Priorities for Lancaster County’s future

May 2017
Lancaster County is a special place. To ensure that it remains a special place, the Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC) is facilitating the development of a new county comprehensive plan. It's called places2040, and it's a plan for all of us – everyone who lives, works, or plays here.

Over the past year, LCPC and its partners asked local residents, officials, and other key stakeholders to tell us what would make this special place even better. At meetings and events throughout the county, we reached out in person. We also provided opportunities for online engagement at places2040.com. So far, over 4,000 residents have directly participated in the process.

We asked what’s important to the community, and here’s what we’ve heard so far.

### MANAGING GROWTH

**Create compact, walkable communities**

We’ve made progress, but we’re concerned about the type and pattern of development we’re seeing.

- Continue directing growth into designated areas to preserve farmland, open space, and natural resources.
- Curb the amount of new automobile-oriented retail and commercial development on major corridors.
- Build up, not out (although we don’t always support compact development when it’s proposed in our own backyard!). Allow for taller buildings.
- Revitalize existing communities (especially our city and boroughs), rehabilitate existing buildings, and build new infill that reflects the character of the surrounding community.
- Create more compact, walkable mixed-use communities that reflect traditional design and development patterns (although some recent examples don’t impress us, and some prefer to keep housing separate from other uses). Better integrate mixed-use development into existing communities.
- Help people visualize best practices in planning – show them what well-designed improvements in the community could actually look like.

### URBAN PLACES

**Promote reinvestment through rehab and infill**

We’re glad to see ongoing reinvestment in urban places – especially the city and a few boroughs – but there’s still some room for improvement.

- Celebrate these places for their history, character, and sense of community.
- Promote the amenities these communities offer – restaurants, markets, shopping, arts and entertainment, activities and events.
- Keep communities clean & safe, and focus more attention on walkability, bikeability, and community character.
- Make better use of what we have – make it easier to reuse and rehabilitate existing buildings and construct appropriately designed infill.
- Encourage local businesses and entrepreneurs, rather than chain stores.
**HOUSING CHOICE**
*Ensure safe, quality housing options for everyone*

We’d like people at every income level to have safe, quality housing options they can afford.

- Provide a greater diversity of multi-family housing options (apartments and condos) to rent and own – not just single-family homes. Provide more homeownership opportunities.
- Support mixed-use development and the addition of housing to existing retail.
- Work to raise incomes, because it’s an important part of the housing affordability equation. Attract higher-wage jobs that enable more residents to afford quality housing.
- Educate people about the importance of inclusionary housing – mixing housing types, costs, and tenure together in the same area.
- To create more housing options, don’t focus on regulation alone, but offer incentives as well.
- Provide housing options that meet the needs of today’s workforce, including those who move here for work.

**EMPLOYMENT**
*Support 21st-century industries and jobs*

We want to strengthen existing industries, invest in emerging ones, and prepare our workforce for the future.

- Develop a skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced workforce. Pursue opportunities to provide training and education at vocational, trade, and technical schools – not just 4-year colleges.
- Attract higher-wage jobs, and provide workers the opportunity to earn a living wage.
- Do a better job of coordinating housing, transportation, and jobs.
- Promote entrepreneurship and the growth of small business.
- Help existing industries such as agriculture and tourism remain competitive. Encourage the development of emerging industries such as food processing, pharmaceuticals, live events, and financial services.
- Protect the unique community character that contributes to our quality of life, because it’s an incentive for new businesses to locate here.
- Invest in new technology infrastructure, because it increases the county’s desirability and competitiveness.

**TRANSPORTATION**
*Build a network with more alternatives and connections*

We want a more efficient and flexible transportation system with more alternatives and connections.

- Create a more integrated transportation network that encourages the use of alternative modes such as walking and bicycling.
- Improve public transportation by increasing service and providing more amenities for riders, such as upgraded bus shelters and train stations.
- Focus on maintaining existing roads and bridges rather than building new ones.
- Reduce traffic congestion by investing in new technology, reducing demand, and providing more connections between corridors.
- Coordinate transportation, housing, and jobs, because their needs are closely related.
PARKS, TRAILS, AND NATURAL AREAS

*Provide more places to hike, bike, and enjoy nature*

We love our parks, trails, and natural areas – but we also care about the quality of our environment.

- Provide additional places to hike, walk, and bike – and safe places for children to play.
- Connect communities with parks and trails, and build trails for commuting as well as recreation.
- Create opportunities to observe and explore nature.
- Protect, restore, and link fragmented natural lands.
- Improve water quality, work together on stormwater management, and invest in renewable energy.

AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND

*Protect both the farm and the farmer*

We must continue to protect agriculture and farmland, because it's an essential part of the county’s economy, identity, and sense of place.

- Protect rural landscapes, including the villages that contribute to their character.
- Ensure that agriculture remains viable over the long term.
- Support farm markets that connect us to local food.

THINKING BEYOND BOUNDARIES

*Promote cooperation, work together, and share resources*

All of us – particularly municipalities – need to look past traditional boundaries. We need to promote cooperation, work together, and share resources.

- Develop more consistent planning and regulations. Streamline zoning and permitting and provide more flexibility in building codes.
- Increase the efficiency of government services (ideally, without higher taxes and fees).
- Promote local and regional cooperation among municipalities, organizations, and institutions. Cooperate, form stronger partnerships, and look for ways to consolidate services.
- Cultivate public, private, and nonprofit leadership to implement the kind of future we want to see. Encourage leaders to educate, communicate, and collaborate to help us achieve our goals.
- Break down institutional barriers and issue-oriented “silos” such as housing, transportation, natural resources, historic resources, etc. Look for linkages, connections, and common ground across different issues and organizations.
- Work together to increase access to technology. Facilitate investment in 21st-century infrastructure, such as enhanced broadband.

stay involved!

places2040.com

Lancaster County Planning Commission
www.lancastercountyplanning.org

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