



North Sewickley Draft Recommendations

Chapter 1 – Rural Character and Open Space

1. Discourage large-lot sprawl and preserve open landscapes by directing development away from core farmland and ridge views.
 - 1.1. Strengthen the Agricultural/Residential zoning district to discourage fragmentation of farmland.
 - 1.1.1. Draft ordinance amendments requiring minimum residential lot sizes greater than 1 acre.
 - 1.1.2. Adopt updated zoning standards following public review and hearings.
 - 1.1.3. Monitor development approvals to ensure large-lot sprawl is minimized.
 - 1.2. Partner with Beaver County to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.
 - 1.2.1. Collaborate with County staff to coordinate outreach to eligible landowners.
 - 1.2.2. Provide technical assistance to support program enrollment.
 - 1.2.3. Promote program benefits through township newsletters, meetings, and mailings.
 - 1.3. Establish a Local Agricultural Easement Cooperative Program to purchase undeveloped farmland and permanently protect it through conservation easements.
 - 1.3.1. Draft program guidelines in coordination with local farmers and conservation partners.
 - 1.3.2. Pursue external funding and partnerships to finance easement purchases.
 - 1.3.3. Adopt the program formally through township policy to ensure consistency.
 - 1.4. Direct business growth to existing commercial zones to reduce development pressure on rural and agricultural land.
 - 1.4.1. Designate commercial zones as priority growth areas on the future land use map.
 - 1.4.2. Amend zoning ordinances to encourage business activity in designated areas.
 - 1.4.3. Monitor rezoning requests to ensure commercial development remains within defined zones.
2. Safeguard steep slopes, forested areas, and Connoquenessing Creek through conservation standards and sensitive development practices.



- 2.1. Adopt riparian buffer protections along Brush Creek, Beaver River, and Connoquenessing Creek, and include dredging of the Connoquenessing Creek as a capital improvement to mitigate flood risk.
 - 2.1.1. Draft and adopt riparian buffer protections along Brush Creek, Beaver River, and Connoquenessing Creek.
 - 2.1.2. Identify the dredging of Connoquenessing Creek as a capital improvement priority.
 - 2.1.3. Partner with regional entities to pursue funding for flood risk reduction projects.
- 2.2. Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.
 - 2.2.1. Compile GIS data to map sensitive lands and flood-prone areas.
 - 2.2.2. Draft ordinance updates limiting development in steep-slope and floodplain zones.
 - 2.2.3. Partner with conservation groups to preserve high-priority lands through easements or acquisition.
- 2.3. Create a land stewardship program in partnership with county and regional entities to implement best practices for preserving agricultural and natural land, supported by outside grant funding.
 - 2.3.1. Develop a collaborative framework for land stewardship education and support.
 - 2.3.2. Promote voluntary stewardship agreements with landowners.
 - 2.3.3. Pursue outside funding to support pilot conservation projects.
3. Update zoning to require rural-appropriate lot sizes, buffers, and siting standards in areas beyond the PA-65 corridor.
 - 3.1. Partner with the County and other municipalities to establish new road standards to limit curb cuts, signage height, and non-agricultural lighting in designated rural zones.
 - 3.1.1. Draft rural road design standards in collaboration with regional partners.
 - 3.1.2. Adopt the standards through zoning and subdivision ordinance updates.
 - 3.1.3. Encourage municipalities to apply standards consistently along shared corridors.
 - 3.2. Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.
 - 3.2.1. Draft model tree preservation standards with input from multiple municipalities.
 - 3.2.2. Adopt the ordinance locally and encourage regional adoption.
 - 3.2.3. Monitor development projects to ensure compliance with tree preservation requirements.



- 3.3. Reduce suburban-style layouts that conflict with agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.
 - 3.3.1. Draft ordinance updates prohibiting cul-de-sacs and strip commercial patterns.
 - 3.3.2. Adopt subdivision standards requiring interconnected road networks.
 - 3.3.3. Promote clustered layouts to preserve farmland and scenic views.
- 3.4. Draft and adopt siting and screening standards for new buildings to blend with rural surroundings.
 - 3.4.1. Draft siting and screening standards addressing setbacks, landscaping, and design.
 - 3.4.2. Adopt ordinance updates incorporating context-sensitive criteria.
 - 3.4.3. Provide design guidance materials to property owners and developers.

Chapter 2 – Balanced and Strategic Growth

- 4. Concentrate new development near infrastructure to protect open land and reduce long-term maintenance burdens.
 - 4.1. Require new subdivisions to demonstrate proximity to or extension of existing infrastructure.
 - 4.1.1. Draft ordinance requirements linking subdivision approval to infrastructure proximity.
 - 4.1.2. Adopt review standards that discourage development in areas lacking adequate services.
 - 4.1.3. Monitor approvals to ensure compliance with proximity requirements.
 - 4.2. Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.
 - 4.2.1. Establish regular coordination meetings to exchange service and capacity data.
 - 4.2.2. Maintain a township-level map of service areas and planned extensions.
 - 4.2.3. Use data to guide zoning and subdivision approvals.
 - 4.3. Through a future land use map, identify priority growth areas near existing water and sewer infrastructure.
 - 4.3.1. Draft a growth map designating priority areas for compact development.
 - 4.3.2. Adopt the future land use map as part of the comprehensive plan.
 - 4.3.3. Review development proposals to ensure consistency with mapped growth areas.
 - 4.4. Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances and stabilize existing neighborhoods.
 - 4.4.1. Review existing ordinances to close gaps in property maintenance standards.



- 4.4.2. Establish a consistent enforcement process with timelines for compliance.
 - 4.4.3. Publicize code expectations to encourage voluntary compliance.
- 5. Encourage rural-friendly businesses such as contractors, trades, and farm-based enterprises in suitable locations along key corridors.
 - 5.1. Permit small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in rural zoning districts.
 - 5.1.1. Draft zoning amendments clarifying permitted rural business uses.
 - 5.1.2. Adopt updates through the zoning ordinance review process.
 - 5.1.3. Provide educational materials to property owners on allowable activities.
 - 5.2. Streamline approval processes for home occupations with minimal impacts.
 - 5.2.1. Draft tiered performance standards to distinguish minimal- and moderate-impact uses.
 - 5.2.2. Adopt administrative approval for low-impact businesses.
 - 5.2.3. Develop online tools to make the permitting process accessible.
 - 5.3. Update permitted uses in rural and commercial zoning districts to allow trades and agricultural services.
 - 5.3.1. Draft ordinance revisions expanding permitted uses in commercial and rural zones (i.e., AR-1 - Agricultural Residential; B - Business; BT - Business Transition; CC - Corridor Commercial; and MDR - Mixed Density Residential) to allow low-impact trades and agricultural services.
 - 5.3.2. Adopt revised use tables following planning review and hearings.
 - 5.3.3. Monitor approvals to ensure compatibility with the rural character of the area.
 - 5.4. Establish performance-based site standards (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.
 - 5.4.1. Draft design standards regulating storage, hours, and signage.
 - 5.4.2. Adopt standards as part of zoning or design ordinances.
 - 5.4.3. Provide applicants with design guidance to support compliance.
- 6. Develop policies that adapt to future development pressure without compromising rural quality of life.
 - 6.1. Develop a multi-jurisdictional Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.
 - 6.1.1. Draft a cooperative framework with neighboring municipalities for open space planning.
 - 6.1.2. Pursue external partnerships and funding to implement the plan.
 - 6.1.3. Adopt the plan into township policy for consistency.
 - 6.2. Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.
 - 6.2.1. Draft a resolution requiring reviews of planning documents every five years.



- 6.2.2. Adopt the review schedule and assign responsibility.
- 6.2.3. Publish findings to ensure accountability and transparency.
- 6.3. Plan future access easements in undeveloped lots to direct traffic onto main roads and prevent dead ends.
 - 6.3.1. Draft subdivision standards requiring future access easements in undeveloped lots.
 - 6.3.2. Adopt ordinance updates promoting interconnected street networks.
 - 6.3.3. Review development proposals for compliance with access requirements.
- 6.4. Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.
 - 6.4.1. Draft ordinance language defining thresholds that trigger an impact assessment.
 - 6.4.2. Adopt standards requiring applicants to address traffic, infrastructure, and fiscal impacts.
 - 6.4.3. Apply assessments consistently during rezoning reviews.

Chapter 3 – Community Roots and Family Life

- 7. Enable accessory dwellings, family subdivisions, and multi-generational housing arrangements to help families stay local.
 - 7.1. Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.
 - 7.1.1. Partner with Beaver County planners to draft sample ordinance language for duplexes, co-located family homes, and other flexible housing types.
 - 7.1.2. Host public workshops with residents to explain how multi-generational housing supports affordability and keeps families in the township.
 - 7.1.3. Encourage a pilot project by working with a local developer to test duplex or shared-lot housing models in an appropriate zoning district.
 - 7.2. Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.
 - 7.2.1. Collaborate with banks and credit unions to create financing options for farm families transitioning property to the next generation.
 - 7.2.2. Organize succession planning workshops in partnership with county extension services and farm bureaus.
 - 7.2.3. Distribute informational packets through tax bills and township newsletters, highlighting tools for land transfer and succession.
 - 7.3. Expand zoning flexibility to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential and agricultural zones.
 - 7.3.1. Draft zoning ordinance amendments specifying ADUs as permitted by right, including clear standards for size, location, and utilities.



- 7.3.2. Adopt ordinance updates after a public hearing process to confirm community support.
- 7.3.3. Publish a “how-to” guide for residents outlining ADU eligibility, permitting steps, and benefits for multi-generational households.
- 7.4. Permit cottage court home arrangements in certain zoning districts.
 - 7.4.1. Draft ordinance updates permitting cottage court housing near main roads or commercial corridors, with lot size flexibility to encourage development.
 - 7.4.2. Establish design standards requiring shared open space, pedestrian circulation, and limited parking footprints to preserve rural character.
 - 7.4.3. Adopt zoning revisions and develop incentives, such as expedited approvals or density bonuses, for projects meeting cottage court standards.
- 8. Invest in targeted road, drainage, and safety improvements that benefit established and growing neighborhoods.
 - 8.1. Utilize state technical assistance funding to hire a consultant to conduct a township-wide infrastructure assessment to prioritize needs.
 - 8.1.1. Apply for technical assistance funding to hire an engineering consultant to evaluate township roads, stormwater systems, and safety infrastructure.
 - 8.1.2. Develop an assessment report that ranks projects based on safety, service life, and cost-effectiveness.
 - 8.1.3. Use the report to create a phased capital improvement schedule tied to realistic funding cycles.
 - 8.2. Prioritize and fund roadway maintenance, including year-round repairs and winter servicing, and implement modern roundabouts in place of traffic signals where feasible to improve safety, efficiency, and reduce long-term maintenance costs.
 - 8.2.1. Apply for Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank, Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, and PennDOT funding to improve high-need road segments.
 - 8.2.2. Prioritize high-need road segments for year-round repair, snow removal, and resurfacing.
 - 8.2.3. Draft design standards that encourage alternatives to traditional traffic signals, such as roundabouts, in appropriate intersections.
 - 8.2.4. Adopt updated roadway standards into township ordinances and seek cost-sharing partnerships with PennDOT.
 - 8.3. Apply for PennDOT’s Dirt & Gravel Roads Program for environmentally sensitive drainage in rural areas.
 - 8.3.1. Map rural roadways with recurring erosion and runoff issues.
 - 8.3.2. Draft subdivision and land development ordinance updates requiring low-impact drainage solutions in new projects.
 - 8.3.3. Apply for external funding to retrofit failing road segments with sustainable drainage designs.



- 8.4. Incorporate stormwater management upgrades and water line replacements into a Capital Improvement Plan for areas with known flooding or runoff issues.
 - 8.4.1. Identify residential areas with repeated flooding, runoff, or outdated water infrastructure.
 - 8.4.2. Develop a phased improvement plan that integrates stormwater upgrades with utility replacements.
 - 8.4.3. Adopt the Capital Improvement Plan and align annual budgets with identified projects.
9. Create avenues for residents to participate in planning, decision-making, and township-sponsored events.
 - 9.1. Partner to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.
 - 9.1.1. Collaborate with schools, faith groups, and civic organizations to recruit youth representatives.
 - 9.1.2. Develop a formal program structure that includes mentorship, leadership training, and defined responsibilities.
 - 9.1.3. Recognize participants annually through certificates, township meeting acknowledgments, or community events.
 - 9.2. Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.
 - 9.2.1. Draft a plain-language guide and application process for board and commission membership.
 - 9.2.2. Post vacancies prominently on the township website, newsletters, and community bulletin boards.
 - 9.2.3. Hold an annual “Civic Engagement Night” to introduce residents to volunteer opportunities.
 - 9.3. Develop a township newsletter and a monitored online platform to share updates and gather feedback.
 - 9.3.1. Develop a quarterly township newsletter highlighting projects, budgets, and public meetings.
 - 9.3.2. Launch a monitored online platform where residents can provide feedback on township issues.
 - 9.3.3. Assign a staff liaison to track submissions, respond, and report back to elected officials.
 - 9.4. Host an annual public engagement event to involve residents with tools to understand development in the region better.
 - 9.4.1. Organize an event that combines historical exhibits, infrastructure updates, and opportunities for public feedback.
 - 9.4.2. Partner with civic groups, businesses, and volunteers to provide programming and sponsorship.
 - 9.4.3. Document community input and report back on how feedback is integrated into township decision-making.



Chapter 4 – Historic Preservation and Pride

10. Inventory historic resources and pursue options for preservation, including reuse, conservation, or local recognition.
 - 10.1. Partner and pursue grant funding to inventory historic barns, cemeteries, and homesteads for potential protection or reuse.
 - 10.1.1. Collaborate with Beaver County and local historical societies to develop a comprehensive inventory of historic properties.
 - 10.1.2. Pursue external funding to support field surveys, mapping, and digital documentation of barns, cemeteries, and homesteads.
 - 10.1.3. Publish the inventory online and integrate it into township planning documents to guide future preservation efforts.
 - 10.2. Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.
 - 10.2.1. Identify properties that meet criteria for the National Register, such as historic farms or unique architectural structures.
 - 10.2.2. Provide technical assistance to property owners in preparing applications.
 - 10.2.3. Partner with regional preservation organizations to secure letters of support and strengthen applications.
 - 10.3. Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings.
 - 10.3.1. Draft ordinance language authorizing property tax abatements for qualifying preservation or restoration projects.
 - 10.3.2. Adopt the ordinance following a public input process to ensure community support.
 - 10.3.3. Promote the program through newsletters, real estate networks, and informational workshops for property owners.
11. Explore overlay districts or design guidance to help maintain the architectural character of historic sites.
 - 11.1. Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.
 - 11.1.1. Draft regional design guidelines that build on Township Code Ch. 22-601 to include rural-appropriate materials, setbacks, and scale.
 - 11.1.2. Work with Beaver County and state partners to align design guidance with preservation standards.
 - 11.1.3. Share guidelines with developers and property owners through design handbooks and pre-application meetings.
 - 11.1.4.



- 11.2. Provide expedited review for maintaining original architectural features in older structures.
 - 11.2.1. Establish an expedited review track for building permits that retain or restore original features.
 - 11.2.2. Draft code updates provide flexibility for projects that maintain historic architectural elements.
 - 11.2.3. Publicize the faster review process as an incentive for property owners to pursue preservation.
- 11.3. Integrate historical compatibility criteria into the site plan review process.
 - 11.3.1. Draft ordinance language requiring applicants to demonstrate architectural compatibility in site plan submissions.
 - 11.3.2. Train the planning commission and staff on applying design review standards consistently.
 - 11.3.3. Require developers to submit renderings or elevations showing how projects align with the historic or rural context.
- 12. Promote programs, events, and engagement opportunities that strengthen the community's identity and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.
 - 12.1. Support and promote school programs that explore local history and connect students with longtime residents.
 - 12.1.1. Partner with schools to integrate oral history and local heritage into class projects.
 - 12.1.2. Create opportunities for students to interview longtime residents and present findings publicly.
 - 12.1.3. Highlight student projects through township newsletters and annual community events.
 - 12.2. Partner with nearby municipalities to create interpretive signage or driving tours highlighting legacy farms.
 - 12.2.1. Identify farms and heritage sites that best represent the township's rural legacy.
 - 12.2.2. Draft a signage and tour plan that incorporates both local and regional historical themes.
 - 12.2.3. Pursue funding partnerships with tourism boards and neighboring municipalities for implementation.
 - 12.3. Require the township to hold town hall meetings with residents to provide opportunities for public input and questions before making decisions on projects.
 - 12.3.1. Require township leaders to host town hall meetings before major project decisions.
 - 12.3.2. Publish agendas and background materials online in advance of town hall events.
 - 12.3.3. Track public comments and provide a written summary of how input influenced final decisions.



- 12.4. Establish a requirement for the township to conduct annual reviews of park infrastructure to ensure adequate maintenance of walking trails.
 - 12.4.1. Draft a requirement for annual reviews of township park and trail infrastructure.
 - 12.4.2. Conduct inspections of walking trails, playgrounds, and open space amenities.
 - 12.4.3. Publish an annual report highlighting maintenance needs and improvements completed.

Chapter 5 – Recreation, Connectivity, and Well-Being

- 13. Identify ways to provide more access to Connoquenessing Creek, trails, and natural open space for residents.
 - 13.1. Complete a Tri-Township Open Space and Trail Plan in coordination with Beaver County Greenways.
 - 13.1.1. Draft a cooperative framework with Franklin, Marion, and Beaver County to identify priority trail connections.
 - 13.1.2. Pursue funding partnerships to complete the planning document.
 - 13.1.3. Adopt the plan as a guide for subdivision approvals and capital improvement planning.
 - 13.2. Expand public access to the Connoquenessing Creek in environmentally sensitive ways.
 - 13.2.1. Identify and map suitable sites for kayak launches, fishing nodes, and public entry points.
 - 13.2.2. Draft design standards for access points that limit erosion and protect habitat.
 - 13.2.3. Partner with landowners and conservation groups to implement improvements.
 - 13.3. Collaborate with park agencies to enhance onsite amenities such as pavilions for gathering spaces, kayak launch areas, and install bollards at trail entrances to limit bike access for pedestrian safety.
 - 13.3.1. Collaborate with Beaver County Parks, PA DCNR, and local civic groups to add pavilions, restrooms, and seating areas.
 - 13.3.2. Design and install kayak launches at high-demand access sites.
 - 13.3.3. Install bollards and signage at trail entrances to separate pedestrian and bike use for safety.
- 14. Target safe walking and biking improvements near schools, churches, and community facilities.
 - 14.1. Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.



- 14.1.1. Conduct a township-wide walkability audit focusing on schools, churches, and civic centers.
 - 14.1.2. Collect public input to identify unsafe crossings and missing sidewalks.
 - 14.1.3. Rank projects based on safety, connectivity, and cost-effectiveness.
- 14.2. Apply for PennDOT, DCNR, or DCED grants to fund bike and pedestrian improvements and complete gaps.
 - 14.2.1. Prepare conceptual designs to strengthen external grant applications.
 - 14.2.2. Apply for multimodal and recreation grants to address priority sidewalk and trail gaps.
 - 14.2.3. Coordinate with Beaver County and PennDOT to align township projects with regional initiatives.
- 14.3. Require a standardized sidewalk or shared-use path as part of all new developments.
 - 14.3.1. Draft subdivision ordinance updates mandating sidewalks or shared-use paths in site plans.
 - 14.3.2. Adopt ordinance revisions following public review.
 - 14.3.3. Monitor new development approvals for compliance with pedestrian requirements.
- 15. Promote development that integrates trails, parks, or gathering areas into residential layouts where appropriate.
 - 15.1. Update subdivision regulations to require open space or trail linkages in major subdivisions.
 - 15.1.1. Draft ordinance language requiring developers to dedicate land for trails, parks, or open space.
 - 15.1.2. Adopt subdivision updates through the township legislative process.
 - 15.1.3. Review plans to ensure open space is usable, connected, and maintained.
 - 15.2. Encourage subdivision designs that preserve open space while allowing compact housing clusters.
 - 15.2.1. Draft a conservation subdivision ordinance permitting clustered housing with preserved open space.
 - 15.2.2. Adopt ordinance revisions to enable rural-appropriate layouts.
 - 15.2.3. Provide design guidance materials for developers on conservation subdivision models.
 - 15.3. Require dedication of trail corridors or public access easements in new developments to link open spaces to the countywide greenway network.
 - 15.3.1. Draft ordinance updates requiring easement dedication as part of subdivision approval.
 - 15.3.2. Map priority trail connections to guide where developer contributions should occur.



- 15.3.3. Adopt ordinance updates and enforce requirements through development review.