

## INTRODUCTION

### What is the Comprehensive Plan?

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to establish overall policies for the development and conservation of the Suburban Berks West Region over the next 15 years. The Region includes Spring Township and the Boroughs of Sinking Spring, West Reading and Wyomissing. Public education in the region is served by the Wilson and Wyomissing Area School Districts. This Plan is not by itself a regulation, but is intended to provide the policy direction for changes to the municipalities' development regulations.

The Comprehensive Plan includes the following major parts:

- The Overall Vision and Goals of the Plan
- The Natural Features and Agricultural Conservation Plan
- The Land Use and Housing Plan
- The Community Facilities and Services Plan
- The Economic Development Plan
- The Plan to Conserve Energy
- The Transportation Plan
- The Historic Preservation Plan
- Putting this Plan into Action

### How Was this Plan Developed?

This Plan was originally prepared in 2003 by a Regional Comprehensive Plan Committee consisting of elected and appointed officials and other citizens from each of the municipalities. In addition, representatives were appointed from the School Districts. The Plan policies were developed at monthly workshop meetings that were open to the public.

Approximately 15 years passed since the adoption of the 2003 Plan. Since then, many things have changed in the region. For instance, the 2003 plan included the Borough of West Lawn, which has since merged into Spring Township, and new demographic, economic and housing information has been made available. After 15 years it is a good time to assess the current joint comprehensive plan and amend it to make it compatible with the issues and conditions that are impacting the municipalities today. Because of this the municipalities decided to pursue an update to their multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

The first step in the process was the identification of major issues and concerns that needed to be addressed. The next step was an analysis and mapping of existing conditions and trends. The mapping started with computerized information provided by Berks County. A survey was sent out to a sample of residents of the region to gauge their thoughts on the community.

An "overall vision" was prepared and a set of goals were written to provide overall direction for the Plan. Then, a series of alternatives were considered to guide development in different areas of the Region. The Land Use Plan was then prepared, followed by recommendations concerning Community Facilities, Transportation, Economic Development, Historic Preservation and Natural Features. Public meetings were then held. After making revisions to respond to public input, the Plan is being considered for adoption by the elected officials of each municipality.

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

### Regional Location

The Suburban Berks West Area is located in southwestern Berks County. The region is bordered by the City of Reading to the east and Lancaster County to the southwest. U.S. 422/Penn Avenue connects the region with Reading to the east and Lebanon to the west. U.S. 222 connects the region with Allentown to the north and Lancaster to the south. Interstate 78 to the north is accessible from Routes 183 and 61. The Pennsylvania Turnpike is accessible to the south via Route 222.

The Suburban Berks West area is primarily affected by growth in the Reading area and the accessibility to the Route 222 and 422 expressways.

Growth pressures from outside of Berks County are affecting the region from several directions. From the east, suburbanization is spreading along the Route 422 and Pennsylvania Turnpike corridors from Montgomery and Chester Counties. From the northeast, major employment growth in western Lehigh Valley along the I-78, Route 222 and Route 100 corridors has increased the demand for residential growth in the vicinity. Development is also moving northward along Route 222 from Lancaster County and the interchange with the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

