

Appendix B: Participant Feedback (Visioning Meeting)

LARGE GROUP INTERVIEW

Question #1: *What are the issues facing the protection/management of our resources?*

ISSUE	VOTE	APPLICABLE PLAN CHAPTER OR TOPIC AREA
Traffic impacts rural character, pedestrian friendliness, and increases pollution.	18	Related Growth Management Issues
Protection of “dark skies”: astronomy “haven”; star party (Warwick Park). Dark sky reduction will impact nocturnal animal habitat, migration and activity. Outdoor Lighting Council Ordinances.	18	Natural Resources Plan
Conservation/preservation of wildlife resources and habitats.	17	Natural Resources Plan
Remove “farmer unfriendly” restrictions on farming.	16	Agriculture Plan
Re-urbanization of our towns and villages.	11	Related Growth Management Issues
Proximity of development to natural resources.	9	Natural Resources Plan
Protect groundwater quality/unique geology through marketing.	9	Natural Resources Plan
Preserve rural character by requiring setback design elements.	6	Related Growth Management Issues
Educate new residents on traditional rural lifestyle.	6	Education/ Cultural Resources Plan
Promote community events to ensure community awareness.	5	Cultural Resources Plan
Promote “town center” approach to development.	5	Related Growth Management Issues
Threat to land in Northern Federation (developers).	4	Related Growth Management Issues
Accommodate development without negatively impacting groundwater.	4	Natural Resources Plan
Need for integrated approach to wastewater/groundwater usage.	4	Natural Resources Plan
Develop program to take advantage of equestrian recreational opportunities.	4	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Influence of surrounding regions (trans).	3	Related Growth Management Issues
Create community awareness for environmentally sensitive businesses.	3	Related Growth Management Issues
Preserve right-of-way and regional trail connections.	3	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Balance use of groundwater with the need for public water.	3	Natural Resources Plan
Promotion of alternative wastewater disposal systems.	3	Natural Resources Plan
Regional historic survey/register.	2	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Promote pedestrian access to community facilities.	2	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Educate property owners of importance of historic resource preservation.	2	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Surpass limitations associated with alternative wastewater facilities.	2	Natural Resources Plan
Promote regulations pertaining to the design and placement of cell towers.	2	Related Growth Management Issues
Celebrate the Schuylkill River.	2	Natural Resources Plan
Threats to biodiversity must be addressed.	2	Natural Resources Plan
Pace of development.	1	Related Growth Management Issues
Protect scenic nature of roadways.	1	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Promote use of roadways for cycling, etc.	1	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Promote road sharing for alternative forms of transportation.	1	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Regional approach to effective agricultural zoning.	1	Agriculture Plan
Conservation easement funding is limited. Impacts decision of landowners.	1	Agriculture Plan
Information technology – sharing on a regional basis.	1	Related Growth Management Issues
Coordination of maintenance for on-lot systems.	1	Natural Resources Plan
Use of historic resources for bed and breakfasts.	0	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Integrated approach to traffic signal design and placement.	0	Related Growth Management Issues

Note: Some responses shown above have been combined to eliminate redundancy.

Question #2: What would you like to see accomplished by this regional planning effort?

OUTCOME	VOTE	APPLICABLE PLAN CHAPTER OR TOPIC AREA
Accommodate/promote development that preserves rural character, change behavior.	15	Related Growth Management Issues
Holistic, regional plan addressing the protection of groundwater (S.W.M.P.).	14	Natural Resources Plan
Regional trail system “connectiveness”; Trail/sidewalks in new development.	14	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Habitat protection – endangered species.	12	Natural Resources Plan
Maximize food protection in the region – preserve open space; preserve farming.	11	Agriculture Plan
Increased funding for easement purchase.	11	Agriculture Plan
Promote effective agricultural zoning – “A regional approach”.	11	Agriculture Plan
Revise (Trash) the M.P.C.	10	Related Growth Management Issues
Educate new homeowners on standard farm practices.	15	Agriculture Plan
Reduction of light pollution.	7	Related Growth Management Issues
Regional communications plan: educate people on rural etiquette/outreach program.	6	Overall – Education
Communication coordination between communities (planning commissions).	6	Overall – Education
Regional enforcement of regulations.	6	Overall – Enforcement
Keep pressure off of local road system through planning.	6	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Regional recreation map.	3	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Local food in school lunches.	3	Agriculture Plan
Sustainable planning as a school curriculum – change the pattern.	3	Overall – Education
Survey of landowners willing to allow equestrian access.	2	Agriculture Plan
Promote community involvement – “volunteerism”.	2	Overall – Volunteerism
Update current regional database of historic uses.	2	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Educate people on historically significant uses.	2	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
ABC’s1 should communicate on issues that may impact region.	2	Overall – Communication
Protection projects taking place in the surrounding area, i.e., “Big Woods”	2	Natural Resources Plan
Further promote agriculture in the classroom.	2	Agriculture Plan
Connecting neighborhoods – creating a “community”.	1	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan
Validation – citizens – “giving up control”.	1	Overall – Communication
Education about litter reduction.	0	Natural Resources Plan
Incorporate School Districts into the process.	0	Overall – Communications
Historic Preservation – a balance between opportunities for and threats to landowners.	0	Historical/Cultural Resources Plan

¹ Authorities, Boards, and Commissions.

INDEX CARDS

Due to time constraints, each participant was given an index card to record “issues” or “outcomes” they may not have been able to communicate during the large group interview.

Card #1

Victoria Laubach, 610-469-7543 (Work), West Vincent EAC

Topic #1 – Issues

- Know what we have and where – inventories. Accessible to township officials/volunteers – be it plants or animals (not just large mammals, but frogs, amphibians, buds, etc.).
- Ordinances that allow a “small town” to be built. A community I spent a lot of time in when young had homes with nice yards, alleys, a small business district that had useful businesses, i.e., drycleaners and pizzerias do not make a useful business district. Farms right up to the edge of town.
- Build quality homes – too often developers are outsiders with no ties to the region – they are in and out as fast as possible. I know the codes allow OSB, but really, in our climate (i.e., rain) – how long will it last. Today’s \$500,000 home may be deteriorated so far in 30 years, it’s not an asset.
- If a subdivision is not built out in a certain time period, they need to come up to the current laws to protect natural resources.

Topic #2 – Goals

- Lots of great projects/information available = a lot presented at Northern Federation – how to tie it together and make it accessible in a timely way. Seems like volunteers and officials are all too busy putting out fires to implement all this good information.
- Hear, hear on the MPC!

Card #3

Some of the suggestions look like they will need funding – one goal maybe should be to investigate grant money that may be available to implement.

Card #4

Schools mandate a civics course. Include local civic forms (e.g., sup’s plan, com., etc) and local civic concerns.

Card #5

- It would be good to end up with a greenways plan which targets and identifies natural habitat areas: (1) to be preserved; (2) to be targeted for future protection or acquisition, such

as when a farm is sold for development, be aware of the areas that should be protected prior to proposed development plans.

- A database, GIS plan which archives permitted wetland impacts and keeps track of mitigation, conservation requirements tied to permits (can a larger wetland project be implemented regionally, rather than small wetland projects that often go unmonitored). Chris Mulvey, 610-469-9788.

Card #6

Question #2 – Goals of the Plan

- What would you like to see accomplished by this plan?
- What would you consider the most important conclusion/action this plan could make?
- What would be a measure of success for the plan?

Card #7

We had little discussion related to culture:

- I feel it is important to capture our culture in northern Chester County, define it, communicate it, and provide a vision for the future on how to preserve it or modulate it to be in the future what we truly desire.

Card #8

Restriction on trail use for snowmobiles.

NOTES TAKEN AT MEETING

In addition to the large note sheets that were displayed at the front of the meeting room (shown on Pages B1, B2, and B3, more complete notes were being taken by consultant team members.

TOPIC #1 – ISSUES

- Rapid development – pace of development
- Pace of development in surrounding region – traffic and other effects from around the region.
- Threat to remaining open land in northern Chester County.
- Relationship of development to adjacent resources – proximity to the resources.
- Protect dark skies in northern Chester County – as beautiful at night as during the day. Astronomers use northern Chester County as haven for observing stars. Important resource because one of few places left with dark skies.

- Avid cyclist and daily commuter – back roads are phenomenal, follow creeks. Hundreds of people come out here to use the roads. Ignore cyclists here; could try to be more accommodating. Bed and breakfasts could be developed for bike tours.
- Funding resources for environmentally friendly companies (to attract those types of businesses/services here). CSA – community supported agriculture – could produce more revenue for farmers.
- Can historic properties be recognized in regional plan? Registry funding/grants for categorizing or starting inventory.
- Water resources – one of things that attracted him to area (geologist/fly fishermen) – need to protect quality of watersheds and market it as a resource.
- Farmers – one of best preserves of open space. Farmers get blamed for a lot of things (pollution) – municipal officials passing ordinances that are not favorable to farmers. Are geese causing pollution?
- Character of land was what attracted her here. More stringent requirements so development is buffered from view (berms/trees).
- People not from rural areas don't understand what life in country is like – need outreach program – make them understand trails and other resources already in place.
- People in developments don't get out of their own development to see what rest of area/community is like.
- Need to preserve connections with open spaces.
- Need ways other than cars to get around. Promote small communities, town center approach to development.
- Increased traffic and noise from traffic.
- More people using back roads as short-cuts – “road pollution.”
- Groundwater – need to protect this resource and balance with use of public water, also connected with recharge by wastewater. Need to recognize that there will be developments – how can it be handled? Integrated approach to water and wastewater management.
- Traffic – series of traffic lights close together on Route 100 cause huge backups and aggravate use of side roads.
- Re-urbanization (revitalization) of existing towns – encourage development where there are already communities.
- Agricultural zoning on a regional basis – initiatives to preserve open space.
- Preservation of wildlife is important – as a bow hunter, appreciates wildlife, hunting is a PA tradition. Preserving habitat, natural corridors and hedgerows is important.

- Loss of night sky also impacts nocturnal animals.
- Importance of private properties – owners maintaining their properties.
- Amount of money paid per acre for easements is an issue (not enough) – a nominal amount of money. Developers offer a lot more.
- Equestrian sports – one of the fastest growing segments of PA economy. Very important activity in this area – generates revenue. Equestrian park – riders would want to preserve resources here. Should have a more comprehensive approach to promoting equestrian sports.
- Alternative septic systems – people need to be aware of other systems.
- Fragmentation of municipalities – people are not aware of what others are doing – integrated website for the region.
- Schuylkill River – we have turned our backs to it. “Hidden river.” Ignoring an incredible resource.
- Integrate cell towers into view and hide electric wires.
- Organized septic system management.
- Biodiversity – migratory flyways, green corridors – these areas are still rich, need to protect it.

TOPIC #2 – GOALS

- Greater dollars per acre for purchase of easements.
- Regional trail system – connectivity.
- Work as regional unit to protect farmers through zoning (Oley zoning).
- Survey of properties large enough to have trails – allow people to ride through.
- Integrate cul-de-sac development into community – reduce isolation.
- Regional communication plan – “way of life” issues, this is how you pass a horse, respect farmers’ fields – how to be a good neighbor.
- Know what is going on between municipalities – communication/coordination.
- Draw new people in as volunteers.
- Regional trail map – showing what different activities are permitted in different parts of the region.

- Need money to fund regional coordination.
- Can't go through farmers' property without written permission.
- Regional database of historic resources is coming from the state – update/validate list and let people know about it.
- Chester County Historical Society tours – how to let people know about them.
- Different groups – EAC's, P.C., historical groups – should meet and discuss issues.
- Educate buyers about farms, existing uses – real estate agents aren't being up front with buyers in terms of what to expect in rural area.
- Litter – needs to be dealt with.
- Egregious lighting – Wawa's, reduce light pollution.
- Enforcement – need to protect resources and enforce protection of wetlands, etc. – can't this be enforced regionally?
- Regional plan for protection of groundwater, covering both groundwater and sewer issues – sustainable watershed management.
- Regional governance – what would it take?
- Fertilization of golf courses.
- Replace the Municipalities Planning Code.
- Surrounding regions/counties - need to know what is happening around the larger region.
- Stringent development regulations – don't expect this to be the suburbs. Create places that are more like current character. Require it to be designed right or it's not going to be approved.
- Incorporate the school districts into the process and have kids educated on these issues. Make part of curriculum and this plan.
- Maximize food production – one of our major resources. Preserve farms, open space, make farmers aware of changing times/needs, put local food into school lunches.
- Traffic right-of-ways – make sure main roads are adequate so side roads aren't overused.
- Validation by people who live in this area – need to give up some control – could be better dealt with at county level.
- People who live in historic properties don't want to be told what they can do – need to educate historic property owners about their heritage to make them want to preserve it.

- Look for endangered animals to help protect land. Try to encourage more of these animals in the region.