

CHAPTER 11

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is the program of actions to implement this Comprehensive Plan. The following outline presents recommended future actions.

Outline of Actions

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

- (12) Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed Overlay Zoning
- (13) Limestone Area Overlay Zoning
- (14) Development Techniques to Protect the Natural and Built Environment
 - (a) Lot Averaging
 - (b) Conservation Zoning
 - (c) Traditional Neighborhood Development
- (15) Access Management Provisions
- (16) Road Corridor Overlay Zoning regarding access management, landscaping, signage, parking design, setbacks, aesthetics
- (17) Transit Design Standards and Transit Oriented Development
- (18) Trip Reduction and Parking Management Consideration
- (19) 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.

2. Update Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

- A. Require trail, bikeway and greenway planning
- B. Require Stormwater Management and Best Management Practices
- C. Require Impact Studies, Analysis, and Mitigation (Traffic, hydrogeologic, environmental, scenic, historic, cultural)
- D. Access Management standards
- E. Resource identification and protection requirements

- F. Open Space and Recreation Requirements and Standards
- G. Street furniture requirements
- H. Right-of-Way Preservation
- I. Traffic Calming requirements
- J. Aquifer Protection provisions
- K. Vegetation Management provisions

3. Administrative Actions for Resource Protection and Enhancement

- A. Maintain the scenic road system in the Townships through the other activities listed in this Section and Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed overlay zoning
- B. Plan for greenways and riparian buffers along the Monocacy, Antietam and other Creeks, and the Schuylkill River.
- C. Establish tree planting programs
- D. Active involvement of Environmental Advisory Committees
- E. Active involvement of Historical Commissions
 - (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
 - (7) Identify contemporary sites for future preservation

- F. Support acquisition/protection of key natural areas through conservation easements, fee simple, donation, dedication, stream easements, stream corridor management, in cooperation with conservation groups and community groups.
 - G. Encourage expansion of agricultural security areas and encourage purchase of agricultural conservation easements.
 - H. Discourage public sewer and water for areas to remain agricultural, coordinate with Act 537 Planning
 - I. Implement/Update Open Space and Recreation Plans and charge recreation fees for new development and subdivision
 - J. Investigate wellhead protection and watershed planning opportunities under the growing greener initiative and other programs.
 - K. Encourage Act 167 Stormwater Management Planning.
 - L. Form watershed associations
 - M. Complete water supply and quality studies
4. Actions to assure availability of and access to recreation facilities for the region's residents.
- A. Implement the trail plan through a joint trail committee.
 - B. Facilitate access to the recreational trail system and access to community facilities by completing links within the Borough and Townships as shown on the Pedestrian Facilities Plan. Identify and enhance appropriate pedestrian and bicycle routes connecting the entire region.
 - C. Work with the School Districts to assure retention of existing facilities and their availability to the region's residents.
 - D. Support efforts to develop County parks on Neversink Mountain and at Antietam Lake.
 - E. Encourage further development of trail systems through the region with links to resources within the region and Neversink Mountain, Antietam

Lake, City of Reading open space and recreation land, and the Antietam Creek outside the region.

5. Actions for Economic and Community Development

- A. Enhance Routes 422, 562 and 662 through streetscape improvements in coordination with PaDCED and PennDOT. Prepare Streetscape Plans.
- B. Support appropriate, in-scale commercial development in the Town Center and Rural Village areas.
- D. Coordinate with BARTA and trail and circulator planning to facilitate access to employment opportunities, the circulation system, and any Schuylkill Valley Metro Station.
- E. Continue cooperation and dialog between the Townships and the Borough and community entities such as the fire companies, authorities, and school districts on provision and sharing of services, equipment, facilities and programs; comprehensive planning; recreation planning; implementation of this plan; and emergency services planning.
- F. Bring together citizens, the business community, and the school districts to plan and organize community-wide activities, events, and programs to foster community spirit, economic development, and community attractiveness.
- G. 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.
- H. 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.
- I. Adopt, maintain and enforce adequate building, housing and property maintenance codes and zoning ordinance provisions to maintain the building stock and properties within the region.

- J. Continue to allow residential uses in the Town Center and Rural Village areas to provide for a mixed-use environment.
- K. Enhance the gateways to the region and the sense of identity of the communities.
- L. 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.
- M. Involve the region's residents and business community in committees to address major issues of concern within the region.
- N. Investigate programs to address and provide for the housing needs of the elderly in the community.
- O. Jointly monitor availability of grants for planning and implementation and pursue such grants.
- P. Identify and support activities to promote the region, retain existing businesses, attract and recruit desired new businesses, and enhance existing businesses. Bring the business community and residents together in efforts to do this. Investigate programs such as financial incentives for re-use of old buildings and tax lien forgiveness to "recycle" buildings, and preserve historic sites. Work with PaDCED.
- Q. 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.
- R. Monitor policies on extensions of public sewer and water facilities to assure they are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
- S. Continue to zone land available for commercial, office and industrial development.
- T. Establish zoning policies for home employment and home occupations.
- U. Encourage appropriate adaptive re-use of historic and vacant buildings.

- V. 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.
- W. Maintain web sites which will contain information on zoning, the community, and available buildings and land.

6. Actions for Transportation Enhancement

- A. Work with PennDOT and Berks County in support of a bypass to the current Route 422.
- B. Work with PennDOT and land developers to improve the safety and functioning of existing Route 422.
- C. Utilize Transportation Impact Fee ordinances and require land developers to address needed transportation improvements in the region.
- D. Institute traffic calming techniques along St. Lawrence Avenue and in Baumstown and Douglassville.
- E. Prepare Sidewalk Improvement Program and Policies which will improve pedestrian access to the region through extension of the sidewalk system; enhance pedestrian circulation through amenities such as benches; complete gaps in the sidewalk system; extend the sidewalk system, provide for maintenance and improvement of existing sidewalks, and facilitate pedestrian crossings at street intersections.
- F. Cooperate with BARTA to assure adequate bus service and the appropriate location and attractiveness of bus stops. Coordinate in the provision of park and ride facilities and multi-modal facilities where appropriate.
- G. Prepare multi-year programs for street maintenance.
- H. Work with PennDOT to keep traffic signal timing current and implement a closed loop signalization system along Route 422.
- I. 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.
- J. Require developer-financed street improvements.

- K. Continue to encourage the linking of developments.
 - L. Work with PennDOT to widen and improve road shoulders and require developers to improve shoulders along their properties.
 - M. Monitor the need for a Transportation Development District along Route 422.
7. Prepare Capital Improvements Programs.
 8. Consider adoption/expansion of Official Maps.
 9. Each year formulate a Work Program to implement this Comprehensive Plan.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

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

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

Other actions to consider in the first two years after Plan adoption are the appointment of municipal historical commissions and municipal environmental advisory councils (EAC's), where they do not exist. These groups can help achieve implementation of the Action Plan.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING AND OFFICIAL MAP

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

Capital Improvements Planning

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

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

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

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

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

Benefits of capital improvements programs include:

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

Official Maps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS

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

▪ BERKS COUNTY

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

▪ PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DCED)

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

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

- **Floodplain Land Use Assistance Program** – Provides grants and technical assistance to encourage the proper use of floodplains. Local governments may apply for up to 50% of eligible costs.
- **Weatherization Assistance Program** – Works to minimize the adverse effects of high energy costs on low-income, elderly, and handicapped citizens. Local governments and non-profit organizations are eligible.
- **Enterprise Zone Grant Program** – Provides grants to financially disadvantaged communities for business development strategies within Municipal Enterprise Zones. Municipal and redevelopment authorities are eligible.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** – Provides grant and technical assistance to aid municipalities in community and economic development efforts.
- **Emergency Shelter Grants** – Provides grants to local governments and non-profit organizations to create or rehabilitate shelter space for the homeless.
- **Act 47 – Municipalities Financial Recovery Act** – Provides loans and grant funds to financially distressed local governments and technical assistance to formulate financial recovery Plans

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY**

- **Pennsylvania Conservation Corps (PCC) Project Grant Program** – Grants for projects related to recreation, conservation, and historic preservation. Municipalities and school districts must provide a 25% match.

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY (PCCD)**

- **Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Program** – Provides local governments with funds to hire and train additional law enforcement personnel; establish special task forces; and establish crime prevention programs.

- **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES** – The Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) includes the following elements:

- **Community Recreation Grant Program** – This program provides grants for comprehensive recreation and park planning, greenways and master site development planning. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for the rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities and acquisition of land for park and conservation purposes.
- **Rivers Conservation Grant Program** – This program provides grants for river conservation plans and non-acquisition, non-development implementation projects. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for land acquisition and the development of river conservation projects.
- **Heritage Parks Grant Program** – This program promotes public/private partnerships to preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism. Grants are awarded for purposes such as feasibility studies, development of management action plans, specialized studies, and implementation projects and management grants.
- **Recreational Trail Program** – This program provides matching funding for the acquisition, development and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails.
- **Rails to Trails, PA Program** – This program provides matching grants for feasibility studies, plans, acquisition and improvement of former railroad lines for recreational trails.

▪ **PA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP)**

- **Stream Improvement Program** – This program provides design and construction projects to eliminate imminent threats due to flooding and stream bank erosion.
- **Stormwater Management Program** – This program provides grants for cooperative watershed level planning and municipal implementation programs.
- **Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program** – This program provides funding for projects that implement innovative practices to control non-point source pollution for impaired waters.

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

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION**

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

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

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

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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

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

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

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

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

- **PENNSYLVANIA INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AUTHORITY** – PENNVEST provides financing for drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater projects.

- **PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE PROGRAM** – This program provides discretion to State legislators to award limited amounts of State funds for projects in their home district.