

# CHAPTER 4

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# VISION & GOALS

*"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."  
—Mahatma Gandhi*

## **Introduction**

In a comprehensive planning process, a clear vision, combined with a set of well-articulated goals and objectives, provides the foundation for future action and the criteria for evaluating options and opportunities. However, hand in hand with this vision must go the will and resources to fulfill it. Without strong resolve, sustained attention, and the wherewithal to move it forward, no plan will get farther than the shelf where it is stored.

The Township intends to use this document as a reference and resource for land use decision making over the next 10 years, but more importantly as an action agenda to realize the vision and goals set forth here.

## **Vision Statement**

Whitemarsh Township will be an oasis of green, its open spaces and natural areas providing respite and recreation for residents, environmental protection for the region, and sanctuary for the area's remaining native species.

## **Goals:**

***Goal #1: Preserve 75% of the township's remaining open space.***

- Implement the Township's Growing Greener zoning ordinances.

- Strengthen existing ordinances to ensure they are consistent with and support the Township's open space goals.
- Work with large landowners to encourage actions/decisions about future land use that will advance the Township's open space vision.
- Actively partner with neighboring municipalities, public and private organizations, and every possible funding source to preserve as much land as possible.
- Acquire important parcels of land, where appropriate and possible.

***Goal #2: Preserve the township's natural beauty and distinctive character.***

- Create a conservation features map that identifies the township's most important viewsheds, wildlife habitats and corridors, natural resources, and potential greenways and establish the necessary policies to ensure that all future land use decisions are consistent with this map.
- Preserve the Township's important viewsheds.
- Promote the retention of remaining agricultural lands.

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***Goal #3: Preserve and protect the Township’s natural resources and their ecological systems.***

- Implement state-of-the-art land stewardship policies, based on best management practices, for every parcel of Township-owned or controlled land to ensure their appropriate long-term care and preservation.
- Implement appropriate training and education programs for Township employees responsible for maintenance of this land.
- Establish a public education program to teach landowners how to sustain or restore the ecological integrity of their properties.

***Goal #4: Provide every community with a means of access to open space.***

- Establish a comprehensive, interconnected Township trail system that links residents to the major County trails and to recreational, commercial and natural areas within and beyond Whitemarsh.

***Goal #5: Ensure that there is adequate funding and the appropriate infrastructure to support the Township’s open space initiatives.***

- Establish a permanent, substantial dedicated revenue stream to support the Township’s open space vision.
- Establish a permanent Open Space Steward position on the Township staff to oversee and help execute the recommendations of this plan.
- Establish the Open Space Committee as a permanent Township committee and resource.

***Goal #6: Build awareness of the need to protect our natural areas and support for the Township’s open space initiatives.***

- Use a variety of communication channels (e.g., Township newsletter and web site, Parks & Recreation programs, public meetings, direct mail) to educate the public about the benefits of, and the individual landowner’s role in, preserving and maintaining open space.

*“O if we but knew what we do / When  
we delve or hew— / Hack and rack  
the growing green!”*

*—Gerard Manley-Hopkins from  
“Binsey Poplars”*