

Chapter 1

Introduction

CALL TO ACTION

Malvern Borough's overarching objective is to retain and enhance our small-town character, which makes the Borough a special place to live and work. Surrounded by significant large-scale regional suburbanized development and impacted by the global economic recession of recent years, the Borough understands that there is a continuing challenge to maintain this desirable, diverse and distinct small-town community character. To address this, the Borough must plan for its future using these **following planning principles and guidelines**:



- Ensure *new development and redevelopment* conforms to the Comprehensive Plan policies and recommendations, as well as requirements of the zoning ordinance and SLDO.
- Utilize an *Official Map*, enabled under PA Act 167, the Municipalities Planning Code, as a development planning tool.
- Encourage redevelopment and new development in the *King Street Corridor* that are consistent and compatible with its existing mixed-use small-town nature including a focus on pedestrian access, and the Victorian-era theme, branding as ‘a restaurant alley and main line small-town shopping center’, and other relevant themes.
- Retain the diverse existing *neighborhood character* as a defining feature of Malvern via compatible new building and development scale, pattern, and uses.
- Maintain *traditional neighborhood design* grid-based development in redeveloped areas and new development areas in connection with open space development design.
- Avoid the undesirable *lot and development characteristics* of flag lots, double-frontage lots, and ridge-line development.
- Minimize the creation of new *non-conforming properties* and - as much as possible - reduce existing non-conformities via zoning and the subdivision and land development process.
- Promote and incentivize the use of ‘*green*’ *building practices* and designations.
- Ensure *ecological protection* of woodlands and other habitats including wetlands and headwaters, and protect remaining valuable ‘open space’ assets as enabled under PA Act 167, the Municipalities Planning Code.
- Implement *open space development design* best practices in new development areas that contain historic and natural (particularly woodlands) resources to be protected.
- Incorporate *new technologies*, such as wireless access, for Borough-wide public use.
- Encourage enhanced *pedestrian access* via the addition of sidewalks in developed areas and walkways in recreational areas.
- Increase and enhance *recreational opportunities* for residents of all ages.
- Coordinate planning activities with other *Malvern Area* municipalities on a regular basis.

PLAN CONTEXT

Malvern Borough serves as a small town center in the midst of an area that has largely completed a transition from rural to suburban character. As development over the past decades has cemented the suburban character of most of the surrounding Townships, Malvern's role has changed from being a service center for surrounding agricultural areas to being a transportation hub for rail commuters from the surrounding area and a small specialty commercial and industrial center. The much larger Route 30 corridor to the north has evolved into the primary commercial and industrial area for the Malvern region. Additionally, the Borough's role as a small town in a developed area, access to the SEPTA rail line and regional roadways, and the neighborhood, regional, and community resources that the Borough contains has made Malvern an increasingly attractive residential community. The resulting increased demand for housing in Malvern has led to new residential construction over the past decades and into the present. To maintain its defining small town and diverse neighborhood Borough character, the Borough must ensure that any new development or redevelopment complements the established development and building scale, pattern, and uses of Malvern Borough.

PLAN PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

A Comprehensive Plan establishes the policy direction that guides Borough actions and decisions over the ensuing ten years.

The 1999 Comprehensive Plan established planning policies and recommended a series of actions to meet those policies through changes to Borough ordinances, improvements to the street and sidewalk network, continued attention to public services, among other items. That Plan emphasized policy and actions to remedy 'on the ground' nonconformities in land use and lot size/dimension created through suburbanized zoning provisions.

This Comprehensive Plan update addresses and updates all the planning topical areas in the 1999 Plan *plus* adds significant additional information on important planning topics through adding individual plan chapters to address housing, economic development, historic resources, natural resources, parks, recreation, and open space, and energy conservation. Chapter 2 of this Plan update in essence provides a Comprehensive Plan summary including Borough planning policies and related recommendations to implement those policies via an Implementation Action Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan update was funded largely with a grant from the Chester County Commissioners under the Vision Partnership Program, a County program to implement Chester County's Comprehensive Policy Plan, *Landscapes2*. A condition of that grant is that this Plan be consistent with the policy intent of *Landscapes2*, which designates Malvern as an "urban landscape". The policies and recommendations established in this Comprehensive Plan update meet this requirement.