

## CHAPTER 2

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### VISION FOR AMITY-EXETER-ST. LAWRENCE REGION

The municipalities of Amity, Exeter, and St. Lawrence will actively strive to maintain and enhance the quality of life in the region by preserving remaining rural character through preservation of farmland, woodlands, stream corridors and other open spaces; managing and establishing high standards for future growth; protecting and preserving natural, historic and cultural resources; managing the region's transportation problems, particularly Route 422, and enhancing the safety, mobility and appearance of the region's road corridors; and providing additional recreational, trail and greenway opportunities for area residents. Amity, Exeter and St. Lawrence will cooperatively plan to slow the high residential growth rates of the past and encourage light industrial, office and limited, managed, attractive commercial development to provide a balanced tax base. The three municipalities will establish additional organizational, pedestrian, vehicular and transit connections among the municipalities and to municipalities and destinations outside the region. Area residents will be provided with expanded community facilities and services to serve their needs, and opportunities for regional cooperation will be identified. Amity, Exeter and St. Lawrence will tie growth to the capacity of the region's infrastructure and resources, particularly water supply, to adequately support that growth and direct growth to where adequate public infrastructure exists or can be efficiently and appropriately extended. The municipalities will stress infill among and logical extensions of existing developed areas. We realize growth is inevitable, but we will insist that growth be managed, environment-friendly and recognize the region's heritage and character.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan presents the goals and objectives of the Borough and Townships. Goals are general statements indicating the desired direction for municipalities, and reflect a long-term state, which they wish establish or maintain. Objectives are more specific, relatively short-term policy guidelines for municipalities to follow. Goals are achieved through accomplishment of the stated objectives.

#### Natural and Scenic Resources

**Goal:** Protect, conserve, sustain and enhance the natural and scenic resources of Amity, Exeter, and St. Lawrence for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

**Objectives:**

- Prepare and implement a resource protection and management strategy for the Region.
- Protect water resources within the municipalities and thus the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater. Water courses of particular concern are the Schuylkill River, the Antietam, Manatawny, Monocacy, Limekiln, Heisters, Ironstone, and Owatin Creeks, Trout Run, tributaries to the creeks, wetlands and floodplains along the river and creeks, and steep slopes draining to the water courses.
- Protect groundwater throughout the municipalities, including remaining limestone areas where the potential for pollution and groundwater resources tend to be greatest.
- Protect and improve water quality within the region.
- Encourage recharge of the water table as development occurs.
- Protect and manage woodlands within the municipalities and encourage new planting of trees within developments and reforestation.
- Protect the steep slopes within the municipalities, including Neversink Mountain, Monocacy Hill, Schwarzwald Hill and Guldin Hill; and preserve visible ridgelines which contribute to the scenic character of the region.
- Protect watersheds and wellhead areas for existing and potential community water supplies within Amity, Exeter and St. Lawrence.
- Preserve the scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors within the region.
- Support water conservation efforts.
- Protect and maintain the rural character in portions of the Townships still possessing that rural character.
- Protect and conserve unique natural areas in the region, such as Neversink Mountain, the Schuylkill River, the Amityville Floodplain, and other identified PNDI sites.
- Conserve, enhance, manage and connect the ecosystems within the Planning Area.

- Strengthen municipal zoning and subdivision ordinance to provide further protection to the region's natural and scenic resources.
- Require developers to utilize appropriate erosion and sedimentation control techniques and minimize and mitigate sinkhole occurrence.
- Utilize existing programs and ordinances and initiate new programs to protect and/or acquire development rights or title to, the key natural resources in the region, such as agricultural areas, woodlands, hills, and greenways and buffers along waterways and wetlands.
- Encourage the design of new development to complement the region's scenic character and cultural heritage.
- Recognize the potential of the Schuylkill River corridor, support the designation of the Schuylkill River as a scenic river and efforts to preserve the River corridor, and foster recreational opportunities along the River.
- Promote alternatives to motor vehicle use to improve air quality.
- Ensure businesses comply with state and federal air quality emission standards.
- Improve the appearance of the Route 422 Corridor through use of design and performance standards and coordinated signage standards and programs.

## **Historic and Cultural Resources**

**Goal:** Preserve and enhance the historic, architectural and cultural heritage of Amity, Exeter and St. Lawrence.

### **Objectives:**

- Encourage property owners and developers to preserve, protect, rehabilitate and enhance historic resources and their context.
- Discourage demolition by neglect and deterioration of historic resources.
- Foster increased public awareness of the history of and historic resources within the municipalities.
- Support efforts of organizations to identify, mark, register and protect historic resources and work with local and state agencies to protect historic resources.

- 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.
- Determine the role which the municipalities should play in historic preservation through land use ordinance incentives, controls and regulations, and efforts to create historic districts and/or historic overlay zoning.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures where appropriate.
- Identify existing contemporary sites which could be considered part of the historical or cultural heritage of future generations and preserve these sites for future generations.
- Support cultural events which celebrate the historic and cultural heritage of the region.

### **Agricultural Resources**

**Goal:** Preserve remaining agricultural areas for agricultural use and support the continuation of agricultural activities in the region.

**Objectives:**

- Promote the preservation of agricultural areas within the Townships through conservation development, agricultural security areas, purchase and donation of development rights, tax provisions and conservation easements.
- Continue and consider expansion of effective agricultural zoning in the Townships.
- Assure policies regarding public sewer and water do not encourage development pressure on designated agricultural areas.
- Limit economic development in agricultural areas to businesses which support agricultural activities.
- Minimize impacts of non-agricultural uses around the perimeter of agricultural areas.

## **Open Space and Recreation**

**Goal:** Provide open space within the municipalities through the preservation and acquisition of farmland, river and stream corridors, woodlands and hills, and the development and retention of recreation areas and parks.

### **Objectives:**

- Assure areas desired as open space are not designated as growth areas and restrict infrastructure improvements which would encourage development in the open space areas.
- Designate concentrated growth areas which will reflect infill among and logical extension of existing developed areas.
- Link recreation areas and natural areas within the municipalities through open space, greenway, and trail systems.
- Foster innovative land development techniques which will minimize land consumption and preserve natural resources, open space, and ecosystems.
- When appropriate, require developers to provide open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation; to coordinate open space systems among adjoining developments; and provide both visual and physical access to the open space system. Otherwise, require fees in lieu to implement recreation, park and open space plans.
- Maintain, expand and enhance of open space and recreation areas.
- Provide for accessible and diverse park and recreation facilities and programs which meet the needs of all Amity, Exeter and St. Lawrence residents.
- Work with surrounding municipalities to link open spaces and recreational facilities in this region with those outside the region.
- Provide both indoor and outdoor and both active and passive recreation facilities.
- Encourage and support cooperative recreational use of facilities among municipal governments, local organizations and school districts.
- Locate recreational facilities with consideration of serving areas not adequately served, and coordinating recreation planning within the region.

## **Land Use and Housing**

**Goal:** Plan a regional pattern of land use which recognizes the existing character and land use patterns of the municipalities and will be consistent with the goals of preserving the natural, scenic, historic, agricultural and open space resources of the region.

### **Objectives:**

- Manage growth in order to preserve the natural environment and remaining rural character and agricultural areas.
- Designate growth areas which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development, have appropriate access, can be efficiently served by the circulation system, and can be efficiently served by public sewer and water systems.
- Encourage a compact development pattern which minimizes land consumption and maximizes open space.
- Direct new development in the municipalities to the designated growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal which cannot be feasibly sewered.
- Coordinate policies for land use, circulation and community facilities and services to assure they do not have conflicting results.
- 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 area and along adjoining municipalities.
- Coordinate future development with the transportation infrastructure to minimize traffic volumes and congestion.
- Allow for a variety of housing densities, development patterns, and attractive residential housing types for all age groups in appropriately designated areas, within the natural and service constraints of the municipalities.
- Encourage land development techniques, such as conservation development, based on land characteristics which will preserve natural resources, agricultural lands, and open space.

- Provide for well-planned development in each municipality which will be consistent with community character.
- Discourage development in areas susceptible to sinkhole development unless adequate mitigation measures are practiced.
- Encourage infill development among existing developments where appropriate because of available infrastructure and lack of environmental constraints.
- Establish a permanent open space system.
- Provide for community facilities to serve the needs of all residents.
- Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents of the region.
- Provide for the maintenance of the character of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate land use controls.
- Address the housing needs of the elderly and disabled in the community.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate, environmentally responsible and compatible commercial, office, and industrial activities at appropriate locations, within the context of existing land use patterns, support services, transportation networks, natural constraints, and environmental concerns.
- Manage development in the Route 422, 562 and 662 corridors and require development to employ techniques to prevent the decline of and enhance the aesthetics, safety and mobility of the corridors.
- Consider opportunities for transit oriented development if the Schuylkill Valley Metro becomes a reality.
- Provide for a mix of land uses which will balance growth with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the area, and have manageable tax structures.
- Protect and enhance the existing character of St. Lawrence Borough and the villages in the Townships such as Douglassville, Limekiln, Jacksonwald, Amityville, Weavertown, Yellow House, Stonersville and Monocacy.

## **Circulation**

**Goal:** Achieve a safe and efficient 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.

### **Objectives:**

- Coordinate land use and road improvement policies to maintain the integrity of existing and future roadways and support the reduction of vehicular trips.
- Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the area as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT as applicable.
- 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.
- Support the development of the Schuylkill Valley Metro system.
- Work to accomplish completion of the Route 422 By-pass from the Pottstown Bypass to the West Shore Bypass in the most efficient and cost effective manner.
- Promote coordinated access management programs along the road corridors within the area, to minimize the number of access points to the road system.
- Establish coordinated design, performance and signage standards for regional road corridors.
- Preserve the scenic road corridors within the region.
- Improve and expand bus and paratransit service in the region to connect residential areas, employment areas, commercial areas, and community facilities.
- Work with BARTA to enhance its bus system to attract riders.
- Provide maintenance of the existing road system as necessary.
- Work with State, County, and other municipal officials to address areas of traffic concern within and adjoining the region.



- Develop, expand, and link pedestrian and bicycle systems, including sidewalks, shared bikeways, paved shoulders, trails and greenways.
- Plan for a system of roads within future growth areas and existing developed areas to provide for convenient local circulation and access to primary routes of travel, such as consideration of a connection between Route 562 and Route 422 and linkages between subdivisions.
- Address existing deficiencies and safety concerns in the circulation system with landowners, PennDOT and developers as appropriate.
- Implement means of relieving congestion on area roadways, particularly Route 422, such as increased use of public transportation, improved traffic management and signalization policies, and relationships of workplaces and residence-serving businesses with residences.
- Improve intersections and turning movements along Routes 562, 662, and 422.
- Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to community facilities, including schools and recreation facilities.
- Develop policies to discourage the use of streets in residential areas as shortcuts for externally generated through traffic.
- Improve the safety of Route 422.
- Examine opportunities for transit-oriented development near stations of the Schuylkill Valley Metro.
- Expand multi-modal facilities in the region.
- Eliminate excess signage and traffic distractions.
- Work with businesses to implement congestion management strategies.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

**Goal:** Provide essential facilities and services necessary to meet the existing and future needs of area residents, protect the environment and the health and safety of area residents, and support managed, concentrated development.

### **Objectives:**

- 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.
- Ensure that required infrastructure is constructed by developers.
- Identify opportunities and/or needs for regionalization and/or sharing of services, equipment and facilities and determine what efficiencies can be obtained in the provision of services to the region's residents.
- Protect water supplies in the region and require development to demonstrate adequate capacity that will not adversely affect other water supplies.
- Work with the School Districts 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.
- Identify opportunities for cooperation among municipalities and school districts in providing facilities and programs to area residents.
- Develop an energy conservation plan.
- Require developers to adequately manage stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation in manners consistent with the protection of natural resources in the region.
- Plan for a safe, clean water supply which will adequately serve the region in the future.
- Provide a variety of recreation facilities and programs for area residents.
- Support water conservation measures.
- Assure that the scale of development in the region is consistent with the capacity of the region's infrastructure.

- Provide for adequate enforcement of municipal regulations and ensure regulations are up-to-date.
- Plan for coordinated, adequate emergency management services in the region.
- Support recycling and waste reduction programs and development of an effective, environmentally sound long range waste management system.
- Minimize adverse landfill impacts on the community and maximum future benefits from reuse of the landfill to the community.
- Coordinate public sewer and water planning with land use policies and establish growth areas where public sewer and water facilities are available.
- Restrict the extension of public sewer and water facilities to areas proposed to remain rural and in open space.
- Encourage cooperation among fire companies in the area to address the fire protection needs of the community.

## **Economic Development**

**Goal:** Provide for additional light industrial, office and commercial development to enhance the region's tax base, provided such development occurs at designated appropriate locations, does not adversely affect the built and natural environment and the region's infrastructure, is compatible, attractive, and environment-friendly.

### **Objectives:**

- Provide land for and encourage additional environmentally responsible industrial and office development in the Route 422-Railroad corridor and along Route 662.
- Provide for managed, limited, attractive, additional commercial development in the Route 422 corridor.
- Encourage appropriate adaptive re-use of vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial properties.
- Encourage the retention and expansion of existing desirable businesses in the region.

- Encourage the continuation of agriculture as a component of the economy of the Townships.
- Work with the business community to identify ways of improving the region's business climate.
- Coordinate the location of businesses and transportation systems to limit traffic impacts on residential areas.
- Direct new business development to areas where it can be served by public sewer and water facilities.
- Encourage the enhancement of the aesthetics of the Route 422 corridor.
- Identify desired new businesses for the region.
- Assure commercial, office and industrial properties are properly maintained.
- Review the merits of tax abatement programs to attract businesses to the region.
- Retain, enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of the region as a means to promote tourism.
- Support agencies promoting economic development in the region.

## **Planning**

**Goal:** Recognize that this Comprehensive Plan is just the beginning of a process to achieve the vision, goals, and objectives found in this plan, and assure the plan will be an integral element in the decision making of Township and Borough officials and commissions.

### **Objectives:**

- Continue the process wherein the three municipalities work together to address planning issues and review development and traffic plans of common interest.
- Work with surrounding communities, conservation agencies, Berks County, regional planning organizations and PennDOT to address transportation, land use, conservation, community facility and economic development issues.
- Consider formation of a standing regional planning body and/or forum.

- Establish a framework for education regarding planning issues in the region.
- Encourage increased public participation in the planning process.
- Implement municipal functional plans and consider regional functional plans.

## **Implementation**

**Goal:** Assure that this plan will be implemented by the three municipalities.

### **Objectives:**

- Discuss the benefits of this plan and the need to implement it with the governing bodies, commissions, and residents.
- Each year review the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan, their continued relevance, the extent to which they have been accomplished, and the need for revision, and establish a work program for implementation of the Plan.
- Identify how the Townships and the Borough can work together to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan.
- Identify and pursue adequate funding of implementation actions.
- Promote public-private cooperation in implementation of this Plan.
- Develop more effective informational gathering tools to assist in plan implementation.
- Be responsive to municipal and resident needs.
- Participate in Berks County and State programs encouraging intermunicipal cooperation.
- Adopt compatible zoning and subdivision ordinance regulations and incentives which reflect sound land use planning and resource protection in order to implement this Plan.
- Encourage developers to incorporate designs into their proposals which will implement the goals and objectives of this Plan.

- **Develop indicators which can measure success in implementation of this Plan and establish a program for measuring those indicators in the future.**