

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **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 Agricultural Preservation and Blue Mountain Preservation areas, watersheds and wellhead protection areas for community water supplies can be established. Intensive residential development is not proposed where there are not sewers planned, available, or nearby, and where 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, proposed recreational facilities, and potential areas for recreational facilities. The Plan discusses a series of trails for recreational purposes and to better connect residential areas to community facilities.

Sewage treatment plant discharges and standards should be consistent with the highest stream fishery standards classification for receiving streams. 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 encourage economic vitality by providing areas for commercial and industrial development and agricultural activities. 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

# Interrelationships of Plan Components

|                                  | Land Use and Housing   | Sewer and Water   | Community Facilities  | Transportation   | Natural and Cultural Environment   | Economic Development  |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| Land Use and Housing             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support existing centers</li> <li>▪ Provide housing opportunities for all</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policies coordinated with land use goals</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make available to serve area residents</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Must consider impacts of growth on the system</li> <li>▪ Accommodate volumes at acceptable levels of service</li> <li>▪ Existing rural and residential areas should not have excessive volumes and speed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide open space system through their protection</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Impacts on residential areas should be mitigated</li> <li>▪ Provide jobs and services for residents</li> </ul> |
| Sewer and Water                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Growth should occur where have adequate facilities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider existing facilities and plans, interrelationships</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Locate with consideration of ability to serve, consistent with land use goals</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Should be coordinated in support of growth areas</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water Supply sources should be protected</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Should not overburden system or deplete supplies</li> </ul>  |
| Community Facilities             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include facilities to service residents and growth areas</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Major facilities should be adequately served</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider existing facilities and plans, potential cooperative efforts</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Should adequately service facilities in the region</li> <li>▪ Consider linkages of community facilities</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can provide recreational opportunities</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can provide a tax base to support provision of facilities</li> </ul>   |
| Transportation                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Growth should occur where have adequate system</li> <li>▪ Maintain functional operation and safety when growth occurs</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Should be coordinated in support of growth areas</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Locate major facilities where can be adequately serviced</li> <li>▪ Concerns for school transportation system</li> <li>▪ Consider impacts on system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider existing facilities and plans, coordinate with County and PennDOT</li> <li>▪ Plan improvements</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can provide scenic roads and vistas</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access management and necessary road improvements must be considered</li> </ul>                                |
| Natural and Cultural Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development should occur where land is suitable</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Should not extend to areas where irreparably harm important resources</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can incorporate natural features</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can facilitate access to resources</li> <li>▪ Design system with consideration of existing environment and resources</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing natural resources should be protected, enhanced and interpreted</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support agricultural component of economy</li> <li>▪ Protect the natural environment</li> </ul>                |
| Economic Development             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify appropriate land uses for sensitive areas</li> <li>▪ Protect water supplies</li> <li>▪ Provide for agricultural uses</li> <li>▪ Provide for commercial, industrial, business uses</li> <li>▪ Neighborhoods provide workforce and market</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can support development at appropriate locations</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to quality of life and the attractiveness of the area</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can support economic development</li> <li>▪ Develop regional public transportation system</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to quality of life and attractiveness of area to businesses</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support existing business centers</li> <li>▪ Consider abandoned uses</li> </ul>                                |

much as possible from the impacts of through traffic, which can be accomplished by proposed improvements to the circulation system.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO BERKS VISION 2020**

The existing and proposed development of Northern Berks is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the County Comprehensive Plan, Berks Vision 2020.

In the County Plan, the northern portion of Northern Berks is designated Permanent Open Space/Recreation or Rural Conservation, reflecting the area of the Blue Mountain and Land at the foot of the Mountain. This is consistent with the Blue Mountain Preservation designation in the Northern Berks Future Land Use Plan.

In the County Plan, in the four townships most of the land south of the Mountain area is designated Agricultural Preservation, except for Existing Development and several Rural Conservation areas in Tilden and Windsor Townships. In the Northern Berks Future Land Use Plan much of this land is also designated Agricultural Preservation, but more Rural land is found in Tilden and Windsor on the Future Land Use Plan for Northern Berks, reflecting the reluctance of some property owners in those two Townships to support an Agricultural Preservation designation.

The County Plan indicates Designated Growth and Future Growth areas in and near Strausstown, Shartlesville, West Hamburg, Hamburg and Edenburg. Industrial areas are indicated at the Strausstown and Route 61 interchanges with I-78 and in Windsor Township along Old Route 22. This is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan for Northern Berks.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES**

The existing and proposed development of Northern Berks is in many cases compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous municipalities. Where there are disparate uses, buffers are recommended.

Adjoining land in northern Bethel Township is zoned Environmental Protection. Land in Schuylkill County, except for some multi-family residential-zoned land in Port Clinton, is zoned Conservation Recreation or Rural Conservation. Adjoining land in Albany Township is zoned Woodland Conservation. This is consistent with the designation of Blue Mountain Preservation in Northern Berks. Port Clinton residential land is buffered by the Schuylkill River.

Agricultural preservation land in Bethel, Tulpehocken, Jefferson, Centre, and Perry Townships is generally consistent with Agricultural Preservation and Rural categories in

Northern Berks, though any residential development on Rural land in Northern Berks should be buffered along agricultural lands in adjoining townships.

Low Density Residential and Rural land in Penn Township is not consistent with Agricultural Preservation in Upper Bern, and residential development should contain buffers. Low Density Residential in Centre is generally consistent with Rural land in Tilden Township.

Land in Greenwich Township is zoned Public Recreation/Open Space, Conservation, Rural and Commercial along Old Route 22. This is generally consistent with the Blue Mountain Preservation and predominantly Rural classifications in Windsor Township. Any commercial development along Old Route 22 should be buffered from Low Density Residential land along Old Route 22 in Windsor Township.

## CHAPTER 6

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN

#### **Introduction**

The goal for community facilities and services is to provide facilities and services, on a coordinated regional basis where possible, to meet the existing and future needs of Northern Berks residents consistent with the financial capabilities of the Boroughs and Townships. The following are the objectives for community facilities:

#### *Objectives:*

- Identify services and facilities which can be provided on a regional basis and work toward intermunicipal cooperation.
- Implement a region-wide public transportation system.
- 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.
- Review proposed developments to ensure that required infrastructure and properly planned and located recreation facilities are constructed by developers.
- Review opportunities for regional sharing of equipment, services and facilities.
- Provide appropriate passive, wildlife-related and water-related recreation facilities at the Kernsville Dam area.
- Investigate the possibility of establishing an emergency services plan for the Region and the position of emergency services coordinator.
- Work with the School District to assure adequate, local school facilities are available to area residents and new facilities are located to be consistent with the goals and objectives of this plan.
- Investigate the possibility of a regional police force to provide greater flexibility and protection in all municipalities.

- Investigate opportunities for cooperation among municipalities and school districts in providing facilities and programs to area residents.
- Improve the facilities at Kaercher Creek Park by addressing the geese problem.
- Provide additional athletic fields for area youth at the location deemed best for the Region.
- Require developers to adequately manage stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation in manners consistent with the protection of water resources in the area.
- Coordinate regional efforts to regulate intensive agriculture activities and the handling of sludge.
- Work toward the provision of a wide variety of active and passive recreation facilities and programs for all age groups of existing and future area residents.
- Plan for needed recreation facilities on a regional basis at appropriate, accessible locations.
- Assure that the scale of development in the area is consistent with the capacity of the area's infrastructure.
- Identify opportunities for expanded public water service in the Region and investigate the feasibility of regionalization.
- Coordinate sewer and water planning with land use policies.
- Encourage cooperation among the fire companies in the Region to address the fire protection needs of the community.
- Plan for the potential closing and conversion of the Hamburg Center to an alternative use with positive economic and/or social benefits and impacts.

### **Coordination of Sewer and Water Facilities and Land Use Planning**

One of the objectives is to coordinate sewer and water planning with land use planning. It is critical 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 Hamburg Municipal Authority and other authorities which might be created with regard to water and sewer to assure coordination of policies. If sanitary sewer and water

systems are expanded and sewage treatment plant capacities expanded or sold, they should be expanded or sold to serve the Medium Density Residential Areas, Borough and Village Center, Business Development, Commercial, and Industrial areas shown on the Land Use Plan. Public sanitary sewer and water facilities in general should not be extended into Agriculture, Blue Mountain Preserve, Rural, and Village Commercial areas unless to address pressing health concerns or in the case of West Hamburg. Extension to Low Density Residential areas could be appropriate if such areas are extensions of Medium Density Residential areas, and would not increase development pressure on areas not intended for intensive development.

It is important to preserve stream corridors within the area and maintain the quality of streams as habitats, water resources and recreational resources. Sewage treatment plant discharges and standards should be consistent with the highest Stream Fishery Standards classification for receiving streams so the streams will not be degraded by the discharges through the plants. This should be monitored with the owners and operators of the plants. A number of the objectives above relate to cooperative efforts.

### **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. A number of the objectives above relate to cooperative efforts.

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 Region to address the fire protection needs of the community should be encouraged. Where appropriate, water systems within the region should be created to address emergency situations and provide 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 should be reviewed include purchase or use of equipment, such as road equipment, emergency services planning and coordination, police services, regulation of intensive agriculture, and biosolids handling, recreation facilities and programs, water service, and building code administration.

If new school facilities would be 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 Agriculture, Blue Mountain Preservation or Rural

areas, which are intended to preserve the rural and open space character of the area. School facilities should be located where public sewer and water is available.

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 all the municipalities 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. This committee would supplement the efforts of the Northern Berks Recreation Commission and the ongoing community visioning efforts.

### **Monitoring of Needs**

It is important to continue to monitor the need, and opportunities, for additional, expanded or improved community services and facilities. Municipalities must 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 at the municipal level as well as area-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 Townships' and Boroughs' 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***

On the Future Land Use Plan, an area in Upper Tulpehocken Township near the Route 183-Old Route 22 intersection has been indicated as a new recreation area to be used for recreation fields constructed by the Township and administered by the Northern Berks Recreation Commission (NBRC). Two baseball fields and one soccer field would be phased. The Strausstown Athletic Association would use the fields. The NBRC is also working to construct three soccer fields, a baseball field, parking lot, and pedestrian access at Kaercher Creek Park. Recreation fees should be charged of developers to help fund development of the recreation area.

Blue Mountain Wildlife is planning development of a passive outdoor recreation and wildlife area at Kernsville Dam. This facility would include trails, wildlife habitats, fishing areas, wildlife observation areas, gazebo, and boat launch.



Upper Bern Township will expand and improve the Township park in Shartlesville with land and recreation fees secured from developers. Continued use will be made of the other recreation facilities in the Region detailed in Chapter 21, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.

The Borough of Hamburg owns 9 acres along the Mill Creek in the northeast portion of the Borough. This has been acquired for possible future recreation use, such as stream access. It is large enough for development of recreation fields, but provision of parking could be a problem.

The Borough may consider additional improvements in the vicinity of the towpath of the Schuylkill Navigation Canal, including coordination with NBRC. Work could include cleaning up brush and poison, thinning trees at some areas, and making provision for ice skating. The Borough owns the remnants of the Canal. It should be determined to what extent the Hamburg Area Historical Society should be involved in restoring and interpreting the Canal.

Additionally, the NBRC will continue to work to provide recreation opportunities within Northern Berks and monitor available sites for recreation. The recreation committee in Hamburg is working to finalize a program of projects and priorities for the Borough.

The municipalities should continue to work together with the School District, NBRC and community organizations such as Hamburg Area Soccer Association, to coordinate use of the recreation facilities within the Region.

### ***Trail and Greenway Planning***

#### **Introduction**

We see in Northern Berks settlements that were formed along major travel routes, either along the Centre Turnpike (now Route 61), Schuylkill River and railroads paralleling it, or along Old Route 22. Residential neighborhoods, employment, community facilities, and cultural facilities were within walking distance. Motor vehicles have made pedestrian travel less safe and less possible. Many portions of the River have been removed from pedestrian orientation.

A goal of this plan is to facilitate pedestrian circulation and connection of neighborhoods, commercial and industry areas, cultural and community facilities, the River, as well as the countryside. An inviting, convenient and safe pedestrian system is required. This may include sidewalk repairs, new sidewalks, and trails. Continuous routes, marked, safe crosswalks, handicapped access, and streetscape amenities such as benches, lighting and trash receptacles (where appropriate) must be considered. Access to downtowns and

their businesses can contribute to the continued vitality and viability of the Region's settlements.

The Schuylkill River Greenway Association is working to provide a continuous recreation trail parallel to the Schuylkill River from its headwaters in Schuylkill County to its confluence with the Delaware River. Key elements of this planning include:

The John B. Bartram Trail – This proposed northernmost section of the 128 mile Schuylkill River trail runs from Hamburg north to Frackville and Morea. The trail will provide a connection to state-owned lands in Tilden Township, including the Kernsville recreation area, and Port Clinton, a historically significant canal village and important hub for the Appalachian Trail.

Bicentennial Trail - parallels old Schuylkill Canal alignment along the eastern bank of the Schuylkill River. Runs from Hamburg Park to terminus north of Mountain Road-Port Clinton Avenue intersection. East of the Bicentennial Trail, at the Olivet Blue Mountain Camp, there is an off-road trail connecting the campgrounds to the Appalachian Trail. Completing this connection would facilitate access of hikers to Hamburg.

The southern end of the Bicentennial Trail connects to the Bartram Trail at the Hamburg-Tilden pedestrian bridge. Northern and southern routes from the pedestrian bridge will be necessary. The next section would be from Hamburg to Shoemakersville.

The Bartram Trail from Lowland Road in Tilden Township to Hamburg Park follows the former Pennsylvania Railroad line. The proposed route to the north will run along the former railroad right-of-way, but will have to follow alternative routes in some areas because of outparcels sales; including a mile section north from Lowland Road.

A conceptual trail system throughout the Region is shown on the Pedestrian Circulation Plan. The trail system would accomplish several things, including providing a recreational resource for bicycling and walking, and in some areas perhaps horseback riding; providing connections to the Appalachian Trail, Schuylkill River Trail, and Bartram Trail, and thus the rest of the trail network in Berks and surrounding counties; and providing an alternative circulation system throughout the area which would provide access between developed areas, access to businesses and jobs, access to community facilities and recreation facilities, and access to historic resources. Connections will be made to the existing pedestrian circulation systems within the Boroughs and the Villages of Shartlesville, West Hamburg, and Edenburg.

On a County-wide basis, eventual connections would be available to the Thun Trail being developed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and the Horseshoe Trail which passes through the southern portion of Berks County.

It should be emphasized that this is a Conceptual Plan, and it will be necessary to refine the Plan with the Northern Berks Recreation Commission and any Joint Trail Commission of the municipalities. Issues to be addressed are listed below.

### **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, and 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 referencing the *Pennsylvania Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*.

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. Developers should be required

to build sections of the trails within their developments. Appropriate shoulder improvements should be required along the frontage of tracts and open areas should be retained along stream corridors.

## **Recommendations of North Berks Land Utilization and Reconnections Planning Study, prepared for the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and Northern Berks Recreation Commission, for Pedestrian Circulation**

### **Hamburg Borough**

1. Historic walking trail which highlights the Borough's historic sites, unique features, commercial district, architecture, and key destinations. The route should be marked with interpretive signs which mark the route.

Downtown Hamburg has an intact Commercial district focused on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and State Streets, providing retail and service businesses for the area. It has restaurants and interesting specialty shops which can be walked to. The architectural heritage of the Borough is visible in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings located in the Commercial area.

There is also a transportation heritage which helped form the Borough – the development of Schuylkill Canal, Centre Turnpike, and railroads spurred development of the Borough. Hamburg was the gateway to Schuylkill County and Pennsylvania's coal regions and connected to industrial centers of the eastern United States.

2. Trail connection to Strausstown. The Hex Highway Trail would be a pedestrian/bicycle and automobile touring route linking Hamburg, Shartlesville, and Strausstown along Old Route 22, including a separated bicycle touring lane and interpretation facilities. This route affords views of agricultural fields and the Blue Mountain. The agricultural heritage of the Region is evident. Historic barns can be viewed, many decorated with hex signs. The charming towns along the route are another attraction, with interesting architecture and mixture of homes and businesses. Signage along the route and promotion of the route would be necessary.

Improvements which would be necessary along Old Route 22 include shoulder expansion, widening of two bridges, State Street Bridge improvements, safety signage, interpretive signage, and parking facilities for bicycles and motor vehicles. Existing parking facilities in settlement might be sufficient.

3. Signage warning motorists of pedestrian and bicycle crossings at intersections.

4. Improved gateways into town. Long-term improvements could be changes or improvements in land use. Short-term improvements could be signage and uniform landscaping and lighting.
5. State Street Bridge improvements, including sidewalk improvements and pedestrian scale lighting. The State Street Bridge over the Schuylkill River links Hamburg and West Hamburg and Lowland Road. After the Hamburg interchange with I-78 is reconstructed, this bridge will be repaired. The bridge is also a pedestrian route, though the sidewalks are now in disrepair. Views of the River are available for those crossing the bridge. Access to Tilden Corporate Center, Cabela's and the Hamburg/Tilden Pedestrian Bridge could be provided along Old Route 22 and Lowland Road.
6. Sidewalks and crossings, including sidewalk repairs, additions, and completions. Crosswalks should be identified by painting or a change in materials, such as concrete, unit pavers, bricks or cobbles.
7. Trail connection to Shoemakersville.

#### *Recommended Route*

The Hamburg/Shoemakersville trail segment begins at the Hamburg/Tilden pedestrian bridge. From this point it will head south and cross State Street traveling along Front Street, a lightly traveled, wide street.

Many industries continue to operate in this section of Hamburg. For 800 feet, adjacent open lands owned by the Municipal Sewer Authority and Mid-Atlantic Cannery Association could be used to accommodate the trail improvements up to the canal alignment. At this point the trail crosses Front Street at the intersection of Pine Street onto the Old Schuylkill Canal alignment. The canal has been filled and is now a dense vegetative hedgerow. The trail will continue to follow the canal alignment, owned by the Borough of Hamburg.

At this point the trail intercepts an inactive portion of the Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad (RBM&N). The Route 61 bypass blocks the old canal alignment, so the trail turns to follow the railroad alignment. This upper segment of the rail line is not currently used. As the rail approaches Route 61, the RBM&N line accesses a rail car storage and repair facility. Coordination with the RBM&N will be necessary to route the trail around this facility to the west.

The railroad passes under Route 61, a busy four-lane highway. This is a key feature of this route because it allows the trail to remain off-road and avoids crossing a busy Route 61. The trail can share the service road on the west side through the underpass.

The trail reemerges on the southern side of the 4-lane highway and returns to the Schuylkill Canal alignment. At this point, the canal is watered. The South Hamburg Railroad Station is located between the railroad and the canal. This period piece of architecture has heritage, preservation, and interpretation opportunities.

South of Hamburg Borough, the trail could follow one of three alternative off-road alignments. One parallels the inactive railroad bed. The second retraces the canal towpath and the third follows the Schuylkill River shoreline.

The trail briefly passes through Windsor Township and then enters Perry Township, intersecting Five Locks Road.

### **Shartlesville**

1. Local interpretive trail highlighting the town's history and directing pedestrians and bicyclists to attractions and destinations within town.
2. Trail connection to Hamburg and Strausstown.
3. Signage warning motorists of pedestrian and bicycle crossings.
4. Sidewalks and crosswalks, including a connection to the Township Park, connection to the west of town to and along Mountain Road (including the fruit stand), and reducing the number of vehicular entry points to the fruit stand. Crosswalks on Main Street should be clearly marked and signed.
5. Pedestrian link to Roadside America and adjacent businesses.

### **Strausstown**

1. Local interpretive trail.
2. Trail connection to Shartlesville and Hamburg.
3. Signage warning motorists of pedestrian/bicycle facilities and crossing.
4. Pedestrian connections beyond the immediate downtown, including to the proposed Township park, to the Church east of town, and homes at the west end of town.

In repairing existing sidewalks, establishing crosswalks and adding new sidewalks, connections from residential neighborhoods to schools, parks, commercial and public

resources are priorities, because these routes are used by children. Needs of senior citizens should be addressed, as well as facilitating access to mass transit.

Many of the areas in downtown have on-street parking, which is important to businesses. It was recommended that where on-street parking exists, the sidewalk at crosswalks should be extended into the street, narrowing the distance from curb to curb and removing parked cars immediately adjacent to the intersection. The extended walk can accommodate site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, landscaping, information signs or community bulletin boards. Pedestrian crossings at street intersections are facilitated by utilizing crosswalks, stop signs, and pedestrian buttons where traffic lights exist, and minimizing cartway radii.

### **1994 Berks County Open Space and Recreation Plan**

The County Plan identifies three major greenways in Northern Berks:

- The Schuylkill River Corridor, along which the Schuylkill River Greenway Association is planning a Heritage Park that would include trail and fishing facilities. This concept is endorsed by this Comprehensive Plan.
- Northkill Creek Corridor, which would connect the North end of Blue Marsh Dam with State Game Lands and the Appalachian Trail.
- Maiden Creek/Pine Creek Corridor, which would link the Schuylkill River to Lake Ontelaunee, the Appalachian Trail, and Leaser Lake in Lehigh County.

These greenways should be reserved along the streams within any parcels which are proposed for development.

### **Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan**

Strausstown Borough and portions of Upper Tulpehocken and Upper Bern Township are located in the Tulpehocken Creek Watershed. This plan identifies obstructions within the watershed, and problem areas of flooding, sedimentation, and groundwater due to storm water volume and velocity along Northkill and Wolf Creeks and tributary to Wolf Creek.

The plan addresses open space planning/development techniques in maximizing open space in the watershed; provides a Model Act 167 SWM Ordinance; and encourages Best Management Practices, including groundwater recharge and infiltration.

The plan also contains required design, criteria and standards and recommended criteria and standards for stormwater management; alternative runoff control techniques; and

nonstructural stormwater management measures, including natural area conservation, stream buffers, and environmentally sensitive rural development.

### **Plan for the Reliable Supply of Water**

The Hamburg Municipal Authority serves the Borough of Hamburg, Edenburg and the portion of Windsor Township along Old Route 22 in-between. Water service is also available in the Tilden Industrial Park. The Hamburg Municipal Authority maintains water storage at the Hamburg Reservoir in Windsor Township. The primary source of supply is an intake on the Furnace Creek. The Authority has wells located in close proximity to the Reservoir on Reservoir Road as a supplementary supply. The facilities of the Authority are generally provided protection because their watershed contains extensive public holdings in the Hamburg Watershed, State Game Land, and State Forest. Other areas of the Region rely on private wells and springs. Both surface and groundwater are used as sources of water supply in the Region, and both sources should be protected with regard to quality and quantity.

In the Berks County Sewer and Water Systems Study, Hamburg Borough and Tilden and Windsor Townships were identified as municipal entities which should seek regional solutions for public water. West Hamburg and Shartlesville were identified as needing to look at short term (2008) public water needs. Strausstown Borough and the surrounding Upper Tulpehocken Township areas were identified as needing to look at long term (2018) public water needs.

In planning for water systems, it will be necessary to identify service areas, which should be consistent with existing population concentrations and designated growth areas. It will be necessary to determine demand, sources of supply, methods of distribution, methods of operation, methods of maintenance, methods of protecting these supplies, conservation techniques, and drought contingency plans.

In order to protect the surface water within the Northern Berks area, Stream Corridor Preservation areas have been identified. These areas include floodplains, wetlands, and hydric soils in the Region. It is intended that the areas now in private ownership would be preserved as open space by private property owners. The granting of conservation easements or dedication of land to municipalities and conservation groups will be encouraged. If adjoining land is developed, developers will be encouraged to establish linear stream parks. Riparian forest buffers will also be encouraged.

The Blue Mountain Preservation area has been established on the Blue Mountain. Extensive State game lands and forest lands are included within this area, as well as the Auburn Reservoir area. Only limited development will be permitted on privately-held land in order to protect the watersheds of watercourses and water supplies, and to protect



vulnerable steep slopes and protect woodlands in order to minimize erosion and sedimentation.

Large areas of the Region have been designated Agricultural Preservation. Agricultural areas can serve as groundwater recharge areas, but Best Management Practices should be used by farmers.

Land along the Schuylkill River is generally designated Blue Mountain Preservation Institutional/Public/Recreation, or Rural.

In areas where development would be permitted, the density of development would be established through consideration of natural features and resources at each site, and steep slopes, woodlands, floodplains and wetlands will be protected.

Where 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.

Where watershed areas are used for public recreation purposes, public access and usage should be consistent with the need to protect water supplies.

Municipal 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 Blue Mountain Preservation and Rural areas to protect natural resources.
4. Steep slope protection provisions
5. Woodland protection provisions
6. Wetlands, wetland margin and hydric soil protection provisions
7. Floodplain protection provisions

8. As municipal water supplies are developed, wellhead protection provisions pursuant to wellhead protection planning
9. Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning

This 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. Stream stabilization and restoration should repair damaged stream channels and eroding banks that contribute excessive sediment loads downstream. Development of impervious surfaces should be limited and set back from streams, riparian buffers established, and stream habitats improved. Vegetation should be protected, and planted where none exists.

10. Environmental performance standards and environmental assessment requirements for industrial and commercial uses. Businesses should have Spill and Pollution Prevention Plans.
11. Minimizing impervious cover

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 to reduce volume and rate of runoff, reducing pollution, and reducing thermal impacts through BMPs.

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 from nutrients and pesticides.

Municipalities can consider appointing Environmental Advisory Councils and foster creation of watershed action committees to protect water resources in the Region. Public education programs can encourage the community to be aware of sources of potential sources of water supply in their watersheds and to exercise good “housekeeping” and stewardship practices to help protect them.

The construction of public sewer systems in Upper Bern and Tilden Townships and Strausstown Borough will help address groundwater and surface water pollution from malfunctioning on-site sewer systems. (The implications of the water quality of effluent from treatment plants on water quality downstream should be considered.) The Future Land Use Plan directs future growth to areas which will be served by public sewer or could potentially be served by public sewer in the future. In areas not to be served by public sewers, municipalities should work to establish programs to have malfunctioning systems addressed by lot owners (on-lot septic system management programs).

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

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **FUTURE LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Future Land Use Plan establishes policies for guiding future land use within the area and serves as a guide on which to base regulatory controls, such as municipal zoning maps and zoning ordinances. The Future Land Use Plan is not a zoning map nor does it change zoning in a municipality. The zoning ordinances and maps separately adopted by the municipalities 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 Future Land Use Plan has been developed in recognition of the special and unique character of Northern Berks: its beautiful, unspoiled rural areas; scenic views; agricultural lands; interesting main streets in its villages and boroughs; barns with hex signs; historic sites in the settlements and rural areas; existing traditional neighborhood development; outstanding recreational opportunities, trails, stream valleys, and river valley; all against the backdrop of the Blue Mountain. This plan is intended to preserve and enhance these assets held so dearly by the residents of Northern Berks, not transform them.

Scenic roads, such as the Hex Highway (Old Route 22), should retain their character. Where commercial development occurs, design and sign controls should be applied.

Development is not prohibited, but it is managed and controlled. The appropriate locations for development have been determined with the intent to direct development to infill existing settlements where public sewer is or could be available, and in some cases allow for appropriate orderly expansion of existing developed areas. This logical growth pattern will allow for the preservation of the Region's resources and retention of rural character.

Two synergies in particular can be attained with Cabela's in the Region. If Cabela's is appropriately linked to Hamburg and visitors to Cabela's can be encouraged to visit the Borough, on-going revitalization efforts in Hamburg may receive a boost. This Plan supports the revitalization of Hamburg and recognizes that Hamburg should be a hub of commercial, residential, and community facility uses within the Region.

Second, recreation opportunities are major assets in the Region. Commercial recreation is an important component of the economy. Recreational opportunities at Kernsville

Dam are intended to be expanded. Visitors to Cabela's could use the recreational facilities in the Region and support recreation-related businesses. The Northern Berks Region is an ideal setting for an outdoor-oriented business-like Cabela's.

But major land use changes should not occur because of Cabela's. Additional commercial areas have not been established along Old Route 22. It is a two-lane, scenic, historic road not appropriate for major commercial development. Commercial areas at the interchanges have not been expanded, except at the area of Route 61 and I-78, close to Cabela's. Managed, appropriate growth should occur at the interchanges in designated areas before new areas for development are established. New resort commercial areas have not been established. Again, logical development and use of existing areas should occur. Road and utility infrastructure in the Region is limited and development which occurs should be appropriate to that infrastructure. The rural character of Northern Berks should be retained and enjoyed by its residents.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The stated goal for land use and housing is to prepare a land use plan which will retain the existing character of the Region and further the goals of preserving the natural, scenic, historic, cultural, agricultural, and open space resources of the Region. The goal for natural and scenic resources is to protect, preserve and enhance the natural and scenic resources of Northern Berks for current and future generations and assure visual and physical access by residents and visitors for viewing pleasure and recreational use. The goal for open space is to provide open space by preserving farmland, river and stream corridors, woodland and steep slope, and the planning and retention of recreation areas and parks. The goal for historic and cultural resources is to identify, mark, preserve and enhance historic, architectural and cultural resources. The goal for agricultural resources is to preserve and encourage continuation of agricultural uses in the Region.

The following are the specific objectives the Future Land Use Plan is designed to meet:

- Identify growth areas which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development in Hamburg, Shartlesville, Strausstown, Edenburg, and West Hamburg, have appropriate access, can be efficiently served by the circulation system, and can be efficiently served by public sewer and water systems in the future.
- Direct new development in the Region to the growth areas.
- Encourage the continuation of agricultural activities in the Region and the preservation of farmland.

- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal which cannot be feasibly sewerred.
- Encourage preservation of the Blue Mountain as open space.
- Identify appropriate future land uses for the Hamburg Center.
- Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through proper allocation of land use and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards. Discourage proximity of incompatible land uses within the Region and along adjoining municipalities.
- Identify appropriate future land uses for the vacant industrial buildings in Hamburg Borough.
- Allow a variety of housing densities and attractive residential housing types in appropriately designated areas, with an emphasis on single family homes, consistent with the natural constraints, service constraints and existing character of the municipalities.
- Maintain Hamburg as a vital commercial, service, cultural and residential center of the Region, and support revitalization efforts within the Borough.
- Encourage land development techniques which will preserve natural resources, agricultural lands, and open space.
- Appropriately allocate land use on a regional rather than municipality by municipality basis in Northern Berks.
- Maintain community character, including the rural character of the Township's, the regional center role of Hamburg, and the small-town character of Strausstown Borough and Shartlesville village.
- Provide for suitable, attractive and compatible commercial, office, and environmentally responsible industrial activities at appropriate locations, consistent with existing land use patterns, support services, transportation networks and concerns and environmental concerns.
- Encourage industrial and commercial development near existing identified concentrations: commercial, office, light industrial, and service development in the vacant industrial area of Hamburg; commercial, office, and service development in the 4<sup>th</sup> Street and State Street areas of Hamburg; industrial and commercial development near the Route 61 interchange with I-78 in Tilden

Township; commercial development near the Route 183 interchange with I-78 in Upper Tulpehocken Township and Strausstown Borough; and industrial and commercial development near the I-78 interchange at Shartlesville.

- Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents.
- Provide for the maintenance of the character, and any necessary restoration or improvement, of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate coordinated land use controls, enforcement policies, and programs throughout the Region.
- Encourage a more compact development pattern.
- Support appropriate tourist-oriented businesses that provide services to visitors to Northern Berks.
- Provide for a mix of land uses which will balance reasonable growth with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the area, and have manageable tax structures.
- Provide for retention of the character of the Villages within the Region.

### **Land Use Categories**

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

**Agricultural Preservation** - Agricultural Preservation areas are intended to be retained as areas where agriculture will be practiced. Uses related to agriculture, including agricultural support businesses, would also be encouraged. Residential development is discouraged. If municipalities utilize effective agricultural zoning, as Upper Bern, Upper Tulpehocken, and Windsor Townships now do, the intent is to severely restrict residential development through zoning. Typically, residential development would be permitted on a sliding scale, with the number of residential units permitted from a farm depending upon the size of the farm. Often, one dwelling may be permitted per 20 acres, but this is decided by the municipality at the time it enacts agricultural preservation zoning. Administrative means for agricultural preservation detailed in Chapter 14 could also be used.

If a municipality determines that it does not want effective agricultural zoning or wants to consider it in the future, primarily reliance would be an administrative means detailed in Chapter 14 to preserve agriculture.

**Blue Mountain Preservation** – The Blue Mountain is a tremendous asset to and key natural area within Northern Berks. The intent of this land use category is to preserve the rural character of the Blue Mountain and protect woodlands, steep slopes, Hamburg watershed, headwaters, wildlife habitats and recreation areas such as game lands and the Appalachian Trail. Conservation and related recreation uses and acquisition for public or quasi-public open space are encouraged. On privately owned land, low-density single family residential development would be allowed, preferably via conservation zoning in order to maximize open space. Typically, the density would be one dwelling per 3 to 5 acres, depending upon the lot size adopted by each municipality.

**Borough and Village Center** - This category is found in Strausstown, Shartlesville, and the center of Hamburg. The intent of this category is to permit a mix of residential development and commercial uses intended to serve the day-to-day needs of the residents of the borough or village and surrounding areas. The density of residential development would depend upon the availability of public sewer and water facilities. Typically, if public sewer and water facilities were available, the types of residential uses permitted would include single family, two family and multiple family at a density ranging from 2 to 10 dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type of dwellings. If public sewer and water were not available, single family and two family dwellings would be permitted at lower densities. Hamburg now has public sewer and water. Shartlesville has public sewer. Strausstown likely will have public sewer by 2005. The commercial uses would be such uses as groceries, restaurants, offices, banks, and retail shops.

**Business Development** - The Business Development category is intended to allow for appropriate commercial, industrial and office uses near an interchange with I-78 or where a mix of similar uses now exists or would be appropriate. The types of commercial uses permitted would be more inclusive than that found in the Borough and Village Center category, and could include some highway oriented commercial. The type of industrial uses would generally be light industrial and warehousing. The actual uses will vary by municipality. In the case of Hamburg, the option to allow apartment and recreation conversions would be considered for vacant commercial and industrial buildings.

**Commercial** - The intent of the Commercial areas is to provide for a wide range of commercial uses, including those serving the day-to-day needs of area residents, as would be included in the Borough and Village Commercial, and some "heavier" commercial uses, which could include highway oriented commercial uses and tourist-oriented uses. Typically, residential development is not permitted.

**Industrial** - The Industrial area is intended for industrial, office, warehouse, and similar type uses. Typically, commercial and residential uses are not allowed, unless there would be an outlet for goods manufactured in the area.



**Institutional/Public/Recreation** - This category includes public buildings, such as municipal buildings and schools, large institutional uses such as the Hamburg Center, and recreational uses such as the Kernsville Dam area, Kaercher Creek Park, and municipal parks.

**Low Density Residential** - The Low Density Residential areas are intended to provide for single family residential development at a density of one acre per dwelling. They typically are not served by public sewer and water facilities.

**Medium Density Residential** - The Medium Density Residential areas are intended to accommodate residential growth in the region. The types of units and density of development would depend upon the availability of public sewer and water facilities. Some Medium Density areas are or will be sewered. Others adjoin areas that will be or are sewered, and might be sewered in the future. Types of units and density of development would also vary by municipality. In the Townships, with on-site sewage disposal, typically single family homes at a density of one dwelling per acre would be permitted. If public sewer and water facilities were available, the municipalities could, if they felt it appropriate, allow two family development and/or apartments and townhouses. With public sewer and water, the typical density for single family dwellings would be two to four dwellings per acre. The maximum density of development, which would be for two-family, apartment, and townhouse development, would range up to five to eight dwelling units per acre with public sewer and water. In the Boroughs, with public sewer and water, single family development would be permitted, and two-family development could be considered. The density for the single and two-family homes might range from three to seven dwelling per acre, depending upon the policy of the municipality.

**Resort Commercial** - The Resort Commercial category is intended to provide for campgrounds and related activities, where campgrounds now exist in the Townships.

**Rural** - The intent of the Rural category is to encourage the retention of rural character of portions of the Townships that are not going to be designated Agricultural Preservation or Blue Mountain Preservation. These areas now contain a mix of agriculture, woodland, and single-family development. The density of development for single family dwellings would range from one acre to two acres per dwelling, depending upon the municipality. Conservation development is the preferred means of development. Each municipality could consider encouraging retention of agricultural uses through various available government programs and other administrative means.

**Village Commercial** - The Village Commercial designation is found along Route 183 in Upper Tulpehocken Township, the Jalappa area in Tilden Township, and the Windsor Castle area in Windsor Township. The intent is to recognize a mix of Commercial and Single Family Residential uses found in rural village settings. Typically, the minimum

density would be one acre per single family dwelling. The commercial uses would be those intended to serve the day-to-day needs of the nearby residents.

## **AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION**

Agricultural Preservation areas are found throughout the southern two-thirds of Upper Bern and Upper Tulpehocken Townships, the southeast portion of Windsor Township, and interspersed in the central and western portions of Tilden Township. Upper Bern, Upper Tulpehocken and Windsor Townships have had agricultural preservation programs in place. Tilden Township currently does not have an agricultural preservation program, but such a land designation is appropriate due to the extent of prime agricultural soils, agricultural operations, agricultural security areas, conserved land in the Township and the presence of agricultural preservation in adjoining municipalities in the region. The Agricultural Preservation areas in Upper Bern, Upper Tulpehocken and Tilden Townships are connected in the southern portion of the Region and the southern portion of Windsor Township reflects agricultural activities, prime agricultural soils, agricultural security areas and preserved farms in the Township and adjoining Perry Township.

In addition to reflecting existing agricultural activities, prime agricultural soils, agricultural security areas, and preserved farms, Agricultural Preservation also reflects the heritage of farming in Northern Berks County, recognizes a major component of the economy of the Townships, will help to maintain the rural character in portions of the Townships still possessing that character, and contribute to the overall open space system in the Region. The goal of this plan is designate sufficient land as agricultural preservation to support farming infrastructure and culture in Northern Berks and maintain the existing farm community.

## **BLUE MOUNTAIN PRESERVATION**

The northern third of the region is designated Blue Mountain Preservation. This category includes land on and at the base of the Mountain and extensive state-owned lands in the Northern Berks Region. The intent of this land use category is to preserve the rural character of the Blue Mountain, limit development in areas with severe limitations to development, protect critical natural resources, and protect adjacent areas which could be severely impacted by development. Conservation and related recreation uses are encouraged. Only very low-density single family residential development should be permitted on privately-held land.

## **BOROUGH AND VILLAGE CENTER**

Borough and Village Center areas are found in the center of Hamburg Borough, along Main Street in Strausstown Borough, and along Main Street in the Village of Shartlesville. The Borough and Village Center areas currently contain a mixture of one and two family homes and apartments, commercial uses, and community facilities, and it is intended that a mixture of residences, 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 of this plan is to assure the continued vitality of the Boroughs and Village, and foster commercial development in the centers of Hamburg, Strausstown and Shartlesville, which can serve the residents of the Boroughs and the Townships on a day-to-day basis. Appropriate uses compatible in scale and design with existing development could also serve visitors to the Region. In Chapter 10, methods of encouraging economic vitality in the existing Centers are discussed.

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Business development areas are located along Route 61 in the “industrial area” of Hamburg Borough, in Tilden Township along Route 61, north of I-78, and north of Strausstown Borough on Route 183. In these areas a mix of commercial, industrial and office uses near interchanges or where a mix of such uses now exists is encouraged. The types of commercial uses permitted would be more inclusive than that found in the Borough and Village Center category, and could include some highway oriented commercial. Light industrial and warehousing would be permitted. In the case of Hamburg, this category will allow for appropriate adaptive re-use of existing occupied and vacant industrial buildings. In Tilden Township, this category will allow completion of the Tilden Corporate Center, light industrial development, and appropriate complementary uses to Cabela’s. In Upper Tulpehocken Township, logical development north of the interchange with I-78 will be allowed.

## **COMMERCIAL**

Commercial areas are found along Route 61 in Windsor Township, north and west of the Village of Shartlesville along Old Route 22 and Forge Dam Road, and in the vicinity of Strausstown Borough. The Commercial areas contain existing commercial concentrations and will allow for expansion for similar uses. Commercial uses, including those serving the day-to-day needs of area residents, highway oriented commercial uses and tourist-oriented uses would be allowed.

## **INDUSTRIAL**

Industrial areas are found in the eastern portion of the Region along Old Route 22 in Windsor Township, north of Shartlesville, and in the area of Post Precision in Strausstown and Upper Tulpehocken Township. Light industrial uses would be permitted in the industrial parks at Edenburg and Shartlesville and expansions of those existing industrial areas.

## **INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC/RECREATION**

This category reflects existing public buildings, such as municipal buildings and schools, large institutional uses such as the Hamburg Center, and recreational uses such as the Kernsville Dam area, Kaercher Creek Park, municipal parks, and public land along the Schuylkill River.

## **LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

Low Density Residential areas are found along Old Route 22 in Windsor Township, along Old Route 22 in Upper Tulpehocken Township, and southeast of Strausstown Borough in Upper Tulpehocken Township. Typically, Low Density Residential Development reflects residential development that has occurred in these areas. 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. The largest area which is available for future development is southwest of Strausstown. 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 Hamburg Borough, in the northern and eastern portions of the Borough; in the Edenburg area of Windsor Township; in the West Hamburg area of Tilden Township; in areas east and south of Shartlesville along Shartlesville Road, Schoolhouse and Valley Roads; around Strausstown Borough in Upper Tulpehocken Township; and in Strausstown Borough. The Medium Density Residential areas contain existing developed areas, areas where infill development could occur, and land for future development. The Medium Density Residential areas are within existing service areas of public sewer or near such areas, and may have the potential to be served by public sewer in the future. Public sewer is available in Hamburg, Shartlesville, and Edenburg, and will be available in Strausstown and West Hamburg within the next two years. Land outside sewer areas, particularly that Upper Bern Township near Shartlesville and in Upper Tulpehocken Township, could not be served without municipal decisions to extend sewer lines and expand treatment capacity.

Encouraging development to locate in areas where public sewer and water can be utilized allows for a greater density of development to occur, which will minimize the land necessary to accommodate future growth, and can protect groundwater supplies by not relying on on-site sewage disposal and individual wells. Much of the Northern Berks region is considered unsuitable for on-site sewage disposal. Providing for compact, orderly growth within the municipalities allows for more efficient provision of utilities. Encouraging infill growth near areas where the road system is most developed and where improvements are more likely can help reduce traffic pressures on rural roads not intended for higher traffic volumes. A nucleus of community facilities is found in and near the Medium Density Residential areas.

### **RESORT COMMERCIAL**

This includes and provides areas for campgrounds and related activities, where such uses already exist in Upper Bern and Upper Tulpehocken Townships.

### **RURAL**

Rural areas are shown interspersed with Agricultural Preservation areas in the southern two-thirds of Tilden Township; south of West Hamburg; in the central and western portions of Windsor Township near Hamburg Borough, and along the Old Route 22 Corridor; and in Upper Tulpehocken Township along the southern portion of Route 183, in the area of Club Road, and between Old Route 22 and I-78. Some of the land has restrictions to development because of steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and woodland. Some of the land has been developed for very low density single family use, and the Rural category would allow similar development nearby. Some of the land, particularly in Tilden and Windsor Townships, is farmed; continuation of agricultural and rural character is desired, but it has been determined that there is no land owner support at this time for active agricultural preservation programs. Retention of agriculture should be encouraged as a means of protecting the rural character of these areas. Development density would range from one to two acres per dwelling unit. Use of conservation development is encouraged where development occurs.

### **VILLAGE COMMERCIAL**

Village Commercial areas are located along Route 183 in Upper Tulpehocken Township, the Jalappa area in Tilden Township, and the Windsor Castle area in Windsor Township. These areas reflect existing the commercial areas, and would allow for 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.

## Available Acreages in Land Use Categories

The following table indicates the available acreages in each category on the Future Land Use Plan. To arrive at available acreage, land classified as Vacant and Farm on the Existing Land Use Map has been totaled.

| <u>Future Land Use Plan Category</u> | <u>Available Acres</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Agricultural Preservation            | 17,423                 |
| Blue Mountain Preservation           | 5,076                  |
| Borough and Village Center           | 79                     |
| Business Development                 | 394                    |
| Commercial                           | 115                    |
| Industrial                           | 290                    |
| Institutional/Public/Recreation      | 105                    |
| Low Density Residential              | 333                    |
| Medium Density Residential           | 809                    |
| Resort Commercial                    | 52                     |
| Rural                                | 6,540                  |
| Village Commercial                   | 164                    |

## Designated Growth Area

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code creates 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, provide for the economic and employment needs of the area, and allow for increase of the tax base of the region.

In the Northern Berks region, the designated growth area includes land within the Medium Density Residential, Borough and Village Center, Commercial, Business Development and Industrial land use categories. The Medium Density Residential and Borough and Village Center areas are intended to accommodate Residential, and in the case of the Borough and Village Center area, mixed residential and commercial development. The density of development would be higher with utilization of public sewer and water facilities. The Borough and Village Center, Commercial, Business Development and Industrial areas will allow for economic development and job formation and contribute to the tax base in the area. As developers can secure capacity

from the municipal authorities and/or municipalities, they could serve developments with public water and sewer where such facilities are not already available within the designated growth areas.

### **Future Growth Area**

The Municipalities Planning Code also includes 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 area includes the Low Density Residential area around Strausstown Borough, which would be a logical extension of the designated growth area if adequate infrastructure could be made available.

### **Public Infrastructure Areas**

Another concept identified in the Municipalities Planning Code is public infrastructure area, which is a designated growth area or all or any portion of a future growth area described in a multi-municipal comprehensive plan where public infrastructure services will be provided and outside of which such public infrastructure services will not be required to be publicly financed. No area within the Northern Berks area has been designated as a public infrastructure area because the municipalities within the area will not guarantee the financing of public infrastructure services to and for developments on the behalf of developers. Municipal policy is that the cost of expanding the necessary infrastructure to developments be borne by the developers, and not by the municipalities.

### **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 except in villages. 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. In the proposed Future Land Use Plan, areas for agriculture, mining, quarrying and other extractive industries, forest and game lands, recreation, tourism and development compatible with or supportive of such uses are found in separate land use categories, which may allow some of these uses. No area has been established for the wide range of these uses. For example, in Agricultural preservation Areas, typically extractive industries are not permitted. Extractive industries will typically not be permitted where residential development, forest and game lands, recreation and tourism are encouraged. The Blue Mountain is not appropriate for extensive timbering and extractive industry because of its ecological importance. Some rural resource uses, such as quarrying and other extractive industries, could be permitted within industrial areas which are considered designated growth area.

### **Considerations for Future Residential Development**

As development occurs in the region, particularly in the Rural and Blue Mountain Preservation areas, which contain the greatest extent of sensitive environmental resources in the area, care must be taken to preserve and protect the resources identified in these areas.

- 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, preserve agricultural lands 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.
- The coordination of open space and circulation systems among adjoining developments should be encouraged.
- A system of bicycle paths and sidewalks should be encouraged.
- Incorporation of resources into development plans should be encouraged.
- Flexible approaches to site design to recognize resources should be encouraged.

It is crucial that when development occurs, infrastructure to support that development be available. Traffic impact studies should be performed by developers and necessary improvements made by them. Municipalities should review the merits of transportation impact fee studies. Developers should also be responsible to assure adequate sewer and water facilities are provided by them.

### **Housing**

The objectives for housing are 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, with an emphasis on single family homes, within the natural and service constraints of the municipalities; and to provide for maintenance of the character and any necessary restoration or improvements

of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate coordinated land use controls, enforcement policies, and programs throughout the region.

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 Blue Mountain Preservation and Rural areas; low density development of one family housing in the Low Density Residential areas; medium density development of one family, two family, multiple family, and mobile home housing in the Medium Density Residential areas; and areas of mixed commercial and residential development within the Borough and Village Center areas at medium density.

Maintenance of the existing housing stock can be accomplished through enforcement of building codes and utilization of property maintenance codes. No significant housing problems within the area have been identified.

As taxes and housing costs rise, there is always concern for the elderly. 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 older residents to identify various programs that are available to help them meet their housing expenses and retain their homes.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CIRCULATION PLAN**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The goal for circulation is to plan for a circulation system comprised of highway, bus, rail, and pedestrian facilities, which will allow safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian travel throughout Northern Berks. Objectives for circulation are as follows:

*Objectives:*

- Improve rail and bus service to the Region, including rail service to Reading, bus service to communities outside the Northern Berks Region, and bus connections between the Boroughs and Villages in the Region.
- Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the area as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT.
- Establish a program to provide additional parking opportunities in Hamburg Borough.
- 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.
- Promote coordinated access management programs along the major road corridors within Northern Berks, such as Route 61, Route 183, and Old Route 22, to minimize the number of access points to the road system.
- Preserve the scenic road corridors and vistas within the Region.
- Provide maintenance and upgrade of the existing road system as warranted and encourage PennDOT to improve state-controlled roads and intersections.
- Because substantial traffic within the Region is generated outside Northern Berks, work with State, County, and other municipal officials to address areas of concern, such as Route 183, Route 61, and detoured traffic on Old Route 22.

- Encourage and support the development of a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails, including sidewalks, shared trails and paved shoulders. Coordinate this network with the existing and proposed trail system, including the Schuylkill River, Bartram and Appalachian Trails.
- Link Hamburg to Shartlesville and Strausstown through a pedestrian/bicycle trail system.
- Address existing deficiencies and safety concerns in the circulation system with landowners, PennDOT and developers as appropriate, such as construction of shoulders along Route 183.
- Facilitate bus, pedestrian and bicycle access to commercial areas and community facilities such as schools and recreation facilities in the Region.
- Promote appropriate, coordinated land use and circulation patterns at the interchanges with I-78.
- Establish consistent signage policies along the major roads within the Region.
- Address concerns over large trucks using roads which are not constructed to accommodate those trucks and their loads, and identify appropriate truck routes.

### **Future Functional Classification of Roadways**

The future roadway classification is as follows:

**Interstate/Expressway:** I-78.

**Major Arterials include:** Route 61.

**Minor Arterials include:** Old Route 22, State Street, and Rehrersburg Road, Route 143 and Route 183.

**Major Collectors include:** Port Clinton Avenue, Windsor Castle Road, Mountain Road, Woodland Road, Industrial Drive, Berne Road, Shartlesville Road, Wolf Creek Road, and Tulley Drive.

**Minor Collectors include:** Balthaser Road, Schappell Road, Witchcraft Road, Mountain View Drive, Bachmoll Road, Salem Church Road, Saint Michael's Road, Skyline Drive, Spring Road, Bloody Spring Road, Clauss Road, Tilden Road, Academy/Walnut Road, Pine Road, Mill Hill Road, Valley Road,

Schoolhouse Road, Naftzingertown Road, Leshers Road, South Swatara Drive, Pearl Road, Bricker Road, Pine Hill Road, Winterhill Road, and Manbeck Road.

**Local Access Roads include:** all other roads.

### **Proposed Road Improvements**

Proposed road improvements are shown on the Circulation Plan.

#### *Intersection Improvements:*

- Route 61 Interchange with I-78, where design should be improved to accommodate Cabela's and where access must be managed;
- Route 183 and Old Route 22, where a traffic light on Old Route 22 should be installed;
- Strausstown Interchange with I-78, where design should be improved and access managed;
- Shartlesville Interchange with I-78, where design should be improved and access managed;
- Hamburg Interchange with I-78, which will be reconstructed;
- State Street Bridge, which will be repaired and improved;
- Shartlesville Road Intersection with Old Route 22, where design should be improved, given the angle of intersection;
- Mountain Road and Industrial Drive, where alignment should be improved;
- Route 61 and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, where the traffic light and design should be improved based on area-wide traffic study;
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Hawk Ridge Drive, where a traffic light should be installed, based on area-wide traffic study;
- Woodland Road and Route 61, where intersection should be improved, based on area-wide traffic study;
- Schappell Road and Route 61, where intersection should be improved, based on area-wide traffic study;

- 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Windsor Street, where a traffic light should be installed;
- Industrial Drive and State Street, where turning radii should be improved;

*Proposed Improvements to Existing Roads:*

- Route 183, provide access management, widening/shoulder improvements, improve bridges at Anthony's Mill, design aesthetics and right-of-way preservation;
- Old Route 22, provide access management, design aesthetics, right-of-way preservation, trail accommodation and emergency management planning, design, construction and alternatives;
- Wolf Creek Road, provide for curve improvements and realignment with I-78.

*Improvements to Existing Areas of Concern*

Each municipality should continue to work toward improvement of these areas through adoption of multi-year road improvement plans in conjunction with Berks County and PennDOT. The cooperation and contributions of developers should be sought where areas of concern are along, within, or affected by proposed developments. Areas for consideration is the Shartlesville Interchange area and the Strausstown Interchange area for access management and design improvements; the State Street Bridge; improvements to the Hamburg Industrial area to improve access and traffic flow as development and redevelopment occurs; Cabela's area improvements to include improvements to the Mountain Road and Route 61 alignment, the Route 61 and I-78 Interchange, other nearby road improvements determined to be necessary, such as Pine, Mountain and Lowland, and additional links to Hamburg, such as a shuttle, rail or trolley connection and connection with trails and a circulator. An east-west road through the industrial area north of Shartlesville should also be explored.

**Cooperation Among Municipalities**

While some road improvements will be handled on an individual municipality basis, cooperation of municipalities will be important, particularly along the major roadways, where the impacts of traffic have created congestion and can affect the quality of life in all municipalities. Of particularly regional importance are the I-78, Old Route 22, Route 183, Route 61, and Mountain Road corridors.

Consideration should be given to forming a regional transportation authority. The authority could facilitate looking at all aspects of transportation, including transit, on a regional basis.

## **Scenic Roads**

Scenic roads are an important element within the circulation system within the Northern Berks area and maintenance of a system of scenic roads is encouraged. The Future Land Use Plan proposes concentrating most future growth in areas where development has already occurred, and proposes substantial agricultural and open space areas, and this will help maintain the scenic road system. In Blue Mountain Preservation and Rural areas, developers will be encouraged to incorporate natural features and resources into an open space system within developments which do occur, and to site homes with consideration of the natural features and resources.

The municipalities should discuss whether it would be appropriate to adopt 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 Route 61, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Old Route 22/State Street and Industrial Drive is a major concern, particularly with additional visitors expected within the Region. Incremental steps can be taken to improve conditions along these roads. One of those incremental actions is encouraging use of the BARTA bus system.

An objective will be to maintain and then expand service; including encouraging BARTA to provide service to Cabela's and downtown Hamburg. Elements in trying to expand service will be well-located stops, attractive and safe stops with shelters and connections to the transit hub in Reading. The proposed trail system is designed to provide connections to public transit routes, pedestrian and bicycle routes to stops, and bicycle racks and safe shelter for bicycles.

If passenger rail service to the Borough is reinstated, a multi-modal facility should be established at the train station, to accommodate and facilitate pedestrian, bus, automobile and bicycle traffic at the train station.

As additional development occurs within the area, consideration should be given to addressing expanded routes throughout the area and provide access to the BARTA system. The expansion of routes could be planned in conjunction with the municipalities, BARTA, and area businesses. The Region should work with BARTA to encourage BARTA to provide adequate connections of the villages and boroughs via bus routes serving major residential, employment and retail areas, with cooperation with and support from the local business community.

The Transportation Plan shows a proposed Circulator Route which would connect Hamburg, Edenburg, Lenhartsville, West Hamburg, Shartlesville, Strausstown and Bethel. If this would not be a regular BARTA route, then a system of mini-buses should run along Old Route 22 to connect the communities. Circulator access is also shown to the residential area in northern Hamburg, the Tilden Corporate Center, Cabela's, the High School, Middle School complex and the length of 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Hamburg.

Additional transit service to the region is important to serve older residents who do not move freely throughout the Region, to provide access to such facilities as the Hamburg Medical Center.

Providing park and ride systems should be encouraged. In the future, it may be appropriate to plan for a transit hub in Hamburg, or where sufficient land would be available along Route 61 if land could not be secured in the Borough. The Pedestrian Circulation Map identifies Park and Ride Facilities near the Strausstown, Shartlesville and Route 61 Interchanges with I-78 (near Cabela's) and the intersection of Route 61 and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The use of carpooling throughout the area should be encouraged. Businesses within the area could take the lead in encouraging employees to carpool. Pedestrian access should be provided from Park and Ride facilities to Circulator stops.

Road and access road design in the future should consider accommodating potential bus traffic. As infill, redevelopment and development occur in the area where bus service is likely, provision should be made for pull-offs, stops and shelters and pedestrian access to the stops and shelters.

An appropriate stop for bus travel beyond the Region should be established in or near Hamburg, and appropriate routes and means of getting people to that stop should be planned.

### **Access Management**

Access management will be a concern along all roads within the area, but particularly along Old Route 22, Route 183 and Route 61, 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
- Left turn lanes and right turn lanes constructed at road and driveway intersections
- Install medians
- Adequate parking lot/internal circulation design in developments
- Shared access to properties
- Interconnect properties developed along roads
- Improve intersection design/spacing
- Signalized high volume driveways
- Control of access
- Direct development access roads to signalized driveways
- 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 Route 183, Old Route 22 and Route 61, within Hamburg, and in the area of Cabela's and Tilden Corporate Center, should be monitored.

### **Congestion Management System Strategies**

Congestion management system strategies have been used by some communities in the past to reduce traffic. 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.

As increased commercial and industrial development occurs in the Region, the appropriateness of these strategies should be reviewed.

### **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. No municipality currently has a traffic impact fee system and the municipalities should determine whether they wish to initiate such a system in the future. One possible district which should be investigated for future development is at the intersection of Industrial Drive and State Street.

The Municipalities Planning Code indicates that when municipalities have prepared a multi-municipal plan, in order to allow for the provision of transportation capital improvements in a cooperative manner, the municipalities may collectively cooperate to enact joint transportation impact fee ordinances.

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 correct current deficiencies and mitigate traffic increases associated with new development.

### **Shoulder Improvements**

Developers should be required to improve shoulders along the frontages of their tracts when they develop. In addition, the municipalities should take it upon themselves 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 Northern Berks area, especially at the entrances to the boroughs and villages. 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. The municipalities can work with property owners to enhance the entrances. Consistent road corridor overlay zoning could be adopted along the major roadways.

Along the length of Route 61 and at various points along Old Route 22 and Route 183, municipalities can work with property owners to enhance commercial areas through coordinated landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, paving materials, design of site improvements, building facades and window displays. When infill, redevelopment or new development occurs, developers could be required to comply with performance and design standards, which would require them to address these elements. When new parking facilities are constructed, they should be landscaped, buffered and placed to the side, or preferably the rear of buildings.

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

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 within the Region:

- discouraging the use of drive-thru facilities
- 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 details as other buildings in the neighborhood
- Utilizing similar numbers and spacing of windows and doors in the facade
- 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)
- Utilizing similar entry treatments to buildings
- Using similar building heights
- Having store fronts, upper facades, and cornices 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. The intent of bonuses is to provide incentives to developers, not just regulation, to allow economic use of property.

### **Pedestrian Circulation**

As streets are maintained and improved, walkability should be addressed, including 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, pedestrian islands, limitation of cartway radii and the use of pedestrian buttons and cycles that signalize street intersections. Access to circulator and bus stops from park and ride areas and neighborhoods should be enhanced.

Gaps in the sidewalk system such as those along 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Hawk Ridge Drive and the Business Development area in Hamburg should also be addressed. Access to community facilities and commercial areas in the boroughs and villages should be enhanced through expanded and repaired sidewalks and establishing crosswalks. Streetscape amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, information signs, landscaping and lighting should be provided in the downtown portions of the villages and boroughs.

### **Parking Programs in Hamburg**

Municipal parking is key to any revitalization effort and to the revitalization of the Borough of Hamburg. A number of issues should be addressed with regards to parking in the Borough of Hamburg:

- There needs to be public/private cooperation
- Identification/Direction to Existing Facilities (such as 4<sup>th</sup> and Pine and municipal building)
- Sharing of facilities (such as M&T parking lots at 4<sup>th</sup> and Pine and to rear of building) and First Union Church at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Pine.
- Sharing of facilities (such as M&T parking lots at 4<sup>th</sup> and Pine and to rear of building) and First Union Church at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Pine.
- Acquisition of Land (such as open lot along State Street, next to Hamburg Stand Video) for Future Lot
- Consolidation and improvement of private facilities (such as along side of Washington, between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets.
- Tenants utilize spaces designated for tenants. Tenants living above commercial uses should not park in front of the commercial uses.
- Maintain existing on-street parking
- Permit and encourage sharing of spaces by private parties
- Investigate use of fee-in-lieu of parking option
- Private cooperation in utilization of underused spaces
- Review of time limit policies

- Periodically revisit and update as appropriate the parking garage feasibility study proposed for the Borough in the late 1980's.

## **Berks Vision 2020**

The proposed Comprehensive Plan for Berks County lists several transportation priorities which would affect Northern Berks.

### *Short Range -*

I-78 restoration from Hamburg to Lenhartsville, including upgrading the substandard Hamburg interchange. This reconstruction of this interchange is in the preliminary design stage with PennDOT, with a late 2003 start to construction expected. The project includes the following elements:

- The plans call for a new diamond shaped interchange. PennDOT has already acquired some right-of-way in the area for the new design.
- It appears that perhaps three to four homes on the north side of I-78 in the present termination area of Northmont Avenue will have to be removed, but officially it remains unclear. It also looks like a total of 14 properties will be affected by the project. Most of the properties require only a sliver of land to be taken for the purpose of right-of-way.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge will be widened to account for the new acceleration and deceleration lanes for the new ramps.
- The portion of Northmont Avenue on the south side of I-78 will terminate in a cul-de-sac just before where the present road curves eastward to funnel out onto Fourth Street. The portion of Northmont Avenue on the north side of I-78 will also end in a cul-de-sac.
- Chestnut Street, on either side of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, will also be slightly realigned.
- The whole project starts at the I-78 bridge over the Schuylkill River and extends about three miles eastward. However, all other work not related to the

interchange area and the 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge area will be within PennDOT right-of-way.

*Intermediate Range -* I-78 restoration between Bethel and Hamburg including upgrades to interchanges to improve capacity and safety.

PA Route 61 – Installation of median barrier, turn lanes, intersection signalization between Shoemakersville and Schuylkill County line. Upgrade of existing Fourth Street intersection at Hamburg as well as providing a second access point to the Borough.

*Long Range -* PA Route 61 – Provide a new limited access connection between US 222 and I-78. Consideration should be given combining this project with upgrades to existing expressways to provide a new Interstate and from I-76 in Morgantown through the Reading area to I-78 and possibly continuing on to I-81 in Schuylkill County.

This is a very long range project and not on the 20-year transportation plan. No route has been set. This project will have to be discussed with the Northern Berks Committee, as the policy of this plan is that there be no new intersections with I-78 during the life of this plan.

## **Traffic Calming**

As development in the Region occurs, and traffic volumes increase, there can be increased traffic flow on residential streets. Means of dealing with traffic volumes discussed previously are road improvements, increased utilization of mass transit, internalized trips within the area, providing increased opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, supporting efforts to increase automobile occupancy rates and parking lot opportunities, and access management. If those steps are not completely successful, traffic calming techniques can be considered.

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.

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)
- 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.

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.

Areas where more active traffic calming could be used would be on 4<sup>th</sup> and State Streets and along Old Route 22/Main Street. 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 Route 61**

In order to increase system capacity and reduce intersection delays, traffic signal timing along Route 61 should be kept current.

Consideration should be given to implementing a closed loop system to enhance the operation of coordinated signalized intersections in the Route 61 corridor. Presently the signals in the Borough could be coordinated with those in Perry, Windsor and Tilden Townships. 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

#### Introduction

Existing natural resources are identified in the Basic Studies Portion of this Plan, specifically in Chapter 14 (where agricultural resources are discussed); Chapter 15 (where the Blue Mountain, floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, streams, steep slopes, wooded areas, streams and watersheds, and natural features of special interest are discussed); Chapter 16 (where geology and aquifer yields are discussed); and Chapter 17 (where scenic resources are discussed). Existing historic resources are identified discussed in Chapter 22.

The following map identifies Natural Resource Preservation Areas, including natural areas, woodlands, water resources, wetlands, floodplains, hydric soils, and steep slopes.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

#### Natural Resources

**Goal:** *Protect, preserve and enhance the natural and scenic resources and beauty of Northern Berks for current and future generations, and assure visual and physical access by the Region's residents and visitors for viewing pleasure and recreational use.*

#### Objectives:

- Protect water resources within the Region to assure the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater for recreational use, wildlife habitats, and water supply. Of particular concern will be the water courses, such as the Schuylkill River; Hassler, Leshner and Rattling Runs; and Maiden, Northkill, Little Northkill, Wolf, Mill, Little Swatara, Jackson, Mollhead, Birch, Spring, Stony, Pigeon, Furnace and Kaercher Creeks; tributaries to these creeks; wetlands and floodplains along the creeks; and steep slopes draining to the creeks.
- Protect groundwater from pollution throughout the Region.
- Protect and manage woodlands within the municipalities and promote the retention and return of indigenous species of flora and fauna.

- Protect the steep slopes within the Region.
- Protect watersheds and wellhead areas for the existing Hamburg reservoir and potential future community water supplies within the Region.
- Identify the scenic areas in the Region, and encourage the preservation of these areas for enjoyment by residents and visitors by limiting the encroachment of development.
- Encourage the preservation of the scenic road corridors and viewsheds along them within the Region.
- Protect and maintain the rural character of the Townships, including agricultural areas and rural areas both north and south of I-78.
- Protect and preserve unique natural areas in Northern Berks, such as Blue Mountain, the Schuylkill River, Kaercher Creek, and Kernsville Dam.
- Preserve hunting and fishing environments so these activities will continue to be available to area residents.
- Preserve the woodland and trails within the Blue Mountain area.
- Maintain the natural beauty of the region.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO LAND USE PLAN**

### **Preservation Districts Established in the Future Land Use Plan**

Blue Mountain Preservation and Agricultural Preservation land use categories have been established to preserve the Blue Mountain and agricultural areas for future generations. These areas are shown on the Future Land Use Plan.

Only limited development will be allowed in the Blue Mountain Preservation area, including conservation and related recreation uses as well as very low-density single family residential development. The intent of this land use category is to preserve the rural character of the Blue Mountain and protect woodlands, steep slopes, and ecosystems. This area contains headwaters to the Region's streams. To protect the Blue Mountain would also aid in protecting future water supplies for the Region.

Agricultural Preservation areas are intended to be retained as areas where agriculture will be practiced. This will help preserve prime agricultural soils, an important part of the Region's economy, and the Region's agricultural heritage. Agricultural areas are also groundwater recharge areas. Uses related to agriculture, including agricultural support businesses, would also be permitted. The intent is to limit residential development. Agricultural Preservation Zoning can be used in these areas. Administrative actions for agricultural preservation are detailed in Chapter 14.

Rural areas have not been identified as preservation areas. The Rural areas do contain agricultural lands, and this Plan encourages continuation of the farming of these areas. The most critical other resources in Rural areas are stream corridors, which are discussed below.

In the Future Land Use Plan Chapter, it was noted that where residential development occurs, the following considerations should be taken into account:

- As development occurs, 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.
- Steep slopes should be avoided.

- The preservation of scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors should be encouraged.
- The protection, preservation and enhancement of historic resources should be encouraged.
- Innovating land development techniques should be used to minimize land consumption, preserve ecosystems, preserve agricultural lands, and preserve natural resources and open space.

### **Water Resource Protection**

The Northkill Creek, Maiden Creek, and Schuylkill River stream corridors have been identified as major greenways. DEP has identified two Exceptional Value streams, Rattling Run and Northkill Creek, located within the Northern Berks Region. These are “streams which constitute an outstanding national, state, regional or local resource, such as waters of national, State or county parks or forests; or waters which are used as a source of unfiltered potable water supply, or waters of wildlife refuges or State game lands, or waters which have been characterized by the Fish Commission as “Wilderness Trout Streams” and other waters of substantial recreational or ecological significance.” These streams, as well as all watercourses throughout the Region, should be protected through the use of riparian buffers, thus limiting nearby development that may have detrimental effects to the value of the streams.

General Stream Corridor Preservation areas are shown on the following map. Streams within the Region are identified as well as wetlands, floodplains and hydric soils.

One way to protect watercourses is to establish Stream Corridor Preservation Overlay Districts in municipal zoning ordinances. Regulations for these Districts should establish riparian buffers along these watercourses, protect groundwater recharge areas, protect the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater, and not interfere with floodplain processes. Protecting these corridors will help to establish greenways which will provide residents with open space and recreational resources.

### **ACTIONS TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES**

The following actions should be taken to protect the natural resources within Northern Berks:

1. Assure the Blue Mountain is protected through appropriate zoning districts in municipal ordinances or a joint zoning ordinance.
2. Maintain effective agricultural preservation zoning where it exists.

3. In areas designated Agricultural Preservation, where there is not effective agricultural preservation zoning in place, consider whether adoption is appropriate. If not adopted, as a minimum promote administrative means for agricultural preservation (see Chapter 14).
4. In all areas where agriculture is practiced, promote administrative means for agricultural preservation.
5. Update zoning ordinances where necessary to reflect the Goals and Objectives of this Plan to include:
  - a. Natural Resource Protection Standards (Net Out Provisions) for floodplains, wetlands, wetland margins, steep slopes, watercourses, and water bodies
  - 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 Margin and Hydric Soil Protection
  - g. Floodplain Regulations and protection from further encroachment of development
  - h. Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning to minimize development and impervious surfaces, provide for riparian buffers, encourage use of Best Management Practices for storm water management and agriculture, and encourage stream habitat improvement through wetland restoration and streambank restoration/stabilization
  - i. Provisions regulating forestry that require the management of forests and timberlands in accordance with accepted silvicultural practices. Regulations should address proper stormwater management, erosion and sedimentation control, proper internal roads, and mitigation of impacts on public roads and require a forestry management plan.
6. Include lot averaging provisions in Blue Mountain Preservation and Rural areas to allow flexibility in lotting to protect natural and historic features and resources.
7. Utilize Conservation Zoning in Blue Mountain Preservation and Rural areas to protect historic sites, agriculture, steep slopes, wetlands, and woodlands through inclusion in open spaces.
8. Identify natural areas to the Berks County Conservancy and other conservation groups to encourage acquisition through conservation easements, fee simple, donation and dedication through the development review process.

9. Consider creation of municipal Environmental Advisory Councils to aid in the protection of natural resources and work with property owners to preserve key tracts of open space.
10. 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.
11. Encourage formation of groups within the community to adopt a stream and provide monitoring and oversight along the stream corridor.
12. Encourage the use of improved farming practices involving the use of fertilizer and pesticides and the application of manure. Aggressive control of animal excretions and feed lot managing should be encouraged.
13. Municipal subdivision and land development ordinances should contain the following provisions to protect natural and historic resources:
  - a. Consider stormwater management part of the hydrologic cycle with less emphasis on detention and more emphasis on infiltration, reducing pollution, and reducing thermal impacts through BMP's.  
  
Assure developers adequately address storm water management and erosion and sedimentation control.
  - b. Encourage developers to identify natural, historic, scenic, architectural and cultural resources in their tracts and incorporate them into the open space system. Management plans for open space should be required as well as mechanisms assuring the continuation as open space.
  - c. Require developers to identify the resources within their tracts, analyze the impacts of the development and mitigate those impacts.
  - d. Plan data requirements should be expanded to include a specific listing of environmental, scenic, historic and cultural resources.
  - e. Require environmental assessment studies, hydrogeological studies, scenic, historic and cultural resources impact studies and plans for preservation of environmental, historic and cultural resources and analysis of the site's ability to support the proposed use and intensity of use.



- f. Guidelines should be established for development in areas of high yield aquifers, such as recharge areas, limits on impervious cover, and limits on on-site sewage disposal.
- g. Include provisions for protection of vegetation during site work.
- h. In review of Subdivision and Land Development Plans, requirements for setting aside open space could be used to preserve the Stream Corridors identified in this plan.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

The goal and objectives for historic and cultural resources are as follows:

**Goal:** *Identify, mark, preserve and enhance the remaining historic, architectural and cultural resources of Northern Berks.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Encourage the preservation, protection, and enhancement of historic resources and their context within the Region.
- Establish written histories of the Region and map historic resources within Northern Berks.
- Generate increased public awareness of the history of and historic resources within the Region and the historic and cultural impact the Northern Berks Region has had within Berks County and on surrounding counties.
- Support efforts of organizations to register, identify, mark and protect historic resources.
- Support the integrity of the Strausstown Historic District.
- Require new development to reflect and consider the history, architecture and development patterns of the municipalities in order to preserve the important historic and architectural resources of the Region.
- Designate an agency and sites to display and promote the historic aspects of Northern Berks.

- Determine the role which the municipalities should play in historic preservation through land use ordinance incentives and regulations, and efforts to create historic districts and historic overlay zoning.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures where appropriate.
- Discourage inappropriate development in the historic areas of the Region, require impact studies for development near historic resources, and require mitigation of any potential adverse impacts on historic resources.
- Foster appreciation of the role of the Schuylkill River in the history and culture of the area and foster an appreciation of the Pennsylvania Dutch heritage.

### **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 awards competitive grants based on the recommendations of independent review panels. To date, since 1995, the PHMC has awarded more than 2,300 grants, totaling more than \$45 million, to 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 Pennsylvania'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. Designate a Regional Historic Commission.
2. Support the activities of individuals and groups, such as the Hamburg Area Historical Society, 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 with trails and erect informative markers and exhibits at historic resources.
4. Recognize the historic tour of Hamburg which has been established and create other such tours in the Region.
5. Evaluation of Historic Resources – A definitive survey of historic resources for the Region should be prepared.
6. Solicit Citizen Support - The Regional Historical Association can provide assistance in identifying historic resources and developing an educational outreach for broad-based community support.
7. 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. Such zoning will require developers to identify historic resources, the impact of proposals on historic resources, and mitigation measures. Adaptive reuse provisions for historic buildings to discourage removal of historic structures and bonuses for design compatible with existing resources and the appropriate reuse of existing resources would be included.
8. Open Space Development - Open space 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.

9. Demolition by neglect provisions in Zoning Ordinance can require maintenance of historic properties.
10. 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.
11. 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).
12. Encourage property owners to restore and/or adaptively reuse historic structures and discourage removal of historic structures.

The Historic Resource Chapter, Chapter 22, identifies historical resources within Northern Berks. Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are identified. The following list contains properties which are Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Listed Properties, designated by the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission (PHMC), Bureau for Historic Preservation. These are properties that have not yet been placed on the National List; however, they have been nominated to someday be included. If and when the Region's municipalities adopt a Historic Overlay District and establish certain restrictions within the district, particular attention should be given to protecting these properties.

*Eligible Historic Resources for Northern Berks County*  
**Properties Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places**  
**The Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission Bureau for Historic Preservation**

| <b>Municipality</b>        | <b>Historic Resource</b>                 | <b>Location</b>          | <b>Eligible Since</b> |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Hamburg Borough            | Hamburg Historic District                | Downtown Hamburg Borough | 11/15/1993            |
| Hamburg Borough            | Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church | 99 Church St.            | 09/09/1999            |
| Hamburg Borough            | Schuylkill Navigation Canal Culvert      | Near Port Clinton Ave.   | 11/15/1993            |
| Strausstown Borough        | Strausstown Historic District            | Main Street              | 05/07/1991            |
| Tilden Township            | Berne Station Bridge                     | Fisher Dam Rd. T-558     | 08/11/1998            |
| Tilden Township            | Benjamin Sontag Farmstead                | Walnut Road              | 11/19/1996            |
| Upper Tulpehocken Township | Valentine Boltz House                    | Bloody Springs Rd.       | 01/12/1995            |
| Upper Tulpehocken Township | Michael Ney Farm                         | Bloody Springs Rd.       | 01/12/1995            |
| Upper Tulpehocken Township | Benjamin Wagner Farmstead                | Off Campsite Rd.         | 01/12/1995            |
| Windsor Township           | Kershner Bridge                          | Woodland Rd.             | 08/18/1998            |
| Windsor Township           | Merkel, Shollenberger, B., Tavern        | Old Rte. 22              | 11/15/1993            |
| Windsor Township           | Hamburg State Hospital                   | S.R. 4028                | 06/10/1984            |
| Windsor Township           | Jacob Stein Farmstead                    | Old Rte. 22              | 11/15/1993            |
| Windsor Township           | David Zettlemyer Farmstead               | Mountain Rd.             | 11/15/1993            |



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.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

#### **HAMBURG REVITALIZATION EFFORTS**

Hamburg Borough has historically been the residential, commercial, community facility and service, and industrial center of Northern Berks, but Hamburg has lost about 600 industrial jobs as industries like Pennsylvania Steel Foundry and Machine Shop, Exide Battery, and Wright Knitting Mills have closed. The Borough is addressing the tasks of finding appropriate uses to fill these empty sites and assuring a bright commercial future. The Our Town Foundation is working with the Northern Berks Chamber of Business and Industry, the Greater Hamburg Business Association, Hamburg Borough government, the Hamburg Area Historical Society, and Hamburg Rotary Club, to preserve, enhance, and promote downtown Hamburg. The Our Town Foundation administers the Borough's Main Street Program which will spearhead revitalization efforts. Activities which have been accomplished, are in process, or are being discussed include:

- Inventory of downtown commercial properties
- Hiring of a Main Street Manager
- Development of a web page to list available recreation, business, and other activities
- Placement of a billboard(s) along I-78 urging motorists to "Shop Historic Hamburg"
- Placement of banners which read "Welcome; Historic Hamburg"
- Placement of smaller billboards at the southern entrance to Hamburg along Route 61 and at the I-78 interchange west of town
- Publishing a directory of businesses, professionals and services in the area
- Planning a walking tour of Hamburg
- Placing planters in downtown Hamburg
- Enhancing parking opportunities
- Music festival, art show, and summer concerts

- Landscaping the Borough parking lot at 4<sup>th</sup> and Pine Streets
- Create a fish feeding area in Mill Creek
- Placement of Christmas lights
- Relocating utility lines to alleys or underground
- Sidewalk and street repairs
- Building façade improvements
- Inventory of available commercial properties

Revitalization of Hamburg is designed to lessen pressures for sprawl throughout the Region, protect Borough property values, encourage local spending by retaining and increasing customers, enhance the image of the community, retain younger people within the area, and attract visitors.

Location of Cabela's outdoor sports superstore, expected to attract over 6,000,000 visitors annually, in Tilden Township could contribute to revitalization efforts in Hamburg. Motels, restaurants, and stores that will follow Cabela's will locate near the store along Route 61. If visitors to Cabela's are attracted to Hamburg, existing businesses could expect increased customers and new businesses might locate in the Borough. Business expansions and façade improvements could result. Cooperation of local businesses to lure customers is essential. Initial efforts at this cooperation have begun, including a Northern Berks Chamber of Business and Industry general meeting in November, 2002. The Berks County Office of Community and Economic Development has also offered to host seminars for local businesses to gain from the expected increase in tourism from the store opening.

Planning will have to be done to determine the best vehicular routes for cars between Cabela's and Hamburg. Appropriate road improvements and signage would be necessary. Cabela's intends to operate a shuttle, and that could be used to run people to and from the Borough. In the Circulation Plan, it is noted that trail and bus connections should be made to Cabela's. A trolley-like bus is another option.

Another potential attraction in the Borough is the proposed museum of the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society at a former industrial site at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Windsor Streets, along railroad tracks. The Society has also talked of instituting weekend railroad excursions along the Reading and Northern line between Temple and Hamburg, and eventually to Schuylkill Haven. The former Hahn Motors building and Penn Steel

Foundry would be used to house equipment and artifacts relating to the Reading Railroad.

### **Regional Attractions**

The Northern Berks Region has a number of attractions which will be of interest to visitors to the area, particularly those who appreciate the outdoors. The Hex Touring Route, the proposed regional trail system, and proposed circulator system will allow residents and visitors to the region to experience the Region's natural, man-made and cultural resources such as:

- Blue Mountain Gap
- Appalachian Trail
- Hex Sign tour
- State Game Lands
- Weiser State Forest
- Historic Railroad Tunnel
- Schuylkill River Navigation System Remnants
- Former railroad grades and alignments
- Historic Sites
- Historic neighborhoods, churches and architecture
- Traditional neighborhoods in boroughs and villages
- Scenic Beauty
- Schuylkill River and Region's streams
- Access via I-78 and Route 61 – to Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown and Harrisburg  
via I-78, to Shoemakersville, Leesport, Reading, Port Clinton, Schuylkill  
Haven and Pottsville via Route 61
- Cultural institutions
- Agricultural lands
- Pennsylvania Dutch restaurants
- Roadside America
- Campgrounds
- Kaercher Creek Park
- Hamburg Watershed Area
- Kernsville Dam

Efforts to capitalize on the influx of visitors to Cabela's should also involve areas outside the Borough of Hamburg. Appropriate identification and interpreting of resources should occur, as well as routes and tours to experience what Northern Berks has to offer.

## **TAX BASE ISSUES**

As more development has occurred in the Region, concerns have increased over the costs associated with that development. 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 the area. Additional industrial development and commercial development in the area can increase the tax base. 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 Joint Planning Committee has recognized the important role that agriculture plays in the economy of Northern Berks County, and agricultural preservation areas are proposed in the Future Land Use Plan. In addition to encouraging the continuation of an important part of the area's economy, this also makes sense from a fiscal point of view. Farm supply and processing-marketing activities should also be encouraged.

In the Future Land Use Plan, provision is made for industrial development around the I-78 interchange in Upper Bern Township, along Old Rte. 22 in Windsor Township. Provision is made for commercial and office development near the interchanges of I-78 in Upper Tulpehocken and Upper Bern Townships, and to the south of Hamburg Borough, in Windsor Township. Though the Plan provides for commercial development, consolidation of existing commercial areas is stressed. New strip commercial development is strongly discouraged.

Business development is proposed along Rte. 61 in Tilden Township, around the proposed Cabela's development site; north of I-78 in Upper Tulpehocken Township, and in southwest Hamburg. The Business Development category is intended to allow for a range of commercial, industrial and office uses near an interchange or where a mix of uses now exists. The types of commercial uses permitted would be more inclusive than that found in the Borough and Village Center category, and could include some highway oriented commercial. The type of industrial uses would generally be light industrial and warehousing. The actual uses will vary by municipality.

Borough and Village Center mixed-use areas, including provision for commercial uses, are established in the center of Hamburg and Strausstown, as well as along Old Rte. 22 in Shartlesville. The intent of this category is to permit a mix of residential development and commercial uses intended to serve the day-to-day needs of the residents of the boroughs and village and surrounding areas and visitors to the Region. The commercial uses would be such uses as groceries, restaurants, offices, and retail shops.

The Village Commercial category also provides land for certain types of commercial establishments. The Village Commercial designation is found along Route 183 in Upper Tulpehocken Township, along Mountain Road in Upper Bern Township, the Jalappa area in Tilden Township, West Hamburg, and the Windsor Castle area in Windsor Township. The intent is to recognize a mix of Commercial and Single Family Residential uses found in rural village settings. The commercial uses would be those intended to serve the day-to-day needs of the nearby residents.

The last commercial land use category found on the Future Land Use Plan is Resort Commercial. The Resort Commercial category is intended to provide for campgrounds and related activities, where campgrounds now exist in the Townships.

### **Encouraging Economic Vitality**

Economic vitality can be approached directly, such as providing land for commercial and industrial 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 Old Rte. 22, at the interchanges of I-78, along Route 61, and in downtown Hamburg, and strengthening entry images at entrances to the municipalities. This is not the entire solution, however.

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. Particularly in the Boroughs and settled communities, 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, pedestrianways 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.

### **Route 61 Corridor Commercial Development**

Encouraging development that enhances the visual character of the Route 61 Corridor makes economic sense, as it can help prevent decline of the area in the future. Design principles for commercial and industrial development should be established. Such design principles would result in continuity in the design of development along the corridor and take into account such factors as signage, screening, landscaping, setbacks, architecture and streetscape improvements.

### **Downtown Hamburg, West Hamburg, Shartlesville and Strausstown**

These settlements have historically been important business centers in Northern Berks. Developments outside these commercial centers at interchanges and the Route 61 corridor should be designed to connect to and complement the centers, not detract from them, so the centers can remain viable. As noted before, active planning to attract people to existing centers should occur. Creation of village greens should also be encouraged where feasible, even if long-term projects. The greens serve as places for people to meet neighbors, interact and hold community functions.

Pedestrian scale and additional human interaction can also be fostered by development of the trail system throughout the Region. The trail system can provide bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown Hamburg, West Hamburg, Shartlesville, and Strausstown. It would be desirable to have appropriate bicyclist and pedestrian-friendly facilities, including bike racks, sitting places, and plazas at the destination points.

In programs designed to strengthen downtowns, the following should be key elements:

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

This includes enhancing the appearance of buildings, street lights, 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 Downtown**

Parties which should be involved include Borough and Township officials, business people, bankers, real estate agents, customers, the media, residents of downtown and civic groups.

- **Promoting the Downtown Area**

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 the businesses downtown should be prepared.

- **Strengthening the Economy of the Commercial Core**

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

- **Affecting Attitudes towards the Commercial Core**

Consumers and investors have more positive attitudes toward downtown 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 downtown as a cohesive shopping area 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. Encourage businesses to work together.



- Encouraging attractive window and interior merchandise displays
- Maintaining information on the downtown
- Marketing and promoting downtown businesses
- Conduct an advertising campaign for downtown
- Helping to maintain existing businesses and encouraging patronage of those businesses
- Working with financial institutions to establish loan pools
- Working to maintain realistic rent structures
- 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 downtown's retail and service mix
- Identifying sources of grants for physical improvements or providing matching grants for such improvements
- Assuring promotional activities create a consistent, positive image for the downtown, consistent with community characteristics and history
- Scheduling events to bring people into the community on a regular basis.
- Understanding downtown's history
- Managing parking spaces
- Linking Cabela's with local downtowns, such as Hamburg Borough, through public transportation. Expand this public transportation into other sites throughout the County such as the VF Outlet Center.

### **Balance**

In the report of the Pennsylvania 21<sup>st</sup> Century Environment Commission, sustainable communities are encouraged. Sustainable communities are those that provide for a good

economy while protecting the environment and consider issues of social equity and quality of life.

The overall goal of this Plan is to preserve the quality of life and conserve and enhance the special features of Northern Berks, assuring that they will remain attractive communities in which to live and work. This will be accomplished by managing the pace, quality and location of development, while preserving natural features, open space, buffers and stream corridors. The intent of the Plan is to balance growth with providing open land, maintaining the quality of life and managing traffic. The municipalities wish to retain and enhance their character and uniqueness in the face of impacts of growth in the region, while providing for reasonable and appropriate development at locations designated in the Future Land Use Plan.

## CHAPTER 11

### ACTION PLAN

The following is an outline of actions for implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Upon the adoption of the Plan, each municipal governing body should assign responsibility for beginning the process of implementation. Some actions can be accomplished individually, but some will require continued cooperative planning among the municipalities.

1. Consider preparation of a joint zoning ordinance and map for the Boroughs and the Townships or update individual municipal zoning ordinances and maps.

Preparation of a joint zoning ordinance or update of individual ordinances should be a short-term high priority action, begun upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Initial responsibility would be with a joint planning committee or municipal planning commissions upon direction of the governing bodies.

- A. Update zoning maps and zoning ordinances to reflect the Future Land Use Plan.

- (1) Agricultural Preservation
- (2) Blue Mountain Preservation
- (3) Borough and Village Center
- (4) Business Development
- (5) Commercial
- (6) Industrial
- (7) Low Density Residential
- (8) Medium Density Residential
- (9) Resort Commercial
- (10) Rural
- (11) Village Commercial

- B. Update zoning ordinances to reflect the resource protection Goals and Objectives of this Plan.

- (1) Natural Resource Protection Standards and Net Out Provisions (consider in all districts)
  - (a) Floodplains
  - (b) Wetlands
  - (c) Wetland Margins (buffers)

- (d) >25% slope
- (e) 15-25% slope
- (f) Watercourses
- (g) Waterbodies
- (h) Lake and pond shores

(2) Steep Slope Protection Provisions

(a) Slope Protection Provisions

Control and limit development on steep slopes

- Consider larger lot sizes and impervious restrictions for steep slopes 15-25%
- Discourage development on slopes >25%

(3) Wellhead Protection

(a) Regulate/Restrict potential contaminating uses

(b) Regulate/restrict potential contaminating substances

(c) Performance standards for uses

(d) Design standards for uses

(e) Operating requirements

(f) Review process for uses

(4) Groundwater Protection

(a) Aquifer protection through design standards, construction guidelines, use restrictions and impervious limits, and submission requirements.

(5) Tree and Woodland Protection, Management and Planting

(a) Limit clearance for development

(b) Encourage tree protection and replacement during development

- (6) Wetland, Wetland Margin and Hydric Soil Protection
  - (a) Restrict development in wetlands and wetland margins
  - (b) Require wetland delineation in hydric soil areas
  - (c) Restrict on-site sewage disposal
- (7) Floodplain Protection
  - (a) Severely restrict development in floodplains to compatible open space uses
- (8) River and Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning, Riparian Buffers
  - (a) Restrict development and impervious surfaces
  - (b) Require riparian (vegetative) buffers to moderate water temperatures, protect wildlife habitats, control sedimentation, and reduce pollution
  - (c) Encourage greenways and trails
  - (d) Encourage conservation easements/donations/dedications
  - (e) Encourage use of best management practices for development, stormwater management, agriculture
  - (f) Encourage stream habitat improvement
    - Wetland restoration
    - Stream bank restoration/stabilization
- (9) Historic Resource Overlay Zoning
  - (a) Create historical commission
  - (b) Identify historic resources
  - (c) Require developers to do analyses:
    - Nature of historic resources on and near property

- Impact of proposals on historic resources
  - Mitigation measures
- (d) Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings
- (e) Discourage removal of historic structures
- (f) Use, coverage, density, intensity and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, and open spaces/buffers compatible with existing resources, appropriate reuse of existing resources and donation of façade easements
- (g) Encourage architecture, materials, and development patterns characteristic of the area
- (h) Discourage uses likely to result in demolition
- (10) Demolition by Neglect Provisions
- (a) Require property owners to protect and maintain historic properties so they are not demolished by vandalism or the elements
- (11) Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed Overlay Zoning
- (a) Greater setbacks from scenic roads
- (b) Additional landscaping, trees and screening
- (c) Standards for siting buildings/building height
- (12) Outdoor Lighting Standards to control light pollution and protect the night sky
- (a) Illumination levels are adequate but not excessive
- (b) Impacts on surrounding streets and properties are mitigated
- (c) Full-cutoff fixtures are used
- (d) Glare is controlled

(13) Sign Regulations

- (a) Billboard regulation
- (b) Consistent and appropriate signage along road corridors
- (c) Encourage appropriate signage in existing settlements with consideration of:
  - Sign materials compatible with the building style
  - Signs' colors complement the building façade
  - Hardware for projecting signs is integrated into the building architecture
  - Lettering compatible with the building façade
  - Sign purpose primarily for identification
  - Off-premises advertising signs restricted
  - Lighting of signs illuminates the sign area only
  - Signs do not obscure architectural features nor windows
  - Roof-top signs are not permitted
  - Window signs do not obscure displays
  - Flashing lights, neon lights, moving lights, and unshielded light bulbs are restricted

(14) Forestry Regulations

- (a) Recognize accepted silvicultural practices
- (b) Require forestry management plan
- (c) Manage stormwater and erosion and sedimentation control
- (d) Construct proper internal roads

- (e) Protect public roads
  - (f) Reforestation
  - (g) Protection of steep slope forestation
  - (g) Protection of steep slopes and riparian areas
- C. Provide for land development techniques designed to protect existing resources and provide open spaces
- (1) Lot averaging (consider in Blue Mountain Preservation and Rural areas)
    - (a) Maximum overall density
    - (b) Flexibility in lot size
    - (c) Natural features and resources contained in larger lots so houses can be sited away from them
  - (2) Conservation Zoning (Growing Greener Concept of Natural Lands Trust)  
(consider in Blue Mountain Preservation, Rural areas)
    - (a) Net out natural resources
    - (b) Establish maximum overall density
    - (c) Establish minimum substantial open space requirement
    - (d) Allow large lot zoning (3 to 10 acres) as alternatives
    - (e) Important natural features and resources, such as scenic vistas, historic sites, agriculture, steep slopes, wetlands, woodland, are contained in open space
    - (f) Design procedure is:
      - Identify conservation areas
      - Locate house sites
      - Align streets and trails



- Draw lot lines
- (g) Provide visual and physical access to open space areas
- D. Encourage appropriate development which is consistent with existing development patterns and enhances streetscapes
- (1) Provide for Traditional Neighborhood Development (Neotraditional Development) in Medium Density Residential and Borough and Village Center areas
- (a) Create sense of community
  - (b) Pedestrian oriented design
  - (c) Central community facilities
  - (d) Public spaces
  - (e) Shallow setbacks
  - (f) Trees
  - (g) Alleys
  - (h) Compact development
  - (i) Interconnected streets, closer to grid pattern
  - (j) Historic development patterns of towns
- (2) In Borough and Village Center and Village Commercial areas, protect the character of the Boroughs and Villages:
- (a) Allow only appropriate uses in scale with and compatible with existing appropriate uses, discouraging uses which would transform the character of the areas.
  - (b) Utilize coverage, density, intensity and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, street furniture, open spaces and parking designs consistent with this Plan.

- (c) Consider whether pedestrian amenities should be required improvements of land developers.
- (d) Encourage parking areas to the rear and side of buildings and review standards for design, buffering and landscaping of new parking facilities.
- (e) Encourage signage appropriate to the area.
- (f) Establish appropriate standards for driveway design and access to streets to provide for appropriate access management.
- (g) Minimize use of drive-through facilities
- (h) Encourage new development to be compatible with and integrated into existing streetscapes, with consideration of:
  - 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 details as other buildings in the neighborhood
  - Utilizing similar numbers and spacing of windows and doors in the façade
  - 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 façade masses with existing buildings)
- Utilizing similar entry treatments to buildings
- Using similar building heights
- Having store fronts, upper facades, and cornices of commercial buildings compatible with existing buildings
- Using colors which are harmonious throughout the area

(i) Regulate conversions of buildings, addressing:

- Locations where permitted
- How use is treated procedurally
- What type of building can be converted
- Density of converted units
- Lot size for converted building
- Impervious surface/open space requirements
- Units per structure allowed
- Structure size requirements
- Dwelling unit size minimum
- Neighborhood compatibility standards
- Parking requirements to assure adequacy
- Screening of parking and common areas
- Structural revisions limits on buildings

(3) Require buffers where have potentially conflicting uses such as residential – non-residential, and residential and/or non-residential – agriculture.

(4) Require impact statements with proposed zoning amendments to address the impacts of proposed developments.

E. Update Statements of Community Development Objectives to be Consistent with This Plan

- F. Include appropriate roadway access provisions
  - (1) Access management standards
    - (a) Appropriate locations
    - (b) Access point separation
    - (c) Access to streets of lower functional classification
    - (d) Internal road systems
    - (e) Coordinated/Shared ingress and egress
    - (f) Interconnection of properties – access, parking, loading
    - (g) Separation from intersections
    - (h) Coordinated traffic movements
  
- G. Consider corridor overlay zoning along major roads such as Route 61, Route 183, and Old Route 22 to enhance the appearance of these corridors, enhance safety and traffic movement, and maintain economic viability.
  - (1) Coordinated landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, paving materials, design of site improvements, building façade and windows displays.
  - (2) Increase pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjoining properties.
  - (3) Increase size and quantity of landscape material
  - (4) Integrate historic resources
  - (5) Provide site amenities
  - (6) Renovate building facades
  - (7) Minimize curb cuts and unrestricted access
  - (8) Provide more attractive signage

- (9) Locate parking to the rear and side of buildings
- (10) Integrate architecture, landscaping and screening
- (11) Discourage big box architecture
- (12) Encourage architecture consistent with Northern Berks history
- (13) Encourage human scale
- (14) Encourage pedestrian oriented spaces
- (15) Screen loading areas, outdoor storage and dumpsters
- (16) Provide safe bus stops with shelters, with pedestrian connections to buildings

H. In agricultural areas, determine if will have agricultural preservation zoning. Consider provisions to allow farmers to supplement income, allow farm support uses, discourage non-farm uses which could cause conflicts with agricultural practices, require buffering around the perimeter of agricultural areas by non-agricultural uses. Establish appropriate controls on intensive agricultural operations and sludge (biosolids)

## 2. Update Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

Update of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances should be a short-term high priority action, begun upon adoption of this Comprehensive Plan. Initial responsibility would be with municipal planning commissions upon direction of the governing bodies.

- A. Traffic impact studies should be required for proposed developments. Such studies would require analysis of existing circulation conditions, the impact of proposed development and resulting circulation conditions and the need for traffic improvements to adequately support the development.
- B. Establish appropriate standards for driveway design and access to streets for appropriate access management. Plans should be reviewed for access management concerns.

- C. Consider stormwater management part of the hydrologic cycle with less emphasis on detention and more emphasis on infiltration, reducing pollution, and reducing thermal impacts through BMP's.

Assure developers adequately address storm water management and erosion and sedimentation control.

Address the recommendations of Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans.

- D. Encourage developers to identify natural, historic, scenic, architectural and cultural resources in their tracts and incorporate them into the open space system. Management plans for open space should be required as well as mechanisms assuring the continuation as open space.
- E. Require developers to identify the resources within their tracts, analyze the impacts of the development and mitigate those impacts.
- F. Plan data requirements should be expanded to include a specific listing of environmental, scenic, historic and cultural resources.
- G. Require environmental assessment studies, hydrogeological studies, scenic, historic and cultural resources impact studies and plans for preservation of environmental, historic and cultural resources and analysis of the site's ability to support the proposed use and intensity of use.
- H. Development guidelines should be established for development in recharge areas, including limits on impervious cover and limits on on-site sewage disposal.
- I. Development guidelines should be established for development near scenic roads and vistas.
- J. Require tree plantings along streets.
- K. Include provisions for protection of vegetation during site work.
- L. In review of Subdivision and Land Development Plans, requirements for setting aside open space could be used to preserve the Stream Corridors identified in this plan and providing for greenways (see Greenways, A Guide to Planning, Design and Development by the Conservation Fund).
- M. Appropriate road design standards for each functional classification of road should be established. Bike and pedestrian lanes should be included in the

cross-sections per the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities by AASHTO.

- N. Enact provisions requiring the public dedication of land suitable for the use intended; and, upon agreement with the applicant or developer, the construction of recreational facilities, the payment of fees in lieu thereof, the private reservation of the land, or a combination, for park or recreation purposes as a condition precedent to final plan approval.

Include definite standards for determining the proportion of a development to be dedicated and the amount of any fee to be paid in lieu thereof.

Each subdivision or land development will have to be reviewed to determine whether the dedication of land or the fee would be more appropriate, based upon the size and location of the development.

- O. Require developers to recognize existing trails and to provide for new trails. Standards for trails should be included in the Ordinances. Sufficient rights-of-way and easements should be required.
- P. Consider addition of standards for recreation facilities which are consistent with NRPA or other relevant standards.
- Q. Rights of access for trails should be secured through easements during the plan review process.
- R. Involve fire company personnel in review of subdivision and land development plans.
- S. Encourage use of internal road systems and parallel access roads along Route 61, Route 183, and Old Route 22 to reduce traffic volumes on and the number of driveway entrances to the roads.
- T. Require street furniture/pedestrian amenities as required improvements pursuant to municipal streetscape plans
- U. Require appropriate ultimate rights-of-way along roads
- V. Require appropriate traffic calming techniques
- W. Require developers to widen roads and construct shoulders along the frontage of their tracts where appropriate.

### 3. Administrative Actions for Resource Protection and Enhancement

The highest priority actions should be consideration of appointment of a regional historical commission and municipal Environmental Advisory Committees within two years of adoption of this Plan, by the governing bodies. The other actions will be on-going, long-term actions initiated by the governing bodies with the assistance of municipal planning commissions and any newly appointed commissions.

- A. Appoint a regional historical commission to be actively involved in historic preservation:
  - (1) Identify, evaluate, mark and foster awareness of 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, events and interpretive signage and exhibits which emphasize the history of the region
- B. Support the activities of individuals and groups, such as the Hamburg Area Historical Society, Berks County Conservancy, which identify, document, evaluate and protect historical resources and increase public awareness of the area's history and historic resources.
- C. Support the planning of trails to link historic sites with trails and erect informative markers and exhibits at historic resources.

Continue planning for greenways and riparian buffers along the Schuylkill River and streams in the Region.
- D. Evaluate the potential for historic districts and support their creation if warranted. If created, support the adoption of Design Guidelines and Sign Controls for the Historic District(s).



- E. Identify key natural areas to the Berks County Conservancy and other conservation groups to encourage acquisition through conservation easements, fee simple, donation and dedication through the development review process.
  - F. Consider creation of municipal Environmental Advisory Committees to work with property owners to preserve key tracts of open space.
  - G. 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 the streams.
  - H. Encourage property owners to restore and/or adaptively reuse historic structures and discourage removal of historic structures.
  - I. Encourage formation of groups within the community to adopt a stream and provide monitoring and oversight along the stream corridor.
  - J. Encourage the use of improved farming practices involving the use of fertilizer and pesticides and the application of manure. Aggressive control of animal excretions and feed lot managing should be encouraged.
- Encourage cooperation with Berks County Conservation District, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Berks County Conservancy to look at each property on an individual basis to determine need to fence streambanks and use other Best Management Practices (BMP's) as necessary to protect stream quality.
- K. Establish tree planting programs
  - L. Maintain the scenic road system in the Townships through agricultural and conservation zoning, the other activities listed in this Section, and Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed overlay zoning
  - M. Implement/Update/Adopt Open Space and Recreation Plans and charge recreation fees for new development and subdivision
  - N. Investigate wellhead protection and watershed planning opportunities under the Growing Greener initiative and other programs. Protect municipal water supplies.

- O. Encourage Act 167 Stormwater Management Planning and plan implementation
- P. Form watershed associations
- Q. Complete water supply and quality studies and identify opportunities for expanded public water service
- R. Work together to address agricultural issues to support continuation of family farms, regulate intensive agricultural activities, and relieve tax pressures on farmers
- S. Pursue discussions with the Berks County Conservancy, Berks County Planning Commission, and landowners on the Blue Mountain to determine interest in the Forest Legacy Program. In this program, designed to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands, participants could sell or donate conservation easements on their forest lands.

4. Administrative Actions for Agricultural Preservation

These are on-going, long-term activities which should be continued/started upon adoption of the Plan. Responsibility is with municipal governing bodies, planning commissions, and authorities.

- A. Work with local farmers to ensure participation in County's Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Program. Encourage the County to make purchase of easements in Northern Berks a priority.
- B. Establish Township Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Program, such as that implemented in Centre Township.
- C. Establish Transfer of Development Program within a municipality or across municipal boundaries (development rights of properties in agricultural areas could be transferred to properties in those areas designated as residential growth areas).
- D. Promote the inclusion of farms in Agricultural Security Areas.
- E. Support measures to relieve property tax burden for farmers
- F. Limit extension of public sewer and water facilities to agricultural areas

- G. Permit businesses which support agricultural operations, such as farm equipment sales and service, farm supply stores, and businesses which market or process farm products
- H. Allow farmers to supplement incomes through home businesses, home occupations and farm related businesses
- I. Permit appropriate recreational activities, such as hayrides, corn mazes, and festivals and appropriate alternatives to traditional agriculture.
- J. Limit non-farm uses which could cause conflicts with agricultural practices and/or require buffers for non-farm uses around the perimeter of farms. Direct any non-farm development to parcels least suited to farming.
- K. Allow conservation development (Growing Greener) as an option (typically 50 to 80% of the tract remains in open space and development occurs on the remaining land, allowing for the protection of some farmland)
- L. Promote enrollment in Clean and Green tax relief program
- M. Allow and give incentives to compact development and higher densities where public sewer and water are available in areas designated for development, and give disincentives to inefficient development techniques
- N. Support establishment and continuation of farm-related programs and organizations
- O. Discourage construction of roads through and interchanges within agricultural areas
- P. Limit expansion of small rural villages into surrounding agricultural areas
- Q. Work to improve relationships between farmers and non-farm neighbors.
- R. Encourage the County Agricultural Land Preservation Board to make acquisition of conservation easements in Northern Berks County a priority.
- S. Make information available on the Pennsylvania Agricultural Loan Program.
- T. Encourage farmers to make use of the Pennsylvania Farm Link Program.

## 5. Planning Actions

The highest priorities should be creation of a standing joint planning committee and a joint trail planning commission within six months of adoption of this Plan. The appointing responsibility would be with the governing bodies. The preparation and update of other municipal plans, maps, and programs should occur within a four-year period after adoption of this Plan. Authorization would come from the governing bodies and be the responsibility of various municipal commissions and the governing bodies.

- A. The Townships and the Boroughs should create a standing joint planning committee to annually review the Comprehensive Plan, recommend work programs for each year, and discuss subdivision and land development plans of common interest.
- B. A Trail Planning Commission should be established to implement the conceptual trail system included in this plan. Proposed trail elements along State roads should be submitted to PennDOT for inclusion in PennDOT improvement programs and shoulder improvements.

Greenway planning should be coordinated with surrounding municipalities. Berks County, the Berks County Conservancy, and property owners.

- C. Each year the Municipal Planning Commission and Governing Body of each municipality should meet to discuss trends in the municipality, surrounding municipalities and the region; progress of meeting the goals set forth in this plan; the effectiveness of this plan; and implementation of the plan. Specific actions determined to be necessary to implement the plan should be identified and action programs for the following year established. Directives for tasks should be given to appropriate boards, committees and commissions.
- D. This Comprehensive Plan should be given a thorough review in five years, with consideration of trends at that time and development events over those five years.
- E. Municipal Act 537 plans should be coordinated with this plan, particularly the Future Land Use Plan.
- F. Municipal Park, Open Space and Recreation Plans should be revised to reflect the proposals of this plan, such as trails and stream corridor preservation.

- G. Streetscape Plans for downtowns in the Boroughs and Villages should be considered, addressing such issues as landscaping, signage, street furniture, lighting, parking locations and design standards. Municipalities should work with property owners to enhance gateways to the municipalities.
- H. Municipalities should consider adoption of an Official Map designating all existing and proposed public facilities, streets, and trails.
- I. Municipalities should prepare Capital Improvements Programs for street improvements, recreation and other community facilities, pedestrian circulation improvements, community appearance improvements, and other improvements recommended by this plan.
- J. Consideration should be given to adopting street tree plans, implemented through municipal Shade Tree Commissions.
- K. Consideration should be given to establishing sidewalks improvement programs such as completion of gaps in the system where necessary to implement the trail plan and provide for improved access to schools, day-to-day shopping facilities, community facilities, transit facilities, and employment opportunities. ADA requirements should be complied with. Pedestrian crossings at street intersections should be facilitated through consideration of crosswalks, stop signs, limitation of cartway radii, and use of pedestrian buttons and pedestrian cycles at signalized intersections.
- L. A plan for the provision of benches and other amenities should be considered along sidewalk and trail systems.
- M. Adopt appropriate land use controls to implement the Tulpehocken Watershed and other adopted Watershed Act 167 Plans. The major implication of these plans will be the need to adopt storm water management parameters and standards consistent with the Plans.  
  
Investigate watershed planning and wellhead protection opportunities available under the Growing Greener initiative and other programs in cooperation with the Berks County Conservancy, Berks County Conservation District, and other agencies.
- N. Maintain a dialog with the School District regarding development activities, school facilities needs, and location of school facilities.  
  
Work with the School District to assure retention of existing recreation facilities and their availability to the region's residents.

- O. Participate in Berks County programs, such as joint planning and community development grants, and State programs, such as the Growing Greener initiative, which encourage cooperative planning efforts among municipalities.

The municipalities should continuously jointly monitor availability of grants for planning, recreation and other elements and pursue grants.

- P. Monitor zoning along municipal boundaries to provide for compatible zoning districts.
- Q. Conduct an area-wide Route 61 planning and management study, with Berks County and PennDOT involvement.
- R. Support efforts of the Northern Berks Recreation Commission to plan for continued improvement and appropriate development of recreation facilities and programs in the region, such as municipal parks. Support efforts to plan for recreation facilities at Kaercher Creek Park, and Kernsville Dam.
- S. Investigate the feasibility of and alternative ways of expanding public water supply within the Region in the future.

#### 6. Administrative Actions for Economic and Community Development

These will be on-going, long-term actions begun upon adoption of this Plan. Primary responsibility will lie with groups such as the Northern Berks Chamber of Business and Industry and Our Town Foundation, with help from governing bodies, municipal staffs and planning commissions.

- A. Enhance downtown Hamburg, Strausstown, and the Villages through streetscape improvements in coordination with PaDCED and PennDOT. Prepare Streetscape Plans.
- B. Support appropriate commercial development in the Borough and Village Center and Village Commercial areas.
- C. Implement trail and circulator planning to facilitate access to employment opportunities, community facilities, and the circulation system. Support expanded bus and rail service to the region.

- D. Continue and expand cooperation and dialog between the Townships and the Boroughs and community entities such as the fire companies, authorities, and the School District on provision and sharing of services, equipment, facilities and programs on a regional basis; comprehensive planning; recreation planning; utility planning; transportation planning; implementation of this plan; code enforcement; biosolids regulation; emergency services planning; ambulance service; and police protection.
- E. 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. Conceive programs that emphasize the history and architecture of the Region.
- F. Monitor the need 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. Establish a parking program for Hamburg.
- G. 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 Zoning Ordinances.
- H. When appropriate, adopt, maintain and enforce adequate housing and property maintenance codes and zoning ordinance provisions to maintain the building stock and properties within the region. Continue to enforce existing codes.
- Consider joint municipal cooperation in addressing the statewide building code.
- Eliminate impediments to adaptive reuse and historic restoration in codes which will not affect safety.
- I. Continue to allow residential uses in the Borough and Village Center and Village Commercial areas to provide for a mixed-use environment.
- J. Enhance the gateways to the region and communities and the sense of identity of the communities.

- K. 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.
- L. Involve the region's residents and business community in committees to address major issues of concern within the region.
- M. Investigate programs to address and provide for the housing needs of the elderly in the community.
- N. Jointly monitor availability of grants for planning and implementation and pursue such grants.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code now indicates that where municipalities have adopted a multi-municipal plan, have conformed their zoning ordinances to the plan by implementing cooperative agreements and adopting appropriate resolutions and ordinances, state agencies shall consider and may give priority consideration to applications for financial or technical assistance for projects consistent with the multi-municipal plan.

- O. Identify and support activities to promote the region, promote tourism, retain existing businesses, attract or recruit desired new businesses, and enhance existing businesses in designated areas. Bring the business community and residents together in efforts to do this. Investigate programs such as financial incentives for re-use of old buildings and tax lien forgiveness to "recycle" buildings, and preserve historic sites. Consider designation of Keystone Opportunity Zones and use of LERTA programs. Work with PaDCED.
- P. 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.

Provide for public areas within the region through provision of open spaces, village greens, recreation facilities, greenways, improved sidewalks, and indoor facilities.

- Q. Monitor policies on extensions of public sewer and water facilities to assure they are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
- R. Continue to zone land available for commercial, office and industrial development in Commercial, Industrial and Business Development areas.



- S. Establish zoning policies for home employment and home occupations.
- T. Encourage appropriate adaptive re-use of historic, vacant and underutilized buildings.
- U. Maintain and enhance the quality of life and business climate in the region through other listed actions for resource preservation, transportation enhancements, recreation and open space, and community development.
- V. Maintain web sites which will contain information on zoning, the community, upcoming events, and available buildings and land.
- W. Support revitalization efforts in the Borough of Hamburg and efforts to bring appropriate land uses to vacant buildings in the Borough.
- X. Support continuation and location of businesses that support local agricultural operations.  
  
Support development of an agri-business park in Berks County.
- Y. Be involved in discussions regarding potential re-use of the Hamburg Center. Support efforts to establish a satellite center of Reading Area Community College.
- Z. Work to provide necessary infrastructure to designated Commercial, Industrial and Business Development areas.

7. Actions for Transportation Enhancement

These actions are primarily the responsibility of the governing bodies with technical assistance from municipal engineers and traffic engineers. The actions are of high priority, but will be on-going and of both short-term and long-term because of the nature of the projects which will be implemented.

- A. Work with PennDOT and land developers to improve the safety and functioning of intersections along Route 61 and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Conduct a study of that general area to determine appropriate traffic patterns.
- B. Utilize Transportation Impact Fee ordinances and require land developers to address needed transportation improvements in the region.
- C. Institute traffic calming techniques as necessary in existing settlements.

- D. Prepare Sidewalk Improvement Program and Policies which will improve pedestrian access to the region through extension of the sidewalk systems; enhance pedestrian circulation through amenities such as benches; complete gaps in the sidewalk systems; extend the sidewalk systems, provide for maintenance and improvement of existing sidewalks, and facilitate pedestrian crossings at street intersections.
- E. Encourage PennDOT to study the Route 183 Corridor and identify and make necessary improvements.
- F. Work with developers to complete an east-west road through the industrial area north of Shartlesville.
- G. 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.
- An inter-regional bus stop should be established and access to the stop facilitated.
  - If passenger rail service to the Region is reinstated, establish a multi-modal facility at the train station.
- H. Prepare multi-year programs for street maintenance.
- I. Work with PennDOT to keep traffic signal timing current.
- J. 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.
- K. Require developer-financed road improvements.
- L. Implement the circulator system through cooperation with BARTA and area businesses, the school district, and community groups, so there will be a region-wide public transportation system.
- M. Work with PennDOT to widen and improve road shoulders and require developers to improve shoulders along their properties.
- N. Align the Mountain Road-Industrial Drive intersection in cooperation with developers.

- O. Require appropriate access management and coordination between developments at the interchanges with I-78.  
  
Coordinate with PennDOT in a program to improve interchanges with I-78.
- P. Plan for improvements to and realignment of portions of Wolf Creek Road.
- Q. Work with PennDOT to establish a program for Old Route 22, including access management, design aesthetics, right-of-way preservation, trail accommodation, and emergency management planning.
- R. Identify appropriate truck routes within the region.
- S. Monitor the need for Transportation Development Districts.
- T. Monitor the need for Congestion Management System Strategies.
- U. Work with PennDOT to provide improved access from Route 61 to Hamburg
- V. Consider formation of a regional transportation authority.

Three major potential tools in implementing this Plan are capital improvements planning, adoption of an official map, and utilization of transportation impact fees, 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 the 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 Map**

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:

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.

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.

### **Transportation Impact Fees**

When the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) was amended back in 1990, one of the major changes allowed municipalities to impose transportation impact fees.

These are fees that may be imposed upon a developer to pay for improvements to the local transportation system made necessary by that new development.

The impact fee legislation is extremely useful for rapidly developing communities, and some municipalities have realized substantial impact fee revenues. However, the process required to implement an impact fee takes time, and there is some cost. It should not be initiated without careful consideration. You may *not* use impact fee revenue to correct existing problems or for maintenance. The funds may *only* be used to pay for capital improvements that will be required to accommodate traffic generated by *new* development. The following questions should be addressed:

- Is your road network currently at or near capacity? Do intersections seem busy and congested throughout the day? Do you usually sit through more than one “red cycle” at a traffic signal? Are you waiting longer and longer to make a left turn at an intersection or out of a driveway? Do you hesitate to go for a walk or a bike ride along what you think of as “back roads” because of the traffic? Does it suddenly seem that there are a lot of cars everywhere?
- Are you in the path of development? Are your neighboring communities experiencing development now? Is this development happening along a road that passes through or near your municipality? Do you have significant open areas suitable for new development? Or do you have large vacant structures suitable for *redevelopment*? If your community does not have public water or sewers, will you be getting them soon? If you already have these services, will they be expanded in the near future? Are new expressways or expressway interchanges planned in *or near* your community?

The more “yes” answers to these questions, the greater the potential to benefit significantly from a traffic impact fee ordinance.

The details of the process are too lengthy to describe adequately here. Briefly stated, you must first *identify your Transportation Service Area (TSA)*. The TSA is the area within which new development will be required to pay an impact fee. It is also the area where impact fee funds must be spent. No single TSA may exceed seven square miles, but you may have more than one. The most recent amendments to the MPC allow TSA’s to cross municipal lines in some cases.

At the same time that the TSA(s) are identified, your *governing body must appoint an Impact Fee Advisory Committee*. This is the group that will be responsible for the remaining steps in the process. The committee must have between seven and fifteen members, and must include representatives from the real estate, development, and construction industries.

The Committee will oversee the creation of three planning documents. The “*Land Use Assumptions Report*” is a statement of what future development is anticipated within the TSA. The “*Roadway Sufficiency Analysis*” documents existing deficiencies in the system and determines what improvements are necessary to address those existing deficiencies *and* to accommodate future development. The “*Transportation Capital Improvements Plan*” is based upon the preceding documents and identifies specific capital improvements to the transportation network. Like the Analysis, it includes projects to address both existing and anticipated needs along with estimated costs, financing strategy, and a timeframe for construction.

Only upon completion of these documents may the municipality enact a *Transportation Impact Fee Ordinance*. The Ordinance includes a formula to calculate the amount of the impact fee for each project. This formula will assure that the fee to be paid is based upon both the amount of traffic that the development will generate and the cost of those improvements required to accommodate that traffic safely. Fees are payable at the time that building permits are issued.

## **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**

**Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)** – This program provides financial and technical assistance to aid communities in their community and economic development efforts. Activities include housing rehabilitation, community facilities, infrastructure, public services, economic development and planning. The activities are to benefit areas containing a majority of low to moderate income persons.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**

**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.



**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.

**Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ's)** – These zones would be used to foster economic opportunities in the area, facilitate economic development, stimulate industrial, commercial and residential improvements and prevent further physical and infrastructure deterioration. The principles behind the zones include providing tax exemptions, tax deductions, tax abatements and tax credits within designated areas of the state. People and businesses within these zones would be entitled to exemptions of certain state and local taxes, as well as tax deductions, abatements and credits for a period of up to 12 years, beginning January 1, 1999.

To be designated a KOZ, the proposed area must meet specific criteria related to poverty level, property deterioration, income levels and job loss. All of this information must be submitted on a form to the state Department of Community

and Economic Development (DCED). If an area receives zone designation, it will receive a one-time \$250,000 grant to implement the opportunity plan and to provide an annual update of real property and other information to the Department of Revenue. The grant is to be drawn down by the zone, as needed, over a period not to exceed the first five years of designation. The DCED will develop and implement a consolidated marketing strategy for the zone for use in job retention and attraction activities. Other arms of the state government will play an active role, such as the Department of Education and DCED's Center for Local Government Services. Each entity is to provide needed technical assistance to bolster the needs of the zone, ranging from housing assistance and job training to filling out annual reports on the progress being made in the zone.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)**

**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**

**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.

**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.

- **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 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.

- **Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority** – PennVEST provides financing for drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater projects.