

Vision FINAL DRAFT

In 2045...

Chester County abounds with healthy natural areas, robust farms, cherished historic sites, diverse housing, thriving businesses, quality education, accessible transportation, and vibrant communities for all.

This vision focuses on place, choice, and community.

We want to embrace places, enhance choices, and engage communities.

GOALS FINAL DRAFT

Preserve

Advance the protection and stewardship of open space, farmland, and natural and cultural features to realize economic, ecological, and quality of life benefits.

Protect

Protect and restore critical natural resources to ensure a resilient environment that supports healthy communities.

Appreciate

Preserve the historic resources and landscapes that define our cultural heritage to inspire the future through tangible connections to our shared past.

Live

Nurture diverse and well-rounded communities with a balance of residential opportunities and convenient access to community facilities, services, and amenities.

Prosper

Grow our economic strength through developing and sustaining a skilled workforce, adaptable work areas, supportive infrastructure, a culture of innovation, and engaged communities.

Connect

Advance efficient, reliable, and innovative transportation, utility, and communications infrastructure systems that responsibly serve thriving and growing communities.

Framework Items

- Leadership & collaboration
- Adaptable/flexible & proactive
- Necessary funding & education

Objectives

Objectives need to be responsive to identified building blocks, topics within the goal area, issues identified by the stakeholders, and the public survey



How We Preserve

open space • farmland
nature preserves
parks • forests

GOAL

Advance the protection and stewardship of open space, farmland, and natural and cultural features to realize economic, ecological, and quality of life benefits.

BUILDING BLOCKS

from steering committee

- Education and engagement of landowners and municipalities (c, d, e)
- Improved funding levels (a, d)
- Identify priority parcels and areas, including connections (b, c)
- At least 40% of the county should be permanently preserved (a)
- Manage these lands for the best return (economic, farms, and ecological) (c, d, e)

PUBLIC SURVEY

rated most important

- Natural resources
- Agricultural soils
- Public parks

KEY ISSUES

from stakeholders

- Funding
- Protect/Steward
- Balance growth/preservation
- Landscapes ecology approach
- Water quality
- Farmland cost

OBJECTIVES

- a** Protect a significant portion of Chester County as preserved farms, open space, forests, public parks or nature preserves.
- b** Prioritize preservation efforts to reflect the critical resources of agricultural soils, wildlife habitat, water resources, and public recreation opportunities.
- c** Support a regional approach to preservation that enhances the resiliency of ecosystems and provides the greatest return on investment.
- d** Promote stewardship of water resources, natural habitats, woodlands, historic landscapes, scenic vistas, recreational facilities, and farms on protected open spaces.
- e** Promote the benefits of protecting and appropriately managing open space by pursuing initiatives that inform and educate.

How We Protect

woodlands • streams • wetlands
steep slopes • greenways
natural heritage areas

GOAL

Protect and restore critical natural resources to ensure a resilient environment that supports healthy communities.

BUILDING BLOCKS

from steering committee

- Guide growth away from sensitive resources (a)
- Provide education on value (d)
- Promote public connection to natural areas (d)
- Plan at the ecosystem/regional level (b, c)
- Improve local regulation/enforcement (a, b, c, e, f)
- Provide tools to guide local efforts (b, c, d)
- Address woodlands, wetlands, surface and groundwater, riparian buffers, steep slopes, floodplains, T&E species, wildlife habitats and corridors (a, b, e, f)

OBJECTIVES

- a** Guide development away from sensitive natural resources and toward areas appropriate for accommodating growth.
- b** Support comprehensive protection and restoration of the county's ecosystems including woodlands, wetlands, surface waters, riparian corridors, groundwater, floodplains, soil health and steep slopes, aquatic and wildlife habitats and corridors, and natural heritage areas.
- c** Support municipal and regional natural resource protection efforts, and promote a resource-based planning approach.
- d** Promote the environmental, aesthetic, and economic value of protecting natural resources with residents and municipalities.
- e** Promote groundwater recharge, stormwater runoff and pollution reduction, flood mitigation and resiliency, and water quality improvement and protection to support safe and healthy communities.
- f** Ensure a safe, clean, long-term supply of water to meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses.

PUBLIC SURVEY

rated most important

- Nature preserves
- Forested areas
- Stream corridors

KEY ISSUES

from stakeholders

- Funding
- Protect/Steward
- Landscape ecology approach
- Water quality
- Stormwater

How We Appreciate

historic buildings
cultural landscapes
historic town centers • villages
scenic views • cultural heritage

GOAL

Preserve the historic resources and landscapes that define our cultural heritage to inspire the future through tangible connections to our shared past.

BUILDING BLOCKS

from steering committee

- Preserve stories and places (a, b, d, e)
- Create tangible connections (a, b, c, d)
- Connect people and places (d, e)
- Connect historic and natural resources (c)
- Promote interaction between people, places, and ideas (d)
- Create opportunities for reuse of infrastructure (a, b)

PUBLIC SURVEY

rated most important

- Scenic features
- Farms
- Historic structures

KEY ISSUES

from stakeholders

- Funding
- Protect/Steward
- Balance growth/preservation

OBJECTIVES

- a** Preserve historic resources in their context while supporting appropriate reuse as a vital part of our community infrastructure and character.
- b** Protect historic town centers and villages for continued prominence in our future growth and sense of place.
- c** Identify and foster historic and natural resource connections to advance their protection and maintain quality of life.
- d** Preserve the stories of our cultural heritage and connect them to our residents and our future.
- e** Protect historic viewsheds as a critical component of our sense of place and character.

How We Live

neighborhoods • housing
community facilities & services
parks and recreation
community health

GOAL

Nurture diverse and well-rounded communities with a balance of residential opportunities and convenient access to community facilities, services, and amenities.

BUILDING BLOCKS

from steering committee

- Meeting demands for services (c, d, f)
- Addressing lifestyle choices (a, b, c)
- Balance of housing/neighborhoods (a, b, c)
- Healthy living (food, recreation) (c, d, e, f)
- Proximity to quality jobs and opportunities (b)
- Quality education (f)
- Emergency services (d)
- Supportive services (d, f)

PUBLIC SURVEY

rated most important

- Fresh healthy food
- Emergency services
- Multi-use trails

KEY ISSUES

from stakeholders

- Affordable housing
- Transportation to jobs
- Housing for seniors
- Fair housing
- Walkability/pedestrian environments
- Healthcare
- Food access
- Supportive services
- Public transportation
- Opportunities for physical activity

OBJECTIVES

- a** Provide opportunities for a diverse housing mix that complements community character and contributes to vibrant, safe, and inclusive neighborhoods.
- b** Accommodate housing at costs accessible to all residents in locations close to job opportunities.
- c** Support safe and accessible places for people of all ages, from children to seniors, through development of appropriate housing, community facilities, and amenities.
- d** Maintain and support coordinated systems and organizations for emergency services, human services, and public health to protect and enhance individual and community well-being.
- e** Foster healthy living by supporting walkability and access to quality recreation options and healthy and affordable food.
- f** Support access to quality education opportunities and community facilities through development, maintenance, and promotion of appropriate facilities and programs.

How We Prosper

job centers • business parks
retail centers • agriculture
main streets • industrial areas
place & experience

GOAL

Grow our economic strength through developing and sustaining a skilled workforce, adaptable work areas, supportive infrastructure, a culture of innovation, and engaged communities.

BUILDING BLOCKS

from steering committee

- Economic health (all)
- Strategic growth/resilient (a, c, d, e)
- Flexible workplaces (design and location) (a)
- Supporting infrastructure (quality education, mass transit, affordable housing, municipal engagement) (b, c, e, f)
- Stronger public/private sector connection and communication (b)
- Workforce: skilled, educated, prepared, across sectors and levels (e)

PUBLIC SURVEY

rated most important

- Strong educational system
- Small businesses
- Local industry

KEY ISSUES

from stakeholders

- Ag career awareness
- Ag operation transition/regulation
- Transportation infrastructure
- Skilled/educated workforce
- Flexible zoning

OBJECTIVES

- a** Promote a diverse industry base and flexible workplaces that can adapt to rapidly evolving market, demographic, and technological trends.
- b** Support communication and collaboration between the public and private sectors to further economic development initiatives and community health.
- c** Support redevelopment and strategic infrastructure investment to maximize community assets, capitalize on existing infrastructure, and provide areas for residential and commercial growth.
- d** Encourage the agricultural industry so that its diverse business models and workforce can adapt and thrive, continuing as a vital component of county industry and land use.
- e** Coordinate and support workforce development across age ranges, skill sets, and business sectors to create a workforce prepared for current and future opportunities.
- f** Support the redevelopment of traditional main streets while encouraging other commercial areas to incorporate the walkability, sense of place, and human-scale of these existing main streets.

How We Connect

roadways • sidewalks • trails
public transportation • airports
freight • communications
utilities • energy • pipelines

GOAL

Advance efficient, reliable, and innovative transportation, utility, and communications infrastructure systems that responsibly serve thriving and growing communities.

BUILDING BLOCKS

from steering committee

- Options for mobility (a, b, c, d)
- Resilient energy systems (e)
- Responsible and modern public water and sewer systems (f)
- Funding to achieve coordinated planning (f)

PUBLIC SURVEY

rated most important

- Safe drinking water
- Expand transit
- Maintain facilities

KEY ISSUES

from stakeholders

- Sewer/water/stormwater infrastructure; coordinated planning
- Water supply
- Solid waste
- Energy system resilience
- Funding for maintenance & improvements
- Coordination transportation and land use planning
- Rail station parking
- Capacity vs congestion management
- Multimodal users

OBJECTIVES

- a** Meet travel needs and reduce congestion through transportation demand management, roadway improvements, and expanded public transportation.
- b** Provide for the integrated development of transit-related, autonomous vehicle, automated traffic management, and other technologically driven transportation options into the overall transportation network and the land development process.
- c** Provide universally accessible sidewalks, trails, and public transit connections to create a continuous active transportation network within designated growth areas, and develop multi-use trails to interconnect all communities.
- d** Ensure that rail, aviation and select highway facilities provide for a safe, efficient and competitive transport of freight, goods, and people through and within the county.
- e** Promote safe, sustainable, and resilient energy and communications systems at the local, regional, and national level.
- f** Coordinate water and sewage facilities planning with land use planning so that development is directed toward designated growth areas with adequate and well maintained infrastructure.