

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ACTION PLAN

INTENT

The intent of the Environmental Resources Action Plan is to ensure the quality of the Middlesex Township natural environment is maintained and enhanced as future development occurs. With sound protection measures, such as those presented herein, the Townships citizens, business community, and visitors can be confident that a healthy environment coexists with a vibrant economy.

Goal: Sustain and enhance the Township's sensitive natural environmental resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES POLICIES

1. Encourage protecting, within reason, the Township's sensitive natural resources including floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, ridge tops of the North Mountain, the Appalachian Trail, LeTort Spring Run, Conodoguinet Creek and other stream corridors.
2. Protect prime agricultural lands and Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) from encroachment by non-agricultural development.
3. Foster the continuation of agricultural uses on prime agricultural lands and ASAs.
4. Encourage cooperation between conservation groups and public organizations to protect and manage natural resources.
5. Preserve important scenic views that help maintain the rural character of the Township.

ACTION STRATEGIES

Restrict Development in Areas of Sensitive Natural Resources

1. Review the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to consider requiring development applicants to provide the following kinds of information with their applications when such information is determined to be necessary to preserve existing environmental features.
 - A description or generalized mapping of natural site conditions with an emphasis on significant environmental features that would be affected by the proposed development or retained upon completion of the project. The mapped information shall address the following, where applicable:
 - Areas that have "severe limitations with regard to soil type and are greater than 15 percent slope".

- Impervious and pervious surfaces.
 - Use of natural ground surface features and drainage patterns for the purpose of managing stormwater runoff.
 - Public water supply.
 - Areas that will remain in a natural or undisturbed state upon completion of the project.
 - Endangered or threatened plant and animal species and species of special concern.
 - 100-year floodplain boundary.
 - A description of mitigation efforts that will occur as part of the proposed development.
 - An impact assessment that discusses the anticipated effect of the proposed development on the environment.
 - Measures that are proposed by the applicant to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on the environment.
2. Consider amending the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to protect ridge tops of the North Mountain from development.

Protect and Manage Soils and Natural Vegetation

3. Consider amending the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to prohibit development in steep slope forested areas.
4. To the extent permitted by law, prohibit clearing areas that have a high potential for erosion (where soils have severe limitations and slope is greater than 15 percent). During the development process, the delineation of site disturbance on a plan, the provision of a narrative description of proposed grading and stabilization methods to be used and/ or similar general information are encouraged as methods to demonstrate an effort to preserve sensitive slope areas. Exact details of these mitigation measures will be developed during the land development plan review process. Consider amending the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to require developers to submit NPDES approval forms to the Township for its consideration during the development plan review process.
5. Encourage the use of native plants that are adapted to local soil and weather conditions when revegetating disturbed areas.

Maintain and Enhance Surface Bodies of Water and Watersheds

6. Consider amending the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to include monitoring programs to ensure that during and after development, peak stormwater flows do not exceed predevelopment peak flows, in terms of quantity, quality, and volume.
7. Consider establishing requirements to leave a natural undisturbed buffer along all waterways.
8. Recognize the use of no-net-gain standards to prevent nutrient loading, and sedimentation runoff to adjacent waters that result from development-related practices. Recognize similar standards for agricultural practices.
9. Recommend limiting and locating away from water bodies those nonresidential activities that use, store, or manufacture significant quantities of toxic substances.
10. Consider developing criteria in appropriate areas for establishing conservation overlay districts in order to protect surface and groundwater quality.
11. Encourage the minimization of the amount of impervious surfaces of development and redevelopment in order to minimize stormwater runoff through the use of appropriate sustainable design techniques.
12. Encourage the establishment of greenways and/ or linear parks along the Conodoguinet Creek and LeTort Spring Run.

Preserve and Properly Manage Prime Agricultural Soils in Middlesex Township

13. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to create an Agricultural Zoning District in those areas with high concentrations of parcels enrolled in the Agricultural Security Area program.

Agricultural Zoning District – For the purpose of preserving and protecting prime farm soils, agricultural security areas and other productive farm areas by limiting residential development activity.

The intent would be to place greater restrictions than the current Residential Farm Zone which allows 60,000 s.f. minimum lot size.

14. Identify conflicts with areas recommended for agricultural preservation during subdivision and land development reviews.

Work with Conservation Groups and Public Organizations to Protect and Manage Natural Resources

15. Identify the various conservation groups and public organizations, such as the LeTort Regional Authority and others, working to protect and manage natural resources within the Township and encourage them to be more cooperative in their efforts.