

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preface

Thornbury Township is a primarily residential community that boasts amenities ranging from parks and trails to unique historic character and access to major roadways. These amenities add great value to the community and will continue to make the Township a desirable area for new residents. To accommodate future growth while maintaining the community’s character the Township must plan for areas of development and preservation.

Thornbury Township’s last Comprehensive Plan update was in 2004, adoption of their Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan was in 2007, and their Historic Resource Inventory was completed in 2009. With each plan update Thornbury identifies how the Township should look in the future, highlighting areas for growth and opportunities for improvement or preservation. With this Comprehensive Plan update Thornbury is taking an action-oriented approach. The Township is focusing on four priority topics that will populate the Plan Chapters and detail the planning policies and implementation plan (recommendations) for each.

This Chapter provides an executive summary for the Plan as well as an overview of Thornbury Township’s history, recent planning efforts, regional influences, the community’s population profile, and the planning goals related to each priority topic. The purpose of this Chapter is to set the stage for the recommendations that will follow in Chapter 2: Implementation Strategies and Plan Chapters 3-7.

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Executive Summary

In 2016, Thornbury Township began updating their Comprehensive Plan. The primary goal of this plan is to address how the Township plans to accommodate growth while preserving the community's character and resources.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Executive Summary

This chapter introduces the reader to Thornbury Township and provides a brief overview of the Township's history, recent planning efforts, regional setting, and population trends. Chapter One also details the relationship to Chester County's Policy Plan, Landscapes2, and the MPC. Further, the chapter highlights the goals for each planning topic.

Chapter 2: Implementation Strategies

This chapter includes tables of recommendations that will guide the implementation of plan actions discussed in the coinciding plan chapters (chapters 3-6). The chapter discusses the strategy for implementation and strives to answer the what, when, who, and how questions by highlighting the priority, responsibility, and method of each recommended action.

Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Character

This chapter provides recommendations for guiding land use, housing, economic development, and historic and scenic resource protection. The chapter addresses how these topics affect one another, showing how future land use guides economic development, housing types and densities, and protects the historic and scenic character of the community. Chapter Three analyzes existing land use, land development trends, and developable lands to determine future land use. Further, the chapter states the importance of maintaining the character and residential nature of the community but still encouraging managed development.

Chapter 4: Transportation and Infrastructure

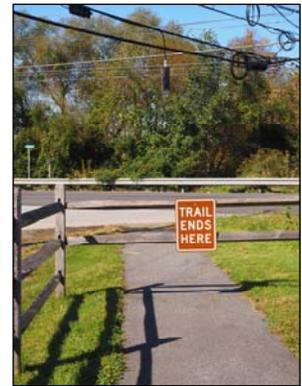
This chapter includes recommendations for the transportation network, sewage disposal, and forms of energy conservation, focusing on the health and safety of residents and the environment. Further, the recommended actions encourage infrastructure upgrades to improve road safety and multimodal connections, reduce pollution, and protect the Township's resources for the future.



Objectives for historic resources along with land use, housing, and economic development are included in Chapter 7: Land Use and Community Character

Chapter 5: Preserving and Enhancing Green Space

This chapter highlights the importance of the Township’s green space to the community’s character. Chapter Five defines green space to include natural resources, parks, and open space, and details how they are connected and related to one another. Further, this chapter focuses on addressing the primary challenges and opportunities in protecting the Township’s natural resources, improving park programs, increasing trail connections, and preserving current open space. Recommended actions are provided for natural resources, parks and recreation, open space, and trails.



Chapter 5 includes recommendations for the expansion of the Township’s trail network and the preservation of natural resources

Chapter 6: Community Facilities and Services

This chapter focuses on the importance of having adequate and available community facilities and services and how they influence overall quality of life of the Township. The chapter identifies both challenges and opportunities and makes recommendations for how to best manage community facilities and services in the future. The chapter provides recommendations for the following facilities and services: municipal government, water supply, stormwater management, solid waste disposal, emergency services, education, and healthcare.

Chapter 7: Existing Township Conditions

This chapter provides an overview of Thornbury Township’s existing conditions. Chapter Seven details terms and topics addressed in the previous plan chapters while providing an overview and inventory of the Township’s existing conditions. The topic areas the chapter addresses include: historic and scenic resources, recreation and open space, natural resources, community facilities and services, land use, housing and economic development, transportation and circulation, and energy conservation. Further this chapter provides supporting data and analysis to the recommendations made in previous plan chapters.

Appendices

These sections provide support information for their associated chapters.

A Brief History

Like most Chester County townships, Thornbury's name has English roots, reportedly named after a town in Gloucestershire. The township acquired its present boundaries in 1786, when Delaware County was carved out of Chester County. Because property owners in Thornbury and Birmingham townships were given the choice of which county they wished to reside in, each township acquired an irregular southern edge.

For its first 270 years, from 1687 to approximately 1955, Thornbury was rural with scattered family farmsteads. During the nineteenth century many local farmers added acreage and turned increasingly to dairy farming to meet the demands of the Philadelphia and Wilmington markets. The latter was reached via Wilmington Pike (today's U.S. Route 202), along which an early village and post office, Darlington Corners, grew on the Westtown-Thornbury border.

Access to Philadelphia improved when the Philadelphia and West Chester Railroad cut through the township shortly before the Civil War. The township's train station and post office (called Westtown Station in 1883) was completed in 1858. Rural isolation lessened, especially after a telegraph office was installed in 1873. The railroad also enabled city dwellers to build summer retreats; many of them remain as handsome and understated Victorian homes near the township's eastern end.

Although the automobile enabled many residents in the early twentieth century to commute to jobs in Media, Paoli, and Wilmington, the township remained rural and rather sparsely populated. That pattern came to an end in the mid-1950s, when in 1956 eager home buyers started moving into Thornbury Estates, the township's first housing development. The impact was significant; the township's population more than doubled, from 297 residents in 1950 to 746 a decade later, after the subdivision's completion. Today, many subdivisions later, its population exceeds 3,000, and open space is a general concern.

The township's history has been one of citizens living generally unremarkable lives, loyal to their families, flag, and faiths. Its one brush with national history was the 1777 Battle of Brandywine, fought on the township's western border. It was the largest engagement in America's war for independence, but one in which the Continental



The Spackman farm house was used as a field hospital during the Battle of Brandywine



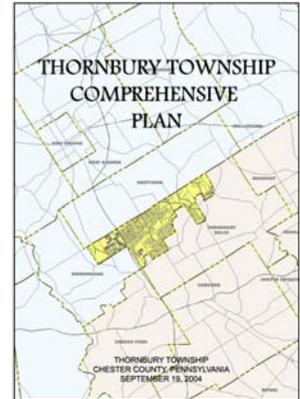
The Spackman Family (shown here at a Battlefield reenactment) have preserved a key piece of land from the Battle of Brandywine (Thornbury Farm) and still farm it today

Army was defeated. Squire Thomas Cheyney, a local farmer, gained fame for attempting to warn General Washington of the British successful flanking action. Today a portion of Squire Cheyney’s farm is a township park and his house is under a preservation easement.

Recent Planning Efforts

2004 Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan

The 2004 Thornbury Comprehensive Plan set goals and objectives that were focused on preserving community character, preserving and protecting environmental, cultural and historic resources, and improving transportation and circulation in and around the Township. The Route 202 Corridor was a focus of concern, with objectives focusing on discouraging the use of Township residential roads as alternatives to overflow traffic and encouraging visual buffering and noise abatement from the roadway. It was also suggested that the streetscape along Route 202 should be improved as a way of promoting economic development in the Township.

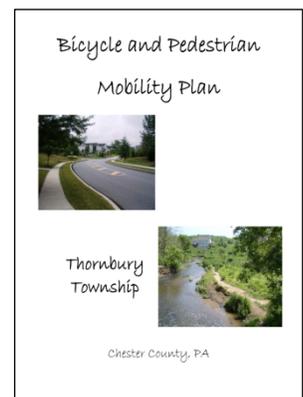


2004 Comprehensive Plan

Some of the accomplishments since the 2004 Comprehensive Plan have been the adoption of the 2007 Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan, completion of the 2009 Historic Resource Inventory, and the expansion of the Township’s park and open space with the addition of Squire Cheyney Park as well as other enhancements in and around Goose Creek Park.

2007 Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan

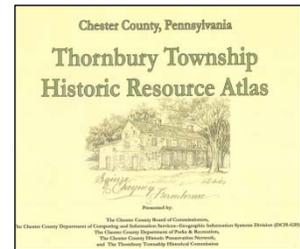
The 2007 Thornbury Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan proposed a series of potential trails throughout the Township with the goals of creating a linked Township-wide network and using public rights-of-way and public land wherever possible. The Plan outlines examples of different types of paths or trails that are possible to implement, and proposes a network that would potentially connect the easternmost portion of the Township at Squire Cheyney Park over to Bridlewood Boulevard to the west of Route 202.



2007 Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan

2009 Historic Resource Atlas

In 2009 the Township completed and adopted an update to its 1979-1980 historic resources survey with an inventory and survey of all resources in the Township that were 50 years or older (all resources constructed before 1960). This survey identified 180 properties and 256 individual historic resources located throughout the Township. Based on this updated survey and inventory, a new Historic Resources Map was developed that includes properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, National Register Eligible resources, and those inventoried for the survey (properties built before 1960). Four separate classes of properties were identified during this survey as well, with Class I being the most significant and Class IV being those that only meet the minimum requirement of being older than 50 years in age.



2009 Historic Resource Inventory

Regional Setting and Influences

Thornbury is located in the southeastern portion of Chester County (see Figure 1-1). The Township is on the border of Chester and Delaware counties and is surrounded by three municipalities, Birmingham and Westtown in Chester County and Thornbury in Delaware County. The surrounding municipalities are primarily suburban with some areas being more rural. As a whole, this area has experienced steady growth in recent decades.

The Township is well connected to major highway corridors. U.S. Route 202 is a heavily travelled road that runs north-south through the Township and County while PA Route 926 (Street Road) travels east-west. These corridors link Thornbury to West Chester and points north, Delaware County and Wilmington to the south, Philadelphia to the east, and western Chester County.

Significant local destinations include Goose Creek Park and its adjacent commercial area located off of Route 926, the Commons at Thornbury commercial plaza at the corner of Route 926 and 202, as well as Squire Cheyney Farm Park with its historic structures and walking trail. West Chester Borough, which is just three miles to the north, and its surrounding area is a significant regional center of employment and offers a great deal of entertainment and cultural attractions. The Township is also located just 3 miles north of Concord Township, which is an extensive shopping and dining area in Delaware County located near the intersection of Route 1 and Route 202.



The Commons at Thornbury is conveniently located at the corner of Routes 926 and 202

Figure 1-1: Regional Setting (See also Map 1-A in Appendix A)

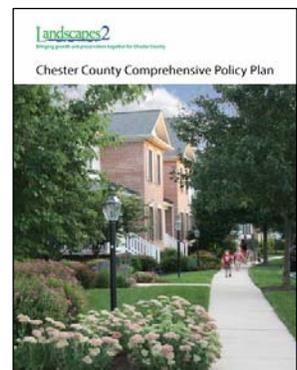


Source: CCPC, 2017

Community facilities within or in close proximity to Thornbury include the Concept School, Starkweather Elementary, Westtown-Thornbury Elementary, Bayard Rustin High School, Stetson Middle School, and Cheyney University. Other community facilities are located further from Thornbury, including police service, fire service, ambulance service, and hospitals.

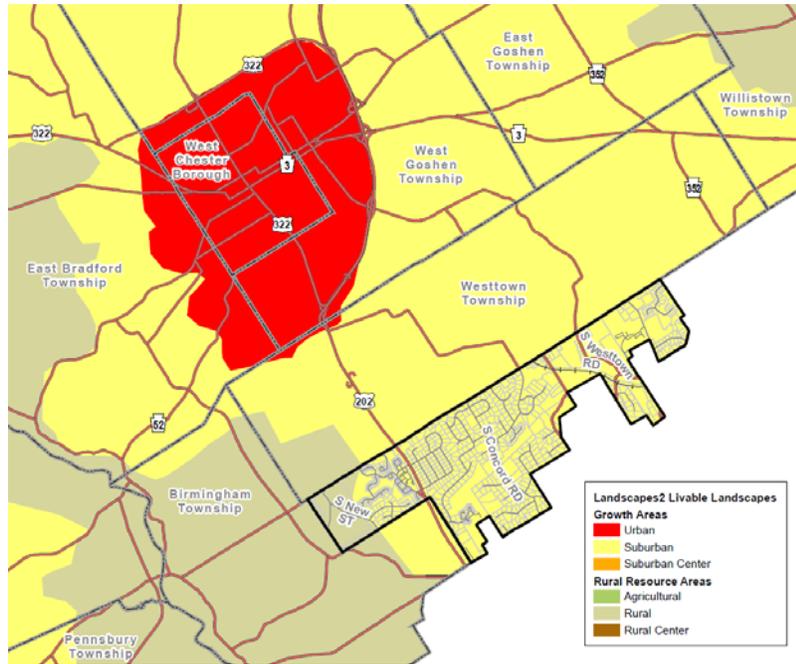
Relationship to Landscapes2

Chester County’s Comprehensive Policy Plan *Landscapes2*, adopted in 2009, designates the vast majority of Thornbury Township as a **Suburban Landscape**, with the western portion of the Township being a Rural Landscape (see Figure 1-2 below). The **Rural Landscape** is located to the west of Route 202 and consists primarily of Thornbury Farm, The **Natural Landscape** overlay is located throughout the Township, but it is most prevalent in the central portions of the Township at the Thornbury Soccer Park and along Westtown Road. These countywide categories are defined as follows:



The **Suburban Landscape** is one of three landscapes (also including Urban and Suburban Center) that make up the County’s Growth Areas. Suburban landscapes are currently dominated by the built environment and have an auto-oriented transportation network. These areas are primarily served by public water and sewer systems and are characterized by residential subdivisions.

Figure 1-2: Livable Landscapes Map



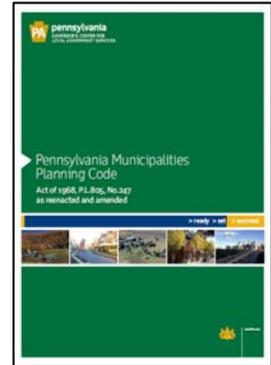
Source: CCPC, 2017

The **Rural Landscape** is characterized by open space dominated by woodland and other open areas. It contains agriculture and scattered residential lots and subdivisions on relatively large lots or with protected common open space. The land use pattern is auto-oriented with limited non-residential uses. Development is primarily served by on-lot sewer and water systems.

The **Natural Landscape** is an overlay that contains the highest concentrations of important natural resources such as streams, floodplains, and forests. The Natural Landscape overlay (not shown on Figure 1-2) does not preclude all development or agricultural operations, but indicates major areas of natural resources that should be protected or subject to limited disturbance.

MPC Support

The Comprehensive Plan was completed in compliance with the provisions of Article III of the MPC, Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended. This legislation enables municipal land use controls in Pennsylvania and provides the framework for developing and implementing plans and land use regulations. It specifically enables municipalities to produce and adopt comprehensive plans and to regulate development through the use of various regulatory tools including zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances. The required contents of a comprehensive plan are specified in Section 301 of the MPC.



The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) is also referred to as Act 247 of 1968.

Population Trends

According to the 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, the population of Thornbury Township is 3,330 residents, which shows an increase of 313 residents since the 2010 US Census. Significant population growth occurred in the Township between 1990 and 2010 with a 167% increase in residents. Since 2010 growth has remained positive but has begun to level off with a 10% increase seen between 2010 and 2015. Thornbury's population is expected to continue to see positive growth, reaching around 4,177 by 2045 according to DVRPC forecast. A more comprehensive analysis of population trends can be found in Chapter 7: Existing Township Conditions.

Plan Policies

The goals and objectives outlined in this chapter were developed by the Task Force (with consideration for the policies of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan) and form the planning policies for Thornbury Township. These policies serve as the framework for actions that are recommended to realize the future vision for the Township.

Goals – Long-term vision statements that provide the overall direction for preferred future conditions.

Objectives – More specific targets that, if accomplished, will achieve the larger planning goal. Objectives are more specific than goals and are measurable achievements.

The goals and objectives together represent the Township's planning policies

Land Use and Community Character Goal

Encourage future development that maintains and enhances existing residential neighborhoods and quality of life throughout the Township.

Housing Goal

Develop remaining undeveloped land in the Township in a manner that reflects the existing community character and enhances existing neighborhoods.

Historic and Scenic Resources Goal

Identify, protect, and enhance the integrity of historic and scenic resources and their settings to maintain the Township's heritage and character.

Economic Development Goal

Continue to support the Township's commercial properties in order to provide for employment opportunities and commercial resources in the Township.

Transportation Goal

Promote a safe, effective, and diversified transportation and circulation system that addresses current and future needs in coordination with land use planning and resource protection objectives.

Sewage Goal

Ensure adequate and safe sewage disposal throughout the Township that promote the Township's land use goals without threatening sensitive natural resources.

Energy Conservation Goal

Promote energy efficiency, conservation, and clean energy sources to reduce overall consumption and costs of energy.

Natural Resources Goal

Preserve, protect, and maintain the Township's existing natural resources to sustain ecosystems, public health, and quality of life.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goal

Maintain and expand parks, recreational facilities and community programming at parks while protecting and preserving existing Township open spaces.

Community Facilities and Services Goal

Provide appropriate levels of government services that are cost-effective, environmentally sound, and meet the needs of current and future Township residents and businesses.

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