

SKETCH PLANS

INTRODUCTION

A sketch plan is an informal plan—not necessarily to scale—indicating a tracts topographic and other notable existing features, surroundings and general layout for a proposed subdivision or land development. The submission of a sketch plan provides an opportunity for the applicant to meet with municipal officials allowing both parties to discuss the project at the conceptual level before the preliminary engineering begins.

Early discussion facilitated through the sketch plan process allows the municipality and the developer to articulate their goals for the project and to discuss site layout and design alternatives. This collaboration benefits both parties—the developer who may experience a smoother, more cost-effective approval process, and the municipality can ensure the project aligns with its community development objectives.



Photo Credit: Above Ground Level Droneworks



APPLICABILITY

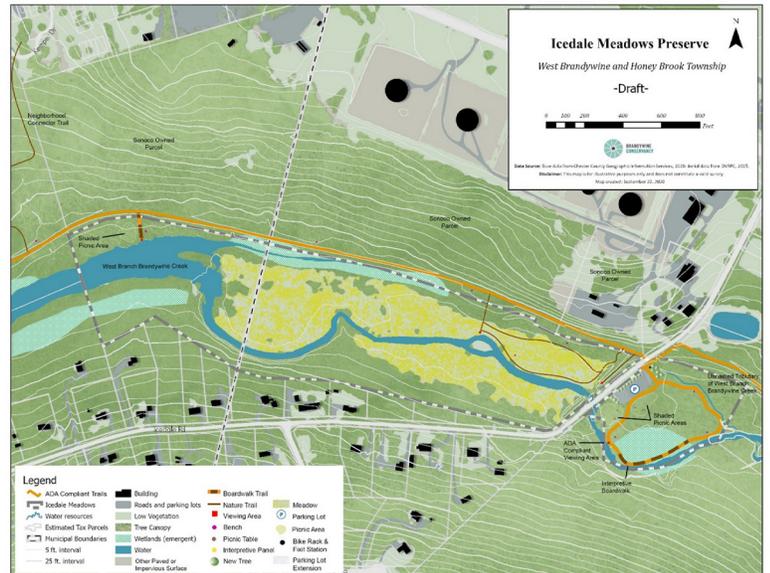
A Sketch Plan not only assists developers, but also can be used to support the following Goals:

1. **History and Culture:** It is an effective tool for municipalities with scenic roads or byways, scenic rivers, historic resources, prime agricultural soils, open space preservation plans, and/or greenway plans to ensure the greatest protection of resources during development and allow for continued stewardship.
2. **Conservation:** Sketch plans create a balance between new development and natural resource protection. Under zoning provisions, developers should not expect to achieve maximum density, to instead, allow for protections of existing natural resources.
3. **Partnerships:** Private and public partnerships allow for collaboration when evaluating future development pressures. A sketch plan also allows for collaboration between municipal representatives and a developer in the land development process.
4. **Transportation:** Sketch plans can allow for collaboration between municipal representatives and developers to provide key multi-modal trail connections.



IMPLEMENTATION

- By updating the Comprehensive Plan (and Future Land Use Map), Open Space, Environmental Resources and Recreation (OSRER) Plan and Official Map to articulate community development objectives
- Through an amendment to the “Plan Process and Content” provisions in the SALDO Procedure: Sketch Plan and Site Visit; Preliminary Plan; Final Plan
- The sketch plan option can be bundled with an Existing Resources and Site Analysis Plan (ERSAP), Conservation Design Option, Natural Features Protection Ordinance, Traditional Neighborhood Design Ordinance, or an Historic Resource Protection Ordinance



Conceptual Sketch Plan from Icedale Meadows Preserve Plan (2022)

EXISTING ORDINANCES

The following municipalities have regulatory ordinances related to sketch or preliminary plans found within the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) of their Township code:

Chester County:

- Kennett Township - §206-304
- Tredyffrin Township - §181-8
- Uwchlan Township - §303
- Upper Uwchlan Township - §162-6
- West Bradford Township - §385-20

Delaware County:

- Chadds Ford Township - §110-9
- Edgmont Township - §305-17
- Thornbury Township - §22-401

Montgomery County:

- Borough of Norristown - §282-302
- Lower Merion Township - §135-3.1

For more information on the Sketch Plan process, see the expanded technical bulletin included in this toolkit.



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