

## CHAPTER 2

### VISION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### VISION FOR MOUNT PENN – LOWER ALSACE

Mount Penn-Lower Alsace will consider merging when economically beneficial for the residents of both municipalities. The Borough and the Township will remain an attractive, stable, fiscally sound community in which to live and do business. Large natural areas such as Neversink Mountain, Mount Penn, and the Antietam Lake area will be preserved for park, recreation and open space purposes, and accessible to area residents. Existing residential neighborhoods will be maintained and enhanced and home ownership stabilized. Existing business areas, such as those along Perkiomen and Carsonia Avenues, will be physically enhanced and their vitality increased. Major fiscal issues facing the community, such as infiltration in the sewer system, storm water management, school taxes, and dam improvement will be addressed through appropriate analysis, planning and implementation in a cooperative, community-based manner.

#### Natural and Scenic Resources

**Goal:** Protect, preserve and enhance the natural and scenic resources of Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough for current and future generations, and provide for physical access by Township and Borough residents for recreational and educational use.

#### *Objectives:*

- Protect and retain water resources within the municipalities to assure the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater for recreational use, wildlife habitats, fire protection, and water supply. Of particular concern will be Antietam Lake, the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, Antietam Creek, the wetlands and floodplains along the creek, and steep slopes draining to the creek.
- Protect groundwater and surface water from pollution and excessive withdrawal.
- Protect and manage woodlands within the municipalities.
- Protect the steep slopes within the Township and Borough.

- Encourage the retention of existing desirable trees in the Borough and Township and the planting of additional trees as part of a tree planting program.
- Protect watersheds and wellhead areas for Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority and Pennsylvania American Water Company water supplies.
- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to create a permanent, large open space and recreation area on Neversink Mountain.
- Encourage the preservation of the scenic road corridors and views along them within Lower Alsace Township by limiting the encroachment of development.
- Support the efforts of Berks County to create a permanent, large open space and recreation area around Antietam Lake.
- Encourage creation and retention of a greenway along the Antietam Creek.
- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to retain the Earl Trust properties for permanent open space and recreation resources for the community.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

**Goal:** Identify, preserve and enhance the historic, architectural and cultural resources of the Township and Borough.

#### **Objectives:**

- Encourage the preservation, protection, and enhancement of historic and architectural resources and their context.
- Support efforts to restore the fire observation tower on Mount Penn.
- Support efforts of Friends of Antietam Lake to restore historic and cultural resources such as the valve house and nature center.
- Require new development to reflect and consider the history, architecture and development patterns of the municipalities; discourage inappropriate development near historic resources; require impact studies for development near historic resources; and require mitigation of any potential adverse impacts on historic resources.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures where appropriate.

## **Open Space and Recreation**

**Goal:** Provide open space and recreation in Mount Penn and Lower Alsace by protecting and preserving Neversink Mountain, the Antietam Lake area, Antietam Creek, the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, Earl Trust properties, Mount Penn, and remaining wooded, rural areas in the Township and by retaining and planning recreation areas.

### **Objectives:**

- Concentrate the limited growth in the Township near existing developed areas to reduce pressure on existing open spaces.
- Promote infill development in existing developed areas and maintenance and restoration of existing housing resources to reduce development of open space.
- Limit and plan infrastructure extensions in order to not encourage development in areas desired as open space.
- Link recreation areas and natural areas within the Region through open space, greenway and trail systems.
- Support efforts of the Berks County Conservancy and Berks County to preserve Neversink Mountain, Antietam Lake, and Earl Trust lands for open space and recreational purposes.
- Encourage the City of Reading to retain current open space areas in Lower Alsace Township as open space.
- Plan, facilitate, and identify a trail connection between Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake.
- Encourage the continued availability of the A-Field to area residents.
- Work toward provision of additional recreational fields on Earl Trust land along Hill Road and assure they will be available for use by Township and Borough residents.

## **Land Use and Housing**

**Goal:** Retain the existing character of the Borough and the Township by preserving natural, scenic, and open space resources; enhancing the tax base; enhancing streetscapes; and assuring the continued desirability of the municipalities as places to live.

### ***Objectives:***

- Identify growth areas which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development in the Stony Creek Mills and Friedensburg Road areas, have appropriate access, can be efficiently served by the circulation system, and can be efficiently served by public sewer and water systems.
- Direct new development in the Township and Borough to the growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal which cannot be feasibly sewerred.
- Encourage preservation of the Neversink Mountain, Mount Penn, the Antietam Lake area, Earl Trust lands, Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, and City of Reading open areas as open space.
- Encourage compact business development patterns along Perkiomen Avenue.
- Minimize conflicts between non-residential and residential uses through allocation of land use and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards. Discourage proximity of incompatible land uses within the area and along municipal boundaries.
- Recognize the variety of housing needs of area residents.
- Allow a variety of housing densities and attractive residential housing types in appropriately designated areas, consistent with the natural resources, service constraints and existing character of the municipalities.
- Encourage owner occupancy of dwelling units in the Borough and Township.
- Encourage retention of dwelling units within commercial areas to provide for mixed and continued use of these areas.
- Appropriately allocate land use on a regional rather than municipality by municipality basis.

- Maintain community character.
- Provide for suitable, attractive and compatible commercial and office uses at appropriate locations, consistent with existing land use patterns, support services, and the transportation system.
- Encourage additional commercial development along Carsonia Avenue at designated locations and encourage use of the vacant Mobil site.
- Encourage development at the filtration beds site along Perkiomen Avenue which will contribute to the tax base of the Borough.
- Assure continued use of the St. Catherine's property which will be an asset to and serve the needs of the community.
- Work to retain existing and attract new desirable businesses in the community, and foster the viability of the Perkiomen Avenue, North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Howard Boulevard commercial area through vitalization efforts and streetscape improvements.
- Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents.
- Provide for the maintenance and any necessary improvement of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate land use controls and enforcement policies and programs.
- Establish appropriate policies for residential conversions within the area which will be consistent with retention of the character, stability, and upkeep of residential neighborhoods and provision of adequate parking facilities.
- Plan land uses and densities which will be consistent with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the area, and have manageable tax structures.

## **Circulation**

**Goal:** Plan for a circulation system comprised of road, transit, and pedestrian facilities, which will allow safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian travel throughout Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.

### **Objectives:**

- Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- Improve the safety of intersections along Perkiomen Avenue.
- Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the area as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT.
- Monitor impacts on roadway capacity from new development and require developers to address projected increased traffic volumes in the road system by improving the existing system.
- Investigate providing additional parking opportunities in Mount Penn and along Friedensburg Road in the Township.
- Assure adequate access management occurs along the major road corridors such as Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road, to minimize the number of access points to the road system.
- Facilitate pedestrian circulation within the business areas of the community through such means as benches, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities.
- Preserve the scenic road corridors and vistas within the Township.
- Monitor the need for appropriate traffic control at the Perkiomen Avenue-27<sup>th</sup> Street intersection.
- Maintain and upgrade the existing road system as necessary and encourage PennDOT to improve state-controlled roads and intersections.
- Institute appropriate traffic calming techniques along Fairview Avenue.
- Encourage and support the development of a network of trails linking residential areas to open space and recreation resources, surrounding municipalities' trail systems, and means of access to any future Schuylkill Valley metro stations.

- Work with BARTA to assure adequate bus service to the area and the appropriate location and attractiveness of bus stops.
- Encourage maintenance and improvement of sidewalks and curbs, completion of gaps in the sidewalk system, and extension of the sidewalk system.
- Expand the pedestrian system to the area of the High School-Junior High School and Stony Creek Mills.
- Relieve congestion at the Antietam Road-Carsonia Avenue-Friedensburg Road intersection.
- Determine the merits of and appropriate locations of park and ride facilities and other multi-modal facilities.

### **Community Facilities, Services and Development**

**Goal:** Provide essential facilities and services to meet the existing and future needs of residents consistent with the financial capabilities of the Borough and Township.

**Objectives:**

- Identify services and facilities which can be provided on a cooperative basis and work toward intermunicipal cooperation.
- Continue a dialog on the potential for merger of Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Continue to evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded or improved community services and facilities and plan for the efficient and economical provision of those services and facilities.
- Encourage upkeep and restoration of the infrastructure of the area such as Skyline Drive and its walls and the Antietam Creek channel.
- Review proposed developments to ensure that required infrastructure and properly planned and located recreation facilities are constructed by developers.
- Address school tax issues on a community-wide basis.
- Review opportunities for sharing of equipment, service and facilities.

- Investigate the possibility of establishing a coordinated emergency services plan for the area.
- Foster a spirit of community within the Borough and Township.
- Support community-wide activities, events and resident participation in government.
- Encourage communication and cooperative efforts among Borough government, Township government, the School District, community organizations, residents and businesses to assure the continued vitality of the area.
- Successfully address the sewer infiltration problem.
- Provide efficient police service to the region.
- Investigate opportunities for cooperation among municipalities and the school district in providing and making available facilities and programs to area residents.
- Provide for additional athletic fields for area youth through cooperative efforts in the region.
- Require developers to adequately manage stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation.
- Successfully address the area's storm drainage problems and reduce flooding.
- Assure that the scale of development in the area is consistent with the capacity of the area's infrastructure and fiscal capacities.
- Coordinate sewer and water planning with land use policies.
- Encourage cooperation among the fire companies in the Township and Borough to address the fire protection needs of the community.
- Assure that renovation and reuse of the high school building will not adversely affect the surrounding community and that parking is adequately addressed.



## **Economic Development**

**Goal:** Sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the Township and the Borough, while maintaining the small-town character.

### **Objectives:**

- Enhance the quality of life in Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Encourage appropriate re-use of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Support programs and efforts to promote economic development in Berks County and to retain, replace, and increase jobs for County residents.
- Provide for additional, appropriate commercial development at designated areas along Carsonia Avenue.
- Provide linkages to major open spaces such as Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake and the regional transportation system, to increase the attractiveness of the region as a residential and business location.
- Investigate use of the income tax to fund the school district.
- Plan for adequate parking facilities
- Facilitate pedestrian access to businesses.
- Encourage streetscape improvements along Perkiomen Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Howard Boulevard, and Carsonia Avenue.
- Foster municipality and business community cooperation in promoting economic development, community attractiveness, and activities and events.
- Foster home ownership, maintenance of the building stock, increase of the tax base, stability of neighborhoods and community, and fiscal soundness of local government and school district.

## **Planning**

**Goal:** Guide the decision making of Township and Borough officials and commissions by identifying an effective action plan in this Plan.

### ***Objectives:***

- Encourage acceleration of regional Act 167 stormwater management planning for the Antietam Creek and Schuylkill River watersheds.
- Encourage the municipalities to continue to meet to discuss planning issues of common concern which arise in the future. Yearly, review the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan, their continued relevance, the extent to which they have been accomplished, and the need for revision, and establish a work program for implementation of the Plan.
- Work with surrounding communities, regional planning and development organizations and PennDOT to address vehicular, pedestrian, and transit, circulation, land use, community facility and economic development issues which impact Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Encourage community-based, long term planning for school facilities.
- Support and participate in the Berks County Conservancy planning efforts for Neversink Mountain and Earl Trust lands.

## **Implementation**

**Goal:** Accomplish the goals, objectives and policies of this Comprehensive Plan through identified appropriate implementation techniques.

### ***Objectives:***

- Identify techniques to manage and control growth in the Township.
- Identify opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan.
- Participate in State grant programs which will aid in the implementation of this Plan.

- Participate in Berks County and State programs designed to encourage intermunicipal cooperation.
- Establish the basis for land use regulations which will implement this Plan.
- Encourage PennDOT and Berks County cooperation in achieving transportation objectives.
- Secure funding for unfunded government mandates.

## CHAPTER 3

### PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

In the course of developing this Comprehensive Plan, planning questionnaires were sent out to 30 households in Mt. Penn Borough and 15 households in Lower Alsace Township. The people to receive questionnaires in each municipality were identified by Joint Planning Committee members from the municipality. The results of each questionnaire are contained in Appendix I. The highlights of the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace questionnaire results are given below.

#### Questionnaire Results Highlights

1. Respondents appear willing to continue to accept new residential growth in the Region at moderate rates of growth.
2. The preferred types of development are conservation development and retirement communities.
3. A clear majority of respondents are in favor of efforts to preserve Neversink Mountain for open space and recreation.
4. Most respondents are in favor of efforts to acquire Antietam Lake from the City of Reading in order to preserve the area for open space.
5. Respondents are not in favor of new industrial areas being developed.
6. Respondents are evenly split in favor of new commercial areas being developed.
7. Respondents are very positive towards preserving what agricultural land is still left.
8. A clear majority of respondents favor the development of light passenger rail service in the area.
9. A majority of respondents also support programs to increase landscaping, decorative lighting, benches and other similar amenities along Perkiomen Avenue and Carsonia Avenue.
10. The major transportation concerns are intersection improvements, inadequate road maintenance, congestion, lack of bikeways, and poor condition of sidewalks.

11. A majority of respondents would use new biking and hiking trails and see a need for these trails to connect existing recreation facilities.
12. A majority of respondents feel that additional public recreation facilities should be provided in the area.
13. A majority of respondents believe the level of commercial development in the area should remain the same along Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road. A small majority of residents in Mt. Penn believe that commercial development along Perkiomen Avenue should be increased.
14. A majority of respondents believe that the Borough and the Township should identify additional opportunities for working together to provide services and facilities for area residents.

## CHAPTER 4

### ISSUES FACING THE TOWNSHIP AND BOROUGH

#### Neversink Mountain

The Township of Lower Alsace and the Borough of Mount Penn are two of the six municipalities that make up the area of Neversink Mountain. The mountain is defined by the Schuylkill River on the west, Perkiomen Avenue and Neversink Road on the east, and the Schuylkill River and river plain on the south. On the north, Neversink Mountain is joined to Mount Penn by a saddle that forms the Perkiomen Gap. The mountain is approximately two miles long, east to west, and one mile wide, north to south.

Because of the unique location of Neversink Mountain at the end of the Reading Prong formation, a point where the Schuylkill River changes direction and where the characteristics of the river change from a large mountain stream to a meandering, lazy river; its juxtaposition to the dense urban environment of the City of Reading and surrounding communities; and its unusual land forms and historic features, the Mountain offers scenic features and experiences different from those of Mount Penn, South Mountain, and the Blue Ridge. It is estimated that at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the residents of Berks County can see Neversink Mountain from their home, path of travel, or place of work.

Neversink Mountain has been identified as a high priority area for protection from development in the Berks County Natural Areas Inventory due to populations of animal and plant species. For all of the above reasons, Neversink Mountain has been a high priority for land preservation activities in Berks County.

In 1979, the Berks County Conservancy acquired its first parcel of land on Neversink Mountain with the goal of protecting the parcel for use as open space and recreation. Since this first acquisition, the Berks County Conservancy has protected approximately 292 acres on the mountain, 204 of which are located in Lower Alsace Township. An additional 127 acres on Neversink Mountain were owned and protected by the Earl Trust. The goal of this preservation activity is to provide residents and Berks County visitors with permanently preserved open space to be used for educational and recreational activities as defined in the Feasibility Study for Neversink Mountain completed in 1997. The Long Range Plan, outlined in the Feasibility Study, proposes that about 950 acres be included for a Neversink Mountain Park.

Presently the access and circulation facilities on Neversink Mountain consist of existing paved public streets, public trails, access lanes for utilities, access lanes to private properties, and trails on private lands. Often, lands have multiple uses, such as a utility land that is also used as an access to a private property and/or as a hiking trail. The

mountain is accessible from the Borough of Mount Penn by 20<sup>th</sup> Street, which serves as the primary access for the residents of the mountain. The long-range plan also identifies access via a hiking trail from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Mount Penn, which seems to be an acceptable access point to the members of the joint planning committee representing the community. This hiking trail would connect the mountain with 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and the local neighborhoods in Mount Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township. Mount Penn Borough residents may also have the opportunity to utilize nearby hiking/biking access to the mountain through a proposed St. Lawrence Access point at 27<sup>th</sup> Street that would utilize an existing land extended from Fairview Avenue.

There are several Lower Alsace Township residents who reside on Neversink Mountain. A few of these residents have expressed concerns related to promoting more public use of the mountain. Trespassing, dumping, and trail erosion due to excessive use of all-terrain vehicles continue to be problems in some areas of the mountain and they feel that these problems will increase with the more people who are familiar with the mountain. When and if the Neversink Mountain Park is realized, proper management, signage, fencing, and parking areas will alleviate the residents' concerns.

In the long run, Neversink Mountain Park could become an integral part of other open space areas and recreation facilities, particularly for the residents of Mount Penn Borough, Lower Alsace Township, and nearby communities. By creating an urban trail along the east side of 19<sup>th</sup> Street (just one block over the Mount Penn Borough line into the City of Reading), the trail system could be continued through Pandora Park, the historic Mineral Spring Park, and Egelman's Park to the 1500-acre Mount Penn Reserve and Antietam Lake.

### **Antietam Lake Reservoir**

Currently, the approximate 560-acre Antietam Lake Reservoir property offers numerous recreational opportunities, including trails that connect to Mount Penn. In 2001, a grassroots organization formed to encourage the use and preservation of the Antietam Lake Reservoir. This organization, Friends of Antietam Lake, consists of a Board of Directors and numerous members, many of which are from the immediate communities of Lower Alsace and Mount Penn. This 560-acre property should continue to be maintained and used as a public recreational facility and open space, and Friends of Antietam Lake will continue to generate community support for its preservation. The Lake is owned by the City of Reading and the dam creating the Lake is controlled by the Reading Area Water Authority.

Antietam Lake faces two major threats. One is the effort of the PaDEP to have the dam at the Lake removed because PaDEP considers the dam unsafe, that it could fail in a major flood, and could pose a danger to downstream residents. The Authority has contested the PaDEP position, and the issue has not been resolved.

A second threat is the potential that the City of Reading could sell the Lake and nearby properties for development. This would eliminate a major county recreation resource. Berks County has offered to buy the 560 acre Lake property for a County park, but the offer was not accepted by the City.

Development of City-owned property in Lower Alsace would have a devastating impact on the Region, as infrastructure is not in place to accommodate development of the area, including transportation, storm drainage, school, and sewage disposal.

### **Earl Trust Properties**

The Clinton F. Earl Trust was set up by the Executor of the Earl estate under a provision of his Will dated July 11, 1921. The Will stipulated that 25% of the residue of the estate be used “*for purchasing nearby property for Park purposes preferably woodland on Mt. Penn or Neversink Mountain*”. This Trust was established with a bank that became First Union (now Wachovia).

A majority of the Earl Trust properties are located in Lower Alsace Township and on Neversink Mountain. Approximately 127 acres of Earl Trust land is located on the western end of Neversink Mountain, and about 239 acres of Earl Trust land are located elsewhere in Lower Alsace Township.

Since the Earl Trust land must remain as recreational and/or open space land, it provides the Borough of Mount Penn and Lower Alsace Township with the opportunity to coordinate the use of these lands into their overall Open Space and Recreational Resources Plan. A majority of the Earl Trust land is woodland, with the exception of the Hill Road property previously known as the Community Gardens. This property had been used by the City of Reading for community gardens and now sits vacant. The joint planning committee members identified this site as a potential location for active recreational fields for the community, provided however, that any potential future owners of this land would be open to this recreational development.

**Infiltration/Inflow within the Sanitary Sewer System** - The Antietam Valley Municipal Authority, which serves the Borough and the Township, continues to address infiltration/inflow problems, which result in flows exceeding rated sewer plant capacity. One area of concern is inappropriate connections of sump pumps, roof drains, and driveway drains.



**Stormwater Management/Flooding** - The region has severe stormwater management problems and flooding concerns, because of flows from Neversink Mountain and surrounding hills, including flow from development in adjoining municipalities; collection systems with inadequate capacity; and open drainage channels in the region. Flooding occurs in a number of areas, and continues to occur more frequently and rapidly. This results in flooded streets, yards, and basements, and affects housing values.

Some of the areas of concern include the High School-Junior High School complex; at the base of Neversink Mountain and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street; Park Lane; the area of the Primary Center; the general vicinity of Endlich, Philmay, Brighton, Cumberland, and Filbert; Friedensburg Road; and Carsonia and Brooke.

There is no Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan for the region, and wider regional cooperation is necessary to address concerns.

**Tree Removal** - Tree removal occurs during development/redevelopment and by property owners who do not wish to continue to maintain them. This can affect Borough appearance, microclimate, and water runoff.

**Traffic Flow, Parking, Pedestrian Safety in Vicinity of Community Facilities** - Particularly in the Borough, parking facilities on-site are limited near community facilities. On-street parking is also limited in some areas, and this results in inconvenience to residents. Where limited parking facilities, narrow streets, buses, and waiting parents converge near schools, safety concerns result.

**Tax Burden on Residents** - The Antietam School District is very small, is experiencing enrollment increases, and is supported by a limited commercial tax base. This results in a very high school tax rate. The Borough's higher property tax rate, increasing County taxes, along with unfunded governmental mandates, such as storm drainage improvements, further place a burden on homeowners. This tax burden puts pressure on low and/or fixed income residents to sell their single family homes, which are often converted to apartments. The conversion to apartments can lead to the destabilization and more transient nature of residential neighborhoods and loss of residents who actively participate in community affairs.

The level of communication between the school district and the municipalities which are affected by school district policies and resultant tax rates, is in need of improvement.

**Upkeep of Properties within and at Gateways to the Community** - Appropriate codes and enforcement, as well as cooperation of property owners, is needed to maintain the attractiveness of the region, stability of neighborhoods, and impression of the region upon entering it.

Public infrastructure is also in need of maintenance, such as the channel walls for Antietam Creek near the schools, walls along Skyline Drive, and the Fire Tower.

### **Finding Appropriate Residential Use for the City of Reading's Filter Bed Property**

**Potential for Merger of Borough and Township** - Consideration was given to merging the municipalities, but it was decided not to merge at the time. The municipalities should continue to monitor whether merging would be appropriate in the future.

Opportunities for additional intermunicipal cooperation should be monitored, as well as merging/cooperation among organizations in the region, such as fire companies.

**Areas of Transportation Concern** - Some of the areas of concern include through traffic on Perkiomen Avenue, an interregional arterial, and the difficulty of some turning movements onto Perkiomen Avenue, such as at 27<sup>th</sup> Street, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Street, and Endlich Avenue/Butter Lane; narrowness of Friedensburg Road, compounded by parking along the road; through traffic on Fairview Avenue, an alternate route to Perkiomen Avenue and other east-west roads; running of stop signs on Fairview Avenue; through traffic on Bingaman-Angora-Antietam-Friedensburg or Carsonia route; congestion at the Antietam-Friedensburg-Carsonia intersection and difficulty of turning movements to the schools.

**Trail Linkages** - Assuring linkages are provided to the trail system in the St. Lawrence-Exeter-Amity region, and thus any potential Schuylkill Valley Metro stops; between Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn, and Antietam Lake trail systems; and to other trail systems outside the region.

**Improving the Sidewalk System Within Developed Areas** – Of particular concern is providing safe pedestrian access to the Senior and Junior High Schools and Stony Creek Mills. In addition, gaps in the sidewalk system should be completed, curb should be provided where sidewalk is constructed, and condition of sidewalks improved.

**Increasing Recreation Opportunities for All Regional Residents** – Recreation opportunities within the region which are open to all residents throughout the day are very limited. Additional fields, such as soccer fields, are a particular need. Rotary Park is only for City use. Camp Lily is not for general use. Elementary school facilities are locked after school and subject to vandalism. The A-Field must be available for school use. Opportunities for additional recreation facilities are Neversink Mountain, Earl Trust land, and the Antietam Creek Watershed.

It is important to facilitate access to open space outside existing developed areas through new trail connections and making it understandable how to access recreation areas through the developed areas.

**Promoting Economic Vitality** – The region can be enhanced by maintaining connections to any Schuylkill Valley metro stops and enhancing streetscapes along Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Carsonia Avenue. Some of the issues along Perkiomen Avenue include lack of a true commercial core; hills which make walking difficult for some residents; narrow planting strips and lack of landscaping; lack of benches; loss of commercial continuity at Antietam Academy, St. Catherines, and residential blocks; old sidewalks and low curbs; and slope on the south side.

As properties along the major commercial streets would be redeveloped or further developed, property owners should work with the municipalities to encourage appropriate uses at appropriate intensities of development.

Maintaining the stability of neighborhoods and housing values is important to keeping the region an attractive one in which to invest.