

Chapter 6

Regional Vision/Goals and Objectives

The Regional Vision is a statement of what we want the Region to be like in the future. It is arrived at through review of the results of the questionnaire sent out to residents of the Region, input from public meetings and interviews of residents, discussions of the Regional Comprehensive Planning Committee, and review by municipal governing bodies and planning commissions. The Vision is attained by setting goals; establishing objectives to achieve those goals; setting forth policies to meet the objectives; and identifying actions to implement the policies.

The Penn, Jefferson, Bernville Region will remain an attractive community in which to live and work, with a high quality of life. There will be a variety of landscapes: Bernville will be a regional center comprised of attractive residential neighborhoods; outstanding community facilities and services, such as parks, to serve all segments of the Region's residents; and retail, office and light industrial facilities, of appropriate scale, to serve and employ area residents. Revitalization efforts will continue, and enhance the small town atmosphere appreciated by the Region's residents. Penn and Jefferson Townships will have areas of suburban character near the Borough where regional public sewer and water facilities may be made available, but retain extensive rural areas and open space. Rural character in the Townships will be maintained through preserving farmland, rural landscapes containing woodlands and slopes, stream corridors, and the Region's water supplies.

Growth in the Region will be managed, balanced, moderate, and coordinated with the availability and adequacy of infrastructure. This will allow for retention of small town atmosphere, retention of rural character, protection of natural resources, and maintenance of a reasonable tax structure. Development which occurs will be attractive, respect traditional development patterns in the vicinity of the Borough, incorporate significant open spaces in the Townships, be in character of the Region, and environmentally responsible. Developers will analyze and mitigate impacts of development, provide appropriate landscaping and buffering, and address recreation and road improvement needs. Housing will be available in the Region for people in all stages of life.

Road corridors in the Region will be enhanced through programs to improve visual appearance, manage and coordinate access, address road intersections in need of improvement, and address parking needs. Development will be concentrated and well planned, rather than stripped along the Region's roads. Connectivity will be provided between new development and existing developed areas. Alternative modes of transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle systems connecting residents to activity centers such as Blue Marsh Lake and local recreation facilities, will be supported.

The municipalities will continue to work together to implement the regional Comprehensive Plan in order to protect the character of existing settled areas, coordinate and enhance community facilities and services, facilitate mobility throughout the Region, and protect natural, historic, and cultural resources.

Goals and Objectives

Goals are general statements indicating the desired direction for the communities, and reflect the long-term state they wish to establish or maintain. Objectives are more specific, relatively short-term policy guidelines for the municipalities to follow. Goals are achieved through accomplishment of one or more of the stated objectives. This Plan will identify goals and objectives of a regional nature, but because of some differences between the municipalities, some objectives are specifically aimed at one municipality and not the other.

It should be noted that the goals and objectives contained in this chapter, as well as the Policies contained within Part II of this Plan, support the *American Planning Association* concept of **Smart Growth**. Smart Growth encourages a more efficient use of the land by encouraging a larger share of growth within urbanized or previously developed areas already served by public infrastructure. Smart Growth reduces the pressure of development on farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Smart Growth can be interpreted in many ways by different people and organizations. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed the following list of 10 **Smart Growth Principles** that have generally been accepted by planning professionals as a starting point:

1. Incorporate Mixed Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
4. Create Walkable Neighborhoods
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective
10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

STATEMENT OF REGIONAL GOALS

Natural and Scenic Resources

Goal: Protect and preserve the natural and scenic resources and beauty of the region.

Historic, Architectural and Cultural Resources

Goal: Protect, preserve, and enhance the remaining historic, architectural, and cultural resources and their surroundings.

Agricultural Resources

Goal: Preserve existing productive farmland for agricultural use and support the continuation of agricultural and agricultural support operations in the Region.

Open Space and Recreation

Goal: Provide for open space within the Region through the preservation of natural resources and the development and retention of recreation areas and parks.

Land Use

Goal: Manage, control, and guide development to preserve natural resources, agricultural uses, and existing communities in order to retain a mix of small town atmosphere, suburban environment, and rural character within the Region.

Circulation

Goal: Achieve a safe, efficient, multi-modal, and cost effective regional circulation system which will enhance pedestrian and bicycle movement, ease vehicular travel within the municipalities, minimize adverse impacts

on residential neighborhoods, enhance the safety, mobility and livability of road corridors within the region, and relieve congestion.

Economic Development

Goal: Sustain and enhance the vitality of Bernville while identifying appropriate locations for environmentally responsible industrial, office, retail and service use which are appropriate in scale and character to the Region.

Housing

Goal: Provide for a diversity of housing opportunities for the economic and demographic groups within the Region, in harmony with existing development and the historical and natural environments and in a manner that allows existing and potential residents of the region to live in the region throughout the life cycle.

Community Facilities, Services, and Development

Goal: Provide necessary community facilities and services to the Region's residents in an efficient, cost-effective and quality manner within the financial resources of the municipalities, consistent with concerns to protect natural resources and accomplish managed, concentrated, and well-planned development.

Planning

Goal: Identify and implement a variety of approaches, mechanisms, and tools appropriate for dealing with the challenges posed by growth within the Region.

STATEMENT OF REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

Natural and Scenic Resources

Objectives:

- Encourage new planting of trees within developments.
- Encourage the preservation of scenic road corridors and viewsheds along them through retention of the character of rural-agricultural areas.
- Establish standards and processes for developers to respect and develop in accordance with land suitability and carrying capacity, preserve and protect environmental resources and quality, preserve unique natural features, and analyze and mitigate impacts of development.
- Encourage improvement of degraded views along road corridors in the Region.
- Require development to be sensitive to natural drainage ways.
- Protect groundwater aquifers and recharge areas from pollution through standards in municipal ordinances.
- Protect watersheds and wellhead areas for municipal water supplies.
- Protect steep slopes within stream corridors.
- Monitor the protection of “protected” lands to encourage their continued protection.
- Protect stream corridors and their watersheds in the Region.
- Protect the night sky from excessive light pollution through lighting standards in ordinances.
- Protect wildlife habitats within stream corridors and woodlands.
- Maintain and initiate partnerships with conservancies to protect the Region’s natural resources such as wooded areas and stream corridors.

- Implement the recommendations and best management practices of the Tulpehocken Creek Watershed and Schuylkill River Watershed Stormwater Management Plans.

Historic, Architectural and Cultural Resources

Objectives:

- Discourage inappropriate development in historic areas of the Region, require impact studies for development near historic resources, and require mitigation of any potential adverse impacts on historic resources.
- Maintain and initiate partnerships with the Berks County Conservancy and other organizations to protect the Region's built treasures.
- Provide for adaptive re-use of historic structures where appropriate.
- Encourage the identification, marking, and interpretation of historic resources in the Region, and foster increased public awareness of the history of the Region.
- Determine the role which the municipalities should play in historic preservation through land use ordinance incentives and regulations and efforts to create historic overlay zoning.
- Require new development to consider the history, architecture and development patterns of the municipalities in order to preserve the important historic and architectural resources of the Region.
- Discourage demolition by neglect and deterioration of historic resources.
- Identify existing contemporary sites which could be considered part of the historical or cultural heritage of future generations and work to preserve these sites for future generations.
- Support cultural events which celebrate the historic and cultural heritage of the Region.
- Consider historic overlay zoning which provides special protection for historic sites including farm houses, barns, mills, old schoolhouses, and churches.
- Maintain the regional survey of historic resources contained within the Berks County Greenway and Open Space Plan.

Agricultural Resources

Objectives:

- Avoid scattered development which causes conflicts with farming, such as additional vehicular traffic and land use incompatibilities, by designating growth and potential future growth areas.
- Discourage the conversion of productive farmland to non-farm uses.
- Protect farming operations in Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) from incompatible, non-farming-related uses.
- Encourage participation in the “Clean and Green” Act (preferential tax assessment), the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (purchase of development rights), and private land preservation programs.
- Continue and consider opportunities for effective agricultural zoning in productive agricultural areas.
- Minimize costs to farmers caused by excessively restrictive regulations that could interfere with normal farming practices.
- Enhance the potential profitability of farming by facilitating appropriate accessory activities on farms.
- Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of local sources of supply for food processing businesses.
- Provide opportunities for agriculturally-related businesses to locate and expand.
- Ensure that roadways continue to accommodate agriculturally-related traffic.
- Establish policies regarding public sewer and water and other infrastructure improvements that do not encourage development pressure on designated agricultural areas.
- Encourage the designation of Agricultural Security Areas within areas designated for farmland preservation, but not within designated growth areas.

- Encourage farmers markets where locally grown produce and goods can be offered for sale.

Open Space and Recreation

Objectives:

- Identify methods for open space preservation, such as participation in County programs and cooperation with conservation-oriented agencies.
- Establish a greenway system within the Region pursuant to the Berks County Open Space and Greenway Plan.
- Preserve a network of woodlands, stream corridors, and agricultural lands in the Townships and Borough.
- Require residential development to emphasize open space conservation through permissible development options and ordinance requirements.
- Establish developer responsibilities for provision of park and recreation facilities within subdivision and land development ordinances.
- Identify designated growth areas near existing developed areas to reduce pressure on existing open spaces and agricultural areas.
- Encourage infill development in the Borough and between existing developed areas and maintenance and restoration of existing housing resources to reduce development of open space and agricultural areas.
- Plan infrastructure improvements so they do not encourage development in areas desired as open space or retention of rural-agricultural character.
- Where appropriate, require developers to provide open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation and to coordinate open space systems among adjoining developments. Otherwise, require fees in lieu to implement recreation, park and open space plans.
- Encourage developers to provide both visual and physical access to the open space system.

Land Use

Objectives:

- Ensure that development occurs in ways that minimize degradation of natural and cultural environments through establishment of standards in zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.
- Ensure that development occurs in an efficient and logical manner, and in ways that minimize short- and long-term costs to the public and private sectors, by designating designated growth areas and potential future growth areas.
- Direct residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development, appropriate in scale and character to the community, to growth areas, where public sewer and water and transportation improvements are most likely and could be phased in concert with new development. Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Designate areas for future growth and development where such future development would be consistent with the protection of community character.
- Allocate sufficient land to accommodate projected population within designated growth areas.
- Minimize encroachment of development into areas recommended for retention of rural character and agricultural resource protection, and/or which lack supporting infrastructure and services.
- Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through proper allocation of land use on the Future Land Use Plan and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards in zoning ordinances.
- Accommodate retail and service development sufficient to meet the day-to-day retail and service needs of the region's residents at appropriate locations shown on the Future Land Use Plan.
- Maintain consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries pursuant to the Future Land Use Plan.

- Establish developer responsibilities for provision of community facilities and infrastructure improvements within zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.
- Continue to allocate land use on a regional rather than municipality by municipality basis, as is done on the Future Land Use Plan.
- Manage growth through the establishment of efficient, compact patterns of land use and discourage haphazard, uncoordinated, leap-frog development. This is accomplished through encouraging growth to growth areas per the Future Land Use Plan.
- Promote infill and revitalization within the Borough, in conformity with the general character of the Borough.
- Improve the visual image of the Region at entranceways to the Borough and Township and along road corridors, such as the Route 183 and New Schaefferstown Road corridors.
- Permit appropriate development techniques for use within the Region, such as Conservation Development and Traditional Neighborhood Development.
- Establish appropriate policies for residential conversions within the Borough which will be consistent with retention of the character, stability, and upkeep of residential neighborhoods and provision of adequate parking facilities.

Transportation

Objectives:

- Encourage regionally-oriented traffic to utilize regional arterial highways and discourage this traffic from using locally-oriented collector roads.
- Eliminate deficiencies in the Region's roadway network pursuant to the Transportation Plan concepts of this plan.
- Identify and generally set priorities for projects which are appropriate for inclusion on Berks County's Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.
- Monitor opportunities and need for transit service in the Region with BARTA.
- Consider low-cost physical improvements to new roads and roads undergoing upgradings to accommodate bicyclists pursuant to municipal recreation plans and review of development plans.
- Improve the appearance of the Route 183 Corridor through adoption of design and performance standards.
- Establish roadway maintenance programs for each municipality to prevent deterioration and ensure safety of the existing road system.
- Manage access along roads pursuant to the Transportation Plan Concepts and adopted ordinance provisions.
- Work to enhance mobility for the elderly, the physically impaired, and those who do not own or lease an automobile.
- Address parking needs on Main Street in Bernville.
- Establish consistent signage policies along roads within the Region.
- 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.

- Encourage the development of a bicycle and pedestrian network that enhances connections between neighborhoods and activity centers such as the Blue Marsh Lake trail system that can serve as a regional recreation amenity, and that can contribute to maintaining community health.

Economic Development

Objectives:

- Encourage investment in Bernville, compatible with the character of the community.
- Discourage random or scattered industrial development patterns, which can produce environmental, traffic, aesthetic, and other problems. Direct industrial development to designated areas on the Future Land Use Plan.
- Establish developer responsibilities in providing infrastructure improvements when they develop within Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances.
- Reserve designated business development sites on the Future Land Use Plan to preclude potentially incompatible uses from foreclosing an eventual use for business.
- Discourage strip development of business uses along major roadways.
- Identify appropriate future uses for vacant commercial and industrial buildings and promote such uses through such efforts as revitalization programs in the Borough.
- Work to retain existing desirable area businesses and industries and identify strategies to attract desired businesses. Work with the local and county business associations and economic development agencies.
- Encourage improved access to data networks of economic development agencies.

Housing

Objectives:

- Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods in and around the Borough.
- Identify appropriate infill housing opportunities within the Borough and between housing developments in the Townships.
- Identify policies that can facilitate provision for the housing needs of elderly and physically impaired residents.
- Encourage use of the existing housing stock. Promote rehabilitation and renovation of existing housing in such need, through participation in appropriate federal, state, and county housing programs.
- Explore opportunities for regional administration of the Uniform Construction Code.
- Ensure that opportunities exist to promote the development of affordable housing that, in particular, meets the needs of the Region's current and likely future work force.
- Ensure that opportunities exist to promote the development of housing necessary to meet the Region's likely demographic make-up, with particular emphasis on retirees and younger households.
- Encourage owner occupancy of dwelling units in the Borough and Townships.
- Discourage absentee landlords.

Community Facilities, Services, and Development

Objectives:

- Support efforts of water supply and wastewater treatment authorities to plan ahead for expansion of capacities and extensions of the areas of service in accordance with growth projections and the establishment of future growth areas. Work to achieve consistency of Act 537 plans and infrastructure planning with this Plan and its land use element. Initially, this will involve coordination with the Borough and Townships in addressing regional approaches to provide sewer and water infrastructure.
- Provide an adequate supply and mix of parks, playgrounds, and other recreation facilities, both active and passive, to serve the existing and projected population of the Region, pursuant to the Future Land Use Plan and municipal recreation plans.
- Identify opportunities for regional cooperation and sharing of equipment, facilities and services.
- Require developers to adequately manage stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation in manners consistent with the protection of water resources in the area, the Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Stormwater Management Plan, and municipal ordinances. Encourage recharge of the water table as development occurs.
- Work toward safe, reliable water supply for all residents.
- Encourage utilization of public sewer and water facilities when development occurs in growth areas around Bernville, but coordinate land use and sewer and water planning so the extension of public sewer and water facilities is consistent with the land use and other goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan, such as protection of agricultural resources in the Townships. Do not plan for extension of sewer and water facilities into Agricultural Preservation areas.
- Continue to monitor the need for additional community, cultural and social facilities and services in the Region, such as expanded senior center facilities.

- Identify techniques and adopt zoning ordinance provisions to encourage attractive signage consistent with the character of the Region, particularly in the Route 183 corridor.
- Urge the Tulpehocken Area School District to work with municipalities when planning school facilities and bus routes so such planning can occur within the context of the goals and objectives of this Plan.
- Encourage the School District, churches, clubs, and other organizations in the community to allow use of facilities for community activities.
- Identify opportunities for cooperation among municipalities and the School District in providing facilities and programs to area residents.
- Identify activities which can bring people together and create community cohesion and create gathering places for community activities.
- Ensure that required infrastructure is constructed by developers.

Planning

Objectives:

- Coordinate planning and development efforts with adjacent municipalities, the Tulpehocken Area School District, the Berks County Planning Commission, and current and future County-wide planning efforts, and other County, State and Federal agencies.
- Create appropriate cooperative mechanisms to implement this Comprehensive Plan, including an on-going regional planning committee.
- Identify opportunities for continued intermunicipal cooperation and planning, such as regional sewage facilities planning and coordination of recreation planning.
- Support efforts for interregional and regional/county cooperation in addressing transportation, economic development, and community development issues. Actively participate in planning efforts for the County and other planning regions.
- Identify and pursue adequate funding of implementation actions listed in the Plan, with consideration of listed grant programs.
- Promote public-private cooperation in implementation of this Plan, such as involving businesses in revitalization efforts in the Borough.
- Establish a framework for education regarding planning issues in the region through the regional planning committee.
- Implement municipal functional plans such as recreation plans, and regional functional plans, such as a Regional Act 537 plan.