

## **II. COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This section addresses Region-wide planning and community development efforts to address growth and development patterns in all areas of the Eastern Berks Region. Regional planning has an important role in shaping the general character of both rural and urban development that transcends municipal boundaries. This section addresses goals, objectives, and policies that encourage regional planning and community development efforts to provide a quality living environment for all existing and future residents of the Region.

To create those goals for this Plan, members of the EBRCP and other citizens of these municipalities were asked to complete a 16-question survey. The survey asked questions regarding age, housing, municipal cooperation, existing and future development, land use, preservation, business growth, park and recreation, and historic preservation. The committee met and discussed the results of the survey. The following presents an overall narrative vision of the desired future followed by a detailed listing of specific planning goals for each municipality and the Region.

### **A. Community Vision**

The Eastern Berks County Region continues to prepare for the future with the update of the initial 2004 joint comprehensive planning effort that will allow for modest planned growth and development while protecting the region's natural resources, farmland and community character.

Based on input from the surveys, residents and local leaders, this Plan aims to protect the resources and protect the region's rural areas that have a mixture of prime agricultural soils, wooded areas, wetlands, farms, open spaces, wildlife habitat corridors, and pristine water resources. The plan also seeks to strengthen downtown Topton that serves as the region's center for commercial, community and cultural activity and events.

## B. Community Planning Goals

The itemized list of goals were created considering the Plan’s vision, survey input and discussions with local officials and citizens These specific goals will guide the rest of this effort by allocating the Region’s resources towards expressed needs. The goals are presented by functional category.

	District Township	Rockland Township	Topton Borough	Region
<b>Environmental Goals</b>				
1. Protect the wellheads and watersheds for several public water sources contained within the Region.				X
2. Protect the headwaters of the Perkiomen, Pine, Oysterville, Sacony, Swamp and Manatawny creeks.	X			
3. Protect the extensive areas that are part of the four exceptional-value and two high-quality watersheds within the Region.				X
4. Protect productive farmlands.	X	X		
5. Protect the PA State game lands.	X			
6. Protect the blend of steep slopes, woodlands, watersheds, wetlands and elevations and natural habitats within the Region.				
7. Steer development away from steep slopes to avoid the stormwater and drainage problems.	X	X		
8. Promote the preservation of historic sites with adaptive-reuse options.				X
9. Promote redevelopment of portions of the Borough and Townships that are in disrepair or their use is less than optimum or obsolete.				X

	District Township	Rockland Township	Topton Borough	Region
10. Promote the creation of riparian buffers as a means of improving local surface water quality and providing wildlife habitats.				X
11. Protect the Region's groundwater supplies.				X
<b>Community Development Goals</b>				
1. Promote the creation of new businesses and related services that serve the daily needs of the local Region within a Town Center that promotes pedestrian traffic.			X	
2. Rely upon larger commercial centers in nearby areas for regional commercial goods and services.				X
3. Acknowledge a mix of new and old neighborhood styles that exist within the Borough.			X	
4. Promote adaptive reuse of the structures within the Borough as a means of preserving local historic buildings and encouraging limited new businesses and other service uses.			X	
5. Inventory and acknowledge properties that have sold or donated conservation/agricultural easements that prevent their future development.	X	X		
6. Limit, locate and design rural growth areas so that, if and when public utilities are required in these areas, they can be provided in an affordable manner.	X			
7. Direct growth towards land that is less sensitive to protect environmental features of the rural areas. Attempt to promote flexible densities in planned residential areas and conservation subdivisions as a means of reducing development on the rural landscape.	X	X		
8. Promote conservation design practices as a means of conserving natural resources and open space during the development review process.	X	X		
9. Encourage rural businesses that can provide for local employment and contribute to an expanded tax base, particularly for public schools.	X	X		
10. Encourage large-scale commercial and industrial developments to locate in the Borough where there is existing infra-structure.				X
11. Locate new rural development in areas with that will support on-lot utilities or small-scale community systems and manageable stormwater drainage.	X	X		

	District Township	Rockland Township	Topton Borough	Region
12. Attempt to identify and eliminate blighted properties that may affect adjoining property values.				X
<b>Planning Program Goals</b>				
1. Preserve existing character of the Region and Communities.				X
2. Preserve and expand, where appropriate, existing infrastructure.				X
3. Plan for future growth and preservation with a pro-active land use policy that uses regulatory controls and development reviews that reflect the Regions overall vision.				X
4. Coordinate development reviews with other municipalities so that local officials are better able to negotiate with prospective developers for needed public improvements and protected natural and cultural features.				X
5. Encourage a plan development process that invites public participation and awareness.				X
<b>Public Facilities &amp; Services Goals</b>				
1. Where practical, seek to provide public facilities and services on a regional basis to avoid duplication.				X
2. Maintain the current high level of parks and recreation service available within the Borough.			X	
3. Encourage a centralized community park for Township yet look to coordinate with the School District and the other municipalities in a coordinated delivery of recreation programs and activities.				X
4. Improve access to public School District parks and indoor facilities.				X
5. Coordinate local planning policies with the need to support local volunteer emergency services.				X
6. Seek to coordinate the Region's overall planning review processes with that of the public School District.				X
7. Promote the creation of a linear trail.				X

	District Township	Rockland Township	Topton Borough	Region
<b>Public Utilities Goals</b>				
1. Coordinate public utility planning to serve the Region.				X
2. Coordinate growth areas with planned and anticipated public sewer and water service areas.			X	
3. Seek alternative options for areas with concentrated malfunctioning on-lot sewers.	X		X	
4. Coordinate zoning policies with the location and availability of public utilities.				X
5. Continue to rely upon on-lot wells and septic to accommodate new land uses in suitable areas.	X	X		
6. Promote compliance with The Department of Environmental Protection's regulations regarding wells, septic systems and stormwater.	X	X		
<b>Transportation Goals</b>				
1. Attempt to acquire funding for roadway maintenance, improvements and traffic flow as a means of encouraging greater economic development potential within the Borough.				X
2. Promote coordination of road projects with other municipalities, PennDOT and utilities.				X
3. Promote pedestrian travel within the Borough and its Village Centers.				X
4. Assess current road conditions and compare with adopted design standards				X
5. Monitor the long range plans concerning major road corridors that may affect the Region.				X
6. Coordinate future land uses with roads that have sufficient capacity to handle the additional traffic.				X
7. Avoid the improvement of additional roadway capacity that would lead to additional local development pressure.	X	X		
8. Look to improve "rural" road conditions (e.g. inadequate sight distance, tight curves, lack of shoulders, excessive speed limits).				X
9. Explore the possibility of restoring regularly-scheduled commuter and/or bus service to the Region.				X