

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

The Agricultural Security Board

CHARGE: To recommend to the Board of Supervisors the addition of farms into the Township's Agricultural Security Area. To assist in developing and implementing policies and strategies that will preserve farmland and the business of agriculture as an economically viable business and increase awareness in the community of the importance of agriculture.

GOAL: To protect the Township's agricultural resources focusing on both farmland and farmer preservation.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the Township's agricultural character by directing future growth away from agricultural lands and into the existing designated or urban growth areas (UGAs).
2. Provide protection from development pressures to those parcels in the Township that contain a majority of the prime agricultural lands that are an important element of the Township's economy.
3. Recognize and maintain a critical mass of farmland and designate agricultural land as fully developed.
4. Ensure that farming remains an economically viable lifestyle by providing tools to farmers.
5. Maintain and strengthen a system of agricultural zoning.
6. Promote the placement of farms into agricultural preservation programs.
7. Allow for the natural expansion and modernization of farms.

Strategies:

1. Actively solicit farmers with lands zoned as Agricultural to apply for preservation.
2. Develop a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program.

3. Solicit outside conservation entities to purchase conservation easements and developers to purchase TDRs.
4. Conduct public outreach meetings to educate farmers and private conservation groups on the benefits of conservation easements and TDRs.
5. Allow a greater diversity of uses on agricultural lands to augment the income of farmers.
6. Specifically focus on preserving through TDRs, conservation easements or by enrolling in Ag Preservation the two parcels that border the VGA to the north so as to separate the VGA in Lampeter from the other conventional residential development.
7. In general, encourage the enrollment of current agricultural parcels bordering the DGAs and VGA in the Ag Preservation program and/or to purchase TDRs or conservation easements on these parcels
8. Encourage private entities such as the Lancaster County Conservancy to purchase conservation easements on critical lands
9. Place parcels with particular significance on the Township's Official Map for purchase of the land or development rights.
10. Create a requirement for a hydro-geologic study for all large farming operations proposing to use groundwater for irrigation or watering animals.

Overall Vision of the Comprehensive Plan:

At the completion of the 2020 plan year, both residents and observers will describe West Lampeter Township as a community of neighbors. The rural character of the community is preserved through measures that protect the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources that have contributed to the Township's rich history. The impact of new growth is minimized through the careful attention that is paid to providing open space, the provision of adequate transportation and utility services, and the provision of recreational opportunities for all residents. The Township government and staff proactively engage residents in order to obtain their input, and educate and inform residents through both personal interaction and communications media. Residents walk and bike on trails that connect residential neighborhoods, parks, and revitalized village centers. The Township has promoted high-tech, office/technology/research businesses in order to diversify the tax base of the Township. Residents continue to take pride in the excellence of the school district, and police, ambulance and fire services. West Lampeter Township is recognized throughout the county for its high quality of life.