



Goals and Objectives



Goals and Objectives Statements for the Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan

North Towanda Township,

Towanda Borough and

Towanda Township

Based on an analysis of the past and present condition and projected future trends for the region the following goals are established. Objectives are included under each goal as a means to achieve progress toward the goal. The Goals and Objectives Statements serve as a bridge between the previous sections of this document (background information on the Central Bradford Region) and the Comprehensive Plan Components following this section.

Goal #1 – Enhance and maintain the Towanda region’s role as an economic and community center in the Pennsylvania Northern Tier.

The greater Towanda community includes the Borough of Towanda, the Villages of North Towanda, South Towanda, East Towanda, Wysox and the surrounding countryside. It is situated on the banks of the Susquehanna River around the junction of U.S. Routes 6 and 220. The Borough is the county seat of Bradford County and the location of the Towanda Area School District campus and has an historic central business district. The community has outgrown the 1.1 sq. mile land area of the Borough and has extended into the nearby areas of the adjoining townships. Towanda is a major employment center for the region including Dupont, Osram-Sylvania and, the School District, Memorial Hospital and associated medical services, County government and abundant commercial and service uses.

The historical land use pattern of the outlying areas of the Townships includes farms, woodland, and low density residential uses resulting in a highly scenic landscape. Commercial and industrial activity is concentrated around the Borough and open land is abundant. Agriculture and lumbering have historically been the principal economic activities.

Maintaining a healthy local economy is a high community priority. Towanda is indeed very fortunate with its strong industrial base in comparison to many other Pennsylvania communities. There are many public policy objectives to consider in order to maintain the community character while meeting the expectations of residents with regard to the future.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the ongoing cooperation between industry and the government sectors as well as between the individual local government units.
2. Provide utility systems and services in a manner that is responsive to business and community needs.
3. Continue to provide utility services on a regional basis, maintain a compact development pattern centered on the utility network.
4. Encourage the use of the preferential tax assessment for rural landowners, Act 319 – Clean and Green Program.
5. Do not develop excessive land use controls for agriculture and forestry; regulations should be clearly tied to community health, welfare and safety benefits.
6. Carefully consider the location impact of sewer and water utility systems on quality farmland and on other unique lands.
7. Employ nuisance regulations to control problems with noise, uncontrolled burning, lack of maintenance, junk accumulations, and substandard building practices that would degrade the natural environment.
8. Orient land use regulatory techniques toward preservation and conservation of agricultural and open space lands.
9. Consider the use of joint municipal zoning as a means of directing higher density development to areas best suited for such development.
10. Consider the use of cluster development regulations to maximize preservation of farmlands and open space and maximize cost effective use of utility systems.

Goal #2 - Develop and sustain an appropriate level of community facilities and services for the greater Towanda community including roads, sanitary, storm sewer and water systems, medical and health services, education, cultural, recreation, and public safety concerns.

The Townships operate under an elected Board of Supervisors that appoint a Roadmaster who is responsible for maintenance of the roads. Additional personnel are typically required on a seasonal or as needed basis. Towanda Borough employs a manager who supervises a streets department for its road maintenance. Road improvement projects, depending on the magnitude, are accomplished either by the Roadmaster and crew or by the streets department or on a contract basis. The Towanda Municipal Authority operates the only utility systems, providing sewerage collection and treatment and water supply on a regional basis. These systems are also managed by the Borough Manager. Many other community services are provided by other levels of government or by civic or volunteer organizations.

Rural municipalities typically do not have the resources to provide the level of services typical of their urban counterparts. For example the Borough is highly involved in providing recreation facilities and programs. However, there is not much involvement by the Townships in the recreation arena. A municipal police department is another significant example of the level of services provided in the Borough versus the Townships. Every community will have its own unique mix of public, civic and community-supported services. Civic and community organizations, operated by citizen volunteers, are a tremendous asset to a community, providing an essential service with little or no general tax support. Volunteer manpower is the essential ingredient for a successful community organization. The municipality should periodically evaluate its service delivery system, including both the public and volunteer components, to insure that the needs of the municipality are adequately met.

Objectives:

1. Analyze the existing mix of community and municipal services including the need to improve or construct facilities; use capital programming to schedule and prioritize major expenditures.
2. Provide appropriate levels of support and cooperation to volunteer fire, ambulance and other community organizations.
3. Maintain existing municipal facilities to maximize their useful life, thus avoiding premature capital outlays.
4. Maintain a strong on-lot sewage facilities permitting program to avoid future environmental problems.
5. Expand sewer and water services to identified priority areas.

6. Operate existing facilities and services effectively and with cost efficiency in mind.
7. Insure that all new development is provided with up-to-date road and utility facilities provided by the developer to avoid additional financial burdens on the municipality.
8. Investigate and participate in intergovernmental cooperative efforts for joint purchasing and for the delivery of community facilities and services, provided that an economy of scale is realized.
9. Develop and maintain up-to-date standards and environmental controls to minimize future problems and costs for water and sewer, storm water management and erosion control.
10. Insure that water supply sources are adequately protected in insure water quality and that adequate future supply is available.
11. Identify potential sources for additional supply, bring the preferred solution on line.

Goal #3 – Develop programs or solutions to land use issues that the community is facing, including expanded housing types for all income levels, need to upgrade older residential structures, rehabilitation and reuse of commercial districts and floodplain mitigation concerns.

There is a need for greater housing choice in the moderate income price range, especially for senior citizens or others who are interested in less maintenance responsibility in connection with home ownership.

For the Borough 68% of the housing stock was constructed prior to 1940 and only 13% has been constructed since 1960. There are many solid, quality older structures with significant rehabilitation needs. In some cases homes are too large to be viable single family residences. Other opportunities for such structure include commercial or office use or conversion to multi-family units.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the Borough is to re-establish or maintain the economic viability of commercial buildings in the Main Street commercial district. There are vacant store fronts due to the relocation of commercial uses to other commercial districts. Many are lacking uses on upper floor that may have

formerly been apartment units or even multi floor industrial uses. There are significant code issues involved in the reuse of these buildings.

Objectives:

1. An education campaign will be needed to overcome community resistance to townhouses or other housing options needed to diversify the local housing market.
2. Encourage the private sector to perform a market analysis for non subsidized townhouses.
3. Recognize the importance of a positive community image in motivating the private sector to invest in the rehabilitation of older residential structures.
4. Identify suitable locations for housing options, make sure that utilities are available at these sites.
5. Building conversions should be made in strict conformance with building codes and based on sensitivity to the building design.
6. Develop housing rehabilitation programs, make improvement grants available, encourage private rehabilitation.
7. Develop incentive programs, e.g. grants and loans for first time home buyers.
8. Maintain strong code enforcement efforts to insure property maintenance.
9. There is a great need for commercial building rehabilitation, however viable building uses will be required to achieve this.
10. The Borough should consider re-establishing the Main St. program to address downtown issues.

Goal #4 – Investigate and pursue opportunities afforded by Sugar and Towanda Creeks and the Susquehanna River through a re-orientation of the community to these outstanding natural features

The communities that developed along our streams and rivers in the colonial period initially utilized these watercourses as the principal mode of transportation and as fisheries. Over time and with industrialization waterways gradually assumed the role of a place for waste disposal. Rivers lost their natural beauty as

water and wildlife resources due to their pollution. During the last half of the 20th century a great environmental movement has swept our country. After several decades of cleanup we have begun to rediscover the natural features and benefits to be afforded by our waterways. Perhaps this is an opportunity for the community to rethink its historic relationship to the stream, putting it more in the context of the community's front yard much like its historic role from earlier times.

Objectives:

1. Recognize that our streams are a great natural resource with scenic, recreation and environmental benefits that can be utilized and enjoyed provided that we respect the periodic threat from flooding.
2. Maintain a strong floodplain management program to prevent future damage.
3. Undertake flood mitigation projects for frequently flooded properties.
4. Increase beautification of stream or river banks.
5. Develop floodproof access points.
6. Promote greenways and trails along the Susquehanna River and stream corridors.
7. Improve boat launches, e.g. docks, more picnic areas, boat rentals.
8. Promote biking use of trails along the streams, bike rental.
9. Promote river and trail access with signage, including historical river theme.
10. Invest in community kiosks for publicizing events and/or selling space to advertisers.

Goal #5 – Gateways, Community Image and Heritage: Develop attractive community gateways in suitable locations, develop appropriate community heritage themes including opportunities to showcase them.

A community gateway is the front door to the community. It is an important opportunity to make a positive first impression and is an opportunity to show a sense of pride in the community.

Case studies have also shown that communities with strong heritage themes often have greater vitality, including greater economic health and attractiveness as desirable residential areas. The Borough has recognized that it has many

outstanding heritage examples in its building resources and has successfully completed a National Registry Historic District designation. However, there are quite likely additional heritage assets in the community than are represented in its building inventory. The role of the river, river bridges, canal, and railroad as transportation facilities played a key role in the mid 19th century boom era of the Borough. These transportation assets directly lead to a manufacturing tradition that today is manifested in the local Dupont and Osram-Sylvania operations.

Objectives:

1. Tell the story of the evolution of transportation systems and the associated industrial development of Towanda.
2. Identify and develop gateway sites.
3. Work with PennDOT concerning removal of negative image signage.
4. Encourage industries to document and present their heritage to the general public, e.g. on site museums
5. School tours, career night for school students to learn about their community and potential employers.
6. Continue to work on signage in Historic District.
7. Identify threatened structures, identify feasible adaptive reuse solutions.
8. Develop video histories.
9. Add/enhance industrial theme at Bradford County Historical Society Museum
10. Identify industrial sites in our historic district

Goal #6 - Maintain and improve all facets of region's transportation network including roads, rail, air, water, pedestrian and cycling to insure the mobility of people and goods within the municipality and to bring residents of outlying areas to the region for employment, commerce and services.

A community's transportation network is an essential public asset that affords us a high degree of mobility within our local area and provides us with the means to connect to regional highways, to travel outside of our area and for commuters and shoppers to reach our community. US Route 220, a two lane limited access bypass through much of our area and with two local interchanges, is the principal north/south highway. US Route 6, providing for travel in an east/west direction, is the Main Street of our community. An additional feature in the Route 6 corridor is the parallel Merritt Parkway providing greater through traffic capacity and congestion relief for Main Street. State Routes 414 and 187 interconnect with

these roads and provide access to surrounding regional communities. The road network for the three municipalities includes more than 45 miles of roadway maintained by the municipalities that provides direct access to abutting properties. In addition there are nearly 33 miles of roadways maintained by PennDOT.

The available fiscal resources of the municipality are critical to keeping up the roads. The road system is usually the second highest demand on funding after the school system. Land use controls can greatly influence future costs for the roadway system as the location and type of development bears a direct relationship to required maintenance and the need to upgrade roads. The location chosen for future development, especially higher density or commercial and industrial uses, is best served by the existing major highways unless the municipality is prepared to upgrade a road to meet a new demand.

An additional important community asset is the Bradford County Airport located in Towanda Township, principally a General Aviation or business airport facility.

Objectives:

1. Develop a highway classification system for the municipality.
2. Inventory problem intersections, curves, bridges and roadway sections.
3. Use the highway classification system as key factor in the design of the future land use scheme.
4. In order to maintain the adequacy of the existing road network, require new developments to meet standards for off-street parking and loading and driveway design criteria.
5. Set standards for new roads to be dedicated to the municipality so that new fiscal burdens are avoided.
6. Participate in available PennDOT and joint municipal programs that are advantageous to the Townships/Borough.
7. Utilize a capital improvements program to prioritize future equipment purchases and highway improvement projects.
8. Support the implementation of the Airport master Plan to provide the highest possible level of service to the community.
9. Expand trails and bikeways for recreation and fitness benefits.
10. Monitor the programs and routes of the EMTA to insure the adequacy of public transit in the community.
11. Monitor rail services to insure their adequacy.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPONENTS

The components of the Comprehensive Plan have their legal basis in Act 247, The Municipalities Planning Code and include:

- **Future Land Use Plan**
- **Future Transportation Plan**
- **Community Facilities and Services Plan**
- **Housing Plan**
- **Natural and Historic Resources Plan**
- **Plan for Economic Development**
- **Interrelationship of Plan Components**
- **Plan Effect on Adjacent Municipalities**
- **Plan Implementation**