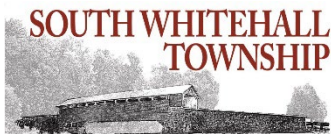


**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

2024/2025 Workplan

4444 Walbert Avenue
Allentown, PA 18104



Overview

Environmental Advisory Councils

An Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is an appointed arm of municipal government that focuses exclusively on environmental conservation and improvement. Authorized by Pennsylvania Act 148 of 1973 (amended by Act 177 of 1996), EACs make recommendations and advise the local authority on environmental-related matters. Each EAC must be established by municipal ordinance and may have a slightly different focus depending on the specific issues in that municipality.

South Whitehall EAC

The South Whitehall Township EAC was originally established in the 1970s, but was reestablished on January 17, 2024 through Ordinance Number 1082. This ordinance outlines six specific duties and responsibilities of the South Whitehall EAC:

1. To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.
2. In conjunction with the Park and Recreation Board, to make recommendations as to possible uses of open space areas.
3. To promote a community environmental program.
4. To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.
5. To advise the appropriate Township government agency in the acquisition of property, both real and personal, by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, easement, devise, or lease.
6. To review subdivision and land development plans in accordance with the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, limited to matters pertaining to the foregoing subject matter.

These six duties and responsibilities are permanent fixtures of the South Whitehall EAC and do not change. The purpose of the annual/biennial workplan is to provide direction and more clarity to the EAC membership, staff, Board of Commissioners, and public as to the activities of the planned to support the authorized duties and responsibilities of the EAC for that calendar year(s). This workplan is developed in collaboration with the EAC membership and Township staff assigned to support the EAC. The annual/biennial workplan is then presented for approval by the Township Board of Commissioners to ensure consistency with other initiatives of South Whitehall Township.

2024 EAC Membership

Marc Basist

Marie North

Frank Petrocelli

Derek Pinkham

Sara E. Seipel

Township Staff

Chris Strohler, Long-Range Planner/Special Projects Coordinator

Mike Elias, Utilities/MS4 Program Coordinator

Herb Bender, Director of Township Operations/Public Works Manager

Tom Petrucci, Township Manager

Priority Goals & Actions (2024 – 2025)

The priority goals and actions for the remainder of 2024 and early 2025, primarily stem from priority actions in the recently adopted *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan. This plan was adopted in September of 2024 and lays out strategies and priorities for the preservation of Open Space, Agricultural, Historic, and Natural Resources. This plan emphasizes the importance of the South Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council as a group to help implement the goals of the plan and recommends several actions to be carried out specifically by the EAC.

The following five goals have been developed by the members of the EAC and staff. These goals were specifically developed in a progression approach, with the results of the first goal influencing or guiding the development of the second goal. The actions associated with these goals are necessary steps that need to be taken in order to accomplish some of the larger priority goals identified in the *South Whitehall Landscapes* plan.

Each goal outlines specific actions to be taken, along with references to other Township plans/initiatives. Each page also identifies which specific duty of the EAC authorizes or encourages the actions proposed. A rough timeline is displayed at the end of this workplan for guidance as to how each step progresses.

2024/2024 Goal #1

Review and further define Open Space and Agriculture Place Types

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #2: In conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Board, to make recommendations as to possible uses of open space areas.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Review the Land Use Plan chapter of the South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
- Review the nine new Open Space classifications introduced in the *South Whitehall Landscapes* plan
- Work with staff to further develop and define uses for the Open Space Place Type and Agriculture Place Type to be incorporated into a proposed “Place Type Guide”
- Work with staff to incorporate use definitions into relevant ordinances (Zoning, SALDO, etc.)

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item O1: Open Space Preservation
 - Implementation Item S1: SALDO Updates
 - Implementation Item Z1: Zoning Updates
- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action B.8: Update SALDO with new open space classifications and requirements

2024/2024 Goal #2

Develop a South Whitehall Township Open Space Map

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #4: To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Map all public and private “open spaces” in the Township
- Classify open spaces based on the nine classifications introduced in the *South Whitehall Landscapes* plan
- Distinguish public and private open spaces

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action A.1: Inventory and categorize public and private Open Spaces
 - Action A.3: Develop an Open Space Preservation Program

2024/2024 Goal #3

Identify and map Priority Resource Protection Areas

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #4: To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Review and prioritize data layers important to Agricultural Resources
- Review and prioritize data layers important to Natural Resources
- Identify layer overlaps and appropriate buffering
- Recommend Resource Protection Areas to be updated on the Township Official Map

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item O2: Official Map Updates
- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action A.3: Develop an Open Space Preservation Program

2024/2024 Goal #4

Review/Recommend Resource Protection Ordinances

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #1: To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Review and comment on existing resource protection ordinances:
 - Floodplain Ordinance
 - Stormwater Ordinance
 - Trees Ordinance
- Identify additional resource protection ordinances and research model ordinance documents
- Make recommendations to update or develop new resource protection ordinances

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item R3: Resource Protection Ordinances
- *South Whitehall Landscapes Plan*
 - Action B.2: Create natural resource preservation ordinances
 - Action B.3: Update and enforce existing natural resource ordinances

2024/2024 Goal #5

Develop and promote a Township Open Space Program

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #4: To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.

EAC Duty #5: To advise the appropriate Township government agency in the acquisition of property, both real and personal, by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, easement, devise, or lease.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Work with staff to identify a Township Open Space Needs Assessment
- Work with staff to develop a process to review applications and properties of interest for protection
- Review and approve Open Space Evaluation Checklist
- Review relevant reports, documents, and case studies on successful municipal open space referendums
- Review financial impact data, cost/benefit analysis, and other municipal open space programs to develop a Community Education Campaign
- Host public outreach events, presentations, and other relevant events in support of the Community Education Campaign

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item O1: Open Space Preservation
- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action A.3: Develop an Open Space Preservation Program
 - Action A.4: Finance an Open Space Preservation Program

Additional Considerations

While the EAC wanted to prioritize actions and goals that support the time-sensitive priorities of the *South Whitehall Landscapes Plan*, several other topics were discussed that should be considered over the next 6-8 months that will help guide future EAC goals and actions. These topics fall under several of the authorized duties of the EAC but will require additional thought and discussion to accomplish.

Develop a 2024/2025 Environmental Issues List

Develop a SWT EAC Community Outreach Package

Identify EAC Land Development Review Procedures

Below is a proposed timeline displaying how each goal will be addressed by the EAC in the coming months.

South Whitehall Township EAC 2024/2025 Workplan		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Goal #1	Place Type Refinement						
Goal #2	Open Space Map						
Goal #3	Priority Protection Areas						
Goal #4	Resource Protection Ordinances						
Goal #5	Open Space Preservation Program						