

## **CHAPTER 23**

### **MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE REGION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The following issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Planning process were identified from responses to the planning questionnaire, interviews with community leaders identified by the Joint Municipal Planning Committee members, analysis of background maps and data, and discussion at Joint Municipal Planning Committee meetings.

#### **ISSUES**

##### **Agricultural Preservation**

- Exeter Township has an effective agricultural preservation program in place. Should preservation efforts be implemented in Amity Township?
- In the phone interviews conducted as part of the comprehensive planning process, many of the people surveyed like the rural character of the Region. The presence of agriculture and rural settings were mentioned frequently. Most of the people were in favor of preserving agriculture. Also, most of the people were in favor of saving remaining rural character of the area.

##### **River and Watershed Conservation**

- The floodplain areas of the Schuylkill River and its tributaries should be protected as important natural resources and are important recreational resources.

##### **Preserving Rural Character**

- The Region still contains areas with significant rural character that is valued by its residents. Many people believe that the rural character should be preserved.

### **Bikeways, Trails, and Recreation Areas**

- The Region contains a number of recreational opportunities, but additional trails could facilitate access to those opportunities.
- There are many options to link community facilities to each other through establishing a Region-wide biking/hiking trail system to provide travel alternatives for residents and visitors. These trails can be used to link residents to parks, work, home and other destinations instead of traveling via automobile. These trails would provide links to existing resources within the Region such as parks, historic sites, and provide recreation opportunities.

### **Implications of the Route 422 Corridor**

- The corridor provides economic opportunities to both Exeter and Amity Townships. Commercial and industrial development will create more jobs for local residents and residents in nearby areas. However, with more commercial and industrial development, there will be more commuter, delivery, and visitor traffic into an already strained road system.
- Commercial corridors can have many problems associated with them if not properly planned and if appearance, signage, access management, traffic calming, and design to ensure a proper flow of traffic are not addressed.

### **Revitalization in St. Lawrence Borough**

- People interviewed felt that the Borough of St. Lawrence was an important urban center and the need to enhance and maintain the Borough was of high importance. Finding a use for vacant buildings was also very important. The need to rejuvenate a hometown feeling was also an issue raised by people.
- Main Street Programs improve downtown streetscapes, attract, retain and support businesses, attract customers, and create a momentum for business owners to participate in the revitalization process by adding such amenities as shade trees, pedestrian circulation enhancements, sidewalk improvements, increased parking opportunities, benches, decorative lighting, and building façade appearance.

### **Future Employment Opportunities**

- The Region's municipalities will need to determine what types of commercial and industrial uses should be accommodated in the Region, and where. Allowing for the appropriate types of development, and planning land use and infrastructure,

can aid in economic development which is a plus to the Region, rather than a negative.

- Within the region, there are a number of vacant industrial buildings, which have had an economic impact on the area. When asked, "Where new industry should locate?" respondents to the Planning Questionnaire had the following recommendations: In areas where industry currently exists and within industrial parks.
- Communities should work with the County and Economic Development Organizations to identify a strategy for marketing available industrial sites and land within the region.

### **Sewer and Water Availability**

- Extensions into areas designated for preservation would work at cross-purposes to this Plan.
- Infill and development where public sewer and water capacity are available can reduce sprawl and inefficient development patterns, but other infrastructure should be in place to support such development. Service areas should be those determined by the municipalities and consistent with the future land use plan.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Public Transportation Needs**

- Public transportation can relieve some of the traffic issues development may pose on the Region. A circulator shuttle to link a multi-modal transit station and expanded BARTA routes have been discussed. Other discussion includes the development of a trail system as an alternative to convention transportation to connect people to and from possible employment centers and public transit.
- Additional opportunities within the Region should be addressed, including connections within the Region and to destinations outside the Region.

### **Residential Growth Patterns**

- As residential development occurs in the Region, it impacts the Region's roads. There are already access management and traffic flow concerns on roads in the study area. If more people move into this area, there will be additional traffic concerns, which must be managed.

- Population growth has resulted in the building, expansion, and planning of new school facilities. As growth continues, there will be continued demand for additional school facilities.

#### **Access Management and Circulation Issues on State Routes (Route 422 and Route 662)**

- Traffic volumes have increased on roads not intended for the volumes experienced or the function performed. Substantial through traffic moves through the area on Route 422 and Route 662.
- Areas along Route 422 and Route 662 will require corridor management, especially as additional commercial and industrial development occurs.

#### **Historic Resources**

- There are a number of historic resources in the Region. It must be determined whether land that is developed near historic resources must be developed in such a way to mitigate the impacts on historic resources. Prior to development of land on which historic resources remain, should developers be required to prepare a plan for the preservation of historic resources and their context?
- Should trail systems link historic sites and should informative displays be erected near the historic sites in the Region?