

# XIII. IMPLEMENTATION

## A. Legal Requirements

The development of this Plan has been an ambitious and educational process. Goals have been considered carefully and many specific recommendations have been made. The Plan outlines a strategy, but continued action and implementation are necessary if the Plan's goals are to be achieved. This final Chapter will provide a list of tasks that must be undertaken to optimally determine the Region's future, but before actual assignments are listed, it is important to understand how each municipality within the Region is to interact in this regional undertaking.

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) addresses this issue directly. Article 11 of the MPC is entitled Joint Municipal Planning Commissions but it provides much more than this subject. Article 11 enables regional planning and specifies its objectives. It defines municipal versus County roles in the regional planning process. And finally, it provides for inter-municipal implementation agreements. Section 1104 states:

- (a) *In order to implement multi-municipal comprehensive plans, under section 1103 counties and municipalities shall have authority to enter into intergovernmental cooperative agreements.*
- (b) *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 multi-municipal 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 multi-municipal 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 as described in subsection (d), 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.*

- (c) *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 multi-municipal comprehensive plan and redefining the designated growth area, future growth area and rural resource area within the plan.*
- (d) *The county may facilitate convening representatives of municipalities, municipal authorities, special districts, public utilities, whether public or private, or other agencies that provide or declare an interest in providing a public infrastructure service in a public infrastructure service area or a portion of a public infrastructure service area within a growth area, as established in a county or multi-municipal comprehensive plan, for the purpose of negotiating agreements for the provision of such services. The county may provide or contract with others to provide technical assistance, mediation or dispute resolution services in order to assist the parties in negotiating such agreements<sup>1</sup>.*

**Based upon the preceding requirements, the Municipalities in the Region have adopted an Intergovernmental Agreement to implement the Plan. Such implementation agreement was developed with the assistance of local officials and BCPC staff. It details expectations of each municipality simple enough to be understood and not discourage involvement.**

## **B. Schedule of Specific Requirements**

In developing an implementation agreement as enabled by the MPC and recommended above, ***the following specific action tasks have been identified with bold italicized print throughout this Plan.*** The task along with its responsible parties, suggested time frame and a reference where further discussion can be found within the plan are provided in the following schedule. These tasks can be used as an agenda of action by local officials over the life of the Plan.

<b>Recommended task:</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Plan reference (Ch.pgs)</b>
1. It is important for all persons involved and/or interested in the future of the Eastern Berks County Region to read and understand this Plan. Local decision-makers should keep the Plan handy when evaluating future development proposals, service adjustments or public investments.	Local staff, & officials from each municipality	ongoing	I.2-3

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.inventpa.com/docs/MPCode.txt> (1/23/03)

Recommended task:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	Plan reference (Ch.pgs)
<b>Recommendations related to the protection of natural &amp; cultural features. (Chapter III)</b>			
2. Public water supply wells should be located in the vicinity of carbonate formations to take advantage of the abundant groundwater supplies. However, such sources should be routinely monitored and treated as necessary due to the vulnerability of this groundwater from contamination via the widespread solution channels.	Topton Borough	ongoing	III.4-5
3. Implement a well-head protection plan for public water supplies .	Topton Borough	Short-term & ongoing	III.5-7
4. All known public wellhead protection areas be reserved for low intensity rural uses with limited permitted lot coverage and woodland preservation requirements that will reduce potential impact on groundwater volumes and quality.	Topton Borough	Short-term & ongoing	III.7
5. All home-based businesses or rural occupations located within known well-head protection areas should require the applicant for such uses to demonstrate the means by which he/she will properly handle materials, and dispose of any wastes, that could threaten groundwater contamination.	Topton Borough	Short-term & ongoing	III.7
6. In addition it is recommended that “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) for the control of stormwater be applied within the Region.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.7-8 III.16-17
7. Prime farm soils should be protected by reviewing and strengthening the Townships’ agricultural zones if necessary.	District and Rockland Townships	Short term	III.9
8. Local officials should emphasize the preservation of prime farmlands and active farms in the design of new developments within the Rural and Conservation Zones.	District and Rockland Townships	Short-term & ongoing	III.9
9. Review Conservation Design practices in zoning & subdivision regulations for any needed updates.	District and Rockland Townships	Short-term	III.19
10. Proposed developments should avoid soils with severe development constraints as regulated by local zoning and subdivision and land development (SLDO) ordinances.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.9-10
11. Local officials should take active steps to preserve and protect State-designated high-quality and exceptional value watersheds from inappropriate land use and local activities that could threaten their integrity.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.12-14
12. Local officials should develop a public/private partnership to protect stream water quality using a combination of educational, assistance and regulatory measures.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.12-14
13. Each of the Region’s municipalities should apply riparian buffer standards to developments that seek to locate within State- designated high-quality and exceptional value watersheds.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.12-14
14. Municipal officials should consider the adoption of various measures to protect the Region’s wetlands, including modified road maintenance standards, an environmental impact assessment (EIA) requirement in their respective SLDO, land use and development limitations, and a homeowner educational program.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.14-15
15. Expand local floodplain regulations to include alluvial soils.	District, Rockland and Topton	Short-term	III.15

<b>Recommended task:</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Plan reference (Ch.pgs)</b>
16. Require an Environmental Impact Assessment prior to any subdivision approval within identified natural habitat areas.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.18-19
17. Develop and adopt sound forestry management regulations that can protect the sensitivity of wooded areas and adjoining neighbors from the deleterious impacts of uncontrolled logging uses and operations.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	III.20 XII.6-7
18. Adoption of woodland preservation requirements.	All Townships	Short-term & ongoing	III.20
20. Gauge public support for voluntary historic preservation techniques.	All municipalities	Long-term	III.21-25
<b>Recommendations related to demographics. (Chapter IV)</b>			
21. Provide for a target mix of housing types to offer housing diversity within the Region.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	IV.9
<b>Recommendations related to the delivery of public services. (Chapter V)</b>			
22. Closely monitor growth within the Region so as to proactively plan for facility expansion well in advance of actual demand for space.	School District	Short-term & ongoing	V.4
21. Improve the process of residential development review and allocate manpower and resources so as to properly respond to such applications and provide meaningful feedback to the municipalities.	School District	Short-term & ongoing	V.4
22. Revise subdivision and land development application requirements so that adequate and timely notification to the School District is assured.	All municipalities	Short-term & ongoing	V.4
23. Investigate the creation of a new Regional Recreation Board (RRB).	All municipalities & School District	Short-term & ongoing	V.4 & VI.1
24. Apply to the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) for a grant to prepare a Regional Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan.	RRB	Short-term	V.4
25. Continue to encourage Emergency Services to work cooperatively throughout the Region.	All municipalities	Short-term	V.11
26. Evaluate policies that affect availability of local volunteers.	ES	Short-term	V.11-12
27. Enhance sources of daytime volunteer firefighters and emergency medical transports (EMTs).	ES	Short-term	V.11-12
28. Formalize program of specialized training throughout the Region.	ES	Short-term	V.12
29. Consider the creation of a new Emergency Services Coordinator staff position.	ES	Long-term	V.12
30. Mount an educational and media campaign to cultivate awareness among the newly-arrived residents of the need for their financial and manpower support to sustain volunteer firefighting and ambulance services.	ES & local officials	Ongoing	V.13-15
31. Apply to the PA DCED for the preparation of a technical review, as part of its Shared Municipal Service Program, at no cost to the Region to examine the adequacy of the Region's equipment to provide adequate service.	ES & local officials	Short-term	V.14

<b>Recommended task:</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Plan reference (Ch.pgs)</b>
32. Publicize the names of contributors to local volunteer emergency service agencies.	Local officials	Annually	V.15
33. Explore the partial and gradual use of “other” funding mechanisms.	Local fire and ambulance companies and local officials.	Long-term	V.15
35. Provide detailed geographic information system (GIS) mapping to each emergency service provider.	Berks County	Ongoing	V.16
36. Install dry hydrants in rural areas of the Region.	Local fire companies and local officials.	Long-term	V.16
<b>Recommendations related to parks &amp; recreation. (Chapter VI)</b>			
37. Investigate the creation a new Regional Recreation Board (RRB).	All municipalities & School District	Short-term & ongoing	V.4 & VI.1
38. Apply to the PA DCNR for a peer-to-peer review.	RRB	Short-term	VI.1
39. Initiate plans to continue to allow the public use of the park at the former Rockland Elementary School.	Rockland Township	Short-term	VI.11
40. Target future growth in Topton Borough Township where abundant parklands exist to serve future residents.	Topton Borough	Ongoing	VI.11
41. Add improvements to parks to offer a wider range of activities and programs.	All municipalities & School District	Ongoing	VI.11
42. Educate landowners and developers of the importance of riparian buffers, and the Region’s intent to provide for them.	Local Officials	Short-term	VI.12-14 & III.12-13
43. Mount a campaign to inform local landowners who abut creeks of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).	Local Officials	Short-term	VI.14-15
44. Energize Region’s youth to develop pilot riparian buffers at visible locations.	All municipalities & School District	Ongoing	VI.15
45. Investigate mandatory dedication language adoption within the SLDO.	District & Rockland Townships	Short-term	VI.16-19
46. Amend mandatory dedication standards in current SLDOs in-line with updated demographics and land values.	Topton Borough	Short-term and ongoing	VI.18-19
47. Apply revenues/parklands acquired from mandatory dedication throughout the Region.	RRB	Ongoing	VI.19
<b>Recommendations related to the local economy. (Chapter VII)</b>			
48. Rural occupations and small-scale industries should be permitted to allow for local employment so long as such activities do not interfere with nearby homes. Potential businesses should be limited to ones that pose no threat to local water quality by reason of waste disposal or the applicant must demonstrate adequate means for proper waste disposal to avoid water pollution.	All Townships	Ongoing	VII.5 & 8

<b>Recommended task:</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Plan reference (Ch.pgs)</b>
49. Investigate and apply all Main Street program opportunities.	Topton Borough	Short-term	VII.6-7
50. Productive farmlands should be protected with effective zoning.	All Townships	Short-term	VII.8. & III.9
51. Farm-related businesses should be permitted.	All Townships	Short-term	VII.8.
52. Strengthen regulations for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).	All Townships	Short-term	VII.8.
53. Adopt a proactive and cooperative approach towards businesses.	Topton Borough	Ongoing	VII.8
54. Expand commercial/industrial opportunities with shared solutions to problems (access, parking, loading, signs, and stormwater).	Topton Borough	Ongoing	VII.8
55. Promote traditional design themes amid pedestrian friendly settings.	Topton Borough	Ongoing	VII.8
56. Offer limited local commercial nodes in outlying rural areas with restrictive design features.	Townships	Short-term	VII.8
<b>Recommendations related to public utilities. (Chapter X)</b>			
57. Promote adoption of wellhead protection language in regulations.	All municipalities	Short-Mid-Term	
58. Coordinate public infrastructure improvements between municipalities, developers and PennDOT.	All municipalities	Ongoing	
59. Make use of PA One-Call system with respect to use and developments proposed along the Region's overhead and underground utility rights-of-way.	Residents and developers.	Ongoing	X.8-15
<b>Recommendations related to transportation. (Chapter XI)</b>			
60. Adopt comprehensive traffic impact study regulations within the SLDO.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XI.1
61. Work with PennDOT to upgrade collector roads to newer recommended standards.	All municipalities	Short-term	XI.4
63. Reduce and discourage the number of driveway cuts along the Region's collector roads.	All municipalities	Long-term	XI.5-6
64. Reclassify the Huff's Church Road / Frederickville Road / Fleetwood Road corridor as a major collector.	District & Rockland Townships & Berks County	Short-term	XI.10
65. Complete various locally-scheduled road improvements.	Townships	Short-term	XI.10-11
66. Reclassify Haas Street / Old Topton Road as a major collector.	Topton Borough & Berks County	Short-term	XI.12

<b>Recommended task:</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Plan reference (Ch.pgs)</b>
69. Install sidewalks in all new planned neighborhoods.	Topton Borough	Short-term and ongoing	XI.12-13
70. Install bus stops at prominent locations.	Topton Borough	Long-term	XI.13
71. Lobby the BCPC and PA DOT's Maintenance Manager to widen designated bicycle route with proper striping or wider shoulders.	Rockland Townships and Topton Borough	Short-term	XI.13
72. Apply for improvements to designated bicycle route under PA DOT's Betterment Program.	Rockland Townships and Topton Borough	Long-term	XI.13
73. Submit a list of needed transportation projects on behalf of the entire Region to RATS.	All municipalities	Bi-annually	XI.13-14
<b>Recommendations related to future land use. (Chapter XII)</b>			
74. Adopt individual municipal zoning ordinances and maps that are generally consistent with the recommendations contained within Chapter XII.	All municipalities	Short-term	XII.1-2
75. Commit to reviewing the Joint Comprehensive Plan every 5 years and updating the Plan if necessary.	All municipalities	Long-term	XII.1
76. Maintain and revise if necessary the effective agricultural zones that severely restricts development in favor of normal farming operations and related secondary occupations.	District & Rockland Townships	Short term	XII.2-4
77. Local officials should emphasize the preservation of prime farmlands and active farms in the design of new developments within the Conservation and Rural Zones.	District & Rockland Township	Short-term & ongoing	XII.15
78. Maintain a Conservation Zoning that severely restricts development in favor of natural conservation and related secondary occupations, has design flexibility to tuck development amid scattered natural features and requires the submission of environmental impact reports .	All Townships	Short term	XII.5-11
80. Adopt a Riparian Buffer Overlay Zone. District Township has already adopted one.	Topton & Rockland	Short-term	XII.6-11, III.12-13, & VI.13-14
81. Assign local planning commission members primary responsibility to review specific environmental topics of proposed developments.	All municipalities	Short-term	XII.6
83. Develop a new R-1 Residential Zone in which planned neighborhoods can grow with the use of a wide range of public utilities and services.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.16
84. Develop a new Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) Overlay Zone that promotes a target mixture of housing types, protects important natural features, promotes pedestrian travel, reflects historic character, features community focal points and invites regular social interaction.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.17-19

<b>Recommended task:</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Plan reference (Ch.pgs)</b>
85. Conduct several TND workshops at various target groups.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.18
86. Adopt Residential Zones that align with existing neighborhood character yet enable some conversion of existing uses for expanded housing opportunities. Also enable public and civic uses here.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.19-20
87. Strengthen accessory use regulations within the Residential Zones.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.21
88. Adopt a Mobile Home Park Zone that is limited to existing parks and any future Mobile Home Parks have very strict design standards.	District & Rockland Townships	Short-term	XII.22
89. Adopt a new Commercial Zone that reflects the rural context, provides for local conveniences, discourages demolition of historic buildings, promotes shared features and manages outdoor activities.	District & Rockland Township	Short-term	XII.22-23
90. Adopt a new Town Center District that promotes pedestrian scale uses and designs, discourages demolition of historic sites, favors on- street parking, directly abuts the sidewalk, and permits 2 <sup>nd</sup> story apartments.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.23-24
91. Promote adaptive reuse of older industrial buildings adjoining the Central Business District (CBD).	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.25
92. Promote revitalization of CBD through demonstrated support for reinvestment.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.25
94. Direct commerce towards local employees and commuters to and from the School campus.	Topton Borough businesses.	Short-term	XII.26
96. Explore the creation of a CBD parking lot between Center Avenue and the railroad just east of South Home Street.	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.27
98. Lobby the Berks Area Transit Authority to offer bus service to downtown Topton and promote the use of Commuter Services within the Region.	All Municipalities	Long-term	XII.27
100. Develop a new Highway Commercial Zone for businesses that are too large or intensive for the CBD, and encourage the use of shared design features (eg. parking, loading, signs, access, stormwater, etc.)	Topton Borough	Short-term	XII.28-30
102. Retrofit existing industrial uses with needed amenities to improve function, appearance and compatibility.	Topton Borough	Ongoing	XII.30-33
103. Allow for adaptive reuse of older industrial buildings by focusing upon potential impacts rather than uses allowed.	Topton Borough	Ongoing	XII.30-33
104. Adopt noise and lighting standards to ensure compatibility from one site to the next.	All municipalities	Short-term	XII.33

The preceding table plots an ambitious list of recommended activities. These tasks are vital if the Region is to optimally manage its growth and development and to plan and implement its “vision” for the future. The completion of many of these tasks should result in an improved quality of life within the Region.

Municipal officials are responsible to monitor and evaluate the implementation strategy aimed at achieving the locally-expressed objectives and resultant recommendations set forth in this Plan. ***It is recommended that the Region appoint a Joint Planning Committee who is responsible to meet as necessary to manage regional planning issues. One of their principal duties should be to meet at least once a year and discuss regional issues and solutions pertaining to the Region and complete a more formal review of the Comprehensive Plan every 5 years that would assess the necessity for updates.***



Cooperation among all administrative bodies and levels of government is an essential component to a streamlined and successful implementation strategy. The continued use of public participation is also a very important duty of municipal officials. If, for some reason, the recommendations of this Plan do not appear to address the, then, current conditions, municipal officials should not hesitate to amend portions of this Plan or any other policy to rectify those deficiencies.

This Plan holds a wealth of information that can be easily accessed and understood. Its implementation will help residents, businesses and visitors know the Plan is vital, and that the future of the Region is deliberate, and the result of considerable analysis and public scrutiny.