

# 1 PLAN PURPOSE AND PREPARATION



## THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Regional Comprehensive Plan is a 10-year policy guide for the continuing development of five municipalities of the Cornwall-Lebanon (Cedar Crest) School District – Cornwall Borough and North Cornwall, North Lebanon, South Lebanon and West Cornwall Townships. The Plan establishes policies for community and economic growth and improvement; a foundation for land use and development regulations; and a framework for investment decisions regarding transportation, housing, municipal services, utilities, and natural and historic resource conservation. Its purpose in considering these topics *simultaneously* is to ensure that municipal decisions and investments are coordinated and complementary to the land use plan and one another. Its purpose in planning for five municipalities *regionally* is to identify opportunities for intergovernmental approaches to become more consistent, more efficient and more cost effective.

The municipalities of the Cornwall-Lebanon Region recognize that they share many resources, systems and markets, and have many needs in common. In advance of the plan's preparation, municipal representatives identified seven common community development issues:

1. the impacts of extensive approved, proposed and anticipated development potential
2. zoning capacity
3. need for expanded business and employment opportunities
4. need for transportation system improvements
5. interest in cooperative municipal services
6. stormwater management compliance, and
7. opportunities for external funding.

As the planning effort sought community input through public meetings, residents expressed two additional issues that should be addressed in the plan:

8. the protection of natural and sensitive environmental resources from the direct and indirect impacts of development, and
9. the preservation of the unique qualities and characteristics of rural villages and towns and significant sites from the direct and indirect impacts of development.

As willing partners, these municipalities agreed to prepare a regional comprehensive plan to characterize these issues and identify ways to cooperatively address common problems and maximize opportunities.

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## AUTHORITY FOR MUNICIPAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLANNING

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended, authorizes municipalities to plan for their future using a variety of planning tools. These tools include the municipal planning commission, the comprehensive plan, the official map, the subdivision and land development ordinance, the capital improvement program, the zoning ordinance, and the zoning hearing board. The MPC authorizes municipalities to plan in cooperation with one another through intergovernmental agreements.

Article III of the MPC requires that a municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan consider the many factors that influence a community's development. Comprehensive plans are to evaluate the existing conditions of land use, transportation system, housing, community facilities and services, and natural and cultural resources—primarily within the study area, but also in the context of surrounding areas. From this evaluation, the Comprehensive Plan projects future community and economic growth trends and recommends a future land use plan, transportation and infrastructure investments, and community service improvements to accommodate expected growth while protecting the community's resources and character. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan includes short and long range strategies to implement or carry out the plan and a process for reviewing and renewing the plan in the future.

### MUNICIPAL PLANNING TOOLS

1. Planning Agencies
2. Comprehensive Plan
3. Official Map
4. Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
5. Capital Improvement Program
6. Zoning Ordinance
7. Zoning Hearing Board

As a policy document, the Comprehensive Plan does not add, change or remove municipal regulations, procedures or standards. It may recommend that such items be revised to guide the development of a more cohesive and sustainable community. But it is only through the actions taken to implement the plan—not the plan itself—that the community or region's quality of life will be sustained.

## THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ITS PREPARATION CAN...

- Form consensus on goals for the Cornwall-Lebanon region for the next 10 years.
- Engage local officials and community residents in a planning process to identify quality of life issues in their planning area and surrounding region.
- Address growth and development trends and issues in the region with best practices and innovative solutions.
- Provide a realistic projection of future land use scenarios based on current patterns and propose strategies for a more desirable and sustainable future.
- Establish consistency between future land use policies, land use regulations (zoning), infrastructure investments, and conservation policies.
- Assist state, county, and municipal officials in their decision-making process by establishing regional needs and priorities.
- Outline feasible areas for cooperation among all or multiple municipalities.

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## THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CANNOT...

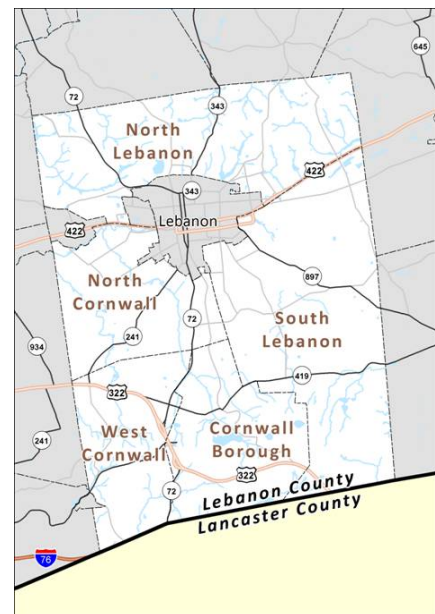
- Change land use regulation. Land use is regulated by zoning ordinances and maps.
- Require new standards for development and construction. Subdivision and land development ordinances regulate these topics.
- Determine what land will be developed. This is a property owner's decision.
- Determine what land will be owned by the public sector or by private owners. Such determination requires action by a public or private entity.

## THE BENEFITS OF THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As stated above, the Regional Comprehensive Plan addresses common issues and opportunities with shared or coordinated approaches that are consistent, efficient, and cost effective. The Regional Comprehensive Plan in itself represented a cost effective approach to updating or establishing municipal comprehensive plans in all five municipalities of the Region.

A multi-municipal or regional comprehensive plan must meet all requirements of a municipal comprehensive plan stated in Article III of the MPO. Article XI governing intergovernmental cooperation authorizes the following optional designations for comprehensive plans:

- Designate growth areas where:
  - (i) Orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area within the next 20 years is planned for residential and mixed use densities of one unit or more per acre.
  - (ii) Commercial, industrial and institutional uses to provide for the economic and employment needs of the area and to insure that the area has an adequate tax base are planned for.
  - (iii) Services to serve such development are provided or planned for.
- Designate potential future growth areas where future development is planned for densities to accompany the orderly extension and provision of services
- Designate rural resource areas where:
  - (i) Rural resource uses are planned for;
  - (ii) Development, at densities that are compatible with rural resource uses, are or may be permitted.
  - (iii) Infrastructure extensions or improvements are not intended to be publicly financed by municipalities except in villages, unless the participating or affected municipalities agree that such service should be provided to an area for health or safety reasons or to accomplish one or more of the purposes set forth in section 1101.



**FIGURE 1 THE CORNWALL-LEBANON REGION**

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These discretionary provisions, outlined in Article XI, Section 1103, are incorporated in this regional comprehensive plan at its 10 year planning horizon. Once adopted, the Regional Comprehensive Plan will legally enable the municipalities to implement additional planning tools, if desired, as provided by Article VIII-A and Article XI. Additional powers enabled by an adopted regional comprehensive plan are outlined in Chapter 13, Implementation.

## PREVIOUS PLANNING AND COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

The municipalities of the Cornwall-Lebanon region have not previously planned together. Four of the five municipalities each have an adopted comprehensive plan, and each has a municipal zoning ordinance and a subdivision and land development ordinance, as shown in Table 1-1. Though they have not planned together, the municipalities have cooperated in the provision of some community services as noted in Table 1-2.

**Table 1-1 Use and Currency of Municipal Planning Tools**

Municipality	Planning Commission	Comprehensive Plan	Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance	Zoning Ordinance	Zoning Hearing Board
Cornwall	Yes	2000	2002	2001; 2005	Yes
North Cornwall	Yes	1999	2000; 2006	2011	Yes
North Lebanon	Yes	1994	County 1989; 2008	1984; 2011	Yes
South Lebanon	Yes	2000	1990	2004	Yes
West Cornwall	Yes	None	County 1989; 2008	1997; 2005	Yes

Source: Lebanon County Planning Department

## RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL PLANS AND REGULATIONS AND COUNTY PLANS

The Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan gives direction to municipal regulation, and other planning efforts. The Regional Comprehensive Plan makes recommendations to prepare, update, and implement the following municipal plans and regulations:

- Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances
- Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plans
- Recreation Plans

The Regional Comprehensive Plan also recommends that the municipalities actively represent the region and participate in county and regional planning and plan implementation efforts, such as:

- Lebanon County MPO Transportation Improvement and Long-Range Transportation Plans
- Long-term Water Supply Planning by the City of Lebanon Authority
- Long-term Sewerage Disposal Planning in conjunction with the City of Lebanon Authority

In 2007, Lebanon County adopted a new comprehensive plan – a multi-faceted planning effort with funding support from four state agencies to strengthen consistency between county and state policies. The 2007 county plan included the Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization's first long-range transportation plan and the county's first greenways and open space plan, titled *Greenescapes*.

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**Table 1-2 Cooperative Municipal Efforts**

Efforts (ongoing unless otherwise noted)	Cornwall	North Cornwall	North Lebanon	South Lebanon	West Cornwall
1. Police Service	To Mt. Gretna, WCT		To West Lebanon		
2. Mutual Aid-Police & Fire and Fire Police	All				
3. First on site, first to plow roads along borders	All				
4. Joint purchase of a crack sealing machine; shared crew/ machine during spring/fall use; and annual joint materials purchase. 50% grant for machine.			NLT, SLT, Jackson, and Bethel		
5. Monthly managers' meetings; informal gatherings to share information, address common issues and at times consider joint purchasing.	All				
6. Joint purchase of an old ambulance as a converted Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement vehicle. Housed at NLT with 50% support billed to SLT.			NLT, SLT		
7. Borrowed use of specialized equipment, as needed.			NLT, SLT, Jackson		
8. Green waste collection yard (by permit)		NCT, SLT, Cleona			
9. Training and workshops provided in partnership Lebanon County Planning Department and Lebanon County MPO.	All				
10. 2009 Justice Assistance Grant		NCT, NLT, Palmyra Lebanon County, City of Lebanon,			
11. Lebanon County Association of Township Supervisors Annual Conferences, which have been open to elected officials and administrative staff from all local governments in the county since 2009.	All				
12. 2010 BASLE Grant for upgraded police hardware (laptops for the vehicles) and software (records management system) among other items.		NCT, NLT, City of Lebanon, Millcreek			
13. 2010 Intergovernmental Agreement for the Regional Comprehensive Plan.	All plus Cornwall-Lebanon School District				
14. 2011 PENNVEST H <sub>2</sub> O grant to provide public sewer to 75 homes in the Rockwood.			NLT, Swatara		
15. 2011 Lebanon County Clean Water Alliance.		All			

Source: Municipalities

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The county plan analyzed six planning regions within the county in addition to its countywide analysis. Each of the planning regions was based on a school district, an existing sub-county region with which many residents identify. The Cornwall-Lebanon School District was one of these regions.<sup>1</sup> The county plan followed this analysis with a recommendation to update, and, where absent, to establish, municipal comprehensive plans on a multi-municipal basis – an approach that had strong state policy and funding support.

The Lebanon County Planning Department encourages municipalities to use the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan as:

1. A guide for establishing or strengthening community development policies consistent with the county plan.
2. A benchmark for existing conditions (circa 2000-2005) as documented in Appendix I.
3. Guidance for land use and recreation planning practices as documented in Appendix II.
4. A Source of model ordinances as documented in Appendix III.

Other studies relevant to the Cornwall-Lebanon region include:

- Lebanon County Natural Areas Inventory, 2002
- The Modified Corridor Management Plan for the Route 419 Cornwall-Lebanon Scenic Byway, 2011
- Cocalico Creek and Tulpehocken Creek Stormwater Management Plans, 2001
- Swatara Creek Rivers Conservation Plan, 2000

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN PREPARATION

The preparation of the Cornwall-Lebanon Regional Comprehensive Plan blended professional planning expertise with the local knowledge and values of citizens and local officials.

## SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL PREPARATION

The technical preparation of the plan was conducted in two phases. The first phase developed a detailed understanding of the issues and opportunities facing the Cornwall-Lebanon Region through an inventory and analysis of available data and anecdotal information. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau, municipal and county records, and other plans and studies were referenced to present and analyze trends and issues in the Region. Spatial data from state and county sources was used to illustrate these conditions through various inventory maps using geographic information systems (GIS) technology.

The second phase framed the community development goals and objectives for guiding growth through land use policies and the placement of physical infrastructure in support of the existing community and planned future growth, and for enhancing the local quality of life through community services. This phase also developed a series of recommendations to advance the Region toward its shared values, while allowing each municipality to retain its autonomy. Particular emphasis was given to anticipated land use changes; transportation improvements; the need for effective community services, including recreation; and the protection of natural and cultural resource that define the character of the Region and its communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Mt. Gretna was invited to participate and declined to participate in the Regional Comprehensive Plan.



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## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public participation process included a variety of techniques to obtain specific input, foster local ownership, and build support for plan approval and implementation throughout the region. The following techniques were used:

1. A Steering Committee comprised of an elected official, a planning commission member and another representative of each municipality met throughout the planning process to oversee development of the plan and provide regular local input on issue analysis, alternative approaches, and recommendations.

2. Key person interviews were conducted with:

- Cedar Crest School District
- City of Lebanon
- Developers active in the Region
- Farmers active in the Region
- Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority
- Lebanon County Planning Department
- Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO MPO)
- Lebanon County Conservation District
- Lebanon Valley Bicycle Coalition
- Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Lebanon Valley Conservancy
- Lebanon Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Lebanon Valley Rails-to-Trails
- Municipal Police Chiefs
- Municipal Recreation Boards and Committees
- Volunteer Fire Departments



**INTERVIEW WITH MEMBERS OF THE  
LEBANON VALLEY BICYCLE COALITION**

3. A Public Meeting was conducted on June 16, 2011 at the Cedar Crest High School to discuss the issues raised by the Steering Committee and the technical analysis. About 30 people attended the meeting, viewed the presentation, and discussed the following questions. A complete meeting summary for Public Meeting #1 is provided as Appendix B2.

- **What are the essential qualities of this region that should not change?**
  1. Agricultural land sufficient for the agricultural industry.
  2. (Historic) Villages with distinctive development pattern and scale.
  3. Quality of life defined by convenience and reliability of service and infrastructure.
- **What issues and opportunities affect you today? What might affect you in the future?**

Quality of life is still good today but the Region is losing

  1. Its identity by way of development location and character, and
  2. The certainty and predictability of future land use and character in zoning.
- **What do you think the plan should address?**
  1. Development located in serviceable areas and fit or buffered into neighborhoods.
  2. More resident and worker transportation options.
  3. Greater open space protection.
  4. Better water conservation and stormwater management.

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5. Employment and restaurant opportunities.
  6. Keep our quality of life, including best solutions by municipality.
4. A second Public Meeting was held on February 16, 2012 at the South Lebanon Elementary School to present the preliminary goals and recommendations. About 75 people attended the meeting, viewed maps and discussed the plan's content. Citizens asked and commented:
- How the plan relates to the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan.
  - If policies for the protection of forest land, and preservation of the natural and historic qualities of the Mt. Gretna area could be strengthened.
  - If the plan endorses development proposals noted in the plan.
  - If outreach occurred to the landowners who would be affected by the identified rezoning recommendations.
  - If there is interest in establishing a transfer of development rights program.
  - If rural character can be maintained without changing the zoning.
  - If the plan addressed the reliability and resiliency of power supply.
  - If redevelopment of the Bethlehem Steel property as apartment buildings along a future passenger rail line adequately accommodate regional growth pressures.
  - That soils data be used as the foundation for infrastructure service area decisions and development locations.



**MILESTONE MEETING #2 AT THE  
SOUTH LEBANON ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL**

A complete meeting summary for Public Meeting #2 is provided as Appendix B3.

## REVIEW AND ADOPTION

A joint public meeting was conducted by the municipal planning commissions on October 4, 2012 at the South Lebanon Elementary School. The planning commissions of North Cornwall, North Lebanon and West Cornwall Townships approved the draft plan with specified revisions in response to public comments. Cornwall Borough and South Lebanon Township held subsequent planning commission meetings to approve the draft plan with revisions. Meeting summaries are provided as Appendix B4.

The governing bodies of the five municipalities held a joint public hearing to hear public comments on the draft Regional Comprehensive Plan was held on \_\_, 2013. A record of the public hearing is provided as Appendix B5. Resolutions to adopt the Regional Comprehensive Plan were passed as follows:

- Cornwall Borough Council passed resolution \_\_ on \_\_, 2013.
- North Cornwall Township Board of Supervisors passed resolution \_\_ on \_\_, 2013.
- North Lebanon Township Board of Supervisors passed resolution \_\_ on \_\_, 2013.
- South Lebanon Township Board of Supervisors passed resolution \_\_ on \_\_, 2013.
- West Cornwall Township Board of Supervisors passed resolution \_\_ on \_\_, 2013.