

PART 3

IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 10

ACTION PLAN

“We are all stewards, charged with the care of something that belongs to someone else. To be good stewards, we must begin now, with purpose and urgency, to build on the foundations we have.”

-- Report of the Pennsylvania 21st Century Environment Commission

INTRODUCTION

The following is an outline of actions for implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Upon the adoption of the Plan, each municipal governing body should assign responsibility for beginning the process of implementation. Some actions can be accomplished individually, but some will require continued cooperative planning among the three municipalities.

1. Continue to maintain and prepare updates needed to the Zoning Ordinance and Maps

Preparation of any necessary updates to the joint zoning ordinance should be a short-term high priority action, begun upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Initial responsibility would be with a joint planning commission upon direction of the governing bodies.

A. Update Joint Zoning Maps to reflect changes in Future Land Use Plan

1. Resource Preservation areas
2. Rural Conservation areas
3. Agricultural Preservation areas
4. Quarry Overlay District
5. Adjustments to district boundaries
6. Medium Density Residential/Village Commercial areas

B. Review and update Joint Zoning Ordinances to reflect any changes to Future Land Use Plan

1. Resource Preservation areas
 2. Rural Conservation areas
 3. Agricultural Preservation areas, with effective agricultural zoning, techniques such as sliding scale, large lot, or preservation of percentage of prime agricultural soils.
 4. Agribusiness area deletion
 5. Transitional Agricultural/Residential
 6. Medium Density Residential/Village Commercial
- C. Review and update the Joint Zoning Ordinances where necessary to expand protection of natural resources and historic resources. Determine current effectiveness and expand provisions where possible.
1. Natural Resource Protection Standards (net out provisions)
(consider in all districts)
 - a. Floodplains
 - b. Wetlands
 - c. Wetland Margins (buffers)
 - d. >25% slope
 - e. 15-25% slope
 - f. Watercourses
 - g. Waterbodies
 - h. Lake and pond shores
 - i. Prime agricultural soils
 - j. Limestone areas
 2. Lot Averaging (consider in Low Density Residential, and review for the Rural Preservation and Rural Conservation areas)
 - a. Maximum overall density
 - b. Flexibility in lot size
 - c. Natural features and resources contained in larger lots so houses can be sited away from them

3. Review and update Conservation Zoning (Growing Greener Concept of Natural Lands Trust) (Rural Preservation and Rural Conservation areas)
 - a. Net out natural resources
 - b. Establish maximum overall density
 - c. Establish minimum substantial open space requirement
 - d. Allow large lot zoning (3 to 10 acres) as alternatives
 - e. Important natural features and resources, such as scenic vistas, historic sites, agriculture, steep slopes, wetlands, woodland, are contained in open space
 - f. Design procedure is:
 - (1) Identify conservation areas
 - (2) Locate house sites
 - (3) Align streets and trails
 - (4) Draw lot lines
 - g. Provide visual and physical access to open space areas
4. Steep Slope Protection Provisions
 - a. Control and limit development on steep slopes
 - (1) Consider larger lot sizes for steep slopes
 - (2) Discourage development on slopes >25% Set maximum disturbance limits for these slopes.
5. Woodland Protection Provisions
 - a. Limit clearance for development
 - b. Encourage tree protection and replacement during development
6. Wetlands, Wetland Margin and Hydric Soil Protection Provisions
 - a. Restrict development in wetlands and wetland margins
 - b. Require wetland delineation in hydric soil areas
 - c. Restrict on-site sewage disposal
7. Floodplain Protection Provisions
 - a. Severely restrict development in floodplains to flood compatible uses
 - b. Compare new FEMA floodplain regulations being created and update provisions for consistency when completed

8. Review and update Limestone Area Overlay Zoning
 - a. Encourage use of public sewer and water and discourage on-site sewer and water
 - b. Review development and stormwater management techniques to minimize sinkholes and prevent groundwater pollution
 - c. Encourage protection of aquifer by restricting uses and potential polluting activities
 - d. Limit impervious areas
 - e. Performance standards for commercial and industrial uses

9. Review and update Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning
 - a. Restrict development and impervious surfaces
 - b. Require riparian (vegetative) buffers to moderate water temperatures, protect wildlife habitats, control sedimentation, and reduce pollution
 - c. Encourage greenways and trails
 - d. Encourage conservation easements/donations/dedications
 - e. Encourage use of best management practices for development, stormwater management, agriculture
 - f. Encourage stream habitat improvement
 - (1) Wetland restoration
 - (2) Stream bank restoration/stabilization

10. Encourage cooperation with Berks County Conservation District, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Berks County Conservancy to look at each property on an individual basis to determine need to fence streambanks and use other Best Management Practices (BMP's) as necessary to protect stream quality

11. Scenic Road Overlay Zoning
 - a. Greater setbacks
 - b. Additional landscaping and trees and screening
 - c. Standards for siting buildings/building height

12. Scenic Viewshed Overlay Zoning
 - a. Standards for building height
 - b. Standards for building placement

13. Historic Resource Overlay Zoning
 - a. Require developers to do analyses:

- (1) Nature of historic resources on and near property
 - (2) Impact of proposals on historic resources
 - (3) Mitigation measures
 - b. Allow adaptive reuse of historic buildings
 - c. Discourage removal of historic structures
 - d. 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
 - e. Encourage architectural, materials, and development patterns characteristics of the area
- 14. Historic District Zoning for Concentrations of Historic Resources
 - a. Elements in 13 a-e above.
 - b. Discourage uses likely to result in demolition
- 15. Demolition by Neglect Provisions
 - a. Require property owners to protect and maintain historic properties so they are not demolished by vandalism or the elements
- D. Review and update Zoning Ordinances to Encourage Appropriate Development Consistent with Existing Development Patterns and to Enhance Streetscapes
 - 1. Provide for Traditional Neighborhood Development (Neotraditional Development) in Medium and High Density Development Areas
 - a. Create sense of community
 - b. Pedestrian oriented design
 - c. Central community facilities
 - d. Public spaces
 - e. Shallow setbacks
 - f. Trees
 - g. Alleys
 - h. Compact development
 - i. Smaller, interconnected streets, closer to grid pattern
 - j. Historic development patterns of towns
 - k. Architectural Design guidelines
 - 2. Continue to Protect Character of Villages and Downtown Wernersville

- a. Allow only appropriate uses in scale with and compatible with existing appropriate use, discouraging uses which would transform the character of the areas.
 - b. Use the Traditional Neighborhood Development strategies for better protection of the integrity of the character and to promote the continued expansion
- 3. Require buffers where have potentially conflicting uses such as residential – non-residential, residential and non-residential – agriculture.
- 4. Use coverage, density, intensity and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, street furniture, open spaces and parking designs consistent with this Plan.
- 5. Consider whether some elements of street furniture should be required improvements of land developers.
- 6. Encourage parking areas to the rear (and side of buildings and review standards for design, buffering and landscaping of new parking facilities.
- 7. Encourage signage appropriate to the area.
- 8. Require impact statements with proposed zoning amendments to address the impacts of proposed developments.
- 9. Establish appropriate standards for driveway design and access to streets to provide for appropriate access management.
- 10. Complete the sidewalk and path systems and fix/maintain that which is there.
- E. Update Statements of Community Development Objectives to be Consistent With This Plan
- F. In agricultural areas, allow farmers methods to supplement incomes, allow farm support uses but discourage non-farm uses which could cause conflicts with agricultural practices. Require buffering provisions around the perimeter of agricultural areas.
- G. Establish appropriate controls for agricultural operations working with the Penn State Cooperative Extension and Berks County Conservation District.

2. Update Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

Update of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances should be a short-term high priority action, begun upon adoption of this Comprehensive Plan. Initial responsibility would be with municipal planning commissions upon direction of the governing bodies.

- A. Traffic impact studies should be required for proposed developments. Such studies ~~would~~ 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.
- B. Establish appropriate standards for driveway design and access to streets for appropriate access management. Plans should be reviewed for access management concerns. Require coordination with BARTA where appropriate.
- C. Consider stormwater management part of the hydrologic cycle with less emphasis on detention and more emphasis on infiltration, reducing pollution, and reducing thermal impacts through BMP's. Review current regulations for compliance with new PA State and Federal regulation changes. (PA Act 167 of 1978, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems and Chesapeake Bay requirements)

Assure developers adequately address storm water management and erosion and sedimentation control.
- D. Encourage developers to identify natural, historic, scenic, architectural and cultural resources in their tracts and incorporate them into the open space system. Management plans for open space should be required as well as mechanisms assuring the continuation as open space.
- E. Require developers to identify the resources within their tracts, analyze the impacts of the development and mitigate those impacts.
- F. Plan data requirements should include a specific listing of environmental, scenic, historic and cultural resources.
- G. Require environmental assessment studies, hydrogeological studies, scenic, historic and cultural resources impact studies and plans for preservation of environmental, historic and cultural resources and analysis of the site's ability to support the proposed use and intensity of use.
- H. Development guidelines should be established for development in areas of high water tables and high yield aquifers, such as recharge areas, limits on impervious cover, and limits on on-site sewage disposal.

- I. Development guidelines should be established for development near scenic roads and vistas.
- J. Require tree plantings along streets.
- K. Include provisions for vegetation management and protection of vegetation during site work.
- L. In review of Subdivision and Land Development Plans, requirements for setting aside open space could be used to preserve the Stream Corridors identified in this plan and providing for greenways (see Greenways, A Guide to Planning, Design and Development by the Conservation Fund).
- M. Appropriate road design standards for each functional classification of road should be established. Bike and pedestrian lanes should be included in the cross-sections per the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities by AASHTO. Where formal bike lanes may not work, consider shoulder upgrades, 'Share the Road' signs, sharrows (shared road pavement markings), and/or signed bicycle routes.
- N. Open space or fee in lieu of open space should be required for commercial and industrial development as well as residential development. Consider coordination of these programs through the municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans or creation of a Joint Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Each subdivision or land development will have to be reviewed to determine whether the dedication of land or the fee would be more appropriate, based upon the size and location of the development.
- O. Require developers to recognize existing trails and to provide for new trails. Standards for trails should be included in the Ordinances. Sufficient rights-of-way and easements should be required.
- P. Consider addition of standards for recreation facilities which are consistent with NRPA or other relevant standards.
- Q. Rights of access for trails should be secured through easements during the plan review process.
- R. Consider preparing and implementing a Joint Open Space and Recreation Plan for the region.
- S. Involve fire company personnel in review of subdivision and land development plans.

- T. Encourage use of service roads/marginal access roads along Route 422, to reduce traffic volumes on and the number of driveway entrances to Route 422.

3. Administrative Actions for Historic and Natural Resource Preservation

The highest priority actions should be consideration of appointment of historical commissions and Environmental Advisory Committees within two years of adoption of this Plan, by the governing bodies. The other actions will be on-going, long-term actions initiated by the governing bodies with the assistance of municipal planning commissions and any newly appointed commissions.

- A. Appoint municipal or a joint historical commission(s).
- B. Support the activities of individuals and groups, which identify, document, evaluate and protect historical resources and increase public awareness of the area's history and historic resources. Continue notification to the Berks County Planning Commission of any changes to historic structures so that the countywide data based is maintained.
- C. Support the planning of trails to link historic sites with trails and erect informative markers and exhibits at historic resources.
- D. Evaluate the potential for historic districts and support their creation if warranted. If created, support the adoption of Design Guidelines and Sign Controls for the Historic District(s).
- E. Identify key natural areas to the Berks County Conservancy and other conservation groups to encourage acquisition through conservation easements, fee simple, donation and dedication through the development review process. "Connecting Tracts in the Rural Preservation Areas" are examples of key areas.
- F. Consider creation of municipal Environmental Advisory Committees to work with property owners to preserve key tracts of open space.
- G. Support efforts of the Berks County Conservancy, Berks County Conservation District, and other agencies to manage stream corridors through cooperative efforts with landowners for riparian buffers, best management practices, and stream bank improvements. Cooperate in securing easements along the streams.
- H. Encourage property owners to restore and/or adaptively reuse historic structures and discourage removal of historic structures.
- I. Encourage formation of groups within the community to adopt a stream and provide monitoring and oversight along the stream corridor.

- J. Encourage the use of improved farming practices involving the use of fertilizer and pesticides and the application of manure. Aggressive control of animal excretions and feed lot managing should be encouraged.

4. Administrative Actions for Agricultural Preservation

These are on-going, long-term activities which should be continued upon adoption of the Plan. Responsibility is with municipal governing bodies, planning commissions, and authorities.

- A. Encourage expansion of agricultural security areas.
- B. Discourage public sewer and water in agricultural areas.
- C. Encourage purchase of agricultural conservation easements.

5. Planning Actions

The highest priorities should be continued use of a standing joint planning commission and a trail planning commission within six months of adoption of this Plan. The appointing responsibility is with the governing bodies. The update of the joint zoning ordinance should occur within 2 years after the adoption of the Plan. The preparation and update of other municipal plans, maps, and programs should occur within a four-year period after adoption of this Plan. Authorization would come from the governing bodies and be the responsibility of various municipal and/or joint committees/commissions and the governing bodies.

- A. The Townships and the Borough joint planning are required to meet at least once per year to review issues with the Joint Comprehensive Plan, they may also recommend work programs for each year, and discuss subdivision and land development plans of common interest.
- B. A Trail Planning Commission should be established to implement the conceptual trail system included in this plan. Proposed trail elements along State roads should be submitted to PennDOT for inclusion in PennDOT improvement programs and shoulder improvements.

Greenway planning should be coordinated with surrounding municipalities. Berks County, the Berks County Conservancy, and property owners, with particular attention to the Spring, Cacoosing and Tulpehocken Creeks.

- C. Each year the Municipal Planning Commission and Governing Body of each municipality should meet to discuss trends in the municipality, surrounding municipalities and the region; progress of meeting the goals set forth in this plan; the effectiveness of this plan; and implementation of the plan. Specific actions determined to be necessary to implement the plan should be identified and action

programs for the following year established. Directives for tasks should be given to appropriate boards, committees and commissions. This information should include the discussion of any recommendations made by the joint planning commission's yearly meeting.

- D. This Comprehensive Plan should be given a thorough review in five years, with consideration of trends at that time and development events over those five years.
- E. Municipal Act 537 plans should be coordinated with this plan, particularly the Future Land Use Plan.
- F. Municipal Park, Open Space and Recreation Plans should be revised to reflect the proposals of this plan, such as trails and stream corridor preservation. The municipalities should consider completing a Joint Park, Open Space and Recreation Plan. This process could begin with a Peer Study/Review completed in conjunction with the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources program.
- G. A Streetscape Plan for Route 422 should be considered, addressing such issues as landscaping, signage, street furniture, lighting, parking locations and design standards. Municipalities should work with property owners to enhance gateways to the municipalities.
- H. Municipalities should consider adoption of an Official Map. Prioritization and designation of appropriate existing and proposed public facilities, streets, watercourses and trails would then be added to the Official Map. This should be coordinated with a Capital Improvements Budget.
- I. Municipalities should prepare Capital Improvements Programs for street improvements, recreation and other community facilities, pedestrian circulation improvements, community appearance improvements, and other improvements recommended by this plan.
- J. Consideration should be given to adopting street tree plans, implemented through municipal Shade Tree Commissions.
- K. Consideration should be given to establishing sidewalks improvement programs such as completion of gaps in the system where necessary to implement the trail plan and provide for improved access to schools, day-to-day shopping facilities, community facilities, transit facilities, and employment opportunities. ADA requirements should be complied with. Pedestrian crossings at street intersections should be facilitated through consideration of crosswalks, stop signs, limitation of cartway radii, and use of pedestrian buttons and pedestrian cycles at signalized intersections.

- L. A plan for the provision of benches and other amenities should be considered along sidewalk and trail systems.
- M. Review, update and adopt appropriate land use controls to implement updates necessary to the Tulpehocken Watershed and Cocalico Watershed Act 167 Plans. The major implication of these plans are the need to adopt storm water management parameters and standards consistent with the Plans and any new State and Federal stormwater regulations.

Investigate watershed planning and wellhead protection opportunities available under the Growing Greener initiative and other programs in cooperation with the Berks County Conservancy, Berks County Conservation District, and other agencies.

- N. Maintain a dialog with the school districts regarding development activities, school facilities needs, and location of school facilities.
- O. Participate in Berks County programs, such as joint planning and community development grants, and State programs, such as the Growing Greener initiative, which encourage cooperative planning efforts among municipalities.

The municipalities should continuously jointly monitor availability of grants for planning, recreation and other elements and pursue grants.

- P. Monitor zoning along municipal boundaries to provide for compatible zoning districts.
- Q. Consider the possibility of a joint Route 422 planning and management study, with Berks County and PennDOT involvement.

6. Administrative Actions for Economic and Community Development

These will be on-going, long-term actions begun upon adoption of this Plan. Primary responsibility will lie with the governing bodies, with help from municipal staffs and planning commissions. The first priority should be to determine whether an economic development or “revitalization” board, particularly within Wernersville, should be appointed.

- A. Establish zoning policies for home employment and home occupations.
- B. Discuss future reuse of portions of the Wernersville State Hospital with Hospital officials.
- C. Cooperate with community organizations to provide a program of community activities and events available to residents and visitors. Conceive programs that emphasize the history and architecture of the area.

- D. Provide for public spaces within the area through provision of open spaces, a green in Wernersville, recreation facilities, greenways, improved sidewalks, and indoor facilities as appropriate and feasible.
- E. Support activities to promote the area, retain existing businesses and recruit desired new businesses, and enhance existing businesses.
- F. Work with businesses in the area to protect and enhance the historic character of the area and improve public amenities.
- G. Foster cooperation between residents and the business community and among businesses to work toward the continued vitality of the community.
- H. Encourage continuation and location of businesses that support local agricultural operations.
- I. Support efforts to maintain a strong town center in Wernersville in accordance with the economic and community development plan.
- J. Maintain opportunities for industrial and commercial uses in the joint zoning ordinance.
- K. Monitor the need for additional parking facilities and/or to improve the management of parking spaces within Wernersville.
- L. Encourage new development which will be compatible with and integrated into existing development and streetscapes.
- M. Encourage continued residential uses in downtown Wernersville to provide a mix of uses.
- N. Continue enforcement of existing Codes. Eliminate impediments to adaptive reuse and historic restoration in Codes which will not compromise safety. Address the implications of the adoption of the statewide building code.
- O. Investigate programs to attract businesses such as financial incentives for reuse of old buildings and tax/lien forgiveness to “recycle” buildings and preserve historic sites.
- P. Create and/or update municipal web sites which will contain information on zoning and other municipal regulations, general information on the community, a listing of upcoming events, and a listing of available vacant buildings.

7. Administrative Actions for Community Facilities and Services

These actions will be on-going, long-term actions begun after adoption of this Plan. Primary responsibility will be with the governing bodies, authorities, and recreation commissions.

- A. Work with school districts to assure resident access to school facilities.
- B. Support efforts of community organizations, such as the Conrad Weiser Community Organization, to provide recreation facilities for area residents.
- C. Investigate opportunities for intermunicipal cooperative efforts for provision of services, equipment and facilities.
- D. Monitor need for additional and expanded services and facilities.
- E. Facilitate continued coordination among providers of emergency services.
- F. Work with Western Berks Fire Department to address manpower and equipment needs. Plan for water lines and fire hydrants with sufficient capacities and pressure to aid fire companies in providing fire protection.
- G. Coordinate sewer and water provision and planning with this Comprehensive Plan, including location of sewer and water lines and capacity in sewage treatment plants. Encourage extension of public sewer and water throughout designated growth areas, and discourage extension of public sewer and water facilities into preservation areas.
- H. Encourage provision of public sewer to the Lower Heidelberg Elementary School.
- I. Encourage interconnection of the water systems in the area.
- J. Assure that appropriate discharge standards are maintained for sewage treatment plants, consistent with the classification of receiving streams.
- K. Protect municipal water supplies through appropriate watershed planning, management and protection.
- L. Monitor opportunities for acquiring additional recreation or municipal facilities, such as the Lower Heidelberg Elementary School should it be vacated by the Wilson School District.
- M. Investigate with Wernersville State Hospital opportunities for public use of hospital facilities.

- N. Foster cooperation among municipal Park and Recreation Boards. Secure Recreation Board input in the review of development plans.
- O. Address recreation safety guidelines for playgrounds.
- P. Make short and long term plans for accessibility improvements at recreational facilities.
- Q. Require dedicated recreation facilities to meet regulation standards for users, and have such requirement noted on development plans.
- R. Negotiate first rights-of-refusal for key elements of the open space system (stream corridors, trail locations, ecosystems on South Mountain) if the land becomes available. Work with the Berks County Conservancy and other agencies to acquire such land or conservation easements, use easements, or easements for making stream corridor improvements.
- S. Encourage coordination of needed services to and facilities for children and senior citizens within the community by appropriate agencies. Review the need for community senior citizen and youth centers and activities in the community.
- T. Support continued operation of a library in the community.
- U. Work with the older residents of the community to identify programs that are available to help them meet their housing expenses and retain their homes as owner-occupied single family residences.
- V. Pursue opportunities for public access to watershed areas with the Wernersville Municipal Authority and Wernersville State Hospital.

8. Administrative Actions for the Circulation System

These actions are primarily the responsibility of the governing bodies with technical assistance from municipal engineers, traffic engineers, the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), and PennDOT. The actions are of high priority, but will be on-going and of both short-term and long-term because of the nature of the projects which will be implemented.

- A. Prepare multi-year programs for street and bridge maintenance and restoration.
- B. Lower Heidelberg Township and Wernersville Borough should review the appropriateness of implementing either an individual or a joint traffic impact fee program.
- C. Encourage use of mass transit through cooperative efforts with BARTA and area businesses.

- D. Encourage the use of multi-modal facilities at three points along Route 422.
- E. A Route 422 improvement program should be implemented.
 - (1) Work with PennDOT to keep traffic signal timing current.
 - (2) Develop an access management plan with PennDOT and RATS to address potential future access points and access design standards.
 - (3) Plan for a turning lane and signal at Furnace Road.
 - (4) Require developer-financed road improvements.
 - (5) Monitor the need for congestion management system strategies.
 - (6) Monitor the need for a Transportation Development District.
 - (7) Consider the possibility of marginal access roads/service roads.
- F. South Heidelberg should continue efforts to have a grade separated crossing at Krick Lane.
- G. Developments should be connected by vehicular and pedestrian systems where feasible and in accordance with the Circulation Plan.
- H. Review the adequacy of Route 419 from Route 422 to I-78 with Western Berks County Municipalities and PennDOT.
- I. Monitor the need for traffic calming techniques and implement them as necessary.
- J. Implement the “southern bypass” to Route 422 by constructing the necessary road segments and improvements.
- K. Establish a program to implement the proposed intersection and bridge improvements, proposed road improvements, proposed roads, and improvements to areas of concern. Work with PennDOT, Spring Township, RATS, and developers to implement the program. Place improvements on the 12- year road program of PennDOT and the RATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- L. Shoulders along roads should be constructed, widened or improved as necessary. Developers should improve shoulders along their properties.
- M. Monitor opportunities to realign North and South Church Streets in Wernersville.
- N. Cooperate with Spring Township in the planning of road improvements in the Fritztown Road area.

- O. Internalize trips within the municipalities, when appropriate, through zoning practices when in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan.
- P. Encourage cooperative efforts of developers and landowners to manage access, including shared access and internal connections.
- Q. Obtain enhanced infrastructure rights-of-way and corridors for future road, trail, and other improvements, particularly during the planning process and highway occupancy permit process for developments.
- R. Place proposed improvements on the official map of the applicable municipality.
- S. Establish and implement Capital Improvements Programming for roadway and bridge maintenance and, if necessary, replacement.
- T. Undertake a Sidewalk Audit to further determine where missing sidewalks need to be placed and where repairs/replacement of existing facilities need to be made.
- U. Implement the trails/path planning in both townships to ensure greater non-motorized connectivity throughout the region.
- V. Work with the Wilson and Conrad Weiser school districts to ensure adequate and safe pedestrian and bicycle access to all schools in the area.

Two major potential tools in implementing this Plan are capital improvements planning and adoption of an official map, as detailed below. The discussion of the official map is based upon the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

Capital Improvements Planning

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 based on 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, salaries, 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 purchase of land or the construction of a building 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 these 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:

- It helps assure that projects will be based upon the ability to pay and upon a schedule of priorities determined in advance.
- It helps assure 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 sharp changes in the tax structure by the proper scheduling of projects.
- It facilitates the best allocation of community resources.
- It helps to better plan municipal budgeting through economic downturns.

Official Map (excerpts from the MPC)

The governing body of each municipality has the power to make an official map of all or a portion of the municipality which may show elements of the 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 widenings, narrowings, extensions, diminutions, openings or closings.
2. Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds, and open space reservations.
3. Pedestrian ways and easements.
4. Railroad and transit rights-of-way 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 Comprehensive Plan.

The governing body may make surveys and maps to identify the location of property, trafficway 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 surveying is required prior to acquisition of land or easements not at the time of placement upon the Official Map.)

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 of the municipality, 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 governing body 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.

Energy Conservation

This Plan recognizes that energy conservation practices and techniques are important to address as fossil fuels become more depleted and energy costs continue to rise. Locating commercial and certain types of industrial areas near residential development can help minimize the dependency on the automobile, provided sidewalks and infrastructure for pedestrian traffic is available. Wernersville Borough has sidewalks and crosswalks that help pedestrians maneuver through the Borough. Sidewalks allow the school students residing in the Borough to walk home or to visit the local parks. Expansion of the sidewalk system will allow for safer access to community facilities within the region. Another area to address automobile fossil fuel

consumption, in the future, may be to incorporate infrastructure that can accommodate electric powered vehicles.

As energy costs increase, it will become important to address solar, wind, and geothermal energy options. To maintain our neighborhood and regional community character, energy conservation techniques and practices will have to be addressed. Something as simple as permitting laundry to be hung outside on a line to dry can have a large impact on saving energy. The municipalities should review and incorporate energy conservation techniques and practices into municipal regulations in the future, residents may become more aware of the opportunities and different ways to save energy. It is important to keep in mind that energy conservation begins with education and incorporation.

Energy conservation technology is always changing. The changes can include improvements to the technology itself, different installation methods, or different designs. The continuous changes to the technology over time make it more affordable and easier to regulate in a variety of districts. The municipalities should continually review the various options for energy conservation and alternative options to foster ideas on regulating for energy conservation uses. The continual review will also help municipal officials stay current and up-to-date on energy conservation technology. This will mean continually reviewing and updating the regulations to stay current with the technology advances.

GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS

The following is a list of some of the County, state and federal programs for community and economic development. Programs can be modified or eliminated over time, so it is necessary to contact the responsible agency for availability and eligibility information.

- **Berks County**

 - Joint Comprehensive Planning Program**
 - Joint Zoning Ordinance Program**

- **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**

 - Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)** – This program provides financial and technical assistance to aid communities in their community and economic development efforts. Activities include housing rehabilitation, community facilities, infrastructure, public services, economic development and planning. The activities are to benefit areas containing a majority of low to moderate income persons. Administered by Berks County.

 - Communities of Opportunity** – This program is for state-funded grants for community and economic development and the development or rehabilitation of housing.

 - Infrastructure Development Program** – This program provides grants and low interest financing for the construction of public and private infrastructure needed for business to

locate or expand to a specific site. It also provides financing for infrastructure costs to redevelop former industrial sites, including site clearance costs.

Intermunicipal Project Grants Program – This program provides grants for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services.

Industrial Sites Reuse Program (Brownfields) – This program provides grant and low interest loan financing for environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites.

Community Economic Revitalization Program – This program is intended to fund infrastructure improvements, community revitalization, building rehabilitation, and demolition of blighted structures, in order to increase community tax base and promote community stability.

Main Street Program – This program is intended to promote business retention and development and preserve the historic character of a community's downtown. A downtown business organization is created and a Main Street manager is hired. Grants can be received for façade restoration, signage programs and design assistance. The program can then be followed by the development of an Elm Street Program.

Elm Street Program – This program is intended to improve residential areas that are directly adjacent/connected to the Main Street area.

Downtown Pennsylvania Program – This program provides management to organize and implement a Business District Authority. The Authority provides financing for services in Commercial areas.

Home Investment Partnership Program – This program provides financial assistance to municipalities for expanding the housing supply for low income persons.

Small Business First Program – This program provides low interest loans for projects such as site acquisition, building construction, machinery, and working capital for businesses of less than 100 employees.

Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program – This program provides low interest loans for equipment and municipal facilities.

State Planning Assistance Grant Program – This program provides matching funds for comprehensive plans and special studies and plans.

Small Business Incubator Program – This program provides loans and grants for facilities in which a number of new businesses operate under one roof and share services and equipment.

Shared Municipal Services Program – This program provides matching grants for cooperative municipal efforts to increase the efficiency of public services.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**

Urban Forestry Grants – This program provides grants for tree planting projects.

Community Grant Program – This program provides grants for comprehensive recreation and park planning, greenways and master site development planning. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for the rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities and acquisition of land for park and conservation purposes.

The Conservation Corps Program – This program provides funding for labor for community projects such as trail improvements.

Rivers Conservation Grant Program – This program provides grants for river conservation plans and non-acquisition, non-development implementation projects. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for land acquisition and the development of river conservation projects.

Heritage Parks Grant Program – This program promotes public/private partnerships to preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism. Grants are awarded for purposes such as feasibility studies, development of management action plans, specialized studies, and implementation projects and management grants.

SYMMS Recreational Trail Program – This program provides matching funding for the acquisition, development and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails.

Rails to Trails, PA Program – This program provides matching grants for feasibility studies, plans, acquisition and improvement of former railroad lines for recreational trails.

C2P2 – This program provides a matching grant for completing Open Space and Recreation Plans. Where municipalities apply to complete a joint plan there is a higher opportunity for funding. There is also funding for specific projects through this grant program. Under this program smaller grants with lower or no matches are available to municipalities that are less than 5,000 residents for playground projects.

Peer Study – This program helps municipalities to look at joint opportunities for open space and recreation.

- **PA Department of Environmental Protection**

Stream Improvement Program – This program provides design and construction projects to eliminate imminent threats due to flooding and streambank erosion.

- **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**

Local History Grants – These grants support public programs, research and writing, educational and commemorative.

Keystone Historic Preservation Grants – This program provides matching grants to groups that are rehabilitating or restoring historic properties that will be open and accessible to the public.

Historic Preservation Grants – This program supports non-construction activities and cultural resources surveys, National Register nominations, technical and planning assistance, and educational programs.

Certified Local Government Grants – This program provides matching grants and technical assistance to protect and regulate historic districts.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation**

Transportation Enhancements Program

The program provides funding for programs such as provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles; acquisition of scenic easements or historic sites; landscaping or other scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities.

Hometown Streets / Safe Routes to School

The program provides funding for non-motorized improvements for pedestrians and bicycles that promote walking/cycling within the community and between houses and schools.