

# The Pivot:

## Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

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October 2, 2022



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# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

- Pre-Pivot
- The Pivot
- Building Consensus
- Roadmap for implementation
- How we collaborate moving forward



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PENNSYLVANIA

New York

Allentown

Harrisburg  
Hershey

Philadelphia

York  
Lancaster

Wilmington

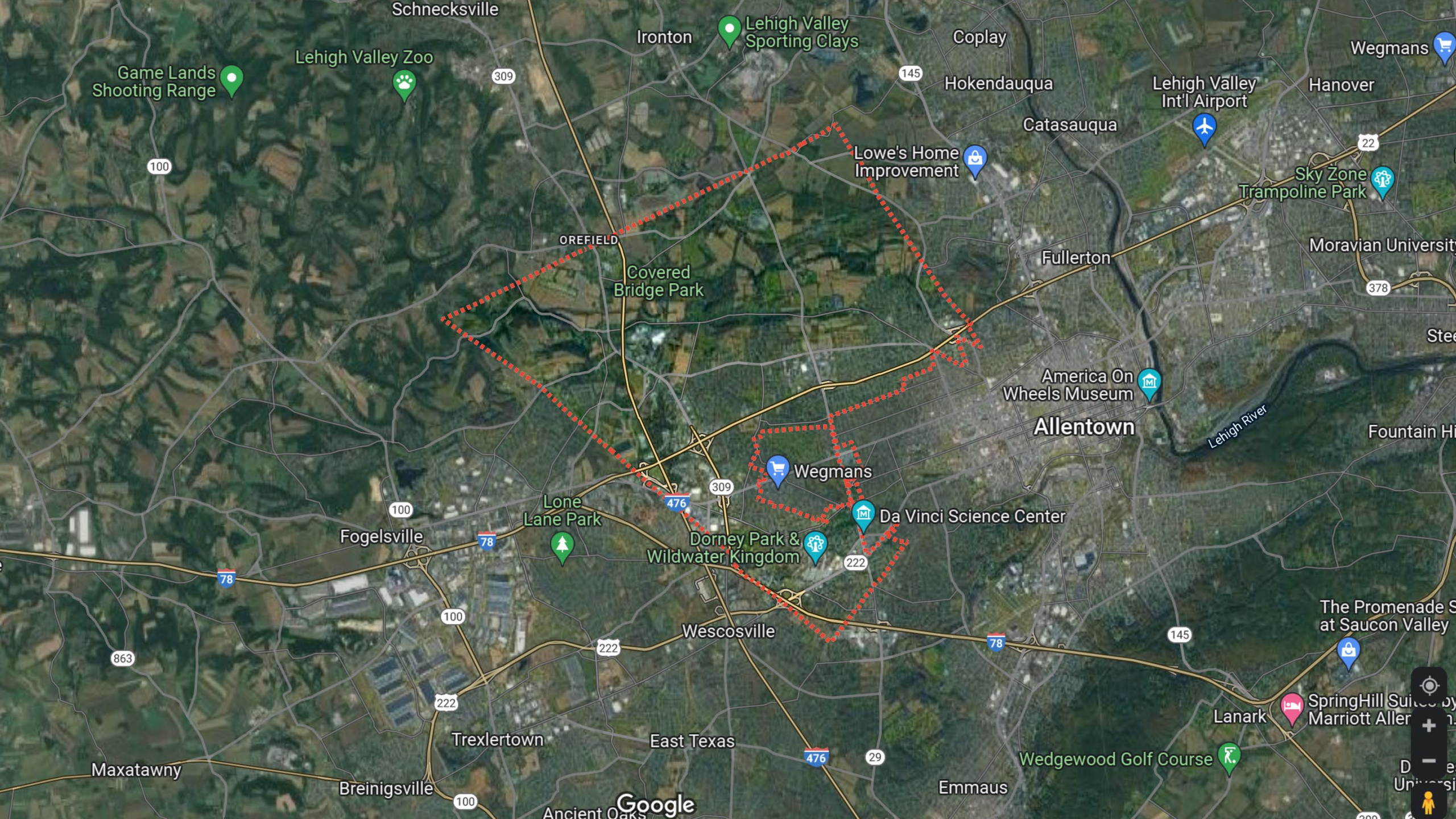
MARYLAND

NEW JERSEY











# **The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19**

**Massive mixed-use project proposed on Cedar**

**Flexible zoning in South Whitehall landed**

**South Whitehall Ridge Farm project draws**

**South Whitehall considers public workshops**

**South Whitehall residents get lesson on land**

**‘ Review of massive Ridge Farm gets down to  
nitty gritty on roads.**

**–Oct 17, 2018**



# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

Common theme:

**“We didn’t know about the 2009 comp plan!”**



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# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

- Large Public Engagement effort up front.
- Created a blog [swtcompplan.org](http://swtcompplan.org)  
*(in the middle of transitioning township website)*
- Kick-Off Meeting March 2019

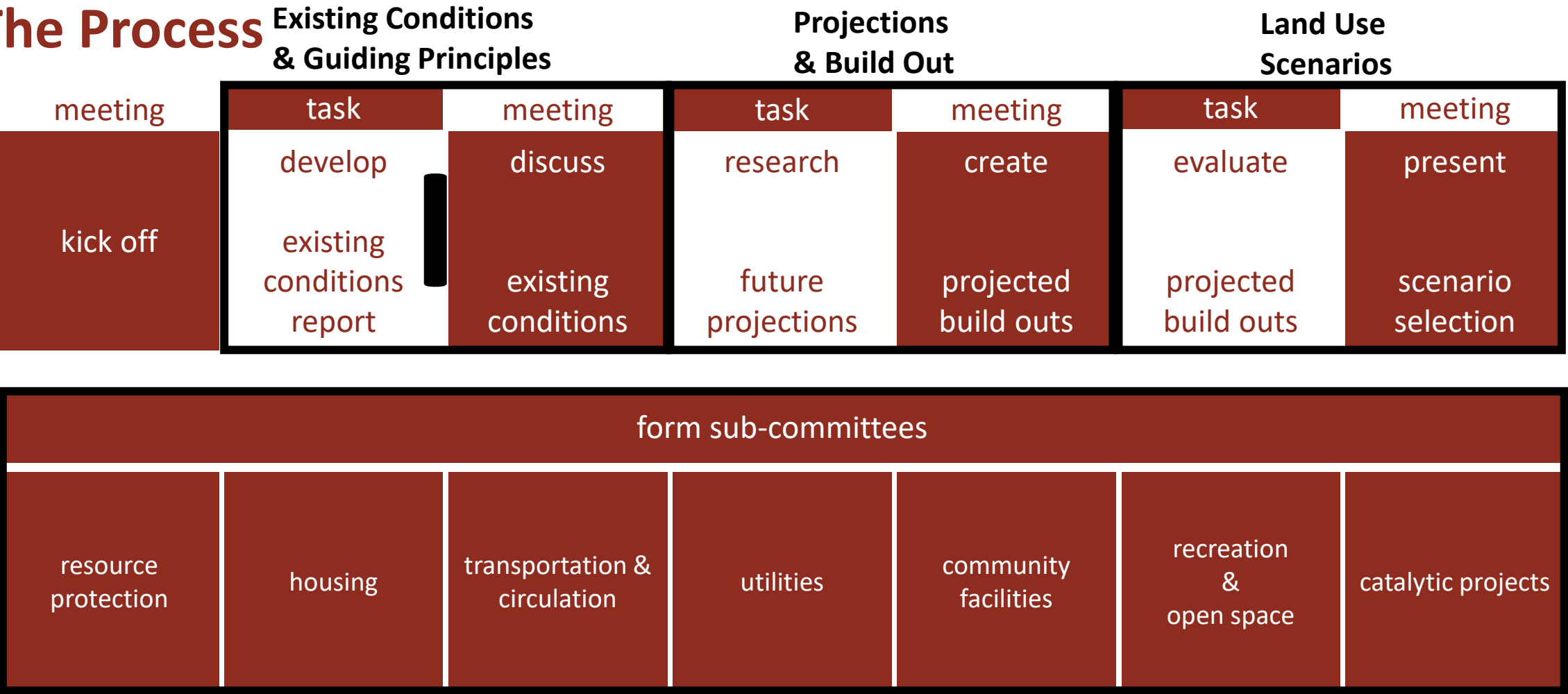


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# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

## The Process



# **The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19**

**"What is the future of South Whitehall Township? That's  
for you to Decide"  
May 30, 2019**



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# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

## Guiding Principles Meetings

- 100-150 people held at Parkland HS
- Post card “hijacking” meeting
- June 18, July 16, July 30, 2019
- Guiding Principles Survey (surveymonkey)

**“Stop all development!”**



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# **The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19**

**"With an eye toward the future, South Whitehall begins  
process of updating comprehensive plan"  
June 19, 2019**

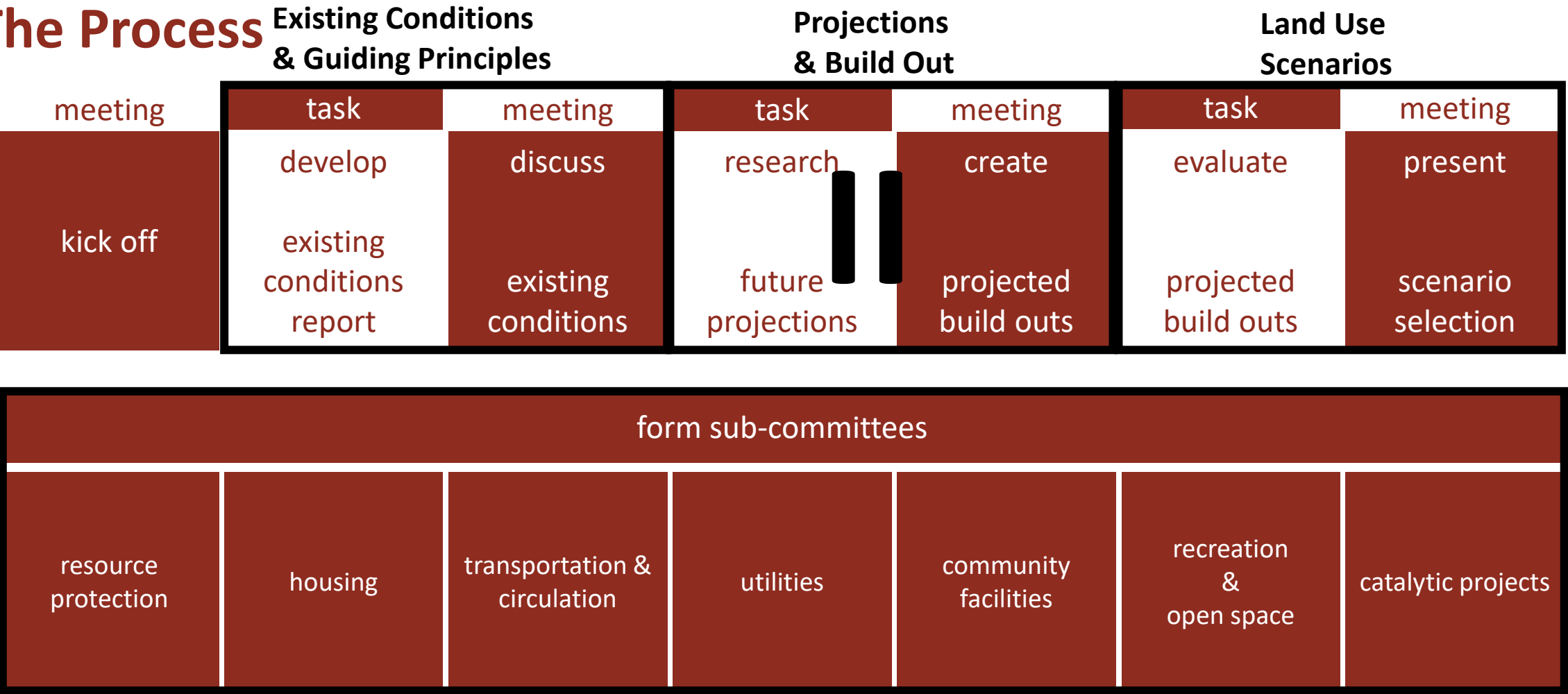


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## The Process



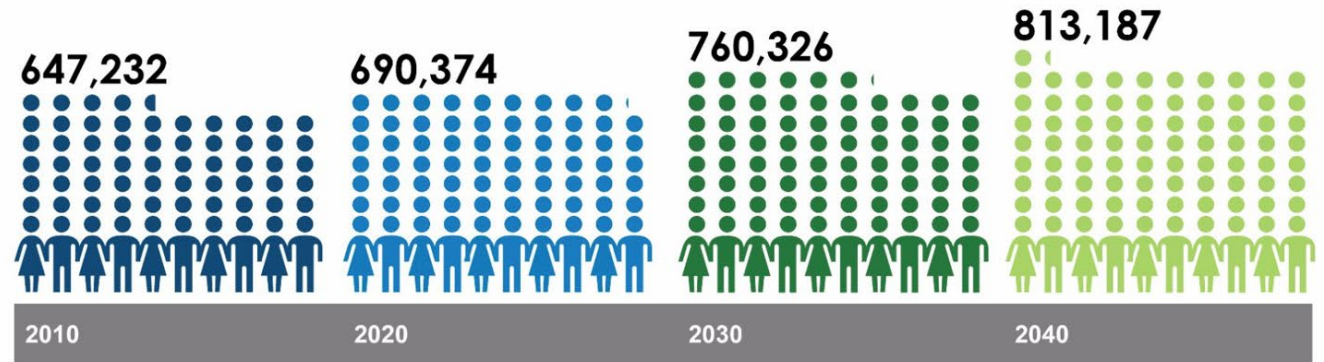
# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

Municipal Planning Code (MPC)  
says Comprehensive Plans to

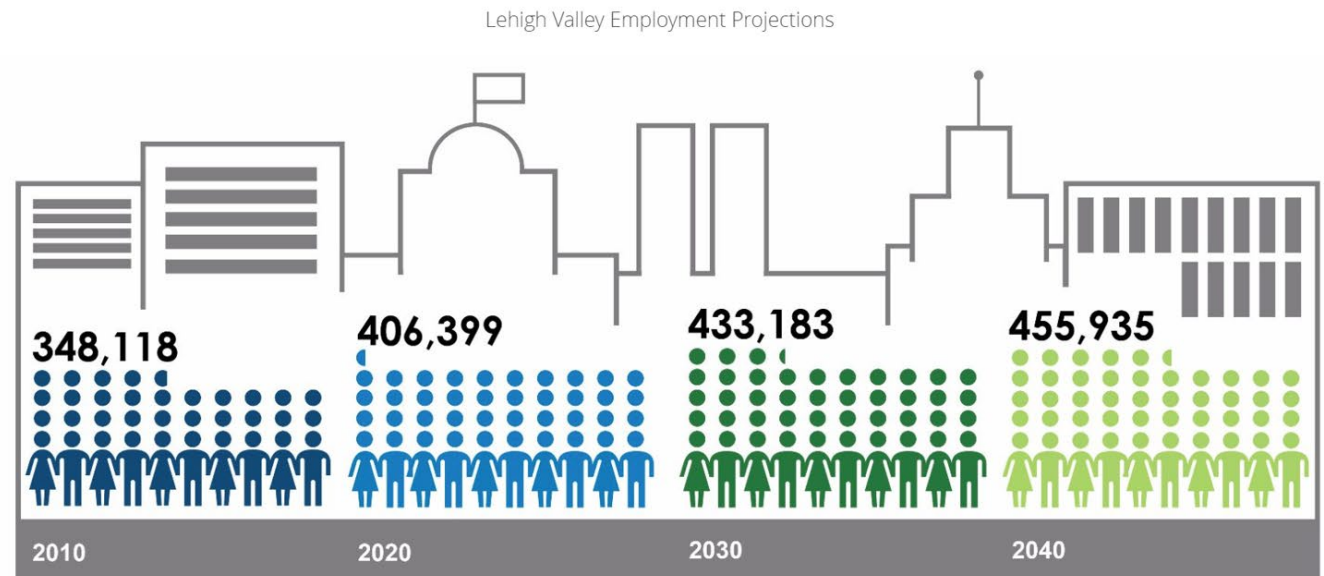
*“...accommodate growth...”*

## LVPC Projections 2045 for South Whitehall

- Population = 25,531
- Employment = 23,952



● = 10,000 people



● = 10,000 people



# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

## "Where should we grow?" Workshops

Updated: Dec 6, 2019

Please join us as we venture into the next phase of our comp plan update. After the development of Guiding Principles, we are now entering the phase to help determine **where we should grow** as a township. This will be accomplished through group interactive exercises at the series of public meetings, smaller group meetings at various venues, along with the distribution of take-home exercises. If you are interested in hosting a smaller group workshop or are interested in the take-home exercise, please contact [manhardtd@southwhitehall.com](mailto:manhardtd@southwhitehall.com)

### **"Where should we grow" workshops:**

Tuesday November 19, 2019 6:00 PM. Springhouse Middle School

Tuesday, December 3, 2019 @ 6:00 PM. Cetronia Elementary School

Saturday, December 7, 2019 @ 10:00 AM. Orefield Middle School

Tuesday, December 10, 2019 @ 6:00 PM. Kratzer Elementary School



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## Where should we grow? Exercises

- Small groups around maps
- Held at local schools, in different areas of SWT
- COOKIES!
- 4 meetings mid-November through December
- Joint BOC/PC meeting March 11, 2020...



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COVID19

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Where should we grow? Exercise follow-up:

Session at HS civics class  
Pizza Boxes to school drop offs, etc..



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**The Pivot begins:**

“Where should we grow?” Results

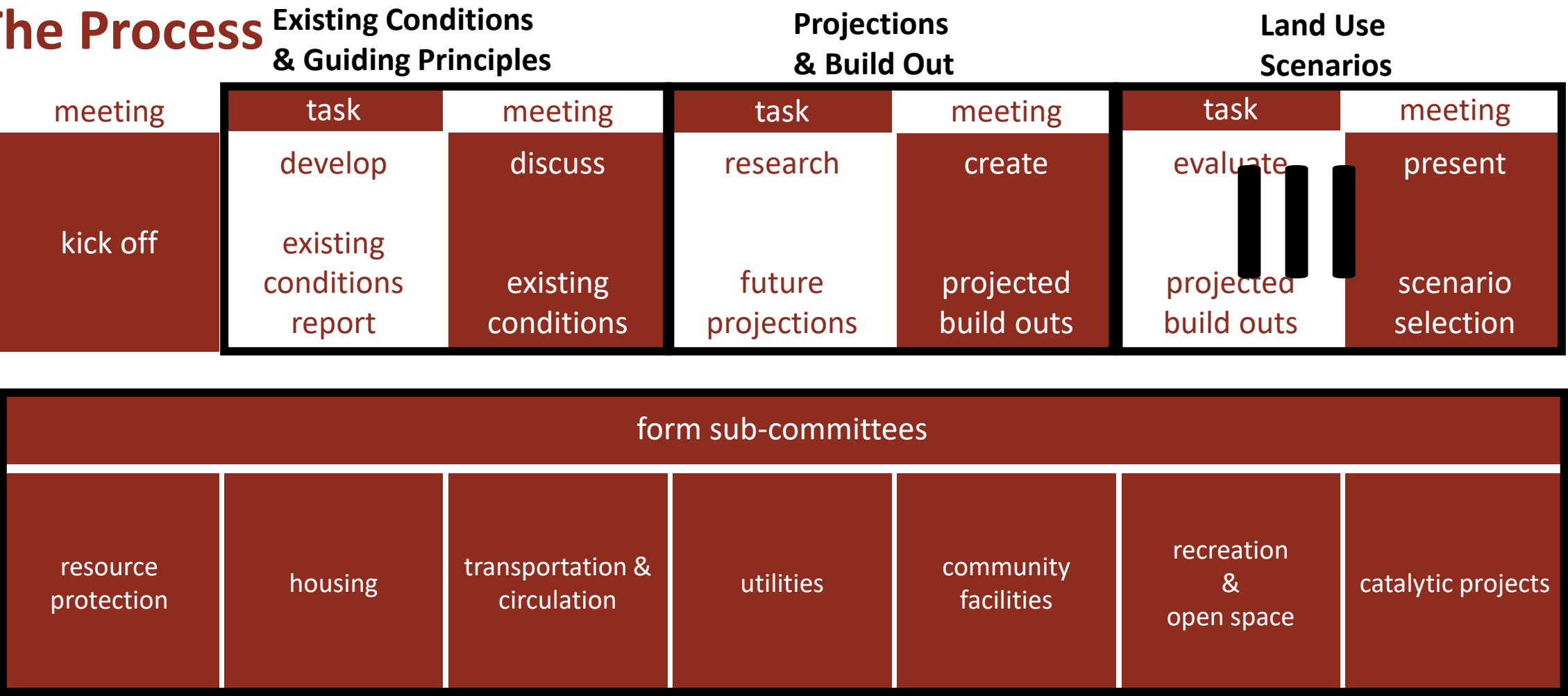
[AGOL Story Map.](#)



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# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

## The Process



# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

How should we grow? survey



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# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

## The Process

# The Process

Existing Conditions & Guiding Principles		Projections & Build Out		Land Use Scenarios	
meeting	task	meeting	task	meeting	task
kick off	develop	discuss	research	create	evaluate
	existing conditions report	existing conditions	future projections	projected build outs	projected build outs
form sub-committees					
resource protection	housing	transportation & circulation	IV utilities	community facilities	recreation & open space
					catalytic projects

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“We should have a townhall meeting with breakout sessions by topic area... but we are still in lock-down....”

Michael Baker International to the rescue...



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# Comprehensive Plan Update

## VIRTUAL KICKOFF MEETING AGENDA

**March 31<sup>st</sup>, 6-8PM**

- Welcome and Introduction (6-6:25PM)

*5-minute transition to Breakout Sessions*

- Breakout Sessions: Comprehensive Plan Topics (6:35-7:35pm)

Breakout Session #1 – 6:35-6:50pm

Breakout Session #2 – 6:55-7:10pm

Breakout Session #3 – 7:15-7:30pm

*5-minute transition to Main Meeting Room*

- Closing and Next Steps (7:35-8PM)



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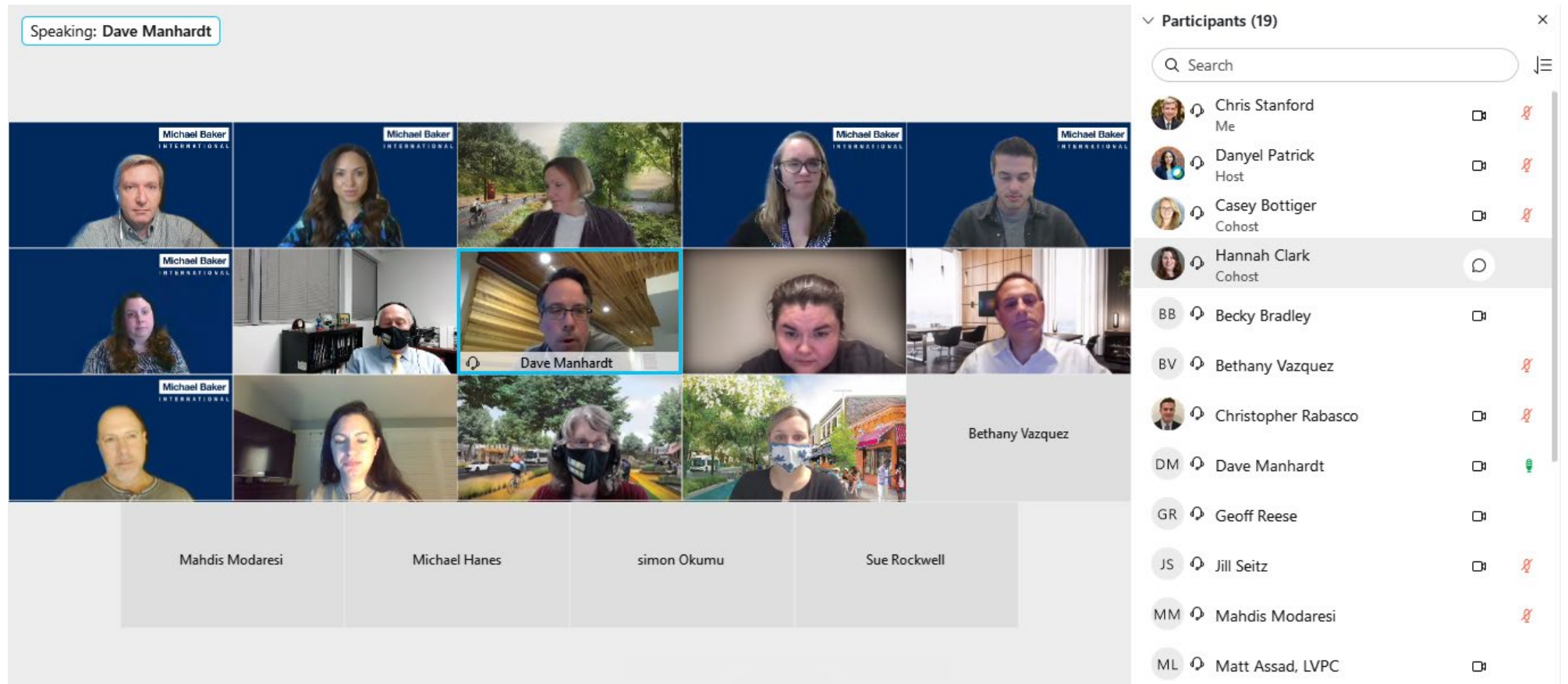
How do we go from this:



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To this:



And maintain interest and enthusiasm?



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Build  
collaborative  
virtual spaces...

What is one word you would use to describe your vision for South Whitehall Township 10 years from now?

Mentimeter



27



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Bring in  
compelling  
Subject Matter  
Experts...



**planning  
for the  
new normal.**



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Facilitate a clear process that keeps folks focused and on task...



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## Comprehensive Plan Update: Phase 4 Working Groups Timeline

**Introductory Virtual Meeting [All Working Groups together]: Tuesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 6-8PM**



**Meeting #1 – Existing Conditions [by Topic Area]: Week of July 12<sup>th</sup>**



**Meeting #2 – Recommendation Brainstorm with Subject Matter Experts from LVPC [by Topic Area] Virtual Meetings: Week of July 19<sup>th</sup>**

7/19, 6-7:30PM: Community Facilities

7/20, (Sessions 1 and 2 running concurrently) 6-7:30PM: 1) Transportation 2) Housing

7/21, (Sessions 1 and 2 running concurrently) 5:30-7PM: 1) Resource Protection 2) Community Utilities



**Meeting #3 – Identify and Develop Recommendations [by Topic Area]: Week of August 2<sup>nd</sup>**



**Concluding Meeting Working Groups [all Working Groups together]: August 19<sup>th</sup>**

# Comprehensive Plan Update: Working Groups Introductory Meeting

*In March 2021, South Whitehall Township kicked off Phase 4 of the Comprehensive Plan Update. South Whitehall is excited to have community participation in the Phase 4 Working Groups: Housing; Transportation; Resource Protection; Community Facilities; and Community Utilities.*

## **When did Phase 4 of the Comprehensive Plan Update begin?**

The Comprehensive Plan Phase 4 Kickoff Meeting on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 introduced the five Working Groups which reflect the required Plan Elements from the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Community members joined Township staff, elected officials, and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) to learn more about how to engage in the Working Groups. The meeting reviewed work to date, and LVPC staff provided brief presentations during breakout sessions on existing conditions and how each topic fits into regional context.

## **What's next?**

Community participation is needed to assess existing conditions and develop Working Group recommendations during Phase 4 of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The groups will follow the meeting schedule on the next page, where Working Group members will evaluate data and future scenarios, and build out recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

housing

transportation

community  
facilities

community  
utilities

resource  
protection

# **Working Group Meeting #1:** **Existing Conditions**

*This meeting will focus on the current existing conditions for Housing in South Whitehall Township. Relevant information will be discussed and presented from the growth, economic development, and transportation scenarios, the South Whitehall Township 2009 Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Plan Update Guiding Principles [2019], Comprehensive Plan Update Existing Conditions Report [2019], and the 2019 regional comprehensive plan FutureLV.*

## **Goals**

- **Identify significant data trends within South Whitehall Township**
- **Identify where updated data and/or additional information is needed**
- **Complete Existing Conditions Discussion Template**

## **Outcome**

Solidify a baseline understanding of current data and information to best inform the recommendation process.



## **Working Group Meeting #2: LVPC Subject Matter Experts**

*Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will present relevant data, tools, and best practices to each working group. Participants will have a chance to discuss the ways to address problems in South Whitehall Township and move forward towards identifying recommendations with SMEs.*

### **Goals**

- **Review and discuss SME sourced data**
- **Learn about tools and best practices**
- **Identify initial recommendations**

### **Outcome**

Create a high-level list of initial recommendations that will be prioritized and built out at Working Group Meeting #3.

## **Working Group Meeting #3:** **Prioritize and Develop Recommendations**

*Meeting #3 focuses on building out the recommendations identified in Meeting #2. Working Group members will prioritize their recommendations and develop recommendations utilizing the Recommendation Template.*

### **Goals**

- **Prioritize and assess recommendations**
- **Build out Recommendation Templates**
- **Prepare to present Recommendations at the Concluding Working Group Meeting**

### **Outcome**

Prioritize recommendations and then identify key goals, key actions, leaders, partners, funding, and timeline. These recommendations will be presented to the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission at the Concluding Working Group Meeting, and will directly inform the Comprehensive Plan Update.

## **Working Group Concluding Meeting**

*Each Phase 4 Working Group will present their recommendations to SWT staff and the Planning Commission to generate constructive feedback and discussion. The recommendations, feedback, and discussion will inform the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan Update.*

### **Goals**

- **Present recommendations**
- **Provide feedback and facilitate discussion**
- **Advance recommendations to Planning Commission drafting of Comprehensive Plan**

### **Outcome**

Phase 4 will conclude with presentations of Working Group recommendations to the Planning Commission, informing the Comprehensive Plan Update.

# Resource Protection Working Group



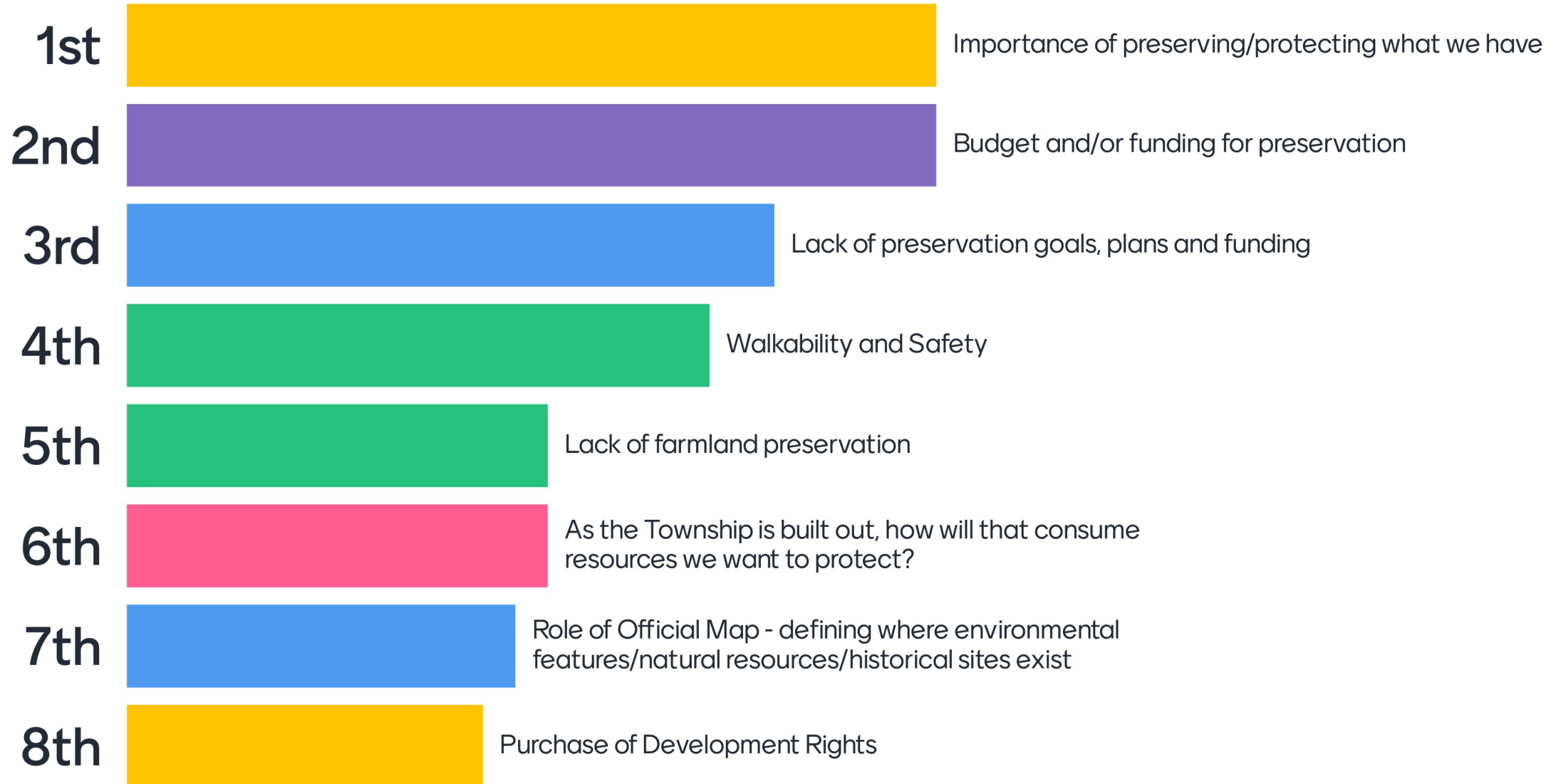
# **Key Takeaways: Resource Protection Meeting 1**

**Lack of  
preservation  
goals, plans  
and funding**

**Lack of  
farmland  
preservation**

**Preserving  
what we have**

# Resource Protection: Key Takeaways Prioritization



# Resource Protection: Recommendation Brainstorm

**Update Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space plan**

Ag easement program - appraisal of property, county does have a cap - for higher value farms - could hinge in part of municipality to provide matching funds

Inventory sensitive areas, add them to Official Map and develop regulations to protect and preserve them

Form a historical society? Collaborate with Lehigh County historical society?

Funding tools for township - increasing EIT, .25%, municipalities use that to raise funds related to natural resource or farmland protection, requirement is open space plan in place

**Confirm if can use for first class townships**

develop more flexible regulations to allow adaptive re-use and preservation of historic structures

where sidewalk networks connect - good way to talk about and think about parks, rec, open space connections

Consider a Transfer of Development Rights program if density receiving areas can be determined

Municipality preserve properties on own (w/o) going through county program, easements for preservation (Bushkill Twp)

**Official map updates**

education before goes on the ballot is critical

Maybe a different sidewalk or mosaic on Cedar Crest and Hamilton to denote that it is historic Dorneyville Settlement and King George Inn

Township has local funding for agricultural preservation, match with county money, then county can receive additional state money for preservation

Honor the story/record what has happened - how could that inform the plan?

How do we preserve the story? How does SWT want to preserve their history and their story?

How pull together resources and tell a story (where we were, where at now, and where we are going in the future)?

**How do we connect the dots?**

# Resource Protection: Recommendation Ranking

## **Final Working Group Recommendation Prioritization**

1. Preservation ToolBox
2. Funding structures and resources
3. Official Map Updates
4. Flexible regulations for adaptive reuse and historic preservation
5. Connectivity/Close Gaps
6. Pull together resources to tell SWT's Story



## Recommendation: Preservation Toolbox (Historic, Natural Resources, Agricultural

### Key Goals:

- Clear
- A written document that can refer to understand and distribute to landowners with options
- KNOW what your options are
- Implementable
- Serves as a springboard for action
- Appealing and build buy-in from property owners
- Useable

### Key Actions:

- Education program is KEY
- Serve as a community resource
- Create a three chapter document (historic; natural resources; agricultural preservation)
- Get it to be used in a way beneficial to both TWP and landowners = a win-win
- Build resource; Communicate its purpose; educate potential users, beneficiaries
- Provide background information
- Transfer of Development Rights

### Stakeholders

#### Who Leads?

- CED w/ support of planning experts, Executive Administration; Elected Leaders

#### Who Partners?

- Lehigh County Ag; Historical societies; LVPC; Wildlands; landowners; residents

### Funding Sources

- Look at Recommendation #2 - Funding Sources

### Implementation Timeline (near-term, mid-term, or long-term):

- First thing that needs to happen, it is the CORE
- Near-term

### Measures of Success:

- Gain landowners interest
- Preservation (of all kinds) increases



## Recommendation: Funding Sources

### Key Goals:

- Get 'skin in the game'
- Generate/categorize list of funding sources

### Key Actions:

- Help inform Toolbox development?
- If have budget surplus, way to allocate
- Increasing EIT (Earned Income Tax) by .25% to raise funds related to natural resource protection
- Identify where funds can be used (i.e. historic; natural resource; agricultural)
- Understanding funding options
- EIT; Grants; Match Programs; Private Foundations

### Stakeholders

#### Who Leads?

- Executive Admin., CED, Finance

#### Who Partners?

- Legislators, Foundations, County/State/Federal Agencies

### Funding Sources

### Implementation Timeline (near-term, mid-term, or long-term):

- Ongoing
- Near term - identify current sources
- Mid-term: Better define funding/resources in budget; dedicate resources in budget

### Measures of Success:

- Funding

## Recommendation: Official Map Updates

### Key Goals:

- Create the vision
- Set the priorities

### Key Actions:

- Barn inventory
- Sensitive areas
- Jordan Creek Greenway District?
- Connectivity: sidewalks, trails, greenways, open space
- Add Jordan Creek Greenway
- Important connections

### Stakeholders

#### Who Leads?

- CED, Planning Commission, BOC

#### Who Partners?

- Public

### Funding Sources

- Township Budget

### Implementation Timeline (near-term, mid-term, or long-term):

- Near

### Measures of Success:

- Jordan Creek Greenway Cultural District

## Recommendation: Flexible regulations for adaptive re-use and preservation of historic structures

### Key Goals:

- Incentivize preservation of historic structures
- Preservation of historic structures
- Reuse of historic structures

### Key Actions:

- Incentives
- Cluster development
- Reuse - help tell the story of SWT
- Pull together resources to tell a story
- Financing for maintenance
- Potentially rezone to support uses that can help preserve?
- Form a historical society?

### Stakeholders

#### Who Leads?

- CED, Administration, Planning Commission

#### Who Partners?

- Lehigh County

### Funding Sources

- Private Donors
- Grant program to facilitate/fast track
- Help keep structures long-term

### Implementation Timeline (near-term, mid-term, or long-term):

- Mid-term
- Ongoing

### Measures of Success:

- Preserve a barn

February 8, 2022

swt

## INDIVIDUAL MEETING FLOW

public comment review

review of “synthesized goals/objectives/implementation”

open comment period. “approval” to post



February 8, 2022

swt

INDIVIDUAL MEETING FLOW

new element

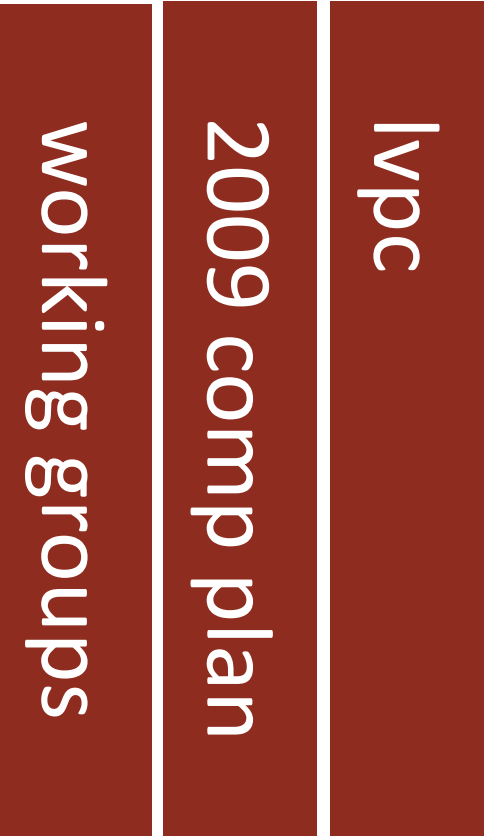
staff review of goals and objectives

board of commissioner comment

public comment

planning commission comment

planning commission prioritization



February 8, 2022

swt

## INDIVIDUAL MEETING FLOW

planning commission prioritization

open comment on prioritization

additional goals and objectives

implementable actions

new element

repeat above until adjournment

May 10, 2022

swt

## INDIVIDUAL MEETING FLOW

review of “synthesized goals/strategies/implementation”

May 10, 2022

swt

## Resource Protection Goal (2022)

### **RPG1.**

**Preserve and protect resources that are important to the unique characteristics of the Township.**



May 10, 2022

swt

## Resource Protection Strategies (2022)

### RPS1.

***Identify and prioritize*** resources that are important to the unique characteristics of the Township.

May 10, 2022

swt

## Resource Protection Strategies (2022)

### **RPS2.**

Strengthen Township regulations to ***encourage*** and ***incentivize*** preservation of resources.

May 10, 2022

swt

## Resource Protection Strategies (2022)

### **RPS3.**

Actively pursue ***partnerships*** and ***opportunities*** to preserve resources.

May 10, 2022

swt

## Resource Protection Strategies (2022)

### **RPS4.**

Direct development to areas with access to infrastructure and limit development in hazard prone areas.



May 10, 2022

swt

## Agriculture (2022)

### ***Identify*** and ***Prioritize***

- Shifts in modern agriculture
- Agri-significant areas
- Potential Sites to support small to medium scale operations.
- Economic development opportunities related to agriculture
- Opportunities to support a local food system

### ***Encourage*** and ***Incentivize***

- Update regulations
- Transfer of Development Rights
- Agri-Uses
- Agri-Zoning
- Cluster/Conservation Zoning

### ***Partnerships*** and ***Opportunities***

- Lehigh County Agriculture
- Clean and Green Program
- Seed Farm
- Rodale Farm
- Landowners
- Farmers

May 10, 2022

swt

## Historic (2022)

### ***Identify*** and ***Prioritize***

- Define historic
- Inventory historic properties

### ***Encourage*** and ***Incentivize***

- Adaptive Reuse
- Rehabilitation of structures
- Ensure long-term maintenance of structures

### ***Partnerships*** and ***Opportunities***

- Trexler Trust
- Property owners
- Lehigh County Historical Society
- Township-based commission

May 10, 2022

swt

## Natural (2022)

### ***Identify*** and ***Prioritize***

- Woodlands
- Steep Slopes
- Riparian Areas
- Critical Habitat
- Others

### ***Encourage*** and ***Incentivize***

- Update/Adopt Ordinances addressing specific natural features: steep slopes, riparian buffer, floodplains, woodlands, etc...
- Greenways / natural corridors

### ***Partnerships*** and ***Opportunities***

- Wildlands Conservancy
- DCNR
- Forest Stewardship Program
- Property Owners

May 10, 2022

swt

## Scenic (2022)

### ***Identify*** and ***Prioritize***

- Significant viewsheds

### ***Encourage*** and ***Incentivize***

- Visual Buffer provisions
- Height Restrictions
- Scenic Resource Overlay

### ***Partnerships*** and ***Opportunities***

- Developers
- Landowners
- Wildlands Conservancy

May 10, 2022

swt

## Resource Protection Implementation (2022)

Implementation Item	Resource
Develop Transfer of Development Rights Program. Identify Sending and Receiving Areas	O
Revise Township ordinances to ensure they support the normal operations of agricultural users.	A
Provide education and outreach materials to farming and non-farming residents about the importance of farming to the township.	A
Identify Funding Sources (WG)	O
Develop a Preservation Toolbox (WG)	O
Official Map Updates (WG)	O
Cluster development near crossroads villages in exurban and agricultural areas.	O
Assess the public's view of open space preservation and the use of taxpayer money to preserve open space in South Whitehall Township.	O
Encourage Adaptive Reuse for Historic Structures	H
Increase historic preservation awareness and education.	H
Conduct an inventory of historic sites and structures in the township.	H
Consider adopting overlay zoning districts over existing villages for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the unique character found there.	O
Evaluate Scenic Viewsheds	O
Update Ordinances to protect natural resources	N
Update regulations in response to changes in agriculture.	A
Develop Resource Protection Prioritization Plan	O
Develop Historic Preservation Plan	H
Evaluate BOC Sub-Committees (EAC, GAC, Land Preservation) to prevent overlap of duties.	O



# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

Implementation Item	Focus Area					Timeline	Priority
Administrative Evaluation						short term	medium
Agriculture Preservation Plan	R				L	short term	medium
Bike Ped Plan					T L	short term	medium
Broadband Infrastructure		U				short term	medium
Capital Improvements Plan	R	U		F	T L	short term	high
Hazard Mitigation				F	L	short term	medium
Historic Preservation Plan	R				L	short term	medium
Housing			H			short term	medium
Infrastructure Evaluation		U				short term	medium
Landscape Plan	R	U		F	L	short term	medium
Open Space Plan	R	U		F	L	short term	high
Official Map Updates	R	U	H	F	T L	short term	high
PROT				F		short term	medium
Public Safety Plan				F	T	short term	medium
Regional Coordination	R	U	H	F	T L	mid term	medium
Re-Examination Report	R	U	H	F	T L	short term	high
Resource Protection Ordinances	R				L	short term	medium
SALDO Updates	R	U		F	L	short term	medium
Sewer Plan (Act 537)	R	U	H	F	T L	short term	high
Solid Waste		U		F		short term	medium
Stormwater Plan (Act 167)	R	U		F	L	short term	medium
Transfer of Development Rights Program	R	U	H	F	T L	short term	high
Traffic Safety Plan					T	short term	medium
Transportation Plan					T	short term	medium
Zoning Updates	R	U		F	L	short term	medium

# The Pivot: Comprehensive Planning in the time of COVID19

IMPLEMENTATION ITEM												
Open Space Plan	R	U	F	L	short term	high						
KEY GOALS												
KEY ACTIONS												
Resource Protection Prioritization												
Assess the public's view of open space preservation and the use of taxpayer money to preserve open space in South Whitehall Township.												
Evaluate Scenic Viewsheds												
Identify Funding Sources (WG)												
consider repurposing structures on open space for community facilities												
Develop a Preservation Toolbox (WG)												
STAKEHOLDERS												
Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Board of Commissioners, Environmental Advisory Committee.												
Wildlands Conservancy, Lehigh County Agriculture Preservation, LVPC												
FUNDING SOURCES												
Township Budget, Recreation Fees, Earned Income Tax, Pennsylvania Grants												
MEASURES OF SUCCESS												
Increased acreage of preserved open space												



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