

### INTRODUCTION

#### What is the Comprehensive Plan?

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to establish overall policies for the development and conservation of the Southern Berks region over the next 15 years. The region includes Birdsboro Borough and the Townships of Caernarvon, Robeson and Union. Public education in the region is served by the Daniel Boone and Twin Valley School Districts. This Plan is not by itself a regulation, but is intended to provide the policy direction for changes to the municipalities' development regulations.

The Comprehensive Plan includes the following major elements:

- The Overall Vision and Goals of the Plan
- The Demographics and Housing Overview
- The Natural Features and Agricultural Conservation Plan
- The Community Facilities and Services Plan
- The Historic Preservation Plan
- The Economic Development Plan
- The Transportation Plan
- The Existing Land Use Plan
- The Future Land Use Plan
- The Implementation Plan
- The Action Program

#### How Was this Plan Developed?

The Southern Berks Regional Comprehensive Plan was originally prepared with the assistance of many groups, organizations and individuals. In March of 2001, the County of Berks in cooperation with Birdsboro Borough, Caernarvon Township, Robeson Township and Union Township selected the professional consulting team of Hawk Valley Associates, ARRO Consulting and RothPlan to prepare the Regional Comprehensive Plan. After three years of meetings and gathering of information from the stakeholders in the region the plan was adopted by the municipalities in 2004.

After approximately 14 years since the adoption of the 2004 iteration of the Plan the municipalities determined that it was time for an update to the original document. The Berks County Planning Commission was chosen by the municipalities to work on updating the Plan and began work on the update in the fall of 2018.

Since the 2004 Plan many things have changed in the Region. For instance, the extension of sewer service to the Geigertown area, zoning amendments, and new demographics, economic and housing information has been made available. After 14 years it is a good time to assess the current joint comprehensive plan and amend it to make it compatible with the issues and conditions that are impacting the municipalities today. Because of this the municipalities decided to pursue an update to their multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

The first step in the process was the identification of major issues and concerns that needed to be addressed. The next step was an analysis and mapping of the existing conditions and trends. The mapping started with computerized information provided by the Berks County Planning Commission. A survey was sent out to a sample of residents of the region to gauge their thoughts on the community.

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

An “overall vision” was prepared and a set of goals were written to provide overall direction for the Plan. Then a series of alternatives were considered to guide development in different areas of the Region. The Land Use Plan was prepared, followed by recommendations concerning Community Facilities, Transportation, Economic Development, Historic Preservation and Natural Features. All of these elements were produced and reviewed by the Planning Committee at monthly meetings advertised and open to the public. Public hearings were then held. After making revisions to respond to public input, the Plan was adopted by the elected officials of each municipality.

### Regional Location

The municipalities composing the Southern Berks Region include Birdsboro Borough, Caernarvon Township, Robeson Township, and Union Township. These four (4) municipalities are located within the southeastern portion of Berks County. The regional planning area consists of 43,439.85 acres of land (67.88 square miles) with a total population of 19,888 residents (2010 Census). The center of the Southern Berks Region is located approximately seven (7) miles to the southeast of the City of Reading, 34 miles to the southwest of the City of Allentown, 42 miles to the northwest of City of Philadelphia, 28 miles to the east of the City of Lancaster, and 57 miles to the west of the City of Harrisburg. The map below depicts the geographic proximity of the Southern Berks Region within Berks County.

