

## Chapter 5

# Goals and Objectives

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This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan presents the goals and objectives of the Oley / Alsace / Ruscombmanor Planning Region. Goals are general statements indicating the desired direction for the communities, and reflect the long-term state they wish to establish or maintain. Objectives are more specific, relatively short-term policy guidelines for the municipalities to follow. Goals are achieved through accomplishment of one or more of the stated objectives. This Plan will identify goals and objectives of a regional nature, but because of some differences between the municipalities, some objectives are specifically aimed at one municipality and not the other.

It should be noted that the goals and objectives contained in this chapter, as well as the Policies contained within Part II of this Plan support the *American Planning Association* concept of **Smart Growth**. Smart Growth encourages a more efficient use of the land by encouraging a larger share of growth within urbanized or previously developed areas already served by public infrastructure. Smart Growth reduces the pressure of development on farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Smart Growth can be interpreted in many ways by different people and organizations. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed the following list of 10 **Smart Growth Principles** that have generally been accepted by planning professionals as a starting point:

1. Incorporate Mixed Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
4. Create Walkable Neighborhoods
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective
10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

## **NATURAL, SCENIC, HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Overall Goal:** Recognize and respect the assets and limitations of the natural and built environment, protect and preserve those assets, and facilitate their use.

**Natural Resources Goal:** Protect the sensitive natural features that characterize so much of the area's natural landscape.

### **Objectives:**

- Direct growth away from areas with sensitive ecological resources.
- Strengthen zoning and subdivision regulations that conserve steep slopes, animal habitats, wooded areas, stream buffers and flood prone lands.
- Strive to maximize preservation of permanent natural areas within residential developments.
- Look for opportunities to initiate a linked network of greenways, open spaces, and green infrastructure.
- Protect the supply and quality of groundwater and surface water.
- Protect woodland.
- Continue to support the efforts of the Pike /Oley District Preservation Coalition.
- Protect important Natural Areas identified in the Berks County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Preserve watersheds, stream corridors, floodplains, wetlands, and recharge areas.
- Protect steep slopes. Determine appropriate approaches toward development on ridgelines.
- Preserve natural wildlife habitats.
- Prevent deterioration of air quality.

## **SCENIC RESOURCES**

**Goal:** To protect the Scenic Resources within the Region.

**Objectives:**

- Protect scenic views, features and landscapes, and ensure for future generations views of the scenic and natural beauty of the Region.
- Protect the night sky from excessive light pollution.

## **HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Goal:** To protect, preserve, and enhance the remaining historic, architectural, and cultural resources and their surroundings.

**Objectives:**

- Protect the character of Oley Village, Pleasantville, Pricetown, and the area's other villages with appropriate zoning strategies.
- Encourage the development of design guidelines to preserve historic architecture and village design patterns.
- Support the efforts of local and county historic preservation groups to continue identifying and protecting historic resources.
- Preserve recognized historic sites and structures. Discourage inappropriate development in historic areas.
- Maintain partnerships with private and non-profit organizations to protect the Region's historic resources.
- Require impact studies for development near important historic resources, and require mitigation of potential adverse impacts to historic resources.
- Review and update the Historic Preservation Ordinance in Oley Township, implemented by the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB).

- Discourage demolition by neglect and deterioration of historic resources.
- Encourage responsible conservation and maintenance of vintage architecture, especially the stone farmhouses located in the Region.
- Consider the degree to which suggested historic preservation guidelines might be legally enforced through revised township ordinances without unduly infringing on property owners' rights.
- Subject rental units to the same standards of good repair as owner-occupied dwellings and perform adequate inspections to guarantee enforcement of existing codes.
- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to preserve historic resources.
- Identify existing contemporary sites which could be considered part of the historical or cultural heritage of future generations and work to preserve these sites.
- Preserve historic landscapes and view sheds that protect the context of the history of the Region.
- Maintain the regional survey of historic resources contained within the Berks County Greenway and Open Space Plan.

## **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Goal:** Preserve existing productive farmland for agricultural use and support the continuation of agricultural and agricultural support operations in the Region.

### **Objectives:**

- Preserve farming by continuing to promote agricultural zoning, agricultural security areas, purchase of agricultural easements and preferential assessments.
- Minimize non-farm activities near agricultural areas to reduce the potential for conflicts with normal farming operations.

- Minimize public water and sewer line extensions into prime agricultural areas.
- Discourage the conversion of productive farmland to non-farm uses.
- Provide for a range of appropriate supplemental income opportunities in agricultural areas.
- Avoid scattered development which causes conflicts with farming, such as additional vehicular traffic and land use incompatibilities, by designating growth and potential future growth areas.
- Encourage participation in the “Clean and Green” Act (preferential tax assessment), the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (purchase of development rights), and private land preservation programs.
- Continue and consider additional opportunities for effective agricultural zoning in productive agricultural areas.
- Protect the actively farmed land remaining in the Region from incompatible non-farm uses.
- Identify techniques to encourage continual use of existing farmland.
- Develop and encourage appropriate land maintenance and protection policies, including best management practices (BMPs).

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

**Goal:** Provide for open space within the Region through the preservation of natural resources and the development and retention of parks and greenways.

### **Objectives:**

- Provide and maintain parks, recreation and open spaces for area residents which are interconnected, accessible, well maintained, and safe.
- Maintain the fee-in-lieu responsibility of developers in providing park and recreation facilities and open space.

- Support the implementation of the Berks County Greenway and Open Space Plan and encourage coordination of recreation planning between the municipalities.
- Promote innovative development techniques such as Conservation By Design and open space development that will minimize land consumption and preserve remaining open space in the Region.
- Provide a wide range of active and passive recreational and cultural programs.
- Work with surrounding municipalities and counties to link open spaces, greenways, and natural areas outside of the Region.
- Encourage and support cooperative use of recreation facilities among the municipalities and the Oley Valley School District.

## **LAND USE**

**Goal:** Manage, control, and guide development to appropriate areas where public infrastructure is available or planned, and protect natural and agricultural resources in order to retain a mix of rural and suburban atmosphere within the Townships.

### **Objectives:**

- Encourage residential developers to use neo-traditional neighborhood design, including Conservation By Design and permanently preserve open space within their development tracts.
- Direct residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development, appropriate in scale and character to the community, to growth areas, where public sewer and water and transportation improvements are most likely and could be phased in concert with new development. Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Discourage high rates of residential development to avoid overwhelming local schools and other municipal services.
- Confine business development to specific designated areas that do not encroach upon existing residential areas.

- Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provisions of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Identify areas which should be protected from development or receive only very low density development because of natural constraints or assets, and/or lack of supporting facilities and services.
- Identify significant natural resource lands and stream corridors for perpetual open space conservation.
- Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through proper allocation of land use on the Future Land Use Plan and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards in zoning ordinances.
- Strive for a balance between the need for future growth and the need for the conservation and preservation of resources.
- Encourage planned, concentrated development which emphasizes significant open space conservation.
- Respect and protect quality of life in the community.
- Encourage well-designed developments, including public and semi-public development, according to the scale and character of the setting.
- Create and maintain visual access to natural features and scenic vistas.
- Minimize strip development along existing roads and provide for appropriate buffering.
- Improve the visual image of the community at entranceways and along road corridors minimizing signage and inappropriate displays.
- Maintain consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries pursuant to the Future Land Use Plan
- Provide for a balance of land uses to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

- Provide for consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries within the Region.
- Maintain the rural character of lands outside the designated growth areas.
- Allocate land uses over the entire Region in an appropriate manner, rather than on a municipal basis.
- Allocate sufficient land to accommodate projected population within the growth areas.
- Design to minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses and attain compatibility between present and future land uses.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures and/or maintenance of historic structures and context within contemporary developments where appropriate after review of the nature of the historic resources.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**Goal:** To achieve a safe, efficient, multi-modal, and cost-effective regional circulation system that will enhance pedestrian and bicycle movement; ease vehicular travel within the municipalities; minimize adverse impacts on residential neighborhoods; enhance the safety, mobility and livability of road corridors in the Region; and relieve congestion.

### **Objectives:**

- Work with PennDOT and developers to ensure local roads and intersections remain safe and able to accommodate current and projected traffic volumes.
- Encourage business developments to share controlled ingress and egress to adjacent major roads such as PA Routes 12, 73, and 662 as well as local collector roads.
- Identify and set priorities for projects which are appropriate for inclusion on Berks County's Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.



- Promote future development of greenways and trails that will further walking, bicycling and other alternative transportation modes.
- Address Route 12 and Route 73 congestion issues, including bridges and road infrastructure.
- Facilitate movement through the Region and into and out of the Region's communities.
- Plan for safe and accessible routes of travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those without automobiles.
- Manage access along the Region's roads.
- Improve the efficiency of traffic flow and the safety of the Region's roads and their intersections.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers for transportation improvements.
- Establish consistent road signage policies.
- Establish design standards for roads and driveways and for building setbacks within the Region based on functional classification and need for future road improvements.
- Emphasize the need for PennDOT and transportation planning entities in Berks County, including the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), to support the recommendations of this Joint Comprehensive Plan with regard to needed improvements of state transportation facilities.
- Establish a mechanism to require traffic impact studies for industrial, commercial, and residential developments.
- Improve pedestrian safety in the Region by developing, improving and expanding the sidewalk system in residential areas.
- Address impacts of land uses and new development on major road corridors in the Region.
- Preserve the scenic, historic, and cultural road corridors in the Region.
- Enhance streetscapes along road corridors in the villages.

- Mitigate impacts of non-residential traffic on residential neighborhoods.
- Identify opportunities to interconnect roads and walkways, provide alternative traffic routes, and facilitate emergency access when new developments are under construction.
- Ensure that roads in agricultural areas may continue to accommodate agriculturally related vehicles and tractors.
- Consider alignment and shoulder improvements to improve safety along PA Route 12 near Woodland Road.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Goal:** To sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the Region while identifying appropriate locations for environmentally responsible industrial, office, retail, and service uses that are appropriate in scale and character to the Region in a cost efficient manner.

### **Objectives:**

- Make sure local ordinances and codes do not discourage responsible business from locating in designated business areas.
- Encourage mixed use development in village areas zoned for business to maintain the economic viability of commercial structures.
- Enhance tax revenue from business development to balance the residential share of the property tax base.
- Promote job creation for local residents through cooperative efforts of municipalities, the county, economic development agencies, businesses, and educational institutions.
- Protect the Region's natural and agricultural resources as economic development occurs.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized properties in the Region.

- Protect natural, cultural and recreational resources to enable tourism based on nature and cultural, recreation, educational, and family activities.
- Retain existing business and industries and identify strategies to attract desirable new ones.
- Identify and designate appropriate target areas for future economic development and determine the types of economic development that are most appropriate for the Region.
- Consider establishing wireless internet hotspots in appropriate areas.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers in providing improvements.
- Establish standards to improve the design and appearance of new commercial and industrial development.
- Provide alternatives to strip commercial development.
- Encourage diversification of funding sources for municipal governments and school districts to achieve equitable taxation policies.
- Encourage resident-owned small businesses in existing mixed-use areas.

## **HOUSING**

**Goal:** Provide diverse housing opportunities for the economic and demographic groups within the Region, consistent with existing development and the historical and natural environments.

### **Objectives:**

- Provide for a variety of detached and attached housing types using environmentally sensitive layouts and designs.
- Concentrate housing in those areas most suitable from a physical perspective.
- Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of housing in and around the area's historic villages.

- Explore opportunities for cooperative administration of the Uniform Construction Code.
- Provide appropriate areas for a variety of single family, two family, and multiple-family dwellings and a variety of densities to allow housing choices, while retaining the existing character of the Region.
- Encourage maintenance of the existing housing stock to prevent deterioration.
- Strive for the provision of well-planned, safe, sound and attractive living environments for the Region's residents.
- Promote responsible development in order to provide an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing in the Region.
- Encourage retention and expansion of owner-occupied housing.
- Encourage the provision of housing alternatives for persons with special needs and the elderly.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Goal:** Provide good quality community facilities and services to the Region's residents in an efficient, cost-effective manner within the financial resources of the municipalities, consistent with concern for protecting natural resources.

### **Objectives:**

- Work with the Oley Valley School District to ensure adequate facilities exist to meet current and projected enrollments.
- Continue the Act 537 process to ensure appropriate solutions are devised for areas with a high concentration of failing septic systems.
- Support efforts of water supply and sewer authorities to plan ahead for expansion of capacities and extensions of the areas of service in accordance with growth projections and the establishment of future growth areas. Work to achieve consistency of Act 537 plans and infrastructure planning with this Plan and its

land use element. Initially, this will involve coordination with the Townships in addressing regional approaches to provide sewer and water infrastructure.

- Look for more opportunities to cooperate with neighboring municipalities on emergency services, road maintenance and other public works.
- Periodically review the adequacy of municipal contributions to private community service providers including volunteer fire companies and rescue groups, and recreation organizations, among others.
- Encourage community efforts to bring people together and create community cohesion.
- Continue to provide high quality fire and police services to the residents of the Region.
- Identify policies to ensure safe, reliable, cost efficient, and well-maintained sanitary sewage disposal and water supply in the Region.
- Increase resident awareness of resources and facilities within the Region and support efforts to protect, enhance, and increase accessibility and use of those resources and facilities.
- Coordinate land use and sewer and water planning so the extension of public sewer and water facilities is consistent with the land use and other goals and objectives of this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Review opportunities for regional sharing of equipment, services and facilities and continue intermunicipal cooperation.
- Identify the need for additional community, cultural and social facilities and services for all age groups in the Region, and encourage provision of those facilities and services.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers for providing social and cultural facilities.
- Identify community facilities and services that can help attract and support desired economic development.
- Encourage increased cooperation of municipalities and the Oley Valley School District in planning activities and utilization of school facilities.

- Identify methods of encouraging energy conservation.
- Address stormwater management concerns through implementation of the Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans for the Schuylkill River, Maiden Creek, and Manatawny Creek Watersheds

## **PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Goal:** Identify and implement a variety of approaches, mechanisms, and tools appropriate for dealing with the challenges posed by growth within the Region. Recognize that this Joint Comprehensive Plan is just the beginning of the process to achieve the Region’s vision and goals, and insist that the Plan be an essential part of the future decision making process.

### **Objectives:**

- Continue intergovernmental cooperative planning and implementation efforts.
- Establish partnerships and create appropriate cooperative mechanisms to implement this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Identify opportunities for continued intermunicipal cooperation and planning.
- Support efforts for interregional and regional/county cooperation in addressing transportation, economic development, and community development issues.
- Identify the responsibilities of developers in accomplishing the goals and objectives of this Plan.
- Identify and pursue adequate funding of implementation actions listed in the Plan, with consideration of listed grant programs.
- Adopt zoning and subdivision ordinance regulations and incentives that are consistent with the goal and objectives of this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Explore the possibility of completing a joint zoning ordinance between the municipalities.
- Encourage developers to incorporate designs into their proposals which will implement the goals and objectives of this Plan.

- Develop indicators for measuring success in implementing this Plan and establish a program for measuring those indicators in the future.