

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The goals and recommendations in this plan should be frequently reviewed and updated as necessary. As part of its continuing planning process, Bally and Bechtelsville should cooperate with Berks County and their neighboring municipalities to ensure future planning has a regional outlook, not just a local perspective. This comprehensive plan is valuable because it makes recommendations on land use and natural resource preservation, among other topics. This comprehensive plan contains recommendations for guiding future development and for preserving the historic, natural and cultural resources. But, it is not a legislative document. There are three basic tools needed to help implement this plan: 1) the zoning ordinance, 2) the subdivision and land development ordinance, and 3) the capital improvement program.

ZONING REGULATIONS

The zoning ordinance is a legal tool to regulate the use of land. Its regulations apply to: 1) the permitted use of land, 2) the height and bulk of structures, 3) the percentage of a lot that may be occupied by buildings and other impervious surfaces, 4) yard setbacks, 5) the density of development and 6) the height and size of signs. The zoning ordinance has two parts -- 1) the zoning map which delineates zoning districts, and 2) the text which sets forth the regulations that apply in each district along with general information regarding administration of the ordinance.

Bally and Bechtelsville should continue to monitor their zoning ordinances to ensure they remain current in light of municipal planning goals, prevailing development trends and state law.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Subdivision and land development ordinances include regulations to control the layout of streets; the planning of lots; and the provision of utilities. The objectives of a subdivision and land development ordinance are to:

- coordinate street patterns;
- assure adequate utilities and other improvements are provided in a manner that will not pollute streams, wells and/or soils;
- reduce traffic congestion; and
- provide sound design standards as a guide to developers, the planning commission and other municipal officials.

Bally and Bechtelsville should each continue to periodically review its subdivision and land development ordinance to bring it up to date as necessary.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

Capital improvements relate to streets, stormwater systems, water distribution, sewage treatment and other major public facilities. These projects, which involve the expenditure of funds beyond those needed for normal operations and maintenance, should be prioritized in the form of a six-year capital improvements program. The program should be prepared by each borough's planning commission and adopted by each borough council.

The capital improvements program should include a capital budget which identifies the highest priority projects recommended for funding in the next annual budget. Each borough planning commissions should revise its capital improvements program and capital budget every year as projects are completed, new needs arise and priorities change. A capital improvements program has many benefits, including the following, among others.

- It helps assure that projects are based on the ability to pay and on a schedule of priorities determined in advance.
- It helps assure capital improvements are viewed comprehensively.
- It promotes financial stability by scheduling projects at proper intervals.
- It facilitates proper allocation of community financial resources.

ROLE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Bally Borough Planning Commission and the Bechtelsville Borough Planning Commission must each assume a lead role in assuring that this comprehensive plan is implemented and updated as needed. The planning commissions should periodically review the plan and recommend any changes to reflect current conditions and priorities. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code also gives the planning commission other responsibilities. At the request of the borough council, the planning commission may:

- make recommendations to the governing body concerning the adoption or amendment of an official map;
- prepare and present a zoning ordinance to the governing body and make recommendations on proposed amendments to it;
- prepare, recommend and administer a municipality's subdivision and land development ordinance;
- prepare and present a building code and housing code to the governing body;
- submit a recommended capital improvements program to the governing body;
- promote public interest in, and understanding of, the comprehensive plan and planning;
- make recommendations to governmental, civic and private agencies and individuals as to the effectiveness of the proposals of such agencies and individuals;

- hold public hearings and meetings; and
- in the performance of its functions, enter upon lands to make examinations and land surveys with the consent of the owners.

ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Bally Borough Council and the Bechtelsville Borough Council must also play a vital role in implementing this comprehensive plan. Council has the final decision on any action that requires an ordinance or expenditure of funds. Council should maintain a relationship of trust and confidence with the planning commission. Council and the planning commission should keep one another informed of all important planning-related matters.