WORCESTER TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TASK FORCE
WORCESTER TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY HALL
WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2021 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER by Stacy Crandell at 7:00 PM

ATTENDANCE

STEPHANIE BAILEY	[X]
ART BUSTARD	[X]
WINNIE HAYES	[X]
BURT HYNES	[X]
LEE KOCH	[X]
PAUL LEIS	[X]
JAY MCKEEVER	[X]
BRIAN NEWHALL	[X]
ROBERT PACE	[X]
PAT QUIGLEY	[X]
JOHN WESTRUM	[X]

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- April 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes – Stacy Crandell called for any comments or objections to the minutes. A motion by Paul Leis to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Brian Newhall and it was passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There were no public comments.

FOCUS AREA OF COMP PLAN FOR DISCUSSION

- Task Force Schedule
  - Stacy Crandell gave a brief update on the Task Force and the schedule for the year and wrapping up the comp plan review by the end of the year. The Task Force meetings will be as follows:
    - June 23, 2021 at 7PM- regular meeting
    - July 28, 2021 at 7PM- regular meeting
    - September 22, 2021 at 7PM- regular meeting
    - October 27, 2021 – Open House from 4-7PM at Community Hall
    - December 8, 2021at 7PM-regular final meeting

- Final Wrap-up of Goals and Objectives

  - Brian Olszak, MCPC explained the timeline and went over the revised goals and objectives with the feedback that was received from the Task Force. There was some discussion regarding some of the changes.

- Draft Chapters – Introduction and Background
  - Brian went over the draft chapters which included the Introduction and Background. There was some discussion regarding the chapters.

- Brian asked if there any photos that the group would like to share with him that would be great so he can add more photos to the plan.

NEXT STEPS AND NEXT MEETING

· June 23, 2021 meeting – Brian Olszak stated that he would provide some chapters for review at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

· There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force, Stacy Crandell adjourned the meeting at 8:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Stacy E. Crandell
Assistant Township Manager

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
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VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, CHAIR
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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Transportation + Mobility Chapter, and Proposed Table of Contents and Review Timeline

TO: Worcester Comprehensive Plan Task Force

CC: Tommy Ryan, Township Manager
Stacy Crandell, Asst. Township Manager

FROM: Brian J. Olszak, Senior Planner, MCPC

DATE: June 23, 2021

Please find attached for your review the proposed Transportation + Mobility Chapter of the Comp Plan Update. I wanted to remind you that, in the final version of this chapter as with all others, MCPC will either cite the source of graphics utilized or create our own graphics illustrating the same underlying concept as is shown in the Chapter.

The proposed Table of Contents of the Plan is as follows (with corresponding Goal sections bolded):

1. Introduction and Background
2. Worcester: Past and Present
3. Goals + Objectives
4. Transportation + Mobility **(Transportation)**
5. Community Character (**Housing**)
6. Parks, Open Space + Preservation (**Parks, Open Space + Preservation**)
7. Environmental Resources + Infrastructure (**Environmental + Sustainability; Infrastructure**)
8. Governance + Public Services (**Governance)**
9. Land Use + Growth Management **(Growth Management; Economic Development**)

The plan for reviewing the remaining chapters over our remaining meetings is as follows:

Month	**Chapter**
June 2021	Transportation + Mobility
July 2021	Community Character
August 2021	*No TF meeting*
September 2021	Parks, Open Space + Preservation; Environmental Resources + Infrastruture
October 2021	*No TF meeting: Public Open House*
November 2021	*No TF meeting: Combined with December mtg*
December 2021	Governance + Public Services; Land Use + Growth Management

Transportation + Mobility

How to get around quickly, efficiently and safely

POLICY STATEMENT

Worcester will ensure that a diverse, safe, sustainable and efficient transportation system is maintained for motorists and nonmotorists alike.

GOALS

- Assure that a diversity of modes of transportation are provided to improve connectively throughout the Township
- Encourage the use of alternatives to motor vehicles
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Improve traffic safety for both motorists and nonmotorists.
- Provide a comprehensive network of trails throughout the Township.

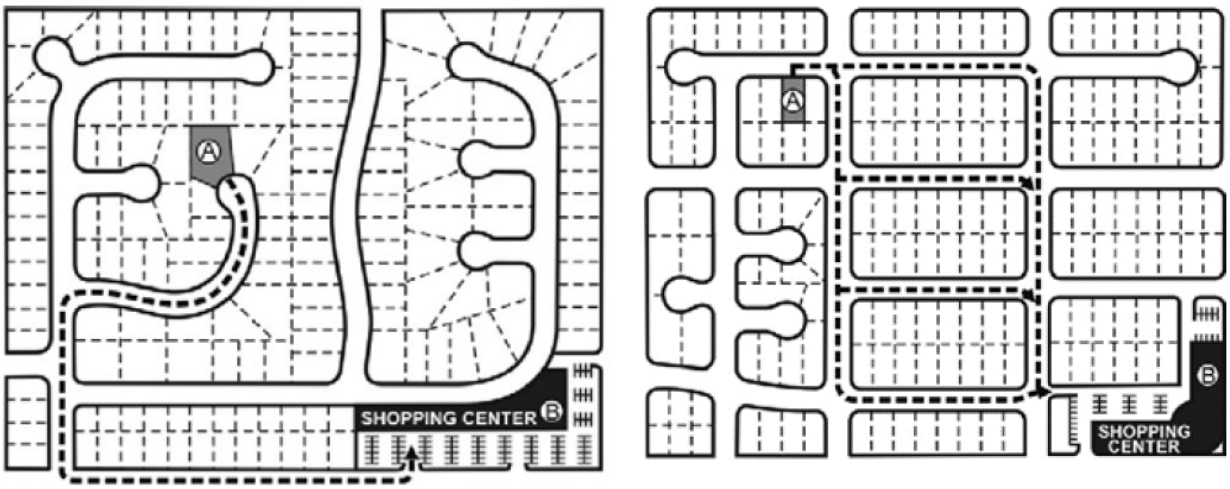
Planning for transportation and mobility is not simply about "getting from Point A to Point B." In fact, this very thinking has, over time, too frequently created communities where the overriding consideration is how to get as many cars through town as quickly as possible. Communities, however, must make sure the transportation system works for *all*, for people of all ages and abilities.

Driving is, and will be, the dominant mode of transportation of residents in the Township for the foreseeable future. However, traffic congestion is a perennial problem that almost all communities face at one time or another, and Worcester is no different. Reducing the impact of the automobile on the community will take a multifaceted, multigenerational approach, impacting both design and behavior.

Context Matters

How a street performs—how fast traffic goes, how useful and easy it is use by multiple people using multiple modes—is a function of its context. The context of a street involves the *kind of development* abutting the street: building design, site layout, and the land use all contribute to the context. The context determines what kind of street is most appropriate: no one would doubt the reasoning behind separating I-476, both visually and physically, from the rest of Worcester: fast, regional traffic with heavy tractor trailers does not mix well with quiet residential neighborhoods. Likewise, overbuilding facilities on a farm road would make just as little sense.

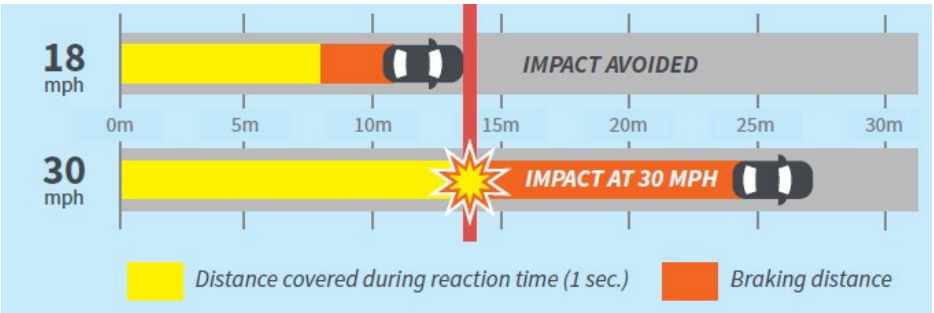
Determining the character and design of streets also must consider the intended purpose of the street, and how it functions as a part of the whole community and regional network. Below are two examples of what a typical community street network, including Worcester, can look like. Picture 1 is the conventional suburban model of a hierarchical street network: many local, residential roads empty out onto a small number of major roads., traffic only has a few routes to use to get to a major destination, and ultimately represents a network with relatively low connectivity. Picture 2, on the other hand, resembles historic street patterns found in older communities; notice that there are several routes one can take to their destination. Connectivity and availability of routes available, as well as the character of our streets generally, can have a great impact upon the community character: we must make certain our streets serve the purposes of the community, not the other way around.

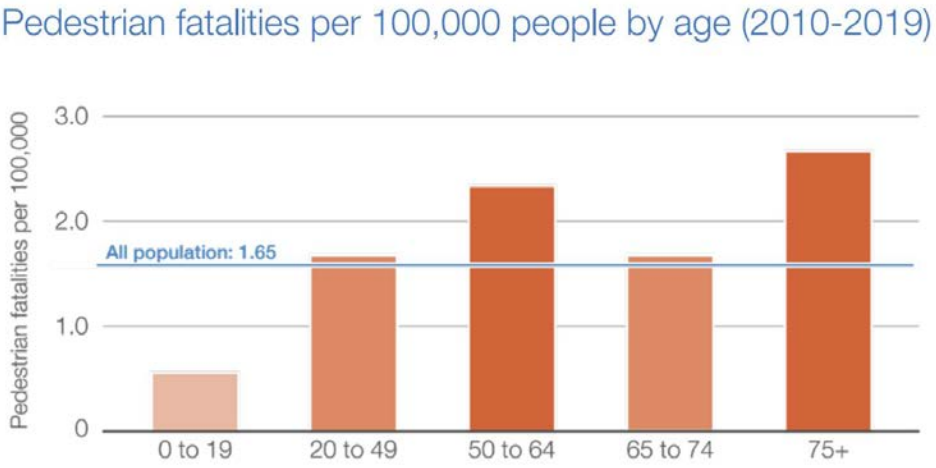


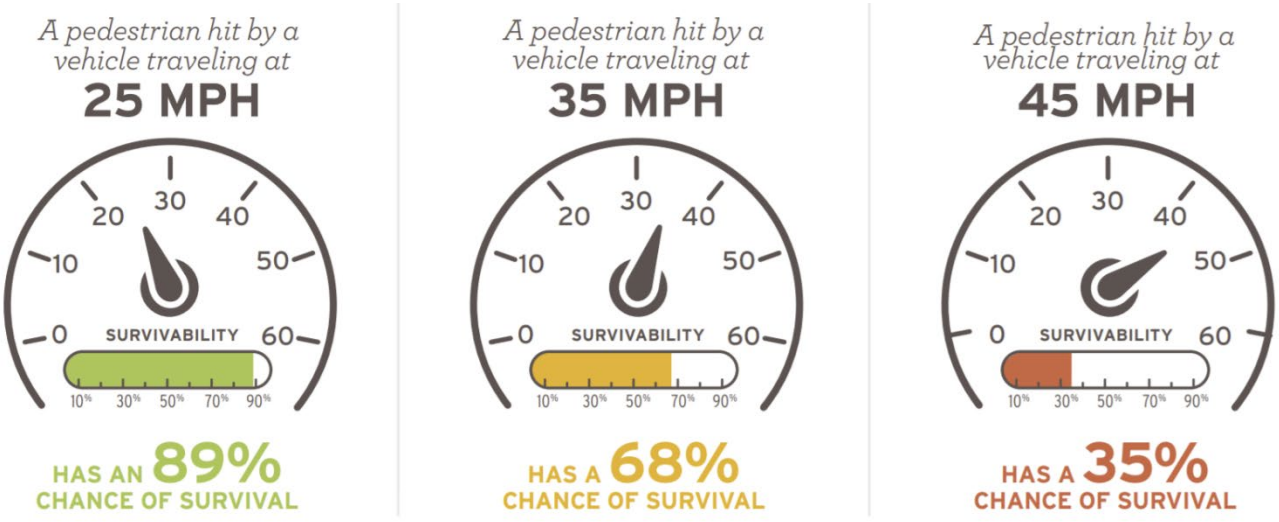
Speed and the Design of Streets

Contrary to popular belief, the posted speed limit of a street is *not* the primary determining factor of a car's speed. It is in fact the *design* of the street, the physical geometry and capacity of a street, which has the greatest impact on the speed of cars.

Speed is a predictable, yet unfortunate, indicator of how serious an accident can be. Cars driving more slowly not only have a better chance of avoiding impacts, but impacts which do occur tend to be much less fatal, particularly with pedestrian involved accidents. Nationally, older adults are overrepresented in pedestrian fatalities from driver accidents, meaning that more older adults suffer from such accidents than any other age group; even more unfortunate is that this trend has worsened nationwide from 10 years ago.







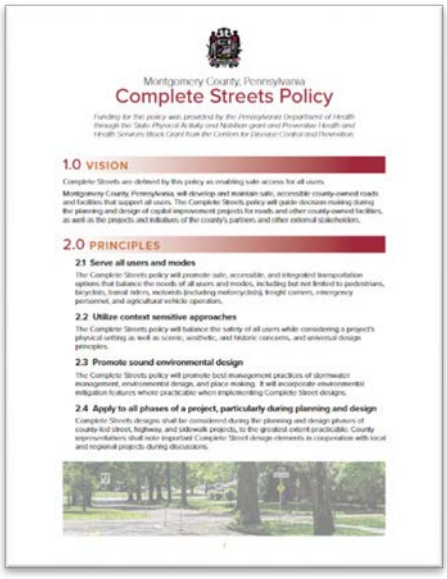
While drivers are certainly to blame, street design is undoubtedly involved as well. The wider the travel lane, the gentler the street curvature, and the more uninterrupted the route, the more comfortable a driver will be driving at higher speeds. One need only ride an expressway to see this effect in action: the wide lanes and gentle curves intentionally are forgiving of "driver error" at high speeds, which helps to reduce the likelihood of crashes. However, the same logic should not be extended to other streets in the community. The below picture shows two low-volume residential streets which nominally are meant to have the same speed limit, but both look quite different. The difference between these two streets represents the key importance of **road side friction,** and how this concept is key to slowing down vehicles and maintaining safe neighborhoods**.**

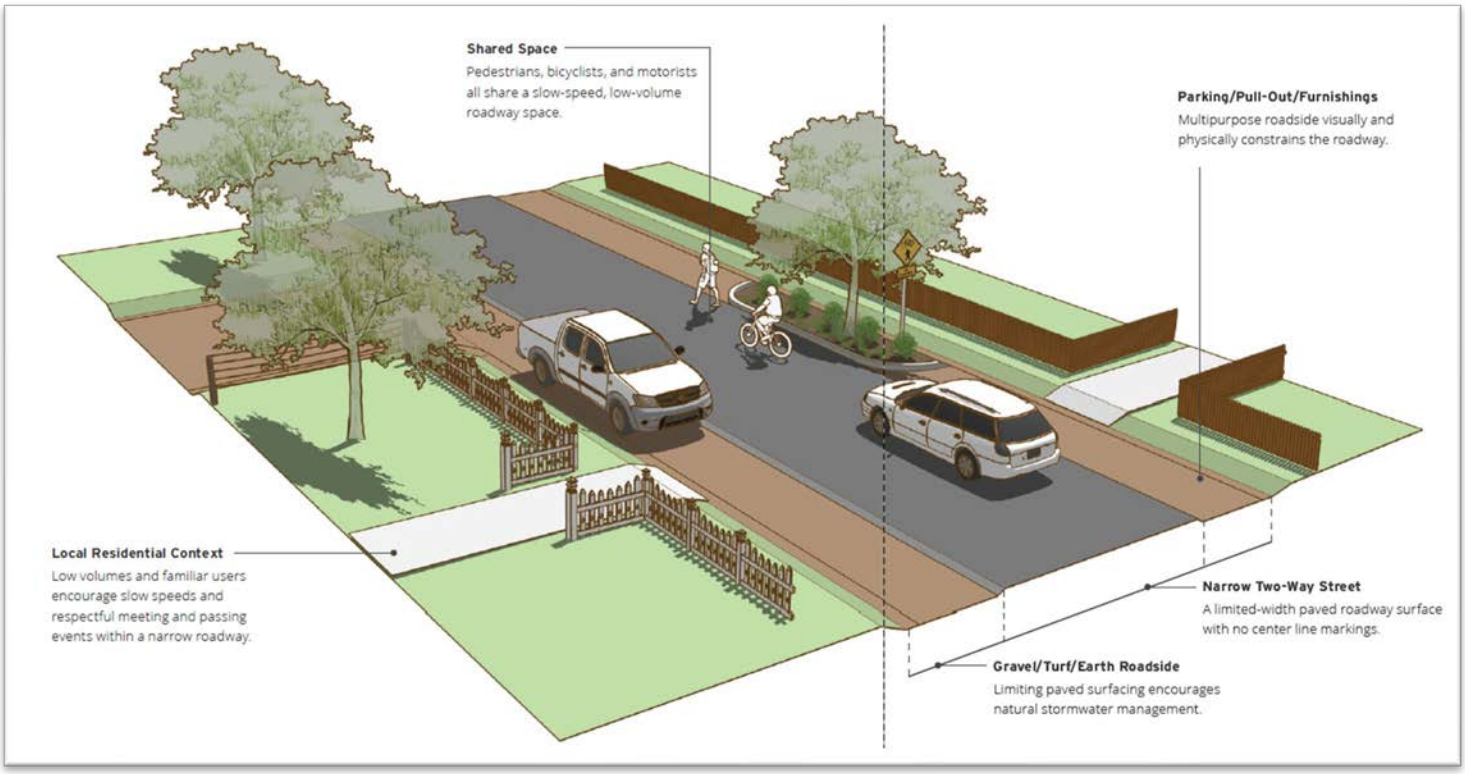
Road Side Friction:

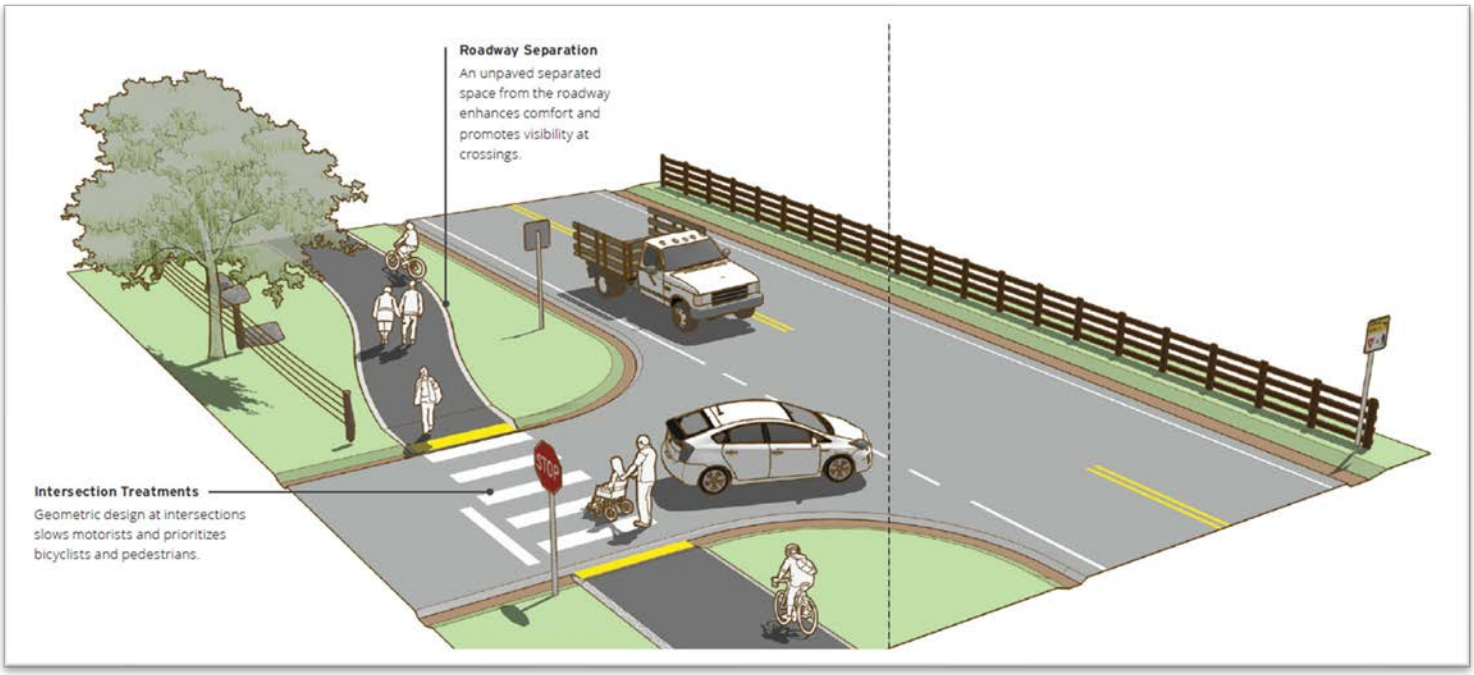
The apparent or perceived visual impact of activities or objects occurring along the side of a road as perceived by a driver. Parked cars, street trees, pedestrians, cyclists, medians, and the edge of the street itself, among other things, either narrow the actual roadway or narrow the visual field of drivers, which have the effect of increasing driver awareness and caution.

Complete Streets

A key strategy in tempering the preference for motor vehicles, and ensuring the safety of all users of the transportation system, is the idea of Complete Streets. The "complete" part of this concept refers to how we should be considering *all* modes of transportation when designing streets, and so a street is more complete when it is involves other modes, such as pedestrians, cyclists, and more. Implementing Complete Streets can take many forms, and particular improvements often depend upon the particular context, neighborhood and street type in question, but they can be most successful when they are created through the implementation of a **Complete Streets Policy**. Such a policy is a decision-making tool which helps guide a jurisdiction on when and what kind of multimodal considerations take place during routine road projects, and whether there are any exceptions. The following two examples of Complete Streets projects may be particularly suited to Worcester's rural character.


Montgomery County, Pennsylvania
Complete Streets Policy
1.0 VISION
2.0 PRINCIPLES
2.1 Serve all users and modes
2.2 Utilize context sensitive approaches
2.3 Promote sound environmental design
2.4 Apply to all phases of a project, particularly during planning and design



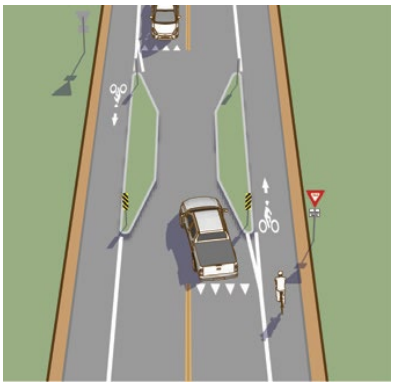


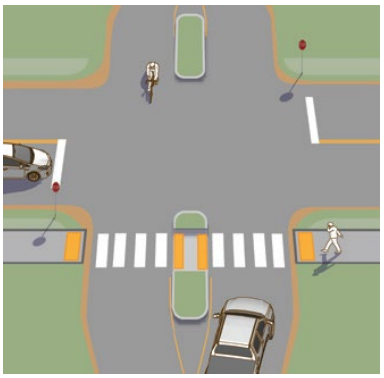
Traffic Calming

By investing in substantive improvements to major roadways, impacts of traffic to neighborhood roads can be reduced and minimized. More motorists will opt to cut through neighborhoods and back roads to avoid traffic and difficult intersections when major roads and intersections are not routinely improved with additional capacity, signal upgrades or turning lanes. By making traffic improvements, motorists will be less likely to go off the main roadways.

Dangers of traffic on neighborhood streets, as well as major roads, can additionally be reduced through traffic calming. Traffic calming is the practice of altering the design of a roadway to reduce speeds and provides safer conditions for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Many of the practices involve the strategic constricting of travel lanes in different ways to effect lower vehicle speeds and more responsible driving, as well as support safer facilities for nonmotorized modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling. The size and character of the road determine which practices may best be suited for it, and there could be several streets in the Township which might benefit from traffic calming practices. Four common practices are illustrated below,

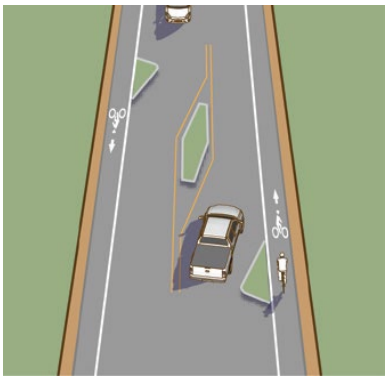
- **curb bumpouts** at intersections, or **pinchpoints** along mid-block street segments, can reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and constrict the roadway, acting as roadside friction to slow cars;
- **pedestrian refuge islands,** which provide relief for pedestrians crossing a street, enables a crossing pedestrian to only look one way at a time before crossing each of the two lanes, and also provides roadside friction to slow cars;
- **road diets**, which reduce the number of existing travel lanes on a road and can be done a number of ways, the most common of which is the reduction of four lanes to two (with a center turning lane and shoulders/bike lanes); and
- **chicanes** and **lane shifts** or other kinds of medians which require extra turning, which require speed reductions.





Standards for Street Design

In furthering the goals of both traffic calming and accommodations for multimodal transportation options, the Township may also wish to reconsider street design standards it currently maintains in its subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO). While emergency response units with vehicles such as firetrucks and ambulances may suggest less restrictive standards than the ones mentioned below, many communities have successfully worked with their emergency management services to field-test these standards with their present equipment.

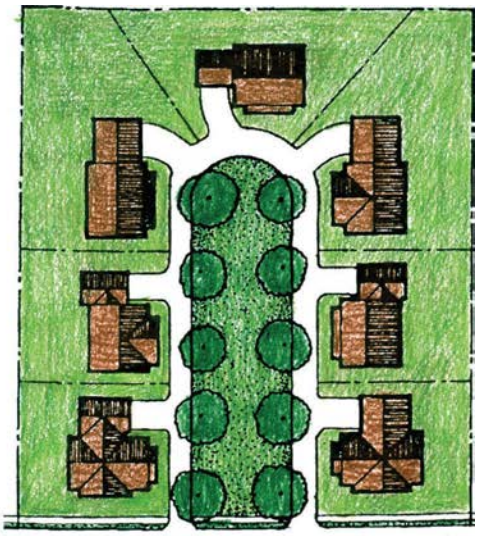


STREET WIDTHS

Overall street widths should respond to the *context* of the street. On a typical interior subdivision street, there may be little need to require paved cartways larger than 18-20 feet, especially when on-street parking will be rare or nonexistent. The reduction in unnecessary paving overall Streets of such a width may also be appropriate when used as "yield streets"—low-volume roads which may accommodate multiple types of users while parked cars or traffic-calming structures induce incoming cars to yield to each other. An example of a yield street is provided above.

STREET CURVES

As noted above, the softer the curve, the greater the speed. Centerline radii of 90 to 165 feet tend to be most appropriate for design speeds of 25 miles per hour and below on local streets and minor collector roads. Nonetheless, radii closer to 90 feet may be preferable.



CUL DE SAC OPTIONS

While cul de sacs are popular and valuable sites on which to situate housing, they can unfortunately reduce connectivity between neighborhoods. One option can be to support or require cul de sacs to provide pedestrian connections beyond the cul de sac to another development or street. An alternative to the cul de sac is the "court" or "close" (a Scottish term), pictured at left, which is a one-way, narrow loop street at the end of a full street upon which houses front. Located at the center of the loop street is a landscaped green, which can double as a stormwater infiltration feature or recreational amenity.

Proposed Projects

In addition to certain policy changes the Township may wish to consider, several important improvement projects are included below, which the Township would like to implement:

STREET PROJECT PROPOSALS

1. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection, Emergency Preemption, Controller Cabinet, Battery Back-Up, Full Modernization at Township Line Road & Whitehall Road
2. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection, Controller Cabinet, Battery Back-Up, GPS Time Clock at Morris Road & Ford Electronics Access Drive
3. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection, Controller Cabinet, Battery Back-Up, GPS Time Clock at Morris Road & Berks Road
4. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection at Skippack Pike & Bethel Road/Whitehall Road
5. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection, Controller Cabinet, Battery Back-Up at Germantown Pike & East Mount Kirk Avenue
6. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection, Controller Cabinet, Battery Back-Up at Skippack Pike & Berks Road
7. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection at Skippack Pike & Bustard Road
8. Valley Forge Corridor Project - Route 363 between intersection between Woodlyn Avenue, Township Line Road, & Stump Hall Road- Construction Costs estimated to be $10-$15 million. Currently under design.
9. Radar Speed Display Signs at Germantown Pike & Kriebel Mill Rd Methacton School Zone Flasher. *School District would install; Township would assume maintenance. Project would require County Highway Occupancy Permit.*
10. Radar Speed Display Signs at Skippack Pike & Worcester Elementary School Zone Flasher. *School District would install; Township would assume maintenance. Project would require PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit.*
11. Realign intersection of Bethel/Whitehall Road and Skippack Pike into 90-degree intersection.

PEDESTRIAN PROPOSALS

1. ADA Curb Ramps, Pedestrian Pushbuttons and Pedestrian countdown signal heads at Valley Forge Road & Skippack Pike. *Project could be constructed by future developer.*
2. Video Detection, Dilemma Zone Radar Detection, Controller Cabinet, Battery Back-Up, ADA Curb Ramps, Pedestrian Pushbuttons and Signal Heads at Germantown Pike & Kriebel Mill Road

TRAIL PROPOSALS

1. Trail Connection from Defford Park Trail Extension to Peter Wentz Farmhouse
2. Trail Connection from Heebner Park to Defford Park.
3. Priority Trail Connections as indicated in *Worcester Community Greenways Plan.*

Recommendations

Assure that a diversity of modes of transportation are provided to improve connectivity throughout Township

- Create Township Complete Streets Policy. *The Policy acts as a decision making tool, the process for which is triggered every time a new road is built or an existing road is proposed for improvement or reconstruction. If support exists, the Township can adopt provisions in the subdivision regulations.*
- Support the integration of best practices in land developments regarding street design and the provision of trails and sidewalks, when appropriate.

Encourage the use of alternatives to motor vehicles

- Support programs like "Safe Routes to School," childhood health initiatives, Bike Rodeos, and other initiatives that encourage physical activity in public places like walking, running and biking.

Reduce traffic congestion

- Implement road improvement projects as indicated above and in Act 209 Capital Improvements Plan.
- Begin process of preparing for 2023 update to Act 209 Study.
- Reduce travel demand by focusing on nonmotorized transportation options.
- Partner with Greater Valley Forge TMA and/or Partnership TMA to implement travel demand management.

Improve traffic safety for both motorists and nonmotorists

- Consider changes to street design standards, including those within the SALDO, to align with recommendations above.
- Create a Township Traffic Calming Policy. *Such a policy can be a decision-making tool for neighborhoods within Worcester desiring traffic calming measures, if certain speed, design or community support criteria are met.*

Provide a comprehensive network of trails throughout Township

- Complete trail projects as listed above, as well as those indicated in *Worcester Community Greenways Plan.*
- Support the completion of the Regional Trails which are proposed within and around the Township. *Upper Gwynedd Township is activiely pursuing the completion of both the Power Line Trail, as well as the Liberty Bell Trail, two major regional trails identified in the County Comprehensive Plan as being of vital important for regional trail connectivity. These trails can be pursued by the Township alone or in partnership with other jurisdictions or agencies, or simply supported in more nontangible ways.*