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Resource Conservation

GOAL

Advance resource conservation efforts to: sustain and rebuild ecosystems and preserve community character.



Objectives

- a.** Protect and enhance historic settings, scenic viewsheds, and environmental resources throughout the Township.
- b.** Continue to support and encourage stewardship of natural resources and historic landscapes.
- c.** Ensure regulatory controls continue to preserve and protect natural resources.
- d.** Protect ground and surface water quality and quantity through community education, stewardship, and conservation efforts.
- e.** Support resource preservation efforts through public education, partnerships with conservation organizations, and as community-oriented conservation efforts.
- f.** Establish regulatory controls to advance historic preservation efforts at a size and scale appropriate for the Township.
- g.** Participate in programming and events that celebrate the Township's historic and natural resources.
- h.** Encourage and support environmental best practices, green technology, and sustainable uses throughout the Township.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Protect Natural Resources. Preserve vital natural resources throughout the Township, including riparian buffers, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, groundwater, and plant and animal corridors, while enhancing water and air quality.

Natural resources provide a number of benefits, and their continued protection can further accomplish broader stewardship goals in West Sadsbury and the surrounding region.

The Township should continue the strategic planning process with community and natural resource partners to advance high-quality stewardship and conservation practices, including the conservation of greenway and recreation corridors. The Township may reach out to land or easement-holders to promote best practices for the conservation and improvement of resource functions. The Township should advocate for similar practices on Township owned lands. Specific actions can include:

ACTIONS

- 1.1.A. **Protect Natural Land.** Continue to explore options to protect open space in the Township and to enhance the stewardship of open spaces as described in Recommendation 2.1 and 2.3.
- 1.1.B.. **Support the Agricultural Community.** Agricultural lands represent 1,302 acres (or 96.7 percent) of the total preserved land in the Township. The importance of this preserved open space is described in Chapter 2. Continuous efforts should be made to engage with the agricultural community to encourage sustainability in agriculture, promote environmental best practices, and to ensure that opportunities for farming remains viable in the Township.
- 1.1.C. **Protect Surface Water.** Investigate the feasibility of targeted wetland, riparian buffer, and/or floodplain restoration projects in the Township. These types of projects promote biodiversity through the restoration of original habitat and can also provide opportunities for enhanced stormwater management. Biodiversity provides additional benefits through promoting landscapes of visual interest and supporting the health and viability of other natural resources such as woodlands. Priority areas for riparian buffer restoration in West Sadsbury include Valley Creek and East Branch Octoraro Creek in the southern portion of the Township. Opportunities for grant funding through the Pennsylvania Department

of Environmental Protection, Chester County Department of Community Development, and other partners could be pursued once a suitable location(s) has been identified.

Surface waters can be protected through riparian buffer restoration and by promoting sustainable practices in agriculture to reduce pollutant runoff.



1.1.D. **Protect Groundwater.** Groundwater protection is critical since there is limited public water service in the Township. Water quality and quantity impacts resulting from land development and agricultural operations reduces inputs to the groundwater supply and can have far-reaching consequences. Comprehensive water resource management must recognize the full range of impacts occurring within the Township as it relates to groundwater quality and quantity. These efforts can include:

1. Establish a system in the Township to monitor groundwater quality. This may be accomplished through analysis of published water quality results and routine monitoring of groundwater quality. Water quality results are provided by the PA Department of Environmental Protection and the Chester County Water Resources Authority
2. Create an inventory of potential threats to groundwater quality and quantity. This may include identifying land uses detrimental to groundwater quality and/or environmental conditions which may lead to increased stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution, damaging to groundwater. Proactive solutions to protect groundwater should be implemented as needed.
3. Educate residents on the need to protect groundwater. Resident education may involve instruction on how to properly maintain and/or how to perform quality tests on on-site residential wells. Community education can be undertaken in a comprehensive manner to address groundwater quality as well as other natural resource preservation efforts in the Township.

RECOMMENDATION

1.2

Enhance natural resource regulations as necessary.
Periodically review and amend natural resource protection standards to advance protection, stewardship, restoration, and interpretation of natural resources.

While the Township currently has excellent regulatory standards in place for most types of natural resources, it is important to ensure that regulations as written, are being effectively implemented. Additionally, it is important to periodically review resource protections in an effort to have the most contemporary protection and stewardship standards in place and to proactively respond to natural resource concerns.

As part of the development of the Comprehensive Plan, West Sadsbury’s resource protection standards were assessed for their effectiveness in protecting the community’s natural resources and reducing the impacts of development and/or other disturbance. In the review for environmental best practices, all resources inventoried including steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, riparian buffers, and floodplains were determined to be rigorously protected (See table below).

Natural Resource	Ordinance Section	Protection Level
Steep Slopes	ZO 802.3	Protected
Woodlands	ZO 871	Protected
Wetlands	ZO 802.11	Protected
Riparian Buffers	ZO 202	Protected
Floodplain	ZO 814	Protected

ACTIONS

- 1.2.A Consider Amending Ordinances.** The Township should consider reviewing and amending areas of their ordinances which could further protect natural resources. While natural resources in the Township are adequately protected, it is important to periodically review these ordinance standards to ensure that regulatory requirements do not conflict with federal and state natural resource regulations and to ensure responsiveness to contemporary challenges and best practices in natural resource protection standards. Contemporary additions to the zoning ordinance may include:
- Add specific regulations to establish a riparian buffer in accordance with the PA Department of Environmental Protection's Chapter 102 for all high quality or exceptional value streams in the Township (this includes the exceptional value stream, Officers Run, and the high quality drainage area, Pequea Creek in the Township).
 - Consider relocating floodplain protection standards to a standalone ordinance to allow for better organization and to better highlight the regulations in this ordinance.
- 1.2.B Maintain Aquifer Protection Standards.** The Township's zoning ordinance currently contains aquifer protection provisions for all areas underlain by the Conestoga Formation, in which land alteration or development may be hazardous. These regulations should be retained in future ordinance updates and should be further analyzed to see if additional regulations are necessary. See the Land Resources Map for locations of the Conestoga Formation within the Township.
- 1.2.C Consider Developing Wellhead Protection Standards.** To further protect groundwater, the Township may consider zoning ordinance amendments to provide standards for wellhead protection areas. This could be accomplished through creating a zoning overlay, which is a zoning district designation applied to specific features (in this instance wellheads) and provides standards in addition to the standards outlined for the underlying base zoning district. A wellhead protection overlay can limit uses within defined radii from wellhead locations to prevent contamination of water supply.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

Further protect historic resources. Consider establishment of a Historical Commission and potential development and adoption of historic resource preservation standards to ensure the Township retains its historic, agricultural, and rural identity.

At present, the Township does not have an Historical Commission, and has limited regulations in the zoning ordinance to advance historic preservation efforts. The establishment of a Historical Commission and adoption of appropriate regulations may prevent historic resources from unnecessary demolition or deterioration.

At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, the following can further define and protect historic resources in West Sadsbury. These efforts could include:

ACTIONS

- 1.3.A Consider Establishing a Historical Commission.** A Historical Commission can serve to advise the Board of Supervisors on matters dealing with identification, protection, conservation, management, promotion, and use of historic resources, located within the Township as described in Recommendation 4.4.A.



Historic resources in West Sadsbury are often framed by the agricultural landscape.

Through the zoning ordinance, the Township can encourage the reuse and restoration of historic buildings.



1.3.C Regulatory Measures. Once a formal historic resource listing and map are adopted, targeted regulations could be developed to foster greater historic preservation efforts throughout the Township. Carefully crafted ordinance provisions can serve to protect historic resources without creating undue regulatory hardship on impacted property owners. These regulations could focus on incentives to encourage the preservation and/or adaptive reuse of historic resources. Such incentives can include, but are not limited to:

1. Consideration of additional uses for historic resources that may not otherwise be permitted in their base zoning districts.
2. Consideration of more flexible lot and bulk standards to address potential nonconformity issues as they relate to historic resources.
3. Consideration for reduced permit fees and a more streamlined permitting process when practicable for properties included on the historic resources listing and map.
4. Consideration of development incentives which encourage and reward the preservation and/or restoration of historic resources in new development and redevelopment.

West Sadsbury's agricultural history is evident in the Township's landscape.



1.3.D Highlight Unique Historic Landscapes. West Sadsbury's historic landscape is uniquely framed by a large Amish population, and the living history of intact rural and agricultural settings. Items that promote the historic landscape can include:

1. The Township should consider participation in the Chester County's Town Tours and Village Walks program, which promotes local history. Town Tours and Village Walks is a series of free summer strolls through historic neighborhoods, hamlets, villages, and sites. Offered during the summer, participants can explore Chester County's rich heritage and landscape. A West Sadsbury Town Tour would help promote the Township to the region and help the Township to showcase its heritage and foster community pride.
2. Consideration of ways that heritage interpretation of historic resources can be incorporated into themes of agriculture and Amish heritage. Heritage interpretation can take the form historic markers, plaques, and panels in key areas that link together and highlight important historic landscapes, natural settings, recreational destinations, and other key sites.
3. Consideration of a recognition program (such as an event or plaque) for property owners who preserve their historic resources. Such buildings could possibly be part of a heritage interpretive effort as described in Recommendation 1.3.B.

**RECOMMENDATION
1.4**

Pursue historical funding. Obtain financial and technical resources from federal, state, and non-profit sources to advance the historic preservation objectives.

Numerous government and private non-profit organizations provide resources for municipalities to preserve their cultural heritage. These resources can be applied for West Sadsbury's historic preservation objectives.

The Township Board of Supervisors, or if established, a Historical Commission could seek and lead the acquisition of federal, state, and/or non-profit sources of project funding. These resources could be utilized by the Township or property owners of historic resources to advance preservation efforts. The Township Board of Supervisors, or if established, a Historical Commission could seek and apply for awards, recognitions, and designations of historic sites that enhance the historic status of the Township. Further, the Township should maintain relationships with partner organizations which provide historic resource assistance, such as the Chester County Historic Preservation Network.

**RECOMMENDATION
1.5**

Support Community Outreach and Education. The Township can encourage greater sustainable practices through its existing regulatory structure. Through amendments to both the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances, the Township can play a role in reducing overall energy usage. This can be accomplished in several ways:

ACTIONS

- 1.5.A Consider Establishing an Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC).** The Township should consider establishing an EAC as described in Recommendation 4.4.A to advise the Board of Supervisors on matters dealing with protection, conservation, management, promotion, and use of natural resources.
- 1.5.B Public Education.** Consider holding community events and informational sessions that focus on steps the community can take to better promote sustainability and environmental stewardship while celebrating the historic agricultural setting of the Township. Potential informational sessions may include informing residents how to properly maintain riparian buffers, information on the history of the agricultural community, or instruction on how to conserve water resources. Partners in these efforts can include: the Brandywine Conservancy, Natural Lands, CCPC, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, and other organizations.
- 1.5.C Signs and Markers.** Integrate environmental and historic informational signage and markers where possible to highlight natural and historic resources in the Township. This can include: signage highlighting preserved land, important historic settings, or signage in community spaces which explains the importance of various natural resources located in parks or along potential future trail routes.
- 1.5.D Climate Action Plan.** Explore methods in which West Sadsbury can implement the goals of Chester County Climate Action Plan. This plan contains specific community wide actions which can be taken to reduce greenhouse emissions and improve sustainability in a variety of sectors. Incremental sustainable actions and policy can be implemented through the Township's future land use planning actions.
- 1.5.E Promote Renewable Energy.** Ensure zoning requirements do not preclude the installation of renewable energy systems throughout the Township. Specific standards may be established for solar, wind, and geothermal energy systems as well as manure digesters. These types of

regulations can be inclusive of setbacks, heights, considerations for glare, noise, etc.

The Township can further serve as a leader in promoting environmental protections and energy conservation through municipal actions. These types of actions can include: a commitment towards increasing the use of renewable energy for Township functions, the use of demonstration projects on Township properties, and encouraging the incorporation of energy conservation and more environmentally sustainable standards for all Township facilities and vehicles.

Renewable energy can be encouraged by developing clear and reasonable Township regulations.



