

CHAPTER 5

FUTURE LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan establishes policies for guiding future land use within the region and serves as a guide on which to base regulatory controls, such as municipal zoning maps and zoning ordinances. The zoning ordinances and maps adopted by the municipalities will establish zoning district boundaries, permitted land uses and the permitted density of development. In the land use categories established below, the types of land uses recommended in each category will be indicated, as well as the proposed density range.

The goal for land use and housing is to 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 for land use and housing are to:

- 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 sewered.
- 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 appropriate use of vacant existing buildings.
- 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 23rd 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.

Land Use Categories

The following is a summary of the categories shown on the Future Land Use Plan:

Open Space and Park - This category is shown in the north and northwestern as well as the southern portion of the Township. The intent is to preserve critical natural areas and major open spaces in the region, including Antietam Lake and Creek and their watershed; Neversink Mountain; Mount Penn; and the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority property. It will provide for predominantly passive recreation facilities for regional and other County residents.

Rural Conservation - This category is intended to protect woodlands and steep slopes on privately-held land interspersed among Open Space and Park land. It will permit very low density residential development which will not adversely affect the natural features of these areas. A density of one dwelling unit per five acres, utilizing on-lot sewer and water is anticipated.

Rural Residential - This category is intended to protect areas of woodlands and steep slopes between Hill Road and Friedensburg Road which, if developed, could create severe storm drainage and erosion and sedimentation problems in existing developed areas of the region. One dwelling unit per two acres with on-lot sewer and water, except if development occurred where public sewer and water lines now exist, is anticipated. Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space.

Low Density Residential - This category will allow for low density residential development, provided such development recognizes and protects the natural resources within these areas. A density of one dwelling unit per acre with on-lot sewer and water is anticipated. Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space.

Medium Density Residential – Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods of single family detached dwellings and allow consistent development of the few remaining undeveloped parcels. Maximum density of up to eight dwelling units per acre, utilizing public sewer and water.

High Density Residential – Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods. Maximum density of up to eight dwelling units per acre, though maximum densities of up to sixteen dwelling units per acre may be permitted, depending upon the municipality and zoning district. Public sewage disposal and water supply are utilized.

Town Center Mixed Use - This area in the center of Mt. Penn, generally along Perkiomen Avenue, though with some extensions (23rd Street), will continue to permit a mix of residential, neighborhood-serving commercial, and community facility uses, where such a mix of uses now exists, in order to promote continued vitality of the Borough Center. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas. Maximum density of sixteen dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type of dwelling. Public sewer and water will be utilized.

Neighborhood Commercial - These areas, found in the Township along Carsonia Avenue, permit the continuation and expansion of two commercial areas, which serve the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas. A minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet would be required and public sewer and water facilities utilized.

Commercial - The Commercial areas provide for commercial uses, which are automobile oriented and which serve highway and neighborhood uses, where such uses now exist. A minimum lot size of 4,000 square feet would be required and public sewer and water facilities utilized.

Light Industrial - These areas are intended to permit the construction of several existing light industrial and heavy commercial uses in a limited, concentrated area in Lower Alsace. A minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet would be required and public sewer and water would be utilized.

Public or Public Protection - This includes recognized existing and proposed public and public protection uses, such as municipal buildings, schools, fire halls, police stations, and authority uses.

Recreation - This includes recognized existing and proposed public recreation facilities such as the A-Field, Antietam Valley Recreation Center, and potential recreation fields along Hill Road.

Institutional – This area recognizes the cemetery along the western end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough.

Mount Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Category	Objective	Recommended Land Uses	Recommended Densities
Open Space and Park	<p>Preserve critical natural areas and major open spaces in the region, including the Antietam Lake and Creek and their watershed; Neversink Mountain; Mount Penn; and the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority reservoir area.</p> <p>Provide for predominantly passive recreation facilities for regional and other County residents.</p>	Parks and open space reserves.	
Rural Conservation	<p>Protect woodlands and steep slopes on privately-held land interspersed among Open Space and Park land.</p> <p>Permit very low density residential development which will not adversely affect the natural features of these areas.</p>	<p>Parks and open space reserves.</p> <p>Conservation uses.</p> <p>Recreation uses</p> <p>Crop farming</p> <p>Single family detached dwellings.</p>	1 dwelling unit per 5 acres, utilizing on-lot sewer and water.
Rural Residential	<p>Protect areas of woodlands and steep slopes which, if developed, could create severe storm drainage and erosion and sedimentation problems in existing developed areas of the region.</p>	<p>Parks and open space reserves</p> <p>Conservation uses</p> <p>Recreation uses</p> <p>Crop farming</p> <p>Single family detached dwellings</p>	<p>1 dwelling unit per 2 acres. On-lot sewer and water would be used, except if development occurred where public sewer and water lines now exist.</p> <p>Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as</p>

Category	Objective	Recommended Land Uses	Recommended Densities
Low Density Residential	Allow for low density residential development, provided such development recognizes and protects the natural resources within these areas.	Single family detached dwellings Crop farming Conservation uses Parks and open space preserves Public recreation uses	conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space. 1 dwelling unit per acre. Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space. On-lot sewer and water would be used.
Medium Density Residential	Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods of single family detached dwellings and allow consistent development of the few remaining undeveloped parcels.	Single family detached dwellings Community facilities Public recreation	Maximum density of up to 8 dwelling units per acre, utilizing public sewer and water facilities
High Density Residential	Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods	Depending on the zoning district and municipality: Single family detached dwellings Single family semi-detached dwellings Two family dwellings Townhouses Apartments Community facilities Public recreation	Maximum density of up to 8 dwelling units per acre, though maximum densities of up to 16 dwelling units per acre may be permitted, depending upon the municipality and zoning district. Public sewage disposal and water supply are utilized.

Category	Objective	Recommended Land Uses	Recommended Densities
Town Center Mixed Use	Continue to permit a mix of residential, neighborhood-serving commercial, and community facility uses along Perkiomen Avenue and 23 rd Street where such a mix of uses now exists, in order to promote continued vitality of the Borough Center. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas.	Commercial uses and offices serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents. Single family detached dwellings Single family semi-detached dwellings Two family dwellings Townhouses Residential conversions Businesses and dwellings in combination Community facilities	Maximum density of 16 dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type of dwelling. Public sewer and water utilized.
Neighborhood Commercial	Permit continuation and expansion of two commercial areas in the Township which serve the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas.	Commercial uses and offices serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents.	Minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. Public sewer and water utilized.
Commercial	Provide for commercial uses which are automobile oriented and which serve highway and neighborhood uses, where such uses now exist.	Commercial uses and offices serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents. Automobile and highway-oriented commercial uses.	Minimum lot size of 4000 square feet, public sewer and water facilities utilized.
Light Industrial	Permit the construction of several existing light industrial and heavy commercial uses in a limited, concentrated area in Lower Alsace Township.	Light industrial activities carried on in completely enclosed buildings Heavy commercial uses.	Minimum lot size of 5000 square feet, public sewer and water facilities utilized.

Category	Objective	Recommended Land Uses	Recommended Densities
Public or Public Protection	Recognize existing and proposed public and public protection uses, such as municipal buildings, schools, fire halls, police stations, and authority uses.		
Recreation	Recognize existing and proposed public recreation facilities such as the A-Field, Antietam Valley Recreation Center, and potential recreation fields along Hill Road.		
Institutional	Recognizes the cemetery along the western end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough.		

Open Space and Park

The open space and park areas within the region include critical natural areas and important recreation areas, including Neversink Mountain, the Antietam Lake and Creek Watershed, and Mt. Penn Preserve. Their on-going protection as open space is critical to protecting ecosystems, providing County-wide recreational resources, and managing water runoff.

Open Space and Park Areas, now generally in public or semi-public ownership, should be preserved as open space by the County, the City of Reading and other organizations. Donation to or the granting of conservation easement to conservation groups such as the Berks County Conservancy could help to assure this. Acquisition of areas for County parkland is encouraged.

Rural Conservation

Rural Conservation areas are shown in the northern portion of the Township, along Angora Road, and in areas at the base of Neversink Mountain. Some of the land has restrictions to development because of steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands. Much of the land is wooded. As each site would be proposed for development, the density of development which could be accommodated on that land would have to be established through analysis of the natural, scenic, and historic features and resources of each site. On privately held land, single family detached dwellings would be permitted, but at a density of one dwelling unit per five acres of land, depending upon land characteristics. Limited development should occur in this area in order to protect the watersheds, protect vulnerable wooded, steep slopes, protect woodlands, maintain rural character adjoining major open spaces, and conserve ecosystems by helping maintain an adequate critical mass.

Rural Residential

The Rural Residential area is found primarily between Friedensburg Road to the east and Hill Road to the west in the Township. Rural Residential areas contain woodlands, steep slopes and very low density residential development. Some of the land has restrictions to development because of steep slopes. It is expected that single family detached dwellings would be permitted at a density of two acres per dwelling unit.

Low Density Residential

Low Density Residential areas are found in the Township between Spook Lane to the south and Haag Road to the north and in the extreme northeast portion of the Township. Typically, Low Density Residential Development reflects residential development that has occurred along existing Township roads. Land adjoining existing development which

is considered appropriate for expansion of low density residential development because of the absence of severe building limitations has also been included in this category. It is intended that single family dwellings at a density of one dwelling unit per acre would be permitted.

Medium Density Residential

Medium Density Residential areas are found around the core area of Mt. Penn Borough, along Fairview and Highland Avenues, in the portion of Lower Alsace Townships adjoining the Borough and to the west of Brighton Avenue and south of Montgomery Avenue. The Medium Density Residential areas contain existing developed areas and infill development could occur. The Medium Density Residential areas are within existing service areas of public sewer and water. Residential development for single family at a maximum density of up to eight dwelling units per acre is anticipated in the Medium Density Residential areas.

Allowing infill growth near areas where the road system is most developed can help reduce traffic pressures on rural roads not intended for higher traffic volumes. Most road improvements within the area are proposed within the developed areas in order to facilitate circulation in those areas. A nucleus of community facilities is found near the existing development in the Medium Density Residential areas.

High Density Residential

High Density Residential areas are found in the central portion of Mt. Penn Borough, on the fringe of the Town Center Mixed Use area located along Perkiomen Avenue and along Carsonia Avenue bounded to the east by Brighton Avenue and to the west by Friedensburg Road in the Township. The High Density Residential areas have been developed for a mixture of one family, two family and multiple family development at a density ranging from eight to sixteen dwelling units per acre. Such a pattern of development will be permitted in the future.

Town Center Mixed Use

A Town Center Mixed Use area is found in the center of Mt. Penn, generally along Perkiomen Avenue and 23rd Street. The Town Center Mixed Use area currently contains a mixture of one and two family homes and apartments, commercial uses, and community facilities, and it is intended that a mixture of residences at high density, commercial uses intended to serve the day-to-day needs of residents of the area, and community facilities will continue in this area.

The intent is to foster commercial development in the center of Mt. Penn which can serve the residents of the Borough and the Township on a day-to-day basis. In Chapter 7, methods of encouraging economic vitality in the center of Mt. Penn are discussed.

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial areas in the Township along Carsonia Avenue near the intersections with Park Lane, Parkview Avenue and at the junction with Antietam and Friedensburg Roads reflect existing mixes of residential and commercial uses, and would allow a mix of such uses in the future. The commercial uses would be those designed to meet the day-to-day needs of the nearby residential areas. Performance standards would be developed to ensure adverse impacts to nearby residential areas are minimized.

Commercial

Commercial areas are found along Howard Boulevard, and at the far eastern end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough adjoining St. Lawrence Borough. The Commercial areas contain existing commercial concentrations. Commercial and office uses located here would be automobile oriented and accommodate highway and neighborhood uses, where such uses now exist.

Light Industrial

A Light Industrial area is found in the eastern portion of Lower Alsace Township (along Brighton Avenue between Melrose and Woodland Avenues), where existing light industrial and heavy commercial are concentrated, would allow a mix of such uses in the future.

Public or Public Protection

This category includes uses such as the elementary schools, municipal buildings, utility uses and fire companies, which are further discussed in the Community Facilities Plan.

Recreation

This includes existing and proposed recreation areas in Lower Alsace such as the A-Field, Antietam Valley Recreation Center and potential recreation fields along Hill Road.

Institutional

This category reflects the existing cemetery along the western end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough.

Designated Growth Area

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code addresses the concept of a Designated Growth Area, which is a region within a multi-municipal plan that preferably includes and surrounds a borough or village, and within which residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned for densities of one unit to the acre or more, commercial, industrial and institutional uses are permitted or planned for and public infra-structure services are provided or planned. The intent of the designated growth area is to provide for orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area within the next 20 years, provide for the economic and employment needs of the area and insure that the area has an adequate tax base.

In Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace, the designated growth area includes land within the Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Town Center Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial and Light Industrial land use categories. The Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Town Center Mixed Use areas are intended to accommodate Residential, and in the case of the Town Center Mixed Use area, Mixed Residential and Commercial, development over the next 20 years. The density of development would range from eight to sixteen dwelling units per acre with utilization of public sewer and water facilities. The Town Center Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial and Light Industrial areas will allow for economic development and job formation and contribute to the tax base in the area.

Future Growth Area

The recent amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code also introduce the concept of future growth area, which is an area of a multi-municipal plan outside of and adjacent to a designated growth area where Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Institutional uses and development are permitted or planned at varying densities and public infrastructure services may or may not be provided, but future development at greater densities is planned to accompany the orderly extension and provision of public infrastructure services. The future growth areas include the Low Density Residential areas, which would be logical extensions of the designated growth areas.

Public Infrastructure Service Areas

The Designated Growth Area within the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region is considered as a public infrastructure service area. Outside the Designated Growth Area the municipalities will not assure the extension of public infrastructure services to and for developments. Public sewer and water facilities may become available in the Future Growth Areas.

Rural Resource Areas

Rural resource areas are areas described in a multi-municipal plan within which rural resources including, but not limited to, agriculture, timbering, mining, quarrying and other extractive industries, forest and game lands and recreation and tourism are encouraged and enhanced, development that is compatible with or supportive of such uses is permitted, and public infrastructure services are not provided. Rural resource areas are further categorized as areas where: (1) rural resource uses are planned for; (2) development at densities that are compatible with rural resource uses are or may be permitted; (3) infrastructure extensions or improvements are not intended to be publicly financed by municipalities, unless the participating or affected municipalities agree that such service should be provided to an area for health or safety reasons or to accomplish one or more of the purposes set forth in Section 1101 of the Municipalities Planning Code. No rural resource areas have been designated in this Comprehensive Plan because no areas appropriately fit all the criteria which have been established.

Considerations for Future Residential Development

As development occurs in the Township, particularly in the Rural Conservation and Rural Residential areas, which contain the greatest extent of sensitive environmental resources, and to a lesser extent in Low Density residential areas, care must be taken to preserve and protect the resources identified within each tract of land.

- An ongoing awareness of and sensitivity toward the natural resources of the area should be encouraged.
- Development should be concerned with geologic stability, soils suitability, groundwater supplies and stream flows.
- Groundwater resources should be protected against depletion and contamination.
- Methods of encouraging replenishment of the groundwater supply should be encouraged.
- Streams, ponds and wetlands should be protected against pollution from point sources and runoff.
- Floodplains and wet soils should be protected from encroachment.
- The loss of topsoil should be minimized.

- The retention and establishment of trees and other vegetation should be encouraged to control erosion, shade surface waters, control stormwater flow, create wind breaks, provide animal habitats and provide visual amenities.
- The preservation of scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors should be encouraged.
- Steep slopes should be avoided.
- The protection, preservation and enhancement of historic resources should be encouraged.
- The adaptive reuse of historic structures should be encouraged where appropriate.
- Innovative land development techniques should be used to minimize land consumption, preserve ecosystems, and preserve natural resources and open space.
- The provision of open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation should be encouraged. Visual and physical access to the open space system should be provided.
- A system of pathways should be encouraged.
- Incorporation of resources into development plans should be encouraged.
- Flexible approaches to site design to recognize resources should be encouraged.

Housing

The goal for housing is to provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents, to allow for a variety of housing densities and attractive residential housing types in appropriately designated areas within the natural and service constraints of the municipalities, and to provide for maintenance of the character of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate land use controls.

Provision for a variety of housing densities and housing types in appropriately designated areas is accomplished through the Land Use Plan, which makes provision for low to very low densities of single family development in Rural Conservation, Rural Residential and Low Density Residential areas; medium density development in the Medium Density Residential areas; and the highest density residential development for single family, two family, and multiple family dwellings in the High Density Residential area. Areas of

mixed commercial and residential development are allowed within the Town Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood Commercial areas.

Maintenance of the existing housing stock can be accomplished through enforcement of building codes and utilization of housing and property maintenance codes.

As taxes and housing costs rise, there is always concern for maintaining home ownership. Long term residents of the area can find themselves in positions where it is increasingly difficult to maintain or keep their properties. The municipalities should work with residents to identify various programs that are available to help them meet their housing expenses and retain their homes. Programs to address and provide for the housing needs of the elderly should be considered.

A particular concern in the region is to reverse the trends of conversion from owner-occupied to center occupied units and conversion of single family homes to apartments.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN

The goal for community facilities and services is to provide essential facilities and services to meet the existing and future needs of residents consistent with the financial capabilities of the Borough and the Township.

The following are the objectives which have been established for community facilities and services.

- 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.

Goal and Objectives for Open Space and Recreation are as follows:

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.

The Goal and Objectives for Planning are as follows:

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.

The Goal and Objectives for Implementation of this Plan are as follows:

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.

Coordination of Sewer and Water Facilities and Land Use Planning

It is important that policies on provision of public sanitary sewer and water facilities be coordinated with the Future Land Use Plan. The municipalities should work with the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority and the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority with regard to water and sewer to assure coordination of policies. If sanitary sewer and water systems are expanded, expansion outside the high and medium density residential areas, Town Center Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial, and Light Industrial areas shown on the Land Use Plan should only be to serve Low Density Residential areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal. Public sanitary sewer and water facilities in general should not be extended into Resource Conservation, Rural Residential and Open

Space areas. Extension to Low Density Residential areas could be appropriate if such areas are next to Medium Density Areas, would not increase development pressure on areas not intended for intensive development, and would not increase the density established in this Plan for Low Density Residential Areas.

Cooperative Efforts

The municipalities should continue to review opportunities and/or needs for regional cooperation in the provision of services and facilities as demands for services and costs increase. Municipalities can also work with the school district in providing facilities and programs to area residents.

Fire companies are finding it more difficult to get adequate numbers of volunteers, and cooperation among and management and staffing of fire companies in the area to address the fire protection needs of the community should be encouraged. Where appropriate, the interconnection of water systems within the region will be encouraged to address emergency situations and provide improved service to area residents. Water planning should also involve fire companies in the area to insure that there will be adequate fire hydrants and volume and pressure of water to provide adequate fire protection.

Other potential opportunities for regional cooperation which could be investigated over time include purchase or use of equipment, such as road equipment. If new school facilities are proposed by the school district, the municipalities should work with the school district to assure that school facilities are located to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. For instance, it would be desirable to consider location of school facilities in areas, where development has or is expected to take place, rather than locate school facilities in Rural Residential, Rural Conservation and Open Space areas, which are intended to preserve the rural and open space character of the area. In those instances where school facilities could lack adequate facilities, such as public sewer and water, the feasibility of extending necessary facilities should be investigated.

To facilitate implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, and to address the needs and possibilities for cooperation in the future, municipalities should formalize the joint planning process that has begun with formation of the Joint Municipal Planning Committee. A committee comprised of representatives from Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township should be created which will meet on a regular basis to review the Comprehensive Plan and to identify what steps should be taken to foster realization of the Plan.

Monitoring of Needs

Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace should continue to monitor the needs and opportunities for additional, expanded, or improved community services and facilities. The municipalities should plan for the efficient and economical provision of services and facilities and determine what efficiencies can be obtained in the provision of services either on an individual basis or in cooperative efforts. It is necessary to monitor needs municipality-and region-wide, but also for specific groups, whether it be the elderly, the youth, or families. Provision of needed services to and facilities for area residents can be coordinated with community agencies within the area and those serving larger geographic areas.

For preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, a committee composed of Township and Borough residents was created. This concept of using committees composed of area residents to address major issues of concern within the area could be used on other issues.

Recreation and Open Space

On the Future Land Use Plan, areas around Antietam Lake, Neversink Mountain, and Mount Penn have been indicated as Open Space and Park. In the Berks County Open Space and Recreation Plan, Neversink Mountain is indicated as open space area to be protected and the Antietam Lake area is indicated as existing open space and recreation. Creation of County Parks at these two areas is supported.

There is a need for additional recreational fields available to all the region's residents, and development of such fields on open Earl Trust land along Hill Road is recommended.

Trail and Greenway Planning

Introduction

A proposed trail system within the region has been planned. The trail system would accomplish several things, including providing a recreational resource for bicycling and walking; providing connections to Antietam Lake and trails in the vicinity, to existing trails on Neversink Mountain, and thus the trail system in Exeter Township and to the trail system in City owned land on and near Mt. Penn; and providing an alternative circulation system throughout the area which would provide access between developed areas, access to businesses and jobs, and access to community facilities and recreation facilities. Connections will be made to the existing sidewalk system within the Borough and Township.

Eventual connections would be available to the Thun Trail being developed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, the Horseshoe Trail which passes through the

southern portion of Berks County, and the Appalachian Trail which passes through the northern portion of Berks County, by connecting to trail systems in adjoining municipalities.

It should be emphasized that this is a Conceptual Plan, and it will be necessary to refine the Plan.

Issues to Address in Detailed Planning for a Trail System

The first item to address is establishing destinations for the trail system. The conceptual trail plan has generally done this, but the destinations to be reached would have to be finalized and prioritized.

It also has to be determined what routes would be used to reach the destinations. The trail system could follow roads, creeks, railbeds, pipeline rights-of-way, sanitary sewer easements, electric company rights-of-way, and drainage easements.

It will also be necessary to determine the users to be accommodated, whether it be hikers, walkers, bikers, or horseback riders, or a combination.

Trail design studies would be necessary to actually design the trails. These studies would determine the actual locations, the extent to which existing pathways and sidewalks would be incorporated into the system, materials of the trails, the width of trails.

It will be necessary to determine costs, including construction costs, land costs, and maintenance. It will also be necessary to determine what method would be used to control the area necessary for the trail, including usage of existing or dedicated road rights-of-way, donations, easements, lease or purchase.

Sources of funding for trail construction would have to be identified, such as Keystone Grants, TEA, and Land and Water Conservation Fund.

If roadside lanes will be utilized, standards for road design should be established. The following typical bicycle lane cross-sections are from *Pennsylvania Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*.

It will be necessary to determine whose responsibility trail planning will be, whether it be individual Recreation Boards, or preferably, a joint recreation board or a trail commission or the entire area.

The planning agency will have to determine what are the primary trail routes and secondary routes. Once the trails are prioritized, if it is determined that some trails will be within PennDOT rights-of-way, PennDOT should be approached for assistance in

providing the trails. Bicycle lane width and shoulder width will vary with the average motor vehicle operating speed for a road, the average annual daily traffic volume, and the adequacy or inadequacy of sight distance along the road. PennDOT could be requested to pave wider shoulders where the rights-of-way permit.

Plan for the Reliable Supply of Water

The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority serves the Borough, developed portions of Lower Alsace Township, St. Lawrence Borough, and portions of Exeter Township. Wells are located between Hill Road and Spook Lane. Pennsylvania American Water Company wells are located between Friedensburg Road and Butter Lane in Lower Alsace Township. The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority also maintains water storage facilities. These facilities are located adjacent and in close proximity to the Authority's wells between Hill Road and Spook Lane. Existing water facilities are shown on the map in Chapter 13. The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority system is interconnected to the Reading Area Water Authority and Pennsylvania American Water Company systems. Some areas of Lower Alsace Township are served by private wells.

Open Space and Park and Rural Conservation areas have also been designated on Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn and between Mt. Penn and Antietam Lake. Berks County Conservancy, Mt. Penn Preserve, Earl Trust, Mt. Penn Borough Authority, and City of Reading lands are included within these areas. Retaining this public and quasi-public owned land in open space and allowing only very low density development of privately-owned land will help protect the watersheds of watercourses and water supplies, protect vulnerable steep slopes, protect woodlands, minimize stormwater runoff and erosion, and maximize infiltration of rainfall.

In Rural Residential and Low Density Residential areas in the northern portion of Lower Alsace Township, the density of development would be established through analysis of the natural, scenic and historic features and resources at each site, and steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands would be protected.

Where residential developments, businesses, or other uses propose to utilize ground water or surface water supplies in substantial amounts, hydrologic studies should be required and the party causing the extraction should be required to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on the water supplies of other entities in the region.

Any public access to and usage of watershed areas should be consistent with the need to protect water supplies.

Zoning Ordinances should contain provisions to protect sources of water supply through the following techniques:

1. Natural Resource Protection standards (net out provisions) protecting floodplains, wetlands, wetland margins, steep slopes, watercourses, water bodies, and lake and pond shores.
2. Lot averaging provisions to allow flexibility in lot layout so houses can be sited away from natural features and resources.
3. Conservation zoning in Rural Residential and Low Density Residential areas to protect natural resources.
4. Steep slope protection provisions to minimize erosion and sedimentation resulting from impervious surfaces and tree clearance.
5. Woodland protection provisions to maintain tree cover.
6. Wetlands, wetland margin and hydric soil protection provisions to protect groundwater and surface water supplies from contamination and allow infiltration.
7. Floodplain protection provisions to protect surface water quality and quantity.
8. Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning to protect surface water from adverse impacts from development and other nearby disturbance.
9. Aquifer protection standards to protect groundwater supplies from contamination through use and impervious restrictions and design standards.
10. Wellhead protection provisions to protect central water supplies by restricting and regulating potential contaminating substances and uses.
11. Minimizing impervious cover.
12. Environmental performance standards and environmental assessment requirements for developments.

Zoning strategies should be coordinated with efforts of the Berks County Conservation District, Penn State Cooperative Extension and Berks County Conservancy to fence stream banks and use other Best Management Practices to protect stream quality. Development of impervious surfaces should be limited, riparian buffers established, and stream habitats improved.

When development plans are reviewed, developers should be required to adequately manage storm water runoff and erosion and sedimentation in manners consistent with the protection of water resources in the area. Storm water management should be considered

as part of the hydrologic cycle with less emphasis on detention, more emphasis on infiltration, reducing pollution, and reducing thermal impacts through BMPs. Recommendations and ordinances pursuant to adopted Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans should be implemented.

Developers should also be required to identify the resources within their tracts, analyze the impacts of development and mitigate those impacts. Natural resources should be incorporated into the open space system.

It should be noted that lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities. Commercial agricultural production impacts water supply sources and Best Management Practices should be applied to mitigate the impact on water supply sources.

The formation of new watershed associations and municipal environmental advisory councils should be supported.

Environmental Advisory Councils should be charged with protecting water resources in the region.

Public education programs should encourage the community to be aware of potential sources of water supply in their watersheds and to exercise good “housekeeping” and stewardship practices to help protect them.

Landscape management programs can be formulated to encourage residents to reduce nutrients and pesticides reaching streams and ground water. A regular program of household hazardous waste collection and public education programs should be maintained.

Pursuant to the State’s Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), source water areas of public water systems have been identified, potential pollution sources identified, and vulnerability of water supply to pollution sources assessed. The program also encourages and provides a tool for water suppliers, municipalities, and the public to develop methods and programs which reduce or eliminate the contamination of water used for drinking water supplies. Within the Region, the municipalities, watershed associations, and water suppliers should work together to develop a program to protect watersheds.

Drought contingency plans should be prepared by all water suppliers to establish how water supplies will be continued during times of drought. Elements to address include alternative sources of supply, interconnections between systems, emergency water transfer agreements, and water conservation provisions.

Even outside times of drought, water suppliers should implement water conservation programs for both the system and individual users.

Wellhead Protection

Wellhead protection programs are an element of protecting groundwater sources and should be implemented. Key elements of wellhead and watershed protection programs include:

- delineation of critical recharge areas surrounding groundwater sources;
- adoption and enforcement of ordinance provisions to ensure compatibility of land use with groundwater protection within delineated critical recharge areas;
- groundwater quality monitoring surrounding water supply sources;
- inventory of contaminant activities surrounding groundwater supply sources;
- coordination with EPA and DEP regarding enforcement of permitting, registration, or emergency planning requirements for contaminant activities; and
- creation of agreements with the County conservation district for routine inspection of land development erosion and sedimentation plans within delineated critical recharge areas.

PROTECTING WATER SUPPLIES

Stream Corridor Protection	Aquifer Protection	Groundwater Resource Protection Provisions	Hydrogeologic Impact Analyses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict development and impervious surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review development plans to prevent groundwater pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellhead Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed supply locations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require riparian vegetative buffers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit impervious surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase watershed awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geologic conditions, recharge rate, degree of renovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage use of best management practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish performance standards for commercial and industrial uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation/restriction of potential contaminating uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquifer characteristics; groundwater movement, use, yield, quality, quantity, well interference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage stream habitat improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect aquifers through controlling uses and potential polluting activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test well results and impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage conservation easements/donations/dedications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize appropriate sewage disposal and water supply techniques, with appropriate standards and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to protect groundwater system underlying and adjacent to the site: prevention, remediation, emergency management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect wetlands and wetland margins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect headwaters and groundwater recharge areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of groundwater quality and quantity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require floodplain and wetland studies where not identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Management Practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review process 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore stream banks and crossings 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenway development 			

CHAPTER 7

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The goal for economic development is to sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the Township and the Borough, while maintaining the small-town character.

The objectives which have been established are:

- 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, 23rd 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.

Overall Approach

The existing tax burden of the region's residents and infrastructure improvement costs are major concerns in the region. One way to address the issue of increased costs is more cooperative efforts of the municipalities and volunteer organizations to try to control costs of services. Another approach to addressing increased costs is to try to increase the tax base within designated commercial areas. The Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences Cooperative Extension has published a study entitled, "Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses, the Pennsylvania Experience." Eight Pennsylvania townships were studied to determine the potential fiscal impact of land uses. For residential, commercial, industrial and farm and open land uses, the ratios of revenues to expenditures were calculated. Residential land, on average, contributed less in revenue to the municipality and school district than it required in expenditures. Much of the negative fiscal impact was because of school expenses. Commercial, industrial and farm and open land provided more revenue than they required in expenditures. The study also indicates that these results are consistent with other states' experiences. In all but one Township, farm and open land had the best ratio of income to expenses among commercial, industrial, and farm and open land uses.

The Open Space and Park designation on the proposed Future Land Use Plan makes sense from a fiscal point of view. More importantly, preservation of those areas protects critical natural resources, provides open space and recreation facilities, enhances the quality of life in the region, and can make the region more attractive for economic investment in existing commercial areas.

In the Future Land Use Plan, provision is made for light industrial uses in the eastern portion of Lower Alsace Township where such uses now exist. The Light Industrial area would allow light industrial activities carried on in completely enclosed buildings and also heavy commercial uses as well. The intent is that the existing residential land uses around this area will not be adversely impacted.

Provision is made for commercial development along Business Route 422, 23rd Street, and Howard Blvd. in Mt. Penn Borough and portions of Carsonia Avenue and Stony Creek Mills in the Township. The Plan provides for commercial, business, and office uses serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents, along with a mix of residential uses, along Perkiomen Avenue and 23rd Street to promote continued vitality of the Borough Center. Neighborhood Commercial areas have been expanded along Carsonia Ave. to allow for additional commercial development within the Township. Performance standards will be established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas. Commercial, business and office uses serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents are promoted.

As noted elsewhere in this plan, providing for connections to potential Schuylkill Valley Metro stations is considered important. Connections to Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn, and Antietam Lake which are easily identified are even more important to the desirability of the Commercial Areas in the region.

Pedestrian scale and additional human interaction can also be fostered by development of the trail system throughout the region and connections to outside the region. The trail system can provide bicycle and pedestrian access to commercial areas in the Township and the Borough. This trail system can link destinations to businesses and commercial establishments. It would be desirable to have appropriate bicyclist and pedestrian-friendly facilities, including bike racks, sitting places, and plazas at businesses which could be accessed by trail users.

Encouraging Economic Vitality

While economic vitality can be approached directly, such as providing land zoned for commercial development, providing opportunities for adaptive reuse of older buildings, fostering municipal/business partnerships to support the business community, marketing opportunities within the area, strengthening the streetscape of the commercial areas along Perkiomen Avenue, 23rd Street, Howard Boulevard, and Carsonia Avenue, and strengthening entry images at entrances to the municipalities, this is not the entire approach.

It is important to preserve residential neighborhoods which support the commercial areas and provide a workforce. Planning to achieve a desirable quality of life makes economic sense, as it can encourage additional investment in the area. Preserving community architecture, history and culture helps maintain a sense of place and attracts people and businesses to the area. "A sense of place" is a term used more and more in community planning. To say that there is a sense of place is to say that there is a location which is distinctive, to which people attach meaning, where there is a sense of a physically defined area, and where past and future experiences can be shared with other people.

To maintain a sense of place, it is necessary to maintain human scale and provide places for people to live, work and play safely and securely. This involves maintaining pedestrian scale, recognizing streets are for people not just for cars, providing adequate parking opportunities, providing for trees and attractive streetscapes, and encouraging humane architecture which is pleasing to and does not overwhelm people. Throughout the region, it is necessary to provide safe neighborhoods; provide convenience to jobs and necessary services; provide opportunities for human interaction by providing for open space, recreation, public places, pedestrian ways and sitting areas, community facilities and special events; providing diversity and experience in sensory involvement; providing awareness of history; maintaining unique characteristics; and recognizing the boundaries of the community.

Business Route 422 Corridor

Encouraging development that enhances the visual character of the Business Route 422 Corridor and 23rd Street – Carsonia Avenue Corridor makes economic sense, as it can help prevent decline of the corridors in the future. Attention should be given to the entrances to the corridors as well as aesthetic treatments along the length of the corridors. Design principles for commercial and residential development should be established. Such design principles would result in continuity in the design of development along the corridors and take into account such factors as signage, screening, landscaping, setbacks, architecture, and streetscape improvements.

Parking opportunities in commercial areas should be monitored and investigated to their feasibility in the future, especially if there are changes in land use to increase the density of commercial development. The need to encourage sharing of underutilized parking areas should be monitored. Along Perkiomen Avenue it is important to keep available traffic lanes open to facilitate traffic flow because of heavy use of the road. The need to facilitate traffic flow complicates the ability to make streetscape improvements and facilitate increased on-street parking. It would be desirable to improve the pedestrian friendliness and landscaping of the Perkiomen Avenue—23rd Street intersection in particular, but this is a very heavily traveled area. The shallow nature of the lots along this route presents some limitations as to size of parking areas.

Improving Commercial Corridors

The following are key elements in efforts to strengthen commercial corridors:

- **Improving the image by enhancing physical appearance**

This includes enhancing the appearance of buildings, streetlights, window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, benches, landscaping, trash receptacles, utility poles and lines, graphics and public phones. Design in the area should recognize existing desirable physical elements, be compatible with the area's character, and be unified.

- **Securing a consensus and cooperation among the groups that are involved in Business Development**

Parties that should be involved include elected officials, businessmen, bankers, real estate agents, customers, the media, residents and civic groups.

- **Promoting the Corridors**

The unique characteristics should be promoted to customers, investors, existing businesses and potential new businesses. A positive image can be fostered through appropriate special events, and other programs. A brochure promoting businesses could be prepared.

- **Strengthening the Economy of the Corridors**

If the economy is strong, it is possible to maintain and upgrade the buildings in the area. Existing businesses should be helped to expand, new businesses could be recruited, and increased use of any underutilized buildings should be promoted.

- **Affecting Attitudes towards the Corridors**

Consumers and investors have more positive attitudes toward areas as they see changes taking place such as building improvement projects and new street furniture. Owners of buildings will be more likely to make improvements to their buildings.

Specific tasks to help maintain economic vitality can include:

- Helping businesses identify new sales opportunities
- Promoting the corridors as cohesive areas to market groups
- Listing potential new businesses
- Keeping track of prospective businesses
- Improving the quality of downtown businesses by helping them be more customer responsive and competitive
- Having coordinated business hours that meet consumer needs
- Encouraging attractive window and interior merchandise displays
- Maintaining information on the corridors
- Marketing and promoting businesses
- Helping to maintain existing businesses and encouraging patronage of those businesses

- Working with financial institutions to establish loan pools
- Maintaining a good working relationship between public and private sectors
- Finding new uses for any underutilized or vacant downtown buildings
- Recruiting businesses to complement the corridor's mix of uses
- Identifying sources of grants for physical improvements or providing matching grants for such improvements
- Assuring promotional activities create a consistent, positive image for the corridor, consistent with community characteristics and history
- Understanding the region's history
- Managing parking spaces
- Scheduling events to bring people into the corridors
- Working with developers to assure attractive, well-planned development, which has an appropriate intensity of development and makes appropriate use of limited commercial land
- Enhancing alternatives to auto traffic, including enhanced transit service and pedestrian walkways
- Landscaping standards
- Enhancing the pedestrian system and coordinating with open space and recreation and greenway planning
- Managing road corridors
- Protecting remaining natural resources
- Encouraging appropriate mixed use
- Incorporating public spaces so they are visible and accessible, in order to humanize areas
- Addressing parking needs

- Recognizing the assets and defining characteristics of a corridor and enhancing and building upon those features. Examples are building stock, variety of available services, walkability, and traditional development patterns.

In conjunction with corridor improvement programs, an economic development strategy table like the following could be prepared.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">Economic Development Task →</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">Economic Development Incentive</div>	Lighting Improvements	Sidewalk/Curb Improvements	Cross Walk Unique Identifier	Establish New Traffic Patterns/Traffic Improvements	Additional Trash Receptacles	Tree Replacement/Planting Program	Color Selection Coordination	Size Selection Coordination	Style Selection Coordination	Bandwidth Improvements	Overhead to Underground Conversion/Placement	Directional Signage	Deferred or Excused Payment Requirement	Commercial Development Recruitment	Create and Advertise Community Venues	Promote Adaptive Reuse Opportunities
Main Street Revitalization	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X
Additional Parking Improvements	X	X		X								X				
Recreation Program Expansion	X	X			X	X					X	X			X	
Public Safety Improvements	X	X	X	X	X						X					
Façade Coordination/Design/Specification							X		X							
Signage Coordination							X	X	X							
Trash/Debris Increased					X											
Communication/Internet Enhancements										X	X			X		
Flat-pad Ready to Build Sites										X	X			X		
Tax Abatement Programs													X	X		X
Utility Incentives										X				X		X
Tourism Recognition													X		X	
Transportation Access				X												

As development occurs in the region, consideration should be given to the following:

- respecting architectural traditions of the region
- retaining the character and integrity of historic neighborhoods and buildings
- retaining a sense of place in neighborhoods and business areas
- enhancing gateways to the region
- limiting building heights to what is deemed appropriate and consistent with existing buildings
- attracting commercial uses which enhance the commercial character of the region
- providing greenspace
- encouraging owner-occupation, controlling conversions, and addressing parking needs in residential areas
- making the region more walkable and bikeable
- providing people-oriented spaces
- having appropriate signage control
- enhancing stream-side areas, providing parkland along creeks utilizing greenways and trails to draw people to the region
- Connecting to trails and bikeways throughout the region and facilitating wayfinding

CHAPTER 8

CIRCULATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The goal for circulation is to 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 are to:

- 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-27th 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.

Future Functional Classification of Roadways

The future roadway classification is as follows:

Major Arterials include: Business 422, Howard Boulevard, Dengler Street, Carsonia Avenue-23rd Street, and Friedensburg Road (from Carsonia Avenue to the northern boundary of the Township).

Minor Arterials include: Friedensburg Road (from the intersection of Carsonia and Filbert Avenues in the Borough to the intersection with Antietam Road in the Township), Spook Lane-Park Lane, and Antietam Road-Angora Road.

Major Collectors include: Filbert Avenue, Glen Road, Harvey Avenue, Antietam Road (from Angora Road to the northern boundary of the Township and in the vicinity of the High School), Fern Street, 22nd Street, 27th Street, and Cherrydale Avenue.

Minor Collectors include: Endlich Avenue, Butter Lane, Old Friedensburg Road, Hill Road, List Road, and Angora Road from List Road to the Alsace Township Line.

Local Access Roads include: all other roads.

Proposed Improvements

Proposed improvements are shown on the Circulation Plan.

Intersection Improvements:

- Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard and 23rd Street intersection, where turning movements and traffic calming should be improved;
- Perkiomen Avenue and 27th Street, where the need for turning limitations should be monitored.
- Perkiomen Avenue, Butter Lane, Endlich Avenue, and 26th Street, where offset and acute angle intersections create undesirable turning patterns.
- Carsonia Avenue, Friedensburg Road and Antietam Road, where the alignment and sight distance of the intersection should be improved, and need for signalization determined.
- Perkiomen Avenue, provide traffic calming and intersection enhancement the entire length running through Mt. Penn;
- Fairview Avenue, provide traffic calming the entire length running through Mt. Penn;

Improvements to Existing Areas of Concern

The Traffic Circulation Plan also shows additional roadway concerns, including areas with parking concerns and circulation concerns (around the schools and churches in Mount Penn and Friedensburg Road in the Township) and areas with access management concerns as well as areas recommended for streetscape improvements and transit enhancements (Perkiomen Avenue, 23rd Street, Howard Boulevard, Carsonia Avenue). The municipalities should continue to work toward improvement of these areas through adoption of multi-year road improvement plans and cooperation with PennDOT. The cooperation and contribution of BARTA should be sought when the areas of concern involve transit improvements.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an important element of the circulation system within Lower Alsace Township. Maintenance of the system of scenic roads will be encouraged. The Future Land Use Plan proposes concentrating most future growth in areas where development

has already occurred, and proposes substantial Open Space and Park areas, and this will help maintain the scenic road system. In Rural Conservation areas, builders will be encouraged to incorporate natural features and resources into sites and to site homes with consideration of the natural features and resources.

The Township should consider adopting scenic road overlay zoning along scenic roads. Within such overlay areas, greater setbacks along the roads could be required, additional landscaping and screening requirements could be established, and design standards for siting of buildings could be established in order to minimize visual impacts of any development.

Discouraging intensive development along the scenic roads also has another benefit. This can lessen traffic volumes and driveway intersections along roads which are typically not suited for intensive traffic volumes.

Mass Transit

Congestion on Perkiomen Avenue is a concern. No major improvements to the road is proposed by any governmental agency, so incremental steps will have to be taken to improve conditions. One of those incremental actions is encouraging use of the BARTA bus system.

An objective will be to maintain and then expand service. Elements in trying to expand service will be well-located stops, attractive and safe stops with shelters, connections to the transit hub in Reading and the Schuylkill Valley Metro, if constructed, and bicycle and pedestrian routes to stops with bicycle shelters and racks. The trail system is designed to provide connections between the sidewalk system, recreation areas and existing BARTA routes.

Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace and surrounding municipalities should work with BARTA to encourage BARTA to provide adequate suburb-to-suburb bus routes serving major residential, employment and retail areas, with cooperation with and support from the local business community.

Providing park and ride systems should be encouraged if land could be secured in the region or nearby.

The use of carpooling throughout the area should be encouraged. Businesses within the area could take the lead in encouraging employees to carpool.

Access Management

Access management will be a concern along all roads within the area, but particularly along Perkiomen Avenue, 23rd Street, Howard Boulevard, Dengler Street, Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road, and the collector road system. The municipalities should consider working with PennDOT to develop an access management plan for the area.

The major elements in access management include the following:

- Driveway design standards
- Reduce number of road entrances
- Traffic Impact Analysis where development is proposed
- Appropriate provision for turning movements
- Adequate parking lot/internal circulation design
- Shared access to properties
- Interconnect properties along roads
- Improve intersection design
- Control of access
- Prohibit inappropriate turning movements

Transportation Development Districts

The Transportation Partnership Act (Act 47 of 1985 as amended) allows municipalities to create Transportation Development Districts to assist in the financing of transportation facilities and services. Roads, railroads, and public transit are eligible. If municipalities propose a district, property owners who represent more than 50 percent of the assessed valuation within a proposed district must be in favor of the district. The creation of the Transportation Development District allows municipalities to impose assessments upon benefited properties within the District to construct transportation improvements.

While the Transportation Development District approach may not be appropriate at the present time, the appropriateness of it along Perkiomen Avenue should be monitored.

Congestion Management System Strategies

The major elements are:

- Employee trip reduction plans to increase average vehicle occupancy
- Creation of transportation management associations in which municipalities work with local business community in identifying travel demand reduction measures such as:

- reducing vehicle concentrations at peak periods by staggering work hours;
- encouraging commuting by carpool and public transit rather than by single occupancy vehicles;
- eliminating unnecessary commutes;
- funding informal para-transit/vanpool operations; and
- hiring a transportation coordinator to organize transportation alternatives.

There are no major employers within the Borough and the Township, but major employers in adjoining regions where area residents work could be encouraged to use these techniques.

- Internalizing trips within an area

Impact Fees and Negotiated Financial Contributions

The Municipalities Planning Code allows municipalities to assess a traffic impact fee provided municipalities have adopted a traffic impact fee ordinance. With a traffic impact fee system in place, a municipality can collect fees to finance improvements to the road system. Neither municipality has a traffic impact fee system. Two possible districts which could be investigated are Carsonia Avenue, Angora Road, Friedensburg Road and Antietam Road, and Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard, 23rd Street, and Dengler Street. It is unlikely such impact fees would be feasible in the region, given the cost of the initial studies, as long as land designated Open Space and Park on the Future Land Use Plan remains open.

Where traffic impact fee systems are not in place, financial contributions from developers for road improvements should be negotiated. Developer-financed road improvements at existing intersections and along road segments could help address current concerns and mitigate traffic increases associated with new development.

Shoulder Improvements

In areas where sidewalk will not be constructed, developers should be required to improve shoulders along the frontages of their tracts when they develop. In addition, the Township could take it upon itself to improve shoulders along existing roads. Shoulders should be a minimum of 4 ft. wide, but should be the minimum width necessary to provide for trails in accordance with the guidelines in the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Gateways

Gateways should be considered at the entrances to the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region along Perkiomen Avenue. A gateway is an entrance corridor that defines the arrival point as a destination. Gateway planning concerns arranging the landscape and visual experiences to help create a sense of arrival at the destination and provide a positive image of the destination. Municipalities can work with property owners to enhance the entrances.

Along the length of Perkiomen Avenue and in other commercial areas, property owners can be encouraged to enhance the commercial areas through coordinated landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, paving materials, design of site improvements, building facades and window displays. When new development occurs, developers could be required to comply with performance and design standards, which would require them to address these elements. Parking facilities should be landscaped.

Signage should be minimal, and appropriate to the character of the region.

Property owners should be encouraged to maintain and improve properties, particularly those that may have negative impacts on surrounding properties. Where the rear of commercial properties face or abut residential properties, attention should be paid to the appearance of the commercial property and its impact on the residences.

Design guidelines addressing the following elements could also be applied or developers could be asked to address them voluntarily:

- discouraging the use of drive-thru facilities where they do not now exist
- encourage new development to be compatible with and integrated into existing streetscapes, by addressing:
 - maintaining appropriate siting patterns, such as setbacks of buildings on lots
 - respecting the massing (volume created by sections of the building) within the neighborhood
 - using materials of similar appearance and texture to those on existing attractive buildings
 - using similar architectural treatments as other attractive buildings in the neighborhood

- Maintaining the scale and proportion of buildings near the building. Scale deals with the relationship of each building to other buildings in the area and proportion deals with the relationship of the height to the width of a building and with the relationship of each part to the whole.
- Using similar roof shapes
- Maintaining similar footprints of buildings and rooflines (matching facade masses with existing buildings)
- Using similar building heights
- Having store fronts and upper facades of commercial buildings compatible with existing buildings
- Using colors which are harmonious throughout the area

The use of coverage, density, intensity and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, street furniture, open spaces and desired parking designs could be considered along Perkiomen and Carsonia Avenues. The intent of bonuses is to provide incentives to developers, not just regulation, to allow economic use of property.

Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian circulation has been discussed previously, but inter-relationships with the street system should be mentioned. As streets are maintained and improved, walkability should be addressed, including sidewalk improvements and the radii at intersections. Limiting radii at intersections to the minimum necessary to allow safe traffic flow can make intersections more pedestrian friendly. Pedestrian crossings at street intersections, particularly along the major trail routes within the area, should be facilitated through crosswalks, stop signs, limitation of cartway radii and the use of pedestrian buttons and cycles that signalize street intersections.

Traffic Calming

The purpose of traffic calming is to manage movement through an area in a way that is compatible with the land usage in the vicinity of the road. Two fundamental principles of traffic calming are that streets are not just for cars and that residents have rights. Streets should be safe for pedestrians and local drivers and traffic should not adversely affect the quality of life along the streets. Traffic calming can be appropriate in residential areas which experience excessive volumes or speeds, typically because of through traffic, or

along rural roads which are not intended for high speed and volume because of the rural nature of the roads (narrow, windy, hilly).

Candidate streets in the region include Fairview Avenue, Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard, 23rd Street, Carsonia Avenue, Friedensburg Road, Antietam Road, Angora Road, and Spook Lane.

The general methods of traffic calming include:

- Active speed reduction (construct barriers to traffic movements)
- Passive speed reduction (installation of signage)
- Streetside design (landscaping changes the appearance of the area and driver attitudes)
- Regional planning efforts (external traffic directed to other routes) (trip reduction and congestion management strategies)
- Opportunities for use of alternative modes (mass transportation, pedestrian, bicycle)

Regional planning efforts and opportunities to use alternative modes have been discussed. The methods available along local streets include active speed reduction, passive speed reduction and streetside design. The need for these techniques should be monitored.

1. *Active Speed Reduction (Construct barriers)*

- a. Speed bumps and speed tables are raised areas in the street surface, which extend across the width of the street. Speed bumps present liability and are also annoying to local residents. Speed tables, which are really raised pedestrian crosswalks, could be more successful. They would be most appropriate in areas with substantial pedestrian traffic.
- b. Changes in roadway surface - This could include rumble strips, milling, and special roadway surfaces. These techniques can increase noise in areas and raise objections by area residents.
- c. Intersection Diverters - This could involve a barrier placed across an intersection, typically to alter travel plans, such as permitting right turns only, to make travel through a neighborhood more indirect.

- d. Channelization - This could involve provision of pedestrian refuge areas, providing protected parking bays through landscaped islands, altering motor vehicle traffic movements, and restricting movements at intersections by narrowing the space available for vehicular movement.

The active controls require changes in driver behavior. While the active methods send the message that the street is not just for through traffic, the methods are costly, and likely to be viewed negatively by some of the local users of the streets.

2. *Passive Methods of Control*

- a. Traffic signs such as Do Not Enter, Stop, Not a Through Street, Local Access Only, No Trucks, or signs establishing speed limits, indicating one-way nature of street, or prohibiting turns.
- b. Traffic Signals
- c. Pavement markings, including crosswalks, edgelines, and use of different materials for pedestrian crosswalks
- d. Permitting on-street parking
- e. Speed watch

These methods have lower costs and can be applied to certain times of the day, if appropriate. However, signs are often ignored in usage, and enforcement is necessary.

3. *Changing Driver Attitudes Within Neighborhoods*

Building design, street trees, landscaping, street furniture, lighting, paving, and land use can change the driver's perception of a road as not just an area to drive, but as a shared space with pedestrians and other occupants of the area. The intent is to have the driver recognize the street as not just a wide-open roadway designed for benefit of a car, but as a place where residents of a neighborhood will also be using the street. Any designs for streets should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood. Landscaping should be easy to maintain and not affect clear sight triangles.

Implementation

Prior to implementation of any traffic calming program, it is necessary to clearly identify the specific problems which are to be addressed, identify and evaluate the alternative techniques and their drawbacks, benefits, and cost; identify alternative traffic patterns that could result from implementation of the techniques and the effects of those patterns on other streets and neighborhoods; and involve citizens of the community in the evaluation and selection of techniques. Techniques should not detract from the character or attractiveness of a neighborhood.

Primary Emphasis on Passive Techniques

Primary emphasis should be given to the passive traffic calming techniques. The use of active traffic calming techniques should be employed only if passive techniques are not successful because of the cost and inconvenience to residents.

One area where more active traffic calming could be considered is Perkiomen Avenue where bumpouts could be considered at some street intersections. The bumpouts would physically protect parking and shorten the distance across the road for pedestrians.

Optimization of Traffic Signalization along Perkiomen Avenue

In order to increase system capacity and reduce intersection delays, traffic signal timing along Perkiomen Avenue should be kept current.

Consideration should be given to implementing a closed loop system to enhance the operation of coordinated signalized intersections in the Business Route 422 corridor. Presently the signals in the Borough could be coordinated with those in St. Lawrence Borough and Exeter Township. Currently there are several closed loop systems in operation within PennDOT District 5-0. The systems will require hardware (vehicle detectors) in the field as well as a computer, software and communication lines to a municipal office and to the PennDOT District Office. They will also require a consultant or employee trained to monitor the system. Although the system would allow for real time signal timing adjustments, PennDOT policy currently allows timing adjustments to be made only by PennDOT. This inhibits the ultimate effectiveness of the closed loop system; however as these systems become more prevalent, we expect that PennDOT will respond with a more effective policy.

CHAPTER 9

PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Natural resources are identified in Chapter 14, where floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, streams, steep slopes, wooded areas and natural features of special interest are discussed; Chapter 16, where aquifers are discussed; and Chapter 17, where scenic resources are discussed. Historic Resources are discussed in Chapter 22.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives have been established for natural resources, historic resources and agricultural resources.

Natural 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 view 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.

When residents were asked if they would support efforts to preserve Neversink Mountain for open space and recreation purposes, 21 people were in favor of supporting it, while only one person was opposed. The questionnaire also asked the question whether or not the residents would support efforts to acquire the Antietam Lake area from the City of Reading in order to preserve the area as open space, 20 people responded in favor of supporting such efforts, while only 1 person opposed the idea.

Antietam Lake Watershed

State Senator Michael A. O’Pake presented a State grant check in the amount of \$10,000 to the Friends of the Antietam Lake and the Berks County Conservancy on April 11, 2001. He secured these funds in the 2000-2001 state budget to support the purchase of a conservation easement from the City of Reading to protect the 560-acre lake and watershed from development.

During this speech, Senator O’Pake said,

“Just a few decades ago, the Antietam Valley was considered a place to get away from the hustle and bustle of our City. There was a popular amusement park (Carsonia Park), "vacation bungalows," and Antietam Lake and the surrounding forest. Today, the only area that remains in tact is the Antietam Lake and its watershed. Residential and commercial development has gobbled up much of the land in the valley, as well as in many areas throughout our county. That is why it so important that this beautiful lake and watershed be preserved and that is what makes this area so unique. Less than a mile from the city limits, as the crow flies, this scenic and pristine area offers hiking trails, a nature center, very popular fishing sites, a habitat for wildlife, and



One of the feeder streams into Antietam Land. Photo from Berks Watch Website

tremendous natural beauty. Each day many people hike the trails in the watershed. It is not uncommon to see anglers braving frigid winter weather to ice fish on the frozen water of the lake. And with the opening of trout season this weekend, the area will be filled with still more fishing enthusiasts—father and son, mother and daughter... This is a win-win situation for all parties involved. The City will gain financially while still maintaining ownership of the Lake and watershed and the citizens of Reading and Berks County, and future generations, will enjoy the area's scenic beauty. If we allow this gem of nature to be developed now, we will never get it back.”

It is important that preservation efforts continue and the region should support organizations such as “Friends of Antietam Lake” working to preserve such an important resource for the area.

Antietam Creek and its Tributaries

Antietam Creek is an important stream corridor. One way to protect this stream and its tributaries is to establish a Stream Corridor Preservation Overlay District in Zoning Ordinances. This District could require riparian buffers along the watercourses and help to establish and maintain greenway corridors. In the Berks County Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Antietam Creek corridor is identified as an open space area to be protected.

A riparian buffer is an area of vegetation that is maintained along the shore of a water body to protect stream water quality and stabilize stream channels and banks.

Buffers provide the following benefits:

- filter runoff – Rain that runs off the land can be slowed and infiltrated in the buffer, settling out sediment, nutrients and pesticides (nonpoint source pollution) before they reach streams.
- take up nutrients – Fertilizers and other pollutants that originate on the upslope land are taken up by tree roots. Nutrients are stored in leaves, limbs and roots instead of reaching the stream. Through a process called “denitrification,” bacteria in the forest floor convert nitrate to nitrogen gas, which is released into the air.
- provide shade – The leaf canopy’s shade keeps the water cool, allowing it to retain more dissolved oxygen, and encouraging growth of plants and aquatic insects that provide food for fish.

- contribute leaf food – Leaves that fall into the stream are trapped on fallen trees and rocks where they provide food and habitat for organisms critical to the aquatic food chain.
- provide habitat – Streams that travel through woodlands provide more habitat for fish and wildlife. Woody debris provides cover for fish while stabilizing stream bottoms.
- provides migration corridors for wildlife.
- safeguard water supplies by protecting groundwater recharge areas.
- provide flood control.
- provide stormwater management potential – natural vegetation provides a basis for innovative stormwater management systems. Stormwater flows from retention basins can be directed to, and allowed to flow through, buffers to reduce nutrient and sediment loads.
- improve water and air quality.
- stimulate economic opportunities such as by providing valuable open space which may increase land values and, therefore, the tax base.
- provide some federal tax incentives to landowners (depending on a landowner's financial situation) willing and able to place some of their lands under conservation easement.
- reduce grounds maintenance.
- provide recreational opportunities, and associated economic benefits for recreation-related businesses.
- provide educational and research opportunities for local schools and colleges.
- provide windbreak, shade and visual buffer.

Highlands

Two features in the Region, Mt. Penn and Neversink Mountain, have been described by the Highlands Coalition as Critical Treasures in the Highlands.

The Highlands Coalition has described the Highlands as follows:

Pennsylvania's Highlands wander through parts of Chester, Berks, Bucks, Montgomery, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties. Streams flowing from these hills supply water to Allentown in the north and Reading, Pottstown, and the Delaware Valley to the south.

Located in the backyard of the nation's most densely populated region lie two million acres of forested ridges, pure streams, lakes, and reservoirs known as the Highlands. These ridges stretch from Reading, Pennsylvania through northern New Jersey, southern New York, and western Connecticut. This eastern-most extension of the Appalachian Mountains forms a vital link with the Berkshires to the North, and the Shenandoahs to the South.

The Highlands are an essential source of drinking water, clean air, critical wildlife habitat and abundant recreational opportunities for nearly twenty-five million people who live within one hour's travel of the region. . .

Undisturbed forests protect water quality in Highlands' reservoirs, watersheds, aquifers, and waterways, reducing the need for costly artificial water treatment facilities. Forested watersheds in the Highlands also help prevent costly downstream flooding and soil erosion. . .

The Highlands region is a beautiful tapestry of cool forests, scenic mountains, sparkling waterways and productive farmlands, which enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike. . .

The beautiful natural landscapes of the Highlands provide a high quality of life for our families and our future. . .

The Highlands are home to a remarkable diversity of life, nourished by verdant forests, lush wetlands and clean waterways. . .

Forests also provide life-giving fresh air, moderate temperature and combat global warming. . .

The Highlands are under an intense assault by suburban sprawl and industrial development.

The Highlands Coalition has identified sixty-seven "Critical Treasures", or priority conservation areas, where additional lands need to be preserved. In order to protect these special places from suburban sprawl and industrial development, increased funding for land conservation is needed through federal programs

including Forest Legacy, the Farmland Protection Program, the Land & Water Conservation Fund and others.

The Federal Government must partner with state and local governments in the Highlands region to protect the Critical Treasures of this nationally significant landscape.

Protecting these missing links will help maintain the integrity of the entire Highlands ecoregion and secure the protection of watersheds, forests, wildlife and the quality of life for millions of people. . .

Unless bold steps are taken, the future of this region of water, beauty and life is in serious danger. Poorly planned sprawl and industrial development will consume the forest and farmlands of the Highlands, threatening the drinking water supplies for millions, destroying important wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and marring the beauty and quality of life of this backyard paradise.

To safeguard the vital resources of this nationally significant region an innovative state and federal partnership is needed to preserve and connect the Critical Treasures of the Highlands as a network of wildlands. Only an interconnected network of protected lands will ensure the ecological integrity of the Highlands in an increasingly fragmented landscape.

We still have an opportunity, and a responsibility, to secure this thriving greenbelt surrounding the nation's most densely populated metropolitan areas – a place where millions of people can live in close proximity to forested ridges and valleys that provide abundant clean water, clean air and places to recreate and enjoy the beauty of nature.

RELATIONSHIP TO LAND USE PLAN

Open Space & Park, as well as Rural Conservation areas have been identified throughout the most southern portion of Lower Alsace Township, which includes Neversink Mountain, and northwestern portion of Lower Alsace Township, which includes Mt. Penn Preserve and the Antietam Lake/watershed area. Only limited development will be allowed in the Rural Conservation areas, now privately owned, in order to not adversely affect watershed, steep slopes, and potential park and recreation areas and trails. Limiting development will also protect watercourses, water supplies, and vulnerable wooded areas and conserve ecosystems by maintaining an adequate critical mass through connecting ecosystems.

The Open Space & Park areas are not intended for development. They include environmentally sensitive areas, including Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn Preserve and

some of the Earl Trust properties. Neversink Mountain Preserve and Mt. Penn Preserve are identified as components of the County open space system in the County Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Future Land Use Map is consistent with and supports efforts of Berks County and the Berks County Conservancy to protect Mt. Penn Preserve, Neversink Mountain Preserve, and the Antietam Lake Watershed.

ACTIONS TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

The following actions should be taken to protect the natural resources within Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township:

1. Update zoning maps and zoning ordinances or enact a joint zoning ordinance to reflect Rural Conservation, and Open Space and Park areas.
2. Update zoning ordinances to reflect the Future Land Use Plan and Goals and Objectives of this Plan to include:
 - a. Natural Resource Protection Standards and Net Out Provisions
 - b. Steep Slope Protection
 - c. Watershed and Wellhead Protection
 - d. Groundwater and Surface Water Protection
 - e. Tree and Woodland Protection, Management, and Planting
 - f. Wetland, Wetland Mitigation and Hydric Soil Protection
 - g. Floodplain Protection from further encroachment of development
 - h. Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning, Riparian Buffers
 - i. Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed Overlay zoning
3. Work with the Berks County Conservancy and other conservation groups to encourage acquisition through conservation easements, fee simple, donation and dedication of key natural areas.
4. Consider creation of an Environmental Advisory Council to work to preserve key tracts of open space and natural resources.
5. Support efforts of the Berks County Conservancy, Berks County Conservation District, and other agencies to manage stream corridors through cooperative efforts with landowners for riparian buffers, best management practices, and stream bank improvements. Cooperate in securing easements along streams.
6. Encourage formation of groups within the community to adopt a stream and provide monitoring and oversight along stream corridors.

7. Form a watershed association for the Antietam Creek and encourage watershed planning under the Growing Greener initiative and other programs.
8. Discourage extension of public sewer and water into areas containing critical natural resources.
9. Encourage Act 167 Stormwater Management Planning, stormwater management, and use of Best Management Practices.
10. Utilize zoning techniques such as Conservation Zoning and lot averaging to protect natural resources on tracts.
11. Support implementation of the Long-Range Plan for Neversink Mountain contained in the Neversink Mountain Feasibility Study, November 1997, prepared for the City of Reading in cooperation with the Berks County Conservancy with the assistance of Robert E. Bartman. See Appendix 5.

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 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.

State Grants Available to Help Fund the Preservation of Historic Resources

Guidelines pertaining to the PHMC's three primary grant programs are found in this section. The programs and eligibility criteria are described in detail. Prospective applicants may determine how the Commission's multiple funding opportunities can best meet their needs and the needs of their constituents and can best serve the people of Pennsylvania. Guidelines can be obtained for each grant type on the PHMC's website. The Bureau for Historic Preservation awarded competitive grants based on the recommendations of independent review panels, which evaluated hundreds of applications. Since 1995, the PHMC has awarded more than 2,300 grants – totaling more than \$45 million- in communities across the state. Grants are awarded to museums, historical societies, municipal governments, and local institutions to support their programs and operation, preserve historic properties and districts, and assist in a wide variety of projects designed to interpret and protect PA's cultural heritage.

The following are the PHMC's available grants to preserve historical resources:

1. **Certified Local Government Grant Program** – Funding under this program is limited to federally designated Certified Local Governments. There is only one type of grant.
 - Competitive
 - Matching
 - Maximum Award \$25,000
 - Funding in the Categories of Cultural Resource Surveys, National Register Nominations, Technical and Planning Assistance, Educational and Interpretive Programs, Staffing and Training, and Pooling CLG Grants and Third Party Administration.

2. **Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program** - Funding under this program is available to nonprofit organizations and local governments for capital improvements on historic resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. (Private property owners are not eligible for funding under this program and may wish to refer directly to PHMC Programs of Interest for information on investment tax credits and historic homesites program.) There is one type of grant.
 - Competitive
 - Matching
 - Maximum Award \$100,000
 - Funding in the Categories of Preservation, Restoration, and Rehabilitation.

3. **Pennsylvania History and Museum Grant Program** - Funding under this program is designated to support a wide variety of museum, history, archives and historic preservation projects, as well as nonprofit organizations and local governments. There are 10 types of grants listed below with descriptions of each following:
 - Archives and Records Management Grants
 - General Operating Support Grants for Museums
 - General Operating Support Grants for Official County Historical Societies
 - Historic Preservation Grants
 - Historical Marker Grants
 - Local History Grants
 - Museum Project Grants
 - Statewide Conference Grants
 - Statewide Organization Grants
 - Technical Assistance Grants

4. **Archives and Records Management Grants** - PHMC grants help communities share Pennsylvania's rich and diverse history.
 - Organizations and local governments can bring historical documents and records to life for their communities with grants for archival care and accessibility.
 - Organizations and local governments can contribute to a community's understanding of its heritage through oral and written histories, public programs of all types, historical research, and educational programs for students of all ages.

5. **General Operating Support for Museums Grants** - Museums are eligible to apply for grant funding to support their general operations.
 - Noncompetitive
 - Matching
 - Maximum Award \$10,000
 - No Special Categories

6. **General Operating Support Grants for Official County Historical Societies Grants** - Official county historical societies receive general operating support grants as a way to recognize the outstanding work these societies do for their communities. These grants are:
 - Noncompetitive
 - Matching
 - Maximum Award \$10,000
 - No Special Categories

7. Achieves and Records Management Grants are:

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000
- Matching to \$20,000
- Maximum Award \$20,000
- Funding in the Categories of Access and Preservation Programs, and County Records Improvement Programs

8. Historic Preservation Grants - Applicants may apply for grants that cover every aspect of historic preservation, including:

- restoration and rehabilitation of historic properties
- cultural resource surveys
- historic preservation studies and plans
- educational and interpretive programs
- nomination to the National Register of Historic Places
- archaeological research

Historic Preservation Grants are:

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000
- Matching to \$15,000
- Maximum Award \$15,000
- Funding in the Categories of Cultural Resource Surveys, National Register Nominations, Planning and Development Assistance, Educational and Interpretive Programs, and Archaeology

9. Historical Markers Grants are:

- Selective
- Matching
- Maximum Award \$650
- No Special Categories

10. Local History Grants are:

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000
- Matching to \$15,000
- Maximum Award \$15,000
- Funding in the Categories of Public Programs, Research and Writing, and Educational Programs

11. Museum Project Grants are:

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000

- Matching to \$15,000
- Maximum Award \$15,000
- Funding in the Categories of Institutional Development, Collections Management, and Educational and Interpretive Program

12. **Statewide Conferences Grants** - Organizations planning to sponsor conferences with a statewide, regional or national audience may apply for “seed” money to assist with conference preparation.

- Selective
- No Match Required
- Maximum Award Generally Does Not Exceed \$5,000
- No Special Categories

13. **Statewide Organizational Grants are:**

- Selective
- No Match Required
- Maximum Award Generally Does Not Exceed \$100,000
- No Special Categories

14. **Technical Assistance Grants** - Offer options to a wide range of applicants for solving institutional problems, developing staff skills, and increasing overall professionalism. The grants bring experts in the field to the organizations’ sites or provide staff training. These grants are:

- Competitive
- No Match Required
- Maximum Award \$1,500
- No Special Categories

Action Steps for Protection of Historic Resources:

1. Appoint an historical commission.
2. Support the activities of individuals and groups, such as the Berks County Conservancy, which identify, document, evaluate and protect historical resources and increase public awareness of the area’s history and historic resources.
3. Support the planning of trails to link historic sites and erect informative markers and exhibits at historic resources.
4. **Evaluation of Historic Resources** - *A reconnaissance survey of historic resources* for Lower Alsace Township and the Borough of Mt. Penn was conducted by the Berks County Conservancy in 1987. This survey identified thirty-six (36) individual buildings significant for their architecture and



contribution to local history. In addition, seven (7) groups of buildings were identified as typical of housing styles prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These resources should be reviewed and one or more historic contexts developed as a precursor to conducting a *comprehensive survey of historic resources*. An historic context is defined as a broad pattern of historical development in a community that may be evidenced in the historic resources. Potential historic context in these municipalities may include:

- a. **Friedensburg Road** –19th century farmhouses and buildings associated with the vineyards that predominated land use in this area before 1876.
 - b. **Stony Creek Mills** - residences and industrial buildings related to the woolen mills that operated at Friedensburg Road and the Antietam Creek from 1865 to the 1940s.
 - c. **Suburban Development of the 1920s** - Trolley lines from the City of Reading brought patrons to the resorts and amusement parks that existed at the turn of the 20th century on Mt. Penn and Neversink Mountain. From 1887 to 1929, developers divided old farmstead into housing developments representing an eclectic mix of Spanish, Colonial Revival and Craftsman architecture in a traditional neighborhood pattern.
5. **Solicit Citizen Support** - The Historical Society of Berks County and local historical associations can provide assistance in identifying historic resources and developing an educational outreach for broad-based community support.
 6. **Historic Overlay Zoning** - Individual sites and clusters documented and identified on a Historic Resource Map may be protected from inappropriate development that would destroy the character of the historic neighborhoods. Zoning ordinances could require buildings similar in type and scale to those already existing. Requirements to replicate the existing building line, and height and bulk would also help to preserve existing neighborhood character.
 7. **Cluster or Open Space Development** - Open space and cluster provisions in the zoning ordinance can allow for the preservation of historic resources on parcels being subdivided for new housing. The required open space may contain the historic buildings and prevent their demolition.
 8. **Designation of National Register Historic Districts** – the comprehensive historic resource survey may identify areas suitable for *determination of eligibility* and possibly *nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*. Listing in the National Register would allow contributing resources to qualify for Historic Tax Credits as well as State and Federal Grant programs.

9. **Certified Local Historic District** - requires appointment of an historic architectural review board to advise the local governing body on the appropriateness of the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings in the district-contributing and noncontributing. Evaluate the potential for historic districts and support their creation if warranted. If created, support the adoption of Design Guidelines and Sign Controls for Historic District(s).
10. Encourage property owners to restore and/or adaptively reuse historic structures and discourage removal of historic structures.
11. Conceive programs, events and interpretive signage and exhibits, which emphasize the history of the region.
12. Identify contemporary sites for future preservation.

This plan for the protection of natural and historic resources is not intended to be inconsistent with and exceed the requirements imposed under acts identified in Section 301.(a).(6) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, nor prohibit the conduct of forestry operations.

Historic Resources for Lower Alsace / Mt. Penn
Properties Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places
Information from the Berks County Conservancy

<p>Wm Penn Memorial Fire Tower</p> 	<p>Skyline Drive</p>	<p>Fire observation tower and tourist attraction built in 1939 on the Tower Hotel foundation (1889 –1924). The William Penn Fire Tower is near where the Stone Tower stood. Skyline drive has replaced the Gravity Railroad. Only the Summit House remained; however, it was demolished in 1959. Photo from BCHS website.</p>
 <p>Antietam Lake</p>	<p>Antietam Road</p>	<p>City of Reading bought properties surrounding Ohlinger's Dam to create the first purchased watershed in the U.S. New dam completed in 1879.</p>

CHAPTER 10

ACTION PLAN

The following actions should be addressed in order to implement this Comprehensive Plan:

1. Consider preparation of a joint zoning ordinance and map for the Borough and the Township or update individual municipal zoning ordinances and maps.
 - A. Update zoning maps to reflect the Future Land Use Plan.
 - B. Update zoning ordinances to reflect the Future Land Use Plan and Goals and Objectives of this Plan.
 - (1) Natural Resource Protection Standards and Net Out Provisions
 - (2) Steep Slope Protection
 - (3) Watershed and Wellhead Protection
 - (4) Groundwater and Surface Water Protection
 - (5) Tree and Woodland Protection, Management and Planting
 - (6) Wetland, Wetland Margin and Hydric Soil Protection
 - (7) Floodplain Protection
 - (8) Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning
 - (9) Historic Resource Overlay Zoning
 - (10) Demolition by Neglect Provisions
 - (11) Town Center provisions regarding scale; uses; intensity; signage; aesthetics; pedestrian amenities; parking; landscaping; access management; and use, coverage, density, intensity, and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, street furniture, open spaces, and parking designs consistent with Plan objectives.

(12) Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed Overlay Zoning

(13) Home Employment Provisions

(14) Housing for the Elderly

2. Update Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

A. Trails and greenways

B. Stormwater Management and Best Management Practices

C. Impact Studies (Traffic, hydrogeologic, environmental, scenic, historic, cultural)

D. Access Management

E. Resource identification and protection

F. Open Space and Recreation

G. Street furniture

3. Administrative Actions for Resource Protection and Enhancement

A. Coordination with DEP to retain Antietam Lake. Build support from Berks County government.

B. Coordination with Berks County Conservancy, Berks County, Friends of Antietam Lake, and the Earl Trust to preserve Neversink Mountain, the Antietam Lake area, and Earl Trust landholdings as permanent open space and park facilities

C. Encourage the City of Reading to retain all landholdings in Lower Alsace Township as permanent open space and park facilities

D. Maintain the scenic road system in the Township through the activities in A, B, and C above and Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed overlay zoning

E. Plan for a greenway and riparian buffer along the Antietam Creek

F. Establish a tree planting program

- G. Establish an Environmental Advisory Council
 - H. Establish an Historical Commission
 - (1) Identify and evaluate historic resources
 - (2) Investigate participation in Certified Local Government Program
 - (3) Investigate creation of historic districts
 - (4) Inform and involve public
 - (5) Encourage retention, restoration, enhancement and appropriate adaptive re-use of historic resources and discourage removal of historic structures
 - (6) Conceive programs and interpretive signage and exhibits which emphasize the history of the region
 - I. Support efforts of groups such as Friends of Antietam Lake and the Berks County Conservancy which are working to preserve resources in the community
 - J. Adopt an Open Space and Recreation Plan component of this plan in order to charge recreation fees for new development and subdivision
 - K. Continue and initiate additional wellhead protection and watershed planning opportunities under the growing greener initiative and other programs. Consider creation of an Antietam Creek Watershed Association.
4. Actions to Address Stormwater Management Problems
- A. Encourage Berks County to initiate Act 167 stormwater management planning for the Antietam Creek/Schuylkill River Watershed as soon as possible.
 - B. Coordinate watershed-wide planning with plans to address local flooding problems and efforts to secure funding to address local problems
 - C. Require land developers and subdivisions to manage stormwater runoff and work with adjacent municipalities to encourage them to have property owners address stormwater affecting the region.

5. Continue to address infiltration problems in the sanitary sewer system.
6. Actions to assure availability of and access to recreation facilities for the region's residents.
 - A. Support efforts to develop County parks on Neversink Mountain and at Antietam Lake.
 - B. Work with the School District to assure retention of existing facilities and their availability to the region's residents.
 - C. Work to accomplish the acquisition of Earl Trust property along Hill Road for permanent recreation fields for all the region's residents.
 - D. Encourage further development of trail systems on Neversink Mountain, at Antietam Lake, in City of Reading open space and recreation land, and along Antietam Creek.
 - E. Facilitate access to the recreational trail system and access to community facilities by completing links within the Borough and Township as shown on the Pedestrian Facilities Plan. Identify and enhance an appropriate pedestrian route connecting Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake.
7. Actions for Economic and Community Development
 - A. Enhance Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue, 23rd Street, and Howard Boulevard through streetscape improvements in coordination with PaDCED and PennDOT. Prepare a Streetscape Plan.
 - B. Establish policies for home employment in the zoning ordinance.
 - C. Expand neighborhood commercial zoning at appropriate locations along Carsonia Avenue.
 - D. Coordinate with BARTA and trail and circulator planning in St. Lawrence – Exeter – Amity to facilitate access to employment opportunities, the circulation system, and any Schuylkill Valley Metro Station.
 - E. Work with the Antietam School District to investigate use of the income tax to fund the School District.

Establish regular communication among the Borough and Township governments, school district, community and business organizations,

residents and businesses to address the school tax burden and school planning in the community.

- F. Continue cooperation and dialog between the Township and the Borough and community entities such as the fire companies, authorities, and school district on provision and sharing of services, equipment, facilities and programs; comprehensive planning; implementation of this plan; emergency services planning; and the potential merger of Lower Alsace and Mount Penn.
- G. Work with the city of Reading, the school district, and state agencies to maintain and restore the infrastructure and appearance of the region, such as the Antietam Creek channel and the Skyline Drive area.
- H. Bring together citizens, the business community, and the school district to plan and organize community-wide activities, events, and programs to foster community spirit, economic development, and community attractiveness.
- I. Establish a program to increase availability and sharing of parking facilities; facilitate pedestrian and bicycle circulation; and facilitate transit access in commercial areas in the region through cooperation with area businesses, PennDOT, and BARTA.
- J. Work with potential land developers to achieve appropriate scale, signage, aesthetics, pedestrian amenities, and intensity and types of commercial development when development occurs in the commercial areas of the region, and provide for the commercial needs of the community. Address design and performance standards, access management, permitted uses, and area and bulk regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.
- K. Adopt, maintain and enforce adequate building, housing and property maintenance codes and zoning ordinance provisions to maintain the building stock and properties within the region and reverse the trend of conversion from owner occupied to renter occupied units.
- L. Continue to allow residential uses in the Town Center area to provide for a mixed-use environment.
- M. Enhance the gateways to the region and the sense of identity of the communities.

- N. Work with residents of the region to identify programs that are available to help them maintain and enhance their properties, and meet housing expenses and retain their homes as owner-occupied single family residences.
 - O. Involve the region's residents and business community in committees to address major issues of concern within the region.
 - P. Investigate programs to address and provide for the housing needs of the elderly in the community.
 - Q. Jointly monitor availability of grants for planning and implementation and pursue such grants.
 - R. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a community center in the region within existing community facilities, such as a primary center or a church building.
 - S. Identify and support activities to promote the region, retain existing businesses, attract and recruit desired new businesses, and enhance existing businesses. Bring the business community and residents together in efforts to do this.
 - T. Promote and support efforts of community organizations to provide recreational facilities and programs for area residents and services and programs for the elderly and children.
 - U. Monitor policies on extensions of public sewer and water facilities to assure they are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
8. Actions for Transportation Enhancement
- A. Work with PennDOT and land developers to improve the safety and functioning of intersections along Perkiomen Avenue.
 - B. Consider adoption of a Transportation Impact Fee ordinance and require land developers to address needed transportation improvements in the region.
 - C. Establish a program to improve parking, safety, and circulation near community facilities in the region. Investigate ways of providing additional parking opportunities in the Borough and along Friedensburg Road. Encourage the school district and churches to provide additional

parking at their facilities. Enact appropriate parking and traffic regulations in the vicinity of school and church facilities. Work with the school district and churches to establish appropriate bus and car circulation, pick-up and discharge patterns. Prepare a program to improve the management of parking spaces in the region.

- D. Institute traffic calming techniques along Fairview Avenue and Perkiomen Avenue.
 - E. Prepare Sidewalk Improvement Program and Policies which will improve pedestrian access to the area of the High School-Middle School through extension of the sidewalk system; enhance pedestrian circulation through amenities such as benches; complete gaps in the sidewalk system; extend the sidewalk system, provide for maintenance and improvement of existing sidewalks, and facilitate pedestrian crossings at street intersections.
 - F. Cooperate with BARTA to assure adequate bus service and the appropriate location and attractiveness of bus stops. Coordinate in the provision of park and ride facilities and multi-modal facilities where appropriate.
 - G. Prepare a plan for relieving congestion at the Antietam Road-Carsonia Avenue-Friedensburg Road intersection.
 - H. Establish a program and policies for provision of curb where it does not exist in the region and improvement of substandard curbing.
 - I. Prepare multi-year programs for street maintenance.
 - J. Work with PennDOT to keep traffic signal timing current and monitor the need for a closed loop signalization system along Route 422.
 - K. Develop an access management plan in cooperation with PennDOT to address access to major roads and access design standards. Encourage cooperative efforts of landowners to manage and share access.
 - L. Require developer-financed street improvements.
- 9. Prepare a Capital Improvements Program.
 - 10. Consider adoption of Official Maps.
 - 11. Each year formulate a Work Program to implement this Comprehensive Plan.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Upon adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the highest priority is to execute an Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement to implement the Plan. A Regional Planning Committee is established by that agreement.

The municipalities have two years from the adoption of the Plan to make sure that their zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, Act 537 plans, capital improvement plans, and official maps are generally consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. The municipalities may act individually, cooperate to draft consistent zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance language, or prepare a joint zoning ordinance. Achieving this general consistency with the plan is the next priority after executing the Agreement.

Other actions to consider in the first two years after Plan adoption are the appointment of a historical commission and environmental advisory council (EAC). These groups can help achieve implementation of the Action Plan.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING AND OFFICIAL MAP

Two major potential tools in implementing this Plan are capital improvements planning and adoption of an official map, as detailed below. The discussion of the official map is based upon the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

Capital Improvements Planning

Capital improvements planning includes financial analysis of past trends in the community, present conditions, and a projection of the community's revenues and expenditures, debt limit and tax rates, to determine what the financial capabilities of the municipality are. It also includes a capital improvements program which establishes a system of priorities. The final element is a capital budget which lists the schedule of improvements over a 5-year period based on the community's financial capacity and availability of grant money.

In the capital improvements program, capital expenditures are separated from operational expenditures. Operational expenditures are those for administration, salaries, maintenance and similar functions, and are short term. Capital expenditures are for assets which have a substantial value compared to the total municipal budget and are expected to provide service for a number of years. The purchase of land or the construction of a building is an example of a capital expenditure.

The capital improvements program schedules the purchase of capital items in a systematic manner rather than allocating a large amount of money for all expenditures in

one year. Based on the assessment of future needs, future expenditures are planned so that the municipality can anticipate these major expenditures prior to the budget year. The program is based on identified capital needs, goals for capital acquisitions, and a priority list of all proposed capital expenditures.

A time frame is established for the capital improvements program. Five-year programs are typical. Every year the schedule for capital improvements must be revised and updated as necessary, based on the current municipal priorities. For each project included in the program, estimated costs must be established and a budget prepared.

Benefits of capital improvements programs include:

- It helps assure that projects will be based upon the ability to pay and upon a schedule of priorities determined in advance.
- It helps assure that capital improvements are viewed comprehensively and in the best public interest of the municipality as a whole.
- It promotes financial stability by scheduling projects at the proper intervals.
- It avoids sharp changes in the tax structure by the proper scheduling of projects.
- It facilitates the best allocation of community resources.

Official Maps

The governing body of each municipality has the power to make an official map of all or a portion of the municipality which may show elements of the Comprehensive Plan with regard to public lands and facilities, and which may include, but need not be limited to, the following elements:

1. Existing and proposed public streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widenings, narrowings, extensions, diminutions, openings or closings.
2. Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds, and open space reservations.
3. Pedestrian ways and easements.
4. Railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements.
5. Flood control basins, floodways and floodplains, stormwater management areas and drainage easements.

6. Support facilities, easements and other properties held by public bodies undertaking the elements described in the Comprehensive Plan.

Each municipality should prepare an official map, but regional cooperation should occur on mapping of projects such as roadways, parks, and trails which will be located in more than one municipality.

The governing body may make surveys and maps to identify the location of property, trafficway alignment or utility easement by use of property records, aerial photography, photogrammetric mapping or other method sufficient for identification, description and publication of the map components. For acquisition of lands and easements, boundary descriptions by metes and bounds must be made and sealed by a licensed surveyor.

The adoption of any street lines or other public lands as part of the official map does not constitute the opening or establishment of any street nor the taking or acceptance of any land, nor does it obligate the municipality to improve or maintain any such street or land. The adoption of proposed watercourses or public grounds as part of the official map does not constitute a taking or acceptance of any land by the municipality.

For the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the official map of the municipality, no permit shall be issued for any building within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground shown or laid out on the official map. No person shall recover any damages for the taking for public use of any building or improvements constructed within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground after the same shall have been included in the official map; and, any such building or improvements shall be removed at the expense of the owner. However, when the property of which the reserved location forms a part, cannot yield a reasonable return to the owner unless a permit shall be granted, the owner may apply to the governing body for the grant of a special encroachment permit to build.

The governing body may fix the time for which streets, watercourses and public grounds on the official map shall be deemed reserved for future taking or acquisition for public use. However, the reservation for public grounds shall lapse and become void one year after an owner of such property has submitted a written notice to the governing body announcing his intentions to build, subdivide or otherwise develop the land covered by the reservation, or has made formal application for an official permit to build a structure for private use, unless the governing body shall have acquired the property or begun condemnation proceedings to acquire such property before the end of the year.

GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS

The following is a list of some of the County, state and federal programs for community and economic development. Programs can be modified or eliminated over time, so it is necessary to contact the responsible agency for availability and eligibility information.

▪ **BERKS COUNTY**

- Joint Comprehensive Planning Program
- Joint Zoning Ordinance Program
- Agricultural Zoning Incentive Program
- Berks County Open Space and Recreation Grant Program

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DCED)**

- **Communities of Opportunity** – This program is for state-funded grants for community revitalization and economic development and the development or rehabilitation of low-income housing.
- **Infrastructure Development Program** – This program provides grants and low interest financing for the construction of public and private infrastructure needed for business to locate or expand to a specific site. It also provides financing for infrastructure costs to redevelop former industrial sites, including site clearance costs.
- **Industrial Sites Reuse Program (Brownfields)** – This program provides grant and low interest loan financing for environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites.
- **Community Revitalization Program** – This program is intended to fund infrastructure improvements, community revitalization, building rehabilitation, and demolition of blighted structures, in order to increase community tax base and promote community stability.
- **New Communities/Main Street Program** – This program is intended to help a community's downtown economic development effort.
- **Elm Street Program** – This program is intended to help revitalize residential neighborhoods near Main Street areas.

- **HOME Program** – This program provides loan and technical assistance to municipalities for expanding the housing supply for low income persons.
- **Small Business Development Centers** – Work with small firms to help them compete and grow.
- **Small Business First Program** – This program provides low interest loans for projects such as site acquisition, building construction, machinery, and working capital for small businesses of less than 100 employees.
- **Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program** – This program provides low interest loans for equipment and municipal facilities.
- **Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP)** – This program provides grant funds for the preparation of community comprehensive plans and the ordinances to implement them.
- **Regional Police Assistance Grant Program** – This program provides grants for the start-up of consolidated police departments.
- **Shared Municipal Services Program Code Enforcement Initiative Grants** – This program assists local governments in the initial administrative expenses of a shared or multi-municipal codes enforcement program.
- **Shared Municipal Services Program** – This program provides matching grants for cooperative municipal efforts to increase the efficiency of public services.
- **Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (LERTA)** – Local municipalities, school districts, and counties can offer tax abatements on improvements to property for up to 10 years.
- **Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA)** – Low-interest loan financing through industrial development corporations for land and building acquisition, construction and renovation resulting in the retention or the creation of jobs. Loans up to \$1.25 million (\$1.75 million for areas within Keystone Opportunity Zones, Act 47 Communities, Brownfield Sites, and Enterprise Zones).

- **Floodplain Land Use Assistance Program** – Provides grants and technical assistance to encourage the proper use of floodplains. Local governments may apply for up to 50% of eligible costs.
 - **Weatherization Assistance Program** – Works to minimize the adverse effects of high energy costs on low-income, elderly, and handicapped citizens. Local governments and non-profit organizations are eligible.
 - **Enterprise Zone Grant Program** – Provides grants to financially disadvantaged communities for business development strategies within Municipal Enterprise Zones. Municipal and redevelopment authorities are eligible.
 - **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** – Provides grant and technical assistance to aid municipalities in community and economic development efforts.
 - **Emergency Shelter Grants** – Provides grants to local governments and non-profit organizations to create or rehabilitate shelter space for the homeless.
 - **Act 47 – Municipalities Financial Recovery Act** – Provides loans and grant funds to financially distressed local governments and technical assistance to formulate financial recovery Plans
- **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY**
 - **Pennsylvania Conservation Corps (PCC) Project Grant Program** – Grants for projects related to recreation, conservation, and historic preservation. Municipalities and school districts must provide a 25% match.
- **PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY (PCCD)**
 - **Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Program** – Provides local governments with funds to hire and train additional law enforcement personnel; establish special task forces; and establish crime prevention programs.
- **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES** – The Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) includes the following elements:

- **Community Recreation Grant Program** – This program provides grants for comprehensive recreation and park planning, greenways and master site development planning. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for the rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities and acquisition of land for park and conservation purposes.
- **Rivers Conservation Grant Program** – This program provides grants for river conservation plans and non-acquisition, non-development implementation projects. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for land acquisition and the development of river conservation projects.
- **Heritage Parks Grant Program** – This program promotes public/private partnerships to preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism. Grants are awarded for purposes such as feasibility studies, development of management action plans, specialized studies, and implementation projects and management grants.
- **Recreational Trail Program** – This program provides matching funding for the acquisition, development and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails.
- **Rails to Trails, PA Program** – This program provides matching grants for feasibility studies, plans, acquisition and improvement of former railroad lines for recreational trails.
- **PA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP)**
 - **Stream Improvement Program** – This program provides design and construction projects to eliminate imminent threats due to flooding and stream bank erosion.
 - **Stormwater Management Program** – This program provides grants for cooperative watershed level planning and municipal implementation programs.
 - **Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program** – This program provides funding for projects that implement innovative practices to control non-point source pollution for impaired waters.

- **Pennsylvania Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAP)** – This program provides grants for wellhead protection and watershed protection,
- **Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Grant Program** – This program makes funds available to protect and restore watersheds.
- **Pennsylvania Green Project Bank** – This program is an interactive online marketplace where organizations seeking funding for environmental projects can be matched with organizations seeking to fund such projects.
- **Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant** – Grants for municipalities for costs associated with implementing alternative fuel program.
- **New or Innovative Technology Grants** – Funds to improve existing drinking water and sewage treatment facilities through new or innovative technology.
- **Sewage Management Grants (Act 537)** – reimbursements for municipalities completing sewage facilities planning and enforcement.
- **Recycling (Act 101)** – Municipalities are eligible for 90 percent reimbursement toward establishing a recycling program.
- **Act 108 (HSCA) Host Municipality Siting** – Payments to municipalities serving as hosts for hazardous waste facilities.
- **Act 198 Resource Recovery Development Fund** – Grants for municipalities and authorities to establish new and innovative resource recovery demonstration projects.
- **Waste Tire Remediation and Market Development Grants** – Reimbursement for cleanup and / or reuse of waste tires.
- **Formation of Water Authorities Grant Program** – Available to two or more municipalities or counties interested in forming a joint water authority.
- **Small Water Systems Regionalization Grant Program** – Reimbursement for feasibility studies by small water systems to study regionalization.

- **PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION**

- **Keystone Historic Preservation Grants** – This program provides matching grants to local government and nonprofit organizations that are rehabilitating or restoring historic properties on or eligible for the National Register.
- **Certified Local Government Grants** – This program provides matching grants and technical assistance to protect historic resources.
- **Historical Marker Program** – Nominations for historical markers are reviewed. When approved, staff works with nominator to prepare text and arrange ceremonies. Limited matching grants are available for markers.

- **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

- **Software Licensing Program** – Program for local governments to save money on software purchases.
- **Cooperative Purchasing Program (Act 57 of 1998)** – Permits local governments to jointly participate in contracts for supplies, services, or construction.

- **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

- **Transportation Enhancements Program (TEA 21)**

The program provides funding for programs such as provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles; acquisition of scenic easements or historic sites; landscaping or other scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities.

- **Transit Assistance Programs** – A variety of programs provide assistance for Public Transportation
- **Home Town Streets** – This program includes a variety of streetscape improvements that are vital to reestablishing downtown and commercial centers. These projects include activities undertaken within a defined “downtown” area that collectively enhance that environment and promote positive interactions with people in the area. Projects may include sidewalk improvements, planters, benches, street lighting, pedestrian crossings,

transit bus shelters, traffic calming, bicycle amenities, kiosks, signage and other visual elements.

- **Safe Routes to School** – This program is designed to work with both school districts and pedestrian and bicycle safety advocates to make physical improvements that promote safe walking and biking passages to schools. Collectively, these efforts would save on school busing costs and promote a healthy lifestyle for children. In addition, some funding may be used for pedestrian education efforts. Examples of these types of improvements include: sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes or trails, traffic diversion improvements, curb extensions, traffic circles and raised median islands.
- **PENNSYLVANIA INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AUTHORITY** – PENNVEST provides financing for drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater projects.

PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE PROGRAM – This program provides discretion to State legislators to award limited amounts of State funds for pro

CHAPTER 11

PLAN INTERRELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIP OF PLAN COMPONENTS

The Future Land Use Plan allocates land uses and indicates the recommended types of land uses and density range for those uses. The availability of sanitary sewer and water facilities plays an extremely important role in the shaping of development patterns, including location and density. It is necessary to coordinate land use and utility planning so future land use reflects the availability of public sewer and water facilities and public sewer and water facilities are not planned for areas not intended for intensive development.

Through land use planning, such as designation of the Open Space and Park and Rural Conservation areas, watersheds and wellhead protection areas for community water supplies can be established. Intensive residential development is not proposed where there are not sewers and the soil is not suitable for on-site sewage disposal.

It is important that community facilities, including recreation and open space, are available to serve the residents of the municipalities. The Community Facilities Plan notes existing recreational facilities and potential areas for recreational facilities. The Circulation Plan shows a series of trails for recreational purposes and to better connect residential areas to community facilities. Future public facilities should be sited to be consistent with the objectives of the Land Use Plan, such as maintaining open space and recreation uses.

The Future Land Use Plan can promote economic vitality by providing areas for commercial development. Preservation of residential neighborhoods can provide support for local businesses and provide a work force. Providing for open space and preservation of community resources contributes to the quality of life in the area and can encourage additional investment.

It is necessary to maintain a road system which can accommodate generated traffic volumes. In turn, future development should not adversely affect the circulation system. Land use decisions are influenced by the existing circulation system, while at the same time those land use decisions affect circulation systems and the functions which the roads are expected to perform. Existing rural and residential areas should be protected as much as possible from the impacts of through traffic, which can be in part addressed by proposed improvements to the circulation system.

RELATIONSHIP TO BERKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2020

The revised Comprehensive Plan for the County, Berks Vision 2020, designates most of the land which is not Existing Development as Permanent Open Space/Recreation. Undeveloped land not in public ownership is designated Rural Conservation. There are no Designated Growth and Future Growth areas. The Future Land Use Plan for Mount Penn and Lower Alsace is generally consistent with the County Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES

The existing and proposed development of Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace is in most cases compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous municipalities. Where there are disparate uses, buffers are recommended.

The St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity Joint Comprehensive Plan is also discussed in the chapter on Regional Setting, Chapter 20. The plan for land use along the eastern boundary of the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region is generally consistent with the area immediately east in St. Lawrence Borough and Exeter Township. While the area in the northern portion of Lower Alsace Township has been designated Low Density Residential and the area adjacent in Exeter Township has been designated Rural Preservation, both areas are recommending low densities for development. The developed High Density Residential Area in Lower Alsace adjoins a Medium Density area in Exeter Township which has been developed at a similar density. The Industrial Area in St. Lawrence which abuts a residential area is already developed for industrial, office, or institutional use. The Rural/Institutional Area in Exeter Township which abuts Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace contains a large memorial park.

The proposed land uses in Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace to the west are also generally consistent with those found in the City of Reading, except where R-1A land in the City adjoins Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace near Neversink Mountain Road and R-1 zoning in the City abuts Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace near Oak Lane.

General Industrial land in Cumru Township is buffered by the Schuylkill River.

Adjoining land in Alsace Township is consistent, except for R-2 and R-4 land in Alsace which abuts Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace.