

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

The planning theme, *Making a Great Community Even Better*, at first blush almost sounds Pollyanna-like. In some ways, Radnor is like that, almost too good to be true. The strengths of the Radnor community can be easily seen in its successful residential neighborhoods, some of which span many years. Strengths are there in its wonderful public and private educational institutions, nationally acclaimed and its systems of community parks, recreational areas, and open spaces. Radnor's commerce serves the community, the region, even the world. People move through the community using the region's most sophisticated systems of roads and rails.

At the same time, there are issues that need to be addressed, issues that relate to existing needs as well as to emerging needs resulting from the reality of ever-changing demographic and natural resource and economic forces that refuse to be cast in stone. People grow older. Developing watersheds build out and water quality changes. Highways grow clogged and congested. Radnor is replete with these potent dynamics. Keeping it simply “the way it is” is no easy matter.

Better also means room for improvement. With all of its good fortune, Radnor is not without problems and certainly not without planning challenges. There have been impacts, costs associated with the considerable development that has occurred, including traffic congestion, loss of open space and diminished aesthetic values that go with it, impacts to the community's water resources and related natural systems, and an overall erosion of the quality of life for some residents.

- ◆ In some places too much has been paved over and developed in ways that create adverse effects which could be avoided. In some very sensitive places perhaps development should have been avoided altogether--should be avoided in the future?
- ◆ Radnor's extensive roadway network affords excellent vehicular access within the Township and to the region, but often at the cost of poor opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle connections. The lack of non-automobile transportation opportunities often forces residents to rely on the auto for short trips that otherwise might be accomplished via bike or foot, adding to roadway tie-ups. How can pedestrian and bicycle opportunities be enhanced in the Township?
- ◆ Radnor's excellent roadway network and regional rail connections point to even greater opportunities for the redevelopment of areas in the future as land values increase and these zones become too valuable to support current land uses. How will the Township approach redevelopment of these opportunities *and* enhance the quality of life in the Township?
- ◆ Although Radnor has made great strides in enhancing the visual environment of the Township through such efforts as the Route 30 “Gateway Initiative,” there remains more work to be accomplished. The Township has set high standards for design--how can these standards be reinforced in the new comprehensive plan and in what ways?
- ◆ Issues of off-campus student housing associated with the Township’s many educational institutions is an on-going issue. Additionally, can we ensure that there will be an adequate

supply of moderately priced housing so that new, younger, and diverse residents can make Radnor their home?



◆ There also remain a significant number of multi-acre, old estate properties that have yet to be subdivided. Many of these properties will eventually be developed, although some may be able to be conserved as open space in toto or at least creatively approached with limited development conservation design options. The comprehensive plan should address these remaining multi-acre sites and identify how, if subdivided and developed, they can enhance the environment of the Township. Perhaps strategies like transfer of development rights can even be used to preserve and protect the most outstanding of values and redirect development to sites most suitable and with best access.

◆ The many streams and waterways in the Township, such as Meadowbrook Run, Valley Run, Gulph Creek, and Darby Creek and its many tributaries should be re-examined for the greenway linkages that they can provide and for the environmental benefits they afford the Township. Exciting opportunities are already emerging through the evolving Darby Creek Rivers Conservation Plan (Cahill consultant). These stream valleys often transcend municipal

boundaries, as do the land use concerns of the Township. The comprehensive plan process is an opportunity for Radnor Township to reconnect with its neighbors, now encouraged by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

As good as it is, public and private action in the past has resulted in impacts to the natural resources of the Township. Radnor can do better. There are housing needs. There are transportation problems. Again, Radnor can do better. Businesses in Wayne are on the upswing, and the Town is aglow with rebirth excitement. Still, there is opportunity to build on and improve and make it work even better. Open space and recreation facilities are impressive and exceed standards, but demands on facilities and programs continue to grow. Radnor can do better. Radnor's remarkable array of institutions, both public and private, is literally unsurpassed. But how to keep them resonating positively and productively with the Township and Township neighbors? A wealth of historical and archaeological values abounds everywhere you look, but many of these wonderful old places of such significance are totally unprotected and subject solely to economic decision making. Radnor can do better. That's what this Comprehensive Plan is all about.

Finally, a note is in order regarding sustainability and "...making it even better." Radnor is a community of over 30,000 persons with even more jobs. That's remarkable. Much of this development in this mature, not very large community of about 14 square miles has already occurred. Relatively little new development will occur on undeveloped land (little undeveloped land remains), although re-development will occur, possibly at an accelerating rate. As this process continues, the goal of the comprehensive plan is to amend past practices where they have been ill-conceived and make this highly developed community of residents and businesses as balanced—as sustainable--as possible. Sustainability here is meant to be defined in terms of natural resource systems, as well as human and economic systems. It means keeping the air and water as clean as possible, remediating problems at every opportunity. It means making sure that housing is available for all types of people, for folks with special physical needs and for those with income constraints. It means providing jobs for all types of workers. Radnor, with its many advantages, has the opportunity to achieve a sustainable balance, which escapes so many other communities. Radnor in 2001 is already a great community. The preparation of a new comprehensive plan for Radnor Township is an opportunity to re-establish and strengthen the essential elements of community that have helped Radnor evolve into the sophisticated place that it is today. Through building on its rich history, its abundant natural resources, and the wealth of human capital and social institutions that define Radnor today, a vibrant vision for Radnor's future can be forged. Radnor is a great community that can grow even better!

The comprehensive planning process is Radnor's opportunity to define change--however large and however small--in the next 10, 20, or 30 years. This process, we believe, will be most successful if strategies for the future build on the rich legacy, which has come to define the Radnor community. The founding fathers (and mothers) of the Township recalled their Welch heritage when they ventured into Penn's Woods to boldly plan their new community more than three hundred years ago. In 2001, the Township celebrates its one hundred years as an incorporated Township with the centennial motto "Looking back, moving forward." This is an appropriate theme for the new comprehensive plan--building on the best from the existing community and boldly planning for a new Radnor community.