

Town of Bethlehem

Comprehensive Plan Implementation Program

Farmland and Open Space Protection Plan

OCTOBER 23, 2008

PUBLIC MEETING

"TOPICS" WORKBOOK

ISSUES AND NEEDS RESULTS (May 15 Public Meeting)

GOAL DEVELOPMENT



NATURAL SYSTEMS

Natural Systems is a topic area that was identified through the issues and needs exercises conducted during the May 15 Public Meeting. The responses received from the public indicated this is an area of interest that should be further explored during the development of the Plan. The responses related to natural systems are listed below.

Issues/Needs

- Conserve wildlife/natural habitat/native species
- Protect water - Lakes/streams/rivers
- Manage stormwater runoff to protect undeveloped lands
- Identify what we have (i.e. soils, species, plants, animals)
- Protect natural resources (including geologic)
- Expand size of current lands (Buffer Five Rivers)
- Maintain ecological benefits - watershed, habitat
- Protect animal and plant diversity
- Network of natural spaces
- Protected river valleys and waterfront natural areas
- Green lungs - clustered development set in undeveloped spaces
- Preserve land that is beneficial for wildlife and people
- Provide access to water bodies
- Preserve scenic views
- Protect ravines; use for recreation as appropriate

Example Goals: *"Goals are broad statements of where we want to be - an end state"*. The goals listed below have been developed by other municipalities during the development of their Open Space Plan. The intent of these goals is to provide an example of a goal and to encourage group discussion regarding Natural Systems in Bethlehem.

- Increase public understanding of the values of natural systems
- Minimize fragmentation of large areas of forest, wetlands and other natural communities
- Preserve links between natural communities
- Maintain the quality of surface and ground waters
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RECREATION AND PATHWAYS

Recreation and Pathways is a topic area that was identified through the issues and needs exercises conducted during the May 15 Public Meeting. The responses received from the public indicated this is an area of interest that should be further explored during the development of the Plan. The responses related to recreation and pathways are listed below.

Issues/Needs

- Parks/recreation opportunities (soccer field/golf course)
- Lack of parks you can walk to
- Need for small pocket parks - walk-able
- Connecting existing open space - walk/bike
- Mix of parks you can walk to; some open space
- Balance between growth and parks
- Public access, public biking paths
- Bike-friendly infrastructure
- Off-road trails and transportation options
- Safe routes for bikers and walkers
- Trails and recreation areas are liability issues
- Protect and use ravines for recreation, as appropriate

Example Goals *"Goals are broad statements of where we want to be - an end state"*. The goals listed below have been developed by other municipalities during the development of their Open Space Plan. The intent of these goals is to provide an example of a goal and to encourage group discussion on recreation and pathways in Bethlehem.

- Increase the amount of pocket parks/neighborhood scale parks
- Provide access to parks and conservation areas from neighborhoods
- Provide for bicycle access and improve safety for cyclists
- Provide access opportunities for fishing, boating and other types of outdoor recreation

AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND

Agriculture and Farmland is a topic area that was identified through the issues and needs exercises conducted during the May 15 Public Meeting. The responses received from the public indicated this is an area of interest that should be further explored during the development of the Plan. The responses related to agriculture and farmland are listed below.

Issues/Needs

- Year round farmers market
- Flexible tax structure for small farmers
- Farmers can't afford to keep doing what they are doing
- Economic resources that allow farmers to continue
- Need to support farmers
- Agri-tourism opportunities
- Future generations don't want to farm
- Support local farmers and businesses/future value of farmland

Example Goals *"Goals are broad statements of where we want to be - an end state"*. The goals listed below have been developed by other municipalities during the development of their Open Space Plan. The intent of these goals is to provide an example of a goal and to encourage group discussion on agriculture and farmland in Bethlehem.

- Increased opportunities to purchase locally grown produce
- Provide incentives for landowners to continue farming and agriculture activities
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