

## ***Bucks 2040 – An Implementable Comprehensive Plan***

A comprehensive plan is a municipality’s land use policy document. It is intended to be a guide to future decision-making for municipal actions, such as developing zoning ordinances, preserving open space and farmland, or protecting water resources. In Pennsylvania, most municipalities frame their comprehensive plans around the stated comprehensive plan elements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), which include plans for future development, land use, housing, transportation, community facilities, natural and historic resources, and water supply.

Comprehensive planning can help a community create better land use outcomes. But municipal officials are often frustrated by the lack of effectiveness of their comprehensive plans. Once adopted, many comprehensive plans sit on a shelf, not to be consulted until it is time to develop a new comprehensive plan.

*Bucks2040* will be an “implementable” comprehensive plan. Implementable comprehensive plans seek to identify solutions to local and regional problems through a community-based planning process. An implementable plan bases its structure around the issues most important to the community, rather than traditional plan elements. The requirements of the MPC are met by backfilling this information into the remainder of the plan.

An implementable comprehensive plan is an action-oriented plan whose success is measured by its results. Denny Puko of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and Jim Pashek of Pashek Associates have listed five keys for a successful implementable plan:

- Focus the plan on real, relevant community issues
- Organize the plan the way local officials and citizens think
- Devise practical and workable recommendations
- Recruit partners and create capacity to implement the plan
- Get local ownership of the plan and commitment to implement

*Bucks2040* will carry out these key ideas through an organic, community-based planning process. Relevant community issues will be uncovered by analyzing the results of a resident and business survey, hosting community open houses around the county, and engaging in roundtable discussions with key community partners. Representatives from our key partners, including municipal officials, businesspeople, institutional leaders, and residents, will be invited to a series of meetings to discuss issues, examine data, agree to policies, and form a vision for the county.

As an implementable comprehensive plan, *Bucks2040* will focus on the most important community issues. Policies and solutions to identified issues will be both feasible and in keeping with the plan’s vision. Moreover, the Bucks County Planning Commission is committed to growing the partnerships gained over the plan’s progress and providing municipalities and community organizations with the practical planning tools and sources of potential project funding needed to implement *Bucks2040*.

The success of *Bucks2040* is dependent on all of us to make Bucks County a better place to live and work. We look forward to working with our residents and partners to bring about a new vision for Bucks County.

