

Resident Workshop 3A/3B:

Summary of Resident Feedback

Introduction:

As part of the borough's Comprehensive Plan update process, the final two resident workshops were held to solicit input on key planning priorities. Workshop 3A took place on September 29th, and Workshop 3B was held on October 20th.

At each workshop, residents were presented with display boards covering seven key topic areas:

1. Historic Preservation
2. Business Development & Tourism
3. Access to Open Space & The Outdoor Environment
4. Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety
5. Traffic & Parking Management
6. Planning for a Changing Climate
7. Growth Management & Affordability

For each topic area, example principles and action steps were provided to frame the discussion and give residents a starting point for engagement. Below each set of examples, blank space was provided for residents to respond to, react to, and expand upon the ideas presented (or to introduce entirely new concerns and priorities).

The response from the community was robust and thoughtful. Residents offered specific suggestions, identified gaps in the original frameworks, raised questions, and shared their experiences with current challenges facing the borough. Their feedback ranged from broad conceptual concerns to highly specific recommendations for streets, properties, and policies.

The following is a summary of what residents contributed. This summary is organized by topic area and captures the major themes, common concerns, notable individual suggestions, and areas of consensus or tension that emerged from the workshops. **Moving forward, this community input will be used to inform a revised set of principles and action items that will be developed in the coming months as a part of the Comprehensive Plan document.**

Topic Area Summaries:

Historic Preservation

Key Themes:

- **Definitions and clarity needed:** Strong call for common definitions of "Historic" and "Preservation" so residents understand what's expected
- **HARB process concerns:** Multiple comments about HARB being too burdensome for homeowners while seemingly easier for large developers
- **Enforcement vs. advisory role:** Questions about whether HARB will remain advisory and concerns about "hearing board overreach"
- **Balance needed:** Desire to maintain historic feel while not making the process "tedious" for small homeowner changes

Notable Specific Requests:

- Opening the old "Odette's" house to bring history to life
- Do not rebuild Cintra (preservation vs. development tension)
- Look to Solebury HARB "fast pass" model for streamlining small projects
- Improve procedures for building "historical-type" buildings that maintain historic feel

Tensions/Questions:

- Clear tension between preservation goals and homeowner flexibility
- Perception that process favors large developers over individual homeowners
- Need to balance HARB authority with resident needs

Business Development & Tourism

Key Themes:

- **Integration with other priorities:** Business development should interface with climate/environmental issues

- **Alternative transportation:** Support for bike lanes and bike/e-bike racks to improve access without increasing parking
- **Pedestrian safety in commercial areas:** Strong emphasis on police presence and traffic management at Bridge and Main Street on weekends
- **Truck traffic enforcement:** 18-wheelers violating the 28-foot limit are a significant concern
- **Parking permits for residents:** Residents without driveways should be able to purchase parking permits

Notable Specific Requests:

- Allow residential accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for smaller housing options
- Reduce police department's dependence on parking revenue
- This is "improvable not fixable" (pragmatic recognition of ongoing challenges)

Tensions/Questions:

- Budget dependence on parking revenue vs. resident needs
- Enforcement gaps (truck restrictions not being followed)

Access to Open Space & The Outdoor Environment

Key Themes:

- **Strong desire for riverfront access:** Multiple comments focused on acquiring or developing riverfront properties (Cintra, Old Mill Road area, properties on Waterloo Street) for public access
- **Sidewalk conditions are a priority:** Residents want existing sidewalks repaired and expanded throughout town
- **Regional connectivity:** Interest in connecting to regional bike paths through on-road bike/e-bike lanes
- **Dog park demand:** Specific request to use JDM materials site for a dog park
- **Safety infrastructure:** Requests for lighted/signal crosswalks, bike racks in parks, and improved walkway safety near the school on Bridge Street

Notable Specific Requests:

- Clarification needed on jurisdictional issues (Old Mill Lane vs. Old Mill Road, Cintra property status)
- Questions about responsibility for maintenance (brick sidewalk inlays, vandalism on towpath utility poles)
- Emergency access preservation for Waterloo (Coryell) fire lane
- Consideration of closing certain roads to create pedestrian walkways for riverfront access

Tensions/Questions:

- Some confusion about property ownership and borough vs. township jurisdiction
- Need for clarity on maintenance responsibilities

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety

Key Themes:

- **E-bike regulations:** Multiple comments about e-bike safety, with some calling for restrictions/bans on Main Street and others supporting dedicated bike lanes for both bikes and e-bikes
- **Sidewalk gaps:** Strong support for sidewalk gap analysis and expansion, especially on W Mechanic, S Sugan, and Old York Road
- **Infrastructure improvements:** Painted bike lanes, clearly marked pedestrian crossings (especially near school), speed bumps, and speed enforcement
- **Regional connectivity:** Support for bike lane from N Main into Solebury along the river (area already exists but needs paving)
- **Encouragement through beautification:** Maintain walking routes to encourage parking farther from Main Street

Notable Specific Requests:

- Better communication with PennDOT and county to accomplish traffic safety objectives
- Remove bikes from Main Street to New Street

- Sidewalks on both sides at North Point crossing Giant
- Speed enforcement "all the time" not just occasionally
- Signage and suggested routes for both bikes and cars looking for parking

Tensions/Questions:

- Conflicting views on e-bikes (some want them banned from Main St, others want dedicated lanes)
- Balance between encouraging alternative transportation and managing pedestrian areas

Traffic & Parking Management

Key Themes:

- **Expanded parking options:** Multiple mentions of Union Square, W Mechanic lot, school lot, rail yard partnerships for more parking
- **Resident parking privileges:** NH and Solebury residents shouldn't have to pay at school lot; need passes
- **Delivery regulations:** Establish regulations for restaurant deliveries that arrive during peak hours
- **One-way street considerations:** Suggestion for one-way streets (Ferry, Main, Bridge)
- **Truck traffic:** Need to eliminate 18-wheelers on Bridge Street and enforce truck limits
- **Alternative transportation:** Support for shuttle service, DART bus service, EV charging stations

Notable Specific Requests:

- Parking outside commercial areas for valet services (Windy Bush Road with zoning change)
- Educate Riverwoods and V2 residents that Uber is cheaper/easier than parking
- Work with Solebury to "undo the silly change on lower York Road" (restricting public roads)

- Borough parking lot should be more welcoming with 15-minute drop-off spots
- Implement what PennDOT has already studied

Tensions/Questions:

- Regional coordination challenges with Solebury
- Balance between visitor parking needs and resident convenience

Planning For a Changing Climate

Key Themes:

- **Green infrastructure and incentives:** Support for incentivizing geothermal, solar, and EV infrastructure through financial and zoning mechanisms
- **Native plantings and natural landscaping:** Multiple comments supporting more trees, native plants, naturalized spaces, less lawn/more meadows
- **Stormwater management:** Routine cleaning of storm grates, increased frequency of stormwater system cleaning, maintaining creek channels
- **Flood preparedness:** Recognition that flash floods will be more frequent with shorter notice; need for education and emergency plans
- **Tree preservation policies:** Strengthen tree replacement requirements (15" caliber tree removal should require three 3-4" replacement trees)
- **School partnership:** Use school as emergency shelter during power outages/weather disasters

Notable Specific Requests:

- Borough should lead by example with best practices
- Public works should routinely clean storm grates
- PennDOT coordination for ditch maintenance (example: 44 S Sугan Road flooding)
- Educate property owners about ivy killing trees (cut at base, don't pull off)
- Major culvert concerns at Lambertville, Washington Crossing, and Aquetong Creek/end of borough on N Main
- Relax "must mow" ordinance to allow meadows for reduced runoff

- Clean fallen trees/logs from creek channels, but don't do it "indiscriminately" as debris slows water (balance needed)

Tensions/Questions:

- Balance between clearing debris for flood prevention vs. leaving natural barriers that slow water
 - Coordination challenges with PennDOT and county for drainage maintenance
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Growth Management & Affordability

Key Themes:

- **Strong ADU support:** Multiple comments supporting accessory dwelling units, including for Airbnb/short-term use and flexible rules for existing properties
- **Affordable housing strategies:** Support for incentivizing affordable housing through tax benefits, allowing second residences in single-family homes, and apartments above commercial properties
- **JDM property planning:** Multiple comments urging immediate planning for the 20-acre JDM concrete site
- **Creative infill opportunities:** Using space above/around existing infrastructure (McCaffrey's, railroad, quarry, parking lots in Union Square)
- **Character preservation:** References to preserving LGBT community character (Rainbow Walk on Mechanic St), less lawn/more natural landscaping

Notable Specific Requests:

- No more hotel/wedding venues
- Consider combining New Hope with Solebury for joint ordinances to attract growth
- Bury utilities underground for safety and wheelchair accessibility
- Allow annual review of comprehensive plan (language for Planning Commission)
- Encourage Borough Council to amend zoning ordinances to achieve goals

Tensions/Questions:

- Some residents support development while others want strict limits

- Balance between affordable housing goals and maintaining small-town character
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Crossover Themes

Several themes emerged across multiple topic areas:

1. **Regional coordination is essential:** Repeated references to working with Solebury, PennDOT, county, and neighboring municipalities
2. **Resident vs. visitor balance:** Tension between supporting tourism and protecting resident quality of life
3. **Enforcement gaps:** Concerns about lack of follow-through on existing regulations (trucks, speed, HARB)
4. **Creative use of existing infrastructure:** Interest in repurposing underutilized spaces (parking lots, upper floors, railroad areas)
5. **Climate resilience intersects with everything:** Residents see climate considerations as integral to all planning decisions
6. **Process clarity needed:** Confusion about jurisdictions, responsibilities, and how to navigate regulations
7. **E-bikes as emerging issue:** This technology is creating new opportunities and challenges not fully addressed in current plans