

## CHAPTER 2

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### VISION FOR THE NORTHERN BERKS REGION

Northern Berks will remain an attractive and desirable community in which to live and work by preserving major features of the landscape, such as Blue Mountain, water courses and agricultural lands. This will assure the retention of rural character, open space, scenic areas, and wildlife habitats. Moderate residential growth will be managed and concentrated around existing centers where public sewer and water can be made available. Light industrial development will occur at designated locations near interchanges with Interstate 78. Agriculture will remain an important part of the regional economy and additional tourism will be promoted. Recreational opportunities in the Region will be enhanced and expanded. There will be increased cooperation among the municipalities in the provision of facilities and services for area residents. The cultural heritage of the community will be identified and made more accessible so the nature and history of Northern Berks will be an integral part of and blended with the future of the Region.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

#### Natural and Scenic Resources

**Goal:** Protect, preserve and enhance the natural and scenic resources and beauty of Northern Berks for current and future generations, and assure visual and physical access by the Region's residents and visitors for viewing pleasure and recreational use.

**Objectives:**

- Protect water resources within the Region to assure the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater for recreational use, wildlife habitats, and water supply. Of particular concern will be the water courses, such as the Schuylkill River;

Hassler, Leshar and Rattling Runs; and Maiden, Northkill, Little Northkill, Wolf, Mill, Little Swatara, Jackson, Mollhead, Birch, Spring, Stony, Pigeon, Furnace and Kaercher Creeks; tributaries to these creeks; wetlands and floodplains along the creeks; and steep slopes draining to the creeks.

- Protect groundwater from pollution throughout the Region.
- Protect and manage woodlands within the municipalities and promote the retention and return of indigenous species of flora and fauna.
- Protect the steep slopes within the Region.
- Protect watersheds and wellhead areas for the existing Hamburg reservoir and potential future community water supplies within the Region.
- Identify the scenic areas in the Region, and encourage the preservation of these areas for enjoyment by residents and visitors by limiting the encroachment of development.
- Encourage the preservation of the scenic road corridors and viewsheds along them within the Region.
- Protect and maintain the rural character of the Townships, including agricultural areas and rural areas both north and south of I-78.
- Protect and preserve unique natural areas in Northern Berks, such as Blue Mountain, the Schuylkill River, Kaercher Creek, and Kernsville Dam.
- Preserve hunting and fishing environments so these activities will continue to be available to area residents.
- Preserve the woodland and trails within the Blue Mountain area.
- Maintain the natural beauty of the region.

## **Historic and Cultural Resources**

**Goal:** Identify, mark, preserve and enhance the remaining historic, architectural and cultural resources of Northern Berks.

### **Objectives:**

- Encourage the preservation, protection, and enhancement of historic resources and their context within the Region.
- Establish written histories of the Region and map historic resources within Northern Berks.
- Generate increased public awareness of the history of and historic resources within the Region and the historic and cultural impact the Northern Berks Region has had within Berks County and on surrounding counties.
- Support efforts of organizations to register, identify, mark and protect historic resources.
- Support the integrity of the Strausstown Historic District.
- 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.
- Create an agency and sites to display and promote the historic aspects of Northern Berks.
- Determine the role which the municipalities should play in historic preservation through land use ordinance incentives and regulations, and efforts to create historic districts and historic overlay zoning.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures where appropriate.
- Discourage inappropriate development in the historic areas of the Region, require impact studies for development near historic resources, and require mitigation of any potential adverse impacts on historic resources.
- Foster appreciation of the role of the Schuylkill River in the history and culture of the area and foster an appreciation of the Pennsylvania Dutch heritage.

## **Agricultural Resources**

**Goal:** Preserve and encourage continuation of agricultural uses 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, and conservation easements, and increase the number of farms so protected.
- Continue and consider opportunities for expansion of effective agricultural zoning in the Townships.
- Encourage cooperative municipal efforts to address agricultural issues such as support for the continuation of family farms, regulation of intensive agricultural activities, and relief of tax pressures on farmers because of land values.
- Encourage safe agricultural practices.
- Establish policies regarding public sewer and water and other infrastructure improvements that do not encourage development pressure on designated agricultural areas.
- Minimize adverse impacts on agricultural uses from non-agricultural uses around the perimeter of designated agricultural areas.

## **Open Space**

**Goal:** Provide open space throughout the Northern Berks Region by preserving farmland, river and stream corridors, woodlands, and steep slopes, and retaining and planning recreation and park areas such as Kaercher Creek Park and Kernsville Dam.

### **Objectives:**

- Establish concentrated growth areas near existing developed areas to reduce pressure on existing open spaces.
- Encourage infill development in existing developed areas and maintenance and restoration of existing housing resources to reduce development of open space.

- Plan infrastructure improvements so they do not encourage development in areas desired as open space.
- Link recreation areas and natural areas within the Region through open space and trail systems.
- Use innovative land development techniques, such as conservation development, which will minimize land consumption and preserve natural resources and open space.
- Require developers to provide open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation and to coordinate open space systems among adjoining developments.
- Encourage developers to provide both visual and physical access to the open space system.
- Encourage the preservation of existing open space and mountain land north of I-78.
- Continue regional efforts to encourage protection and maintenance of existing open spaces and provide additional recreational facilities in the Region.

## **Land Use and Housing**

**Goal:** Prepare a regional land use plan which will retain the existing character of the Northern Berks Region and will further the goals of preserving the natural, scenic, historic, cultural, open space and agricultural resources of the Region.

### ***Objectives:***

- Identify growth areas which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development in Hamburg, Shartlesville, Strausstown, Edenburg, and West Hamburg, have appropriate access, can be efficiently served by the circulation system, and can be efficiently served by public sewer and water systems in the future.
- Direct new development in the Region to the growth areas.
- Encourage the continuation of agricultural activities in the Region and the preservation of farmland.

- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal which cannot be feasibly sewerred.
- Encourage preservation of the Blue Mountain as open space.
- Identify appropriate future land uses for the Hamburg Center.
- 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 Region and along adjoining municipalities.
- Identify appropriate future land uses for the vacant industrial buildings in Hamburg Borough.
- Allow a variety of housing densities and attractive residential housing types in appropriately designated areas, with an emphasis on single family homes, consistent with the natural constraints, service constraints and existing character of the municipalities.
- Maintain Hamburg as a vital commercial, service, cultural and residential center of the Region, and support revitalization efforts within the Borough.
- Encourage land development techniques which will preserve natural resources, agricultural lands, and open space.
- Appropriately allocate land use on a regional rather than municipality by municipality basis in Northern Berks.
- Maintain community character, including the rural character of the Township's, the regional center role of Hamburg, and the small-town character of Strausstown Borough and Shartlesville village.
- Provide for suitable, attractive and compatible commercial, office, and environmentally responsible industrial activities at appropriate locations, consistent with existing land use patterns, support services, transportation networks and concerns and environmental concerns.
- Encourage industrial and commercial development near existing identified concentrations: commercial, office, light industrial, and service development in the vacant industrial area of Hamburg; commercial, office, and service development in the 4<sup>th</sup> Street and State Street areas of Hamburg; industrial and commercial development near the Route 61 interchange with I-78 in Tilden

Township; commercial development near the Route 183 interchange with I-78 in Upper Tulpehocken Township and Strausstown Borough; and industrial and commercial development near the I-78 interchange at Shartlesville.

- Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents.
- Provide for the maintenance of the character, and any necessary restoration or improvement, of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate coordinated land use controls, enforcement policies, and programs throughout the Region.
- Encourage a more compact development pattern.
- Support appropriate tourist-oriented businesses that provide services to visitors to Northern Berks.
- Provide for a mix of land uses which will balance reasonable growth with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the area, and have manageable tax structures.
- Provide for retention of the character of the Villages within the Region.

## **Circulation**

**Goal:** Plan for a circulation system comprised of highway, bus, rail, and pedestrian facilities, which will allow safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian travel throughout Northern Berks.

### ***Objectives:***

- Improve rail and bus service to the Region, including rail service to Reading, bus service to communities outside the Northern Berks Region, and bus connections between the Boroughs and Villages in the Region.
- Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the area as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT.
- Establish a program to provide additional parking opportunities in Hamburg Borough.

- 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.
- Promote coordinated access management programs along the major road corridors within Northern Berks, such as Route 61, Route 183, and Old Route 22, to minimize the number of access points to the road system.
- Preserve the scenic road corridors and vistas within the Region.
- Provide maintenance and upgrade of the existing road system as warranted and encourage PennDOT to improve state-controlled roads and intersections.
- Because substantial traffic within the Region is generated outside Northern Berks, work with State, County, and other municipal officials to address areas of concern, such as Route 183, Route 61, and detoured traffic on Old Route 22.
- Encourage and support the development of a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails, including sidewalks, shared trails and paved shoulders. Coordinate this network with the existing and proposed trail system, including the Schuylkill River, Bartram and Appalachian Trails.
- Link Hamburg to Shartlesville and Strausstown through a pedestrian/bicycle trail system.
- Address existing deficiencies and safety concerns in the circulation system with landowners, PennDOT and developers as appropriate, such as construction of shoulders along Route 183.
- Facilitate bus, pedestrian and bicycle access to commercial areas and community facilities such as schools and recreation facilities in the Region.
- Promote appropriate, coordinated land use and circulation patterns at the interchanges with I-78.
- Establish consistent signage policies along the major roads within the Region.
- Address concerns over large trucks using roads which are not constructed to accommodate those trucks and their loads, and identify appropriate truck routes.



## **Community Facilities and Services**

**Goal:** Provide facilities and services, on a coordinated regional basis where possible, to meet the existing and future needs of Northern Berks residents consistent with the financial capabilities of the Boroughs and Townships.

### ***Objectives:***

- Identify services and facilities which can be provided on a regional basis and work toward intermunicipal cooperation.
- Continue to 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.
- Review proposed developments to ensure that required infrastructure and properly planned and located recreation facilities are constructed by developers.
- Review opportunities for regional sharing of equipment, services and facilities.
- Provide appropriate passive, wildlife-related and water-related recreation facilities at the Kernsville Dam area.
- Investigate the possibility of establishing an emergency services plan for the Region and the position of emergency services coordinator.
- Work with the School District 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.
- Investigate the possibility of a regional police force to provide greater flexibility and protection in all municipalities.
- Investigate opportunities for cooperation among municipalities and school districts in providing facilities and programs to area residents.
- Improve the facilities at Kaercher Creek Park by addressing the geese problem.
- Provide additional athletic fields for area youth at the location deemed best for the Region.

- Require developers to adequately manage stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation in manners consistent with the protection of water resources in the area.
- Coordinate regional efforts to regulate intensive agriculture activities and the handling of sludge.
- Work toward the provision of a wide variety of active and passive recreation facilities and programs for all age groups of existing and future area residents.
- Plan for needed recreation facilities on a regional basis at appropriate, accessible locations.
- Assure that the scale of development in the area is consistent with the capacity of the area's infrastructure.
- Identify opportunities for expanded public water service in the Region and investigate the feasibility of regionalization.
- Coordinate sewer and water planning with land use policies.
- Encourage cooperation among the fire companies in the Region to address the fire protection needs of the community.
- Plan for the potential closing and conversion of the Hamburg Center to an alternative use with positive economic and/or social benefits and impacts.

## **Economic Development**

**Goal:** Provide for appropriate environment-friendly economic development in the Region consistent with goals of preserving rural character, open space, and natural, scenic, historic, cultural, and agricultural resources.

### **Objectives:**

- Work together on a regional basis to provide for economic development and support regional organizations such as the Northern Berks Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of vacant and underutilized properties in Hamburg Borough.

- Work with Berks County, State, and Federal agencies to provide infrastructure to promote light industrial development at locations designated on the future land use plan.
- Encourage the continuation of agriculture as a major component of the economy of the Townships.
- Address tax base issues on a regional basis, with consideration of the needs of all municipalities.
- Coordinate the location of businesses and transportation systems to limit traffic impacts on residential areas.
- Protect and enhance historic and cultural resources and promote their identification and marking to provide for additional tourist trade in the Region. Support appropriate commercial uses to serve tourists.
- Expand and identify recreational opportunities in the Region to enhance the tourist trade.

## **Planning**

**Goal:** Assure that this Comprehensive Plan will guide the decision making of Township and Borough officials and commissions by identifying an effective action plan.

### ***Objectives:***

- Encourage the municipalities to continue to meet to discuss planning issues of common concern which arise in the future. Yearly, 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.
- Work with surrounding communities and counties, regional planning and development organizations and PennDOT to address vehicular, pedestrian, and mass transportation, land use, community facility and economic development issues which impact Northern Berks.

## **Implementation**

**Goal:** Accomplish the goals, objectives and policies of this Comprehensive Plan through identified implementation techniques.

**Objectives:**

- Implement techniques to manage and control growth in the Region.
- Identify opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan.
- Participate in State grant programs which will aid in the implementation of this Plan.
- Participate in Berks County and State programs designed to encourage intermunicipal cooperation.
- Establish the basis for land use regulations which will implement this Plan, and provide for regional allocation of land uses.
- Encourage PennDOT and Berks County cooperation in achieving transportation objectives.

## CHAPTER 3

### OVERVIEW OF THE NORTHERN BERKS REGION

A drive over the roads of Northern Berks is at once both relaxing, as you are transported to a region where you experience rural quiet and beauty, and exciting as you come across lovely rural churches, a covered bridge over the Maiden Creek, charming villages, panoramas of farmland, woodlands and streams, historic sites, all against the backdrop of the Blue Mountain.

Unique rural settlements are found in the region, such as Strasstown, Shartlesville, Edenburg and West Hamburg. They have mixed use, small town character, and maintaining that character and their vitality is important. These rural centers also are, will, or could be served by public infrastructure which can support concentrated development which would be logical expansions of these settlements. Concentration of future growth in these areas could help maintain the open spaces and farmlands which give Northern Berks its rural character.



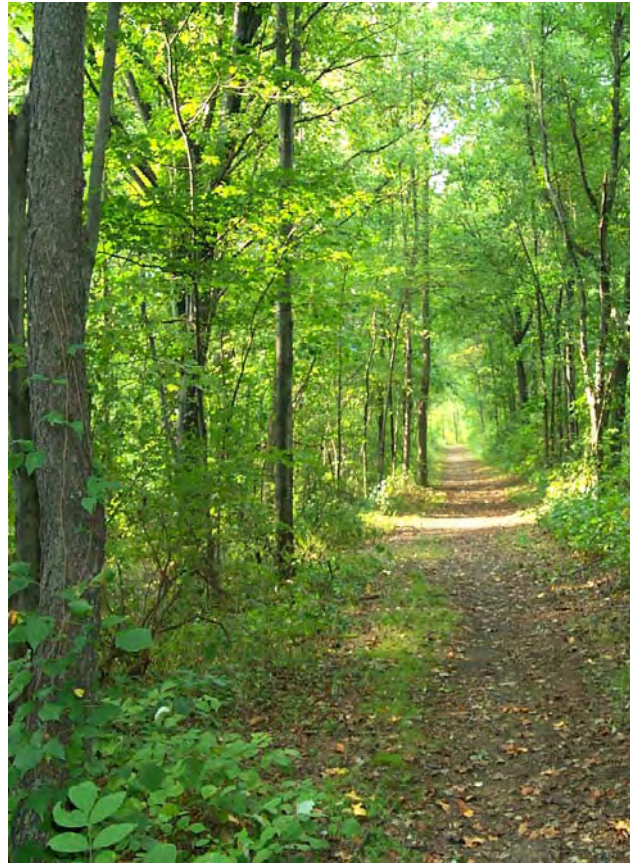
Rural churches such as St. Michael's, St. Paul's, Friedens, Zion Blue Mountain, and Berne have played an important religious and social role in the community for almost two centuries.

The Blue Mountain plays many roles: scenic resource, wildlife habitat, watershed, recreational resource for hunting and hiking, and environmental moderator of runoff, sedimentation and pollution.



Northern Berks has a history and resources which are often underappreciated. They need to be identified, marked, interpreted, accessed, and enjoyed.

The Region has a nucleus of trails such as the Bicentennial and Appalachian Trails. Additional trails can link these trails, link the Region's villages and boroughs (such as Hamburg to Shartlesville and Strausstown), and link the Region's recreational and historic resources. Analysis of and designation of routes will be necessary.



Agriculture is the major component of the Region's economy, a major land use, and prime contributor to the rural atmosphere of Northern Berks. Upper Tulpehocken, Upper Bern, Tilden, and Windsor Townships contain agricultural security areas and farms for which conservation easements have been purchased. Upper Tulpehocken, Upper Bern and Windsor Townships have effective agricultural zoning. Support for continued agricultural operations in the Region is strong. Continuation of family farms in the Region cannot always be assured, and if large farm operations become more prevalent in the area, regional coordination in regulation and oversight of these farm operations would be necessary because of water extraction and pollution and other environmental impacts, effects of truck traffic on inadequate roads, deposits on roads, flies, odors, and other impacts.

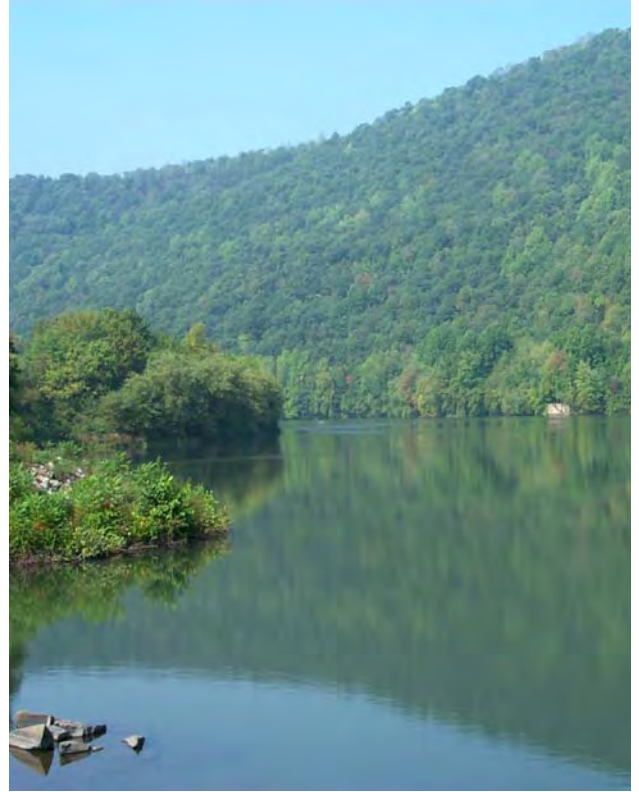
There is a variety of recreational opportunities in Northern Berks. Kaercher Creek Park and the Kernsville Dam will likely be further developed as major resources. School district and municipal facilities are complemented by active and passive opportunities in the Blue Mountain (within State gamelands, woodland, and the Hamburg Watershed) and along the Schuylkill River and streams, and commercial recreational facilities. Tourism could be promoted by supplementing these recreational resources with linkages to appropriate services and enhanced historic resources. Adequate infrastructure, parking, roads, and signage would be necessary to support increased tourism. An important need is to provide additional active recreational facilities for the youth of Northern Berks. In the provision, management and scheduling of recreational facilities and the promotion of the history of and tourism within Northern Berks, region cooperation can be a plus. Indoor recreation facilities could be located in some of the vacant industrial buildings in Hamburg.



Hamburg has been the residential, commercial, service and industrial center of Northern Berks. It contains a number of community facilities such as its park, pool, trails, movie theater, library, field house, and schools. It is expected to continue to play this role in the future, but to enhance the vitality of the Borough, revitalization efforts have begun along the Borough's "Main Streets". Other keys to the continued vitality of the Borough are appropriate adaptive re-use of the vacated industrial buildings west of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, assuring adequate parking within the Borough, managing traffic on its streets, and meeting needs of its elderly.



The Schuylkill River was important in the economic and residential development of the Region. Its importance in transportation has lessened, but its importance for recreation continues to increase, as evidenced by interest in utilizing Kernsville Dam and constructing trails along the River.



The Hamburg Center has been a major use and employer in the region, but its future is in doubt. The facility can be a major asset to the region, and its future use, as is the future use of industrial buildings in Hamburg, is a major consideration. One future use mentioned for the Hamburg Center includes a veterans home. The Reading Area Community College will have a satellite campus there. Continued industrial uses of the vacant buildings in Hamburg is made more difficult by the narrow road system and proximity of residential areas. Providing adequate parking is necessary.

I-78 links Northern Berks to other portions of the State and its interchanges provide economic development opportunities. On the other hand, traffic in the Region increases as people drive to and exit the expressway. Traffic detoured from I-78 to Old Route 22 is a major problem, tying up traffic, damaging the road, and highlighting the need for coordinated emergency management in the Region. The Hamburg Interchange is scheduled for much needed improvements. Traffic to that interchange impacts downtown Hamburg. Interchanges at Route 61, Shartlesville and Strausstown have experienced commercial and/or industrial development, and this development could continue in the future. Proper land use allocation and management of traffic patterns is key near interchanges.



Routes 183, 61 and Old 22 and 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Hamburg are the other major roads in Northern Berks. Access management to them is crucial to promoting mobility and safety. Route 183 carries substantial through traffic, but is narrow and has inadequate shoulder and bridge widths for the volumes and truck traffic it experiences. The Route 61 intersection at the south end of Hamburg is of particular concern to area drivers, but is under the jurisdiction of PennDOT. The nearby intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the Hawk Ridge Shopping Center is also of concern. As additional business development occurs along Route 61, intersections with the northern portion of the road will be of increasing concern. Old Route 22 is a rural two-lane road, and not adequate for major development. Such development would also affect the scenic character of portions of this road which links many of the settlements, recreation resources, and historic sites in Northern Berks.



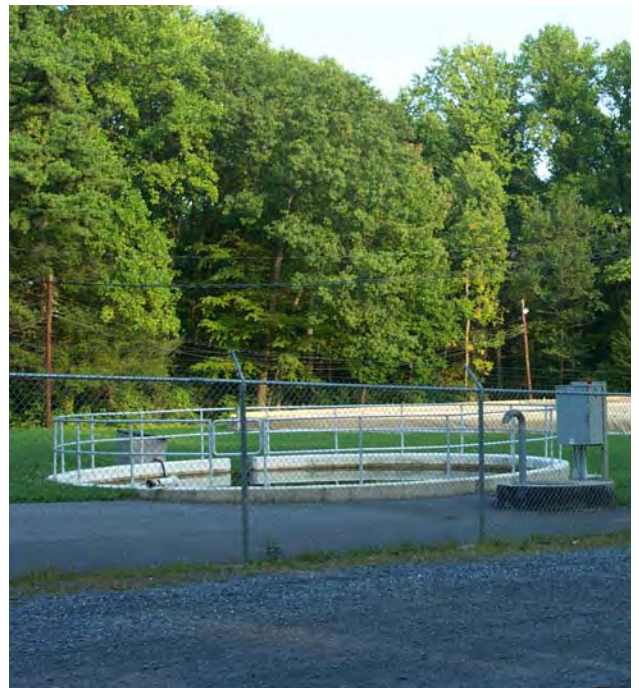
The I-78/Route 61 Interchange area has experienced substantial industrial and highway commercial development, and this may be the prime location for such development in the region. Cabela's will build its retail outlet near the interchange. The Leak-Goforth Study of Berks County has recommended that additional industrial development occur at this interchange. Other recommendations in the study which need review are linking Route 222 to I-78 in Tilden or Windsor with a new road corridor and identification of the Hamburg Center and Strausstown Interchange as potential industrial areas. Business development can provide jobs and balance residential development by increasing the tax base. Additional industrial development will require appropriate handling of truck traffic, including designation of routes and making necessary road improvements. Roads in the region such as Route 61, Old 22, Route 183 and the Bernville-Shartlesville Road already experience substantial truck traffic, much of it externally generated. Coordination with PennDOT is essential.





The greatest population and business concentration in Northern Berks are found in the Hamburg-Edenburg-West Hamburg area and Route 61 Corridor. This is made possible by the public sewer and water service of Hamburg Borough, which is extended to adjoining areas in Tilden and Windsor. Tilden is now planning for significant expansion of sewer service in the West Hamburg area. Construction of a sanitary sewer system to serve Shartlesville has been completed. Public sewer service will be provided to the Strausstown area in the future. Service to these two areas is generally designed to address existing problems, with little initial capacity for additional users. In the future, public sewer could be used to concentrate growth around the areas so served. A key issue is to restrict extension of public sewer into those areas planned for agriculture and open space.

The Hamburg area is the only area currently served by and planned for public water, but public water may be feasible in the Shartlesville and Strausstown areas in the future. Hamburg is served by wells and its reservoir in Windsor Township. The geologic formations in Northern Berks tend to have low to moderate yields of groundwater. Efforts should be made to protect existing and potential water supplies.





To retain the rural character of Northern Berks, housing development must be managed and sprawl prevented. Residents do not want to experience overdevelopment and the resultant traffic, infrastructure, tax and quality of life consequences of that overdevelopment. Concentrating limited growth near existing centers such as Hamburg, Shartlesville and Strausstown is essential to managing growth.

Concern about traffic on Northern Berks roads helps to build support for alternative modes of travel, including rail service to Reading; bus service on Routes 61 and 183 to the Reading area; bus and paratransit service within the region connecting the villages and Boroughs and residents to commercial and recreational uses, with particular concern for the mobility of the elderly and youth; park and ride facilities at major roads and interchanges near the Boroughs and villages and at multi-modal facilities such as the train station; and additional walking and bicycling trails.



The residents of Northern Berks highly value the rural character, open spaces and natural, historic and recreational resources of the region, and a challenge of this plan will be to preserve them for current and future generations.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **NORTHERN BERKS REGION PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE AND PHONE SURVEY**

In the course of developing this Comprehensive Plan, 74 planning questionnaires were sent out to households in Northern Berks. The people to receive questionnaires in each municipality were identified by Joint Planning Committee members from the municipality. The results of each questionnaire are contained in Appendix I. The highlights of the Northern Berks questionnaire results are given below. Most of the residents who responded have lived within their municipality for 20 years or longer, own approximately 10,000 square feet to one acre of land or 6 to 49 acres of land, and are between the ages of 45-64 years old.

#### **Questionnaire Results Highlights**

1. Respondents appear willing to continue to accept new residential growth in the area at the same rates of growth the area experienced from 1990 to 2000 (13%).
2. The preferred types of development are village pattern, with a mix of uses and emphasis on human scale and walkability; on remaining vacant land in Hamburg, Shartlesville, Strausstown, Edenburg and West Hamburg; conservation development in which conservation areas containing special features of a tract are protected and large areas of the tract remain in open space; and cluster developments in which higher density housing concentrations are offset by open space and recreation areas.
3. Approximately half of the responses were in favor of industrial development, and a clear majority of those residents who were in favor of industrial development were in favor of light manufacturing in planned industrial parks or on individual sites near existing industries within the Region.
4. A clear majority of respondents do not favor new commercial area in the Region. Those in favor of commercial development would prefer new restaurants and entertainment, motels, home furnishing stores, and day care centers in Hamburg, Shartlesville, and off of the I-78 interchanges.
5. An overwhelming majority of respondents were in favor of the agricultural land in the Townships remaining as agricultural land, to keep farmland available for future generations to farm and to limit development in the community.

6. The majority of respondents were in favor of programs to increase landscaping, decorative lighting, benches, building façade appearance and similar amenities in the Boroughs and villages.
7. The major transportation concerns are intersection improvements, inadequate parking, inadequate public transit, lack of bikeways and walking trails, inadequate road maintenance, and congestion. The 4<sup>th</sup> Street intersections with Route 61 and entrance to Hawk Ridge Shopping Center were the intersections most noted in need of improvement.
8. A majority of residents would use new biking and hiking trails and see a need for these trails to connect existing recreation facilities and settlements.
9. Half of the respondents were in favor of providing additional public recreation facilities in the area, particularly the addition of multi-purpose athletic fields.
10. The majority stated the level of commercial development along Route 61, Route 183, and Old Route 22 should stay the same, while commercial development at the interchanges with I-78 should increase.
11. Respondents regarding the level of industrial and office development along Route 61 and I-78 interchanges were split between staying the same and increasing. Route 183 and Old Route 22 should remain the same with regard to industrial and office development.
12. When asked what use should be made of vacant industrial buildings in Hamburg, the majority of respondents stated that they should be used to attract other industries.
13. When asked what they liked most about living in Northern Berks County, the majority responded they liked the rural character/scenery, the amount of open space, and the Blue Mountain.
14. The majority said that the most important issues facing Northern Berks today are development pressure/planned development/sprawl; industrial development/providing jobs; and agricultural preservation.
15. When asked what kind of community you want Northern Berks to be in the future, the majority responded with “much the same as it is”, and “staying an agricultural/rural community.”



## **Northern Berks Phone Survey Summary**

Fifteen people in Northern Berks were interviewed over the phone to determine their views on certain issues and identify issues of concern to them. The people to be interviewed were identified by the Joint Planning Committee and included residents, resident business people, and municipal officials and employees.

The majority of the people surveyed like the country aspect of the Region. The presence of agriculture and rural settings were mentioned frequently. Most of the people were in favor of preserving agriculture and saving the rural character of the area. It was noted that the Region has good water and clean air.

Regarding the concept of intensive agriculture, respondents were split between being opposed and in favor (but only if done properly).

Most of the people felt Hamburg has a good school system. The majority of the respondents felt the taxes were not a problem, but they did not want to see them go any higher and were in favor of methods to keep them in check. One person mentioned that perhaps the State should contribute more to the schools in the future.

All the people felt that the Borough of Hamburg was the regional center and the need to revitalize the Borough was of high importance. Finding a use for all the vacant buildings was also very important. The need to rejuvenate the hometown feeling was also an issue raised by a lot of respondents. A few people mentioned that the architecture of some of the buildings was well worth preserving.

Several people said they would like to see more industry and commerce locate in the area to create more jobs, to aid the tax base and provide balanced land use.

Several people suggested Hamburg should become a stronger economic center with more jobs. They wanted to see more people that live in the area also work in the area and the region not to be a bedroom community for other towns/cities.

Many of the people interviewed felt planning was very important for the area. Sprawl is a concern. Development should occur where sewers are available, at interchanges with I-78, and on non-prime agricultural soils.

One person said they liked the area for all the recreational opportunities, such as the mountains, the wildlife, the low traffic volumes on the country roads, but would like to see more trails, specifically rails-to-trails projects.

One person felt the mom and pop stores are decreasing and do not have a bright future in the town.

One person mentioned the Tilden Trailer Park has too much traffic for only two windy roads that serve it.

One person mentioned they liked the ability to do all their shopping in the area.

All the people that were projected to be hooked-up to public sewer in the near future were in favor of the hook-up.

Almost all the people wanted to see the area stay much the same as it is now, maintain the agricultural presence and the rural character of the area. Any new development should occur in or around the Boroughs of Hamburg and Strausstown and the village of Shartlesville, where public sewer and water are or will be available.

Several issues were cited as being a concern:

- The intersection of PA 61 and Lowland Road needs attention. It is hard to get into the flow of traffic from Lowland Road.
- The odors emanating from the duck farm near West Hamburg and a garbage dump near Strausstown.
- The large number of driveways coming out onto PA 183
- The I-78/Hamburg exit interchange
- Preservation of the Blue Mountain
- Continued beneficial use of Hamburg Center
- Intersections in Windsor Township along Route 61, south of Hamburg
- Geese at Kaercher Creek Park spoil use of a major regional asset
- Joint emergency management planning
- Landfill site in Windsor Township
- Addressing and administering the State-wide building code

In June 1998, Berks County Planning Commission staff members met with residents of the Hamburg Area School District to gather public input to be used in developing the County Comprehensive Plan. Fifteen (15) residents attended. The following are what

the residents indicated they liked about their region, what they did not like, and changes they would have liked to see occur in the region, as listed in the draft Berks Vision 2020. The responses were generally consistent with those received from the questionnaire and phone survey conducted for the Northern Berks Comprehensive Plan.

***Likes***

1. Rural character
2. Agricultural preservation
3. Water quality and wildlife
4. Amount of available recreation
5. Safe secure feeling
6. Schools
7. Zoning
8. Proximity to city
9. Local government structure and system
10. Quality of living

***Dislikes***

1. Loss of farmland
2. High density development pressure/mobile homes and effects on taxes
3. Lack of regional planning
4. Lack of public sewer/water
5. The number of traffic lights/lack of intersection control in PA 61 and PA 183
6. Onerous property tax system and nuisance tax (head tax)
7. Lack of public transportation

8. Outside developers – development pressure
9. Cell towers pressure

*Changes*

1. Village/Future Growth Areas – around existing developed areas
2. Regional Zoning Plan
3. Have or develop public transportation
4. More public parks/recreation
5. Desire for Tilden to stay the way it is
6. Revitalize downtowns/villages
7. Increase economic opportunities – light manufacturing – industrial park setting
8. Wellhead/surface water protection – true conservation planning
9. Control commercial development – specifically big chain stores
10. Expand public sewer and water where necessary – specifically West Hamburg