

Demographics

Another important piece in the data collection phase was the analysis of demographic data. Extrapolated from the US Census Bureau and American Community Survey, the information provided to the Task Force painted a picture of their community. The data, such as population, reinforced some of the trends that are visible throughout the region. The population in Lower Saucon grew by 9.0% from 2000 to 2010, Northampton County grew by 11.5% and Lehigh County grew by 12.0% in the same time period. In keeping with visible trends, Lower Saucon also saw an “aging” of the population. The median age in 2000 was 41.1 and in 2010 it was 45.9. There was also a 73.77 percent increase in the number of residents aged 60-64 in that same time period and the population of those over 85 years old more than doubled. Facts such as these support the need for health care related industries and consumer services in Lower Saucon and the Lehigh Valley.

Other important demographic data that the Task Force reviewed included family and non-family households. While Lower Saucon saw an overall increase in the number of households from 2000 to 2010, the number of family households decreased while the number of non-family households increased. Average household size and average family size also both decreased in the same time period.

Education and income also provided interesting insight into the Lower Saucon community. 93.3 percent of the Township’s residents over age 25 have at least a high school diploma and 41.3% have a college degree or higher educational attainment. The average (mean) household income is \$113,667.00 and the average family income is \$131,737. Both of these numbers are significantly higher than the county-wide numbers. Northampton County’s mean household income is only \$75,527.00 and the mean family income is \$87,646.00.

The data indicates a very stable, well-educated and well paid, middle aged (but aging) community.

Projects of Regional Significance

The Task Force reviewed a list of projects that have economic impacts for the entire Lehigh Valley region. These projects include a variety of entertainment, retail and commercial, industrial and warehousing, as well as manufacturing and transportation uses. Sands Casino Resort is just an example of the multi-use facilities that impacts not only Lower Saucon and the Lehigh Valley but the expanded regional area.



Vision Statement

At the April 2014 meeting, the Task Force developed their vision through the creation of a mission statement. The Vision they developed would then be the basis for the creation of goals and objectives and the eventual development of an action plan. After much discussion, the Task Force approved as their Vision Statement, the following:

Lower Saucon Township will support existing businesses and institutions while developing future opportunities through managed growth that reflects the Township’s heritage.

Goals and Objectives

The Task Force had many ideas for the future of Lower Saucon Township in terms of economic development. Discussion revolved around harnessing the synergy of development in the region, protecting the quality of life in the Township, bringing new commercial and industrial ventures to the Township, current obstacles in policy to attracting businesses, the occupation of many vacant properties and storefronts. They had the task of

formulating broad based goals that reflected the vision statement but that would address their concerns and could also have attainable objectives attached to it. The Task Force developed these four primary goals:

- GOAL 1: Promote Economic Development Growth
- GOAL 2: Explore Potential Uses / Adaptive Reuse for Existing Underutilized Parcels within the Township
- GOAL 3: Promote and Encourage the Creation of New Ventures that Attract High-Wage, Future-Oriented Businesses
- GOAL 4: Maintain and Enhance the Quality of Life in Lower Saucon Township.

The goals are the building blocks on which this plan was developed. In order to create the objectives for each of these goals, the Task Force members had to ask, “How are we going to achieve this goal?”; “Why is this goal important?”; “What is this goal going to bring us in 1, 5, 10 years?”. In answering these questions, the Task Force worked together to form consensus, consolidate thoughts, and precisely word each one of the newly formed objectives.

III. SHORT-TERM TASK TIMELINE

The Task Force created the Action Plan as a step-by-step process to achieve the goals they set forth in their quest to provide additional economic development opportunities for the Township. In creating these tasks or steps, the Task Force needed to assign a priority timeline based on a number of factors, such as urgency, cost, manpower/ability, ease or difficulty of task completion, etc. The following items are considered Short-Term tasks in the Action Plan and are expected to be started and/or completed within a year of plan adoption. Each of these tasks is categorized as either zoning/planning, administrative, marketing, incentives, or physical improvements. A number of the tasks are similar, indicating importance to the Task Force.

Timeline in Months

Category	Short-Term Task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Administrative	Creation of a committee to work with staff in reviewing Township policies and permitting procedures												
Zoning/ Planning	Re-examine zoning districts, permitted uses, and the area and dimensional requirements.												
Zoning/ Planning	Parcel inventory to determine highest and best uses as well as maximum development potential												
Zoning / Planning	Use utility base mapping to determine areas with public sewer and water that are best suitable for development.												
Zoning / Planning	Review and revise zoning regulations, if needed, to promote creative and new businesses and industries.												
Zoning / Planning	Map areas currently available with public water and sewer and overlay with zoning. Determine areas for utility expansion and areas suitable for rezoning.												
Administrative	Engage local realtors and developers to grasp “real” or “perceived” roadblocks to development in Lower Saucon												
Zoning / Planning	Explore expansion of existing commercial zoning district boundaries along the Route 412 and 378 corridors.												
Administrative	Work with local realtors to determine current inventory of office space for rent / lease / sale.												

SET INTO MOTION
The Plan of the Lower Saucon Economic Development Task Force

Category	Short-Term Task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Zoning / Planning	Explore options for zoning regulations to encourage development in Commercial and Industrial districts, such as different impervious surface ratios or environmental protection standards for woodlands and steep slopes												
Marketing	Creation of a local business committee that meets with Township staff on a regular basis to discuss community and business relationships.												
Physical Improvements	Explore space in/on Township owned properties for appropriateness and adaptability as office and research space.												
Physical Improvements	Look to enhance areas along major roadways through the rehabilitation, conversion, and/or adaptive reuse of aging, vacant, commercial properties.												
Marketing	Establish contacts at the major health institutions in the Lehigh Valley including St. Luke’s, Lehigh Valley Healthcare Network, and Coordinated Health.												
Marketing	Establish contacts in facilities planning at major regional employers.												
Marketing	Embrace the “Love Local” advertising theme. Identify locally owned and operated businesses to promote the Township’s unique branding.												
Marketing	Undertake a branding and marketing campaign to launch the economic development goals and objectives found in this report and developed subsequently.												
Marketing	Include existing regional facilities such as the Lehigh River and the Saucon Rail Trail in the advertising pieces aimed at relocating or new businesses.												
Physical Improvements	Develop commercial corridor branding through the usage of streetscape improvements.												
Administrative	Explore space in/on Township owned properties for appropriateness and adaptability as office and research space.												

SET INTO MOTION
 The Plan of the Lower Saucon Economic Development Task Force

Category	Short-Term Task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Marketing	Identify and promote local businesses through a Township directory, a Love Local campaign, and other advertising media outlets, with Saucon Valley branding.												
Incentives	Explore the need and feasibility of tax incentives and grant monies to attract and retain small research and development companies												
Incentives / Marketing	Explore a variety of Public Private Partnerships with STEM related institutions to establish incubators, start-ups, funding, etc.												
Administrative	Extend reach and bring to the table, all local universities to utilize talent of students, faculty and staff.												
Marketing	Partner with technology business developers, such as Ben Franklin TechVentures, to provide additional research facilities with proximity and accessibility to Lehigh campus												
Incentives	Partner with LVEDC and NDCED to investigate tax abatement programs, grants, and other incentive programs that are appropriate for the Township in order to compete within regional market.												

IV. ACTION PLAN

The following action plan was developed by the Task Force in phases. First, the Task Force developed four specific goals that supported their Vision Statement. Within each goal, the Task Force examined different objectives that would corroborate each goal. Third, the Task Force developed actions that could be implemented to achieve the goals desired. Last, the Task Force set a responsible party and time frame to each of the action items to create accountability and a framework for its implementation.

After the plan is adopted and tasks are budgeted, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be developed for all major initiatives to provide metrics and measurement of the results. Where possible, baseline KPIs will be established from existing data (e.g., permits issued versus permits applied for; length of time from permit application to issuance).

Goal 1: Promote Economic Development Growth

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Remove roadblocks for development and redevelopment of vacant parcels	Collate data on existing loan and grant programs and determine contact information for brokers, banks, and realtors. Establish connections and provide information to starter companies.	LVEDC and NCD CED	Ongoing
	Engage local realtors and developers to grasp “real” or “perceived” roadblocks to development in Lower Saucon	Council and Staff	Short-term
	Creation of a committee of local business owners to work with staff in reviewing Township policies and permitting procedures	Council and Staff	Short-term
	Re-examine zoning districts, permitted uses, and the area and dimensional requirements.	Planner, Zoning, PC	Short-term
	Educate the community about the “process”. Expand Citizen’s Academy to include a business development segment.	Council and Staff	Mid-term
	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a “buddy system” where established businesses mentor new business owners.	Staff and Chamber of Commerce	Mid-term
	Complete a study to determine the feasibility of offering tax incentives to businesses looking to locate in the Township.	Council, Finance, and LVEDC	Mid-term

Goal 1: Promote Economic Development Growth

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Manage Growth	Work with Chamber of Commerce, LVEDC, NDCED, and other economic development organizations in the Lehigh Valley to actively advertise and promote the Township and recruit business development.	Council, Staff, Chamber of Commerce, LVEDC, and NDCED	Ongoing
	Steer development to utilize and adapt existing facilities and infrastructure where possible.	LVEDC and Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing
	Parcel inventory to determine highest and best uses as well as maximum development potential	Planner, Zoning, PC, and LVPC	Short-term
	Explore options to upgrade and/or expand existing transportation and utility network to fully utilize land development potential in appropriate areas of the Township.	LSA, Staff, Public Works, Engineer, and LVPC	Mid-term
	Create opportunities to encourage a variety of housing styles to attract a solid and varied workforce.	LVPC and NDCED	Mid-term
Identify and pursue development corridors	Utilize resources such as LVPC, NDCED, and LVEDC to identify economic trends in the Lehigh Valley and how to best create linkages with development areas in Lower Saucon.	Council, Zoning, LVPC, NDCED, and LVEDC	Ongoing
	Explore expansion of existing commercial zoning district boundaries along the Route 412 and 378 corridors.	Planner, Zoning, and PC	Short-term
	Look to enhance areas along major roadways through the rehabilitation, conversion, and/or adaptive reuse of aging, vacant, commercial properties.	Council, Zoning, PC, Chamber of Commerce	Short-term
	Develop commercial corridor branding through the usage of streetscape improvements.	Council, PC, Zoning, Chamber of Commerce	Short-term
	Improve the overall streetscape and traffic flow by encouraging facade improvements, placement of overhead utilities underground, shared access / driveways, revised parking, and new landscaping.	Zoning, Planner, Engineer, and Chamber of Commerce	Mid-term
	Increase accessibility through the use of sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths.	Parks & Rec., Planner, PC, LVPC, PADOT, Appalachian Mt. Club	Mid-term

Goal 1: Promote Economic Development Growth

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Inventory and improve Infrastructure	Use utility base mapping to determine areas with public sewer and water that are best suitable for development.	Engineer, Planner, LSA, Zoning	Short-term
	Undertake a transportation study to determine roads with highest use, efficiency at intersections, shortcuts, and major trip generators.	Council, Staff, Engineer, LVPC, PADOT, and LANTA	Mid-term
	Work with local cable and wireless communication companies to identify development areas which require the placement and/or upgrade of cable, fiber optics, relay stations, and other infrastructure to improve speed, reliability, and access to internet, wireless, and digital communication.	Consultant and LVEDC	Mid-term
	Utilize grant funding to assist with the expansion of transportation and roadway improvements	Zoning, Staff, LVPC, and LVEDC, and NCDCEd	Mid-term
Identify current and future office space for expanding businesses	Work with local realtors to determine current inventory of office space for rent / lease / sale.	Council, Staff, Zoning, and NCDCEd	Short-term

Goal 2: Explore Potential Uses / Adaptive Reuse for Existing Underutilized Parcels within the Township

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Ensure that key development areas are zoned appropriately	Inventory of existing commercial, industrial, and institutional uses	Zoning and Planner	Ongoing
	Map areas currently available with public water and sewer and overlay with zoning. Determine areas for utility expansion and areas suitable for rezoning.	Zoning, Planner, Engineer, LSA, and PC	Short-term
	Update Comprehensive Plan and Zoning ordinance to reflect goals and objectives of the Economic Task Force.	Zoning, Planner, PC, Hellertown Borough, SVSD, and LVPC	Mid-term
	Look to expand types of permitted uses based on the increase in STEM companies and facilities in the Lehigh Valley	Zoning, Planner, and PC	Mid-term

Goal 2: Explore Potential Uses / Adaptive Reuse for Existing Underutilized Parcels within the Township

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Review regulations and create a balance for environmental protection and development potential	Explore options for zoning regulations to encourage development in Commercial and Industrial districts, such as different impervious surface ratios or environmental protection standards for woodlands and steep slopes.	Zoning, Planner, PC, and EAC	Short-term
	Research options for re-use and restoration of historic structures for business as well as preservation opportunities.	Planner, Zoning, Staff, and PC	Mid-term
	Encourage the rehabilitation of building using “green” methods. Utilize EPA publications and other resources to update Township codes and ordinances.	EAC, Planner, Zoning, PC, and LVPC	Mid-term
	Explore the potential of developing existing “brownfield” sites through the use of grants and other development funding	NDCED, LVEDC, and LVPC	Mid-term
Retention and expansion of the existing businesses within the Township	Identify and promote local businesses through a Township directory, a Love Local campaign, and other advertising media outlets, with Saucon Valley branding.	Staff and Chamber of Commerce	Short-term
	Creation of a local business committee that meets with Township staff on a regular basis to discuss community and business relationships.	Council	Short-term
	Creation of a Township-wide or corridor specific streetscape program, with business and directional signage, lighting, street furniture, and landscaping.	Zoning, Planner, Public Works, and Chamber of Commerce	Mid-term
Promote a balance of land uses within the Township	Look to re-use older or vacant buildings for uses completely different from their original design (eg. factory converted to apartments) and utilize brownfields or other grant monies available.	Council, Staff, LVEDC, and NDCED	Mid-term
Communication with property owners	Use of Township website and other social media to engage Township residents and property owners in the Township’s economic development efforts	Staff	Ongoing

Goal 3: Promote and Encourage the Creation of New Ventures that Attract High-Wage, Future-Oriented Businesses

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Explore, attract and retain technology and health care related businesses	Establish contacts at the major health institutions in the Lehigh Valley including St. Luke’s and the Lehigh Valley Healthcare Network.	Council and Staff	Short-term
	Explore the need and feasibility of tax incentives and grant monies to attract and retain small research and development companies	Council, Finance, LVEDC, and NCDCEd	Short-term
	Explore a variety of Public Private Partnerships with STEM related institutions to establish incubators, start-ups, funding, etc.	Council, Staff, LVEDC, and NCDCEd	Short-term
Partner with existing institutions	Establish contacts in facilities planning at major regional employers.	Council, Staff, LVEDC, and NCDCEd	Short-term
	Extend reach and bring to the table, all local universities to utilize talent of students, faculty and staff.	Council and Staff	Short-term
	Capture talent of expanding arts programs at all levels, such as ArtsQuest, Lehigh Valley Charter School of the Arts, and Baum School of Art.	Council and Staff	Mid-term
Recruit small businesses	Partner with LVEDC and NCDCEd to investigate tax abatement programs, grants, and other incentive programs that are appropriate for the Township in order to compete within regional market.	Finance, LVEDC, and NCDCEd	Short-term
	Embrace the “Love Local” advertising theme. Identify locally owned and operated businesses to promote the Township’s unique branding.	Council, Staff, and Chamber of Commerce	High
Identify facilities and sites for start-up businesses	Explore space in/on Township owned properties for appropriateness and adaptability as office and research space.	Zoning, Planner, and Staff	Short-term
	Review and revise zoning regulations, if needed, to promote creative and new businesses and industries.	Zoning, Planner, and PC	Short-term

Goal 3: Promote and Encourage the Creation of New Ventures that Attract High-Wage, Future-Oriented Businesses

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Incubator spaces / opportunities for shared space for the creation of new businesses.	Partner with technology business developers, such as Ben Franklin TechVentures, to provide additional research facilities with proximity and accessibility to Lehigh campus.	Council, Zoning, Lehigh, LVEDC, and NCDCEd	Short-term

Goal 4: Maintain and enhance the Quality of Life in Lower Saucon Township

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Develop the identity of our community / social fabric	Undertake a branding and marketing campaign to launch the economic development goals and objectives found in this report and developed subsequently.	Council and Staff	Short-term
Enhance the rural character and diversity of the Township	Work with the agricultural community to promote the development of agritainment uses, such as wineries, farmers markets, harvest festivals, CSAs, etc.	Council, Zoning, Planner, and EAC	Mid-term
Balance between environmental protection and development opportunity	Encourage property owners to permanently preserve open space and environmentally sensitive areas through the donation of conservation easements.	Council, Staff, and EAC	Ongoing
Protect and enhance the cultural heritage of the community	Continue to support and identify important historical resources through common signage, improved facilities, landscaping, and advertising.	Council, Zoning, Staff, Saucon Valley Conservancy, and Lower Saucon Historical Society	Ongoing
	Provide zoning ordinance regulations specific to historic structures that permit a variety of uses and additional design standards in order to encourage their adaptive reuse	Zoning, Planner, PC	Mid-term