

CENTRAL BRADFORD REGION

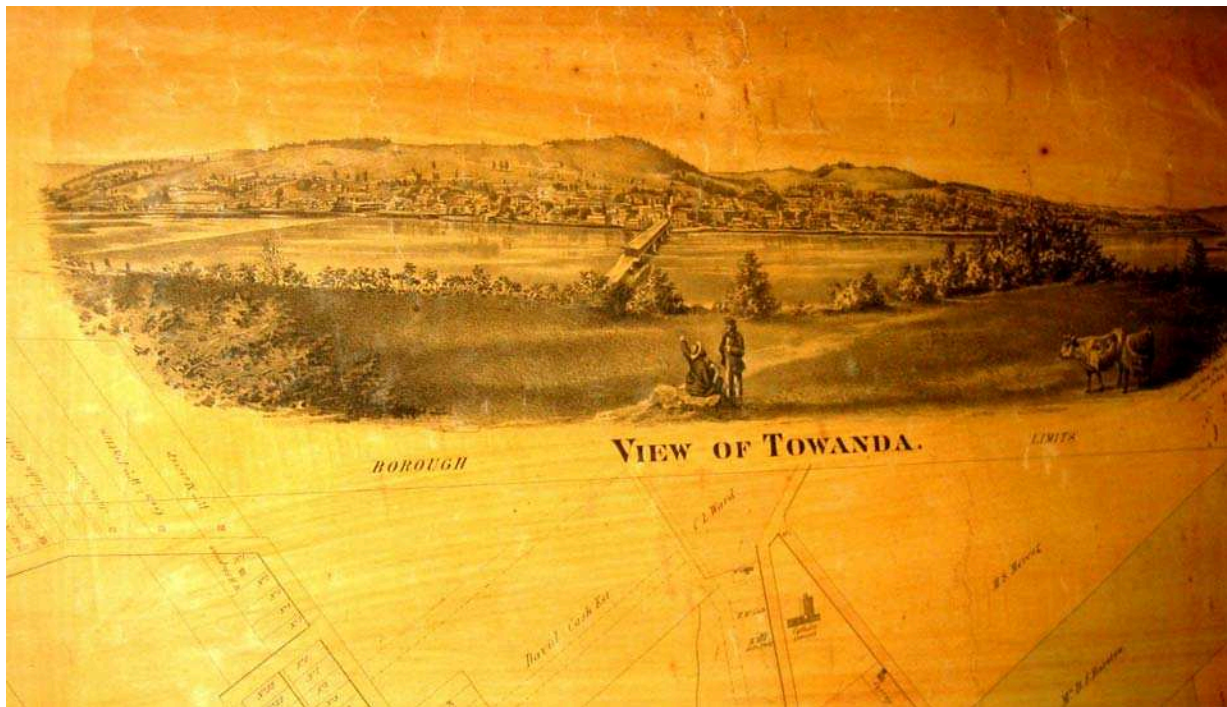
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Prepared By:

**Cummings & Smith, Inc.
8163 U.S. Highway 15
Montgomery, PA 17752**

**In Conjunction with the Bradford County Office of
Community Planning and Grants**

CENTRAL BRADFORD REGION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NORTH TOWANDA TOWNSHIP

Linda Mackie
Charmaine Stempel
Don Brennan

TOWANDA BOROUGH

Mark Christini
Jo Rockwell
Evelyn Sherburne

TOWANDA TOWNSHIP

Lee Sullivan
Floyd VanDeweert
Mike Welliver

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY

Bradford County Office of Community Planning and Grants

Raymond J. Stolinas Jr., AICP, Planning Director
Josh Brown, Community Planner
Amber Mase, Community Planner

Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission

Richard J. Biery, Regional Planning Program Manager

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thomas Fairchild, Towanda Borough Manager
Carl Lafy, Manager, Bradford County Airport
Anthony J. Ventello, Executive Director Central Bradford Progress Authority
Towanda Area School District - For Use of School for Public Meeting
Towanda Township - For Use of Township Building

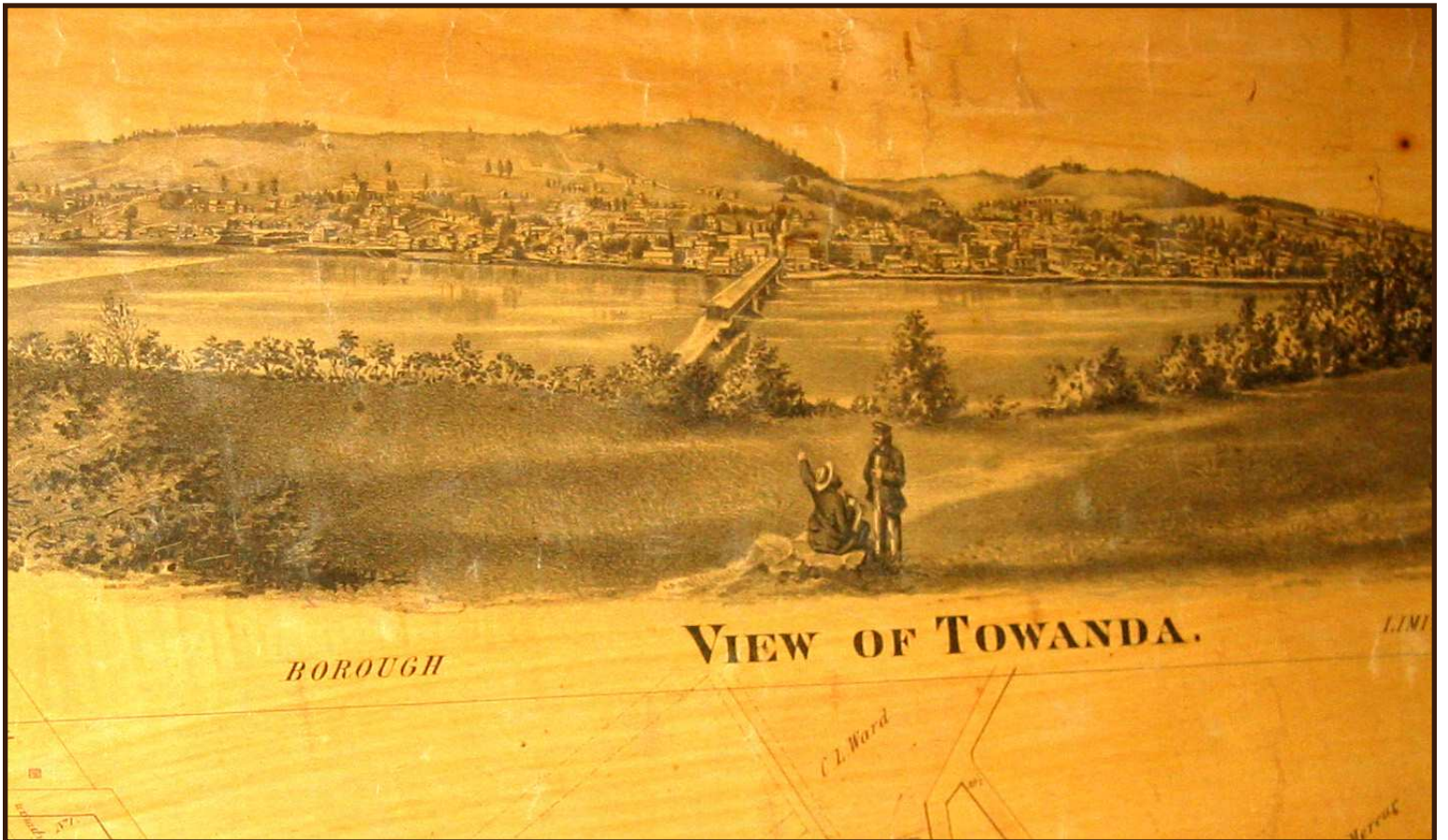
PLANNING CONSULTANT

Douglas W. Hovey, Senior Planner
Cummings & Smith, Inc.
8163 U.S. Highway 15, Montgomery, PA 17752

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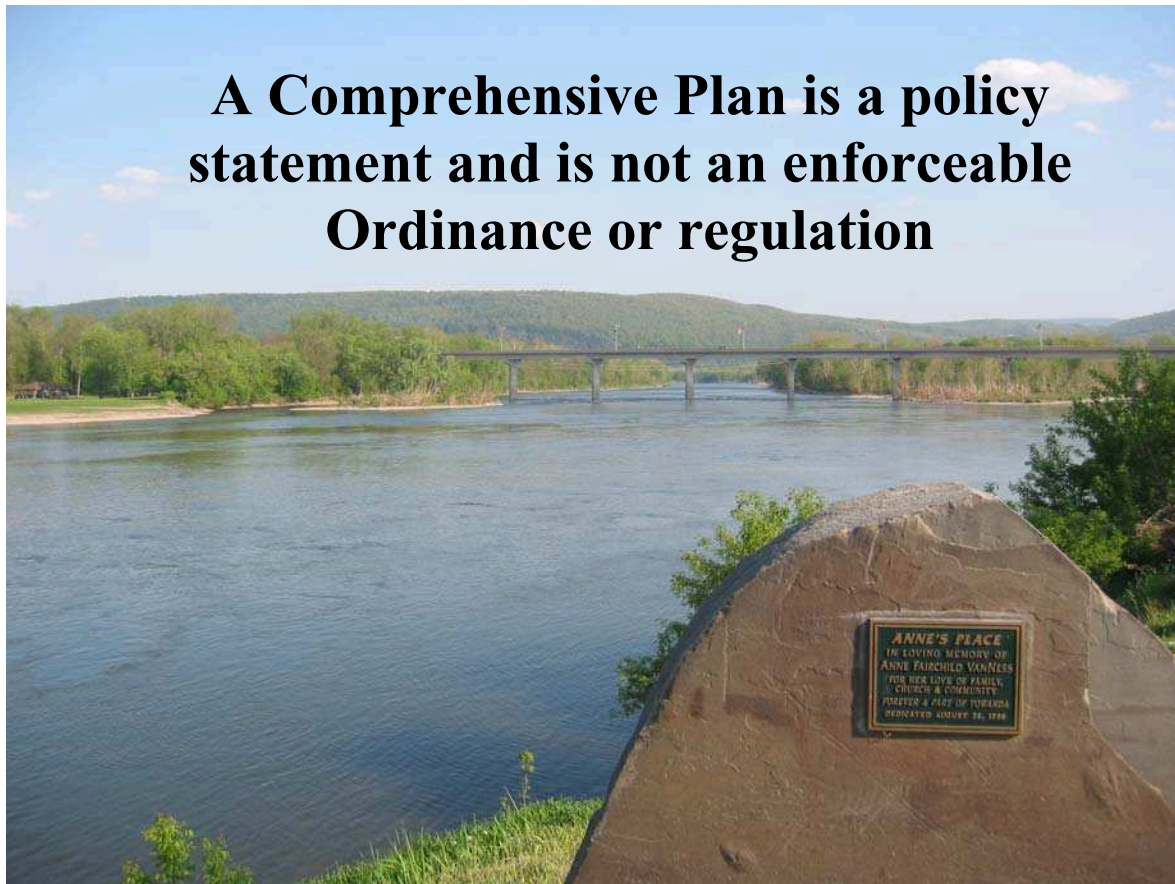
Introduction



Introduction

The Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan – Background

In 2005 the municipalities of North Towanda, Towanda Borough and Towanda Township joined together for the purpose of developing a regional or multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan. The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC), a multi-county resource agency with its offices in downtown Towanda, was a project catalyst and conduit for funding assistance. Comprehensive planning funds were secured from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to supplement local funding. PennDOT has recognized the value of promoting community planning in areas where significant transportation infrastructure investments have been or are programmed to be made. The Central Bradford Region is an excellent candidate for a multi-municipal comprehensive plan due to its important highway and bridge facilities, the Bradford County Airport and its rail facilities. In addition, the proximity of the fully developed Borough to its surrounding townships suggests that an integrated and cooperative approach to community development, land use and utility issues will yield positive benefits to the municipalities and the community at large.



View of Veterans Memorial Bridge from Merrill Parkway Trail

The Comprehensive Plan - What Is It ?

The Comprehensive Plan is a planning document, including text, charts, graphs and maps, adopted by the Municipalities as a policy guideline to decisions regarding the physical development of a region over a 10-20 year period. It is considered as a tool or mechanism through which the municipalities identify their goals and objectives for the future and establishes practical strategies to achieve those goals. It is meant for use by municipal officials, County Planning staff, and other government agencies, authorities, private citizens and the business community. A Plan provides a framework for municipal decisions relating to land use, housing, transportation, community facilities and utilities and other community-related issues.

Comprehensive Municipal Planning is an orderly process or activity through which a municipality attempts to correct present problems or issues, and address its future development. This report will collect, compile and analyze data relevant to the past, present and future of Central Bradford region.

Legal Status of the Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan is a policy statement and is not an enforceable Ordinance or regulation. However, the Municipalities Planning Code does require, after the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan, that a review opportunity be granted to the municipal planning agency by the governing body (Borough Council or Township Supervisors) before it takes action on certain types of activities. In accord with the Municipalities Planning Code, each of the following proposed actions must be reviewed by the municipal planning commission to determine its consistency with the objectives of the municipal comprehensive plan.

1. the location, opening, vacation, extension, widening, narrowing or enlargement of any street, public ground, pierhead or watercourse;
2. the location, erection, demolition, removal or sale of any public structure located within the municipality;
3. the adoption, amendment or repeal of an official map, subdivision and land development ordinance, zoning ordinance or provisions for planned residential development, or capital improvements program; or
4. the construction, extension or abandonment of any water line, sewer line or sewage treatment facility.

Despite this mandated review, the Planning Code provides that an action taken by a municipal governing body cannot be declared invalid “on the basis that such action is inconsistent with, or fails to comply with, the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.” The Planning Code clearly establishes that the Planning Commission’s recommendations, while clearly relevant and important, are intended to be advisory in nature.

Additionally, since the County has adopted a County Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Code requires that any proposed action by the municipal governing body relating to the activities described above must also be submitted to the County Planning Office for review and recommendations prior to execution.

Legal Authority for the Comprehensive Plan

The legal authority for comprehensive planning and for land use ordinances to implement the plan is provided by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 of 1968, as amended). This enabling legislation sets forth an outline of what is typically required in the plan and ordinances and specifies steps involved in their development and adoption. The Planning Code's primary intent, purpose and scope is "to protect and promote safety, health, and morals; to accomplish coordinated development; to provide for the general welfare by guiding and protecting amenity, convenience, future governmental, economic, practical, and social and cultural facilities, development and growth, as well as the improvement of governmental process and functions; to guide uses of land and structure, type and location of streets, public grounds and other facilities; to promote the conservation of energy through the use of planning practices and to promote the effective utilization of renewable energy sources; and to permit municipalities to minimize such problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen."

Plan Content

A Comprehensive Plan is based on guidelines established in the Municipalities Planning Code and includes the following basic elements:

1. A statement of objectives of the region concerning its future development, including, but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development.
2. A plan for land use, which may include provisions for the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use proposed for residence, industry, business agriculture, major traffic and transit facilities, utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation, preservation of prime agricultural lands, flood plains and other areas of special hazards and other similar uses.
3. A plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families expected to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation, rehabilitation, and the accommodation of expected new housing types at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.
4. A plan for the movement of people and goods.

5. A plan for community facilities and utilities, which may include education, recreation, municipal buildings, fire and police stations, libraries, hospitals, water supply and distribution, sewerage and waste treatment, solid waste management, storm drainage, and flood plain management, utility corridor and other similar facilities or uses.
6. A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components, which may include an estimate of the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality.
7. A discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies, which may include implications for capital improvements programming, new or updated development regulations, and identification of public funds potentially available.
8. A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous municipalities.
9. A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources to the extent not preempted by federal or state laws.
10. A plan for the reliable supply of water, considering current and future water resources availability, uses and limitations.

In addition, a Comprehensive Plan may include:

11. The identification of areas where growth and development will occur so that a full range of public infrastructure services can be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate growth.
12. A plan element to promote energy conservation and the effective utilization of renewable energy sources.

In preparing the Comprehensive Plan, the planning agency shall make careful surveys, studies and analyses of various physical features and cultural resources of the municipalities.

Once adopted, a municipality uses its Plan to accomplish the recommendations included therein. The document should not be considered as final or unchangeable. Conditions and circumstances do change and evolve over time, and the municipality should review the document every few years to determine its continued relevance and if it requires revision or updating to reflect unforeseen factors or circumstances.

The Approach to a Comprehensive Plan

The initial step in undertaking the Comprehensive Plan is to objectively analyze the municipality from a number of perspectives. A thorough review of existing conditions, facilities, services and

features is utilized. Concerns, issues and problems must be identified and catalysts for and limitations to development determined. Fragile and special resource or environmentally sensitive areas must be located, including steep slopes, floodplains, wetland, and prime farmlands. These features must be mapped so they can be considered during the development of the municipality's land use policies and implementing regulations.

Growth issues must be identified and addressed and a response incorporated into the plan's land use component. The land use objectives must consider the community's environmental limits to development, as well as public opinion toward future growth.

The second step involves development of a set of goals and objectives, and recommendations intended to achieve the desired results. Ultimately, the recommendations need to be molded into implementation strategies which will set forth a schedule for both short and long term achievement of the identified goals.

Citizen input and participation are critical elements of the comprehensive plan. Good planning involves citizens, not just the planners and the elected officials, and attempts to establish a consensus of opinions. The Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan will employ public outreach meetings to gain citizen involvement in the Comprehensive Plan. A record of these meetings will be included in an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan document.

CENTRAL BRADFORD REGION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

NORTH TOWANDA TOWNSHIP, TOWANDA BOROUGH and TOWANDA TOWNSHIP

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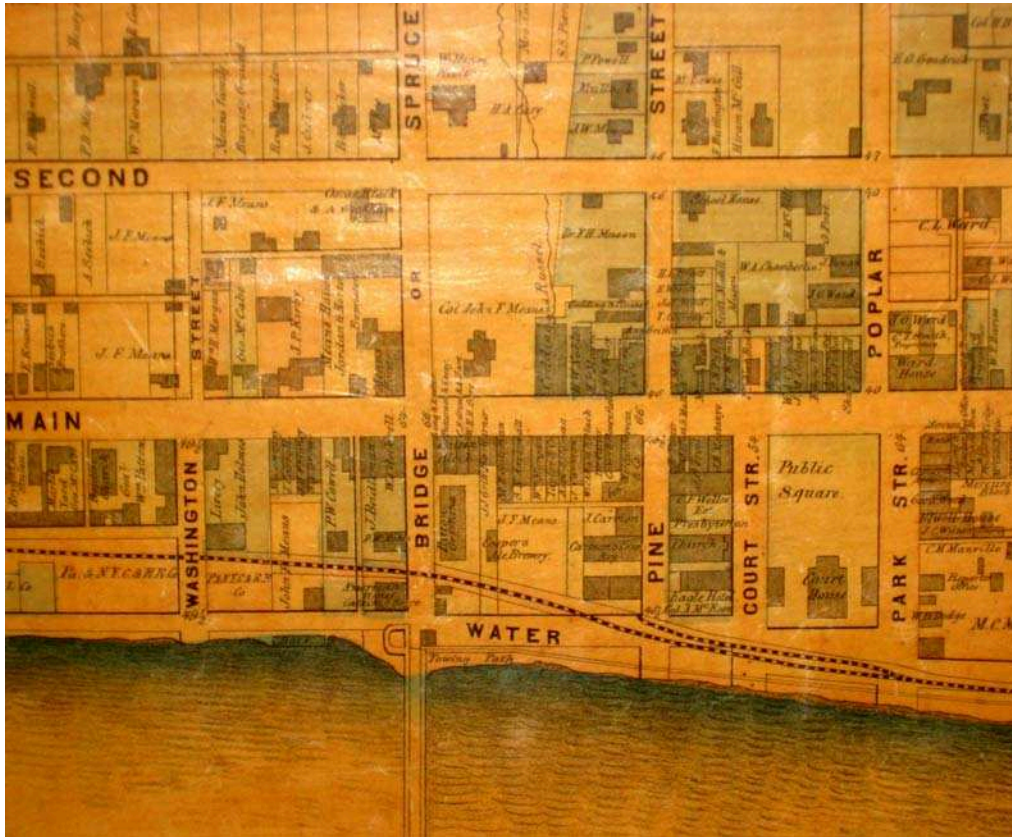
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