

March 19, 2009 Open House

Town of Bloomsburg Comprehensive Plan

Summary

March 19, 2009

6:00pm-8:00pm

Bloomsburg Fire Hall

The open house opened at 6pm. Michelle Brummer, project manager for Gannett Fleming, Inc., provided an overview of the comprehensive plan's preparation, content and structure at 6pm, 6:45pm and 7:15pm. Attendees then visited the seven "stations", hosted by planning advisory committee members, to learn about the draft comprehensive plan and vote their support or non-support for the select recommendations presented at each station.

A total of 53 people, including the planning advisory committee, attended the open house. The results of voting are presented on the following pages.



1. Vision and Goals – hosted by Mayor Daniel Knorr

This station presented the draft vision statement for the Town of Bloomsburg and nine community development goals.

2. Bloomsburg as Place – hosted by Joshua Green and Sylvia Costa

This station presented the draft future land use map and recommendations related to the Town's location, land uses, and infrastructure.

3. Living in Bloomsburg – hosted by Bill Brobst

This station presented the 2008 land use map and rental housing map, and recommendations related to housing choices, neighborhoods, e.g. walkability, and community services, e.g. public safety.

4. Working in Bloomsburg – hosted by Megan Hummel

This station presented a map of land uses in the downtown, and recommendations related to business vitality and growth, business assistance, and workforce training.

5. Lifelong Learning in Bloomsburg – hosted by Michelle Brummer

This station presented recommendations related to the promotion and partnerships among education and enrichment organizations.

6. Relaxing in and Visiting Bloomsburg – hosted by Carey Howell

This station presented recommendations related to the Town Park, the fairgrounds, the airport, signage, and tourism.

7. The 2008/2009 Downtown Parking Study – hosted by McTish, Kunkel & Associates

This station presented recommendations related to the concurrent parking study.



Continued

VISION & GOALS

Draft BLOOMSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Our vision for 2020

By 2020, the Town of Bloomsburg will have a distinct and vibrant character,

reflecting the influences of the

Susquehanna River, Bloomsburg University,

and neighboring communities.

The Town will continue to pursue a

sustainable and entrepreneurial approach to

public, private and institutional development

and investment that nurtures community and

University life and the local economy.

Bloomsburg is a community where...

1. citizens of all ages and stages of life find affordable, quality housing and neighborhoods.
2. citizens travel in a variety of ways to reach their work, school, and leisure destinations.
3. community partners provide quality educational services, programs, and facilities for all ages from childhood through workforce preparation to continuing education.
4. citizens and public services are prepared to prevent and respond to emergencies and natural hazards.
5. citizens make conscious decisions about consumption of goods and services and the resources required to provide them.
6. citizens appreciate their own diversity.
7. public, private and institutional investment respects, maintains and adds value to the distinctive small town pattern and historic architecture.
8. leading and emerging industries shape and are shaped by area initiatives, entrepreneurial opportunities, and business assistance.
9. citizens and visitors find a fun, welcoming, and navigable destination with a rich variety of recreational and leisure attractions and special events.

BLOOMSBURG AS PLACE

Draft BLOOMSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We will achieve our goals if we

1. Sustain Bloomsburg's small town character.
2. Preserve, interpret and apply the patterns of the most significant historic resources; use other techniques to recognize and appreciate other historic resources, as appropriate.
3. Provide safe travel options for citizens and visitors moving within and through the Town.
4. Continue to foster redevelopment.
5. Redefine Bloomsburg's connection with the Susquehanna River.
6. Embrace Bloomsburg University as a community and economic development partner.

Key recommendations

If implemented, this recommendation will...	Benefit our Town	Not benefit our Town
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of life • Improve economy • Sustain character and resources 	in meaningful ways. Why not?
Encourage compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods and districts.	12	1
Review the regulations and boundaries of the historic district.	11	
Republish the historic district brochure that outlines the design guidelines that property owners must abide to when updating, restoring, or altering their home or property.	5	
Expand transit services/options.	16	
Adopt design guidelines for parking structures.	5	
Revise zoning regulations to allow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased density, i.e. taller buildings. • multi-story structures with on the ground floor in flood risk areas. 	4	6
Establish financial and other incentives to encourage redevelopment.	4	
Prepare redevelopment master plans to guide redevelopment activities in designated areas.	5	
Continue to pursue funding for the design and construction of the flood protection system.	4	1
Improve access and linkages to the river and creek; interpret water resources for citizens of all ages.	16	1

BLOOMSBURG

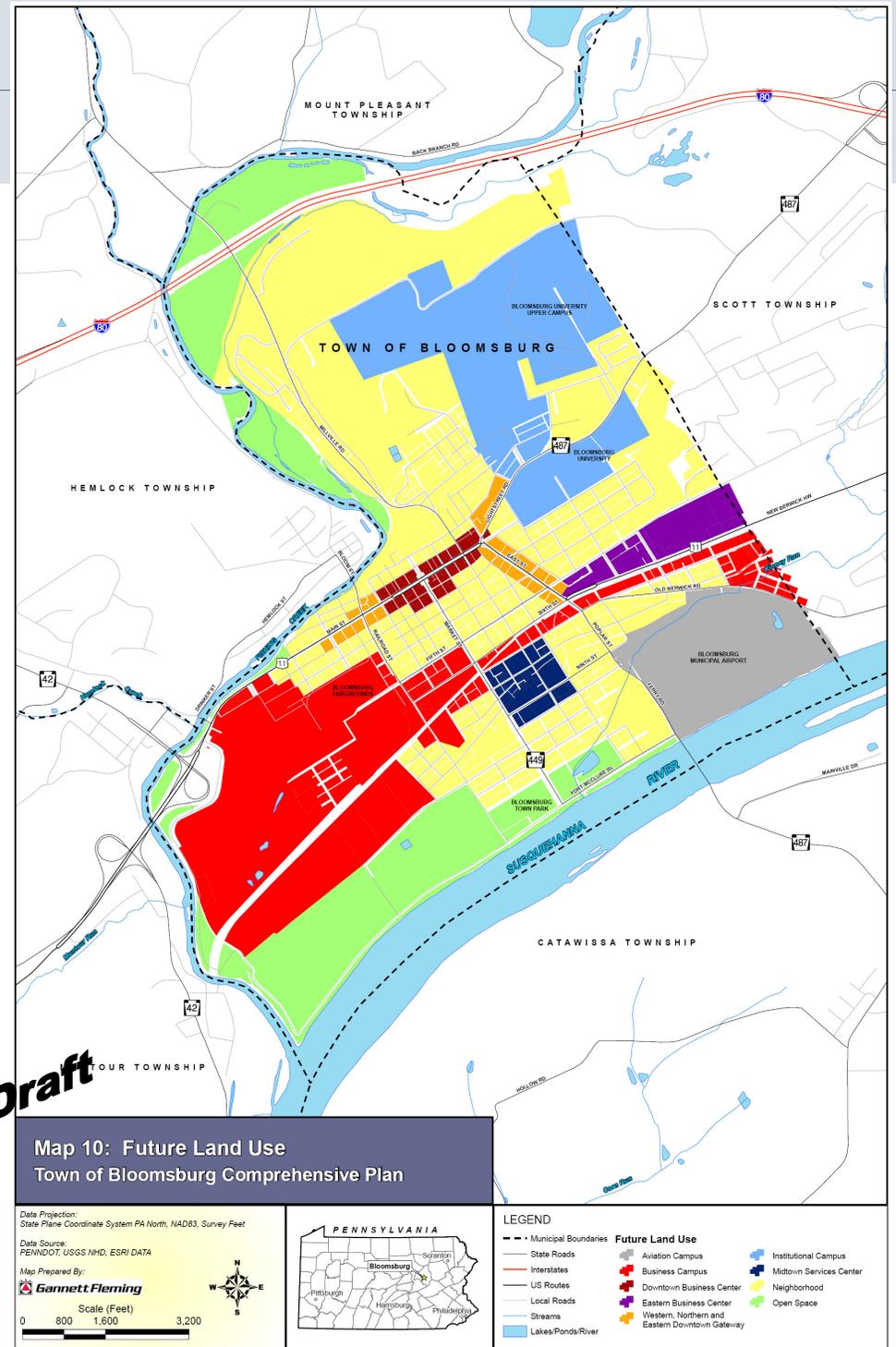
Future Land Use Map Draft

Our goal is to

The future land use map provides the basic parameters for zoning policy. It cannot itself change zoning policy. The description and location of these land use classes are the first step toward a revised land use policy and pattern.

Categories

-  Aviation Campus - Uses associated with the airport or compliant with its design and operational requirements
-  Business Campus - Primarily midsize office, wholesale and industrial uses
-  Downtown Business Center - Primarily small to mid size office and retail; upper floor residential
-  Eastern Business Center - Primarily mid size retail; upper floor residential
-  Western, Northern and Eastern Downtown Gateway - Mixed office, retail and residential
-  Institutional Campus - Uses associated with the University and Bloomsburg Hospital, including residential
-  Midtown Services Center - Primarily public and quasi-public facilities; mid to high density residential
-  Neighborhood - Primarily residential with neighborhood retail and services
-  Open Space - Recreation, floodplain, and natural areas



Draft

We will achieve our goals if we

1. Provide housing choices that meet residents' needs through all stages of individual and family life.
2. Protect public safety through Town, community, volunteer, and regional services.
3. Extend the walkability of downtown throughout the town.
4. Build Community from Diversity

Key recommendations

If implemented, this recommendation will...	Benefit our Town • Improve quality of life • Improve economy • Sustain character and resources	Not benefit our Town in meaningful ways. Why not?
Promote housing maintenance and renovation.	12	
Continue (or develop) a ranking system of rental properties for student housing.	2	8
Increase development of housing options suitable for young adults, "empty nesters", seniors, persons with disabilities and traditional families.	8	
Continue to promote flood preparedness among citizens.	4	
Expand the mission of the Shade Tree Commission to address sidewalks, trails and walkability throughout town. • "Missing links" • Improvements on East Street • A Neighborhood Street Tree Program • Other improvements	14	
Promote desired community service projects to civic, high school, vo-tech, and University service clubs and organizations.	10	

WORKING AND DOING BUSINESS IN BLOOMSBURG

Draft BLOOMSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We will achieve our goals if we

1. Focus on retaining existing businesses and growing new ones.
2. Foster and promote intergovernmental cooperation.
3. Support the growth and development of the region's workforce to meet the needs of a technology based workplace.
4. Foster and promote a "business-friendly" environment in the Town of Bloomsburg.
5. Recognize energy production as a natural resource based industry.
6. Foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Key recommendations

If implemented, this recommendation will...	Benefit our Town	Not benefit our Town
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of life • Improve economy • Sustain character and resources 	in meaningful ways. Why not?
Partner with the University and the business community to explore the market demand for a downtown hotel with or w/o conference facilities.	7	1
Expand land zoned for mid size business.		4
Champion intergovernmental cooperation for the development of the North Branch Canal Trail, (other specific projects?).	12	
Continue to recognize outstanding members of the local business community through Chamber awards and other acknowledgements.		
Create a local regulatory environment that ensures that the development process is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predictable in timely reviews and specified fees • Reasonable in length of time for the permitting process 	3	
Create a competitive local tax environment.		7
Explore a system for using student debit cards at Bloomsburg businesses.	14	
Seek funding to create a rent subsidy program for tenants at the Bloomsburg Technology Center.		
Work with SRBC and surrounding governments to monitor drilling activity in the Marcellus Shale formation and its impact on the region.	11	

LIFELONG LEARNING IN BLOOMSBURG

Draft BLOOMSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We will achieve our goals if we

1. Increase public awareness of local educational services, events, programs, and facilities available to all residents
2. Ensure that the educational services, programs, and facilities available to residents are and continue to be high quality
3. Support the Bloomsburg Public Library's efforts to renovate and improve its existing facilities.
4. Narrow the gap in professional and digital skills to ensure a more job ready workforce.
5. (Continue to) Enhance the cooperative and collaborative relations between the Town, the University and local employers.

Key recommendations

If implemented, this recommendation will...	Benefit our Town	Not benefit our Town
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of life • Improve economy • Sustain character and resources 	in meaningful ways. Why not?
Develop and distribute an annual update on educational services, programs, and facilities available to residents in the area.	8	
Support fundraising for the library through in-kind services, such as use of public facilities.	17	
Partner with Bloomsburg University and other local volunteer organizations to develop internship and volunteer programs that would benefit the Children's Museum.	13	1
Link museum exhibits to local and regional jobs and careers that will help children connect their museum experience to an attainable employment dream.	4	3
Enhance the University's existing advisory programs and create additional advisory programs to assist local businesses and government organizations as well as broaden and enhance educational opportunities and research applications for University students and faculty.	11	
Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to act as an intermediary to identify local business needs that the University can help to address.	10	

RELAXING IN AND VISITING BLOOMSBURG

Draft BLOOMSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We will achieve our goals if we

1. (Continue to) Implement the Town Park Master Plan.
2. Promote and develop the airport as an integral transportation and recreation facility of Bloomsburg.
3. Improve the fairgrounds facility and operations, balancing investment, economic return, and community needs for entertainment.
4. Develop and install a signage system to aid residents and visitors in navigating their way to community destinations and support facilities, e.g. restaurants and parking.
5. Work cooperatively to schedule and market special events.

Key recommendations

If implemented, this recommendation will...	Benefit our Town • Improve quality of life • Improve economy • Sustain character and resources	Not benefit our Town in meaningful ways. Why not?
Follow the recommendations and phased development approach of the 2007 Park Master Plan.	12	
Host more frequent special events at the municipal airport.	8	10
Work with local taxi companies or other transit providers to improve transportation access between downtown and the airport, particularly during special events.	8	6
Prepare a Fairgrounds Master Plan to guide future physical improvements at the facility.	6	2
Develop a welcome and way-finding signage system throughout the Town.	12	
Promote use of the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau's online calendar of events.	12	
Encourage community organizations to coordinate related or compatible events on the same day or weekend in order to create a larger overall event.	12	

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Town of Bloomsburg Comprehensive Plan

An exit survey provided an opportunity for attendees to express additional support for recommendations or to comment on issues missed by the plan (as presented). Comments included:

- Still need to address student parking in residential neighborhoods
- More internal communication among volunteer commissions/committees and staff.
- Add a dog park (this is one of the Town Park Master Plan components)
- Address the timing of pedestrian crosswalks
- Protect quiet neighborhoods from student housing and from pre-dawn garbage pick-up
- Expand sidewalks and walking/biking paths for recreation and for daily transportation
 - To in Town destinations, e.g. 5th Street Hollow to grocery stores
 - To adjacent communities, Scott Township, Hemlock Township, etc.
- Keep the composting site local and accessible
- Integrate the arts and culture into the plan
- Buy women's center and adjoining property for office expansion
- Encourage partnership between Bloomsburg Area School District and the University
- Protect wetlands and open space
- Expand our urban forest and green space; replace street trees
- Bury overhead wires as streets are paved/improved
- Publish information online; use print selectively
- Take steps to reduce energy use and light pollution, e.g. street lights
- Improve street maintenance, curb/sidewalk maintenance, street tree pruning/maintenance
- Create transit in town and between Berwick, Bloomsburg, and Danville (and Catawissa?)
- Improve maintenance/code enforcement of property maintenance, esp. rentals
- Designate periodic community clean-up days
- Protect the integrity of the historic district



The planning advisory committee will review the results and comments of the open house at its next meeting. With the committee's approval, the draft comprehensive plan will be forwarded to the Bloomsburg Planning Commission for its review and preparation for its public meeting to be held this spring.