

Borough of Greencastle
5-year strategic plan
Adopted September 8, 2009

Strategic Planning process and purpose

In spring of 2009, the Greencastle Borough Council decided to embark on a process to develop a five year strategic plan. Committed to citizen participation, the Borough initiated the process with a Town Hall meeting, at which citizens shared their perceptions of Greencastle today and their visions for the community five years from now. Citizens were also encouraged to share their ideas with Borough Council through letters or emails, and several were received. Council then held two workshop sessions at which they identified goals and objectives, based in large part on citizens' ideas. This plan provides background information from both the Town Hall meeting and workshop sessions.

Looking ahead five years, Council has identified seven goals for the Borough, each of which has at least one objective and a series of action steps. The goals of the Borough are unlikely to change over time. However, the specific objectives for reaching the goals should be revisited on a regular basis and adjusted to reflect changing conditions in the community. Thus adoption of the plan is only a starting point, and the effective implementation of the plan is a critical part of the strategic planning process.

Community Assets and Resources

Greencastle today has much to offer: a small town atmosphere with citizens who are interested in and care about their community, strong civic organizations, good schools and responsive local government. It is a 'walkable' community – most services are accessible and convenient, and the downtown has new shops and viable retail businesses. Community pride is evident in special activities like the triennial Old Home Week celebration.

Community assets include unique physical infrastructure: the train station, the train mural on the Baltimore Street underpass, and the square. Cultural and recreational assets in and near the Borough include the Lillian Basore Library, the Antrim-Allison Museum, Tayamentasachta Environmental Center, and the Jerome King Playground. The presence of the John L. Grove Medical Center ensures that health services are available and accessible for Borough residents.

Citizens are an important community asset, volunteering their time and talents both individually and through service clubs, sports leagues, Boy and Girl Scouts, church groups and other organizations. The Jerome King Playground Association, the Greencastle Arts Council and the Old Home Week organization are examples of citizen contributions to the Borough's quality of life.

Changing Conditions, Trends for the Future

Significant residential and commercial development in and around the Borough has brought new citizens and an increased tax base to the community. But the increase in population has also resulted in more demand on schools, utility systems, fire, ambulance and police services and recreational facilities.

Increased traffic, particularly truck traffic through the Borough, has raised concerns about congestion and pedestrian safety, especially in downtown Greencastle. The competition from new retail and commercial centers outside the Borough is also a stressor on downtown.

While the amount of housing has increased, there is a perceived lack of adequate affordable or workforce housing, as well as housing for low-income families and senior citizens. As an example, Habitat for Humanity has had difficulty finding building sites in the Borough. A related concern is the need for more recreational activities for all ages, including after-school activities for children.

A Borough Wish List

What should Greencastle look like and be like in five years? Participants in the planning process focused on four key areas: traffic and parking, recreation, downtown, and town appearance.

Traffic suggestions: complete the Greencastle bypass (in Antrim Township), remove truck traffic downtown, install traffic calming devices, create more parking downtown, relocate Post Office and/or mail drop boxes, public transportation, and improve the intersection at Routes 11 and 16.

Recreational suggestions: a public swimming pool, a dog park, a community center, classes and activities ranging from arts and crafts to exercise.

Downtown suggestions: a variety of retail businesses such as restaurants, specialty foods, and small repair and service businesses, development of the empty lot on Baltimore Street (the existing building was recently destroyed by fire), increased nightlife and activities.

Town appearance suggestions: 'Welcome to Greencastle' signs, hanging baskets, more trees and green spaces, better street lighting, sidewalks installed and maintained throughout the Borough, upkeep for the train mural, more historic preservation of buildings, and enforcement of zoning and building codes regarding property maintenance.

Goals and Objectives.

Goal #1: Improve traffic circulation and reduce heavy truck traffic in the Borough.

Objective 1-A: Encourage completion of the bypass

- Meet with Antrim Township officials and other stakeholders (Franklin County Planning Commission, PennDOT) to open discussion
 - Review existing bypass plan and transportation components of the proposed Greencastle-Antrim Comprehensive Plan
 - Determine if new configuration for bypass is needed
 - Collaborate with Township in seeking funds for planning and construction
- Key People: Borough Representatives to Comprehensive Plan Joint Committee*

Objective 1-B: Improve circulation on Borough streets

- Conduct traffic study of circulation patterns; consider changes to one-way streets and parking options. (Defer study until after completion of improvements on Baltimore Street and anticipated improvements at intersection of Routes 16 and 11.)
- Key People: Public Facilities Committee*

Goal #2: Extend the life of Borough infrastructure through planned maintenance and replacement.

Objective 2-A: Adopt a capital improvements plan by the end of 2010

- Inventory Borough facilities and equipment
 - Identify potential funding sources
 - Incorporate capital improvements plan into annual budget
- Key People: Administration & Finance Committee*

Objective 2-B: Maintain and improve Borough streets and alleys

- Complete street inventory
- Conduct inventory of all public alleys

- Prioritize streets and alleys by condition
- Incorporate into capital improvements plan
Key People: Public Facilities Committee

Objective 2-C: Maintain and replace Borough sewer infrastructure

- Inventory all sewer facilities and infrastructure
- Prioritize according to useful life
- Incorporate into capital improvements plan
Key People: Public Facilities Committee

Goal #3: *Ensure the effective coordination of emergency fire and ambulance services for Borough citizens.*

Objective 3-A: Support the continued viability of volunteer-based public safety services in the community

- Encourage more communication and collaboration between volunteer providers, Borough police and Borough and Township officials
- Explore ways to increase volunteerism
Key People: Public Safety Committee

Goal #4: *Ensure pedestrian safety and the responsible maintenance of curbs, sidewalks and private property*

Objective 4-A: Establish a fair and consistent policy regarding the installation, maintenance and repair of curbs and sidewalks

- Convene a committee of citizens and elected officials to review and revise existing curb and sidewalk policies
- Amend ordinances as applicable
- Develop plan for enforcing maintenance requirements
- Explore options for providing financial assistance to property owners
Key People: Borough Council

Objective 4-B: Improve code enforcement

- Evaluate need for more enforcement staff
- Establish a Citizen Appeals Board
- Consider adoption of new property maintenance code
- Improve communications with the Shade Tree Commission
Key People: Community Development Committee

Objective 4-C: Ensure adequate and cost-effective street lighting

- Request evaluation of location and adequacy of existing street lighting from Allegheny Power. Coordinate with circulation study in Objective 1-A.
- Assess energy and cost efficiency of street lighting.
- If needed, develop plan for funding addition, replacement or relocation of streetlights
Key People: Public Safety Committee

Goal #5: *Provide a wide range of parks and recreational opportunities for Borough residents*

Objective 5-A: Provide leadership in coordinating and improving recreational opportunities and facilities throughout the Borough

- Encourage partnerships between the Park Board and community organizations
- Explore opportunities for collaboration between the Borough, Antrim Township and Greencastle-Antrim School District

Key People: Ad Hoc Committee (to be appointed) to create Regional Committee

Goal #6: Encourage the availability of health care and housing options for all segments of the Borough population

Objective 6-A: Encourage the continued presence of the John L. Grove Medical Center

- Appoint a Borough liaison to the medical center

Key People: Borough liaison (to be appointed)

Objective 6-B: Investigate the need for and feasibility of senior housing

- Initiate a discussion with county and state housing agencies and non-profit housing organizations

Key People: ad hoc committee (to be appointed), citizens

Goal #7: Preserve the unique sense of community in downtown and throughout Greencastle

Objective 7-A: Install welcome signage at the gateways to the Borough and directional signage within the Borough

- Appoint citizen committee to plan and raise funds for gateway signage
- Investigate state regulations and permitting requirements
- Install gateway signage
- Determine need for directional signage in borough

Key People: Community Development Committee, citizens

Objective 7-B: Create a community organization to focus on downtown revitalization and beautification

- Establish a steering committee including Borough Council, the Greencastle Area Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses and interested citizens
- Investigate PA Main Street and other downtown revitalization programs
- Determine the appropriate structure and function of the organization
- Identify projects and activities for the organization to address

Key People: Community Development Committee, citizens

Objective 7-C: Ensure the viability of the train station

- Explore options for long-term ownership and preservation of the train station

Key People: ad hoc committee of Council (to be appointed), citizens

Objective 7-D: Evaluate and address the need for parking in the downtown area

- Inventory existing parking
- Assess need for additional parking –coordinate with circulation study in Objective 1-A
- Provide recommendations to Council
- Approach Post Office about relocating drop boxes

Key People: Community Development Committee, downtown organization

Objective 7-E: Explore opportunities for redevelopment of the empty lot at Washington and Baltimore Streets

- Research actions taken by other municipalities
- Approach owner about redevelopment or assistance in locating a buyer
Key People: Community Development Committee, downtown organization

Objective 7-F: Encourage preservation of Greencastle’s historic buildings and places

- Explore options for encouraging historic preservation
- Coordinate efforts with downtown organization
Key People: ad hoc committee, citizens

Priority Listing of Goals and Objectives

The list below reflects the year during which work on any one objective will be initiated. Council anticipates that many objectives will take several years to complete, or are ongoing in nature. The schedule for initiating objectives may change from time to time as Council revisits its progress on implementing the strategic plan.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Goal #1: Improve traffic circulation and reduce heavy truck traffic in the Borough.	<u>Objective 1-A:</u> Encourage completion of the bypass		<u>Objective 1-B:</u> Improve circulation on Borough streets		
Goal #2: Extend the life of Borough infrastructure through planned maintenance and replacement.	<u>Objective 2-A:</u> Adopt a capital improvements plan by the end of 2010 <u>Objective 2-B:</u> Maintain and improve Borough streets and alleys	<u>Objective 2-C:</u> Maintain and replace Borough sewer infrastructure			
Goal #3: Ensure the effective coordination of emergency fire and ambulance services for Borough citizens.	<u>Objective 3-A:</u> Support the continued viability of volunteer-based public safety services in the community				
Goal #4: Ensure pedestrian safety and the responsible maintenance of curbs, sidewalks and private property.	<u>Objective 4-A:</u> Establish a fair and consistent policy regarding the installation, maintenance and repair of curbs and sidewalks	<u>Objective 4-B:</u> Improve code enforcement <u>Objective 4-C:</u> Ensure adequate and cost-effective street lighting			

<p>Goal #5: <i>Provide a wide range of parks and recreational opportunities for Borough residents.</i></p>		<p><u>Objective 5-A:</u> Provide leadership in coordinating and improving recreational opportunities and facilities throughout the Borough</p>			
<p>Goal #6: <i>Encourage the availability of health care and housing options for all segments of the Borough population.</i></p>	<p><u>Objective 6-A:</u> Encourage the continued presence of the John L. Grove Medical Center</p>	<p><u>Objective 6-B:</u> Investigate the need for and feasibility of senior housing</p>			
<p>Goal #7: <i>Preserve the unique sense of community in downtown and throughout Greencastle.</i></p>	<p><u>Objective 7-A:</u> Install welcome signage at the gateways to the Borough and directional signage within the Borough</p> <p><u>Objective 7-B:</u> Create a community organization to focus on downtown revitalization and beautification</p> <p><u>Objective 7-C:</u> Ensure the viability of the train station</p>		<p><u>Objective 7-D:</u> Evaluate and address the need for parking in the downtown area</p>	<p><u>Objective 7-E:</u> Explore opportunities for redevelopment of the empty lot at Washington and Baltimore Streets</p> <p><u>Objective 7-F:</u> Encourage preservation of Greencastle's historic buildings and places</p>	

Implementation

In order for this plan to be effective in achieving its goals, it must become a 'living' document that guides the progress of the Borough. When considering changes in policy or other critical issues, Council members should consult the strategic plan for guidance. They should ask questions such as 'How does this help us achieve our goals as stated in the strategic plan?', 'What community assets are available for a collaborative approach to addressing this issue?' and 'How will this coordinate with other initiatives in the strategic plan?'

Distribution of the plan is an important first step to ensuring that the five year vision for the Borough is widely shared and understood. The Plan will be distributed to all staff, board and commission members, and will be available at the Borough Office and on the Borough's website. It will be provided to all new staff, Council members and board and commission

appointees when they join the Borough organization. Revisions to the plan will also be distributed when there are significant changes made to the plan.

The Borough should monitor its progress in achieving its goals and objectives. This can be accomplished by regular reports from the key people assigned to each objective. Council should consider incorporating such reports into its monthly meeting agenda. It might also convene a workshop session to evaluate progress made on the plan after the first year or two of implementation.

Citizen Participation

Involvement of Borough citizens is key to the success of this strategic plan. There are many specific opportunities for citizens to become involved in implementation by serving on ad hoc committees, particularly in the areas of downtown revitalization and recreation. Their participation is welcomed and encouraged.

This Strategic Plan was prepared by the Greencastle Mayor and Borough Council, Borough Manager Ken Womack and the citizens of Greencastle. Penn State Cooperative Extension provided facilitation and guidance for the planning process.