

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP RESIDENTIAL OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

**1) What is being proposed?**

- It is proposed that the zoning in the Township’s R-2 district (the predominant residential zoning district in the Township) be amended to allow for semi-detached carriage homes (twins) and townhomes (triplexes) on undeveloped or under-developed parcels of 20 acres or more.
- Currently, only single family detached homes are permitted in the R-2 at a maximum density of one unit per acre.
- Importantly, under this proposal, the one-dwelling-per-acre density requirements would not change. That is, on a 25 acre lot, a developer could not build more than 25 total dwelling units, just as they cannot build more than 25 detached homes under the current zoning ordinance.

**2) What parcels would be affected under this proposal?**

- There are four undeveloped or underdeveloped parcels with over 20 acres in the Township:
  - 980 Hershey Mill Road (34.7 acres)
  - 1469 Morstein Road (20.6 acres)
  - 401 Ellis Lane (87.3 acres)
  - 204 Line Road (31.9 acres)—However, this property (Thorncroft) has a **conservation easement** that restricts future development to no more than—we believe—two additional residential units, once the tenant house currently under construction is complete. This conservation easement is enforced by the Pickering and French Creek Conservation Trust.
- In addition, theoretically, undeveloped parcels of under 20 acres that are contiguous to any of the 20+ acre parcels listed above could be combined so that more acreage would be affected, provided the respective owners can agree on any terms of sale amongst themselves. See the [map](#) for more detail about the abutting properties.

**3) Why is this proposal under consideration?**

- The Township’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Township “continue to provide opportunities for a variety of housing types”, which would include alternatives to detached homes such as carriage homes and townhomes.
- The Township was approached by the owners of 980 Hershey Mill Road about whether non-detached homes would be permitted to be built on their property. This property has steep slopes and wetlands. As a result, if the property were to be developed, a developer would likely take down many of the trees and bulldoze into steep slopes in order to accommodate as many single family detached homes as the current zoning ordinance allows (although, as a practical matter it’s probably impossible to get one detached home per acre, or 34 detached homes, on this property). By contrast, allowing for carriage homes and townhomes would allow the developer to build all the units close together and retain as much existing open space as

possible, as the “footprint” of these housing types is, in the aggregate, much less than the footprint of single family detached homes.

- In response to this inquiry, the Township commissioned Thomas Comitta Associates (TCA) to develop recommendations on this issue.

**What will the townhomes look like?**

- It is important to stress that the open space proposal is for an amendment to the zoning ordinance; it is not a specific development plan with detailed architectural and engineering plans for any parcel.
- In order to actually adopt an ordinance, the Board of Supervisors needs to advertise and hold a separate public hearing on the amendment at a later date.

**Who participated in the development of the recommendations?**

- A working group consisting of representatives of Township staff, the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission met with TCA on a number of occasions before the recommendations were finalized and presented to the Planning Commission in a public meeting on September 25, 2018.
- Thursday’s meeting (October 25) is the first time the recommendations will be presented to the entire Board of Supervisors.

**Why is the Township permitting any new development?**

- Property owners have a legal right to develop their property pursuant to the PA Municipal Planning Code and local zoning ordinances in place.
- However, the Township wants to ensure that the remaining residential development in East Goshen is done in a manner that is environmentally responsible and preserves as much open space as possible.

**Will this increase traffic?**

- All new development increases traffic.
- However, because the recommendation would not change the existing density requirement (i.e. it would still be one dwelling per acre), it is unlikely that revising the ordinance would increase the traffic more than maintaining the existing ordinance.
- In any event, as part of any future land development process, the Township will work with the developer to ensure that all potential traffic hazards are mitigated.

**How much money does the Township receive as a result of new development?**

- Without knowing what the new homes will look like, it’s hard to project new Township revenue with precision.
- However, for discussion purposes, the following Township taxes and fees would apply:

**One-time revenue**

- Building permit revenue of no more than 1% of construction cost. The estimated permit revenue for a new 3,000 square foot house is \$3,650. Paid by developer.
- The Sewer Tap In fee (paid to the Municipal Authority) to buy into the existing sewer infrastructure is \$2,000 per unit, plus a sewer inspection fee to ensure that the connection was made properly of \$423 per unit. Paid by developer.
- A Transportation Impact Fee of about \$396 per unit to pay for road improvements necessitated by more vehicular traffic. Paid by developer.
- Real estate transfer taxes of 0.5% of the sales price whenever a property is sold (in addition, the school district gets 0.5%). Paid by buyer and/or seller.

**On-going (repeats annually) revenue**

- Earned Income Tax, which is generally 0.5% of earned income, with the school district getting the other 0.5%, for a total of 1%. Therefore, a family earning \$100,000 per year would pay the Township \$500 and WCASD \$500 in EIT annually. Paid by resident.
- Real Estate Property Taxes at the current tax rate of 0.125% of assessed value (plus, obviously, higher millage rates for Chester County and WCASD). For perspective, a property with a current fair market value of \$500,000 (and therefore an assessed value of about \$250,000) would pay about \$313 in Township real estate taxes annually. Paid by property owner.
- Finally, a Cable TV Franchise Fee of 5% of every resident's cable bill. This fee is levied on all cable bills and is remitted by Verizon and Comcast to the Township for their use of the Township's right-of-way. Paid by cable subscriber.

**Was any economic analysis conducted?**

- No, TCA's report was focused on zoning and land planning not economic impacts on property values or Township revenues.

**What is the current breakdown of residential housing types across the entire Township?**

- Approximately 41% of the Township's existing housing stock is single family detached; 26% is townhomes (including Hershey's Mill Villages and townhome developments along the Route 3 corridor); the remaining 33% is multi-family housing (apartments & condos).