



JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

April 2009

Alsace, Oley, Ruscombmanor Townships

**ALSACE TOWNSHIP
OLEY TOWNSHIP
AND RUSCOMBMANOR TOWNSHIP
JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

This Plan was adopted by:
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Why a Comprehensive Plan?

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to work proactively to assure that the future of the Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Region will be shaped by the municipalities' own vision, rather than by reactions to forces acting upon the Townships. This Plan manages, rather than just reacts, to growth in the region.

Oley and Alsace Township have prepared a joint comprehensive plan in the past but this Comprehensive Plan is the first joint comprehensive land use planning effort by Oley, Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships, and was initiated because of the recognized need to examine overall planning for the Region in light of development trends and pressures in the region; to determine common goals and objectives for land use, transportation, community facilities and services, housing, economic development, natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources; coordinate land use and infrastructure planning on a regional basis; and build upon regional planning efforts of the Berks County Comprehensive Plan, the Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan.

The following objectives were identified at the outset of this planning process.

- Identify desired community vision for the Region and develop an effective plan scenario to attain that vision.
- Provide a means of perpetuating for future generations those environmental, historic, scenic, cultural, agricultural and economic resources which make the Region special to those who live and work in the community.
- Provide for open space preservation and recreation opportunities consistent with municipal goals and community needs.
- Prepare a scenario which will enable the municipalities to accommodate appropriate levels of new development, but not overburden municipal resources, utilities and roads, nor degrade environmental resources.
- Properly control, manage, allocate, balance and locate future development in the community consistent with the community vision through establishment of designated growth areas, future growth areas, rural resource areas, and public infrastructure areas.
- Integrate land use, open space, economic development, resources, recreation, utility and transportation planning into one cohesive document.

- Maintain and enhance the quality of life in the area.
- Prepare recommendations which are reasonable, achievable, and tied to implementation means so the plan will be a living document used by the municipalities throughout the following years.
- Comply with Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (PMPC) requirements.
- Prepare a Comprehensive Plan which is generally consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan.
- Prepare a Plan which provides consistent land use proposals along the common municipal boundaries and promotes common goals for the logical development of the area as a whole.
- Take advantage of opportunities and benefits established in the MPC for municipalities which prepare joint plans and identify possible future opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation in the region.
- Identify the unique characteristics of the area and provide means of protecting these characteristics while providing for responsible, well-planned and managed development.
- Provide specific recommendations for an appropriate mixture and amounts of land use in the rural settings in Oley Township.
- Coordinate planning for the Region with School District Planning.
- Provide a Comprehensive Plan which provides a unified approach to managing future growth and development in the Region.
- Determine future infrastructure needs within the Region, including capacity and allocation.

What does a Comprehensive Plan Accomplish?

The Comprehensive Plan contains a vision of what the Townships want to be and includes goals, policies and strategies for realizing that vision.

The Comprehensive Plan is an educational document, providing discussion of conditions, issues, and opportunities, and identifying resources that are worthy of protection and preservation.

The Comprehensive Plan contains policies for land use, circulation and community facilities which will serve as a guide for public and private decision-making to accomplish the goals and objectives, and thus the vision, for the Townships.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a basis for implementation techniques, such as land use ordinances, official maps and capital improvements programs, which will implement the policies contained in this plan. It is critical that the Action Plan be implemented.

Planning jointly allows allocation of land uses, housing types, densities, and development patterns over the entire region, rather than trying to fit all types of uses and densities into each municipality. It also allows for coordinated land use planning along municipal boundaries; coordinated planning for trails, recreation and open space, and transportation throughout the Region; and coordinated planning along the common road corridors in the Region. Coordinated input can be provided to County and State agencies and an overall approach to economic development can be presented, addressing retention of major components of the economy and allowing for appropriate commercial and industrial development, which complements rather than detracts from existing commercial areas. Benefits of multi-municipal planning are summarized below.

Benefits of Multi-Municipal Planning

- Provides a regional planning approach and allocation of land uses
 - Where
 - How to accommodate population projections
 - Patterns of development
- Establishes growth areas and future growth areas regionally
 - Coordination with infrastructure
 - Opportunities for infill
- Provides coordinated planning along the common boundaries of the municipalities
- Supports existing centers rather than weaken them
- Coordinates road corridor planning, standards, and management
- Provides for linkages between municipalities
- The Plan and implementing ordinances are considered by state agencies in permitting decisions

- Addresses review of “developments of regional impact”
- Identifies opportunities for future joint efforts
- Promotes common land use designations and definitions
- Establish goals for economic character over the entire Region
- Provides support for municipalities in zoning challenges
- Enables Transportation Impact Fees across municipal boundaries
- Enables Transfer of Development Rights across municipal boundaries
- Enables priority consideration in state funding programs
- Provides opportunity to learn from neighbors’ shared experiences
- Enhances the Region’s attractiveness to quality development
- Enables developing a “specific plan” for an area designated for non-residential development, preparing regulations for that area, and streamlining the approval process
- Enables establishment of housing goals and a housing plan on a regional basis to address the current and future needs of all households, including younger workforce, and older households.

The Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Township Joint Comprehensive Plan demonstrates one of the key benefits to planning on a multi-municipal, rather than single municipality level: the ability to manage growth on a regional basis. Land use categories can be allocated on a regional basis and it is not necessary to try to fit every type of land use into each municipality. Growth areas can be established around a core of existing development, where community facilities and infrastructure are available to serve future development and permit logical, efficient growth. Agricultural lands, stream corridors, and rural lands outside the core can be conserved.

Multi-municipal planning also enables coordinated transportation planning, including planning for road corridors such as the PA Route 12 and PA Route 73 corridors.

Planning together helps to integrate, on a multi-municipal basis, the various elements of planning, such as land use planning, sewer and water planning, community facilities

planning, economic development planning, natural resources planning, and transportation planning. A key to effective establishment of the growth area boundaries is coordinating land use planning with the availability of public sewer and water facilities, and not extending public sewer and water facilities to areas intended for preservation of agricultural lands, protection of other natural resources, and retention of rural character.

It is important to plan for economic development on a regional basis, so revitalization efforts can be supported and complementary economic development could be accommodated at locations where it is determined to be appropriate. Appropriate building re-use, gateway treatments, and design elements can be addressed.

As growth occurs, additional demands are made on water supplies, sewer systems, recreation facilities, schools, and other municipal services. The most effective and efficient way to address these impacts is on a regional basis. Directing growth near existing facilities and services can lessen the pressure for additional, dispersed facilities.

Planning to address Regional influences is done in the context of County and regional planning which has already been done, including the Berks County Comprehensive Plan, the Berks County Greenways, Parks and Recreation Plan.

This Joint Plan is also an opportunity to attain general consistency with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan is a Living Document

This Comprehensive Plan is just a start. It is the foundation for the attainment of the goals and objectives established within the plan, which can be accomplished only with the support of the municipal governments, municipal commissions, boards and committees, area businesses, area residents, and surrounding municipalities and regional planning groups.

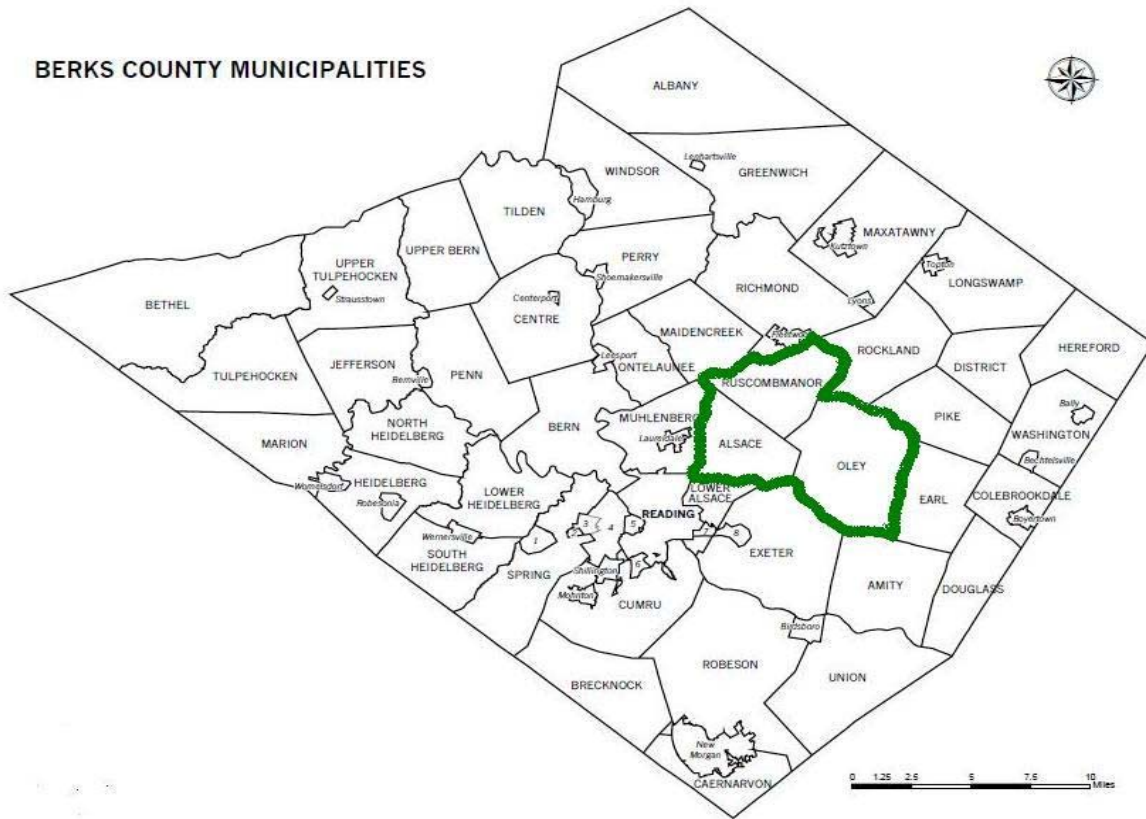
The objective has been to prepare a plan, which will not sit on a shelf and gather dust, but a plan that will be implemented and used by municipal governing bodies, planning commissions and other groups within the municipalities to guide their actions in attaining the goals of this Plan.

This Plan presents a strategy to guide municipal officials and other agencies in making decisions that will assure that the Region will continue to be an attractive place in which to live, work, and visit. This Comprehensive Plan is not an ordinance or regulation, but is a basis for establishing regulations and undertaking specific functional plans designed to implement the policies set forth within the plan. Each municipality retains the right to control zoning within its municipality, whether through individual zoning ordinances or a joint zoning ordinance.

Need for Continuing Planning

Planning is an ongoing process and this Comprehensive Plan must be continually reviewed in light of development trends, the state of the economy, unforeseen influences, changes in community goals, and the appropriateness of the Plan's objectives, policies, and implementation program.

Chapter 2 Regional Setting



Oley, Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships are located in southeastern Pennsylvania to the east of Reading, in Berks County, approximately 60 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Berks County is 864 square miles and contains 44 townships, 31 boroughs, and the County Seat, Reading. Berks County was incorporated in 1752 from parts of Philadelphia, Chester, and Lancaster Counties, and was reshaped in 1772 with the formation of Northumberland County and again in 1811 with the formation of Schuylkill County.

Berks County and Reading's early growth was directly related to the Schuylkill River and Union and Schuylkill Canal systems which became a transportation corridor for agricultural products and anthracite coal from Schuylkill County and central Pennsylvania. Canal systems were replaced by Railroads as a more efficient way to transport products and became a catalyst for growth in Berks County.

Growth trends in Berks County suggest that the County will continue at a moderate rate. The current trend is outward growth from the City of Reading into surrounding

municipalities. The goal of the County is to promote a more consolidated development pattern instead of the scattered pattern currently occurring. New growth is encouraged to occur within natural service areas of existing and proposed public water and sewer systems, where higher densities and greater variety can be provided.

Regional growth pressures are affecting the Region from several directions. From the east, suburbanization is spreading through Montgomery County and Chester County from Philadelphia along the Schuylkill River corridor. This trend has accelerated since the Schuylkill Expressway extension was completed in the early 1980's. From the northeast, Berks County is affected by major growth in the Lehigh Valley and road improvements to PA Route 222 and PA Route 100.

Ruscombmanor is bisected by two major state roadways, PA Route 662 and PA Route 2026, which intersect in Pricetown. PA Route 12, also known as Pricetown Road, connects Pricetown and Fleetwood with Reading and is the major road through Alsace. Oley is traversed by both PA Route 662 and PA Route 73, which join to form a bypass around Oley Village. Heading eastward, these two state highways then separate with {A Route 73 heading directly east to Boyertown (on the Berks/Montgomery County line) and PA Route 662 traveling southeast to U.S. 422 near Pottstown.

Oley and Alsace are being affected by Reading area development from both the west and south. Exeter and Muhlenberg are two populous, suburban townships that share boundaries with both the City of Reading and the Oley/Alsace area. Both Exeter and Muhlenberg have experienced rapid residential growth in recent years.

Need for Regional Comprehensive Planning in the Oley/Alsace/Ruscombmanor Region

As development continues in the Region, the quality of life is threatened. The major concern of this Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and enhance the quality of life for the Region's residents. While threats to the Region present challenges, they also present opportunities for coordinated action to address the challenges:

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is not to stop development, but to see that it gets done smartly, with respect to the Region's resources, and in designated growth areas rather than areas which are critical to maintaining the Region's character and quality of life.

Adjacent Planning

The Region is bordered by the Townships of Maiden creek, Richmond, Rockland, Pike, Earl, Amity, Exeter, Lower Alsace, Muhlenberg and Fleetwood Borough. The following is a brief summary of the recommendations of the comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances of adjacent municipalities to the Joint Regional Comprehensive Plan.

The existing and proposed development of the Joint Regional Comprehensive Plan for Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships is generally consistent with the plans and objectives of the County Comprehensive Plan, Berks Vision 2020.

Maiden creek Township

Maiden creek Township is 14.8 square miles and is located northwest of the Region bordering on Ruscombmanor Township. The population is 6,553 people as of the 2000 U.S. Census.

The area adjacent to Ruscombmanor Township is zoned Agriculture, Residential, and a small area of Commercial. The Residential areas in Maiden creek Township are adjacent to Residential areas in Ruscombmanor; however, the western portion of Ruscombmanor is zoned LI-2 (Light Industrial) and is adjacent to Agriculture. Buffering should be used to provide a separation between these two uses. These areas are generally consistent with each other.

Fleetwood Borough

Fleetwood Borough is north of the Region bordering Ruscombmanor Township. Fleetwood has a population of 4,018 as of the 2000 U.S. Census and is 1.0 square mile.

Fleetwood land use is consistent with Ruscombmanor. The adjacent land use is residential for both municipalities.

Richmond Township

Richmond Township borders a small portion of Ruscombmanor on the northeast. The Township is 23.7 square miles with a population of 3,500. The adjacent land uses are zoned residential and therefore achieve consistency.

Rockland Township

Rockland Township borders Ruscombmanor and Oley on their east side. The Township has a population of 3,765 and is 17.1 square miles.

The adjacent areas between Rockland and Ruscombmanor are consistent. Residential areas are next to each other and Agricultural Preservation areas are next to Rural Conservation.

Pike Township

Pike Township is 13.9 square miles on the eastern border of Oley Township. The population is 1,677.

Low density residential areas in Pike Township are adjacent to Agricultural Preservation in Oley Township. There is a small area of high density residential next to Agricultural Preservation. A buffer area should be used to offset the uses.

Earl Township

Earl Township borders Oley on the southeastern border. It is 13.9 square miles and the population is 3,050. The land use in the adjacent areas are Woodland Agricultural District next to effective agriculture in Oley; highway residential next to Oley residential; Municipal Waste Landfill next to effective agriculture with buffering in place. These areas are generally consistent.

Amity Township

Amity Township is located at the southwestern corner of Oley Township. It is 18.4 square miles with a population of 8,867.

The adjacent planning is consistent with Oley. Agricultural Preservation and Rural land are the designations in Oley which border Agricultural Preservation and Rural Preservation in Amity.

Exeter Township

Exeter is a Township bordering both Alsace and Oley Townships on the southeastern and eastern perimeter. Exeter is 24.6 square miles with a population of 25,000.

Exeter Township is generally consistent with the adjacent lands of Oley Township. Agricultural Preservation and Rural Preservation in Exeter are consistent with Agricultural Preservation and Rural land in Oley. Adjacent land in Alsace is zoned as Rural Conservation, Commercial and Woodland Conservation while Exeter is zoned as Rural Conservation and Low Density Residential. Buffering should be used for any new commercial development in Alsace Township to offset the lack of consistency. All other bordering uses are consistent.

Lower Alsace Township

Lower Alsace Township is 4.7 square miles and has a population of 4,473 persons as of the 2000 U.S. Census.

The adjacent planning with Alsace Township is generally consistent with Residential zones on each border.

Muhlenberg Township

Muhlenberg is a fairly populated area adjacent to Alsace Township. The population as of the 2000 Census was 16,305 persons. The land area was 12 square miles, therefore the population density was 1357 persons per square mile.

The adjacent areas between Alsace and Muhlenberg Townships are generally consistent. The southeast corridor has some areas of conflict with existing uses. Commercial Areas in Alsace Township border High Density Residential in Muhlenberg and the Commercial area in Muhlenberg is adjacent to Low Density Residential in Alsace. These areas should be monitored to ensure that when an opportunity to achieve consistency presents itself that a change is made or a buffer is put in place to offset the contrasting uses.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and Multimunicipal Planning

Objectives:

Intergovernmental cooperation is encouraged in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- To provide for development that is compatible with surrounding land uses and that will complement existing land development with a balance of commercial, industrial and residential uses.
- To protect and maintain the separate identity of Pennsylvania's communities and to prevent the unnecessary conversion of valuable and limited agricultural land.
- To encourage cooperation and coordinated planning among adjoining municipalities so that each municipality accommodates its share of the multimunicipal growth burden and does not induce unnecessary or premature development of rural lands.
- To minimize disruption of the economy and environment of existing communities.

- To complement the economic and transportation needs of the region and this Commonwealth.
- To provide for the continuation of historic community patterns.
- To provide for coordinated highways, public services and development.
- To ensure that new public water and wastewater treatment systems are constructed in areas that will result in the efficient utilization of existing systems, prior to the development and construction of new systems.
- To ensure that new or major extension of existing public water and wastewater treatment systems are constructed only in those areas within which anticipated growth and development can adequately be sustained within the financial and environmental resources of the area.
- To identify those areas where growth and development will occur so that a full range of public infrastructure services including sewer, water, highways, police and fire protection, public schools, parks, open space and other services can be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate the growth that occurs.
- To encourage innovations in residential, commercial and industrial development to meet growing population demands by an increased variety in type, design and layout of structures and by the conservation and more efficient use of open space ancillary to such structures.
- To facilitate the development of affordable and other types of housing in numbers consistent with the need for such housing as shown by existing and projected population and employment data for the region.

Governing bodies of municipalities are authorized to enter into intergovernmental cooperative agreements for the purpose of developing, adopting and implementing a comprehensive plan. Such agreements may also be entered into between and among counties and municipalities for areas that include municipalities in more than one county, and between and among counties, municipalities, authorities and special districts providing water and sewer facilities, transportation planning or other services within the area of a plan and with the opportunity for the active participation of State agencies and school districts.

Contents: The multimunicipal plan is to include all required elements for comprehensive plans specified in the MPC. The plan may:

1. Designate growth areas where:
 - a. Orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area within the next 20 years is planned for residential and mixed use densities of one unit or more per acre.
 - b. Commercial, industrial and institutional uses to provide for the economic and employment needs of the area and to insure that the area has an adequate tax base are planned for.
 - c. Services to serve such development are provided or planned for.
2. Designate potential future growth areas where future development is planned for densities to accompany the orderly extension and provision of services.
3. Designate rural resource areas, if applicable, where:
 - a. Rural resource uses are planned for.
 - b. Development at densities that is compatible with rural resource uses are or may be permitted.
 - c. Infrastructure extensions or improvements are not intended to be publicly financed by municipalities except in villages, unless the participating or affected municipalities agree that such service should be provided to an area for health or safety reasons or to accomplish one or more of the purposes set forth above.
4. Plan for the accommodation of all categories of uses within the area of the plan, provided, however, that all uses need not be provided in every municipality, but shall be planned and provided for within a reasonable geographic area of the plan.
5. Plan for developments of area wide significance and impact.
6. Plan for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic resources within the area of the plan.

Implementation Agreements:

In order to implement multimunicipal comprehensive plans, counties and municipalities shall have authority to enter into intergovernmental cooperative agreements.

Cooperative implementation agreements between a county and one or more municipalities shall:

- (1) Establish the process that the participating municipalities will use to achieve general consistency between the county or multimunicipal comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development and capital improvement plans within participating municipalities, including adoption of conforming ordinances by participating municipalities within two years and a mechanism for resolving disputes over the interpretation of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan and the consistency of implementing plans and ordinances.
- (2) Establish a process for review and approval of developments of regional significance and impact that are proposed within any participating municipality. Subdivision and land development approval powers under this act shall only be exercised by the municipality in which the property where the approval is sought. Under no circumstances shall a subdivision or land development applicant be required to undergo more than one approval process.
- (3) Establish the role and responsibilities of participating municipalities with respect to implementation of the plan, including the provision of public infrastructure services within participating municipalities, the provision of affordable housing, and purchase of real property, including rights-of-way and easements.
- (4) Require a yearly report by participating municipalities to the county planning agency and by the county planning agency to the participating municipalities concerning activities carried out pursuant to the agreement during the previous year. Such reports shall include summaries of public infrastructure needs in growth areas and progress toward meeting those needs through capital improvement plans and implementing actions, and reports on development applications and dispositions for residential, commercial, and industrial development in each participating municipality for the purpose of evaluating the extent of provision for all categories of use and housing for all income levels within the region of the plan.
- (5) Describe any other duties and responsibilities as may be agreed upon by the parties.

Cooperative implementation agreements may designate growth areas, future growth areas and rural resource areas within the plan. The agreement shall also provide a process for amending the multimunicipal comprehensive plan and redefining the designated growth area, future growth area and rural resource area within the plan.

Legal Effect:

Where municipalities have adopted a county plan or a multimunicipal plan is adopted under this article and the participating municipalities have conformed their local plans and ordinances to the county or multimunicipal plan by implementing cooperative agreements and adopting appropriate resolutions and ordinances, the following shall apply:

1. Where municipalities have adopted a multimunicipal comprehensive plan pursuant to Article XI but have not adopted a joint municipal ordinance pursuant to Article VIII-A and all municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan have adopted and are administering zoning ordinances generally consistent with the provisions of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan, and a challenge is brought to the validity of a zoning ordinance of a participating municipality involving a proposed use, then the zoning hearing board or governing body, as the case may be, shall consider the availability of uses under zoning ordinances within the municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan within a reasonable geographic area and shall not limit its consideration to the application of the zoning ordinance on the municipality whose zoning ordinance is being challenged.
2. Where municipalities have adopted a joint municipal comprehensive plan and enacted a zoning ordinance or ordinances consistent with the joint municipal comprehensive plan within a region pursuant to Articles VIII-A and XI, the court, when determining the validity of a challenge to such a municipality's zoning ordinance, shall consider the zoning ordinance or ordinances as they apply to the entire region and shall not limit its consideration to the application of the zoning ordinance within the boundaries of the respective municipalities.
3. Where municipalities have adopted a multimunicipal comprehensive plan pursuant to Article XI but have not adopted a joint municipal ordinance pursuant to Article VIII-A and all municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan have adopted and are administering zoning ordinances generally consistent with the provisions of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan, and a challenge is brought to the validity of a zoning ordinance of a participating municipality involving a proposed use, then the court shall consider the availability of uses under zoning ordinances within the municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan within a reasonable geographic area and shall not limit its consideration to the application of the zoning ordinance on the municipality whose zoning ordinance is being challenged.

4. State agencies shall consider and may rely upon comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances when reviewing applications for the funding or permitting of infrastructure or facilities.
5. State agencies shall consider and may give priority consideration to applications for financial or technical assistance for projects consistent with the county or multimunicipal plan.

Participating municipalities that have entered into implementation agreements to carry out a county or multimunicipal plan as described in this article shall have the following additional powers:

1. To provide by cooperative agreement for the sharing of tax revenues and fees by municipalities within the region of the plan.
2. To adopt a transfer of development rights program by adoption of an ordinance applicable to the region of the plan so as to enable development rights to be transferred from rural resource areas in any municipality within the plan to designated growth areas in any municipality within the plan.

Specific Plans:

Participating municipalities shall have authority to adopt a specific plan for the systematic implementation of a county or multimunicipal comprehensive plan for any nonresidential part of the area covered by the plan. Such specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams and implementing ordinances which specify all of the following in detail:

1. The distribution, location, extent of area and standards for land uses and facilities, including design of sewage, water, drainage and other essential facilities needed to support the land uses.
2. The location, classification and design of all transportation facilities, including, but not limited to, streets and roads needed to serve the land uses described in the specific plan.
3. Standards for population density, land coverage, building intensity and supporting services, including utilities.
4. Standards for the preservation, conservation, development and use of natural resources, including the protection of significant open spaces, resource lands and agricultural lands within or adjacent to the area covered by the specific plan.

5. A program of implementation including regulations, financing of the capital improvements and provisions for repealing or amending the specific plan. Regulations may include zoning, storm water, subdivision and land development, highway access and any other provisions for which municipalities are authorized by law to enact. The regulations may be amended into the county or municipal ordinances or adopted as separate ordinances. If enacted as separate ordinances for the area covered by the specific plan, the ordinances shall repeal and replace any county or municipal ordinances in effect within the area covered by the specific plan and ordinances shall conform to the provisions of the specific plan.

Regional Quick Facts:

	Oley	Alsace	Ruscombmanor
Settled	1700	1735	1749
Incorporation Date	September 1, 1740	March 4, 1744 or 1745	1752 or 1759
Land Area	24.2 Square miles	12.2 Square miles	13.9 Square miles
Population (2000)	3,583	3,689	3,776
Government	3 member Board of Supervisors	3 member Board of Supervisors	3 member Board of Supervisors
Senatorial District	11 th District	11 th District	11 th District
Legislative District	130 th	126 th	130 th
U.S. House of Representatives Congressional District	17 th	17 th	17 th
Municipal Sewer Service	Oley TWP Municipal Authority PO Box 19, Oley, PA 19547-0019 610-987-3423	A small portion is served by Muhlenberg Township Municipal Authority; an area will be served by Alsace Municipal Authority	N/A Small portion served by Fleetwood Borough Authority and Maiden creek Township.
Non-Municipal Sewer Service	On-lot septic	On-lot septic; 5-points served by private system in Exeter	On-lot septic
Municipal Water	Oley TWP Municipal Authority PO Box 19, Oley, PA 19547-0019 610-987-3423	A small portion is served by Muhlenberg Township Municipal Authority; an area will be served by Alsace Township	Fleetwood Borough Authority 110 West Arch St, Suite 104, Fleetwood, PA 19522 610-944-8220 (serves a small portion) Pennsylvania American Water also serves a small area
Non-Municipal Water	Wells	Wells	Wells
Education	Oley Valley School District		
	(1) Elementary School K-5		
	(1) Middle School 6-8		
	(1) High School 9-12		
Township Offices:	Oley Township	Alsace Township	Ruscombmanor Township
	1 Rose Virginia Rd.	65 Woodside Ave	204 Oak Lane
	Oley, PA 19547	Temple, PA 19560	Fleetwood, PA 19522
	Ph: 610-987-3423	Ph: 610-929-5324	Ph: 610-944-7242
	Fax: 610-987-9010	Fax: 610-921-0977	Fax: 610-944-7265
	Email: oleytownship@hotmail.com	Email: AlsaceTwp@comcast.net	Email: ruscotwp@ptdprolog.net

Chapter 3

Existing Land Use

Introduction

One of the most important elements of a Comprehensive Plan is the existing land use and future land use chapters of the Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is the blueprint for future growth and development of an area.

An examination and inventory of existing land use is vital to the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan. Reviewing the past and present land use of an area provides basic information and a foundation by which future residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural land use decisions can be made. It is impossible to plan for future land use without first understanding what patterns exist today.

Existing land uses are presented in this chapter by category and acreage. The approximate acreage of each category is provided for a comprehensive overview of land use. Existing land use patterns not only have a significant impact on the development of the future land use plan, but they affect circulation within the area and the demand for community facilities and services as well. A review of existing land use patterns is necessary to plan for uses that may be desired or that are currently lacking in the Region.

The Berks County Planning Commission and SSM GIS created Figure 3.1, the Existing Land Use Map for the Region. This data was based on the Berks County tax assessment of each parcel in the Townships.

Land Uses are classified into the following types for mapping purposes.

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Mobile Home
- Multi-family
- Residential
- Road

TABLE 3.1: EXISTING LAND USE CATEGORIES

	Alsace	Oley	Ruscombmanor	Total
Agriculture	3155.47	9541.51	3347.99	16044.97
Commercial	323.83	1303.03	528.16	2155.02
Industrial	38.82	159.54	89.47	287.83
Institutional	376.91	238.46	240.93	856.3
Mixed Use	0	4.87	2.34	7.21
Mobile Home	45.74	14.08	44.60	104.42
Multi-Family	17.95	36.36	15.67	69.98
Residential	3537.08	3787.91	4210.65	11535.64
Road	312.59	418.31	364.28	1095.18
Total	7808.39	15504.07	8844.09	32156.55

The Existing Land Use Map should be used in conjunction with other maps in this document. The Agricultural Resources Map (Figure 10.2) shows prime agricultural soils and Agricultural Security Areas in the Region while the Natural Resource Map (Figure 10.1) shows where floodplains, forested lands, steep slopes, and wetlands are located.

LAND USE PATTERNS

The Region has experienced modest population growth and expansion over the past 20 years. Ruscombmanor Township has experienced the most growth in the Region. The development pattern consists of developments and clusters of suburban type development in Ruscombmanor Township. The land use categories and approximate acreage of each are described in detail in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.2: EXISTING LAND USE

Existing Land Use	Alsace		Oley		Ruscombmanor	
	No. of Parcels	Acres	No. of Parcels	Acres	No. of Parcels	Acres
Agriculture	199	3155.47	289	9541.51	240	3347.99
Commercial	47	323.83	79	1303.03	45	528.16
Industrial	10	38.82	13	159.54	17	89.47
Institutional	46	376.91	44	238.46	24	240.93
Mixed Use	0	0.00	3	4.87	1	2.34
Mobile Home	28	45.74	6	14.08	10	44.60
Multi-family	12	17.95	23	36.36	11	15.67
Residential	1621	3537.08	1436	3787.91	1666	4210.65
Road	4	312.59	4	418.31	5	364.28
Total	1967	7808.39	1897	15504.07	2019	8844.09

TABLE 3.3: EXISTING LAND USE ALLOCATION

Existing Land Use	Alsace		Oley		Ruscombmanor	
	Acreage	%	Acreage	%	Acreage	%
Agriculture	3155.47	40%	9541.51	62%	3347.99	38%
Commercial	323.83	4%	1303.03	8%	528.16	6%
Industrial	38.82	0%	159.54	1%	89.47	1%
Institutional	376.91	5%	238.46	2%	240.93	3%
Mixed Use	0.00	0%	4.87	0%	2.34	0%
Mobile Home	45.74	1%	14.08	0%	44.60	1%
Multi-family	17.95	0%	36.36	0%	15.67	0%
Residential	3537.08	45%	3787.91	24%	4210.65	48%
Road	312.59	4%	418.31	3%	364.28	4%
Total	7808.39		15504.07		8844.09	

Figures in acres; Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding error.

SOURCE: Berks County Planning Commission, SSM GIS, 2007

Agriculture

The Agriculture category consists of areas currently or typically in agricultural use (cropland, pastureland, dairy facilities, barns, and stables), along with agriculturally based businesses.

Commercial

Commercial uses consist of all properties where goods and services are sold, ranging from restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, and markets, to professional offices and golf courses. Commercial development is concentrated mostly along the PA Route 12 Corridor and PA Route 73.

Industrial

The industrial land use category includes all properties being used for manufacturing and processing facilities, quarries, research and development facilities, metal- and woodworking shops, truck terminals, airports, and office/warehouse uses. The Region's industrial development includes industries located along PA Route 662 in Oley Township, PA Route 73 in Ruscombmanor and off of Kutz Road in Alsace.

Institutional

Institutional lands include buildings and lands owned by the municipal, county, state, or federal governments; churches; recreational, cultural, and park facilities; libraries; schools; churches and adjacent properties; fire stations. Specific descriptions and examples of this use are provided in Chapter 9, Community Facilities & Services.

Mobile Home Park

This category includes the mobile home parks in the Region that are located in Alsace, Oley and Ruscombmanor Townships.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family residential uses are scattered throughout the Region and cover substantially less total acreage than single-family residential housing. This category consists of the following specific development types: three-family residences, condominiums, apartments (including those over garages), and residential conversions.

Residential

This is the second largest land use in the Region, after Agriculture. Specific development types included in this category are single-family dwellings and two-family dwellings (when constructed as semi-detached or “twin” houses). Significant concentrations of single-family residential development are located throughout the Region, with the highest concentrations located in Ruscombmanor and Alsace Townships.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRENDS

Analysis of the Existing Land Use Map reveals several land use trends in the Region.

Agricultural and Rural uses are predominate throughout the Region however; there has been a trend of increased residential uses. A relative lack of larger scale commercial and industrial uses coupled with increased residential uses could lead to future problems for the Townships. A balance of industrial and commercial uses is important to the tax base of the Region, since the cost of providing services to residential uses is much higher than any other land use. In addition to a high tax burden on residents, this discrepancy could also indicate a potential deficiency of commercial and retail opportunities for the growing population, as well as a deficiency of job opportunities in the Region.

Continued preservation of open space and agricultural land is another way to lessen the tax burden on the residents of the Region. The Existing Land Use Map (Figure 3.1) shows that the Region still contains a large amount of open space and farmland, however, recent trends have shown a growing rate of residential development which threatens to encroach upon the Region's natural resource base. The pattern of residential strips along rural roads should be discouraged. While this is convenient for the developer, it results in a "built-up" feeling, regardless of the extent of farm property that may be behind the homes

Figure 3.2, the composite existing zoning map, provides a visual summary of all the zoning districts throughout the Region. The following chapters of this Plan will provide recommendations for future land use planning to base zoning changes upon, as well as future economic development, resource preservation, and transportation improvements that address the goals and objectives discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4

Population and Housing

Introduction

The allocation of land uses and amount of services to be provided are based on the anticipated population to be served. This chapter will review the population and housing characteristics of Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships including past and present trends as well as projections for the future. This chapter includes discussion about expected housing increases and the anticipated demand for land zoned for residential use over the next ten and twenty years.

It is useful to begin by considering the pattern of residential development that has occurred so far. The growth pattern of the Region has been strongly affected by the City of Reading and the surrounding metropolitan area of Philadelphia. Future population growth will be contingent on the provision of a variety of community and public services to the communities such as public water and sewer services, highway improvements, economic development initiatives, and agricultural preservation.

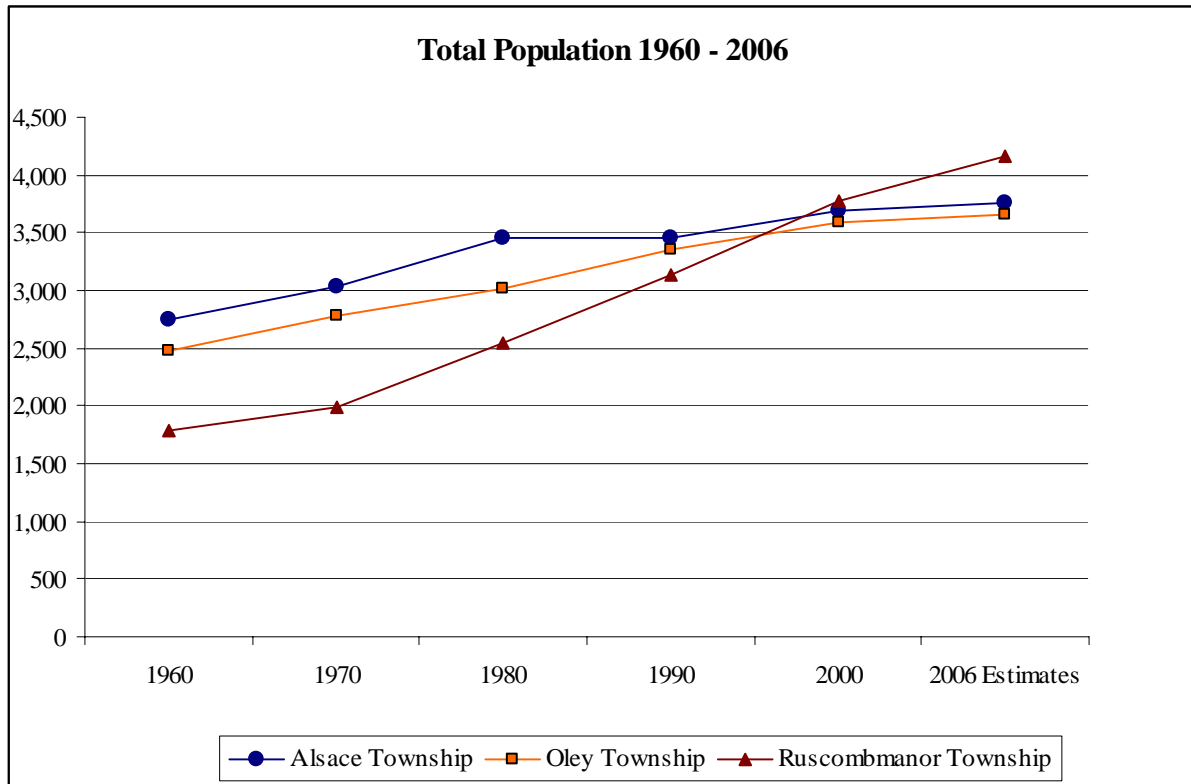
There is land available for new residential development in the Region, though much of it is agricultural land.

This chapter includes tables that show past and present conditions as well as projections of future growth. This information is intended to assist local officials in the decision-making process, as well as point out opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation.

Historic Population Growth and Trends

The rate of population growth over time can provide insight into how the population may increase in the years to come. The following graph shows how the population has changed over time in each municipality as well as for the Region.

FIGURE 4.1 TOTAL POPULATION GROWTH IN THE REGION



SOURCE: Berks County Planning Commission; U.S Census Bureau

Total Population

Alsace Township's population in 2000 was 3,689, an increase of 230 persons (6.6%) since 1990. The 2006 Census population estimates are an additional 3.6% increase. Alsace had a fairly low growth rate that was approximately half the rate of Berks County, which had a 2006 estimated growth rate of 7.3%.

The population in Oley Township, according to the 2006 population estimate, was lower than Alsace Township and less than half of the County. The Oley estimated increase in population is 2.1% following a 6.6% increase from 1990 to 2000.

Ruscombmanor Township is the area in the Region with the most growth. The population in 2000 was 3,776, which was an increase of 20.7 percent (647 persons). The 2006 estimates project an additional 382 persons or 10.1%. This is higher than Berks County 2000 increase of 11.03% and 2006 increase of 7.3%.

The 2006 population estimates and the 2000 population for Alsace and Oley Townships are lower than the County percentages for the same time period. Ruscombmanor Township has had the most growth in the region every decade since 1980.

Figure 4.1 demonstrates that Oley and Alsace Townships are slowing down on growth while Ruscombmanor is clearly continuing on this growth trend.

TABLE 4.1: TOTAL POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISON

Total Population Comparison												
Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County												
1960 - 2006												
	Alsace Township			Oley Township			Ruscombmanor Township			Berks County		
YEAR	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change
1960	2,739	-	-	2,474	-	-	1,787	-	-	275,414	-	-
1970	3,034	295	10.7	2,778	304	12.2	1,985	198	11.1	296,382	20,968	7.6
1980	3,456	422	13.9	3,024	246	8.9	2,546	561	28.2	312,509	16,127	5.4
1990	3,459	3	0.1	3,362	338	11.2	3,129	583	22.8	336,523	24,014	7.7
2000	3,689	230	6.6	3,583	221	6.6	3,776	647	20.7	373,638	37,115	11.03
2006 Estimates	3,758	131	3.6	3,661	78	2.1	4,158	382	10.1	401,149	27,511	7.3

Socioeconomic Data

The decennial census gathers a wide variety of data in addition to the raw count of persons. The data on household size, age, and income can give insight into how the composition of the Region's residents is changing. These are the parameters that are most useful for planning purposes as they allow us to make projections relative to housing and land use issues. The following topics refer to Table 4.2: Basic Demographic Characteristics.

TABLE 4.2 BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This data included in this table will be the basis of the remainder of the chapter.

All data is based upon the 2000 Census unless otherwise noted.

	ALSACE TOWNSHIP	OLEY TOWNSHIP	RUSCOMBMANOR TOWNSHIP	REGION TOTAL
Total Population 2000	3,689	3,583	3,776	11,048
Total Households	1,433	1,382	1,378	4,193
Total Families	1,060	1,029	1,104	3,193
Racial Composition				
White	3,631 (98.4%)	3,535 (98.7%)	3,730 (98.8%)	10,896 (98.6%)
African-American	16 (.4%)	5 (.1%)	6 (.2%)	27 (.24%)
Hispanic (of any race)	36 (1.0%)	35 (1.0%)	46 (1.2%)	117 (1.06%)
Asian and Pacific Islander	22 (0.6%)	10 (.3%)	9 (.2)	41 (.37%)
Other, including mixed racial composition*	15 (0.4%)	7 (.2%)	2 (.1%)	24 (.22%)
Household Characteristics				
Average number of persons	2.57	2.58	2.71	#
Married-couple households	905	868	993	2766
Total households with children under 18	332	376	450	1158
Female-headed households	74	103	63	240
Non-family Households	373	353	274	1000
Householder living alone	288	274	224	786
Householder 65 years +	123	111	97	331
Age Characteristics				
Median age	41.8	39	40.7	#
Persons under 5 years	139 (3.8%)	181 (5.1%)	186 (4.9%)	506 (4.6%)
5-9 years	248 (6.7%)	222 (6.2%)	261 (6.9%)	731 (6.6%)
10-14 years	263 (7.1%)	286 (8.0%)	306 (8.1%)	855 (7.7%)
15-19 years	229 (6.2%)	250 (7.0%)	259 (6.9%)	738 (6.7%)
20-24 years	140 (3.8%)	158 (4.4%)	145 (3.8%)	443 (4.0%)
25-34 years	373 (10.1%)	443 (12.4%)	332 (8.8%)	1,148 (10.4%)
35-44 years	652 (17.7%)	662 (18.5%)	754 (20%)	2,068 (18.7%)
45-54 years	622 (16.9%)	502 (14.0%)	705 (18.7%)	1,829 (16.6%)
55-59 years	232 (6.3%)	208 (5.8%)	206 (5.5%)	626 (5.7%)
60-64 years	191 (5.2%)	164 (4.6%)	168 (4.4%)	523 (4.7%)
65-74 years	360 (9.8%)	289 (8.1%)	273 (7.2%)	922 (8.3%)
75-84 years	184 (5.0%)	180 (5.0%)	131 (3.5%)	495 (4.5%)
85 years and over	56 (1.5%)	38 (1.1%)	50 (1.3%)	141 (1.3%)
Income Characteristics				
Median household income	\$46,500	\$52,151	\$56,813	#
Median family income	\$52,621	\$58,045	\$64,010	#
Per capita income	\$21,385	\$21,565	\$23,889	#
Persons below poverty line	161 (4.4%)	72 (2.0%)	157 (4.2%)	390 (3.5%)
Families below poverty line	26 (2.5%)	9 (.9%)	32 (2.9%)	67 (.61%)

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

*When reporting Hispanic or mixed race, the total percentages may add to greater than 100% because individuals report more than one race.

This data cannot be determined for the Region from available information.

Population in Adjacent Municipalities

Oley and Alsace are adding population at a slower rate than the surrounding municipalities. Ruscombmanor has had moderate to high growth in the past, 23% and 21%, but appears to be slowing down with a 10% increase shown for the 2006 estimates.

Maidencreek Township, which borders Ruscombmanor, has grown 93% between 1990 and 2000 and according to the 2006 estimates, is increasing another 34%. Growth pressure from Maidencreek Township may influence the growth in Ruscombmanor. Amity Township to the south of Oley also has experienced high growth, 38% in 2000 and 29% for the 2006 estimate.

In 2000, the County had an 11% increase in population while the 2006 estimate is anticipating a 5% growth overall. The large increases are offset by several municipalities with low increases and a few with population losses, such as neighboring Lower Alsace that consistently had population losses over the past 30 years and will remain the same as of the 2006 estimate.

TABLE 4.3: REGIONAL POPULATION TRENDS

Regional Population Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Surrounding Municipalities 1960 - 2006											
MUNICIPALITIES	1960	1970	% Increase	1980	% Increase	1990	% Increase	2000	% Increase	2006*	% Increase
Alsace Township	2,739	3,034	11%	3,456	14%	3,459	0%	3,689	7%	3,758	2%
Oley Township	2,474	2,778	12%	3,024	9%	3,362	11%	3,583	7%	3,661	2%
Ruscombmanor Township	1,787	1,985	11%	2,546	28%	3,129	23%	3,776	21%	4,158	10%
Amity Township	2,699	4,718	75%	5,883	25%	6,434	9%	8,867	38%	11,431	29%
Earl Township	1,904	2,290	20%	2,607	14%	3,016	16%	3,050	1%	3,313	9%
Exeter Township	8,848	10,607	20%	14,419	36%	17,260	20%	21,161	23%	24,776	17%
Lower Alsace Township	4,965	5,091	3%	4,906	-4%	4,627	-6%	4,478	-3%	4,487	0%
Maidencreek Township	2,042	2,376	16%	2,377	0%	3,397	43%	6,553	93%	8,786	34%
Muhlenberg Township	10,955	13,693	25%	13,031	-5%	12,636	-3%	16,305	29%	18,085	11%
Pike Township	754	867	15%	1,056	22%	1,359	29%	1,677	23%	1,914	14%
Richmond Township	2,369	2,745	16%	3,204	17%	3,439	7%	3,500	2%	3,633	4%
Rockland Township	1,289	1,452	13%	1,911	32%	2,675	40%	3,765	41%	3,956	5%
BERKS COUNTY	275,414	296,382	8%	312,509	5%	336,523	8%	373,638	11%	391,640	5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2006, Berks County Planning Commission

Population Density

Population density, measured in persons per square mile, is a way of comparing the extent of development in the Region with surrounding municipalities and Berks County overall. Table 4.4 shows that Pike Township is the least developed municipality in the Region with a population density of 137.7 persons per square mile. Oley is second with 151.3 persons per square mile, with Ruscombmanor and Alsace being sixth (299.1 persons/sq. mile) and seventh (308 persons/sq. mile) least developed municipality, respectively. Muhlenberg, Lower Alsace, and Exeter, the townships adjacent or closest to the City of Reading, are the Region's most developed municipalities. Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships have fewer persons per square mile than the County which has 463 persons per square mile.

TABLE 4.4: POPULATION DENSITY

Population Density Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Surrounding Municipalities 2006			
MUNICIPALITIES	ESTIMATED 2006 POPULATION	LAND AREA (in square miles)	POPULATION DENSITY (in persons per square mile)
Alsace Township	3,758	12.2	308
Oley Township	3,661	24.2	151.3
Ruscombmanor Township	4,158	13.9	299.1
Amity Township	11,431	18.4	621.3
Earl Township	3,313	13.8	240.1
Exeter Township	24,776	24.6	1007.2
Lower Alsace Township	4,487	4.7	954.7
Maidencreek Township	8,786	14.3	614.4
Muhlenberg Township	18,085	12.2	1482.4
Pike Township	1,914	13.9	137.7
Richmond Township	3,633	23.7	153.3
Rockland Township	3,956	17.1	231.3
Berks County	401,149	865.7	463.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Berks County Planning Commission

Population By Age

The largest population groups by age in each municipality during 1990 were the 35-44 year old age group, followed closely by the 25-34 year old age group, and then 45-54 year olds. The groups between 25-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds represent the baby boomer generation. Oley Township was the only Township of the three that had a higher 25-34 year old group than 35-44 year old group.

There are various dates given for the baby boomer years but the most widely accepted time period is people born between 1946 and 1964. The groups in the Region that have the highest numbers also include the 45-54 year old group. This is the initial jump in population as compared to other groups. This is probably due to a large number of 45 or 46 years old which would have been born around 1954 to 1963 at the end of the baby boomer years.

As the baby boomers continue to age, the group that they are represented in will continue to be the largest group. Due to the 35-44 age group having a twelve year span, the trend stays the same for 2000 with the largest group being the 35-44 year olds. The change in 2000 is in the second largest group which is now the 45-54 category and the third group, 25-34 year olds, has a fairly significant decrease as many of the baby boomers move into the 35-44 age group.

In each municipality the Under 5 category has decreased from 1990 to 2000. Alsace had the most significant drop, 32%, while Oley dropped 26% and Ruscombmanor had an 11% decrease. This decrease can also be attributed to the baby boomers. First, the baby boomers did not have as many children as their parents, which reduced the population. Then as the baby boomers continue to age, the fertile population also decreases which is reflected in the number of births.

The baby boomer generation trend can be clearly seen in the % change column in Table 4.5 Population By Age. The largest percentage of change comes from the baby boomers moving through the age categories.

Ruscombmanor Township has the only very large % increase that does not follow the other trends. The Township had a 213% increase in the 85+ category from 1990 to 2000. This can be explained by a retirement community being introduced in the Township or it can be a natural occurrence based on the high number from the two previous categories. As the age groups progress, the categories are reduced from 10 plus year increments to 5 year increments.

TABLE 4.5: POPULATION BY AGE

Population by Age Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township 1990 - 2000															
AGE	Alsace Township					Oley Township					Ruscombmanor Twp.				
	1990 Population		2000 Population		% Change from 1990 to 2000	1990 Population		2000 Population		% Change from 1990 to 2000	1990 Population		2000 Population		% Change from 1990 to 2000
	%	Number	%	Number		%	Number	%	Number		%	Number	%	Number	
Under 5	5.9	205	3.8	139	-32	7.3	245	5.1	181	-26	6.7	209	4.9	186	-11
5-9	5.8	201	6.7	248	23	7.4	250	6.2	222	-11	7.5	235	6.9	261	11
10-14	6.1	210	7.1	263	25	6.6	223	8.0	286	28	7.1	221	8.1	306	38
15-19	5.9	204	6.2	229	12	5.9	200	7.0	250	25	6.2	194	6.9	259	34
20-24	5.4	186	3.8	140	-25	5.4	182	4.4	158	-13	5.0	158	3.8	145	-8
25-34	14.1	486	10.1	373	-23	17.1	576	12.4	443	-23	15.3	480	8.8	332	-31
35-44	16.7	576	17.7	652	13	16.0	537	18.5	662	23	19.9	624	20.0	754	21
45-54	12.2	422	16.9	622	47	11.3	379	14.0	502	32	11.9	372	18.7	705	90
55-59	5.8	201	6.3	232	15	5.3	177	5.8	208	18	5.4	169	5.5	206	22
60-64	6.5	224	5.2	191	-15	4.8	160	4.6	164	3	5.0	155	4.4	168	8
65-74	9.7	337	9.7	360	7	8.0	270	8.0	289	7	6.3	197	7.3	273	39
75-84	4.8	167	5.0	184	10	4.0	133	5.0	180	35	3.2	99	3.5	131	32
85+	1.2	40	1.5	56	40	0.9	30	1.1	38	27	0.5	16	1.3	50	213
Total	100	3459	100.0	3,689		100	3362	100.0	3,583		100.0	3,129	100.0	3,776	

Source: U.S. Census

Educational Facilities

Oley Valley School District is located in the heart of Oley, approximately 10 miles east of Reading. The school district encompasses 65 square miles and includes the residents of Alsace, Oley, Pike, and Ruscombmanor Townships.

The student population has remained relatively stable over the past seven (7) years with slight fluctuations occurring. The % change in population from 1990 to 2000 has increased in the student age ranges but the “under 5” category has decreased 32%, 26% and 11% for the Townships. This would indicate that the school size is adequate for the population as it is reported today. An increase in development in the area could influence these numbers.

Table 4.6 shows student enrollment per grade for the 2006-2007 school year. The largest numbers of students are in the high school with the class size decreasing in the Kindergarten through third grade. The average class size for K-5 is 22 students while the average size for the Middle and High School is 24 students per class.

TABLE 4.6: ENROLLMENT BY GRADE 2006-2007

Elementary School	Number of Students		Middle School	Number of Students		High School	Number of Students
Kindergarten	139		6 th	152		9 th	217
1 st	139		7 th	171		10 th	180
2 nd	138		8 th	165		11 th	166
3 rd	123					12 th	152
4 th	166						
5 th	149						

TABLE 4.7: BERKS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENTS, 2000-2007

School District	2000-01	2001-02	% Increase	2002-03	% Increase	2003-04	% Increase	2004-05	% Increase	2005-2006	% Increase	2006-2007	% Increase
Antietam	1,045	1,051	1%	1,014	-4%	1,093	8%	1,109	1%	1116	1%	1121	0%
Boyertown Area	6,712	6,727	0%	6,787	1%	6,919	2%	7,005	1%	6979	0%	7047	1%
Brandywine Heights	2,036	2,013	-1%	1,950	-3%	1,983	2%	1,997	1%	1943	-3%	1924	-1%
Conrad Weiser Area	2,117	2,724	29%	2,743	1%	2,822	3%	2,904	3%	2977	3%	3002	1%
Daniel Boone Area	3,002	3,174	6%	3,361	6%	3,503	4%	3,579	2%	3782	6%	3877	3%
Exeter Township	3,822	3,908	2%	3,955	1%	4,076	3%	4,210	3%	4322	3%	4401	2%
Fleetwood Area	2,426	2,496	3%	2,526	1%	2,633	4%	2,658	1%	2694	1%	2698	0%
Governor Mifflin	4,149	4,120	-1%	4,194	2%	4,265	2%	4,154	-3%	4281	3%	4279	0%
Hamburg Area	2,702	2,708	0%	2,755	2%	2,765	0%	2,746	-1%	2728	-1%	2687	-2%
Kutztown Area	1,809	1,814	0%	1,826	1%	1,801	-1%	1,771	-2%	1766	0%	1711	-3%
Muhlenberg	2,914	2,980	2%	3,015	1%	3,001	0%	3,112	4%	3304	6%	3342	1%
Oley Valley	2,174	2,136	-2%	2,203	3%	2,131	-3%	2,073	-3%	2075	0%	2057	-1%
Reading	14,914	15,553	4%	16,266	5%	16,494	1%	17,215	4%	17362	1%	17820	3%
Schuylkill Valley	1,863	1,880	1%	1,897	1%	1,910	1%	1,969	3%	1993	1%	2000	0%
Tulpehocken Area	1,719	1,735	1%	1,716	-1%	1,694	-1%	1,778	5%	1699	-4%	1673	-2%
Twin Valley	2,975	3,050	3%	3,133	3%	3,083	-2%	3,246	5%	3331	3%	3422	3%
Wilson	4,894	4,997	2%	5,148	3%	5,300	3%	5,478	3%	5626	3%	5699	1%
Wyomissing Area	1,848	1,813	-2%	1,858	2%	1,984	7%	1,865	-6%	1905	2%	1872	-2%
Total	63,121	64,879		66,347		67,457		68,869		69,883		70,632	

SOURCE: Berks County Intermediate Unit; Pennsylvania Department of Education

Population Projections

The population projections on Table 4.8 assume the municipalities in the Region do not make significant amendments to their Zoning Ordinances or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Table 4.8 shows Alsace adding approximately 22 persons per year or 7 new homes per year. This is a continuation of the Township's previous averages and would result in a total 2010 population of 3,908 and a 2020 population of 4,142.

The projected population growth for Oley Township shows a change of 213 people between 2000 and 2010. The projected growth for 2020 is 227 people or approximately 23 people per year (7 new homes).

Ruscombmanor Township shows a 2020 projected growth of 239 which is similar to both Alsace and Oley. The additional persons per year would be approximately 24 with 8 new homes per year.

TABLE 4.8: POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population Projections Alsace Township, Oley Township and Ruscombmanor Township 2010 and 2020			
Municipality	Alsace Township	Oley Township	Ruscombmanor Township
2000 Population	3,689	3,583	3,776
2010 Projected Population	3,908	3,796	4,000
Change 2000 - 2010	219	213	224
Percent Change 2000 - 2010	5.93	5.94	5.93
2020 Projected Population	4,142	4,023	4,239
Change 2010 - 2020	234	227	239
Percent Change 2010 - 2020	5.98	5.97	5.97

Source: BCPC

Gender

Gender refers to the number of males and females in a population. There are no special conditions in the Region that have altered the traditional 50/50 balance between males and females.

TABLE 4.9: GENDER

Gender Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000					
Area	Total Population	Males		Females	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alsace Township	3,689	1,858	50.4	1,831	49.6
Oley Township	3,583	1,788	49.9	1,795	50.1
Ruscombmanor Township	3,776	1,894	50.2	1,882	49.8
Berks County	373,638	182,956	49.0	190,682	51.0

Source: U.S. Census

Household Size

Household size is determined by the number of persons living in a housing unit whether they are related or not. The household size in the United States has declined in the past two or three decades for a variety of reasons: later marriages, more divorces, fewer children, and more elderly households. The average household size for Oley and Ruscombmanor in 1980 was 2.9 while Alsace was 2.87 and the County was 2.66. In 2000, the County was 2.55 and Oley and Alsace were 2.57 and 2.58 with Ruscombmanor dropping the least at 2.71.

Growing areas with young children tend to have larger household sizes, and older communities with more singles and elderly people have smaller household sizes.

TABLE 4.10: AVERAGE PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

Average Persons Per Household Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 1980-2000			
AREA	AVERAGE PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD		
	1980	1990	2000
Alsace Township	2.87	2.63	2.57
Oley Township	2.90	2.70	2.58
Ruscombmanor Township	2.90	2.76	2.71
Berks County	2.66	2.56	2.55

Source: U.S. Census

Total Housing Units

Total Housing Units is calculated based on the increase of new homes and converted single family dwellings to apartments. In general, housing units and population are consistent and remain similar but new households are often created with singles, divorces, and the elderly which can skew the results and give the appearance that new housing units are being created in the absence of population growth. These results are expected in areas with decreasing average persons per household.

Alsace Township added 126 housing units between 1990 and 2000. This represents a 9.2% change in total housing units for the Township. The population increased 7% during that same period.

The population of Oley Township increased 7% between 1990 and 2000 but the housing units increased 11.2% or 144 units.

Ruscombmanor Township added 258 housing units by 2000. This represents a 22.2% increase in housing units or an additional 25 houses per year. The total population increased 21% during the same period.

TABLE 4.11: TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

Total Housing Units Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 1990 - 2000				
AREA	Total Housing Units		1990-2000 Change	
	1990	2000	Number	Percent
Alsace Township	1,377	1,503	126	9.2%
Oley Township	1,281	1,425	144	11.2%
Ruscombmanor Township	1,163	1,421	258	22.2%
Berks County	134,482	150,222	15,740	11.7%

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Type

Housing types and needs vary throughout the life cycle. Young singles and beginning families often require smaller, less expensive homes or multi-dwelling housing. As the family expands or children start to become mobile, the needs change and families then prefer larger, single-family homes. As children grow older and leave home, families then downsize and return to apartments, townhouses, or row homes.

Close to half of all homes in Berks County are single family detached homes followed by single family attached homes. The Regional Housing Types do not follow the County

make-up very closely. The County numbers are heavily influenced by the City of Reading.

In Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships, single family detached homes make up 90% and approximately 95%, respectively. Oley Township is different in its make-up of housing types because of the downtown component. Oley is comprised of 78% single family detached housing, 9% single family attached housing and almost 8% of 2 unit housing.

TABLE 4.12: HOUSING TYPE

Housing Type Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000								
TYPE	ALSACE TWP		OLEY TWP		RUSCOMBMANOR TWP		BERKS COUNTY	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single family detached	1,354	90.1	1,111	77.9	1,347	94.7	81,581	54.3
Single family attached	24	1.6	128	8.9	11	0.8	34,822	23.2
2 Units	16	1.1	109	7.6	12	0.9	14,400	9.6
3 or more Units	9	0.6	52	3.6	27	1.9	13,689	9.1
Mobile Home & Others	100	6.6	25	1.7	24	1.7	5,730	3.9
Total	1,503	100.0	1,425	100.0	1,421	100.0	150,222	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Tenure and Vacancy

Housing tenure and vacancy is an important component to review in a Comprehensive Plan. Housing tenure defines residents as either owners or renters in a unit. Vacancy rates reflect utilization and give an indication if a variety is available.

The relationship between owner-occupied housing and rental units influences the demographics of an area. An area with higher rates of renter-occupied units has affordable, less expensive housing for singles, young families and the elderly. Areas with more owner-occupied housing often preclude young starter families and singles from being able to enter the market.

Almost 90 percent of all homes in Ruscombmanor Township and 85 percent of homes in Alsace Township are owner-occupied. Oley Township is very similar to the County statistics with 73 percent of owner-occupied housing and 24% renter-occupied. The difference in the County statistics and Oley Township is in the vacant housing. The County has double the vacancy percentage as Oley Township.

The median value of owner-occupied housing was highest in Ruscombmanor Township, \$142,700, and lowest in Alsace Township, \$112,000. The median value was higher for the Region than Berks County.

TABLE 4.13: HOUSING TENURE, VACANCY, AND VALUE

Housing Tenure, Vacancy and Value Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000								
TENURE	ALSACE TWP		OLEY TWP		RUSCOMBMANOR TWP		BERKS COUNTY	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner-occupied	1,278	85.0	1,041	73.1	1,262	88.8	104,719	69.7
Renter-occupied	155	10.3	341	23.9	116	8.2	36,851	24.5
Vacant	70	4.7	43	3.0	43	3.0	8,652	5.8
Total	1,503	100.0	1,425	100.0	1,421	100.0	150,222	100.0
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Unit	\$112,000		\$123,900		\$142,700		\$104,900	

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Age

The housing age gives an overall picture of the area and the housing stock. Oley has the most housing from 1939 or earlier which is to be expected considering the historic significance of Oley. When comparing the age of houses from 1969 and earlier, Alsace Township has the most, 900. Oley has 882 and Ruscombmanor only has 660.

Ruscombmanor has the newest houses with 566 houses being added from 1980 until 2000. This represents almost 40 percent of the houses in Ruscombmanor Township have been built since 1980. 28% of Oley's housing stock has been added in the same time period while the addition to Alsace makes up 23%.

TABLE 4.14: MUNICIPAL HOUSING AGE

Municipal Housing Age Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000							
AREA	TOTAL UNITS	1990 TO MARCH 2000	1980 TO 1989	1970 TO 1979	1960 TO 1969	1940 TO 1959	1939 OR EARLIER
Alsace Township	1,503	207	138	258	194	418	288
Oley Township	1,425	153	246	144	125	264	493
Ruscombmanor Township	1,421	287	279	195	132	216	312
Berks County	150,222	20,623	16,834	19,089	14,922	29,829	48,925

Source: U.S. Census, 2005 Berks County Data Book

Chapter 5

Goals and Objectives

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

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

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

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

NATURAL, SCENIC, HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Overall Goal: Recognize and respect the assets and limitations of the natural and built environment, protect and preserve those assets, and facilitate their use.

Natural Resources Goal: Protect the sensitive natural features that characterize so much of the area's natural landscape.

Objectives:

- Direct growth away from areas with sensitive ecological resources.
- Strengthen zoning and subdivision regulations that conserve steep slopes, animal habitats, wooded areas, stream buffers and flood prone lands.
- Strive to maximize preservation of permanent natural areas within residential developments.
- Look for opportunities to initiate a linked network of greenways, open spaces, and green infrastructure.
- Protect the supply and quality of groundwater and surface water.
- Protect woodland.
- Continue to support the efforts of the Pike /Oley District Preservation Coalition.
- Protect important Natural Areas identified in the Berks County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Preserve watersheds, stream corridors, floodplains, wetlands, and recharge areas.
- Protect steep slopes. Determine appropriate approaches toward development on ridgelines.
- Preserve natural wildlife habitats.
- Prevent deterioration of air quality.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Goal: To protect the Scenic Resources within the Region.

Objectives:

- Protect scenic views, features and landscapes, and ensure for future generations views of the scenic and natural beauty of the Region.
- Protect the night sky from excessive light pollution.

HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

Objectives:

- Protect the character of Oley Village, Pleasantville, Pricetown, and the area's other villages with appropriate zoning strategies.
- Encourage the development of design guidelines to preserve historic architecture and village design patterns.
- Support the efforts of local and county historic preservation groups to continue identifying and protecting historic resources.
- Preserve recognized historic sites and structures. Discourage inappropriate development in historic areas.
- Maintain partnerships with private and non-profit organizations to protect the Region's historic resources.
- Require impact studies for development near important historic resources, and require mitigation of potential adverse impacts to historic resources.
- Review and update the Historic Preservation Ordinance in Oley Township, implemented by the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB).

- Discourage demolition by neglect and deterioration of historic resources.
- Encourage responsible conservation and maintenance of vintage architecture, especially the stone farmhouses located in the Region.
- Consider the degree to which suggested historic preservation guidelines might be legally enforced through revised township ordinances without unduly infringing on property owners' rights.
- Subject rental units to the same standards of good repair as owner-occupied dwellings and perform adequate inspections to guarantee enforcement of existing codes.
- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to preserve historic resources.
- Identify existing contemporary sites which could be considered part of the historical or cultural heritage of future generations and work to preserve these sites.
- Preserve historic landscapes and view sheds that protect the context of the history of the Region.
- Maintain the regional survey of historic resources contained within the Berks County Greenway and Open Space Plan.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

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

Objectives:

- Preserve farming by continuing to promote agricultural zoning, agricultural security areas, purchase of agricultural easements and preferential assessments.
- Minimize non-farm activities near agricultural areas to reduce the potential for conflicts with normal farming operations.

- Minimize public water and sewer line extensions into prime agricultural areas.
- Discourage the conversion of productive farmland to non-farm uses.
- Provide for a range of appropriate supplemental income opportunities in agricultural areas.
- Avoid scattered development which causes conflicts with farming, such as additional vehicular traffic and land use incompatibilities, by designating growth and potential future growth areas.
- Encourage participation in the “Clean and Green” Act (preferential tax assessment), the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (purchase of development rights), and private land preservation programs.
- Continue and consider additional opportunities for effective agricultural zoning in productive agricultural areas.
- Protect the actively farmed land remaining in the Region from incompatible non-farm uses.
- Identify techniques to encourage continual use of existing farmland.
- Develop and encourage appropriate land maintenance and protection policies, including best management practices (BMPs).

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

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

Objectives:

- Provide and maintain parks, recreation and open spaces for area residents which are interconnected, accessible, well maintained, and safe.
- Maintain the fee-in-lieu responsibility of developers in providing park and recreation facilities and open space.

- Support the implementation of the Berks County Greenway and Open Space Plan and encourage coordination of recreation planning between the municipalities.
- Promote innovative development techniques such as Conservation By Design and open space development that will minimize land consumption and preserve remaining open space in the Region.
- Provide a wide range of active and passive recreational and cultural programs.
- Work with surrounding municipalities and counties to link open spaces, greenways, and natural areas outside of the Region.
- Encourage and support cooperative use of recreation facilities among the municipalities and the Oley Valley School District.

LAND USE

Goal: Manage, control, and guide development to appropriate areas where public infrastructure is available or planned, and protect natural and agricultural resources in order to retain a mix of rural and suburban atmosphere within the Townships.

Objectives:

- Encourage residential developers to use neo-traditional neighborhood design, including Conservation By Design and permanently preserve open space within their development tracts.
- Direct residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development, appropriate in scale and character to the community, to growth areas, where public sewer and water and transportation improvements are most likely and could be phased in concert with new development. Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Discourage high rates of residential development to avoid overwhelming local schools and other municipal services.
- Confine business development to specific designated areas that do not encroach upon existing residential areas.

- Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provisions of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Identify areas which should be protected from development or receive only very low density development because of natural constraints or assets, and/or lack of supporting facilities and services.
- Identify significant natural resource lands and stream corridors for perpetual open space conservation.
- Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through proper allocation of land use on the Future Land Use Plan and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards in zoning ordinances.
- Strive for a balance between the need for future growth and the need for the conservation and preservation of resources.
- Encourage planned, concentrated development which emphasizes significant open space conservation.
- Respect and protect quality of life in the community.
- Encourage well-designed developments, including public and semi-public development, according to the scale and character of the setting.
- Create and maintain visual access to natural features and scenic vistas.
- Minimize strip development along existing roads and provide for appropriate buffering.
- Improve the visual image of the community at entranceways and along road corridors minimizing signage and inappropriate displays.
- Maintain consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries pursuant to the Future Land Use Plan
- Provide for a balance of land uses to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

- Provide for consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries within the Region.
- Maintain the rural character of lands outside the designated growth areas.
- Allocate land uses over the entire Region in an appropriate manner, rather than on a municipal basis.
- Allocate sufficient land to accommodate projected population within the growth areas.
- Design to minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses and attain compatibility between present and future land uses.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures and/or maintenance of historic structures and context within contemporary developments where appropriate after review of the nature of the historic resources.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal: To achieve a safe, efficient, multi-modal, and cost-effective regional circulation system that 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 in the Region; and relieve congestion.

Objectives:

- Work with PennDOT and developers to ensure local roads and intersections remain safe and able to accommodate current and projected traffic volumes.
- Encourage business developments to share controlled ingress and egress to adjacent major roads such as PA Routes 12, 73, and 662 as well as local collector roads.
- Identify and set priorities for projects which are appropriate for inclusion on Berks County's Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

- Promote future development of greenways and trails that will further walking, bicycling and other alternative transportation modes.
- Address Route 12 and Route 73 congestion issues, including bridges and road infrastructure.
- Facilitate movement through the Region and into and out of the Region's communities.
- Plan for safe and accessible routes of travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those without automobiles.
- Manage access along the Region's roads.
- Improve the efficiency of traffic flow and the safety of the Region's roads and their intersections.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers for transportation improvements.
- Establish consistent road signage policies.
- Establish design standards for roads and driveways and for building setbacks within the Region based on functional classification and need for future road improvements.
- Emphasize the need for PennDOT and transportation planning entities in Berks County, including the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), to support the recommendations of this Joint Comprehensive Plan with regard to needed improvements of state transportation facilities.
- Establish a mechanism to require traffic impact studies for industrial, commercial, and residential developments.
- Improve pedestrian safety in the Region by developing, improving and expanding the sidewalk system in residential areas.
- Address impacts of land uses and new development on major road corridors in the Region.
- Preserve the scenic, historic, and cultural road corridors in the Region.
- Enhance streetscapes along road corridors in the villages.

- Mitigate impacts of non-residential traffic on residential neighborhoods.
- Identify opportunities to interconnect roads and walkways, provide alternative traffic routes, and facilitate emergency access when new developments are under construction.
- Ensure that roads in agricultural areas may continue to accommodate agriculturally related vehicles and tractors.
- Consider alignment and shoulder improvements to improve safety along PA Route 12 near Woodland Road.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: To sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the Region while identifying appropriate locations for environmentally responsible industrial, office, retail, and service uses that are appropriate in scale and character to the Region in a cost efficient manner.

Objectives:

- Make sure local ordinances and codes do not discourage responsible business from locating in designated business areas.
- Encourage mixed use development in village areas zoned for business to maintain the economic viability of commercial structures.
- Enhance tax revenue from business development to balance the residential share of the property tax base.
- Promote job creation for local residents through cooperative efforts of municipalities, the county, economic development agencies, businesses, and educational institutions.
- Protect the Region's natural and agricultural resources as economic development occurs.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized properties in the Region.

- Protect natural, cultural and recreational resources to enable tourism based on nature and cultural, recreation, educational, and family activities.
- Retain existing business and industries and identify strategies to attract desirable new ones.
- Identify and designate appropriate target areas for future economic development and determine the types of economic development that are most appropriate for the Region.
- Consider establishing wireless internet hotspots in appropriate areas.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers in providing improvements.
- Establish standards to improve the design and appearance of new commercial and industrial development.
- Provide alternatives to strip commercial development.
- Encourage diversification of funding sources for municipal governments and school districts to achieve equitable taxation policies.
- Encourage resident-owned small businesses in existing mixed-use areas.

HOUSING

Goal: Provide diverse housing opportunities for the economic and demographic groups within the Region, consistent with existing development and the historical and natural environments.

Objectives:

- Provide for a variety of detached and attached housing types using environmentally sensitive layouts and designs.
- Concentrate housing in those areas most suitable from a physical perspective.
- Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of housing in and around the area's historic villages.

- Explore opportunities for cooperative administration of the Uniform Construction Code.
- Provide appropriate areas for a variety of single family, two family, and multiple-family dwellings and a variety of densities to allow housing choices, while retaining the existing character of the Region.
- Encourage maintenance of the existing housing stock to prevent deterioration.
- Strive for the provision of well-planned, safe, sound and attractive living environments for the Region's residents.
- Promote responsible development in order to provide an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing in the Region.
- Encourage retention and expansion of owner-occupied housing.
- Encourage the provision of housing alternatives for persons with special needs and the elderly.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Goal: Provide good quality community facilities and services to the Region's residents in an efficient, cost-effective manner within the financial resources of the municipalities, consistent with concern for protecting natural resources.

Objectives:

- Work with the Oley Valley School District to ensure adequate facilities exist to meet current and projected enrollments.
- Continue the Act 537 process to ensure appropriate solutions are devised for areas with a high concentration of failing septic systems.
- Support efforts of water supply and sewer authorities to plan ahead for expansion of capacities and extensions of the areas of service in accordance with growth projections and the establishment of future growth areas. Work to achieve consistency of Act 537 plans and infrastructure planning with this Plan and its

land use element. Initially, this will involve coordination with the Townships in addressing regional approaches to provide sewer and water infrastructure.

- Look for more opportunities to cooperate with neighboring municipalities on emergency services, road maintenance and other public works.
- Periodically review the adequacy of municipal contributions to private community service providers including volunteer fire companies and rescue groups, and recreation organizations, among others.
- Encourage community efforts to bring people together and create community cohesion.
- Continue to provide high quality fire and police services to the residents of the Region.
- Identify policies to ensure safe, reliable, cost efficient, and well-maintained sanitary sewage disposal and water supply in the Region.
- Increase resident awareness of resources and facilities within the Region and support efforts to protect, enhance, and increase accessibility and use of those resources and facilities.
- Coordinate land use and sewer and water planning so the extension of public sewer and water facilities is consistent with the land use and other goals and objectives of this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Review opportunities for regional sharing of equipment, services and facilities and continue intermunicipal cooperation.
- Identify the need for additional community, cultural and social facilities and services for all age groups in the Region, and encourage provision of those facilities and services.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers for providing social and cultural facilities.
- Identify community facilities and services that can help attract and support desired economic development.
- Encourage increased cooperation of municipalities and the Oley Valley School District in planning activities and utilization of school facilities.

- Identify methods of encouraging energy conservation.
- Address stormwater management concerns through implementation of the Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans for the Schuylkill River, Maiden Creek, and Manatawny Creek Watersheds

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Goal: Identify and implement a variety of approaches, mechanisms, and tools appropriate for dealing with the challenges posed by growth within the Region. Recognize that this Joint Comprehensive Plan is just the beginning of the process to achieve the Region’s vision and goals, and insist that the Plan be an essential part of the future decision making process.

Objectives:

- Continue intergovernmental cooperative planning and implementation efforts.
- Establish partnerships and create appropriate cooperative mechanisms to implement this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Identify opportunities for continued intermunicipal cooperation and planning.
- Support efforts for interregional and regional/county cooperation in addressing transportation, economic development, and community development issues.
- Identify the responsibilities of developers in accomplishing the goals and objectives of this Plan.
- Identify and pursue adequate funding of implementation actions listed in the Plan, with consideration of listed grant programs.
- Adopt zoning and subdivision ordinance regulations and incentives that are consistent with the goal and objectives of this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Explore the possibility of completing a joint zoning ordinance between the municipalities.
- Encourage developers to incorporate designs into their proposals which will implement the goals and objectives of this Plan.

- Develop indicators for measuring success in implementing this Plan and establish a program for measuring those indicators in the future.

Chapter 6

Future Land Use and Housing Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is one of the most important elements of the comprehensive plan. It graphically brings together all of the chapters of the plan and evaluates all of the information that has been mapped and gathered during this planning process. Based on stated goals and objectives, this Plan will determine what future land uses would be most appropriate throughout the region and at what density. Factors such as existing land use, natural features, soil conditions, demographics, housing, economic development trends, road conditions, sewer and water capacities, and village and neighborhood vitality all play a role in the development of the Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan will serve as a guide for future municipal ordinance amendments and regulations. Municipal regulatory controls such as zoning, sewer and water facilities planning, transportation planning, and recreation planning should be based upon the recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan.

It is important to stress that the Future Land Use Plan is **not** a zoning map, nor does it change the zoning ordinances and maps that have been previously adopted by the municipalities in the region. It is a reference tool and a guide that may be used by municipal officials and planners when making decisions regarding future development.

Future Land Use recommendations are based on a variety of factors: The patterns of development and existing conditions within the Townships; the anticipated path of future growth in the Region; existing environmental conditions and natural resources; capacity of public facilities, such as sewer and water service, and other infrastructure; and goals of *Vision 2020*, the Berks County Comprehensive Plan

LAND USE

Goal: Manage, control, and guide development to appropriate areas where public infrastructure is available or planned, and protect natural and agricultural resources in order to retain a mix of rural and suburban atmosphere within the Townships.

Objectives:

- Encourage residential developers to use neo-traditional neighborhood design, including Conservation By Design and permanently preserve open space within their development tracts.

- Direct residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development, appropriate in scale and character to the community, to growth areas, where public sewer and water and transportation improvements are most likely and could be phased in concert with new development. Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Discourage high rates of residential development to avoid overwhelming local schools and other municipal services.
- Confine business development to specific designated areas that do not encroach upon existing residential areas.
- Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provisions of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Identify areas which should be protected from development or receive only very low density development because of natural constraints or assets, and/or lack of supporting facilities and services.
- Identify significant natural resource lands and stream corridors for perpetual open space conservation.
- Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through proper allocation of land use on the Future Land Use Plan and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards in zoning ordinances.
- Strive for a balance between the need for future growth and the need for the conservation and preservation of resources.
- Encourage planned, concentrated development which emphasizes significant open space conservation.
- Respect and protect quality of life in the community.
- Encourage well-designed developments, including public and semi-public development, according to the scale and character of the setting.
- Create and maintain visual access to natural features and scenic vistas.

- Minimize strip development along existing roads and provide for appropriate buffering.
- Improve the visual image of the community at entranceways and along road corridors minimizing signage and inappropriate displays.
- Maintain consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries pursuant to the Future Land Use Plan
- Provide for a balance of land uses to meet the needs of existing and future residents.
- Provide for consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries within the Region.
- Maintain the rural character of lands outside the designated growth areas.
- Allocate land uses over the entire Region in an appropriate manner, rather than on a municipal basis.
- Allocate sufficient land to accommodate projected population within the growth areas.
- Design to minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses and attain compatibility between present and future land uses.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures and/or maintenance of historic structures and context within contemporary developments where appropriate after review of the nature of the historic resources.

Actions:

- A. Update zoning maps and zoning district provisions, to reflect the Future Land Use Plan as necessary.
- B. Update Statements of Community Development Objectives contained in Township zoning ordinances to be consistent with this Plan.
- C. In zoning ordinances, provide for land development techniques designed to protect existing resources, provide open spaces, enhance streetscapes, and protect the character of existing villages.

1. Conservation Zoning (Growing Greener Concept of Natural Lands Trust) in the Region:

Determine whether Conservation Zoning should be the default and/or encouraged method of development, with density disincentives given to other methods of development which result in less open space and protection of resources. The typical Conservation Zoning development process is:

- a. Net out natural resources
- b. Establish maximum overall density
- c. Establish minimum substantial open space requirement
- d. Establish alternative methods of development
- e. Require important natural features and resources, such as scenic vistas, historic sites, agriculture, steep slopes, wetlands, and woodland, to be contained in open space
- f. Provide visual and physical access to open space areas

2. Lot averaging, as appropriate, which provides:

- a. A maximum overall density
- b. Flexibility in lot size, with a minimum established
- c. Natural features and resources are contained in larger lots so houses can be sited away from them

3. Traditional Neighborhood Development (Neotraditional Development), and Village Extension and Village Design within the Villages. These methods promote the following concepts:

- a. Creation of a sense of community
- b. Pedestrian oriented design
- c. Central community facilities
- d. Public spaces

- e. Shallow setbacks
 - f. Street trees
 - g. Alleys where appropriate
 - h. Compact development
 - i. Interconnected streets, closer to a grid pattern
 - j. Historic development patterns of villages
4. Adopt corridor overlay zoning along major commercial roads, such as PA Route 73, Route 662, and Route 12. Examine the potential for overlay zoning for Main Street in the Village of Oley to enhance the appearance and protect historic character, enhance safety and traffic movement, and maintain economic viability. Such overlay zoning may address:
- a. Coordinate landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, paving materials, design of site improvements, building façade and windows displays throughout the road corridors
 - b. Increase pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjoining properties and within properties
 - c. Increase size and quantity of landscape material
 - d. Integrate historic and cultural resources into development
 - e. Provide site amenities
 - f. Renovate building facades
 - g. Minimize curb cuts and unrestricted access
 - h. Provide more attractive signage
 - i. Locate parking to the rear and side of buildings where appropriate and feasible
 - j. Integrate architecture, landscaping and screening

- k. Encourage pedestrian oriented design (e.g., sidewalks and benches)
 - l. Encourage pedestrian oriented spaces in the villages.
 - m. Screen loading areas, outdoor storage and dumpsters
 - n. Provide safe bus stops with shelters, with pedestrian connections to buildings
- D. In zoning ordinances, require areas for economic development to be developed through coordinated, attractive commercial and business parks and discourage additional strip commercial development.
- E. Consider allowing convenience commercial uses in or near residential developments to reduce traffic to and from commercial areas in the Region.
- F. The Townships should continue to monitor zoning along municipal boundaries to provide for compatible zoning districts.
- G. Within zoning district provisions, considering the entire Region as a whole, provide for the accommodation of housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households from all economic and demographic groups within the Region.
- H. Address architectural and related issues within zoning ordinances. For example:
 - 1. In some zoning districts, such as but not limited to village zoning districts, limits on building size will be appropriate to maintain existing character.
 - 2. In some zoning districts, emphasis should be placed on encouraging architecture consistent with existing community and/or architectural and historic character.
- I. Additional zoning actions include:
 - 1. Requiring buffers and/or performance and design standards where there will be potentially conflicting uses.
 - 2. Requiring impact statements (environmental, traffic, services, fiscal, etc.) with requested zoning amendments requiring a zoning district change, to address the impacts of the requested amendment.

3. Giving emphasis to density bonuses for development served by, or with potential to be served by public sewer and public water, rather than development served by package/private systems or individual systems.
- J. Update municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances, as necessary. Options include:
1. Require street furniture/pedestrian amenities as required improvements in the villages where appropriate.
 2. Adopt appropriate refinements to implement the Growing Greener Conservation Zoning Concept.

If the Conservation Zoning concept is used, the design procedure is:
 - Identify conservation areas
 - Locate house sites
 - Align streets and trails
 - Draw lot lines
 3. Require pre-design meetings between planning commissions and developers prior to preparation and submission of subdivision and land development plans.
 4. Stormwater management ordinances prepared in accordance with Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans should be consistent with the objectives of this Plan.
 5. Require landscaping and buffering of commercial and industrial uses to avoid conflicts with residential uses.
- K. Municipal Act 537 plans and water supply planning should be coordinated with this plan, particularly the Future Land Use Plan, to promote compact, efficient, orderly, and phased development within and contiguous to existing developed areas.
- L. Brownfield properties should be remediated and redeveloped as industrial uses. An authority should be formed to assist in the reclamation and administration of these properties.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

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

Objectives:

- Preserve farming by continuing to promote agricultural zoning, agricultural security areas, purchase of agricultural easements and preferential assessments.
- Minimize non-farm activities near agricultural areas to reduce the potential for conflicts with normal farming operations.
- Minimize public water and sewer line extensions into prime agricultural areas.
- Discourage the conversion of productive farmland to non-farm uses.
- Provide for a range of appropriate supplemental income opportunities in agricultural areas.
- Avoid scattered development which causes conflicts with farming, such as additional vehicular traffic and land use incompatibilities, by designating growth and potential future growth areas.
- Encourage participation in the “Clean and Green” Act (preferential tax assessment), the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (purchase of development rights), and private land preservation programs.
- Continue and consider additional opportunities for effective agricultural zoning in productive agricultural areas.
- Protect the actively farmed land remaining in the Region from incompatible non-farm uses.
- Identify techniques to encourage continual use of existing farmland.
- Develop and encourage appropriate land maintenance and protection policies, including best management practices (BMPs).

Actions:

- A. To promote the long term economic vitality of agriculture, the Townships should identify and encourage the preservation of the most viable agricultural lands. Lands that should receive priority include:
- Land that is protected by existing restrictions and/or easements against development, including lands that have had easements purchased or are adjacent to such lands;
 - Land that is composed of capability class I, II, or III as defined by the USDA.
 - Land that is currently in agricultural use.
 - Land that is included within an approved Agricultural Security Area..
- B. Oley Township should consider whether to expand its Effective Agricultural Zoning areas to include the lands designated as Agricultural Preservation on the Future Land Use Map. Effective Agricultural zones permit a wide variety of farming uses, including farm-related businesses and restrict non-farm uses that can be disruptive to agricultural activities. Non-agricultural dwelling unit density is strictly limited to one dwelling unit per 20 to 25 acres average, with the homes required to be built on small lots.

Examples of effective agriculture preservation techniques include:

- Fixed System Formula – allows one dwelling unit for a specified number of acres (1 du / 5 acres or 1 du / 25 acres);
 - Sliding Scale Formula – varies the number of permitted dwelling units based on the acreage of the entire parcel. The result is that larger parcels are permitted to have proportionately less dwellings than smaller parcels;
 - Percentage-System Formula – Permits only a percentage of the entire parcel to be subdivided or developed (example 10%).
- C. The Townships should encourage preserving agricultural operations through the following administrative actions:
1. Work with local farmers to encourage participation in the Berks County Agricultural Easement Program.
 2. Encourage individual participation in other Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Programs.
 3. Promote the inclusion of farms in Agricultural Security Areas.

4. Support measures to relieve property tax burden for farmers.
 5. Limit extension of planned public sewer and water facilities to agricultural areas only when failing systems are involved.
 6. Limit non-farm uses which could cause conflicts with agricultural practices and/or require buffers for non-farm uses around the perimeter of farms.
 7. Allow conservation zoning development (Growing Greener) as an option in agricultural areas.
 8. Promote enrollment in Act 319 (Clean and Green) tax relief program.
 9. Allow for and give incentives to compact development and clustering of housing for development.
 10. Give disincentives to inefficient development techniques.
- D. The Townships should allow farmers to supplement income through home businesses, home occupations and farm related businesses; allow farm support businesses and businesses which market or process local farm products; establish appropriate controls on intensive agricultural operations; and permit appropriate recreational activities, such as hayrides, corn mazes, and festivals.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The principal benefit of multi-municipal planning is the opportunity to coordinate land uses among the participating municipalities. Even if the implementation process does not include a joint zoning ordinance, much is gained if the individual ordinances define land uses in the same way. The following text is *not* recommended ordinance language, but indicates the type of use and general function of each land use identified on the Future Land Use map.

While it is not required to specify lot sizes in the Comprehensive Plan, doing so makes it much easier to draft the implementing zoning ordinances. The target densities for every category should be used as a starting point when amending zoning district requirements. Areas with recommendations for higher density development are contingent on the availability of public sewer and water service.

The Draft Future Land Use Plan Map for the Oley, Alsace, Ruscombmanor Joint Comprehensive Plan, Figure 6.1, includes the following Land Use Categories:

- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Village
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional / Public Facilities

GROWTH AREAS

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code introduced the concept of Designated Growth Areas, which are regions within a multi-municipal plan that preferably includes or is adjacent to existing developed areas or villages. In Growth Areas, residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned for at densities of more than one unit per acre, commercial, industrial and institutional uses are permitted or planned for, and public infrastructure services are provided or planned. The intent of the Growth Area is to provide for orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area within the next 20 years.

Berks Vision 2020 defines “Growth Areas” as mostly undeveloped at present. New growth must occur within the natural service areas of existing and proposed public sewer and water systems, which can accommodate higher densities and greater variety of housing. Medium to higher density development will reduce the amount of land necessary for future growth, and will take advantage of the existing public facilities and infrastructure.

For the purposes of this Joint Comprehensive Plan, Growth Areas will be areas where public sewer and public water service is provided, or could be provided with reasonable ease (for example a tract of land within one quarter mile of the system).

FUTURE LAND USE MAP CATEGORIES

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

Description - Cultivation of the soil, forestry, and the raising of livestock for commercial or private purposes, including ancillary uses such as the residence of the farm operator. Commercial uses which directly support farm operations are typically allowed.

Planning Objective – Target critical areas where agricultural activities are practiced for future preservation. Uses related to agriculture including support businesses should be encouraged. Limited residential development may follow a sliding scale or Conservation by Design Zoning techniques in some areas to preserve open space.

Recommended Land Uses – Cropland; Pastureland; Farm-related structures and businesses; Woodlands; Limited residential; Public and municipal uses.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – If residential development is permitted, it should be at lower average densities (not greater than 40,000 square feet) and should not encroach on active farmland. Conservation by Design Zoning development, and effective agricultural zoning techniques such as sliding scale, where larger parcels have proportionately less dwellings than smaller ones or percentage-based lot calculation methods should be encouraged in this district. Public sewer and water service is not recommended for Agricultural areas unless public health issues are imminent. Continued participation in the County’s Agricultural Preservation Program should be encouraged.

RURAL:

Description - These areas contain a mixture of agricultural, woodland, open space, and low density residential uses. Factors such as the presence of steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, and/or floodplains limit the development potential of these areas.

Planning Objective – Accommodate limited very low density development; agricultural uses; rural resources; open space and recreation.

Recommended Land Uses – Limited Very Low Density Residential; Cropland; Pastureland; Open space; Farm-related structures and businesses; Woodlands; Public, Semi-Public; Institutional, and municipal use.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Larger lots of at least one to three acres or more per dwelling unit. Conservation Development techniques are encouraged in this district. Public sewer and water service is not recommended for Rural areas.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

Description - The lowest density of residential. The defining characteristic of these areas is that only single-family detached homes (and accessory uses) are permitted.

Planning Objective – To accommodate continued low density residential development where such development is occurring, in a setting that will continue to contain some rural characteristics such as woodland and open space.

Recommended Land Uses – Single Family detached dwellings; Woodlands; Parks/Open Space; Municipal Use.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Lot sizes of approximately 40,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet (approx one and one-half acre). Higher density development may be allowed through Conservation Zoning development, provided that public sewer and water service is available. Public sewer and water service should be provided in developments where overall density is approximately 20,000 square feet or less.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

Description - This area is recommended for higher densities than the Low Density Residential category, and allows narrower lots. Also, single-family semi-detached homes, townhomes, and mobile homes may be permitted as well as detached houses.

Planning Objective – Recommended areas where continued residential development should occur.

Recommended Land Uses – Single family detached dwellings; Single family semi-detached dwellings; Park/Open Space Uses.

Recommended Development Densities / Strategies – Maximum density range up to 4 units per acre (10,000 square foot lots), depending on the availability of public facilities. Lower densities if on-site facilities are used. Conservation Zoning development, Neo-Traditional, and Traditional Neighborhood Development is appropriate in these areas.

VILLAGE:

Description - These areas will be characterized by a mix of uses including residential uses and related convenience-commercial areas, second floor apartments, and professional offices at a variety of densities.

Planning Objective – Provide areas to encourage a mixture of residential and appropriate commercial uses within the villages of Oley, Pleasantville, and Pricetown. The critical element here is the creation of an environment where the commercial uses are compatible with existing residential uses. Commercial uses within these areas will be at a smaller neighborhood scale. Highway oriented uses, such as garages and service stations, are not recommended in these areas.

Target area for economic activity and re-development of vacant buildings with the goal of keeping the village center a destination. Emphasis should be given to protection of the character of the historic character of the area

Recommended Land Uses – Offices; Small-scale retail and local commercial and personal service uses. Single family dwellings, semi-detached dwellings; Parks and Recreation; Public, institutional, and municipal uses.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Density will vary depending on the use and the availability of public facilities, but it should mirror the existing development pattern and density (4-6 units per acre). Traditional Neighborhood Design development may be appropriate within these areas to blend in with the Region’s existing development pattern.

Access management strategies are extremely important in this area and off-street parking areas should be to the side or rear of the structures. Buildings and sites with historic attributes should be targeted for preservation.

COMMERCIAL:

Description - This category includes most kinds of retail sales and businesses and highway-oriented businesses like those found along PA Route 73 and PA Route 12.

Planning Objective – Provide for appropriate commercial development in locations where a cluster of commercial uses exist. These uses should be environmentally friendly, with proper landscaping and buffering required to not impact adjacent residential development.

Recommended Land Uses – Highway oriented commercial uses such as retail; offices; supermarkets; multi-tenant shopping plazas; automobile related uses.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Lot sizes may vary, with density appropriate as needed by use, and type of sewer and water service. Access management should be stressed.

INDUSTRIAL:

Description - This category will be intended to accommodate a variety of industrial uses, due to access to major highways and availability of required utilities.

Planning Objective – Provide areas to accommodate a wide range of industrial uses.

Recommended Land Uses – Quarry; Offices; Printing and Publishing uses; Warehousing and Distribution; Manufacturing; Food Processing; Transportation.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – One acre minimum lot size or larger, where appropriate for use.

PUBLIC FACILITIES / INSTITUTIONAL:

Definition - These are open space, recreational, and school district and municipal areas that should remain in such use for the foreseeable future.

Planning Objective – Provide for existing public and semi-public owned parks, school district and municipal facilities, and open space.

Recommended Land Uses - Parks; Pavilions; Greenways; Open Space; Natural Areas; Churches and cemeteries; Schools; Post Offices; Municipal buildings and facilities.

Recommended Development Densities / Strategies – Not recommended for private development other than low-impact accessory uses related to the recommended land uses.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP ACREAGE BY CATEGORY

Future Land Use	Acres (Approximate)
Agricultural Preservation	9,901
Commercial	583
Rural	10,992
Public Facilities / Institutional	134
Industrial	1,234
Village	291
Low Density Residential	6,804
Medium Density Residential	1,359
Roads	1,083
Total	32,383

HOUSING PLAN

The objectives for housing are to provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents; to 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 Region; to provide for maintenance of the character of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate coordinated land use controls, and address the housing needs of the elderly and disabled in the community.

Provision for a variety of housing densities, housing types, and development patterns in appropriately designated areas is accomplished through the Future Land Use Plan. Maintenance of the existing housing stock and adequacy of new housing can be accomplished through enforcement of building codes and utilization of property maintenance codes.

Another concern is providing for housing for people trying to enter the housing market and housing for those families living and working in the Region. Allowing for a variety of housing types, including multiple family, and higher densities of development when public sewer and water is available, is important to addressing this need.

While housing affordability issues typically reflect market conditions, the Townships can maintain construction and housing codes which are reasonably based on protecting public health, safety and general welfare, and which do not contain provisions solely to increase the luxury of dwelling units. This is facilitated by use of the Uniform Construction Code. Excessive standards in municipal regulations can unnecessarily raise housing costs.

New housing developments should be well-planned, attractive living environments. A variety of development options can be made available, such as conservation zoning development, traditional and village patterns, in addition to more typical single family development.

The existing character of residential areas can be maintained through appropriate zoning provisions and review of subdivision and land development plans.

Goal: Provide diverse housing opportunities for the economic and demographic groups within the Region, consistent with existing development and the historical and natural environments.

Objectives:

- Provide for a variety of detached and attached housing types using environmentally sensitive layouts and designs.
- Concentrate housing in those areas most suitable from a physical perspective.
- Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of housing in and around the area's historic villages and countryside.
- Explore opportunities for cooperative administration of the Uniform Construction Code.
- Provide appropriate areas for a variety of single family, two family, and multiple-family dwellings and a variety of densities to allow housing choices, while retaining the existing character of the Region.
- Encourage maintenance of the existing housing stock to prevent deterioration.
- Strive for the provision of well-planned, safe, sound and attractive living environments for the Region's residents.
- Promote responsible development in order to provide an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing in the Region.
- Encourage retention and expansion of owner-occupied housing.
- Encourage the provision of housing alternatives for persons with special needs and the elderly.

Actions:

- A. Establish and maintain adequate housing and property maintenance codes and zoning ordinance provisions as necessary to maintain the building stock and properties within the Region.
- B. Foster programs which encourage home renovation and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods. Enact land use regulations that provide adequate opportunities for affordable workforce housing.
- C. Work with residents of the Region and regional taxing entities to identify programs and policies that will help residents maintain and enhance their properties, and meet housing expenses and retain their homes as owner-occupied single family residences.
- D. Regulate housing conversions through zoning provisions and require adequate parking to be provided.
- E. Provide for a variety of housing types and densities through zoning.
- F. Enact zoning regulations that provide incentives for senior housing in the Residential Areas on the Future Land Use Map. Consider appropriateness of such techniques or density incentives or overlay treatments.
- G. Encourage housing development in existing villages at densities consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Capacity for Future Development

The Future Land Use and Housing Plan must provide documentation that there is a sufficient amount of available land for future development to accommodate the future population projected up to the year 2020. Table 6.1 illustrates Region's population projections (from US Census Bureau) for 2010 and 2020. The projected increase for the Region from 2006 to 2020 is approximately a range of 649 to 1,704 additional persons. Table 6.2 provides the projected need for additional housing units in the Region. In order to accommodate the projected population increase, there will be a need to provide a range of 249 to 644 additional housing units by 2020.

**TABLE 6.1: POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
ESTIMATED 2006 POPULATION**

	1970 CENSUS	1980 CENSUS	1990 CENSUS	2000 CENSUS	2006 EST	2010 PROJ (range)	2020 PROJ (range)
Alsace Township	3,034	3,456	3,459	3,689	3,758	3,789- 3,908-	3,964- 4,142
Oley Township	2,778	3,024	3,362	3,583	3,661	3,796- 3,871-	4,023- 4,121
Ruscombmanor Township	1,985	2,546	3,129	3,776	4,158	4,000- 4,386	4,239- 5,018
REGION	7,797	9,026	9,950	11,048	11,577	11,585- 12,165	12,226- 13,281

SOURCE: US Census; Berks County Planning Commission; PA DEP; SSM

TABLE 6.2: HOUSING NEED PROJECTIONS

	2000 CENSUS	2006 Estimate	2010 PROJ (range)	2020 PROJ (range)
Alsace Township	3,689	3,758	3,789-3,908	3,964- 4,142
Alsace Township housing requirement @2.6 persons/household (2000 Census)	1,503*	1,445**	1,457- 1,503 (12 to 58 additional units)	1,525-1,593 (80-148 additional units)
Oley Township	3,583	3,661	3,796- 3,871-	4,023- 4,121
Oley Township housing requirement @2.6 persons/household (2000 Census)	1,425*	1,408**	1,460- 1,488 (52 to 80 additional units)	1,547- 1,585 (139-177 additional units)
Ruscombmanor Township	3,776	4,158	4,000- 4,386	4,239- 5,018
Ruscombmanor Township housing requirement @2.7 persons/household (2000 Census)	1,421*	1,540	1,481-1,624 (-59 to 84 additional units)	1,570-1,859 (30-319 additional units)
REGION POPULATION	11,048	11,577	11,585- 12,165	12,226- 13,281
REGION HOUSING REQUIREMENT (units)	4,349*	4,393	5 to 222 additional units	249- 644 additional units

SOURCE: US Census; Berks County Planning Commission; PA DEP 2006;

*Total existing occupied housing units as of 2000

** The average household size has increased from 1990-2000, thus in some cases the requirement for units may decrease

TABLE 6.3: BUILD OUT CAPACITY FOR POPULATION GROWTH IN GROWTH AREAS-REGION

Future Land Use Plan Category	Approx. Available Undeveloped Acres	Available Acres Minus 20%	Likely Development Density Range	Likely Maximum Potential Range for Dwelling Units at Build Out	Likely Maximum Potential range for additional persons*
Low Density Residential	2,833	2,266	.75 - 1 D.U./Acre	1,700- 2,266 units	4,590- 6,118
Medium Density Residential	512	410	2-4 D.U./Acre	820- 1,640 units	2,214- 4,428
Village	57	29**	4-6 D.U./Acre	116 - 174 units	313 - 470
TOTALS	3,402	2,705	--	2,636-4,080 units	7,117- 11,016

*Used 2.7 persons per dwelling unit, average for Ruscombmanor Township, the highest average in the Region.
Source: US Census Bureau.

– assumed 20% of tract would not be available for inclusion within residential lots (50% for Village)

** only 50% of available acres were factored into Village, assuming mixed-use and commercial development occurs.

Table 6.3 calculates a maximum build out capacity range for population growth in the growth areas as from 7,117 to 11,016 additional persons, depending on the density of development. This figure does NOT include additional available acreage within the categories outside of the growth areas (rural), where undoubtedly there will be some additional growth. Even after excluding the non-residential categories, this build-out capacity exceeds the initial projected 2006-2020 population increase for the Region of 649 to 1,704 additional persons. It is a safe assumption that the Region will have more than enough capacity to handle anticipated future growth for the life span of this Plan and beyond.

This Joint Comprehensive Plan recommends that the majority of residential growth occur within areas capable of providing public sewer and public water service, which would include the Medium Density and Village categories. Within these two categories, there is capacity to accommodate a range of 2,527 to 4,898 additional persons.

However, undoubtedly, there will be lower density development occurring outside of these areas, mainly the Low Density Residential category. Table 6.3 also calculates a build out capacity range for population growth in the Low Density Residential areas

outside of the sewer and water service areas as from 4,590 to 6,118 additional persons, depending on the density of development. This figure is in addition to the capacity range of the Medium Density and Village categories. The total overall capacity for development in the Region, is a range of 2,636 to 4,080 additional units, and 7,117 to 11,016 additional persons, both well below the projected future needs for the Region

Environmental Considerations for Future Development

As development occurs in the Region, particularly in the Agricultural areas, which contain the greatest extent of sensitive environmental resources in the Region, care must be taken to preserve and protect the resources identified within each tract of land. The following approaches should be applied to the Region for regional consistency regarding development in Agricultural areas:

- An ongoing awareness of and sensitivity toward the natural resources of the area should be encouraged.
- Development should be concerned with geologic stability, soils suitability, groundwater supplies and stream flows.
- Groundwater resources should be protected against depletion and contamination.
- Methods of encouraging replenishment of the groundwater supply should be utilized.
- Streams, ponds and wetlands should be protected against pollution from point sources and runoff.
- Floodplains and poorly drained soils should be protected from encroachment.
- The loss of topsoil should be minimized.
- The retention and establishment of trees and other vegetation should be encouraged to control erosion, shade surface waters, control stormwater flow, create wind breaks, provide animal habitats and provide visual amenities.
- The preservation of scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors should be encouraged.
- Steep slopes should generally be avoided.

- The protection, preservation and enhancement of historic resources should be encouraged.
- The adaptive reuse of historic structures should be encouraged where appropriate.
- Innovative land development techniques should be used to minimize land consumption, preserve ecosystems, preserve agricultural lands and preserve natural resources and open space.
- The provision of open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation should be encouraged. Visual and physical access to the open space system should be provided.
- The coordination of open space and circulation systems among adjoining developments should be encouraged.
- A system of bicycle paths and sidewalks should be encouraged.
- Incorporation of resources into development plans should be encouraged.
- Flexible approaches to site design to recognize resources should be encouraged.
- Not permitting invasive species to be planted by developers as part of landscaping plans.

Recommended Development Concepts

The Action Plan contains recommendations for land development techniques and processes designed to protect existing resources, provide open spaces, encourage appropriate development which is consistent with existing development patterns, and enhance streetscapes. Because of the rural character of much of the Region and the existing population centers and Villages, techniques which are especially recommended include Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and Conservation Zoning Development. TND is particularly appropriate within and surrounding existing settlements and villages, and would be appropriate in designated growth areas in the Region. Conservation Development could be used to help preserve open space and agricultural resources when development occurs in more rural areas of the Townships.

The Elements of Traditional Neighborhood Design

- **Limited Size:** A village or neighborhood is limited to a 1/4 mile radius (up to 200 acres), or a five minute walk from the center to the edge.
- **Mixed Uses:** The inclusion of retail and commercial activity with residential uses brings the needs of life within walking distance for all ages and social groups. A variety of housing types is a standard element, including single family, duplex, townhouses, and apartments over shops, which can bring safety and vitality to the town center.
- **Street Network:** A traditional grid or web pattern creates a more understandable system and more choices for travel routes, which is effective for pedestrians as well as the automobile.
- **On-Street Parking:** Helps to slow down traffic, acts as a buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic, and increases opportunities for drivers to find convenient parking.
- **Alleys and Lanes:** Give secondary access to property for deliveries: locating parking garages, utilities and garbage collection here preserves the beauty of the streetscape.
- **Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths:** An emphasis on "walkability," or the needs of the pedestrian, makes destinations accessible to residents, including children and the elderly.
- **Village Center:** A central focal point for community life, providing a special place for public events, and is the appropriate place for mixing retail, civic and business life.
- **Shallow Setbacks:** Placing buildings close to sidewalks creates a friendlier "outdoor room." Distances across streets, from building to building, do not exceed five times the building height.
- **Outbuildings:** Secondary structures normally located at a rear alley allow for parking, storage, workshop space, home offices or a rental apartment.
- **Porches:** Create spaces for a sociable transition from the public street to the private home and provide shelter and shade.
- **Building Types:** Designed to allow for adaptation from one use to another, as markets dictate, with an emphasis on local historical style.

- **Open Space:** A variety of types are included for specific needs, from the regional parks, to the neighborhood playground, to a green buffer, bringing nature into the human environment.

Conservation Zoning (Growing Greener)

Growing Greener¹ is a statewide community planning initiative which is designed to help communities use the development regulation process to their advantage to protect interconnected networks of greenways and permanent open space.

Each time a property is developed into a residential subdivision, an opportunity exists for adding land to a community-wide network of open space. Although such opportunities are seldom taken in many municipalities, this situation could be reversed fairly easily by making several small but significant changes to the Township's basic local land-use documents – the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and land development ordinance. Conservation Zoning rearranges the density on each development parcel as it is being planned so that only half (or less) of the buildable land is consumed by house lots and streets. Without controversial “down zoning” (decreasing the number of house lots), the same number of homes can be built in a less land-consumptive manner, allowing the balance of the property to be permanently protected and added to an interconnected network of community green spaces. This “density-neutral” approach provides a fair and equitable way to balance conservation and development objectives.

Infill Policies

Two of the objectives for land use are to encourage new residential development to take place as infill within and near the existing villages and other existing settlements with infrastructure of adequate capacity and functionality and promote infill and revitalization within existing centers, in conformity with the general character of the existing centers. There are a number of strategies which can be used to promote infill. The following policies can be reviewed as a starting point in determining the most appropriate methods for use in the Region. Land consumption for new development can be minimized if development or redevelopment occurs on vacant or underutilized parcels within existing developed areas. Development costs can sometimes be reduced because of the accessibility of existing infrastructure and services.

¹ Source: Natural Lands Trust, Media, PA

Potential Infill Promotion Strategies

Zoning Strategies

1. Map areas for infill development. Identify parcels, developments, and existing vacant or underutilized buildings and lots that can be targeted for infill development.
2. Determine types of development desired.
3. Zone areas appropriately to allow desired land uses.
4. Create infill development opportunities overlay districts as necessary.
5. Consider whether more design flexibility in ordinances is necessary to achieve the desired end – such as flexibility in setbacks, yard requirements, lot widths, and lot size.
6. Consider density bonuses to lowest acceptable lot size or highest intensity of use consistent with available sewer and water facilities.
7. Consider allowing nearby convenience services in designated economic development, mixed use, or infill overlay areas.
8. Apply appropriate standards to non-conforming lots which can allow reasonable development.
9. Where appropriate, consider well-designed, buffered mixed uses or dwelling types, if appropriate infrastructure is available.
10. Consider transfer of development rights with bonuses to target development areas from areas targeted for preservation or conservation.
11. Eliminate incentives to development in non-growth and non-targeted areas.

Subdivision and Land Development Strategies

12. Streamline procedures and permitting.
 - reduce delays and hearings
 - have expeditor
13. Review level of service standards (such as amount of recreation) or design standards (such as road widths) for appropriateness in each situation.
14. Consider appropriateness of incentives for infill projects
 - reduced development/permit fees
 - reduced impact fees
 - reduced infrastructure connection fees
15. Consider appropriateness of allowing/promoting re-subdivision or redesign of very low density tracts to more efficient, land conserving patterns if appropriate infrastructure is available.

Public Relations Strategies

16. Stimulate developer interest in infill development and educate consumer/public regarding benefits and availability of infill:
 - promotional/publicity campaign for infill
 - make parcel data available
 - establish cooperative demonstration project
 - seminars
 - training programs
 - design competition for demonstration project
17. Prepare neighborhood strategies with input from residents; cooperation with, involvement of, and information to existing residents.
18. Inform existing residents of projects, invite participation in review, hold project meetings with developers at initial stages.
19. Prepare appropriate protective design standards such as traffic calming, landscaping, vegetation retention or replacement, and permissible land uses.

20. Encourage lending institutions to be supportive of infill initiative in providing lending.

Municipal Financial Policies

21. Consider appropriateness of real estate transfer tax relief for purchase of properties in target areas.
22. Consider appropriateness of property tax abatement in target areas.
23. Foster programs which encourage building renovation and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods.
24. Identify strategies for assembling parcels (with realtors and developers).

Municipal Infrastructure Policies

25. Identify need for Infrastructure improvements (new or improved roads, parks, utilities, streetscape improvements, drainage facilities, pathways).
26. Facilitate accessibility to community facilities and services (senior centers, community centers, etc.).
27. Locate municipal services near growth and target areas.

Official Map

Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code authorizes the governing body of each municipality with power to create an official map of all or a portion of the municipality which may show elements of the Joint Comprehensive Plan with regard to public lands and facilities, and which may include, but need not be limited to:

1. Existing and proposed public streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widening, narrowing, extensions, diminutions, openings or closings.
2. Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds, and open space reservations.
3. Pedestrian ways and easements.
4. Transit right-of-ways 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 Joint Comprehensive Plan.

The Township Supervisors may make surveys and maps to identify the location of property, traffic way 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, 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 Townships 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.

Chapter 7

Economic Development Plan

The Oley, Alsace, Ruscombmanor Planning Region must support and create conditions for innovative economic and community development. A proactive approach to economic development is to increase the tax base as well as employment opportunities by expanding and diversifying the economic base. Residents of the Region expressed an interest in additional commercial and, to a lesser extent, industrial development in the area.

The citizen survey revealed that the stability and vitality of the Region's character and economy is a concern for area residents. The respondents are also concerned about the loss of rural areas to residential development. A coordinated economic development strategy involving smaller scale uses could be directed to the village areas of Oley, Pricetown, and Breezy Corners; and larger-scale enterprises could be directed toward the PA Route 73 Corridor in several locations in the Townships as well as the PA Route 12 Corridor north of the City of Reading, which are appropriate for larger scale commercial and office uses. Industrial development should be directed toward existing industrially zoned areas of the Region. Existing uses such as the Eastern Industries and Allentown Cement Company Quarries should be buffered to prevent incompatible residential development adjacent to these sites.

The Costs of Land Use

As development has increased in and around the Region, costs associated with that development, including traffic and road maintenance, public protection, sewer and water system development and expansion, and public education have also increased. Ultimately, these costs result in higher taxes, which can be especially burdensome on those with fixed incomes. One way to address increased costs is to form cooperative efforts among the municipalities and volunteer organizations to identify ways to provide essential services more efficiently, and to eliminate duplication of services among agencies.

Continued residential development in the Region needs a balance of non-residential development to ensure a healthy tax base and economy. The Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences Cooperative Extension has published a study entitled, "Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses, the Pennsylvania Experience." In the study, eight Pennsylvania townships were analyzed to determine the fiscal impact of land uses. The ratios of revenues to expenditures were calculated for residential, commercial, industrial, and farm and open land. Residential land, on average, requires substantially more expenditures, mainly due to school expenses and infrastructure costs. In some cases, the expense to revenue ratio can be more than 2 to 1 for residential uses. Commercial,

industrial, and farm and open land provides more revenue than they require in expenditures. These findings are consistent with those in other states, according to the study. A summary of this study can be found in Appendix B.

Encouraging Economic Vitality

Municipalities can support economic vitality through municipal ordinances. Amending zoning ordinances to allow additional commercial and industrial development, as well as adaptive reuse of older buildings is one method. Streetscape enhancement of commercial areas and entry or “gateway” enhancements are others. The townships must take advantage of the public/private partnerships that exist and provide leadership to the business community to help establish a common focus for future economic development.

A healthy economy requires a balance between residential and non residential uses, preserving residential neighborhoods to support commercial areas and provide a workforce. Communities with high quality-of-life amenities attract more affluent and skilled workers and retain existing workforces better than communities with poor quality-of-life amenities. Preserving open space, architecture, and culture helps a community maintain a sense of place and attract people and businesses to the Region.

The employment by Industry, Table 7.1, clearly shows manufacturing to be the largest category of employment in the Region and the County. Education, Health, and Social Services is the second largest category for each municipality in the Region, as well as, the County of Berks. Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships and Berks County rank Retail as the third largest category while Oley has three very closely tied categories with 10% of the population identifying their third largest employment by industry as Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management service, 9.9% as Construction, and Retail trade as 9.7%.

The categories of employment with the least amount of responses are information and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining. Oley has the largest number of the latter category but these are mostly in the mining industry.

TABLE 7.1: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment by Industry								
Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County								
2000								
	Alsace Township		Oley Township		Ruscombmanor Twp		Berks County	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	22	1.1	52	2.8	20	1.0	3,215	1.8
Construction	187	9.7	181	9.9	137	6.6	10,591	5.9
Manufacturing	551	28.4	475	25.9	602	29.2	43,600	24.1
Wholesale trade	99	5.1	62	3.4	40	1.9	6,873	3.8
Retail trade	261	13.5	178	9.7	235	11.4	21,804	12.1
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	134	6.9	87	4.8	123	6.0	8,896	4.9
Information	12	0.6	31	1.7	32	1.6	3,060	1.7
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	104	5.4	57	3.1	86	4.2	11,582	6.4
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	77	4.0	184	10.0	133	6.5	13,575	7.5
Educational, health and social services	263	13.6	306	16.7	424	20.6	33,496	18.5
Total	1,710	88.3	1,613	88.0	1,832	89.0	156,692	86.7

Table 7.2: Employment by Sector chart indicates the total employment and change to employment in the Reading Metropolitan Statistical Area. In Berks County, the largest reduction to Employment by Sector has been in Retail Trade and Manufacturing, 33.7% and 29.3% respectively. The largest increase has been in the Government sector at 28.6% and Transportation 17.5%.

TABLE 7.2: EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Employment by Sector Reading Metropolitan Statistical Area (Berks County) August 1997 - November 2007				
ECONOMIC SECTOR	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT		CHANGE	
	November 2007	August 1997	Number	Percent
Construction, Mining, Communication and Utilities	9,344	11,300	-1,956	-17.3
Manufacturing	31,321	44,300	12,979	-29.3
Transportation	4,937	4,200	737	17.5
Wholesale Trade	6,666	7,700	-1,166	-15.1
Retail Trade	20,414	30,800	10,386	-33.7
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	27,699	8,400	19,299	2.3
Services	45,279	40,900	4,379	10.7
Government	20,712	16,100	4,612	28.6
Total Non-Agricultural Employment	166,372	163,700	2,672	16.3

Source: PA Dept of Labor & Industry

The median annual household income is a good indicator of the stability of a Region. All three Townships exceed the Berks County median annual household income in 1999. Ruscombmanor Township has the highest median annual household income at \$56,813 while Berks County has the lowest at \$44,714. Alsace Township, \$46,500, has the least as compared to the other two Townships in the planning region but is still higher than the County. The percent of persons below the poverty level is very similar in both Alsace and Ruscombmanor Township at 4.4% and 4.2% respectively. The County percent below poverty is double the amount of Alsace and Ruscombmanor. Oley Township has the least amount below poverty with only 2% falling into that category. Alsace Township has the lowest number of people with a bachelor's degree or higher and the lowest percentage of high school graduates or higher.

**TABLE 7.3: MEDIAN ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME, POVERTY LEVEL
EDUCATION**

Median Annual Household Income, Poverty level, Education Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000				
AREA	Median Annual Household Income in 1999	Percent of Persons Below the Poverty Level	Percent Bachelor's Degree or higher	Percent High School Graduates or Higher
Alsace Township	\$46,500	4.4	11.1	76.8
Oley Township	\$52,151	2.0	18.3	85.2
Ruscombmanor Township	\$56,813	4.2	20.3	81.3
Berks County	\$44,714	9.4	18.5	78.0

Source: U.S. Census

Economic Development:

Goal: To sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the Region while Identifying appropriate locations for environmentally responsible industrial, office, retail, and service uses that are appropriate in scale and character to the Region in a cost efficient manner.

Objectives:

- Make sure local ordinances and codes do not discourage responsible business from locating in designated business areas.
- Encourage mixed use development in village areas zoned for business to maintain the economic viability of commercial structures.
- Enhance tax revenue from business development to balance the residential share of the property tax base.
- Promote job creation for local residents through cooperative efforts of municipalities, the county, economic development agencies, businesses, and educational institutions.
- Protect the Region’s natural and agricultural resources as economic development occurs.

- Encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized properties in the Region.
- Protect natural, cultural and recreational resources to enable tourism based on nature and cultural, recreation, educational, and family activities.
- Retain existing business and industries and identify strategies to attract desirable new ones.
- Identify and designate appropriate target areas for future economic development and determine the types of economic development that are most appropriate for the Region.
- Consider establishing wireless internet hotspots in appropriate areas.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers in providing improvements.
- Establish standards to improve the design and appearance of new commercial and industrial development.
- Provide alternatives to strip commercial development.
- Encourage diversification of funding sources for municipal governments and school districts to achieve equitable taxation policies.

Encourage resident-owned small businesses in existing mixed-use areas. .

Target Areas

Economic development planning is not only the responsibility of the municipal officials. Local economic groups, non-profit organizations, business and property owners, and local and State legislators all have a stake in the economic well being of the Region. The Region is home to several economic development groups such as the Berks County Industrial Development Authority and the Berks County Chamber of Commerce. These groups need to establish a consistent approach and common focus for future economic development and work closely with the public and private sectors to avoid duplication of efforts. The first step to improve the climate for economic development and develop a community wide vision is to identify the crucial or ‘target areas’ that present the most future economic development potential in the Region. The Region’s most intense future commercial development should occur in two areas: along PA Route 73 in Oley Township, and PA Route 12 in Alsace and Ruscombmanor Township.

PA Route 73 Corridor – Oley and Ruscombmanor Townships

The commercial areas in Oley and Ruscombmanor Townships include the Villages of Pleasantville, Oley, and Breezy Corners. PA Route 73 intersects with PA Route 662 near Oley, and PA Route 12 in Breezy Corners. The development potential for these areas includes retail and convenience commercial uses, as well as ancillary and specialty commercial uses. In the Village Areas adjacent to the commercial areas, the uses should be less intense and adhere to design standards that encourage visual consistency along this corridor by regulating access management, signage, landscaping, setbacks, and streetscape improvements.

PA Route 12 Corridor – Alsace and Ruscombmanor Township

The commercial areas along PA Route 12 in Alsace Manor, Breezy Corners, and Pricetown, as delineated on the Future Land Use Map, should be reserved for commercial or office development. This area, because of its location within a growth area, in which medium to high density housing is expected to occur, and because of its potential to be served by public sewer and water, is an ideal location for economic development activities in the Region. The Transportation Plan, recommends access management, and intersection improvements on PA Route 12 to accommodate future commercial and business development and the additional traffic it will create.

Village of Oley, Oley Township

The Village of Oley is appropriate for smaller scale commercial and business development, however, this development should consist of low-impact, village-oriented land uses. Convenience commercial, antique shops, and other unique shops that bring character to the Village should be encouraged. Access management should be a key consideration, and any development in the Village should consider shared access and rear parking facilities.

Main Street is the main thoroughfare through the Village, and runs directly through the business district as well as the historic district. Fortunately, PA Route 73 handles the large volumes of thru traffic, however, the Township must strive to make the Village a destination. Economic development follows people, so Oley must become a gathering place. It must have a pedestrian-friendly design that accommodates informal gathering places mixed in with stores, restaurants, coffee shops, and office uses.

Foster a positive image through special events, programs, music and art festivals, and holiday decorations. Promote the historic and cultural heritage of the Region

as a means to promote tourism. Marketing tools such as banners, brochures, and restaurant/shopping guides should be produced.

The provision of a sidewalk (or trail) system throughout the Region is another method to enhance social interaction and the sense of place. Such a system could provide bicycle and pedestrian access to the Village as well as recreational opportunities to residents in surrounding areas.

Currently, the Village does not have any serious parking problems, but this should be monitored to determine if problems develop in the future. A lack of on-street parking within the business district will adversely affect future commercial investment or re-development.

Actions:

- A. Zone areas appropriate for economic development pursuant to the Future Land Use Plan designations. Develop environmental performance standards. Prepare Specific Plans where appropriate, as per Section 1106 of the Municipalities Planning Code.

Emphasize tourism, health care, research and development, high technology, office and service development to supplement the existing commercial and industrial development in the Region.

Require new development to be designed and constructed to meet environmental performance standards, eliminate adverse impacts on adjacent land uses, and minimize highway access safety hazards.

- B. Amend municipal ordinances to improve community image by enhancing physical appearance. Enhance the appearance of public areas, including buildings, street lights, window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, benches, landscaping, trash receptacles, utility poles and lines, and public phones. Enhance the Village Gateways and the commercial areas through design criteria that is uniform and compatible with the area's rural and historic character
- C. Maintain a dialog with businesses in the community to determine their needs and concerns in order to retain existing businesses and ensure their experience in the Region is positive.
- D. Work with telecommunications companies to ensure that adequate telecommunications facilities, including fiber optics, are available to businesses in

the Region. Seek to create wireless hotspots in the Village of Oley to encourage patronage of the Village's businesses.

- E. Work with the Berks County Industrial Development Authority and the Berks Chamber of Commerce to secure potential funding for land purchase and infrastructure improvements to support economic development in the Region.
- F. Refine zoning policies for home employment and no-impact home-based businesses.
- G. Inform economic development agencies of areas and buildings zoned and available for commercial and industrial development in the Region.
- H. Investigate programs providing financial incentives for the re-use of old buildings and tax lien forgiveness to re-use buildings, and preserve historic sites. Work with PADCED.
- I. Support the necessary legislation to authorize impact fees in addition to those which can now be charged. Work to establish consistent policies on use of impact fees within the Region.
- J. Investigate opportunities for streamlining processes for economic development that will enhance the economy and quality of life of the Region.
- K. Review opportunities created with the recent passage of Pennsylvania's Economic Stimulus Package, including such programs as Business in Our Sites and Tax Increment Financing Guarantee Program.
- L. Encourage local restaurants to provide outdoor seating facilities, particularly in the Villages.
- M. Continue to market the historic and agricultural resources of the Region as tourist attractions, and provide brochures to provide information on the Region's dining and shopping facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ)

Keystone Opportunity Zones are defined as parcel- specific areas with greatly reduced or no tax burden for property owners, residents, and businesses.

Eligibility:

To be considered a Keystone Opportunity Zone, a site must have:

- Displayed through a vision/strategy statement how this property through targeted growth could impact the Region positively;
- Displayed evidence of adverse economic and socioeconomic conditions in the proposed zone such as high poverty rates, high unemployment rates, a high percentage of abandoned or underutilized property, or population loss;
- Passed binding resolutions or ordinances forgoing certain taxes; this includes school districts and county and municipal governments;
- Public and private commitment of resources;
- Linkages to regional community and economic development activities including Team Pennsylvania and initiatives under the DCED's Center for Community Building;
- A written plan discussing the implementation of quality school improvements and local crime reduction measures;
- And a demonstrated cooperation from surrounding municipalities.

Where to Apply – DCED Customer Service Center 1-800-379-7448

Enterprise Zones

Summary - The purpose of an Enterprise Zone is to promote job growth and to help municipalities take advantage of business expansion opportunities when they arise. EZ's improve the capacity of local governments and business communities by encouraging them to form public/private partnerships. These partnerships then boost business investment in the zone. Increased business investment, job creation, and sustained community self-sufficiency are the primary goals of the Enterprise Zone program.

Eligibility - Local governments, redevelopment authorities, nonprofit economic development organizations, and other nonprofit organizations and business district authorities.

Eligible Uses - Enterprise Zone competitive grants-to-loans can be used for up to 30 percent of the total project investment to acquire machinery and equipment. They are available for new business construction or building improvements, site improvements, infrastructure, and in some special cases, up to 40 percent of inventory or working capital needs. Competitive grants-to-loans also can be used toward the cost of preparing business lease space, especially for facilities with fiber optic wiring. Costs of public infrastructure development and hazardous waste testing may also be considered if the lack of conventional funding sources for such costs is documented. Competitive grants may not exceed 30 percent of total project investment, and one full-time job must be created or retained for each \$30,000 of loan capital.

Where to Apply - DCED Customer Service Center

Amounts - Planning grants can total up to \$50,000 (one time only). Basic grants can total up to \$50,000 for up to seven consecutive years. During this time period, basic grants may be increased up to \$75,000 on two occasions, if the entity is undertaking a cluster analysis or some other activity that uses analytical tools to enhance the zone's development plans. This is not an entitlement program. Need and demonstrated progress must be documented before receiving these grants on a yearly basis.

Competitive grants-to-loans can total up to \$500,000 and can be loaned to private sector firms in the zone.

Additional Programs / Opportunities

The Pennsylvania Economic Stimulus Package has been recently passed and includes the following economic development programs and potential funding sources for the Region:

- Business in Our Sites will offer flexible loans and grants for local municipalities and their economic development partners to create future business growth and attract opportunities through the acquisition and preparation of key sites for development. The program would provide communities with grants and loans of up to \$250,000 to pay for the reclamation of industrial land.
- Building PA will provide funding for the development of real estate assets in the Commonwealth. Funds will be loaned to private investors and foundations who want to match funds to facilitate projects within the Commonwealth.
- New PA Venture Guarantee Program will allow the Commonwealth to more actively work with the investment community by providing guarantees to venture

capital companies interested in Pennsylvania businesses. These guarantees will provide increased capital for Pennsylvania businesses to grow and create jobs.

- New PA Venture Capital Investment Program will provide capital to venture capital companies focused on Pennsylvania that agree to match those funds and invest in Pennsylvania businesses.
- First Industries Fund. First Industries will provide grants, low-interest loan financing, and loan guarantees for agriculture and tourism.
- 2nd Stage Loan Program will provide guarantees for bank loans to second-stage manufacturers and technology companies for working capital and other financing needs. Targeted toward manufacturing, advanced technology, and biotechnology, these funds will support growth in these sectors.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Guarantee Program. Through TIF, communities can borrow funds for projects that will develop blighted areas and then repay those borrowed monies through the new tax revenues that will be generated as a result of the development. A combination of technical assistance and loan guarantee assistance will encourage small communities to use this program.
- Infrastructure & Facilities Improvement Program is a multi-year grant program that will provide grants to certain issuers of debt to assist with the payment of debt service.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is the primary contact for these programs.

Specific Plans

The Municipalities Planning code enables municipalities that have participated in a multi-municipal plan to adopt specific plans. As part of the intergovernmental cooperative agreements, municipalities can choose to adopt specific plans individually or jointly. The MPC defines a specific plan as:

“a detailed plan for non-residential development of an area covered by a municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan, which when approved and adopted by the participating municipalities through ordinances and agreements, supersedes all other applications.”

A specific plan is a tool that can be used by municipal governments for the systematic implementation of a comprehensive plan. It establishes a link between the policies of the comprehensive plan and development proposals in a specifically defined area. Provisions

of a specific plan shall include type, location and intensity of land uses, the design capability of infrastructure, the standards for preservation of natural resources, regulation of land development, and financing of capital improvements. A specific plan can be used to define the exact location most appropriate for economic development activities to, particularly the village or commercial areas found on the Future Land Use Map, and protect it through ordinance that would supersede all other ordinances.

Specific plans do not create additional planning or permitting requirements. All data collection involved in creating a specific plan is information required as a prerequisite for approval and recording of a final subdivision or land development plan. The specific plan facilitates the planning and permitting, without having to wait for a development application. When an appropriate development proposal occurs, permitting will move directly to the final plan, because all requirements for a preliminary plan (such as sewer, stormwater, sediment and erosion, highway occupancy) will have already been met.

Chapter 8

Transportation and Circulation Plan

Introduction

The relationship between the use of land and its impacts on the circulation network is an important element in the comprehensive planning effort. A community's quality of life is highly dependent on the efficient use of land as well as effectiveness of its circulation network. In order for a network to adequately serve adjacent land uses, it must be regularly evaluated as new development or redevelopment occurs. Different land uses require different road characteristics, and addressing future transportation needs is dependent on a sound understanding of the current network.

Existing and proposed development areas must be considered when making future road programming decisions. In turn, future development patterns should not adversely affect the circulation system. It is necessary to follow appropriate design standards, improve existing roads and manage access so the road network will be capable of performing its intended function. Municipal and individual land use decisions are strongly influenced by existing or proposed circulation systems, while at the same time these same land use decisions can affect the circulation systems and the functions which the roads are expected to perform.

The circulation system within a community has an important influence on the type and location of development which occurs. The location of residential, commercial, and industrial uses can influence the function or classification of roads, their design and their condition. In addition to influencing the character of the community by influencing land uses, the perception of a community can be influenced by the circulation system itself. A municipality with relatively narrow winding roads abutting agricultural and wooded areas will often be perceived as having a rural character, while a municipality with high traffic volumes, unsynchronized signalization, and delays at intersections could be perceived as gridlocked. In areas where development has occurred which does not respect the limitations of the circulation system, the perception can be one of poor planning and frustration.

The transportation system will function properly only when each community has adequate access to the system. The identification of problem areas throughout a region's transportation network, as well as a logical land use plan that enables residents to make fewer vehicle trips are key components to a joint comprehensive plan.

Transportation Goal:

Goal: To achieve a safe, efficient, multi-modal, and cost-effective regional circulation system that 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 in the Region; and relieve congestion.

Objectives:

- Work with PennDOT and developers to ensure local roads and intersections remain safe and able to accommodate current and projected traffic volumes.
- Encourage business developments to share controlled ingress and egress to adjacent major roads such as PA Routes 12, 73, and 662 as well as local collector roads.
- Identify and set priorities for projects which are appropriate for inclusion on Berks County's Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.
- Promote future development of greenways and trails that will further walking, bicycling and other alternative transportation modes.
- Address Route 12 and Route 73 congestion issues, including bridges and road infrastructure.
- Facilitate movement through the Region and into and out of the Region's communities.
- Plan for safe and accessible routes of travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those without automobiles.
- Manage access along the Region's roads.
- Improve the efficiency of traffic flow and the safety of the Region's roads and their intersections.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers for transportation improvements.

- Establish design standards for roads and driveways and for building setbacks within the Region based on functional classification and need for future road improvements.
- Emphasize the need for PennDOT and the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), to support the recommendations of this Joint Comprehensive Plan with regard to needed improvements of state transportation facilities.
- Establish a mechanism to require traffic impact studies for industrial, commercial, and residential developments.
- Improve pedestrian safety in the Region by developing, improving and expanding the sidewalk system in residential areas.
- Address impacts of land uses and new development on major road corridors in the Region.
- Preserve the scenic, historic, and cultural road corridors in the Region.
- Enhance streetscapes along road corridors in the villages.
- Mitigate impacts of non-residential traffic on residential neighborhoods.
- Identify opportunities to interconnect roads and walkways, provide alternative traffic routes, and facilitate emergency access when new developments are under construction.
- Ensure that roads in agricultural areas may continue to accommodate agriculturally related vehicles and tractors.
- Consider alignment and shoulder improvements to improve safety along PA Route 12 near Woodland Road.

IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation affects the daily lives of most people. It is important to understand the impact of transportation needs on an area. One aspect of transportation needs is travel to and from work. The U.S. Census provides information that can be used to determine the circulation needs of a community. The following chart shows the methods used for commuting to work for the Region's labor force 16 years and older in 2000.

TABLE 8.1: COMMUTING TO WORK - 2000

	Alsace Township		Oley Township		Ruscombmanor Township	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	1,921	100%	1804	100%	2,029	100%
Drove alone to work	1,736	90.4%	1526	84.6%	1,735	85.5%
Carpooled	131	6.8%	134	7.4%	205	10.1%
Public Transportation (including taxicabs)	7	.4%	0	0	4	.2%
Walked to work	4	.2%	51	2.8%	14	.7%
Other means	0	0	12	.7%	10	.5%
Worked at home	43	2.2%	81	4.5%	61	3.0%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	19.5		23.3		22.1	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As the table above reflects, of Alsace Township's labor force, 16 years and older, 1,736 (90.4%) drove alone to work, another 131 (6.8%) carpooled. Public Transportation was taken by 7 people or .4%, while another 4 walked to work. Oley and Ruscombmanor had similar numbers with 1,526 (84.6%) and 1,735 (85.5%) traveling alone to work. Oley Township had 7.4 percent carpooling and Ruscombmanor Township had 10.1%. The mean travel time to work was 19.5 minutes for Alsace Township, 23.3 for Oley and 22.1 for Ruscombmanor. All were less compared to Pennsylvania at 25.2 minutes and the National mean travel time to work, 25.5 minutes.

Since the reliance on the automobile is so strong in the Region, it is very important that transportation and circulation issues are addressed.

Addressing transportation issues has three critical benefits:

- It increases the quality of life for the residents by facilitating circulation and making travel safer.

- Attractiveness of the Region as a destination and place of work or residence can be enhanced if congestion is mitigated; and, the level of service and visual attractiveness of area roads are maintained.
- PA Route 12, PA Route 73, and PA Route 662 are considered the main economic growth corridors of the Region. Providing a well maintained transportation system is necessary to support optimum economic development.

COMPOSITION OF THE CIRCULATION NETWORK

Township and State road mileage for Alsace, Oley and Ruscombmanor Townships are listed below in Table 8.2.

TABLE 8.2: ROAD MILES

ALSACE, OLEY AND RUSCOMBMANOR TOWNSHIPS

Township	State Miles	Township Miles	Total Miles
Alsace	15.41	27.28	42.69
Oley	19.10	50.73	69.83
Ruscombmanor	15.35	35.42	50.77

A few of the State Roads travel through multiple municipalities in the Region. PA Route 73 and PA Route 662 travel through both Ruscombmanor and Oley Townships. PA Route 12 travels through Ruscombmanor and Alsace Townships.

Important Transportation Corridors

PA Route 12, PA Route 73 and PA Route 662 are the most important corridors in the Region.

PA Route 12 (Pricetown Road) is the major north/south corridor in the Region. The road provides access to US Routes 222 and 422, Allentown and Kutztown to the north, and Lancaster to the south. PA Route 73 and PA Route 662 are the main east/west corridors through the Region providing linkages to PA Routes 100 and 61, as well as US Route 422.

EXISTING ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION

How a particular highway is used determines the function that it serves in the system. Highway and roadway classification are based on analysis of the volume of traffic using the facility, the type of trip provided, the length of the trip, and the speed of the trip.

The principal arterial system consists of a commercial road network of continuous routes having the following characteristics:

- Serve the corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel.
- Provides connections to all, or nearly all, urban areas of 50,000 and over population and a large majority of those with population of 25,000 and over.
- Provide an integrated network without stub connections except where unusual geographies of traffic flow conditions dictate otherwise (e.g., internal boundary connections and connections to coastal cities).

– Principal Arterial System – The principal arterial system is stratified into the following two subsystems:

Interstate System - The interstate system consists of all presently designated routes of the Interstate System located outside small urban and urbanized areas.

Other Principal Arterial System - This system consists of all non-Interstate principal arterial highways located outside small urban and urbanized areas.

- Minor Arterial System - The minor arterial system should, in conjunction with the principal arterial system, form a network having the following characteristics:

- Link cities and towns (and other generators, such as a major resort area, that

are capable of attracting travel over similarly long distances) and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service.

- Be spaced at such intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway.
- Provide service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those predominately served by rural collector or local systems. Minor arterial highways therefore constitute routes whose design should be expected to provide for relatively high overall travel speeds, with minimum interference to through movement.

Collector Road System – The collector routes carry local traffic between minor streets and arterials and provide land access service and traffic circulation in residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas.

Local Road System - The local road should have the following characteristics: (1) Serve primarily to provide access to adjacent land; and (2) Provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared with collector roads or other highway systems. Local roads will, of course, constitute the rural mileage not classified as part of the principal arterial highway, minor arterial, or collector road systems.

**HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS AND
RECOMMENDED DESIGN FEATURES**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>General Provisions</u>	<u>Right-of-Way Width (ft.)</u>	<u>Cartway Width</u>
Interstate Expressway	55+ MPH Limited Access No Parking Noise Barrier/Buffer (where required)	Minimum 120; however, may be wider based on local conditions and design	Minimum four 12' wide travel lanes with 10' wide shoulders capable of supporting heavy vehicles
Arterial (Principal and Minor)	35-65 MPH Some access controls to and from adjacent development. Encourage use of reverse and side street frontage and parallel access road. No Parking	80	48-52 feet; 12' wide travel lanes with shoulders in rural area and curbing in urban areas
Collector (Major and Minor)	25-35 MPH Some access controls to and from adjacent development. Parking permitted on one or both sides.	60	34-40 feet; 12' wide travel lanes with stabilized shoulders or curbing; 8' wide lanes provided for parking.
Local	15-35 MPH No access control to and from adjacent development. Parking permitted on one or both sides.	53	28-34 feet with stabilized shoulders or curbing; cartway widths can be reduced based on interior traffic patterns.

Roads are classified on the Transportation Map. The following is the list of each existing type of functional classification in the Region based on the Penn Dot criteria:

Arterials: PA Route 73, PA Route 662

Collectors: PA Route 12 (Pricetown Road), PA Route 662, Laurel Road, Blankenbiller Road, Spies Church Road, Friedensburg Road, Main Street, Water Street, Covered Bridge Road, Limekiln Pike, Skyline Drive

Local Roads: all other roads

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Traffic volumes are determined through traffic counts taken at specific locations within a transportation corridor. The volume is usually portrayed in terms of annual average daily traffic (AADT). This represents the average count for a 24 hour period, factoring in any fluctuations due to the day of the week or month of the year. The AADT is an important factor that, in conjunction with the previous factors outlined, helps in determining the functional classification of a road.

Information available on traffic volumes is important in determining the potential for capacity problems. Roads that are not used for the purpose for which they are intended can experience capacity problems. This is particularly evident in areas experiencing a significant amount of new development without concurrent upgrades to the transportation corridors. Capacity problems become particularly evident when the number of lanes is reduced and traffic is funneled from a roadway with a higher number of lanes to one with a lower number of lanes.

In addition to the increased development in the Region, capacity on the Region's roads is also heavily influenced by traffic originating outside the area. Roads most likely to experience capacity problems are PA Route 12, PA Route 73 and PA Route 662, because these roads are carrying traffic to Township locations as well as regional traffic at increasingly higher volumes. Traffic volumes are beginning to increase on other roads throughout the Townships as well.

There are several factors contributing to the traffic impact in the Region. There is regional traffic, which includes trucks, tourists, and commuters going to Philadelphia, New Jersey and Montgomery County employment centers, local traffic patronizing businesses in Oley, Alsace and Ruscombmanor as well as, residents of outlying areas using PA Route 12 as an alternative route to Reading area, avoiding the much congested US Route 222 corridor.

Highest average daily traffic volume in the Region is Route 12 at the western end in Alsace Township, at 18,486. Several sections of PA Route 12 have high volume with AADT counts west of PA Route 73 of 15,999 and in between that location and the western end with counts of 14,872. PA Route 73 also has significant AADT counts of 15,362 and 14,660 through the Village of Oley.

AADT numbers for selected roads can be found on Figure 8.1, the Transportation Plan Map.

Roadway Conditions

An inventory of roadway conditions is necessary in order to identify problems within the circulation system and to address these problems as appropriate. Roadway conditions are generally evaluated from four perspectives.

- Safety
- Access
- Interchanges
- Corridor Segments

Safety

Safety concerns are evident at those locations within the circulation system that may pose hazards due to poor road alignment, limited sight distance, design, or structural problems, lack of road shoulders or obstacles near the roadway. These all create hazardous conditions, which can slow traffic and cause congestion and potentially lead to accidents.

Pavement conditions affect travel costs with respect to operation, delay and accidents. Vehicle operation is affected by excessive wear on tires and suspensions misalignments due to uneven road surfaces or worn edges of roadway. Delays occur when drivers have to slow down for potholes or uneven surfaces. Accidents can be caused by all of the above.

Access Management

Access management problems are situations where conflicts between mobility and access are, or will be, intense and result in congestion and safety problems. Access management problems typically occur on roads serving high volumes, high speed traffic, and abutting intense trip generating uses. An example of an access management problem would be where commercial development occurs on a road and the mobility of traffic is adversely affected by the increase in driveways from adjacent land to the road on which the land fronts. As the number of driveways increases, the safety and efficiency of the road can decrease. Access management will be an increasing concern on the roads in the Region in the future. The biggest concern in the area is PA Route 12 (Pricetown Road). Access management has been an issue in the past and continues to plaque the Region with increased businesses along the corridor and increased traffic along the Route.

Corridor Segments

Corridor segment problems are usually found in more densely developed areas when congestion, access and safety issues are all present. Corridor segment problems can include those roads that may possess maintenance issues or exhibit structural problems.

The PA Route 12 corridor is the most heavily traveled road in the Region and intersects with PA Route 73 and PA Route 662. There are other corridor segments of concern along PA Route 12: Skyline Drive, Woodside Avenue, Mt. Laurel Road, Elizabeth Avenue, Antietam Road, and Oley Furnace Road. These are areas of concern for safety and congestion.

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

In a plan for circulation, it is necessary to not only address vehicular traffic but multi-modal facilities such as bicycle-pedestrian, transit-pedestrian, and bicycle-transit opportunities.

Bus Service

There are no fixed routes that serve the planning Region. Long distance, inter-city bus service is provided by Capital Trailways and Bieber Tourways. Capital Trailways provides daily service from Reading to Philadelphia with a direct route and a route with stops depending on the time of departure. A route between Reading and Lebanon and Harrisburg via U.S. 422 is also available with service to Allentown and Pottsville. Bieber Buses provide service between Kutztown and Reading, plus offer routes to Atlantic City and New York.

Berks Area Reading Transit Authority (BARTA) provides a traditional fixed route service operating in the urban area of Berks County as well as a special services division that provides demand-response services to elderly and handicapped citizens throughout the county.

Rail Service

There is no freight rail service or passenger rail service in the Region. The Norfolk Southern owns and operates the majority of railroad lines in the County. The majority of the activity occurs in the City of Reading with the line going from Harrisburg through Reading to Philadelphia.

The Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad provides short line service to shippers on the Schuylkill Secondary Line that goes between Temple and Hamburg. Additional short line services run to northeastern Pennsylvania, Kutztown and Topton, and Pottstown to Boyertown.

AMTRAK has a commuter rail terminal in downtown Lancaster, Philadelphia and Harrisburg, both within a one to one and one-half hour drive.

Airport Services

The nearest airport is the Reading Regional Airport approximately ten miles away. There are three charter services based at Reading. Additionally, there are Corporate and other general aviation aircraft operating out of the airport.

The nearest passenger, commuter, and charter air service are located between 55 and 65 miles away. They are Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE), Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), and Harrisburg International Airport (MDT).

Two private airports are close to the planning region. Grimes Airport has a 2860 foot turf runway and is located in Bethel Township, north of Interstate 78. It provides fuel, minor maintenance, radio, and hangar facilities. Kutztown Airport is located east of the region in Maxatawny Township and includes a 2,068 foot turf runway and a 1,938 paved runway. Services provided are radio, fuel, maintenance and hangar facilities. The airport is the local center for sailplane activities in the County.

Pedestrian/Bike Facilities

Pedestrian and Bike Facilities are somewhat limited in the Region. The Village of Oley has sidewalks along Main Street and adjoining streets. There are no current trails or greenway locations in place in the Region but the Berks County Greenway, Park, and Recreation Plan of 2007 shows potential local connections through Alsace and Oley with limited connectivity between Fleetwood and Ruscombmanor.

Transportation Actions:

- A. Update zoning ordinances as necessary.
 - 1. Include access management standards in zoning and/or subdivision and land development ordinances as determined by the Townships:
 - a. Establish access location standards
 - b. Establish access point separation requirements
 - c. Require access to streets of lower functional classification
 - d. Require internal road systems
 - e. Require coordinated/shared ingress and egress

- f. Require interconnection of properties, including access, parking, loading
 - g. Establish separations from intersections
 - h. Require coordinated traffic movements
 - i. Require acceleration and deceleration lanes where appropriate
 - j. Require left and right turn lanes where appropriate
 - k. Refine design standards for intersections, driveways, internal circulation, and parking lot design
 - l. Minimize entrances to roads
 - m. Prohibit inappropriate turning movements
 - n. Consider signalization of high volume driveways
 - o. Refine location, size, and design requirements for billboards and signs.
- 2. While particularly crucial along the PA Route 73 and PA Route 12 Corridors, access should be managed along all roads within the Region.
 - 3. In mixed use areas, where pedestrian activity can be higher, discourage curb cuts over sidewalks to limit pedestrian/vehicular conflict.

B. Update subdivision and land development ordinances as necessary.

- 1. Establish appropriate design standards for each functional classification of road. Safe, buffered, and sufficiently set back bike and pedestrian lanes can be included in the cross-sections with consideration given to the Pennsylvania Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Bike and pedestrian lanes may be required on those roads deemed appropriate by the municipality.
- 2. Require traffic impact studies for proposed developments. Such studies require analysis of existing circulation conditions, the impact of proposed

development and resulting circulation conditions and the need for traffic improvements to adequately support the development.

3. Establish appropriate standards for driveway design and access to streets for access management. Coordinate with zoning ordinance design standards and access management provisions. Plans should be reviewed for access management concerns.
 4. Require developers to recognize existing and planned trails and to provide new trails. Standards for trails can be included in the Ordinances. Sufficient rights-of-way and easements may be required during the review process.
 5. Require developers to provide pedestrian paths and sidewalks to enhance foot traffic.
 6. Request right-of-way dedication along existing roadways to meet design standards.
 7. Require necessary roadway improvements along the frontage of developments.
 8. Review setback and building location policies along major road corridors to refine regulations that will facilitate future road improvements.
- C. Consider the adoption of Official Maps designating proposed public facilities, streets, intersection and road improvements, bike paths, and trails.
- D. Monitor and regulate development in and around the airport to promote its economic development potential, while ensuring safety.
- E. Implement the Capital Improvements Programs recommended by this plan.
- F. Establish pedestrian pathway improvement programs to enhance foot traffic in the Region, as well as provision of trails to provide improved access to schools, local shopping areas, community facilities, and employment opportunities. ADA requirements should be complied with.
- G. Work with PennDOT to ensure adequate maintenance of roads with substantial volumes of truck and school bus traffic as well as automobile traffic.

- H. Consider the adoption of Transportation Impact Fee ordinances to be used by the Townships individually or jointly and require land developers to address needed transportation improvements in the Region.
- I. Work with PennDOT and BCPC to establish appropriate speed limits, reducing them as necessary, in developed areas.
- J. Prepare multi-year programs for street maintenance and improvement.
- K. Develop access management plans in cooperation with PennDOT to address access to major roads and access design standards. Encourage cooperative efforts of landowners to manage and share access.
- L. Encourage landowners to cooperate with PennDOT and the municipalities in the redesign of existing strip development areas to manage access and improve streetscapes.
- M. Coordinate utility and road improvements so that utilities are constructed before road improvements are made.
- N. Require property owners to keep street rights-of-way available for required improvements and pedestrian systems.
- O. Work together as a Region with the County, Legislators, and PennDOT to list needed transportation improvements on the Berks County's Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.
- P. Work with transportation organizations and agencies providing services to seniors to facilitate mobility of seniors by determining desired destinations and means of providing access to those destinations.
- Q. Establish consistent road signage policies.

Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS)

The Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Berks County, was created in 1964 through a legal agreement between the City of Reading, Berks County, and the Pennsylvania Department of Highways (now the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation). According to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, any urban area with a population of more than fifty thousand people must

maintain a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative (“3C”) transportation planning process consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urbanized area in order to be eligible to receive Federal funding for transportation projects. RATS enables Berks County to be eligible to receive state and federal funding for highway and transit system capital improvements and operations.

An area was delineated as the Reading urban area in accordance with the U.S. Bureau of Census boundaries for the Reading urbanized area and the identified area became the subject of continuous transportation planning which has proceeded from 1964 to date. In 1992, in response to both the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990, the study area was expanded to cover all of Berks County. This encompasses 864 square miles and includes 74 municipalities that have a 2000 Census population of 373,638. Additionally, the 2000 Census indicated that the Reading urbanized area contained a population of 240,264. On July 8, 2002, the Reading MPO was officially designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) and is therefore subject to additional planning regulations. This special designation applies to MPOs with an urbanized area of greater than 200,000.

There are two committees that comprise RATS: the Coordinating Committee and the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee is responsible for reviewing items brought before the group and recommending actions to the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee is the policy body that formally adopts items reviewed by the Technical Committee. The role of the MPO is to promote transportation plans, programs, projects and policies that are consistent with current federal transportation planning legislation and the Clean Air Act. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is the current planning legislation. The transportation planning staff of the Berks County Planning Commission serves as the technical staff to RATS.

RATS recognizes the interconnection between transportation and land use issues. The Berks County Planning Commission works closely with local governments throughout Berks County on land use planning issues. However, under Pennsylvania law, implementation of land use policies is the responsibility of local governments therefore RATS has no authority over local land use planning or zoning.

The Berks County Planning Commission is the lead agency for the Region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization, RATS. As the lead agency, the BCPC performs all tasks associated with the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This includes Clean Air Act requirements, development of the PennDOT Twelve Year Program for Berks County, Transportation Enhancements, functional classification updates, and traffic volume counts.

Recommended Road Improvements

Intersection Improvements, Realignment, and Widening Projects

The following transportation improvements in the Region should be included in future transportation capital improvement budgets, as well as the PennDOT Twelve-Year Program where applicable. These intersections or roads have been identified as having one or more of the following characteristics: poor sight distance; bad alignment; lack of proper signage or signalization; insufficient width; and / or lack of turning lanes.

Recommended improvement projects for the transportation system for the Region are listed below. All proposed intersection improvements on State roads require PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permits. Note that inclusion of these intersections in this plan does not commit the Townships financially or legally to these projects.

Suggested Intersection Improvements / Signalization

1. PA Route 12 and Elizabeth Avenue – Sight distance
2. PA Route 12 and Skyline Drive – Alignment; Sight Distance
3. PA Route 12 and Antietam Road – Turning Lane; Sight Distance
4. PA Route 12 and Mt Laurel Road – Sight Distance
5. PA Route 12 and PA Route 73 – Turning Lane
6. PA Route 12 and PA Route 662 – Turning Lanes
7. PA Route 12 and Oley Furnace Road – Sight Distance
8. PA Route 12 and Orchard Road – Alignment
9. PA Route 73 and PA Route 662 (west) – Alignment
10. PA Route 73 and Friedensburg Road – Turning Lane
11. PA Route 73 and Main Street – Alignment; Sight Distance
12. PA Route 73 and PA Route 662 (east)- Alignment; Signalization
13. PA Route 662 and Oley Turnpike Road – Sight Distance
14. Friedensburg Road and Limekiln Road (Five Points) – Alignment

LONG RANGE PLANNING

The recent increase in proposed development in all three Townships will undoubtedly impact the transportation system in the Region. Therefore, it is important to discuss long range transportation recommendations to mitigate the implications of increased development. This section will present a vision for the future transportation network in the Region, including strategies for priority corridors, which were identified as the most critical to the Region in terms of a functioning transportation system.

Highest Priority Corridor - PA Route 12 / Pricetown Road

PA Route 12 in Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships is the corridor most in need of future upgrades. This corridor contains the highest volumes of traffic in the planning region and is the principal access road to the City of Reading. It bisects the one of the Region's largest growth area, where future residential, commercial, and village development is expected. This impending development will increase traffic in the corridor, and eventually surpass the highway's carrying capacity. Access management is a critical issue along this corridor.

Highest Priority Corridor- PA Route 73

PA Route 73, with some of the highest traffic volumes, is the principal east/west route and the main transportation corridor in the Region. The highest density of development will occur along this corridor, including the Villages of Oley and Pleasantville. The high rates of development in suburban townships in Montgomery County, as well as Maiden creek, Amity and Douglass Townships in Berks County will result in increased traffic along PA Route 73. This plan does not recommend intensive development throughout the entire corridor, which would result in traffic flow problems.

High Priority Corridor- PA Route 662

PA Route 662, though not currently experiencing substantial traffic problems, is a key corridor in the Region. PA Route 662 is the primary route from the Region to the Borough of Fleetwood and Amity Township, which could receive higher traffic volumes if drivers seek alternate routes to US Routes 222 and 422.

High Priority Corridor - Friedensburg Road

The portion of Friedensburg Road from PA Route 73 to New Hope Boulevard should be monitored due to the presence of the schools and the impending residential developments. Access management, turning lanes, and /or road widening in sections are options that should be considered.

Long Range Strategies

The corridors identified are State owned and maintained with State and Federal funding. It is critical that the Townships continue communications with PennDOT and RATS, to discuss future planning and upgrades. Reactionary spot improvements will not suffice, and will ultimately lead to a poorly functioning transportation system. The Townships, PennDOT, and RATS need to agree on a vision for these corridors and plan accordingly to accommodate future development. Some of the improvements and concepts recommended by this Plan include the following:

- **Road Widening:** add travel and turning lanes to improve traffic flow. The Townships should include provisions for right-of-way preservation in their subdivision ordinances and develop standard design criteria to ensure seamless road corridors between Townships.
- **Traffic Signal coordination:** new traffic signals should be located at least one-half mile apart. The cycle lengths of each light should be coordinated to allow for smooth traffic flow along the corridor. Signals with self-adjusting timing mechanisms can optimize flow at intersections. Higher density and village development should occur near signalized intersections, to lessen the need for additional signals.
- **Access management:** An effective transportation system cannot allow unlimited land access. Every additional driveway and street intersection introduces traffic and reduces the road's ability to move traffic safely and efficiently. Especially within the growth areas, it is imperative to limit the access points, particularly along PA Route 12 and PA Route 73. This applies to Township collector roads as well. The Townships must discourage subdivision along the frontages of main transportation corridors to lessen points of access. PennDOT has developed guidelines for municipalities to use when formulating their own access management regulations. The Townships should coordinate with PennDOT to develop access management regulations to include in their respective ordinances.
- **Act 209 Traffic Impact Fee:** Steps required to establish and implement a traffic impact ordinance are shown in Table 8.3.
- **Mass transit:** The Townships, BCPC, and BARTA should discuss the feasibility of extending service out PA Route 12 to at least the Breezy Corners area.

Access Management

Access management is a concern for all of the roads in the Region, but particularly along PA Route 12 and PA Routes 73. The Townships should consider working with PennDOT to develop a joint access management plan for the area.

The major elements in access management include the following:

- Driveway design standards
- Access management regulations, in coordination with PennDOT.
- Limited number of road entrances

- Traffic Impact Analysis where development is proposed
- Left and right turn lanes constructed at road and driveway intersections
- Installation of medians
- Adequate parking lot/internal circulation design in developments
- Shared access to properties
- Interconnection of properties developed along roads
- Improved intersection design/spacing
- Signals at high volume driveways
- Control of access
- Direct new development access to roads with traffic signals.
- Prohibition of inappropriate turning movements

Transportation Development Districts

The Transportation Partnership Act (Act 47 of 1985 as amended) allows municipalities to create Transportation Development Districts to assist in the financing of transportation facilities and services including roads, railroads, and public transit systems. If municipalities propose a district, property owners who represent more than fifty percent of the assessed valuation in a proposed district must be in favor of the district. The creation of the Transportation Development District allows municipalities to impose assessments upon benefited properties in the District to construct transportation improvements. The needs for such districts along PA Route 73 and PA Route 12 should be monitored.

Congestion Management System Strategies

Congestion management system strategies have been used by some communities to reduce traffic. The major elements are:

- Creation of transportation management associations in which municipalities work with local businesses to identify measures to reduce travel demand. These may include:
 - reducing vehicle concentrations at peak periods by staggering work hours;
 - encouraging commuting by carpool and public transit rather than by single occupancy vehicles;

- eliminating unnecessary commutes;
- funding informal paratransit/vanpool operations.

With the potential for more commercial and residential development in the Region, the appropriateness of these strategies should be reviewed. The Transportation Plan Map includes Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) numbers for major road segments in the Region. High traffic volume areas, such as the PA Route 12 and PA Route 73 corridors, are most in need of congestion management techniques.

Impact Fees and Negotiated Financial Contributions

The Municipalities Planning Code allows municipalities to assess a traffic impact fee provided they have adopted a traffic impact fee ordinance. With a traffic impact fee system in place, a municipality can collect fees to finance improvements to the road system.

The Municipalities Planning Code indicates that when municipalities have prepared a multi-municipal plan, to allow for the provision of transportation capital improvements in a cooperative manner, the municipalities may cooperate to enact joint transportation impact fee ordinances.

In municipalities where traffic impact fee systems are not in place, financial contributions from developers for road improvements should be negotiated. Developer-financed road improvements at existing intersections and along road segments could correct current deficiencies and mitigate traffic increases associated with new development. Table 8.3 identifies the steps involved in setting up and implementing an impact fee ordinance.

**TABLE 8.3
SUMMARY OF THE STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING
TRAFFIC IMPACT FEE ORDINANCE**

<u>Task</u>	Responsible Entity
<p>1. Establish Transportation Service Area and appoint an advisory committee. <i>Note: Committee must be at least 7 members, can be the <u>entire</u> Planning Commission, with ad hoc members if necessary to meet the 40% builder/realtor requirement. Other than this, the committee <u>cannot</u> contain municipal officials or employees.</i></p>	Governing Body
<p>2. Public Notice of Intent to implement a Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance. <i>Note: This allows for fees to start being collected <u>and</u> starts an 18 month clock, by which time the Ordinance must be adopted.</i></p>	Governing Body
<p>3. Committee oversees preparation of Land Use Assumptions plan, holds public hearing, forwards to Governing Body for adoption.</p>	Impact Fee Advisory Committee
<p>4. Committee oversees preparation of Roadway Sufficiency Analysis and forwards to Governing Body for approval.</p>	Impact Fee Advisory Committee
<p>5. Committee oversees preparation of Capital Improvements Plan, holds public hearing, forwards to Governing Body for approval.</p>	Impact Fee Advisory Committee
<p>6. Impact Fee Ordinance text developed and Ordinance adopted.</p>	Governing Body

Shoulder Improvements

Developers should be required to improve shoulders along the frontages of the tracts they develop. In addition, the municipalities should improve the shoulders along existing Township roads where appropriate. Shoulders should be wide enough to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians in accordance with the guidelines in the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The Township's ordinances currently mandate these actions, and should continue to do so.

Gateways

Formal gateways should be considered at the entrances to the Region and Villages of Oley and Pricetown along the major highways. A gateway is an entrance corridor that defines the arrival point as a destination. Gateway planning addresses the arrangement of the landscape to create a visual experience that establishes a sense of arrival at the destination and provides a positive image of the destination. The Townships can work with property owners to enhance these gateways. Consistent road corridor overlay zoning could be adopted along the major roadways.

The primary gateways to the Region include both ends of PA Route 73 and PA Route 662, and PA Route 12. Gateway enhancement opportunities also exist at the entrances to the Villages of Oley, Pricetown, and Pleasantville. At these gateways, the Townships can work with property owners to enhance commercial areas through coordinated landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, paving materials, site improvement design, building facades, and window displays. When infill, redevelopment, or new development occurs, developers should be required to comply with performance and design standards that would address these elements. When new parking facilities are constructed, they should be landscaped, buffered, and located to the side or rear of buildings.

Signage should be minimal, and appropriate to the character of the Townships.

Property owners should be encouraged to maintain and improve properties, particularly those that may have negative impacts on surrounding properties. In places where the rear of commercial properties face or abut residential properties, the appearance of the commercial properties and their impact on the residences should be mitigated.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an important element in the circulation system within the Region and should be maintained. Scenic roads include roadways that offer picturesque views of the surrounding countryside, or offer a pleasant drive under a canopy of trees. The Townships should decide whether it would be appropriate to adopt scenic road overlay

zoning along scenic roads. Within such overlay areas, greater setbacks along the roads may be required, additional landscaping and screening requirements may be established, and design standards for siting of buildings may be established in order to minimize visual impacts of any development.

Discouraging intensive development along the scenic roads also has another benefit. It can lessen traffic volumes and driveway intersections along roads, which are typically not suited for intensive traffic volumes.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Circulation

The Townships should incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements into the transportation planning process. The Community Facilities Plan recommends that the Townships strengthen their zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that bicyclists and pedestrians are accommodated in the transportation system. As roads are maintained and improved, design requirements for pedestrian and bicycle access should be addressed, such as the provision of bike lanes, sidewalks, and appropriate curb radii at intersections. Limiting radii at intersections to the minimum necessary to allow safe traffic flow can make intersections more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, a curb radius measurement of zero to ten feet is safest for pedestrians. Pedestrian crossings at street intersections, particularly along the trail routes, should be facilitated by crosswalks, stop signs, and pedestrian islands. Gaps in the sidewalk system (where feasible) should be eliminated. New developments, particularly within Designated Growth Areas, should have sidewalks. Access to community facilities and commercial areas in the Region should be enhanced through expanded and repaired sidewalks and greenways and by establishing crosswalks. Streetscape amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, information signs, and landscaping should be provided in the villages where appropriate.

Safe Routes to School

This program is designed to work with 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.

Traffic Calming

As development in the Region occurs and traffic volumes increase, residential streets and roads will have more traffic. Means of dealing with this additional volume include road improvements, providing increased opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, supporting efforts to increase automobile occupancy rates, and managing access. If these steps are not sufficient, the Townships may consider traffic calming techniques.

The purpose of traffic calming is to manage movement through an area in a way that is compatible with the nearby land uses. Streets should be safe for local drivers, and traffic should not adversely affect the quality of life of residents.

The general methods of traffic calming include the following:

- Active speed reduction (constructing barriers to traffic movements)
- Passive speed reduction (installation of signage)
- Streetside design (landscaping that changes the appearance of the area and driver attitudes)
- Regional planning efforts that direct external traffic to other routes
- Opportunities for use of alternative modes (mass transportation, pedestrian, bicycle)

1. *Active Speed Reduction (constructing barriers)*

- a. Speed humps and speed tables are raised areas in the street surface that extend across the width of the street. Speed humps present liability and are also annoying to local residents. Speed tables, which are really raised pedestrian crosswalks, may be more successful. They are most appropriate in areas with substantial pedestrian traffic.
- b. Changes in roadway surface may include rumble strips, milling, and special roadway surfaces. These techniques can increase noise in areas and raise objections from area residents.
- c. Intersection diverters may involve a barrier placed across an intersection, typically to alter travel plans, such as permitting right turns only, to make travel through a neighborhood more indirect.
- d. Channelization may involve provision of pedestrian refuge areas, providing protected parking bays through landscaped islands, altering motor vehicle traffic movements, and restricting movements at intersections by narrowing the space available for vehicular movement.

The active controls require changes in driver behavior. Although active methods convey that the street is not just for through traffic, such methods are costly, and can be viewed negatively by some.

2. *Passive Methods of Control*

- a. Traffic signs saying “Do Not Enter”, “Stop”, “Not a Through Street”, “Local Access Only”, “No Trucks”, or signs establishing speed limits, indicating one-way street, or prohibiting turns.
- b. Traffic signals.
- c. Pavement markings, including crosswalks, edgelines, and use of different materials for pedestrian crosswalks.
- d. Permitting on-street parking.
- e. Speed watch.

These methods have lower costs and can apply to only certain times of the day, if appropriate; however, signs are often ignored and enforcement is necessary.

The main emphasis should be on the passive traffic calming techniques. Active traffic calming techniques should be used only if passive techniques are not successful due to their cost and the inconvenience of their construction.

Prior to implementing any traffic calming program, it is necessary to identify the specific problems to be addressed; identify and evaluate the alternative techniques and their drawbacks, benefits, and cost; to identify alternative traffic patterns that could result from implementation of the techniques and the effects of those patterns on other streets and neighborhoods; and to involve residents in the evaluation and selection of techniques. Such techniques should not detract from the character or visual quality of a neighborhood.

Capital Improvements Planning

Capital Improvements planning should be considered for programmed transportation improvements. 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 the capital budget which lists the schedule of

improvements over a 5-year period on the basis of 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, payroll, employee benefits, 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 construction of a road 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 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 the following:

- It ensures that projects will be based upon the ability to pay and upon a schedule of priorities determined in advance.
- It helps ensure 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 severe changes in the tax structure by the proper scheduling of projects and facilitates the best allocation of community resources.

Chapter 9

Community Facilities & Services Plan

Introduction

The location of key community facilities such as water, sewer, schools, parks, and roads, is important to providing the necessary services to residents and businesses. The provision of adequate facilities and services allows municipalities to develop at a higher density, in a more compact and efficient pattern, and is often tied to economic well-being. However, these facilities may also attract development to areas such as farmland and sensitive open space that are not appropriate for such high intensity uses. The challenge to municipal governments is to provide these services in an efficient and cost-effective manner, while still protecting the character of the Region.

Cooperative Efforts

The three Townships should continue to review opportunities for regional cooperation in the provision of services and facilities as both the demand and the cost of such services increase. The municipalities can also work with the school district in providing facilities and programs to area residents. A number of the objectives found later in this chapter relate to cooperative efforts.

Potential opportunities for regional cooperation include purchase or use of equipment, such as road equipment or road salt, emergency services planning and coordination, police, fire, and ambulance services, recreation facilities and programs, and building code administration.

Volunteer fire companies are finding it increasingly difficult to get personnel in adequate numbers. The municipalities should encourage cooperation among the volunteer departments, perhaps in areas such as recruiting and acquisition of compatible equipment in order to meet the fire protection needs of the community. Where necessary, water systems within the region should be expanded to address emergency situations and provide service to residents. Water planning should assure that water will be supplied at adequate volume and pressure to meet fire protection needs. Similarly the location and number of fire hydrants should also be planned.

If new school facilities are proposed by the Oley Valley School District, the municipalities should work with the District to assure that school facilities are located to be consistent with the requirements of the Future Land Use Plan.

To facilitate implementation of this Joint Comprehensive Plan and to address the needs and possibilities for cooperation in the future, the municipalities should formalize the joint planning process that began with the formation of the Joint Municipal Planning Committee. A committee comprised of representatives from all three municipalities

should be created that will meet on a regular basis to review this Comprehensive Plan and to identify what steps should be taken to promote its implementation. The concept of using committees composed of area residents to address major issues of concern within the area may be used on other issues.

Public Sewer Service

The majority of Oley Township is served by on-lot septic systems. As of 2007, the Oley Municipal Authority provides wastewater collection and treatment for 675 connections in the Village of Oley and the surrounding area, including the Charmingdale subdivision. Also served are developments along Friedensburg Road, including the Middle School, Vo-Tech, and Meadow Farms II Subdivision. In 2008, Amity and Oley Townships discussed plans for providing public sewer service to the Yellow House area to address suspected malfunctions. Due to economic reasons, Oley Township has decided not to proceed with public sewers in the Yellow House area at this time.

The Oley Municipal Authority sewage treatment plant is located south of Pleasantville along the Manatawny Creek. The sewage treatment plant discharges into Manatawny Creek and has a capacity of 400,000 gallons per day and 500,000 gallons per day maximum. The plant is presently running at near capacity due to its current connections plus infiltration and inflow.

In 1999, the Oley Municipal Authority made improvements to its sewage treatment and expanded the plant's capacity by 95,000 gallons per day. The 1995 Oley Township Sewage Facility Plan Update identified three areas in the Township where public sewers were to be provided to address malfunctioning on-site systems: Pleasantville, Water Street between Lake Road and Stitzer Road, and the Essig Subdivision near Route 73 and Snyder Road. The Oley Municipal Authority plans to reserve part of its new treatment capacity for these three areas, with Pleasantville and Water Street receiving the highest priority. The Township's 1995 Sewage Facility Plan Update estimated that the three areas together would generate 35,500 gallons of wastewater per day from 118 new connections. As of 2007, all but the Essig Subdivision have been connected to the system.

Nearly all of Alsace Township is served by on-lot septic systems but a new plant will be operational by the Fall of 2008. The new plant will have capacity for 190 families and 220 EDUs. The Muhlenberg Township Authority serves 59 connections in the Wedgewood Heights subdivision, which is located in the southwestern corner of the Township. Wastewater is collected from Wedgewood Heights through sewer lines owned by Alsace Township. The wastewater then flows through the Muhlenberg Township Authority system to be treated at the City of Reading Sewage Treatment Plant. Muhlenberg Township monitors the wastewater flow from Wedgewood Heights which is approximately 15,500 gallons per day. The Muhlenberg Township Authority collects

fees from each customer in Wedgewood Heights. A portion of these fees is turned over to Alsace Township.

There is a community sewer service in the Urban Acres Mobile Home Park at Elizabethtown Road and Pricetown Road. The Shady Lane Mobile Home Park on Spies Church Road contains a private system with a pump station that sends sewage to the Exeter Township wastewater collection and treatment system.

Alsace Township prepared an Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan to investigate long term sewage treatment needs in the Township. In 2007, the Township received funding to provide public sewer to the Alsace Manor subdivision near Pricetown Road, where malfunctioning on-site systems have occurred.

Ruscombmanor Township contains three areas proposed to be served by public sewer, including the Village of Breezy Corners, at the intersection of PA Routes 73 and 662; Pricetown along PA Route 662 east to the Golden Oaks Country Club; and further north on the PA Route 662 corridor from approximately Stitzer Road to the Borough of Fleetwood. The Fleetwood Borough Authority provides sewage treatment for all of these areas.

Sewer Service Areas are shown on Figure 9.2, Water and Sewer Service Areas.

Public Water Service

Public water service in Oley Township extends to the Village of Oley and the surrounding area, including the Charmingdale subdivision. As of 2007, the Oley Township Municipal Authority serves approximately 680 connections with water supplied by three wells that is pumped through water lines owned by the Authority. The water lines were recently extended to serve Friedensburg Road, as well as the Meadow View Farms II Subdivision. The remainder of Oley Township relies upon private on-site wells.

Wedgewood Heights is the only area in Alsace Township with public water service. The Muhlenberg Township Authority provides water to 59 connections in Wedgewood Heights through its own water conveyance system. The Muhlenberg Township Authority's water is supplied by 12 wells.

Ruscombmanor Township has two areas that are proposed to be served by public water-PA Route 662 from the Borough of Fleetwood line to approximately one mile south of the Borough along Willow Road, which is served by the Fleetwood Borough Water Authority; and a very small portion in the northwest part of the Township, which is connected to the Maiden creek Township Authority.

Sewer Service Areas are shown on Figure 9.2, Water and Sewer Service Areas.

Community Facilities, Services, and Development:

Goal: Provide good quality community facilities and services to the Region's residents in an efficient, cost-effective manner within the financial resources of the municipalities, consistent with concern for protecting natural resources.

Objectives:

- Work with the Oley Valley School District to ensure adequate facilities exist to meet current and projected enrollments.
- Continue the Act 537 process to ensure appropriate solutions are devised for areas with a high concentration of failing septic systems.
- Support efforts of water supply and sewer authorities to plan ahead for expansion of capacities and extensions of the areas of service in accordance with growth projections and the establishment of future growth areas. Work to achieve consistency of Act 537 plans and infrastructure planning with this Plan and its land use element. Initially, this will involve coordination with the Townships in addressing regional approaches to provide sewer and water infrastructure.
- Look for more opportunities to cooperate with neighboring municipalities on emergency services, road maintenance and other public works.
- Periodically review the adequacy of municipal contributions to private community service providers including volunteer fire companies and rescue groups, and recreation organizations, among others.
- Encourage community efforts to bring people together and create community cohesion.
- Continue to provide high quality fire and police services to the residents of the Region.
- Identify policies to ensure safe, reliable, cost efficient, and well-maintained sanitary sewage disposal and water supply in the Region.

- Increase resident awareness of resources and facilities within the Region and support efforts to protect, enhance, and increase accessibility and use of those resources and facilities.
- Coordinate land use and sewer and water planning so the extension of public sewer and water facilities is consistent with the land use and other goals and objectives of this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Review opportunities for regional sharing of equipment, services and facilities and continue intermunicipal cooperation.
- Identify the need for additional community, cultural and social facilities and services for all age groups in the Region, and encourage provision of those facilities and services.
- Establish the responsibilities of developers for providing social and cultural facilities.
- Identify community facilities and services that can help attract and support desired economic development.
- Encourage increased cooperation of municipalities and the Oley Valley School District in planning activities and utilization of school facilities.
- Identify methods of encouraging energy conservation.
- Address stormwater management concerns through implementation of the Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans for the Schuylkill River, Maiden Creek, and Manatawny Creek Watersheds

Education

Oley Township, Alsace Township and Ruscombmanor Township are each part of the Oley Valley School District, which also includes Pike Township. Oley Valley High School is located on the north side of Oley Village, from which the entire school district is served. Oley Valley Elementary School, the district's only elementary school, and Oley Valley Middle School are also located in Oley, just south of Route 73 on Friedensburg Road. The Berks County Career and Technology Center (Berks County Vo-Tech Eastern Campus) is adjacent to Oley Valley Elementary School. The Oley Valley Intermediate Unit operates from the former Alsace Elementary School on Antietam Road in Alsace Township.

Table 9.1 shows that enrollment in the Oley Valley School District has decreased from 2,157 in 2000-2001 to 1,991 in 2007-2008, a reduction of 8 percent in 8 years. Overall, this indicates a fairly stable population with slight fluctuations occurring.

Previously, the District projected its total enrollment would peak in 2002 and decline between 2002 and 2006. These projections assumed continued slow growth in each of the four Oley Valley School District municipalities. The projections are still valid with continued slow growth in the municipalities and a stable or declining student population. The future projections up to the 2011-2012 school year continues to exhibit the pattern of slow decline in enrollment. The Oley Valley School District does not plan to construct any new schools or school building additions in the foreseeable future.

TABLE 9.1: TOTAL ENROLLMENT / PROJECTIONS

Total Enrollment Oley Valley School District 2000-2008		
SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	CHANGE
2000 - 2001	2,157	
2001 - 2002	2,129	-28
2002 - 2003	2,200	71
2003 - 2004	2,140	-60
2004 - 2005	2,073	-67
2005 - 2006	2,078	5
2006 - 2007	2,047	-31
2007 - 2008	1,991	-56
2008-2009 (proj)	1994	3
2009-2010(proj)	1968	-26
2010-2011(proj)	1897	-71
2011-2012(proj)	1861	-36

Sources: Oley Valley School District; PA Department of Education

Montessori Day School is the only private school in the Region. The following are the nearest colleges and universities to the Region:

- Albright College – City of Reading
- Alvernia College – City of Reading
- Reading Area Community College – City of Reading
- Pennsylvania State University Berks Campus – Spring Township
- Kutztown University – Maxatawny Township

Police Protection

The Police Departments providing coverage to the Region are:

- *Oley Township Police Department, #1 Rose Virginia Road, Oley, PA 19547*
- *Pennsylvania State Police, 600 Kenhorst Boulevard, Reading, PA 19611*

Oley Township has a police department with a full-time police chief and five part-time police officers. Police headquarters are located at the Oley Township Municipal Building. Ruscombmanor and Alsace Townships are patrolled by the Pennsylvania State Police. A few homes in Alsace Township have contracted privately with Central Berks Regional Police, located in Lower Alsace Township, for police protection.

Fire Protection

Oley, Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships each have their own fire company. The Oley Fire Company serves Oley Township from its location on Main Street in the Village of Oley. The Alsace Fire Company provides fire protection throughout Alsace Township and is located off Pricetown Road at Alsace Manor. Ruscombmanor Fire Company is located off of PA Route 662 near the Ruscombmanor Municipal Building. The fire companies each provide primary protection in their own municipalities and act as secondary or backups to each other. Mutual assistance agreements are in effect between the two fire companies and with fire companies from several neighboring municipalities to assist in fire emergencies.

TABLE 9.2: FIRE DEPARTMENTS: OLEY, ALSACE, AND RUSCOMBMANOR TWPS

Fire Dept.	#	Location	Services Offered	Area Covered	Personnel	
Alsace Manor Fire Company	8	1 Antietam Road, Temple	Fire, Rescue	Alsace	15 Volunteer Firefighters + 10 other volunteers	
Fleetwood Volunteer Fire Company	45	16 N. Chestnut St, Fleetwood	Fire, Rescue, EMS	Fleetwood ; Ruscombmanor	48 Volunteer Firefighters + 29 other volunteers	4,000 Residents in Primary area and 10,000 in mutual air response area
Fleetwood EMS Division	535	16 N. Chesnut St, Fleetwood	Certified ALS (Advanced Life Support)	Fleetwood, Richmond, and Ruscombmanor		Operates as a membership program
Oley Fire Company	5	477A Main St, Oley	Fire, Rescue	Oley	32 Volunteer Firefighters	
Ruscombmanor Fire Company	34	3721 Pricetown Road, Fleetwood	Fire, Rescue	Ruscombmanor		
Walnuttown Fire Company	32	535 Park Road, Fleetwood	Fire, Rescue	Maidencreek; Ruscombmanor	12 Volunteer Firefighters + 10 Other volunteers	

Ambulance Service

Ambulance service from the Oley Fire Company serves Oley Township. On an as-needed basis, ambulance service is also available from Blandon, Boyertown, and Fleetwood. Ambulance service in Alsace is provided by Blandon, Oley, Lower Alsace

and Muhlenberg, depending upon location while Ruscombmanor receives ambulance service from Fleetwood, Blandon, and Oley.

Library Service

While there are no libraries directly located in the Region, there are several that are conveniently located nearby. The Berks County bookmobile travels through the Region. The Oley Valley School District provides books for school students.

-
- Fleetwood Area Public Library - 110 West Arch Street in Fleetwood
- Muhlenberg Community Library - 3612 Kutztown Road, Laureldale
- Reading Public Library – 100 South Fifth Street, Reading, PA
- Exeter Library – 4569 Prestwick Drive, Reading, PA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipal Structure

Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor are all second class townships governed by a three-person board of supervisors. The supervisors are elected at large for six-year terms. Oley Township and Ruscombmanor Township each have a five-person planning commission while Alsace has a four-person planning commission. Each municipality has a three-person zoning hearing board. Each municipality also retains a municipal engineer and a municipal solicitor. Oley's municipal offices and garage are located at 1 Rose Virginia Road in Oley; Alsace Township's municipal building and garage is at 65 Woodside Avenue in the Alsace Manor subdivision off Pricetown Road; and Ruscombmanor Township is at 204 Oak Lane in Fleetwood. The municipal tax millage varies between them with Ruscombmanor at .09, Alsace at 1.0 and Oley at 2.2.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

As population increases within the region, so does the need for open space and recreation facilities. Communities that provide open space and recreation opportunities for their citizens enjoy a higher quality of life, which has a positive influence on the local economy. It is important to achieve a balance between active recreation facilities and open space and hiking trails for passive recreation. The results of the citizen survey indicated a high level of support for open space and recreation.

The Region is a diverse area with historic and ecological resources plus agricultural lands along small villages. While recreational activities are abundant in Berks County and the surrounding municipalities, the Region is lacking in parks and recreation opportunities.

Regional Recreation Areas

Regional recreation areas attract visitors from throughout Berks County and beyond. The focus of these areas is usually picnicking, boating, fishing, camping, hiking or hunting.

They may also have areas set aside for environmental conservation. Regional recreation lands within a 25-mile radius of the area are listed as follows.

Federal Lands

Blue Marsh Lake National Recreation Area (Berks County)

State Lands

French Creek State Park (Berks County)
Evansburg State Park (Montgomery County)
Marsh Creek State Park (Chester County)
Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center (Berks County)
State Gamelands 182 (Berks County)
State Gamelands 280 (Berks County)
State Gamelands 106 (Berks County and Schuylkill County)
State Gamelands 110 (Berks County and Schuylkill County)
State Gamelands 80 (Berks County and Schuylkill County)
State Gamelands 222 (Schuylkill County)
State Gamelands 286 (Schuylkill County)
State Gamelands 196 (Bucks County)
State Gamelands 43 (Chester County)
State Gamelands 52 (Lancaster County)
State Gamelands 46 (Lancaster County and Lebanon County)
State Gamelands 225 (Lebanon County)
State Gamelands 205 (Lehigh County)

County Lands

Camp Joy (Berks County)
Kaercher Creek (Berks County)
Tulpehocken Creek (Berks County)
Youth Recreation Facility and Education Farm (Berks County)
Leaser Lake (Lehigh County)
Trexler Lehigh County Game Preserve (Lehigh County)
Central Perkiomen Valley Park (Montgomery County)
Green Lane Reservoir Park (Montgomery County)
Upper Perkiomen Valley Park (Montgomery County)

Municipal Lands

Lake Ontelaunee (City of Reading)

Hiking Trails

Appalachian Trail

Pinnacle Side Trail

Other Regional Parkland

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

Local Recreation Areas

Local recreation areas are parks and other recreation-related properties designed for use by residents of the local municipalities. These are different than regional recreation areas which serve a much larger geographic area. Volunteer Park, a passive open space with picnic facilities, is the only municipally-owned park in Oley Township. Alsace Township owns the Alsace Township Park, which features a pavilion and basketball courts. The Oley Valley Youth Recreation Area, which is owned by a private non-profit organization, is the central athletic complex in the Region. Its baseball fields, softball fields, soccer fields and other recreation facilities are heavily used by sports organizations throughout the greater Oley/Alsace area. Ruscombmanor Township owns the Reueben Strause Park and the Ruscombmanor Municipal Ballfield.

The Oley Valley High School/Middle School and the Oley Valley Elementary School each have a gym, outdoor basketball courts, baseball fields and soccer fields. The High School/Middle School also has a track and tennis courts. School District activities have first priority on the use of each school's gym and sports fields. In addition to school activities, community basketball groups use the School District's two gyms and the Oley Youth Recreation organization uses School District athletic fields.

There are a variety of other public, semi-public and private recreation areas available for the Region's residents including the following:

- Pleasantville Park (a private picnic grove in Oley Township)
- Reading Motorcycle Club (private non-profit motorcycle track & recreation grounds in Oley Township)
- American Legion Grounds (picnic and natural area owned by the American Legion in Oley Township)
- Poole Nature Preserve (Berks County Conservancy land in Oley Township)
- Oley Valley Fish & Game Club (a private non-profit fish and game club in Alsace Township)
- Portions of Mount Penn Preserve (owned by City of Reading in Alsace Township)
- Gasser Golf Course
- Golden Oaks Country Club
- Conservancy Land

- Pricetown Rifle Association
- Evergreen Country Club
- Hobby Horse Ranch

Open Space and Recreation

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

Objectives:

- Provide and maintain parks, recreation and open spaces for area residents which are interconnected, accessible, well maintained, and safe.
- Maintain the fee-in-lieu responsibility of developers in providing park and recreation facilities and open space.
- Support the implementation of the Berks County Greenway and Open Space Plan and encourage coordination of recreation planning between the municipalities.
- Promote innovative development techniques such as Conservation By Design and open space development that will minimize land consumption and preserve remaining open space in the Region.
- Provide a wide range of active and passive recreational and cultural programs.
- Work with surrounding municipalities and counties to link open spaces, greenways, and natural areas outside of the Region.
- Encourage and support cooperative use of recreation facilities among the municipalities and the Oley Valley School District.

Future Recreation Needs

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Standards recommend a minimum of approximately ten (10) acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. The total population of the Region, according to the 2006 U.S. Census Bureau estimate, is 10,064. Applying the NRPA Standards, the Region should contain a **minimum** of approximately 116 acres of developed, usable active parkland (see Table 9.3). The municipalities should continue to keep recreation and open space provision a high priority.

TABLE 9.3: EXISTING AND RECOMMENDED OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ACREAGE

Municipality	2006 Population (Estimate) Source: US Census Bureau	Minimum Recommended Acres (NRPA Standards- 10 acres / 1,000 persons)	Total Existing Public Recreation Acres (Municipal)
Alsace	3,758	37.6	3.9
Oley	3,661	36.6	56.6*
Ruscombmanor	4,158	41.6	6.8
Total Region	11,577	115.8	71.3

*includes 60% adjustment to estimate the proportion of a school district facilities available for recreation.

The Oley Valley Youth Recreation area is 14.7 acres. The Oley Valley High School/Middle School is 32.8 acres and the Oley Valley Elementary School is 37.1 acres. The Alsace Township Park is 3.9 acres, and Ruscombmanor’s facilities are 6.8 acres. These sites, which are each used for active recreation, total 95.3 acres. However, these 95.3 acres are reduced to 67.3 acres when just 60% of the school acreage is counted. NRPA suggests using this 60% adjustment to estimate the proportion of a school site actually available for recreation. Using NRPA standards, the Region as a whole is 44.5 acres deficient in per-capita recreational acreage. The municipalities should seek to develop usable recreation land before this deficiency grows as the population increases, and available open space is developed.

It is a recommendation of this plan to preserve land now, while the land is still undeveloped, creating an open space system consisting of a network of connected active and passive open space and recreation opportunities. Lands targeted as high priority Greenways by the *Berks County Greenway, Park, and Recreation Plan* should receive

highest priority for acquisition. However, if the Townships encounter an opportunity to acquire open space that is vulnerable to incompatible development, and can be incorporated into the Region's recreation system, they should acquire the land.

Passive recreation and/or undeveloped open space may include stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes, ridgelines, and groundwater recharge areas. Active recreation areas are characterized by property that is suited for athletic fields or playgrounds (flat and well-drained); has adequate public access; and closer to population centers.

Greenways and Creek Conservation Corridors

What is a Greenway?

The Pennsylvania Greenway Partnership Commission defines a greenway as follows:

A greenway is a corridor of open space. Greenways vary greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban, and rural areas to wide corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural, and scenic features. Greenways can be land- or water-based, running along stream corridors, shorelines, lakes, waterfalls, or wetlands. Some follow old railways, canals, ridgelines, or other features. They can incorporate both public and private property. Some greenways are primarily recreational corridors, while others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage. Greenways differ in their location and function, but overall, a greenway network will protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, enhance the natural beauty and the quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, and stimulate economic development opportunities.

Benefits of Greenways

Greenways can have a number of benefits:

- Protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources.
- Link communities together.
- Provide for recreational opportunities such as walking, biking, picnicking, camping, skiing, fishing, equestrian trails, snowmobile trails, and links to recreation resources.
- Enhance the quality of life and promote revitalization in communities.

- Provide educational and interpretive opportunities.
- Enhance tourism and economic development opportunities.
- Maintain habitat linkages (wildlife corridors) and ecosystems.
- Allow access to natural, scenic and cultural resources.
- Preserve and build upon existing trail networks.
- Provide alternatives to vehicular travel.
- Provide riparian buffers to protect water quality.
- Provide linkages to trails of regional significance.

The municipalities should work toward the establishment of a greenway/bike path system, with highest priority given to the linking of existing parks and open space facilities, as well as creating links to trail systems outside of the Region. Not all corridors will be developed as active greenways with trails, nor will they all exist along a creek – these corridors should exist to preserve vital natural features, particularly ridge lines, woodlands, wetlands, and native vegetation.

Recommended Greenway / Bike Path System

The Future Greenway Network recommended by the *2007 Berks County Greenway, Park, and Recreation Plan* depicts a regional system of proposed greenways and bike paths. The plan is conceptual and subject to further refinement, but is the starting point for a Region-wide system. Given the many benefits of greenways, the effort is worth it. Greenways and trails should be considered along creeks, as connections to existing local trails, subdivisions, recreational and municipal facilities, and businesses.

The Greenways for the Oley Hills Region include the following high priority corridors:

- Antietam Highlands Greenway;
- Irish Mountain Greenway;
- East Penn Valley Greenway;

The Greenways for the Oley Hills Region include the following medium priority corridors:

- Oley Hills Greenway;
- Little Manatawny Greenways.

The goal of the bike path system is to include a bike lane along existing roads to accommodate bicycles safely. The bike path system is designed, where possible, for interconnection of existing and proposed parks and school facilities. Unfortunately, due to unsafe conditions such as high traffic volume, narrow cartways, and poor sight distances, some ideal connections are not possible.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is a natural life support system. It is an interconnected network of protected land and water that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources and contributes to the health and quality of life for the Region's communities and people. Within this infrastructure, streams and rivers, ridgelines, hiking and biking trails, passive open space, as well as wildlife migration corridors can be found.

The 2007 Berks County Greenway, Park, and Recreation Plan recognizes the following areas as important ecological areas:

- Poole Sanctuary
- Bieber Creek Wetlands
- Oley Hills
- Little Manatawny Creek
- Irish Mountain

The Oley Hills Region is also identified as a Hub by the Pennsylvania Highlands, which is part of the statewide Highlands Corridor, as designated by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Community Facilities / Open Space and Recreation Actions

- A. Support efforts of Regional Open Space and Recreation Organizations, including the Berks County Open Space Advisory Council, and the Berks County Conservancy, to plan for and seek funding for the continued acquisition, improvement and appropriate development of recreation facilities, greenways, and recreation programs in the Region.
 - 1. Seek to develop additional municipal parkland
 - 2. Develop a Region-wide greenway and bike trail system.

3. Implement the goals and objectives of the *2007 Berks County Greenway, Park, and Recreation Plan*.

- B. Evaluate the need to develop a regional or separate municipal open space and recreation plans.
- C. Establish and maintain language in Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to require developers to dedicate land or pay a fee in lieu of land for all new subdivisions.

Each subdivision or land development would have to be reviewed to determine whether the dedication of land or the fee in lieu of land would be more appropriate, based upon the size and location of the development.

Maintain standards for recreation facilities. Review National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Standards for appropriateness.

- D. Where appropriate, work with PennDOT to widen and improve road shoulders and require developers to improve shoulders along their properties in order to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- E. Maintain a dialog with the Oley Valley School District regarding development activities, school facilities needs, location of school facilities, and school bus routes.
- F. Work with the Oley Valley School District to assure availability of school district facilities to the Region's residents.
- G. Promote and support efforts of community organizations to provide recreational facilities and programs for all area residents and services and programs for seniors and youth.
- H. Provide for public areas within the Region through provision of open spaces, village greens, recreation facilities, greenways, improved pathways, and indoor facilities.
- I. Enforce on-lot Sewage Management Ordinances and State mandates to manage, monitor, and maintain on-lot sewage disposal facilities in the Region and assure that the best available technology is used.
- J. Involve local fire companies and school district personnel in review of subdivision and land development plans, where appropriate.

- K. Encourage volunteerism for non-profit agencies and increased coordination of volunteer services among agencies.
- L. Continue to promote recycling activities and work to establish recycling centers, if deemed appropriate, that are convenient and well managed.
- M. Address the need for fire and emergency medical personnel as fewer volunteers become available. Cooperate regionally to ensure adequate service throughout the Region.
- N. Coordinate policies of governing bodies, and the municipal authorities regarding the development of public sewer and water facilities within the Growth Areas, as depicted on the Future Land Use Plan, to assure consistency.
- O. Bring together citizens, the business community, and the school district to plan and organize community-wide activities, events, and programs to foster community spirit, economic development, and community attractiveness.
- P. Maintain current and workable emergency operations plans.
- Q. Require all wastes to be treated and/or disposed of in an approved, environmentally responsible manner.
- R. Promote efficient, effective, and professional management of public facilities. Identify opportunities for technological enhancements for municipal government.
- S. Update the municipal Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plans and include on-lot management recommendations. Seek input from surrounding municipalities.

Plan for the Reliable Supply of Water

The 2000 amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) state that a County or multi-municipal comprehensive plan *shall* include a plan for the reliable supply of water. Chapter 10, The Natural Resources Plan, provides a detailed description of the geology and groundwater of the Region.

Where developments, businesses, or other entities propose to utilize ground water or surface water supplies in substantial amounts, hydrologic studies should be required and the party causing the extraction is required to demonstrate that such use will have no adverse effects on the water supplies of other entities in the Region.

In cases in which watershed areas are used for public recreation purposes, public access

and usage should be consistent with the need to protect water supplies.

Efforts to protect groundwater resources must occur at all levels of government. Special consideration to the types and densities of permitted land uses should apply in areas that offer little natural protection to groundwater. Such efforts should also apply where the protection level is unknown. Groundwater quality is also a concern since domestic water for many of the residents of the Region outside of the few community water service areas are supplied by individual wells.

Land use regulations, land acquisition, and education programs can play a key role in protecting groundwater. Examples of land use control activities include the following:

- Land use plans that consider groundwater vulnerability;
- Zoning ordinance and site plan review standards related to aboveground secondary containment, interior floor drains, and other topics;
- Purchase of land and/or conservation easements to provide a wellhead protection buffer around any future municipal wellfields; and
- Public education through public meetings, school-based classroom programs, library displays, cable television videos, public information flyers, and municipal newsletters.

Protection of groundwater resources requires efforts on several fronts, including the need for regional planning, land planning for individual sites, and technological advances that may offer alternative solutions. Regional planning must be based on the entire watershed; it will do little good for one community to implement solutions to its problems only to find that neighboring communities do not. Groundwater has no respect for community boundaries. From a land planning perspective, simply requiring larger lots does little or nothing to enhance groundwater quality. One of the few readily available solutions to polluted wells or failed septic systems is to obtain public water and sewer. With the larger lots sizes and frontages prevalent in some areas in the Region, the costs of water and sewer services to homes are likely to be very expensive. On the other hand, where lot frontages are smaller, so too will be the cost of public utilities.

Municipal zoning ordinances should contain provisions to protect sources of water supply through the following techniques:

1. Natural resource protection standards (net out provisions) protecting floodplains, wetlands, wetland margins, steep slopes, watercourses, water bodies, and lake and pond shores.

2. If municipal water supplies are developed, wellhead protection provisions pursuant to wellhead protection planning should be completed.
3. Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning.
4. Floodplain, wetland, and hydric soil protection provisions.
5. Environmental performance standards and environmental assessment requirements for industrial and commercial uses. Businesses should have Spill and Pollution Prevention Plans.
6. Provisions to minimize impervious cover.

When development plans are reviewed, developers must indicate proper management of stormwater runoff as well as control of erosion and sedimentation to protect local water resources.

The recommendations of the Manatawny Watershed Stormwater Management Ordinance, as prepared in accordance with Act 167, the Stormwater Management Act, should be adhered to.

In accordance with current best management practices, stormwater management should be considered part of the hydrologic cycle with less emphasis on detention and more emphasis on infiltration to reduce the volume and the rate of runoff, pollution, and thermal impacts. Developers must identify the resources within their tracts, and to analyze and mitigate the impacts of development. Natural resources should be incorporated into the open space system.

It should be noted that lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources. Such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.

The following chart (Table 9.4) provides a reference for zoning ordinance policy recommendations and techniques for water resource protection.

TABLE 9.4: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTING WATER SUPPLIES

Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning	Zoning Policies	Water Resource Protection Provisions	Impact Analyses
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict development and impervious surfaces • Require riparian vegetative buffers • Encourage use of best management practices • Encourage stream habitat improvement • Encourage conservation easements/donations/dedications • Protect wetlands and wetland margins • Require floodplain and wetland studies based on soil types • Employ Innovative stormwater management techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development where public sewer and water exist; discourage on-site sewer and water • Limit impervious surfaces • Establish performance standards for uses • Protect aquifers through controlling uses and potential polluting activities • Establish an overlay protection zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation/restriction of potential contaminating uses and substances • Performance standards • Design standards • Operating requirements • Review process • Wellhead protection ordinance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply locations • Geologic conditions, recharge rate, degree of renovation • Aquifer characteristics: groundwater movement, use, yield, quality, quantity, well interference • Test well results and impacts • Plan to protect groundwater system underlying and adjacent to the site: prevention, remediation, emergency management • Monitoring of groundwater quality and quantity
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The Townships and municipal water authorities should cooperate to encourage the provision of public water service in Growth Areas, and to discourage public water service outside of the Growth Areas.

Overlay Zoning

Overlay zoning is the application of an additional set of regulations to an established zoning district. Overlay zones supplement, but do not replace, the existing applicable zoning regulations. Overlay zones can be used for any number of objectives, ranging

from commercial corridor improvement to stream corridor and wellhead protection efforts. Areas commonly targeted for overlay zoning include: floodplains, watersheds, environmental areas, stream corridors, historic districts, and economic revitalization areas. The use of an overlay zone can be especially effective to ensure consistent regulation of land uses within multiple zoning districts.

Monitoring of Needs

Monitoring the need and opportunity for additional, expanded, or improved community services and facilities will help the Townships plan for their efficient and economical provision. The goal for community facilities and services is to provide them on a coordinated, regional basis, where possible, to meet the existing and future needs of the residents of the Region in a manner consistent with financial resources.

The majority of respondents to the citizen survey indicated high satisfaction with the rural character and small town atmosphere of the Region, but also indicated concern that the level of emergency services (for example, police and fire and ambulance protection) be sustained. The Townships should jointly monitor the efficiency of current emergency services to ensure that the Region has adequate provision of these services.

Chapter 10

Natural Resources Plan

Natural resources contribute to the economic activity, environmental health, and quality of life of a community. Parks, open space, woodlands, steep slopes, streams, wetlands, and farmlands are all resources that are aesthetically pleasing, and provide economic as well as environmental benefits. One example of this is the way that floodplains and wetlands act as natural storage basins in periods of high water and help to improve water quality by filtering out sediment and pollutants.

Natural Resources Goal: Protect the sensitive natural features that characterize so much of the area's natural landscape.

Objectives:

- Direct growth away from areas with sensitive ecological resources.
- Strengthen zoning and subdivision regulations that conserve steep slopes, animal habitats, wooded areas, stream buffers and flood prone lands.
- Strive to maximize preservation of permanent natural areas within residential developments.
- Look for opportunities to initiate a linked network of greenways, open spaces, and green infrastructure.
- Protect the supply and quality of groundwater and surface water.
- Protect woodland.
- Continue to support the efforts of the Pike /Oley District Preservation Coalition.
- Protect important Natural Areas identified in the Berks County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Preserve watersheds, stream corridors, floodplains, wetlands, and recharge areas.
- Protect steep slopes. Determine appropriate approaches toward development on ridgelines.
- Preserve natural wildlife habitats.
- Prevent deterioration of air quality.

Scenic Resources

Preservation of scenic resources can be accomplished through broad land use policies, such as open space and woodland preservation and through attention to developments as they are proposed. Performance and design standards for developments, including siting of buildings and protection of woodland can encourage retention of scenic areas.

Scenic Resources Goal: To protect the Scenic Resources within the Region.

Objectives:

- Protect scenic views, features and landscapes, and ensure for future generations views of the scenic and natural beauty of the Region.
- Protect the night sky from excessive light pollution.

Physical Characteristics

Physical Characteristics of an area are an important aspect in the planning process. Specific features found in an area can determine where development is best suited or where it should be limited.

Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships are located within the physiographic region known as the Appalachian Highlands Region, Great Valley Section of the Ridge and Valley Province. The Appalachian Highlands Region is one of eight physiographic regions found in the United States. These Regions are based on features such as terrain, rock type, and geologic structure and history.

Geology

The geology of an area dictates its groundwater potential and is an important determinant of soil types. The Region is underlain by three geological groupings: Ordovician, Cambrian and Precambrian formations. These formations represent different geological time periods, with Ordovician being the most recent and Precambrian being the oldest. Each municipality contains a sampling of all three types of geological formations.

Ordovician formations consisting of shale, dolomite and limestone are the predominate formations that underlie Oley. These Ordovician formations are found throughout most of the central portions of Oley. Cambrian formations of dolomite and limestone can be found along the east and northeast edges of the Township. The northwest corner of Oley, along the border with Ruscombmanor Township, contains Precambrian Gneiss mixed with some small pockets of Cambrian quartzite.

Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships are underlain primarily by Precambrian Gneiss formations. Small pockets of Cambrian Quartzite and Dolomite exist in the western portion of Alsace Township. Along Alsace's eastern border with Oley lies a small area of Ordovician Shale and Dolomite/Limestone.

The following geological formations, their characteristics and their effect on planning are described below:

Ordovician Formations

Ordovician formations are composed of gray shales, sandstone interbeds and crystalline limestones. Ordovician shales are non-permeable and cause poor drainage. Ordovician dolomite and limestone are both calcium carbonate bedrock, are highly porous, soluble and easily weathered. Both dolomite with its magnesium component and limestone are associated with the highly productive agricultural soils of the Oley Valley. Limestone has also supplied lime and other stone for the area's quarries. Because carbonate geology is porous, it does not filter pollutants through slow percolation to the extent that more solid rock does. This tendency for carbonate geology to rapidly transport pollutants in groundwater should be a consideration in limiting permitted densities where development is served by conventional on-lot septic systems. Ordovician formations tend to be small to moderate suppliers of ground water, but adequate for residential uses.

Cambrian Formations

Cambrian formations are composed of quartzite, dolomite and limestone. The Cambrian formations tend to have an abundance of surface depressions and sinkholes due to the relative purity of the limestone bedrock found here. Their high porosity and solubility make them easily weathered and provide similar concerns regarding transporting pollutants to the ground water as Ordovician limestones. Likewise, limiting development densities where conventional on-lot septic systems are used should be a strong consideration. The relative purity of these limestone formations increases chances of sinkholes forming as the limestone forms a solution when water comes into contact with it, washing away and forming larger and larger cavities below ground until the surface collapses. Like Ordovician dolomite and limestones, these formations are generally associated with productive farm land.

Precambrian Formations

Precambrian formations were the earliest to form in Berks County. They are composed of Hornblende and Granite gneiss, a very hard and compact rock which resists erosion. These underlie the area's hills and ridges found in Ruscombmanor, Alsace and the northwestern border of Oley Township. Precambrian formations tend to be poor aquifers

and finding and sustaining high yield wells can be difficult, although flows are usually sufficient for residential uses.

On a larger scale, the Region is near the Reading Prong, a geological region that extends along the Blue Mountain corridor from Reading to the Lehigh Valley. The Reading Prong produces a high level of radon gas, an invisible, tasteless and odorless gas that can pose health risks when concentrations build up in enclosed areas, like basements. Houses vary significantly in their ability to resist radon. Yet there is no reliable way to predict where, within the radon-prone areas, that radon is likely to accumulate to dangerous levels.

Soils

Soil is a naturally occurring loose covering of broken rock and decaying organic mineral matter on the earth's surface. Soils are derived from the parent material, or geology that underlies them. This geology gives the soil its specific characteristics as described above.

Several soil types exist within the Region. Analyzing soil type is important to evaluate how well the soil can support septic systems or agriculture. Soils are classified into eight classes, beginning with I and ending with VIII. Class I soils are the highest rated and have few restrictions on uses. Class VIII soils are limited in use based on severe slope and their propensity towards erosion.

Agriculturally productive soils are Class I through IV. Class I and Class II agricultural soils are considered prime agricultural soils and indicate where the best farmland is located. Class III soils have limitations in their ability to support certain crops and require additional conservation practices. Classes IV-VII are considered the least favorable for agricultural use because of their severe limitations to farming.

The definition of "prime farmland" has been established nationwide by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to include Class I and Class II soils. These are the classifications used by the Agricultural Preservation Board to determine eligibility in the Berks County Agricultural Easement Program. Prime farmland has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is managed according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. Its soils are permeable to water and air. Prime farmland is not excessively eroded or saturated with water for long periods of time, and it either does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Figure 10.2 identifies prime farmland as well as soils defined by the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as “farmland of statewide importance” based upon conditions specific to Pennsylvania.

Stewards of prime farmland soils should recognize that soil properties are only one of several criteria that make for “prime” soil. Other factors include land use, frequency of flooding, irrigation, water table, and susceptibility to wind erosion.

- **Land use** - Prime farmland is designated independently of current land use, but it cannot be areas of water or urban or built-up land.
- **Frequency of flooding** - Some soil types include both prime farmland and land not prime farmland because of variations in flooding frequency.
- **Irrigation** - Some soil types include areas that have a developed irrigation water supply that is dependable and of adequate quality along with areas lacking such a supply. For these soil types, only the irrigated areas meet the prime farmland criteria.
- **Water table** - Some soil types include both drained and undrained areas; only the drained areas meet the prime farmland criteria.
- **Wind erodibility** – Susceptibility to erosion by wind is determined by a combination of soil characteristics and the climate. Due to varying climatic conditions, it is possible for a single soil type to be prime farmland in one part of a survey area but not in another.

On-site sewage disposal systems should not be located within areas containing hydric soils that are subject to flooding because of the danger of contamination of the stream and the groundwater due to the proximity of the stream and the presence of the high water table. There may not be an adequate distance between the on-site facility and surface water to permit renovation of sewage effluent prior to its reaching the stream. In some instances, soils found in the floodplains are very porous and the movement of sewage effluent is too rapid to allow for the renovation of the effluent prior to reaching the groundwater table or the stream. In other situations, the soil near the surface may be saturated with water or become readily saturated with sewage effluent, resulting in effluent remaining near or rising to the surface of the land. When flooding occurs, sewage effluent could then contaminate the surface water. The efficiency of filter fields of septic tanks can be impaired or destroyed as a result of flooding.

The hydric soils and floodplains found along the tributaries and watercourses within watersheds should be preserved. Serious consideration should be taken to limit development on hydric soils. These floodplains and hydric soils act like a sponge when floodwaters rise and, when coupled with established wetlands, can filter nutrients and

pollutants to protect the surface and ground water that feed the various streams and lakes within the Region.

In general, soils which are steeply sloped, shallow, stony or poorly drained are considered unsuitable for on-lot systems. Soil suitability for on-site septic systems is not an important issue in areas served by public or private community sewage systems. Soil suitability for on-site septic systems is a critical issue for existing and future development within the Region.

Prime Agricultural Soils

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service has established soil capability classes based on each soil type's agricultural productivity. Capability classes range from Class I, soils with few limitations for farming, to Class VIII, soils generally unsuitable for farming. Class I and Class II are considered prime agricultural soils, and Class III soils are considered of statewide importance for agriculture. When evaluating farmland soils for potential purchase of development rights, Berks County also considers Class III and Class IV soils although more value is assigned to Class I and Class II.

Class I and Class II soils are abundant in Oley. According to Berks County, the Township has more Class I soils than any other Berks County municipality. Class I soils are relatively rare in Berks County outside of Oley. Outside of Oley, Class II and Class III soils predominate among the Berks County farms whose development rights have been sold to the State. There are no Class I agricultural soils in Alsace or Ruscombmanor. The eastern part of Alsace Township has significant concentrations of Class II and Class III soils while Ruscombmanor has a fair amount of Class II and Class III soils scattered throughout the Township.

Soil Suitability for On-Site Septic Systems

Soil suitability for on-lot septic systems is based primarily on a soil's depth to bedrock, depth to groundwater, soil permeability and the presence of slopes. Septic systems in soils that percolate too rapidly can degrade groundwater because impurities are not sufficiently absorbed before reaching the water table. Conversely, soils that do not drain properly can cause the unhealthy surface ponding of wastewater. These soil characteristics are important to consider for development that relies on private wells and private septic systems rather than public water and sewer service.

Much of Oley Township has only slight limitations for septic systems. These areas of slight limitations lie primarily in the eastern and southern portions of the Township. Many of the areas in Oley that are suitable for septic systems are on farms protected from development either permanently or temporarily. Soils with moderate limitations for septic systems lie directly to the west of the Village of Oley and near Oley Furnace. The

soils found in the Village of Oley, areas north of the village and southwest to Alsace Township border are generally not suited for septic systems.

Most of Alsace Township contains soils that severely constrain the safe use of septic systems because of steep slopes, poor drainage and shallow depth to both bedrock and the water table. Areas in Alsace with concentrations of soils that have only slight or moderate limitations for septic systems include the following:

- a scattering between the base of Irish Mountain and Temple Quarry
- the east side of Pricetown Road
- both sides of Basket Road
- the east side of Antietam Creek
- the Five Points area near Exeter Township

The majority of the soils in the Region are unsuitable for on-site sewage disposal due to steep slopes, the depth of the water table and/or slow permeability. On-lot septic soil Suitability can be seen on Figure 10.4.

Topography

The accompanying Topography map shows two categories of slopes within Oley and Alsace: land between 15 and 25% grade (steep slopes) and land over 25% grade (very steep slopes). It is important to know where steep slopes are located because steep slopes are susceptible to erosion when soil and vegetation are disturbed. Steep slopes can add significantly to the cost of constructing and maintaining roads and buildings. Steep slopes also limit the placement of on-site sewage systems.

Most of Oley is a flat to gently rolling agricultural valley. Steep slopes in Oley are concentrated along in the western part of the Township near the Monocacy and Limestone Creeks and in the Township's northern sector, near Oley Furnace. Alsace has very little flat land compared to Oley. Most of Alsace is hilly, including large areas of both moderately steep slopes and very steep slopes. Over half the land area of Alsace is in steep slopes.

Ruscombmanor has elevations from 492 feet adjacent to Fleetwood to approximately 1,000 feet around the Seidel School.

Streams

Streams are valuable aquatic habitats that provide both active and passive recreation. The major streams in Oley Township are the Monocacy Creek, Limekiln Creek, and Manatawny Creek. Limekiln Creek and Monocacy Creek each have several unnamed tributaries. In addition to unnamed branches, tributaries to Manatawny Creek include

Little Manatawny Creek, Furnace Creek, Furnace Run, Bieber Creek and Oysterville Creek.

The primary streams in Alsace Township are the Willow Creek, Laurel Run, Bernhart Creek and Antietam Creek. Within Alsace, each of these streams is a designated Cold Water Fishery. Laurel Run is also designated a Migratory Fishery. Unnamed tributaries from the Monocacy Creek, Willow Creek and Little Manatawny Creek also extend into Alsace.

Ruscombmanor streams include Little Manatawny Creek, Furnace Creek,

Pennsylvania's Water Quality Standards designate protection categories for streams and water quality criteria for each category that are used in limiting the discharge of effluent into streams. Within Oley, Bieber Creek is classified as a waterway of Exceptional Value, a designation for streams that should receive special protection because of their outstanding water quality and other environment attributes. Several streams in Oley are designated as Cold Water Fisheries, streams that should be protected as habitat for cold water fish and other fauna and flora indigenous to cold water. These include Furnace Creek, Manatawny Creek, Little Manatawny Creek, Oysterville Creek and Furnace Run. Monocacy Creek is designated as a Warm Water Fishery, a waterway that should be preserved as a warm water habitat. Furnace Creek is also designated by the State as a Trout Stock Fishery.

Drainage Basins

Drainage basins are stormwater catchment areas. Watershed boundaries for drainage basins are delineated by ridge lines. All stormwater runoff in a particular drainage basin eventually flows to the same waterway, either directly or via one or more other waterways. Drainage basins are logical service areas for sanitary sewer systems because lines that carry wastewater by gravity do not require pumping stations. For these reasons and others, drainage basins are important to consider in comprehensive planning.

The Manatawny Creek system forms a major watershed that drains most of the eastern and northern portions of Oley Township. Tributaries of the Manatawny, including Little Manatawny Creek, Furnace Creek, Bieber Creek and unnamed branches form sub-basins within the Manatawny Watershed. The Limekiln Creek and Monocacy Creek drain most of the southwestern quadrant of Oley Township. The Monocacy Creek's watershed extends on both sides of the Oley/Alsace municipal boundary. Most of the central portion of Alsace is drained by Antietam Creek, with a small northern portion drained by the Manatawny Creek. The western side of Alsace is divided into three major watersheds. From north to south these include watersheds formed by Willow Creek, Laurel Run and Bernhart Creek. Each of the major watersheds in the Oley/Alsace area

drain to the Schuylkill River, which empties into the Delaware River in South Philadelphia.

Floodplains

Floodplains are areas adjacent to rivers and streams which are subject to flooding during periods of excessive precipitation. The floodplain holds the excess water allowing it to seep into the groundwater and slowly drain back into the waterway.

100-year floodplains are areas that, on average, have a one in one hundred chance of flooding in a given year, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Besides providing natural habitat, floodplains carry floodwaters and help moderate flood heights. Interfering with these natural functions can result in more severe flooding, costly property damage, and loss of life. A 100-year floodplain is the area adjacent to a river or stream which has a one percent chance of being flooded during any one year, and is typically used for regulatory purposes. Floodplains should not be developed, due to the potential for damage to persons and property. If development occurs within the floodplain, it may limit the floodway, resulting in increased damage downstream because of resulting increased velocities of the floodwater downstream. Outdoor storage of materials within floodplains is not desirable because of the possibility of the materials being swept into the stream when flooding of the banks occurs. One hundred-year floodplains are shown from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Maps. Detailed studies and calculations have not been performed to establish the extent of the 100-year floodplains for all watercourses. Any development proposed in the vicinity of watercourses would require the developer to obtain a calculated study of the 100-year floodplain if such studies have not been performed by FEMA. The 100-Year Floodplain for the Region is depicted on Figure 10.1, The Natural Resources Map.

Care must be taken in disturbing areas along watercourses because increased sedimentation within the stream (increased depositing of soil within the stream) can occur. Increased impervious cover along watercourses typically increases the volume of storm water runoff into the streams. This additional runoff can erode stream banks and channels. If sedimentation increases, streambeds may fill, causing floodwaters to affect a larger area.

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as: “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.”

Wetlands have three major characteristics which include vegetation, soil, and hydrology. Wetlands are generally found along rivers and streams or in other areas subject to frequent flooding, and are characterized by soil type and the presence of hydrophytic (“water-loving”) vegetation, in addition to the presence of visible surface water. Wetlands are typically rich in plant growth and provide habitat for a variety of animals. Furthermore, wetlands can protect water sources by acting as a natural filter, removing pollutants such as bacteria and sediment from surface water before it enters the ground. Development activity, including the placement of fill material, is regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The wetlands depicted on the Natural Resources Maps (Figure 10.1) are from the National Wetlands Inventory, prepared by the Office of Biological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The wetlands inventory was prepared by stereoscopic analysis of high altitude aerial photographs, with the wetlands identified based on vegetation, visible hydrology, and geography. The National Wetlands Inventory does not necessarily show all wetlands that exist within townships along stream corridors and other low lying areas. A detailed ground level analysis of any site may result in a revision of the wetland boundaries, and it is possible that small wetlands and those obscured by dense forest cover may not be identified. Wetlands are dispersed throughout the Region.

Hydric Soils

Hydric soils are soils that are flooded, ponded or saturated long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic (without oxygen) conditions. They are typically poorly drained and have a shallow water table. Lack of oxygen in the soil leads to certain characteristics of wetlands soil such as: non-decomposed plant material, oxidized root channels, and concentrations and depletions of iron and other elements. These soils, if undrained, may exhibit wetland vegetation and be an indicator of wetlands. Hydric Soils are noted on the Natural Resources Maps.

Unique Natural Areas

In 1991, the Pennsylvania Science Office of the Nature Conservancy prepared the Berks County Natural Areas Inventory, a list and mapping of rare and endangered plants, animals and natural habitats in Berks County. The Natural Areas Inventory contains a)

sites of local importance and b) sites of statewide significance as listed on the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index (PNDI).

The Lobachville Floodplain Forest, which is in Oley and Pike Townships, is the only site in the Oley/Alsace area noted to be of Statewide Importance. It is a mature woodland with extensive wetlands. Beech, white ash, tulip poplar, sugar maple and spice bush are its most prevalent vegetation. While development of the area appears unlikely, the Natural Areas Inventory recommends that logging and other forms of human disturbance be minimized so the area can continue to provide open space, wildlife habitat and flood storage. The Lobachville Floodplain Forest is an area of local importance in addition to its designation of Statewide Significance.

The Chapel Hill Forest, which is on the south side of Mexico Road in central Alsace Township, is noted as a natural area of local importance, although it is not designated as a site of Statewide Significance. The Chapel Hill Forest is a mature forest with an 80-foot canopy of oak, beech, hickory, birch, maple, tulip and sour gum. A diversity of birds occupies this site and its ponds support aquatic life. The Natural Areas Inventory recommends against logging or other forms of disturbance and development.

Ruscombmanor Township had two areas which were identified as Natural Areas Inventory.

There is a special plant, Boyers Junction Seeps (SP503) which is described as: “A population of a state endangered grass grows in Ruscombmanor Township. The population grows in a seepage wetland near the village of Boyer’s Junction. The seep occurs along a stream flowing through a closed-canopy forest of red maple (*Acer rubrum*), common alder (*Alnus serrulata*), and skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). If roads and ditches in the woods were made more extensive, the resulting change in hydrology could threaten the plant. Otherwise, the plant appears relatively secure. The Inventory recommends protection by seeking an agreement with the landowner.”

Lake Ontelaunee Watershed:

“Ruscombmanor is partially located in the Lake Ontelaunee Watershed. The watershed needs protection from additional intrusion by housing and other forms of development. The agricultural industry should be encouraged to use best management practices (BMPs), to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, and the resulting nutrient and pesticide run-off. Limiting development and providing the agricultural industry with incentives to control soil erosion, will help avoid more costly remedies in the future, i.e., desilting Lake Ontelaunee.”

An animal species of concern was found in the “Little Manatawny Creek Watershed” in 1994 in an extensive wetland area. It was determined that additional survey work is

needed. This affects Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships. A plant species of concern was found in a nearby area in 1996. The population occurs in an alluvial bottomland woods. The open canopy includes sugar maple, bitternut hickory, red maple, ash, and beech. The population is healthy but possibly threatened by woody, exotic species. A 2003 update notes disturbances including exotic species invasion and dirt bike trails.

Woodlands

Woodlands are wildlife habitats that, if destroyed, take decades to replace. The root systems of trees and other vegetation stabilize the soil against erosion, particularly in steep areas. Woodlands are also a scenic resource that provide visual relief from the built environment.

Large concentrations of woodlands are scarce in Oley because so much of the Township is cleared for farming. Most of Oley's woodlands are in the northwestern quadrant of the Township, particularly north of Oley Village and in the Oley Furnace area. Woodlands also exist along several miles of stream corridor in Oley. In contrast, Alsace is predominantly wooded. Wooded hillsides exist throughout the Township. Woodlands cover almost all the undeveloped lands in the western portion of Alsace. In the eastern portion of Alsace, woodlands are less concentrated but still very prevalent.

SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURAL AREAS

The importance of protecting natural resources is summarized below:

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes of 15 to 25% have 15 to 25 feet of vertical change in elevation over 100 feet of horizontal distance. Very steep slopes of greater than 25% have a vertical change greater than 25 feet over 100 feet of horizontal distance.

Steep Slopes Importance

- Erodible if vegetative cover is removed.
- Stormwater runoff problems can result if vegetative cover is removed.
- Severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal.
- Driving hazards can result from development of roads and driveways.
- Difficulty in road maintenance and plowing.
- Higher building costs.

Areas of steep slopes within the Region are generally found in Alsace Township.

Woodland

Woodland Importance

- Wildlife habitats.
- Stabilize soil against erosion.
- Scenic resources.
- Provide visual relief.
- Birding and hunting areas.
- Buffer development.
- Absorb stormwater runoff.
- Cleanse air.
- Moderate water temperatures along streams

Woodlands are scattered through the Region, and are more concentrated in Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships. For the reasons noted above, as development occurs, efforts should be made by developers to minimize clearance of wooded areas. The contiguous wooded areas of the Region are particularly valuable in providing wildlife habitat and scenic amenities.

Floodplains

Areas adjacent to watercourses which are covered by flood water. 100-year floodplains mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on average have a 1 in 100 chance of being flooded in a given year. If detailed studies along watercourse have not been done by FEMA, they are necessary from developers.

Floodplains Importance

- Development poses danger to people and property.
- Can constrict floodwater flow, increasing flood velocities downstream and increasing flood damage.
- Outdoor storage can be washed downstream.
- Wildlife habitats.
- Development can increase sedimentation and stormwater runoff in streams, thus erosion of stream banks and channels, filling of streambeds, meandering of streams, and choking of aquatic life.
- Development can detract from esthetic value.
- Development can detract from recreational value.
- Absorb surface runoff, thus replenish ground and surface water and reduce flood peaks. Increased surface flow can reduce concentration of pollutants and maintain stream flow in dry weather.
- On-site sewage disposal can contaminate ground and surface water

Floodplains along the Region's streams and creeks should incorporate riparian buffers as explained below.

Wetlands

From National Wetlands Inventory, does not include wetlands which cannot be identified from high altitude aerial photography. Detailed analysis of sites proposed for development is necessary. Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Wetlands along the Region's waterways and their tributaries should be incorporated into riparian buffers.

Hydric Soils

Have shallow depth to seasonally high water table. Potential wetlands, with need for further analysis.

Areas of hydric soils need to be analyzed when development is proposed near them to determine the presence of wetlands. Generally, areas of hydric soils should be avoided, and areas along streams and tributaries should be incorporated into riparian buffers.

Wetlands Importance

- Store water which can replenish groundwater and surface water supplies (recharge areas).
- Plant and animal habitats.
- Breeding places and sources of food for organisms.
- Natural filters of pollutants from waters via actions of plants.
- Reduce flooding by detaining stormwater.
- Unsuitable for development and on-site sewage disposal.

Hydric Soils Importance

- Unsuitable for development and on-lot sewage disposal.
- Flooded basements and poor foundation stability if built upon.
- Natural recharge areas which can reduce flooding and manage stormwater runoff.
- Filter surface water.

Watercourses Importance

Watercourses

Watersheds can be planning and management areas for stream conservation and protection, stormwater management planning, water supply budgeting planning, watershed based zoning, and integrated resource planning.

- Recreational resources.
- Scenic resources.
- Aquatic habitats.

Groundwater Supplies

Groundwater enters through the soil and creeks.

Groundwater Importance

- Public water systems and private wells are usually dependent upon groundwater supplies.
- Groundwater supplies are affected by development which reduces recharge and pollutes groundwater.
- High water withdrawals can affect other water supplies.

Natural Resources Actions:

- A. Update zoning ordinances as necessary, and consider adopting official maps to reflect the resource protection Goal and Objectives of this Plan and to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map (Figure 6.1). The resource protection provisions of municipal zoning ordinances vary, and the approach taken by each Township will vary. Options include:
 1. Adopt Natural Resource Protection Standards and/or Net-Out Provisions for the following resources:
 - a. Floodplains
 - b. Wetlands
 - c. Wetland Margins (buffers)
 - d. Watercourses
 - e. Water bodies
 - f. Greater than 25% slope
 - g. 15-25% slope

2. Adopt Steep Slope Protection Provisions:
 - a. Control and limit development on steep slopes
 - Require larger lot sizes and impose stricter impervious restrictions for steep slopes of 15 to 25%
 - Prohibit or severely restrict development on slopes greater than 25%
3. Adopt Groundwater Protection Provisions:
 - a. Protect aquifers through design standards, construction guidelines, use restrictions, impervious limits, and permit submission requirements.
4. Adopt Tree and Woodland Protection, Management and Planting Provisions:
 - a. Limit clearance for development in both subdivisions and land developments.
 - b. Require tree protection and replacement during development.
 - c. Encourage the use of native species in landscaping. Discourage invasive species.
 - d. Establish limited clearance buffer zones around the perimeter of new developments
5. Adopt provisions for Wetland, Wetland Buffer, and Hydric Soil Protection:
 - a. Restrict development in wetlands.
 - b. Establish consistent wetland, wet area, and water body buffer (margin) requirements, such as 50 feet or 100 feet.
 - c. Require wetland delineation in hydric soil areas.
6. Adopt Floodplain Protection Provisions:

- a. Severely restrict development in floodplains to compatible open space uses.
7. Establish Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning and require Riparian Buffers:
 - a. Restrict development and impervious surfaces.
 - b. Require riparian (vegetative) buffers to moderate water temperatures, protect wildlife habitats, control sedimentation, and reduce pollution.
 - c. Require greenways.
 - d. Utilize the Best Management Practices where practical, and implement the Manatawny Creek Watershed Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan.
 - e. Protect the Region's streams.
 8. Adopt Outdoor Lighting Standards to control light pollution and protect the night sky:
 - a. Establish illumination levels that are adequate but not excessive.
 - b. Require impacts on surrounding streets and properties to be mitigated by directing light down, not up or out to sides of fixtures.
 - c. Control glare.
 9. Adopt Forestry Regulations:
 - a. Require accepted silvicultural (forestry) practices.
 - b. Require a forestry management plan.
 - c. Require stormwater and erosion and sedimentation control.
 - d. Require properly constructed internal logging roads and protection of public roads.
 - e. Require soil erosion protection during steep slope forestry.

B. Update subdivision and land development ordinances as necessary. Options include the following:

1. Expand plan data requirements to include a specific listing of environmental, scenic, historic, and cultural resources.
2. Require developers to identify the resources within their tracts, analyze the impacts of the development, and mitigate those impacts.
3. Require environmental assessment studies; hydrogeologic studies; scenic, historic and cultural resources impact studies; plans for preservation of environmental, historic, and cultural resources; and analysis of the site's ability to support the proposed use and intensity.
4. Require developers to identify natural, historic, scenic, architectural and cultural resources in their tracts and incorporate them into the open space system. Require management plans for open space as well as mechanisms to ensure the continuation as open space.

In review of Subdivision and Land Development Plans, requirements for setting aside open space can be used to preserve conservation corridors and provide for greenways.

Requirements for setting aside open space can also be used to protect targeted undeveloped areas and identified natural areas pursuant to municipal plans.

5. Establish development guidelines for development in groundwater recharge areas, including limits on impervious cover and limits on on-site sewage disposal.
 6. Require protection of vegetation during site work.
 7. Limit clearance on approved, but not developed, lots. Potential techniques include tree clearance ordinances, deed restrictions, net-out provisions, and identification of permissible clearance areas during the development process.
- C. Create municipal Environmental Advisory Councils to work with Township Supervisors to preserve key tracts of open space, protect environmental resources in the Region, and implement open space and recreation plans.

Act 148 of 1973 authorizes any municipality or group of municipalities to establish, by ordinance, an Environmental Advisory Council to advise the local planning commissions, park and recreation boards, and elected officials on matters dealing with the protection, conservation, management, promotion, and use of natural resources located in the municipality's territorial limits.

Act 148 empowers Environmental Advisory Councils to:

- Identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs to the appropriate municipal agencies for the promotion and conservation of natural resources and for the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment within its municipal boundaries;
 - Keep an index of all open space, publicly and privately owned, including flood-prone areas, and other unique natural areas, for the purpose of obtaining information on the proper use of such areas;
 - Advise the appropriate local government agencies, including, but not limited to, the planning commission and park and recreation board or, if none, the elected governing body, on the acquisition of property, both real and personal.
- D. Encourage formation of groups within the community to adopt a stream and provide monitoring and oversight along the stream corridor.
- E. Pursue joint watershed planning opportunities under the Growing Greener initiative and other programs in order to protect community water resources.

Scenic Resources Actions:

- A. Update zoning ordinances as necessary to protect scenic resources. Options include the following:
1. Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed Overlay Zoning:
 - a. Require greater setbacks from scenic roads.
 - b. Require additional landscaping, trees and screening on site.
 - c. Establish standards for siting buildings and building height.
 - d. Require retention of existing desirable vegetation when it will not conflict with road safety concerns.

- e. Impose sign limitations.
 - f. Require access management.
 2. Adopt ridgeline protection zoning.
 3. Update Sign Regulations:
 - a. Regulate billboards.
 - b. Adopt consistent and appropriate signage standards along road corridors in the Region.
 - c. Encourage appropriate signage in villages with consideration of the following:
 - Sign materials compatible with the building style.
 - Sign colors that complement building façades.
 - Hardware for projecting signs integrated into the building architecture.
 - Lettering compatible with the building façade.
 - Purpose of sign for identification only.
 - Restrict signs with off-premises advertising.
 - Lighted signs should illuminate the sign area only.
 - Signs do not obscure architectural features or windows.
 - Prohibition of roof-top signs.
 - Window signs should not obscure displays.
 - Prohibition of flashing lights, neon lights, moving lights, and unshielded light bulbs.
 4. Require landscaping and buffering in commercial and industrial Developments.

- B. Update subdivision and land development ordinances as necessary. Options include the following:
1. Establish guidelines for development near scenic roads and vistas.
 2. Require tree plantings along streets in both major and minor developments and both residential and non-residential developments.
- C. Minimize visual blight along the road corridors in the Region to enhance the business climate. Work with the Berks County Planning Commission and PennDOT to identify illegal or non-compliant signage and driveways and enforce applicable regulations. Establish responsibility in each Township for addressing this issue.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and managed network of wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and working lands with conservation value that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to the health and quality of life of the community.

The Green Infrastructure network encompasses a wide range of landscape elements, including natural areas such as wetlands, woodlands, waterways, and wildlife habitat; public and private conservation lands such as nature preserves, wildlife corridors, greenways, and parks; and public and private working lands of conservation value such as forests and farms. It also incorporates outdoor recreation and trail networks.

The contiguous woodlands found throughout the Region, particularly in Alsace Township, as well as the stream corridors are examples of parts of the green infrastructure network that should be protected.

Riparian Buffers

A riparian buffer is an area of vegetation that is maintained along the shore of a water body to protect stream water quality and stabilize stream channels and banks. The buffers provide the following benefits:

- Filter runoff – Rain that runs off the land can be slowed and infiltrated in the buffer, settling out sediment, nutrients and pesticides (nonpoint source pollution) before they reach streams.

- Take up nutrients – Fertilizers and other pollutants that originate on the upslope land are taken up by tree roots. Nutrients are stored in leaves, limbs and roots instead of reaching the stream. Through a process called “denitrification,” bacteria in the forest floor convert nitrate to nitrogen gas, which is released into the air.
- Provide shade – The leaf canopy’s shade keeps the water cool, allowing it to retain more dissolved oxygen, and encouraging growth of plants and aquatic insects that provide food for fish.
- Contribute leaf food – Leaves that fall into the stream are trapped on fallen trees and rocks where they provide food and habitat for organisms critical to the aquatic food chain.
- Provide habitat – Streams that travel through woodlands provide more habitat for fish and wildlife. Woody debris provides cover for fish while stabilizing stream bottoms.
- Provides migration corridors for wildlife.
- Safeguard water supplies by protecting groundwater recharge areas.
- Provide flood control.
- Provide stormwater management potential – Natural vegetation provides a basis for innovative stormwater management systems. Stormwater flows from retention basins can be directed to, and allowed to flow through, buffers to reduce nutrient and sediment loads.
- Improve water and air quality.
- Stimulate economic opportunities such as providing valuable open space which may increase land values and, therefore, the tax base.
- Provide some federal tax incentives to landowners (depending on a landowner’s financial situation) willing and able to place some of their lands under conservation easement.
- Reduce grounds maintenance.
- Provide recreational opportunities, and associated economic benefits for recreation-related businesses.
- Provide educational and research opportunities for local schools and colleges.

- Provide windbreak, shade, and visual buffer.

Energy Conservation

The Oley, Alsace, Ruscombmanor Region is growing, and with this growth comes the increased reliance on energy sources. Energy conservation is becoming a high priority because the way we use our resources today will have a profound effect on future generations. Land use plans, land development regulations, building codes, and transportation policies should be implemented to support the policy of energy conservation.

As the environmental impact of buildings becomes more apparent, a new field called *green building* is arising to reduce that impact at the source. *Green* or *sustainable building* is the practice of creating healthier and more resource-efficient models of construction, renovation, operation, maintenance, and demolition.

Goal: Conserve energy through appropriate land use and transportation planning techniques and public education efforts.

Objectives:

- Promote alternatives to motor vehicle use to improve air quality and conserve fossil fuels.
- Maximize recycling as the markets become available.
- Promote mixed-use development patterns and densities that result in more compact communities, encourage fewer and shorter vehicle trips, and limit the need to extend infrastructure.

Actions:

1. Educate residents and businesses regarding the benefits of energy conservation.
2. Review and update ordinances to include regulations for energy efficient building and design techniques. Encourage the use of renewable sources of energy, including solar, wind, and biomass (energy from organic matter).

Chapter 11

Historic Resource and Preservation Plan

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that municipal Comprehensive Plans address historic resource preservation, specifically identifying cultural and historic resources. The MPC adds that municipalities are not limited by this list, but may provide for the protection of other resources of local importance

The results of the citizen survey indicated that the Region's residents are very concerned about historic and natural resource preservation. Respondents also indicated a high level of interest in historic preservation.

Historic Resources

The Region's history is reflected in its architecture, people, and character. Historic resources connect us to the past, emphasize our sense of community, and often provide aesthetic value. In addition, historic resources can provide tourism benefits which often lead to economic development opportunities. Planning for the protection of historic resources is especially important because historical resources are not renewable.

Many of the buildings found along the Region's highways, country roads, and village streets are examples of vernacular architecture. Although they may feature some of the elements commonly found in a particular style, mainly Germanic, vernacular architecture incorporates an individual builder's ideas into an overall design. The mixture of the vernacular and German examples enhances the overall character of the Region. Distinctive Pennsylvania German stone farmhouses, barns and outbuildings, outstanding in quality and quantity, define their time and place. The historic rural landscapes of the Region add to the context of this architecture, and provide a glimpse of the Region's rich heritage and history.

History of the Region

The earliest known inhabitants of eastern Berks County were the Delaware or Lenni Lenape Indians. By the early years of the 1700's after England's King Charles granted 40,000 square miles to William Penn in what is now eastern Pennsylvania immigrants came from Germany, France, Sweden, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland and elsewhere, often seeking religious freedom. Many moved inland from Philadelphia along the Schuylkill River.

Ruscombmanor Township began as the "Manor or Ruscombe". It was originally surveyed as a tract of ten thousand acres of land near Oley in Philadelphia County.

Oley Township was founded in 1740, although residents petitioned to be a Township in 1720. The Court failed to act on the original petition and a second petition was submitted and approved in 1740.

German settlers petitioned to establish Alsace Township in 1744. Settlers from the Palatine region in Germany were the most influential in the formative years of the Oley/Alsace area.

Berks County was incorporated in 1752 from parts of Lancaster, Chester, and Philadelphia Counties. Early Eighteenth Century immigrants were Swedes, followed by Germans, Welsh, English and French Huguenots. Results from the first federal census in 1790, showed Germans and German descendants comprised almost 75% of Berks County's population. Their farming traditions, religious convictions and self-reliance, which came to be known as "Pennsylvania Dutch" characteristics, have dominated in the region for nearly 300 years. Religion was a major factor in the development of the Oley/Alsace area. French Huguenots, Moravians, Quakers, Lutheran, Reformed and other congregations each built places of worship in the area prior to the mid 1800's.

In addition to farming, water powered industry was a dominant economic activity in the area's formative period. The Manatawny and Monocacy Creeks and their tributaries were hosts to mills for grain, lumber, paper and other commodities until the mid 1800's. The Oley Forge and Oley Furnace iron works, which supplied weapons and wagon hardware to the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, were the largest of the area's water powered industries. Berks County was a leading early iron producer. Evidence of the area's early industries still exists, including old mill buildings, furnace sites, mine holes and other remnants.

Industrial development stalled in the first half of the 1800's as the region's iron ore and forests were gradually depleted. Then the Schuylkill Canal and major railroads between Philadelphia, Reading, Allentown and the coal regions were constructed which bypassed the two townships. Oley Village developed during this time as a local commercial center along Main Street. Today, its concentration of Victorian structures is a unique historic resource. Smaller villages, such as Yellow House and Limekiln, are examples of other local crossroads that were once stagecoach stops or trading posts in the Oley/Alsace area. Another example is Pleasantville, an important stop on the old Oley Turnpike.

Farmsteads, stone houses, barns, cemeteries, churches and other structures from the 1700's and 1800's are widely recognized and treasured resources in the Region. Well organized grassroots support for preserving the region's living history, and extensive research and documentation, led to the U.S. Department of the Interior placing the entire Township of Oley on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. In 1980, the National Trust For Historic Preservation selected Oley as a Rural Project. Between 1980

and 1983, over 435 structures in Oley Township and the immediate vicinity were inventoried and noted as contributing historic resources. (See Appendix) More than 50 of these properties were found to feature 18th century structures. Preserving the area's heritage remains a prominent planning goal in Oley and Alsace today.

According to the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, there are no locations in Alsace or Ruscombmanor Townships on the National Register of Historic Places. The following Table 11.1: National Register of Historic Places, lists all the Oley Township places that are listed on the National Register as separate listings from the Oley Historic District, which encompasses the entire Township.

The Oley Township Zoning Ordinance includes an HV – Historic Village District designed to help preserve the historic integrity of Spangsville Village on Spangsville Road along the Manatawny Creek. The Township established a historic architectural review board to review proposals for new construction and exterior building alterations in this district.

Historic Districts

Local historic districts are areas in which historic buildings and their settings are protected by public review. Historic district ordinances are local laws adopted by communities using powers granted by the state. Historic districts consist of the Region's significant historic and architectural resources. Inclusion in a historic district signifies that a property contributes to a group of structures that is worth protecting because of its historic importance or architectural quality.

The entire Township of Oley is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Village of Spangsville contains a historic district, however, there are some specific areas in the Region that should also be noted, including the Villages of Pricetown, Pleasantville, Oley, and as well as the numerous clusters of historic graveyards, churches, grist mills, and schools that make up the Region's wealth of cultural and historic features.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture. Table 11.1 lists all of the sites in the Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor planning area that are listed on the National Register.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the special characteristics that make a community unique. A community that takes pride in and respects its traditions is typically a community with a well-defined character. Alsace, Oley and Ruscombmanor Townships contain a rich, diverse heritage with significant cultural resources that should be embraced and preserved. Much of the rich culture in the Region is derived from the influences of the early German settlers who arrived in the Townships in the mid 1700s. Many examples of the architecture and customs of these people still remain, reflected in the historic farmhouses, stone barns, churches, and grist mills that enhance the Region's heritage.

TABLE 11.1: LISTINGS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Historic Name	Partial Address	Year Built	Historic Function	Sub-function	Area of Significance
Fisher, Henry, House	About 1.25 mile North of Yellow House on Pa 662	1801	Domestic	Single Dwelling	Architecture
Greisemer's Mill Bridge	Northwest of Boyerstown on T-579	1832	Transportation	Road Related (Vehicular)	Transportation Engineering
Knabb-Beiber Mill	Beiber Mill Rd. T-539 1/4 mile from W. School Rd. (T-500)	1809 - 1819	Industry/Processing/Extract	Manufacturing Facility	Architecture, Engineering, Industry
Oley Township Historic District	Entire Township	1700 - 1899	Domestic, Agriculture/ Subsistence	Single Dwelling, Animal Facility, Secondary Structure, Horticultural Facility	Agriculture, Architecture, Industry
Pleasantville Bridge	Covered Bridge Rd. T-916	1850, 1874	Transportation	Road Related (Vehicular)	Transportation Engineering
Reiff Farm	Old State Road T-454, 1000ft. Southwest of Reiff Rd. (T-569)	1815	Domestic, Agriculture/ Subsistence	Single Dwelling, Animal Facility, Secondary Structure, Horticultural Facility	Architecture, Agriculture

Figure: 11.1 The Historic Features map shows the National Register Sites and Surveyed Sites for Oley, Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships. The following tables list the sites found on the Historic Features Map, Figure 11.1.

Oley, Alsace Ruscombmanor Joint Comprehensive Plan
Historic Features Site Key:

Alsace Township

Map ID	Historic Feature	Map ID	Historic Feature
1	John D. & Magdalena Miller House	19	Daniel Hartman Farm
2	Shalter's Union Church	20	J. Lorah Farm
3	Brenda & Donald Morgan Property	21	Oley Valley Fruit Farm
4	John Willy Farm	22	Hoch Farm
5	Blankenbiller Log Cabin	23	Conrad Log House
6	Noll Farm	24	Hartman Farm
7	Benjamin & Louise Shaltz House	25	Heist Log House
8	McKnights Mansion	26	Zimmerman Forge
9	F.J. Pauclski Property	27	Chapel Rocks
10	James Ripley Fehr Property	28	Weber's Hotel
11	Spies Union Church Site	29	Old Spies School
12	Hinnerschitz Farm	30	Parochial School
13	Kemmerer Farm	31	Old Spies Graveyard
14	Hartman Farm	32	Kerper School
15	Fies Tavern	33	Wheelwright Shop
16	David Kinsey Farm	34	Zions Evan Lutheran Church
17	Gary L. Reinert	35	Zions Evan & Reformed Church
18	Kinsey Farm		

Oley Township

Map ID	Historic Feature	Map ID	Historic Feature
36	Samuel Gulden Settlement	110	Walnut Farm
37	J & A Steppleton Property	111	Elmer Eyrich Property
38	Fisher's Mill	112	Snyder / Gheer Homestead
39	Daniel Baum Farm	113	Knabb-Kauffman Grist Mill
40	Gerald Houpp Property	114	Barrie Williamson Property

Map ID	Historic Feature	Map ID	Historic Feature
41	Nicholas Hunter House	115	Bernard Zackson Property
42	Leshner House	116	Wentzel Tannery
43	Enoch Griesemer Inn	117	Tom Knecht House
44	Michael J. Misiaszek Property	118	Holcraft
45	Spangsville Store	119	Laucks Homestead
46	Spang House	120	Estella Hoch Property
47	Oswald Estate	121	Heffner Farmstead
48	Dr. Fegley Property	122	General Daniel Udree Mansion
49	Elwood Hoch Sr. Property	123	Furnace Hill
50	Henry Wagner Property	124	Arthur Homan Property
51	Omar Zook Property	125	Oley Furnace Boarding House
52	Earl Rhoads Property	126	Addison Kohout Property
53	Lowell Kurtz Property	127	Martin Eshelman Property
54	Guy Corson Estate	128	Franklin Galambos Property
55	Whitner House	129	Yoder Homestead
56	Wilmer Richard Property	130	Dr. Wilfred Heinbach Property
57	Rothenberger Farm	131	Dr. Wilfred Heinbach Property
58	Donald Shelley Property	132	Carl Herbein Property
59	Samuel Rhoads Property	133	Stitzer Road House
60	Griesemersville Hotel	134	Richard Geissenhainer Property
61	National Gypsum Property	135	Breil Homestead
62	Elmer Eyrich Property	136	Leroy Howard Property
63	Kaufman House	137	Levan Homestead
64	Catherine Stahler Property	138	Ralph Richard Property
65	George Schlegel Property	139	Regina Lebe Property
66	Paul Lechner Property	140	Mark Hoch Property
67	Samuel Dunn Property	141	Raymond Conrad Property
68	Covered Bridge Rd House	142	William Lunt Property
69	Jacob Hartz Property	143	Paul Hoppes Property
70	Locust Ford Farm	144	Herbert Levan Property
71	John Bertolet Homestead	145	Paul Labe Property
72	Thomas Rutter Property	146	Victor Miller Property
73	Abraham Bertolet Property	147	Ralph C. Richard Property
74	Bertolet Tenant House	148	Yoder Road House
75	Charles Schaeffer Property	149	Paul Labe Property
76	Christman's	150	Glase's General Store
77	Bertolet Gristmill Farm	151	Oley Inn
78	Samuel Guldin Settlement	152	Crawley Property
79	Hunter Settlement	153	Jones Property
80	Edwin Lichenstein Property	154	Kohn Property

Map ID	Historic Feature	Map ID	
81	Erma Lapp Property	155	McCarthy Property
82	Marquette Homestead	156	Oley Forge
83	Harold Herbin Property	157	Oley Furnace
84	James Cassidy Property	158	Snyder Cemetery
85	Jean Bertolet Burial Home	159	Tollhouse #2 Oley Turnpike
86	Bertolet Settlement Tenant House	160	Snyderville Sunday School
87	Bertolet Home	161	Tollhouse #3 Oley Turnpike
88	Knabb Picnic Woods	162	Spangsville Oley Reformed Church
89	DeBenneville Home	163	Tollhouse #4 Oley Turnpike
90	Charles Roshon III Property	164	Pleasantville Hotel
91	Abraham Knabb Barn & House	165	General Store
92	Rodger Wagner Property	166	Sally Boone School
93	Double Schoolhouse	167	Weidner Graveyard
94	Allentown Portland Cement Proper	168	Hoch Graveyard
95	Trout Farm	169	Levan Graveyard
96	Herbein Settlement	170	John Leshner Graveyard
97	Angstadt Homestead	171	Trolley Cars
98	Knabb House	172	Sawmill
99	Knabb Homestead	173	Oley Furnace Gristmill
100	Knabb Homestead	174	Scared Oak Tree
101	Kemp's Tavern	175	Oley Village
102	Daniel Hunter Home	176	Reiff Graveyard
103	Deturk House	177	Graveyard
104	Isaac Deturk Homestead	178	Jean Bertolet Graveyard
105	Donald Miller Property	179	Herbein's Cave
106	Earl Hoffman Property	180	Stone Schoolhouse
107	Earl Hoffman Property	181	Moravian Church
108	John Moxon Property	182	Graveyard
109	Mary Youse Property	183	Tree in Road

Ruscombmanor Township

Map ID	Historic Feature	Map ID	Historic Feature
184	Union Church	206	C.R. Care Property
185	Yoder Pottery	207	Rothermel Farm
186	Dr. Weber Farm	208	Jacob Price Homestead
187	Old Baptist Society	209	Irwin Eby Property
188	Martin Gaube House	210	C. Eugene & Phyllis Pyle Prop
189	Snyder Farm	211	Fox Homestead
190	Doug Zucco Property	212	Keller Farm
191	Bush Tavern	213	Pricetown (Village of)
192	Ann & Richard Kennedy Property	214	Pricetown Hotel
193	Dale & David Schwoyer Property	215	St. John's Union Church
194	Douglass & Linda Wegman	216	Tilt Forge
195	Hartman Farm	217	Schoolhouse
196	Baum Farm	218	Log Cabin
197	Klein's Tree Farm	219	Pricetown Schoolhouse
198	J. Holyoke Foundry	220	Ancient House
199	Link's School House	221	Emblem Arms Hotel
200	Link Farm	222	Graveyard
201	Daniel D. Derolf Property	223	Graveyard
202	H. Klein Property	224	Graveyard
203	Boyer Farm	225	Basket Store / Post Office
204	Edgewood Mills	226	Country Inn
205	Jacob Mill Farm	227	Log Cabin

Historic, Architectural and Cultural Resources

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

Objectives:

- Protect the character of Oley Village, Pleasantville, Pricetown, and the area's other villages with appropriate zoning strategies.
- Encourage the development of design guidelines to preserve historic architecture and village design patterns.
- Support the efforts of local and county historic preservation groups to continue identifying and protecting historic resources.
- Preserve recognized historic sites and structures. Discourage inappropriate development in historic areas.
- Maintain partnerships with private and non-profit organizations, such as the Berks County Conservancy, to protect the Region's historic resources.
- Require impact studies for development near important historic resources, and require mitigation of potential adverse impacts to historic resources.
- Review and update the Historic Preservation Ordinance in Oley Township, implemented by the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB).
- Discourage demolition by neglect and deterioration of historic resources.
- Encourage responsible conservation and maintenance of vintage architecture, especially the stone farmhouses located in the Region.
- Consider the degree to which suggested historic preservation guidelines might be legally enforced through revised township ordinances without unduly infringing on property owners' rights.
- Subject rental units to the same standards of good repair as owner-occupied dwellings and perform adequate inspections to guarantee enforcement of existing codes.

- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to preserve historic resources.
- Identify existing contemporary sites which could be considered part of the historical or cultural heritage of future generations and work to preserve these sites.
- Preserve historic landscapes and view sheds that protect the context of the history of the Region.
- Maintain the regional survey of historic resources contained within the Berks County Greenway and Open Space Plan.

Historic and Cultural Resource Actions:

- A. Update zoning ordinances as necessary to protect historic resources and community character. Options include:
1. Adopt or refine Historic Resource Overlay Zoning. Concentrate on the Historic Overlay District, as depicted on the Future Land Use Map.
 - a. Create historical commissions and / or committees where they do not exist or a joint historical commission
 - b. Identify historic resources
 - c. Require developers to analyze:
 - Nature of historic resources on and near property
 - Impact of proposals on historic resources, and
 - Mitigation measures
 - d. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings
 - e. Establish use, coverage, density, intensity, and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, and open spaces/buffers compatible with existing resources, appropriate reuse of existing resources and donation of façade easements
 - f. Encourage architecture, materials, and development patterns characteristic to the area.

2. Adopt Demolition by Neglect Provisions:
 - a. Require property owners to protect and maintain historic properties to avoid demolition by vandalism or the elements by requiring unoccupied structures to be sealed or secured by fencing
3. Identify provisions to protect the character of villages, and have streets, buildings, and public spaces integrated to create a sense of place with pedestrian scale. Consideration can be given to adopting the following as standards or promoting them through incentives:
 - a. Allow only appropriate uses in scale with, and compatible with, existing appropriate uses, discouraging uses that would transform the character of the areas.
 - b. Establish coverage, density, intensity, and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, street furniture, open spaces, and parking designs consistent with the character of the area.
 - c. Require pedestrian amenities as necessary improvements to be made by land developers.
 - d. Construct parking areas to the rear and side of buildings and establish standards for design, buffering, and landscaping of new parking facilities.
 - e. Require signage appropriate to the area.
 - f. Establish appropriate standards for driveway design and access to streets to provide for appropriate access management.
 - g. Minimize use of drive-through facilities.
 - h. Encourage new development to be compatible with, and integrated into, existing streetscapes when appropriate, with consideration of:
 - Appropriate siting patterns, such as setbacks of buildings on lots
 - Materials of similar appearance and texture to those on existing buildings

- Similar architectural details as other buildings in the neighborhood
- The scale and proportion of buildings near new structures. Scale deals with the relationship of each building to other buildings in the area; and, proportion deals with the relationship of the height to the width of a building and with the relationship of each part to the whole
- Similar roof shapes
- Similar footprints of buildings and rooflines (matching façade masses with existing buildings)
- Similar building heights

4. Regulate conversions of buildings, addressing:

- Locations where permitted
- The procedural treatment of the use
- The type of building that can be converted
- Density of converted units
- Lot size for converted building
- Impervious surface/open space requirements
- Units allowed per structure
- Structure size requirements
- Minimum size of dwelling units
- Neighborhood compatibility standards
- Adequate parking requirements
- Screening of parking and common areas
- Limits on the structural revisions for buildings

B. Appoint a regional or municipal historical commission or committee if none exist, which is actively involved in historic preservation. The commission would be instrumental in administration of any historic resource overlay zoning that is adopted. The commission would also continue to:

1. Identify, evaluate, mark and foster awareness of historic resources
2. Investigate participation in Certified Local Government Program

3. Encourage retention, restoration, enhancement and appropriate adaptive re-use of historic resources and discourage removal of historic structures
 4. Develop programs, events and interpretive signage and exhibits that emphasize the history of the Region
 5. Evaluate the potential for historic districts and support their creation if warranted. If created, support the adoption of voluntary or mandatory Design Guidelines and Sign Controls for the Historic District.
- C. Support the activities of individuals and groups that identify, document, evaluate, and protect historical resources and increase public awareness of the area's history and historic resources.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL

Establishing a local Historic District requires an assessment of the present status of the community's historic resources, knowledge of past historic preservation efforts, and a list of goals and objectives. Taking such an assessment enables the designating community to take advantage of historic preservation incentives available at the national, state, and local governmental levels, such as grants, income tax credits for historic rehabilitation, low-interest loans, and local tax abatements. A requirement of establishing a local district, provided it was created pursuant to Act 167, the Historic District Act, is the establishment of a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB). The HARB reviews all proposed erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or demolition of buildings within the district before the issuance of any municipal permits pursuant to these actions. HARB reviews and recommendations must be consistent with the design guidelines established at the enactment of the Historic District. The Township Supervisors have the right to incorporate any of the HARB's recommendations into the permit requirements, but they may also override those recommendations. Townships whose districts are not created under Act 167 are not required to have a HARB, but instead may appoint a Historic District Commission or Committee.

Two Pennsylvania laws provide the legal foundation for municipalities to adopt historic ordinances and regulatory measures.

Act 247 – The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)

Acts 67 and 68 of 2001 amended the MPC, strengthening the ability of local governments to protect historic resources through their Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances. The following passages and paraphrases from the MPC are the most critical sections regarding this power.

- §603(C)(7) – Zoning ordinances may promote and preserve prime agricultural land, environmentally sensitive areas, and areas of historic significance.
- §603(G)(2) - Zoning ordinances are required to protect natural and historic resources.
- §702(1)(ii) – The governing body of each municipality may enact, amend and repeal provisions of a zoning ordinance in order to fix standards and conditions for traditional neighborhood development. In the case of either an outgrowth or extension of existing development or urban infill, a traditional neighborhood development designation may be either in the form of an overlay zone, or as an outright designation, whichever the municipality decides. Outgrowths or extensions of existing development may include development of a contiguous municipality.
- §1106(a)(6) – Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans shall consider the conservation and enhancement of natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic resources in their municipalities.

A Historic Overlay Zoning District, unlike the protection offered through the establishment of an Act 167 Historic District (discussed below), can include individual sites as well as clusters, as long as the resources are documented and identified on a historic resources map. A historic overlay district could require new buildings to be similar in type and scale to those already existing. Setbacks should be consistent with the common building setback. Requirements to replicate the existing building line, building height, and bulk could help to preserve the character of the neighborhood.

Act 167 - The Historic District Act (1961)

Municipalities may create historic districts within their borders to protect the historic character through regulation of the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition, or razing of buildings in the district. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission must certify districts, including a *determination of eligibility* for the National Register of Historic Places. In this way, historic districts established pursuant to Act 167 have the same protection from federal projects as do National Register properties. Act 167 also requires appointment of a HARB.

Historical and Museum Commission Act 1945

Act No. 446, approved June 6, 1945, created the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) by consolidating the functions of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, The State Museum, and the State Archives. The PHMC is an independent administrative board, consisting of 14 members: 9 citizens of the Commonwealth appointed by the Governor, the Secretary of Education (ex officio), 2 members of the Senate, and 2 members of the House of Representatives. The Executive Director is appointed by the Commission and is an ex officio member of three groups: the Environmental Quality Board, County Records Committee, and the Local Government Records Committee.

The PHMC is the official agency for the conservation of Pennsylvania's historic heritage. The powers and duties of the Commission fall into these principal fields: care of historical manuscripts, public records, and objects of historic interest; museums; archaeology; publications; historic sites and properties; historic preservation; geographic names; and the promotion of public interest in Pennsylvania history.

The PHMC is funded partially through an annual legislative appropriation, federal grants, and private donations. Officially recognized local historical organizations may benefit financially through the Commission's eligibility to receive matching funds from various federal programs. The PHMC is active in many phases of historic preservation. The PHMC also conducts a landmark identification program, presenting identification plaques to property owners for attachment on structures included in the Pennsylvania Inventory of Historical Places. The landmark identification program also includes the placement of roadside historical signs at various sites and locations having statewide and national historic significance. Today there are nearly 1,900 such markers across the state.

The Office of Historic Preservation is an arm of the PHMC responsible for assisting the public and private sectors in implementing the Commonwealth's policy to "protect and enhance our irreplaceable resources." To this end, the Office has implemented a five-point program:

- Registering historically and architecturally significant sites and structures on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places;
- Advising and guiding individuals and organizations regarding historic preservation and its funding;
- Reviewing applications for federal preservation grants;
- Working for legislation at the state level to provide effective tools for historic preservation; and

- Working with other governmental agencies to review the impact of projects, such as highways, on the Commonwealth's historic resources.

Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation

The Bureau is an agency of the PHMC. The Executive Director of the Bureau is designated as the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

The Bureau provides technical assistance for the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic buildings. The Bureau reviews architectural plans and specifications and provides comments on historic building projects for state and federal compliance. They also assist in code-related issues and accessibility programs in the form of letters of support for variances for historic buildings. To inform the public, public agencies, local governments, and other stewards of historic properties, the Bureau assists in the development and distribution of materials on applying the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* when repairing historic buildings.

The Bureau also administers the Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) program in partnership with the National Park Service. The tax credit program is one of the most successful programs for encouraging private investment in the rehabilitation of historic properties. Since the establishment of the PHMC in 1976, Pennsylvania has been a national leader in certified tax credit projects, completing over 1,800 projects and generating over \$2.5 billion in qualified rehabilitation expenditures. The Bureau provides technical assistance throughout the application process.

The Bureau also administers the State's Historic Preservation Program as authorized by the Pennsylvania History Code and National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The program is guided by advisory boards as well as the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Plan.

The Pennsylvania General Assembly is considering legislation to establish a Historic Homesites Grant Program. Once established, this legislation will provide funds to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to support rehabilitation grants (up to \$6,000) to individuals owning and residing in a historic residential building, as well as to individuals intending to purchase and reside in a historic residential building. Possible conditions for eligibility include the following:

- The building must serve as the owner's principal residence,
- The building must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places or be determined to be a contributing building in a listed National Register Historic District,

- The building must be located in an Act 167 historic district or be designated as a historic property under the local ordinance or city code in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and
- All rehabilitation work must conform to the U.S. Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

NATIONAL EFFORTS AND LEGISLATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Federal programs encouraging historic preservation include:

- the National Register of Historic Places,
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits on federal income tax for qualifying rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings used for income-producing purposes,
- Section 106 Review of federally funded or assisted projects that impact historic resources, and
- the Certified Local Government Program, which facilitates historic preservation at the local level.

The earliest Federal preservation statute was the Antiquities Act of 1906, which authorized the President to set aside historic landmarks, structures, and objects located on lands controlled by the United States as national monuments. It required permits for archeological activities on Federal lands, and established criminal and civil penalties for violation of the act.

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 was the second major piece of Federal historic preservation legislation. This act declared it national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance and directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct various programs with respect to historic preservation.

In 1964, The United States Conference of Mayors undertook a study of historic preservation in the United States. The resulting report, "With Heritage So Rich," revealed a growing public interest in preservation and the need for a unified approach to the protection of historic resources. This report influenced the Congress to enact a strong new statute establishing a nationwide preservation policy: The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and its subsequent amendments established a legal basis for the protection and preservation of historic and cultural resources. Historic resources are defined as *"any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structures or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register; the term includes artifacts, records, and remains which are related to such a district, site, building, structure or object"*.

The Act promoted the use of historic properties to meet the contemporary needs of society. It directed the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, Native Americans, and the public, to take a leadership role in preservation. First, the Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to expand and maintain the National Register of Historic Places. This is an inventory of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant on a national, State, or local level in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Once a property is eligible to be placed on the list, the property, site, or object can be qualified for Federal grants, loans, and tax incentives. Second, the NHPA encourages State and local preservation programs. States may prepare and submit programs for historic preservation to the Secretary of the Interior for approval. Approval can be granted if they:

- designate a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to administer the State preservation program,
- establish a State historic preservation review board, and
- provide for adequate public participation in the State program.

Since 1966, the Congress has strengthened national preservation policy through other statutes, including the National Environmental Policy Act, several transportation acts, and statutes directed toward the protection and preservation of archeological resources. These laws all require Federal agencies to consider historic resources in their decision making and overlap with provisions of NHPA.

Section 106 Review

Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and provide the Council an opportunity to comment on Federal projects prior to implementation. Section 106 review encourages, but does not mandate, preservation.

To successfully complete Section 106 review, Federal agencies must:

- determine if Section 106 of NHPA applies to a given project and, if so, initiate the review,
- gather information to determine which properties in the project area are listed on or are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places,
- determine how those historic properties might be affected by the project in question,
- explore alternatives to avoid or reduce any negative effect upon those historic properties, and
- reach agreement with the SHPO on specific measures to mitigate any adverse effects.

The Executive Branch has also expressed support for preservation through several Executive Orders. Examples include Executive Order No. 11593 of 1971, which instituted procedures for Federal agencies to follow in their property management activities. Executive Order No. 13006 encourages the location of Federal offices and facilities in historic districts and properties within the inner cities. Executive Order No. 13006 also directs Federal agencies to use and rehabilitate properties in such areas wherever feasible and reaffirms the commitment to Federal leadership in the preservation of historic properties set forth in NHPA. Executive Order, No. 13007, signed in 1996, expressed support for the protection of Native American sacred sites.

Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Buildings

According to the Tax Reform Act of 1986, a property owner is eligible for a 20% tax credit, along with a 27.5 to 31.5% straight-line depreciation for the substantial rehabilitation of historic buildings for commercial, industrial and rental residential purposes (not owner-occupied buildings). In addition, the Act allows a 10% tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of nonresidential buildings built before 1936. The 10% tax credit is not available for rehabilitations of certified structures.

Two Federal Tax Incentive Programs currently apply to preservation activities in Pennsylvania: the rehabilitation investment tax credit and the charitable contribution deduction.

Rehabilitation investment tax credits are the most widely used incentive program. Certain expenses incurred in connection with the rehabilitation of an old building are eligible for a tax credit. Rehabilitation investment tax credits are available to owners and certain long-term leases of income-producing properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are two rates: 20% for historic buildings and 10% for non-residential, non-historic buildings built before 1936.

The charitable contribution deduction is taken in the form of a conservation easement and enables the owner of a "certified historic structure" to receive a one-time tax deduction. A conservation easement usually involves the preservation of a building's facade by restricting the right to alter its appearance.

The Federal Tax Incentive Programs are coordinated through the State Historic Preservation Office, Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in conjunction with the National Park Service. Federal Historic Preservation Certification. Applications are available on-line.

The National Park Service “Certified Local Government” (CLG) Program

This program was created in 1980 under the National Historic Preservation Act and is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The Certified Local Government Program provides additional benefits to municipalities interested in historic preservation. Once certified, the local government is then eligible for:

- Direct participation in the federal historic preservation program,
- Greater access to historic preservation funds,
- Greater level of information exchange with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO),
- Access to technical assistance and training from the SHPO, and
- A higher degree of participation in statewide preservation programs and planning.

This program was established to allow local governments to participate directly in the national historic preservation program and to provide funding to local governments to carry out their historic preservation responsibilities (survey, inventory, designation and protection of their historic resources). To achieve CLG status in Pennsylvania, a municipality applies to the Bureau for Historic Preservation. All states are required to set aside 10% of their federal historic preservation grant funds to CLGs. These grants are presently offered as a ratio of 60% funding from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and 40% match from the CLG.

Critical requirements for CLG designation are:

- adopt and enforce appropriate legislation for designation and protection of historic properties,
- establish a qualified historic preservation commission,
- enact a system for surveying historic properties,

- enact a public participation component as part of the local program,
- adequately perform duties and responsibilities delegated through the certification process,
- provide continuing in-service historic preservation training for HARB and Historical Commission members (8 hours training annually per member),
- a good faith effort to appoint HARB members with appropriate professional qualifications for historic preservation backgrounds,
- submit an annual report of the municipality's historic preservation activities, and
- enforce the historic district ordinance.

Oley Township is a Certified Local Government.

Chapter 12

Interrelationships of Plan Components

Introduction

The Municipalities Planning Code specifies that comprehensive plans include a discussion of the interrelationships among the various plan components. This requirement is intended to ensure that plan components are integrated and for the most part, not in conflict with the primary goals and objectives. Furthermore, this section requires the Plan to consider the impacts each component has upon the others so the potential consequences of future decisions are known. During the production of this Plan, the Steering Committee formulated and approved general goals, gathering information from prior planning documents, public input, and Berks County Planning Commission staff recommendations. More detailed objectives were derived from these goals and serve as the framework for the entire plan.

The following text and Interrelationship Chart give a brief description of how each of the individual plan elements relate to one another.

RELATIONSHIP OF PLAN COMPONENTS

The Future Land Use Plan allocates general land uses and specifies the recommended types of land uses and densities for those uses. The availability of sanitary sewer and water facilities influence the shaping of development patterns, including location and density. It is critical to coordinate land use and infrastructure planning so future land use reflects the availability of public sewer and water facilities and public sewer and water facilities are not proposed for those areas not intended for future development.

Through land use planning, such as designation of the Agricultural Preservation and Public / Recreation and Open Space areas, recharge areas for community water supplies can be established. Intensive residential development is not proposed where sewer infrastructure is not planned, available, or in close proximity, and where soils are not suitable for on-site sewage disposal.

It is important that community facilities, including recreation and open space, are available to serve the residents of the area. The Community Facilities Plan notes existing recreational facilities and potential opportunities for recreational facilities. The Plan discusses a potential greenway system for recreational purposes and to better link residential areas to community facilities. Future public facilities should be sited to be consistent with the objectives of the Future Land Use Plan, such as maintaining open space and recreation uses.

The Future Land Use Plan encourages economic vitality by providing areas for commercial and industrial development and agricultural activities. Preservation of residential neighborhoods can provide support for local businesses and provide a work force. Providing for open space and preservation of community resources supports the quality of life in the area and can encourage additional investment.

It is necessary to maintain a circulation system, which can accommodate generated traffic volumes. In turn, future development should not adversely affect the circulation system. Land use decisions are influenced by the existing circulation system, while at the same time those land use decisions affect circulation systems and the functions which roads are expected to perform. Existing rural and residential areas should be protected as much as possible from the impacts of through traffic, which can be accomplished by proposed improvements to the circulation network. Efforts to link the various modes of transportation, such as pedestrian trails, transportation system improvements, and multi-modal facilities should be explored and encouraged.

Interrelationships of Plan Components

Plan Element	Land Use and Housing	Sewer and Water	Community Facilities	Transportation	Natural Environment	Economic Development
Land Use and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support existing villages ▪ Provide a variety of housing opportunities for all ▪ Target Growth Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policies coordinated with land use goals to direct development to growth areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make available to serve area residents where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must consider impacts of growth on the system ▪ Accommodate volumes at acceptable levels of service ▪ Access management on priority corridors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide open space system through their protection ▪ Agricultural preservation strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impacts on residential areas should be mitigated ▪ Provide jobs and services for residents
Sewer and Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth should occur where have adequate facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider existing facilities and plans, appropriate discharge standards and methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locate with consideration of ability to serve, consistent with land use goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should be coordinated in support of growth areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water Supply sources should be protected and pollution prevented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should not overburden systems or deplete water supplies
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include facilities to service residents and growth areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Major facilities should be adequately served 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider existing 537 plans, potential cooperative efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should adequately service facilities in the Region ▪ Consider linkages of community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can provide recreational opportunities ▪ Green Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can provide a tax base to support provision of facilities
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth should occur where have adequate capacity ▪ Maintain functional operation and safety when growth occurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should be coordinated in support of growth areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locate major facilities where can be adequately serviced ▪ Concerns for school transportation system ▪ Consider impacts on system from growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider existing facilities and plans, coordinate with County and PennDOT ▪ Plan improvements to the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can provide scenic roads and vistas ▪ Provide non-motorized and public transportation alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop Greenway system ▪ Access management on PA Route 12
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development should occur where land is suitable and resources will not be harmed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should not extend to areas where irreparably harm important resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can incorporate natural features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can facilitate access to resources ▪ Design system with consideration of existing environment and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing natural resources should be protected, enhanced and interpreted ▪ Agricultural Preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect the natural environment ▪ Tourism / promote heritage of the Region
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify appropriate land uses for sensitive areas ▪ Provide for commercial, industrial, business uses ▪ Neighborhoods provide workforce and market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can support development at appropriate locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to quality of life and the attractiveness of the area ▪ Implement a greenway system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address system deficiencies to improve business climate ▪ Improve intersections and access to industrial parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to quality of life and attractiveness of area to businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support existing business centers ▪ Concentrate on developing industrial parks

Appendix A

Identification of Issues - Public Participation

For a Joint Comprehensive Plan to be a useful tool for guiding future development and policy in an area, it must represent a consensus among the Region's stakeholders. The residents, business owners, community service providers, and municipal officials must each have a part in forming the policies of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires public input at the *end* of the process, in the form of public meetings and public hearings. Restricting public involvement to merely what is required is not likely to produce a successful plan, as the public will have little sense of participation in the process or ownership of the final document: they are being asked to approve a plan in which they had no voice. Early and frequent public participation is essential to the development of a practical, community-based Comprehensive Plan, regardless of the number of municipalities that are involved.

The public participation component of the Alsace, Oley, and Ruscombmanor Townships Joint Comprehensive Plan surpasses the requirements of the MPC. Public input was sought early in the planning process, well before any policies or future land uses were determined. A three-pronged approach to direct public input was implemented.

- The Committee held monthly meetings, which were open to the public, starting in October 2007 for the duration of the planning process.
- The Committee and SSM prepared a written questionnaire. The questions were largely similar to those asked in the interviews, but were structured in a way that allowed for quantitative analysis of the responses. Questionnaire responses were reviewed and analyzed by Berks County Planning Department.
- SSM conducted a series of telephone interviews with specific individuals identified by the Committee. The selected persons were chosen because of their positions within the community and the particular insights those positions gave them. The interviewees included a variety of public officials, local business leaders, and farmers.
- SSM, The Committee, and Berks County Planning Department Coordinator held a public meeting on July 22, 2008 to review a draft of the plan prior to sending it to the Planning Commissions for review and approval.

This Appendix will include the results of the public outreach, including a summary of the questionnaire results.

6. What one reason most influenced your original decision to live or spend time in the region? (please check one)

- 11 Natural Environment 5 Close to Work 1 Low Taxes
 1 Job Transfer Affordable Housing Costs 4 Close to friends and relatives
 Quality of schools 14 Born or raised here 4 Other

7. Would you agree or disagree that there should be more cooperation among the municipalities in the Oley/Alsace/Ruscombmanor region in the following areas? (Please check one opinion per category)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/ Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Joint zoning ordinances	12	8	12	6	2
Regional fire protection	16	17	4	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional police protection	20	11	2	4	2
Economic development / retention	9	18	10	1	1
Public sewer and water service	5	5	15	7	6
Emergency medical service	15	17	5	3	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. How would you rate the amount of increase in residential, commercial and industrial development in the Oley/Alsace/Ruscombmanor area over the last ten years?

	Very Excessive	Excessive	Neutral/ Undecided	Lacking	Severely Lacking
Residential Development	5	16	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial Development	2	2	15	16	5
Industrial Development	1	2	17	14	5

9. Please indicate whether you are satisfied with each of the following aspects of the Region:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral/ Undecided	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Attractiveness/aesthetics of the area	17	21	1	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing cost	5	19	11	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Convenience to shopping	7	25	4	3	1
Fire protection services	11	27	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing availability/choice	4	23	13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law enforcement services	5	19	3	9	3
Management of growth and new development	2	16	8	10	3
Parks/open space	3	18	9	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playgrounds for children	3	17	12	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of public schools	4	21	6	6	1
Recreational opportunities	5	18	8	7	1
Road surface conditions	7	16	5	11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sense of community	5	19	8	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic volume	2	9	7	12	8
Job opportunities	2	6	21	9	1

10. Should the municipalities consider stronger zoning ordinances for preservation of the following?

Waterways	24 Yes	6 No	8 Undecided
Air Quality	27 Yes	9 No	2 Undecided
Agricultural Preservation	28 Yes	9 No	1 Undecided
Water Supply	30 Yes	6 No	1 Undecided
Wooded Areas	30 Yes	5 No	3 Undecided
Floodplains	27 Yes	6 No	5 Undecided
Wetlands	29 Yes	5 No	4 Undecided
Steep Slopes/Hillsides	20 Yes	9 No	9 Undecided
Wildlife Habitats	29 Yes	4 No	4 Undecided
Other (please specify): _____	1 Yes	2 No	<input type="checkbox"/> Undecided

11. Should the Township adopt stricter sign regulations along road corridors?

16 Yes 14 No 7 Undecided

12. Do you think that properties in the region are being adequately maintained?

24 Yes 10 No 3 Undecided

13. Should the municipalities get stricter when enforcing codes (building maintenance / yard maintenance), particularly with rental properties?

20 Yes 12 No 5 Undecided

14. How likely would you be to support a tax increase that might address each of the following initiatives, assuming your total annual tax increase would be approximately \$20 for each item? This question is specifically exploring whether you would be willing to increase your taxes for these services.

	Very Likely	Likely	Neutral/ Undecided	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Road improvements in the Townships	7	10	7	8	4
Public sewer and water improvements in the Townships	4	7	10	10	7
Promoting economic development in the Townships	1	8	11	11	4
Preservation/protection of historic resources	11	8	8	7	3
Preservation/maintenance of open space for environmental and aesthetic purposes	11	10	5	7	3
Improvements to or maintenance of existing parks and recreational facilities in the Township	10	8	12	6	2
Biking, hiking, and walking trails in the Townships	10	7	11	7	2
Preserving agricultural land	14	11	5	5	3
Increased police/public safety	14	13	6	2	4
Acquisition of additional Township property for public parkland (new parks or expansion of existing parks)	10	6	10	7	5

Chosen Survey (White)

Written Responses from the Alsace, Oley, Ruscombmanor Municipal Survey

16. Would you be in favor of additional traffic lights through the region?

- Route 12 @ Sunoco & strip mall (Chatty's)
- 72 & Friedensburg Rd. – turn signals/also @ 662 & 73
- Pricetown Rd. & Oley Rd.
- Route 12 & Skyline Road
- Route 12 at intersection south of Route 73
- Route 12 and Mt. Laurel Rd.
- 662 & Oley Turnpike Roads
- As Needed
- Pricetown Rd. & Oley Furnace Road
- Pricetown Rd. near Sunoco & strip mall with Chatty's, Max Creamary Dance Dynamics – dangerous
- Near strip mall on Route 12 (Giannotti's Restaurant)
- Bertolet Mill & Hoch Rd. – also Covered Bridge & 662
- Pricetown Rd.
- Pricetown/Antietam Rd.
- Antietam/Pricetown Rd.
- 662/72 Intersection in Oley
- Route 73 & 662
- Pricetown Rd. (Route 12) (Modify) also Route 73 & Friedensburg put arrows in
- I would like to see a center turning lane on Route 12 from the 4-lane highway to Mt. Laurel Rd., especially at Route 12 and Elizabeth Ave.
- Route 12 in Alsace Twp.
- Route 12 & Mt. Laurel Rd.
- Route 12 – Elizabeth Ave.
- Route 12 – Antietam Rd.

17. Every area has its “treasures” – places that are unique because of their beauty, appeal, historic character, or because of what they offer the citizens of the area. Citizens often want to preserve these special spaces for future generations. In the space provided below, please identify places in the Oley/Alsace, Ruscombmanor area – including neighborhoods, historic buildings, public buildings, businesses, and scenic spots or any other location – that you consider a “treasure.”

- The Village of Oley
- The hillside along Route 73 (formerly owned by Shirley DeTurk) just west of the Weis Market Shopping Center should remain open space. It

consists of approximately 50 acres. If this ground is developed it will spoil the beautiful Oley Valley!! The “Moxon” Land should not be developed! It should remain open space and be used for community park!

- Main St. Oley
- The entire Oley Township is on historical registry – how can development happen with this designation?
- Main St. Oley.
- “Golden Oaks Golf Club” – offers sport attraction while maintaining open space and a restaurant for dining.
- We have a generous mix of woodland and farmland. Maintaining our “Green Jewel” is most important to us. Conservation Zoning and codes requiring architecture appropriate to our neighborhoods should be considered.
- The historic buildings and farmlands of all three townships should be preserved for future generation.
- Oley Main Street
- Main St. Oley & intersection of Main & Friedensburg Rd.
- All of Oley Township is unique in scenic beauty & historic character, and agricultural productivity – Alsace and Ruscombmanor also have many special features.
- Private open space will be the best treasure to leave future generations. Farms & woodland make for a more appealing vista than the roof tops of housing developments or industrial size schools and parking lots. Preserve our private open land.
- Covered bridges – Oley
- All of our historic farmsteads
- Oley farmlands – not to over develop our existing areas – open spaces.
- Main St., Oley; Spangsville; 2 covered bridges.
- Oley Furnace
- Main St. of Oley
- Simply put, STOP destroying quiet/good farm/wooded areas with ridiculous development (homes). People are moving here from out of County. Preserve all good areas that God has given us to enjoy. Thank You.
- Ag. Land – no buildings
- Each person’s property is their treasure. Infringing regulations could be a hindrance to home and landowners.
- Let the townships alone – they are “treasures” as they exist – that’s why we are here!
- I believe that preservation of local “treasures” should be privately funded, not with tax dollars.
- The family owned farms & open space that remains but is being developed because elected officials do stand behind the taxpayers wishes.
- Stop destroying old buildings - fix them up

18. Any other comments or issues that you would like to see addressed?

- Additional beautification of “Main Street” Oley. The Main Street Oley needs to be repaired/resurfaced. The result of the many municipal sewage repairs that have been made.
- Please do something about motorcycles & RMC – they bring noise and lots of unwanted people to Oley. A noise ordinance would be great or actually fine people with illegal pipes.
- Also events @ Fairgrounds in Oley like April Motorcycle Meet are dangerous and too large for our community. STOP THEM before someone gets hurt.
- Too much traffic and residential development in Oley.
- Can’t understand why these communities have not worked more closely together in the past. We share a school district and could do more together to address issues associated with growth, water and sewer, public safety.
- Permits and approvals should be required for any cutting on wood plots. Should be overseen by a department knowledgeable in forestry and erosion. Clear cutting should be banned.
- If the townships decide to work jointly – please focus on developing a future plan that includes businesses and budgeting! Please explore outside sources of funding and grants! Focus on senior developments that won’t tax our school system and increase our taxes! We’re paying a lot of taxes and are not getting much in return!!
- Smart Growth (density) requiring more open space area in new developments.
- As the three townships grow, the following should be looked into: regionalizing police, fire and emergency medical services as well as trash collection and recycling. Also some properties in the townships need to be cleaned up, too much trash lying around makes everyone’s property value’s lower.
- Consolidation of the 3 townships into one. Centralized business development area. Berks County can no longer afford all of the current townships.
- A community swimming pool would give focus to our area – not owned by a municipality, but private. Healthful, safe, financially independent – cultivate a sense of belonging that doesn’t center around the schools – which is all there is now.
- Protect water resources to fullest extent.
- Eliminate property taxes. Regionalization destroys community heritage. Don’t regionalize!
- Better traffic/speed enforcement.
- Safe right-of-ways for horseback riding

- The more townships stick their noses in other townships business the less control the poor tax payer has over anything. P.S. nothing you talked about can lower taxes – only raise them higher.
- Schools should have to stop spending like we do – No more taxes.
- Adding right turn lanes at Breezy Corners and Route 73 & Friedensburg Rd. in Oley
- Use our tax money wisely – Fix Mexico Rd.
- Better enforcement of “Zoning” too many “businesses” in residential zones

Appendix B

space, roads, police, water treatment, parks, and road maintenance, among other services.

Land uses do matter, so it is important to think carefully when development is proposed in a community. Particular attention should be paid to how the development will affect local services and how well those existing services can accommodate new service demands.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DECLINE

When a community's major industry (such as the town steel mill) closes due to economic difficulties, the assessed value of that property can decrease, reducing tax revenues. Water and sewer fee revenues can also decline

drastically, making it difficult to operate the local systems without increasing usage fees for homes and other businesses. Because industrial and commercial land types in general help subsidize homeowners, the loss of their revenue can be especially damaging. The school district and municipality may be forced to choose between cutting services or raising tax rates to make up for the lost revenue. If a school district or municipality relies too heavily on a large commercial or industrial property to fund local services, it leaves itself vulnerable to these kinds of shocks.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL COOPERATION

The influence of school revenues and expenses on the fiscal impacts of different land uses has an important implication for how neighboring boroughs, townships, and cities cooperate. Land uses throughout a school district affect all taxpayers living in the school district, not just taxpayers in the host municipality. Intensive residential land uses in a neighboring municipality will affect your school taxes as much as if those land uses were within your own municipality, if that neighboring community is located within your school district. Commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses in neighboring municipalities similarly can help benefit school tax bills in your own municipality.

These effects illustrate the benefits of cooperation among neighboring municipalities. What happens in a neighboring municipality influences what happens in your municipality. It makes sense for municipal officials and planning commissions at least to communicate among themselves so they can be aware of what is occurring in neighboring municipalities. Cooperation between municipalities can ease coordination of planning activities and provide better control over what happens within the region.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Some residents may not appreciate the smells, sounds, or other inconveniences of living near farms, but these things are reminders that all

residents benefit from farm and open land. The tax revenue from these lands helps keep residents' taxes low.

When farmland is converted for residential purposes, these benefits are lost. If the number of children living in the new houses requires that the school district hire new teachers or build new schools or that the local government increase service expenditures (for roads, sewers, water systems, and so forth), the impacts of farmland loss can be especially dramatic. The land will be converted from a net contributor to the municipality and school district into a net drain.

Some farmland protection programs, such as Clean and Green, reduce the amount of real estate tax paid by farmers. This lessens the revenue that farmland contributes to the school district and municipality. The results in several townships, that had land enrolled in Clean and Green, demonstrate that even when these programs are in use in a township, farmland still contributes more than it requires. Even with preferential assessments, farmland ends up subsidizing the educational costs of residential land and plays a positive economic role in the community.

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Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses

THE PENNSYLVANIA EXPERIENCE IN 2006

The way land is used in your community affects your taxes and the quality of your life. Land uses influence the size of your local government, the types of services it offers, the types of equipment it must purchase, and the taxes and tax rates it must levy. Land use also affects the number of students in the local school district, the sizes and number of school buildings, the number of teachers, and the taxes and tax rates the school district levies.

These impacts are significant not only because they affect taxpayers and local residents but because they affect the ability of local government to respond to the needs of its citizens. Identifying the impacts of different land uses will help you recognize what types of land uses should be encouraged in your municipality and what types should be treated cautiously.

This publication discusses the fiscal impact of different land uses in Pennsylvania and the implications for taxpayers and communities. It uses Cost of Community Service studies conducted during 2006 and 2007 to update an earlier extension publication on the same topic.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Land uses can affect the local government's and school district's finances by changing the revenues collected or the amount of public money spent on services. A housing development where many children live, for example, may generate a lot of tax revenue for the municipality while also requiring that the school district operate more classes.

Sorting out the net impact of different land uses requires a consideration of their impacts on both revenues and expenditures.

Impacts on Revenues

The revenues collected through local taxes, such as the real property and realty transfer taxes, depend directly on the land uses in a jurisdiction. High-value uses, like industrial and commercial enterprises or expensive homes, can generate much tax revenue.

Other local taxes depend less directly on land uses

but are still affected by them. Revenues from the earned income tax, occupation tax, and per capita tax are heavily influenced by how many people live in the jurisdiction and their economic status.

The ways people use land also affect the nontax revenues of municipalities and school districts. These include license and permit revenues, sewer and public service fees, highway aid, the amount of money school districts receive from the Commonwealth's Equalized Subsidy for Basic Education, and payments in lieu of taxes made by the Commonwealth and the federal government.

Impacts on Expenditures

How much revenue can be raised is only part of the overall fiscal impact of different land uses. The costs of providing local governmental and school district services for different land uses are also important.

Such services can include sewer, water, fire protection, police, refuse collection, streets, libraries, and

Table 3.
Hierarchy of land uses and typical fiscal impacts.

Land use	FISCAL IMPACT ON:	
	Municipality	School district
Research office parks	+	+
Office parks	+	+
Industrial development	+	+
High-rise/garden apartments (studio/1 bedroom)	+	+
Age-restricted housing	+	+
Garden condos (1–2 bedrooms)	+	+
Open space lands	+	+
Retail facilities	–	+
Townhouses (2–3 bedrooms)	–	+
Expensive single-family homes (3–4 bedrooms)	–	+
Townhouses (3–4 bedrooms)	–	–
Inexpensive single-family homes (3–4 bedrooms)	–	–
Garden apartments (3+ bedrooms)	–	–
Mobile homes	–	–

Note: This is a general listing and may not apply accurately to any one specific development. The fiscal impacts must always be viewed in the context of the specific community, existing surplus capacity of local services, and other development occurring in the jurisdiction.

Source: Burchell and Listokin, 1993.

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