

Chapter Three

Coordination and Regional Policies

Introduction

This Chapter provides guidance for the Oxford Region to continue coordinating regional and municipal planning activities by prioritizing the Plan recommendations and actions in each of the following twelve Plan Chapters. To be most effective, these recommendations must be implemented consistently on a regional basis in order to ensure growth is appropriately managed and that natural, historic, scenic, and agricultural resources are preserved for future generations and to maintain the quality of life in the community.

Coordination

Of the hurdles facing any regional planning group, coordinating planning and regulatory efforts is possibly the most challenging. The recommendations in this Plan are primarily aimed at the municipal level; therefore, it is even more important that the Region’s municipalities coordinate their efforts to achieve the desired Regional outcome. The mechanisms discussed throughout this Chapter are just some of the ways to help implement this Plan as well as future planning efforts.

Regional Communication

Communication between member municipalities has been a primary goal of the Oxford Region throughout the development of the Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan. For the most part, this has been accomplished through discussion at monthly meetings and discussion at subsequent municipal meetings. The recommendations that follow outline potential strategies to expand the Regions’ opportunities for communication:

Oxford Region (Planning Committee) Meetings

Municipal Updates. The Region should consider designating the first segment of each meeting as a time to share municipal activities that may impact the Region, either negatively or positively. These updates may be in regard to Zoning or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance revisions, amendments to municipal Comprehensive Plans involving changes in Land Use or Transportation, expansion of water and/or sewer service areas, or simply a community event or fundraiser that may interest other members.

Schedule of Events. The Leadership of the Oxford Region may want to consider developing a regular “Schedule of Events” that would provide members and interested parties with a calendar for regular updates or activities of the Oxford Region. For example, the Region could schedule an update with the Oxford Area School District, the Chester County Economic Development Council, the Chester County Conservation District, the Brandywine

Conservancy and other organizations, on a Semi-annual basis. The schedule should be based on an organization's activity in the Region or influence on Regional activities.

Community Education and Information Sharing

Members of Oxford Region Planning Committee should disseminate the information that is shared at Planning Committee Meetings at their board of supervisors, borough council, or planning commission meetings.

Newsletter and/or Website Updates

The Oxford Region could write an article to submit as part of municipal newsletters and websites. The "Regional Update" could be published either bi-monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually to provide residents, municipal leaders, and other interested parties information as to the Region's activities.

Residents and landowners would benefit from learning about topics including general natural resource topics, as an example, which could be shared through the opportunities for communication discussed above:

- Importance of protecting vegetation along stream banks (riparian buffers),
- Seasonal Agricultural Operations,
- Control of non-native plant species and promotion of native plant species,
- Development of a local land trust,
- Environmental cost of unnecessary tree removal,
- Organic alternatives to chemical fertilizer,
- Importance of stormwater quality and the impacts of harmful runoff downstream,
- Preservation of "dark skies,"
- Requirement for the use of stormwater management best management practices to promote the infiltration of stormwater associated with new development.

Regional Cooperation

Potential Future Work Programs

Throughout the implementation tables there are numerous opportunities identified for potential future projects and work programs. It will be the responsibility of the Planning Committee to determine which of these opportunities should be pursued based on the assigned priority (immediate, short-term, long-term, and/or ongoing), the current needs of the Region, and availability of funding.

Progress Reports

In order to assess how effective each municipality has been in implementing the Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan, the Region's municipalities could provide a progress report on the Actions they have implemented to further the goals of the Plan. These reports should be provided twice a year at Oxford Region meetings by the representative of the Governing body of each municipality.

Plan Goals and Objectives

In order to plan for the future of the Region, a common set of goals and objectives is needed. Policies can then be created which can achieve the identified goals and objectives of the Plan.

For the purposes of this Plan, “goals” and “objectives” are defined as follows:

Goals

Long-term broad vision statements that are not precisely measurable, but provide general direction for preferred future conditions.

Objectives

Shorter-term targets which, when accomplished, aid in achieving the associated goal. Objectives are more specific than goals and are measurable achievements.

Oxford Region Goals and Objectives

There are twelve Plan Chapters included in this plan that address the following topics: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Community Facilities and Services, Transportation, Open Space, Agricultural Resources, Natural Resources, Historic Resources, Scenic Resources, Recreational Resources, and Energy Conservation. The following are the Goals and Objectives developed by the Planning Committee:

Chapter 5: Land Use Goal

Provide for orderly growth and development by identifying regional and local centers for growth; ensuring compatibility between present and future land uses; and establishing a balance between growth, transportation, and the protection of resources that define the Region’s rural character.

Land Use Objectives

- 5-A** Encourage managed growth in and around Nottingham Village (existing rural center), Oxford Borough (urban growth area), and the thoughtful expansion (through infill and redevelopment) of the other Region’s villages where supported by the necessary infrastructure.
- 5-B** Discourage unmanaged development outside of designated growth areas while promoting the continuation of agriculture and the protection of open space and natural resources in designated resource protection areas.
- 5-C** Accommodate a variety of land uses compatible with the existing community and improve the compatibility between all types of existing and future land uses within the Region.
- 5-D** Continue to promote the agricultural industry (and all associated activities) as the top priority for preservation in the Region and use of the land for agrarian practices as part of the Region’s past, present, and future.

- 5-E Direct higher density development away from designated resource protection areas and into designated growth areas consistent with land use patterns of this Plan and where they may be served adequately by necessary facilities and services.
- 5-F Review and, as necessary, amend municipal zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to ensure that the patterns and design of land uses throughout the Region are consistent with the land use goal and objectives of this Plan.
- 5-G Encourage commercial and industrial uses that are appropriate in scale, intensity, and location and consistent with the needs of the Region.
- 5-H Protect farmland, natural resources, and open space areas through the use of appropriate resource protection provisions and proven alternative residential development options including transfer of development rights, cluster development, and effective agricultural zoning.
- 5-I Ensure adequate and safe water supply, sewage disposal, transportation systems, and other infrastructure needs through the coordination of regional plans and municipal ordinances and through coordination and interaction with other regulatory agencies.

Chapter 6: Housing Goal

Encourage a variety of housing options, at densities appropriate for the growth areas of the Region, which address the needs of a diverse and growing population.

Housing Plan Objectives

- 6-A Support the development of a mix of housing types, with increased opportunity for multi-family housing, in proximity to job centers and public transit within designated growth areas.
- 6-B Support the farming community by promoting quality, affordable, and easily accessible housing options for agricultural workers.
- 6-C Coordinate information sharing with the Oxford Area School District to assist them with projecting and planning for the growth of the school age population in the district..
- 6-D Ensure that municipal regulatory documents encourage a sustainable approach to neighborhood design.
- 6-E Support development or redevelopment of a diversity of housing types across the Region, at varying cost levels, to meet the needs of all households.
- 6-F Ensure equal access to housing for all members of the classes protected under the federal Fair Housing Act and other applicable anti-discrimination legislation.

- 6-G Identify concentrations of substandard housing within the Region and promote rehabilitation or redevelopment in those neighborhoods.
- 6-H Support efforts by homeowners and landlords to maintain residential properties to acceptable standards.
- 6-I Support Oxford Borough as a major population center in the Region and target needed resources to existing neighborhoods.
- 6-J Promote new housing development within designated growth areas, and provide a mix of uses wherever feasible.
- 6-K Promote strategies that attempt to reduce or avoid conflicts between new residential development and existing farming operations.

Chapter 7: Economic Development Goal

Recognize the importance of agriculture as an industry, support Oxford Borough as the traditional commercial center of the Region, and encourage targeted commercial and industrial development, redevelopment, and the advancement of a skilled and educated workforce.

Economic Development Plan Objectives

- 7-A Support existing and proposed farming operations, by connecting farmers with technical assistance and funding resources, to sustain agriculture as a viable, long term component of the regional economy.
- 7-B Ensure that land use patterns and regulations do not limit the expansion of agricultural operations or the development or continuation of farm support businesses.
- 7-C Support the revitalization of Oxford Borough, and promote the Borough, through the Oxford Main Street Initiative, as a destination of choice for residents, visitors, and local businesses.
- 7-D Facilitate communication and coordination among businesses, municipalities, economic development entities, and education providers, to create a supportive environment for retention and expansion of industry across all sectors.
- 7-E Support new business development in designated growth areas where adequate infrastructure systems currently exist or are planned for expansion.
- 7-F Promote expansion and increased utilization of the rail freight system to support regional business and industry.
- 7-G Support improvements to roadways and bridges, public transit, and pedestrian circulation systems to improve employment accessibility.

- 7-H Promote local employment and training programs to assist unemployed and underemployed residents in accessing jobs that provide a self-sufficiency wage.
- 7-I Promote the development of workforce housing to provide adequate housing options for workers in the agriculture, manufacturing, service, education, government, and emergency response sectors.
- 7-J Focus non-agricultural economic development efforts within the Commerce, Town Center (Oxford Borough), and Village Center (Nottingham Village) land use areas.
- 7-K Provide for buffers between agriculture or agricultural support uses and new residential or other potentially incompatible development.
- 7-L Encourage the development of walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, within designated growth areas, that will foster establishment and growth of local, neighborhood-oriented businesses.

Chapter 8: Community facilities and Services Goal

Provide and promote the establishment of accessible, efficient, and dependable community facilities and services for the health, safety, welfare, and educational needs of the Region's residents within reasonable municipal fiscal limits.

Community Facilities and Services Plan Objectives

- 8-A Continue to evaluate existing municipal facilities and services to identify current deficiencies and future needs.
- 8-B Promote the development and maintenance of school facilities and programs to ensure high quality educational opportunities.
- 8-C Support the Oxford Public Library in an equitable manner as an important resource center for the Region.
- 8-D Support an emergency services system (fire, police, ambulance) that protects the health and safety of residents by coordinating the efficient allocation of services, initiating preventive measures, and providing a rapid response to all emergencies.
- 8-E Coordinate with emergency service providers and health care institutions to ensure access to vital health care services for all residents of the Oxford Region.
- 8-F Support development and delivery of community education programs that stress the importance of healthy lifestyles on issues such as nutrition, fitness, disease prevention, prenatal care, and management of chronic health conditions.
- 8-G Support continuation and expansion of human services programs and improve service accessibility, especially for disadvantaged populations.
- 8-H Coordinate with countywide, regional, and local entities to assess the housing, health, and support services needs of a growing senior citizen population.

- 8-I Promote outreach to the Latino community to assist in meeting the unique health and human services needs of this population.
- 8-J Coordinate land use and utility planning efforts between the Oxford Region’s municipalities and utility service providers to ensure effective, consistent, and cooperative infrastructure planning throughout the Region and the provision of adequate supplies and facilities for current and future uses.
- 8-K Promote the integration of local and regional planning efforts with those of utility providers and water suppliers in order to provide a safe, sustainable drinking water supply.
- 8-L Promote the integration of local and regional planning efforts (including the preservation of agriculture) and those of utility providers and approved and adopted wastewater facility plans in order to ensure public health and safety and planned growth and redevelopment.
- 8-M Support an effective, environmentally sound, fiscally responsible, and sustainable integrated waste management system.
- 8-N Support the design, construction, maintenance and improvements of stormwater management infrastructure to protect public health and safety, and to provide effective and efficient prevention, or at a minimum, management of stormwater runoff while addressing Chesapeake Bay Strategies.

Chapter 9: Transportation Goal

Plan for a safe, efficient, effective, and diversified transportation system that is compatible with land use strategies and addresses both current and future transportation needs of the Region and adjacent communities, regions, counties, and states.

Transportation Plan Objectives

- 9-A Develop an interconnected roadway, transit, and trail network, which reflects the current and future transportation needs of the Region, promotes efficient transportation movement, and respects the natural and cultural objectives of the community.
- 9-B Coordinate transportation needs and funding on a regional basis to prioritize and promote effective and efficient improvements that maximize transportation objectives and funding opportunities.
- 9-C Maintain and enhance a roadway network that safely and effectively accommodates vehicular traffic while supporting (and where possible, facilitating) other community development objectives.
- 9-D Manage roadway design, speed, volumes, and safety in the Borough and in and around areas with increased pedestrian activity such as schools, parks, villages, and centers.

- 9-E Enhance pedestrian and bicycle opportunities by developing additional facilities in coordination with roadway projects, subdivision and land developments, park improvements, trail developments, and other related improvements to increase alternative modes of transportation, add recreational opportunities, and promote healthy lifestyles.
- 9-F Enhance opportunities for transit through cooperation with local, regional, state, and federal agencies, changes to municipal design features, increases in intermodal connections, and coordination between transportation improvements and land use patterns and densities.

Chapter 10: Open Space Goal

Permanently protect, provide appropriate access, and maintain or restore open space lands through conservation easement and regulation to provide economic, ecological, public health, and quality-of-life benefits.

Open Space Plan Objectives

- 10-A Identify priority parcels with significant cultural or natural resources to permanently protect as open space.
- 10-B Encourage landowners, developers, non-profit groups, and public entities to pursue and fund open space conservation.
- 10-C Investigate options for open space preservation during the development process.
- 10-D Balance the protection of resources on open space with the desire for public access and recreation.
- 10-E Educate residents of the Region on the importance and benefits of open space preservation.
- 10-F Establish a Regional open space network.
- 10-G Ensure that open space protection efforts include planning and funding for the long-term maintenance of the property and, if needed, the restoration of the property.

Chapter 11: Agricultural Resources Goal

Promote environmentally and economically sustainable agriculture and the Region's agrarian character through the protection of the farming industry, conservation of agricultural soils, and the recognition of agriculture as a viable land use.

Agricultural Resources Plan Objectives

- 11-A Encourage the conservation of prime agricultural soils for agricultural purposes.

- 11-B Continue to support farm land preservation efforts by landowners, the municipalities, public agencies, and non-profit organizations.
- 11-C Continue to protect farmland through conservation easements and by the implementation of appropriate land use tools such as alternative development options, eg. conservation development, effective agricultural zoning, and transferable development rights, while recognizing private property rights.
- 11-D Guide non-agricultural development to targeted growth areas and encourage the location of compatible land uses and support facilities adjacent to agricultural areas to reduce the potential for nuisance conflicts with residential development.
- 11-E Encourage economic development in the Region that is appropriate to the continuation of agriculture and will provide a diverse tax base to help reduce the tax burden on farmers.
- 11-F Reduce or eliminate undue regulations that hinder agricultural operations.
- 11-G Recognize the importance of farm labor to agricultural production within the Region.
- 11-H Promote access and mobility practices in transportation planning that encourage the continuation of agriculture in the Region.
- 11-I Promote the continuation of open communication and facilitation among the municipalities in the region, as well as between the municipalities and other entities, to encourage the preservation of agriculture.
- 11-J Allow, and encourage where appropriate, food processing sites within the Region so that farm products do not need to be shipped elsewhere to be processed.
- 11-K Encourage the conservation of energy to reduce operating costs and the exploration of alternative energy sources which may be used to generate additional income.
- 11-L Encourage and sustain the transition of agricultural operations to the next generation of farmers with the support of private and public entities.
- 11-M Support access to and changes in technology when such technology has the effect of improving agricultural production, reducing environmental impacts, and preserving agricultural land.

Chapter 12: Natural Resources Goal

Protect, restore, and maintain natural resource features and landscapes to sustain the Region's economy, maintain watersheds, ecosystems, and public health, and to continue its rural character and quality-of-life.

Natural Resources Plan Objectives

- 12-A Protect and restore stream valleys and regional watersheds and maintain the quantity of groundwater and pursue measures to maintain and, where possible, improve water quality.

- 12-B** Limit the disturbance of land resources such as steep slopes and woodlands to prevent increased runoff and degradation of stream valleys and headwater areas.
- 12-C** Promote innovative stormwater management (best management practices) and wastewater disposal policies that emphasize the recharge of groundwater and water balance.
- 12-D** Preserve and protect areas that provide wildlife habitat and natural diversity including stream valleys, steep slopes, floodplains, woodlands, wetlands, and hedgerows.
- 12-E** Preserve and protect woodland resources to maintain the Region’s rural character, wildlife habitat, and natural diversity.
- 12-F** Support sustainable land use practices within the Region and ensure that proposed development respects the existing site conditions.
- 12-G** Enhance municipal zoning and subdivision ordinances where necessary in the Region to improve their effectiveness in preserving and protecting natural resources and to implement consistent resource protection standards in the Region.
- 12-H** Encourage innovative and creative techniques to effectively address natural resource protection issues to maintain the Region’s agricultural heritage rural character and dark skies.

Chapter 13: Historic Resources Goal

Identify and preserve the historic resources that contribute to the Region’s heritage and protect these features and the surrounding historic landscapes from encroachment of incompatible development.

Historic Resources Plan Objectives

- 13-A** Formulate regulatory and non-regulatory protection strategies for historic resources and their settings
- 13-B** Monitor applicable state and federal regulations and tax laws, public and private funding, easement programs, and other historic resource protection programs
- 13-C** Encourage appropriate maintenance and continued integrity of historic resources
- 13-D** Continue to define, inventory, and map significant historic resources
- 13-E** Work in cooperation with other regional entities in promoting historic resource protection

Chapter 14: Scenic Resources Goal

Identify, protect, and maintain the integrity of scenic resources that provide the rural character and cultural feel of the Region.

Scenic Resources Plan Objectives

- 14-A** Continue to maintain and update the listing of intrusions that visually characterize the Region's rural/agrarian landscape including scenic roads, corridors, vistas, features, and landforms.
- 14-B** Protect and maintain the quality of scenic resources by developing and implementing appropriate land use strategies and regulatory measures.
- 14-C** Protect and maintain the quality of scenic resources by supporting community education efforts and activities.
- 14-D** Continue to maintain and update the listing of resources that may visually impair the Region's rural landscape, including poorly sited or designed residential, commercial, or industrial development; light pollution; inappropriate signage; utility structures or transmission lines; parking facilities; and abandoned or unkempt properties.

Chapter 15: Recreation Goal

Promote the establishment of, and the programming for, a safe, functioning, walkable, and well-maintained network of public parks, recreation corridors, and recreation and pedestrian facilities that maintain and improve the physical health, economy, and rural quality-of-life for residents of the Region.

Recreation Plan Objectives

- 15-A** Establish sufficient publicly-owned and managed park, open space, and water recreation facilities that provide a variety of active or passive recreation opportunities.
- 15-B** Establish a region-wide network of sidewalks, trails, paths, bike routes and buggy lanes, which link recreation destinations with population centers, employment centers, shopping areas, and public schools.
- 15-C** Provide fiscally responsible and well-planned maintenance, security, safety, and liability insurance for public recreational facilities in perpetuity.
- 15-D** Establish adaptable recreation programming to meet the needs of the community, and provide administration and sufficient staffing to implement such programming.
- 15-E** Continue and maintain regional recreation coordination centered on Oxford Borough and its nearby public schools.
- 15-F** Pursue joint public-private recreation initiatives, and support private and institutional entities that provide community recreation opportunities such as community events, organized team sports, and school related play and athletics.

- 15-G** Support and promote the continuation of traditional rural recreation activities such as fishing, hunting, horseback riding, farm shows, and country fairs.
- 15-H** Rigorously pursue public and private grants and funding sources for recreation while continuing to dedicate municipal funding for recreation capital improvements, maintenance, programming, and other necessary costs.
- 15-I** Sponsor community events to help maintain a rural culture and small-town atmosphere that is conducive to building strong relationships, communities, and families.

Chapter 16: Energy Conservation Goal

Minimize energy consumption in the Region and incorporate the use of renewable and reliable energy sources to reduce energy costs and environmental impacts.

Energy Conservation Plan Objectives

- 16-A** Promote the reuse of existing resources including redevelopment and community revitalization, the restoration of brownfields and greyfields, and allowance for new technologies to be utilized in recycling and waste management.
- 16-B** Encourage the development, distribution, and use of alternative fuels and energy sources, with a preference for those energy sources that are renewable, sustainable, and locally-generated.
- 16-C** Encourage upgrades to government facilities, utilities and public infrastructure that will promote energy efficiency and the distribution and use of alternate fuels and energy sources, as they become available.
- 16-D** Promote energy efficiency and the reduction of energy demand and consumption in the use of vehicles, and the design and construction of motorized and non-motorized transportation infrastructure.
- 16-E** Support the development and use of energy efficient technologies, as they become available, in farming, manufacturing, industrial processes and activities and other economic development activities.
- 16-F** Promote the design and construction of subdivision and land development utilizing energy efficient “Green” technologies, as they become available.
- 16-G** Promote efforts to educate residents, government officials and the business community about energy conservation technology and techniques, through public outreach and demonstration projects.