

Chapter 10

Plan for Resource Conservation and Historic Preservation

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that municipal Comprehensive Plans specifically address the issue of resource preservation, specifically identifying natural, cultural, and historic resources. The natural resources noted by the MPC are wetlands and other aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slope areas, prime agricultural land, floodplains, and “unique natural areas.” The MPC adds that municipalities are not limited by this list, but may provide for the protection of other resources of local importance. This chapter will also identify energy conservation objectives for the planning region.

The results of the citizen survey indicated that both Borough and Township respondents are concerned regarding water supply quality. Township respondents indicated strong interest in farmland/open space preservation.

Historic preservation did not enjoy broad support in either the Borough or the Township respondents, but among those who did indicate some concern, it ranked highly. This suggests that public outreach or education programs may be needed.

Goal: Recognize and respect the assets and limitations of the natural and built environment, protect natural and historic assets, and facilitate their incorporation into the daily lives of the residents.

Historic Resources

The Region’s rich 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.

Chapter 19 of this document discusses the history of the Shippensburg Region, including an inventory of nationally as well as locally important historic sites and resources.

Goal: Recognize historic preservation as a means of retaining and promoting community character.

Objectives

- Respect the history of the Region and identify techniques to preserve historic and architectural resources, incorporating such resources into rehabilitation projects and supporting the HARB in their efforts to maintain and retain the historic district.
- Provide for adaptive re-use and rehabilitation of historic structures where appropriate using standards compatible with the HARB and U.S. Department of Interior historic preservation guidelines.
- Encourage the historic preservation of buildings owned by the municipalities that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, such as Dykeman’s Hatch House.

- Encourage the historic preservation and structural integrity of buildings owned by non-profit and citizen organizations.
- Encourage historic buildings in the Downtown to be maintained and retained for their historic character; examples include the Old Courthouse and buildings listed in the Historic Resources chapter of this Plan.
- Discourage inappropriate development in historic areas, and require impact studies for development near historic resources.
- Amend ordinances to encourage preservation and restoration of historic resources.
- Consider obtaining Certified Local Government Status from the Pennsylvania Bureau of Historic Preservation.
- Support the integrity of the region's Historic District and the not-for-profit citizen groups and boards established to study and enhance these areas.
- Pursue National Historic Register status for important historic resources such as those listed in this Plan.

Actions:

1. Support the activities of individuals and groups, such as the HARB, that identify, document, evaluate, and protect historical resources and increase public awareness of the area's history and historic resources.
2. Support the planning of trails and self-directed walking tours to link historic sites and erect informative markers and exhibits at historic resources.
3. Prepare a definitive survey of the Region's historic resources.
4. Solicit citizen support. The HARB can provide assistance in identifying historic resources and developing an educational outreach for broad-based community support.
5. Implement Historic Overlay Zoning. Individual sites and clusters documented and identified on a Historic Resource Map may be protected from inappropriate development that would destroy the character of the historic neighborhoods. Such zoning will require developers to identify historic resources, the impact of proposals on historic resources, and mitigation measures. Adaptive reuse provisions for historic buildings to discourage removal of historic structures and bonuses for design compatible with existing resources and the appropriate reuse of existing resources would be included.
6. Encourage property owners to restore and/or adaptively re-use historic structures; discourage the removal of historic structures.

Shippensburg Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB)

The HARB reviews all construction, including signs, which are in the Historic District and are visible from any Borough street or way. The HARB then makes recommendations to Borough Council. Borough Council then acts on these recommendations before a building permit is issued.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the special things that make a community unique. A community that takes pride in and respects its traditions is typically a community with a well-defined character. The Shippensburg Region contains a rich, diverse heritage with significant cultural resources which should be embraced and preserved. The Shippensburg Gazebo, the Public Library, as well as the vast cultural resources of the University add to the quality of life in the Region.

Goal: To protect and preserve all community, cultural, and aesthetic elements that identify the Shippensburg region as an enjoyable place to live and work.

Objectives

- Continue to support the use of local cultural resources and events such as the coordination efforts of the Corn Festival, local community centers, and societies which exist to protect, enhance, and market the unique cultural resource which is the historic downtown area and the entire Borough.
- Encourage more cultural activities and celebrations to locate in the Region, utilizing local cultural resources such as the Borough Gazebo for such events. Support community efforts to attract cultural festivals (music, art, collectors, antiques, etc.) to locate in the area.
- Enhance marketing efforts to attract cultural events and festivals by use of the Borough's website, newsletters, and other means for public announcements to disperse information to the community about upcoming events and opportunities.
- Cooperate with Shippensburg University to increase local awareness of the cultural amenities and programs offered by the University.
- Cooperate with the University to encourage utilization of the Performing Arts Center, and the new University Foundation Building and Conference Center.

Action:

1. Identify existing cultural resources and community gathering places and develop a plan to utilize them. The plan should include the potential for new events, facilities, and programs and identify potential financial sponsors.

Natural and Agricultural Resources

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 to look at, 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.

Chapter 18 of this document describes the region's various natural features in detail, including geology, soil types, groundwater, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal: Identify and protect natural resources.

Objectives

- Conserve and connect the region's green infrastructure.
- Build public/private support for preservation of land and water resources.
- Protect areas listed in the 2003 Natural Areas Inventory prepared by the Tri-County Planning Commission.
- Prepare and implement a resource protection and management strategy for the region.
- Protect the supply and quality of surface and groundwater water paying special attention to the protection of aquifers, recharge areas, and natural springs. Special attention should be given to Dykeman's Spring, Middle Spring Creek, Burd Run, their tributaries, floodplains, and wetlands.
- Support efforts of watershed associations and other groups in the Region to protect stream corridors and their watersheds.
- Implement development regulations that require the recharge of the water table as part of the development design process.
- Implement regulatory tools such as buffers to protect environmentally sensitive features such as riparian buffers along creeks and wellhead recharge areas, particularly including Dykeman Spring.
- Manage woodlands within the municipalities; encourage new plantings of trees.
- Establish standards and processes that allow development in accordance with land suitability; preserve and protect environmental resources and quality; preserve unique natural features, and analyze and mitigate impacts of development through best management practices and smart growth techniques; require standards in architecture of new and rehabilitated structures to be consistent with the properties surrounding the development.
- Utilize the resources of Shippensburg University, including the expertise of University personnel, to help preserve the Region's natural, historic, and cultural resources.
- Continue to update and enforce zoning, subdivision and land development, and historic district ordinances to include new goals and objectives that protect the Region's natural resources and new State legislation that supports innovative land use techniques as they it is enacted.
- Protect important natural areas and primary corridor targets identified in the *2000 Cumberland County-wide Greenway Study* and the future *2004 Cumberland County Open Space Preservation Plan*.
- Continue to support the Rails-to-Trails Council in their efforts to maintain the Rail-to-Trails and extend it into the Borough; seek to attract businesses in the Downtown that support the hikers, bikers, and other travelers using this trail.
- Protect scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors described in this Plan.
- Monitor the management of protected lands to encourage their continued protection. Examples of such lands include permanent open spaces in residential neighborhoods, riparian buffers along floodplains and streams, and existing park and recreational facilities.

- Acquire development rights to key natural resources including but not limited to stream corridors, woodlands, historic resources, and open space.
- Promote the preservation of remaining agricultural areas within the Township through conservation zoning and development techniques, effective agricultural zoning, agricultural security areas, purchase and donation of development rights, tax reduction programs, and conservation easements.
- Minimize impacts of non-agricultural uses around the perimeter of agricultural areas.

Actions:

1. Update zoning ordinances where necessary to reflect the Goals and Objectives of this Plan to include:
 - Natural resource protection standards for floodplains, wetlands, wetland margins, steep slopes, watercourses, and water bodies.
 - Steep slope protection.
 - Identification and protection of green infrastructure network.
 - Watershed and wellhead protection.
 - Groundwater and surface water protection.
 - Tree and woodland protection, management, and planting.
 - Floodplain regulations and protection from further encroachment by development.
 - Stream corridor overlay districts to minimize development and impervious surfaces, provide for riparian buffers, encourage use of Best Management Practices for storm water management and agriculture, and encourage stream habitat improvement through wetland restoration and streambank restoration/stabilization

2. Municipal subdivision and land development ordinances should contain the following provisions to protect natural and historic resources:
 - Stormwater management requirements that recognize that it is part of the hydrologic cycle and implement BMP's, with less emphasis on detention and more emphasis on infiltration, reducing pollution, and reducing thermal impacts.
 - Require 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 to assure that such lands will be preserved as open space.
 - Additional data requirements for development plans to include specific lists of environmental, scenic, historic, and cultural resources to be shown on plans.
 - Requirements for environmental assessment studies such as hydrogeologic studies, scenic, historic and cultural resources impact studies, and plans for preservation of environmental, historic, and cultural resources. Such analyses should document the ability of the site to support the proposed use and intensity of use.
 - Guidelines for development in areas of high-yield aquifers, such as requiring recharge areas, establishing limits on impervious cover, and limits on on-site sewage disposal.
 - Provisions for protection of vegetation during site work.

- Requirements for setting aside open space that could be used to protect the stream corridors identified in this plan.
3. The municipalities should identify and preserve the most viable agricultural lands. Lands that should receive priority include:
- land that is protected by existing restrictions and/or easements against development or that is adjacent to such land;
 - land designated for protection by the Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan;
 - soils in capability class I, II, or III, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture; and
 - land currently in agricultural use.

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 for 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 green infrastructure in the Shippensburg region includes the greenway corridors- the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail; the Burd Run Corridor and Wetland Park; Middle Spring Creek Corridor; preserved farmlands and open space; and Dykemans Spring.

Energy Conservation

The Shippensburg 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).