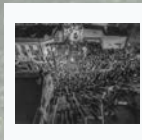# Southern York County Regional Comprehensive Plan

March 2025
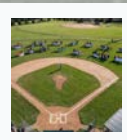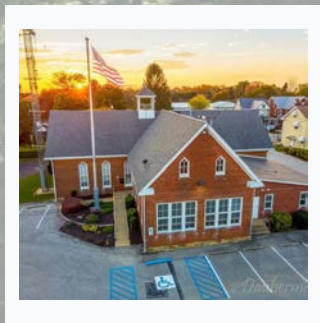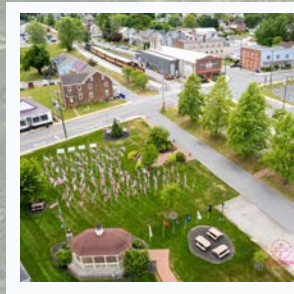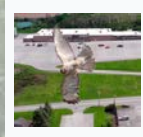
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Mission Statement

The mission of the 2025 Southern York Regional County Comprehensive Plan is to safeguard the agricultural roots and small-town essence of Southern York County while promoting economic growth. The plan strives to offer a variety of housing options, responsive services that adapt to residents' needs, and a transportation network that enhances community well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The Southern York Region, a gateway to greater York County, is a unique area that showcases many of the county's and region's quintessential characteristics, including prime agricultural areas, access to recreational opportunities and environmental resources, and main street charm. This 2024 comprehensive plan is an update to the regional plan adopted in 2010 and now includes the New Freedom Borough.

The 2024 Southern York Regional Comprehensive Plan has the following five (5) primary goals:

Preserve the Region's Community Character

Preserving the Region's Community Character relies heavily on where and at what intensity we allow development. In general, preserving community character relies on preserving and reserving agricultural lands, open spaces, and natural areas and habitats. At the same time, growth and development should be directed to areas with existing access to public water and public sewer services, and increased development densities should be allowed in the boroughs and at the Interstate-83 Interchange.

Engage in Targeted Intergovernmental Cooperation and Regionalization

The adage 'Teamwork makes the dream work!' perfectly applies to the Southern York County Region. With its distinctive geographic character and five local municipal governments delivering services across a 35-square-mile area, the region is ideally positioned for collaborative and regional service provision.

Increase Safety and Access to Transportation

Transportation is vital for connecting communities and driving economic growth. However, many individuals encounter obstacles to safe and accessible transportation. Innovations and policies aimed at enhancing transportation safety and accessibility are essential to ensure that everyone has the chance to travel safely and efficiently. A significant aspect of this initiative is active transportation, which involves walking and bicycling. Unlike motorized transportation, active transportation encourages physical activity and offers numerous health and well-being benefits. Additionally, it helps reduce vehicle miles traveled, improves access to public transportation, and fosters mixed-use neighborhoods where suitable.

Being An Inclusive Community

Creating an inclusive community in Southern York County involves ensuring affordable and diverse housing options, accessible community programs, and robust physical and digital connectivity. Effective communication channels and ADA accessibility in public spaces are also crucial. By focusing on these areas, the region can foster a socially cohesive community where all residents feel included and valued.

Create a Thriving Rural Economy

Creating and maintaining a thriving rural economy requires a multi-faceted approach that focuses on sector development, workforce development, and community connectivity. This involves growing key sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, equipping the workforce with necessary skills, and enhancing community infrastructure and services. By integrating these elements, the region can ensure sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life for its residents.

The benefits of adopting a regional comprehensive plan are manifold. It promotes coordinated growth, leading to more efficient use of resources and better planning for infrastructure and services. It provides a consistent framework for decision-making across the region, helping to resolve conflicts between different municipalities and ensuring that individual decisions align with the broader goals of the area. The plan can identify opportunities for shared services or joint infrastructure projects by considering the region, leading to cost savings and increased efficiency. The plan also helps identify and preserve significant regional natural and cultural resources.

Developing the plan involves extensive public participation, increasing community engagement, and ensuring that the plan reflects the values and priorities of the residents. Furthermore, a comprehensive plan can help attract investment by providing clear guidelines about the region's future development and help identify and capitalize on economic opportunities. Lastly, the plan can help the region prepare for and adapt to climate change, economic shifts, and demographic changes.

The Southern York County Region in Pennsylvania is rich in history and comprises several local governments, including Glen Rock Borough, New Freedom Borough, Railroad Borough, Shrewsbury Borough, and Shrewsbury Township. These municipalities, each with their unique histories, contribute to the rich tapestry of the Southern York Region's past. For instance, Glen Rock Borough was established by William Heathcote in 1837, who was attracted to the area's resemblance to his English homeland and the potential of the South Branch of the Codorus Creek. New Freedom Borough, originally named "Freedom" for the Free family, was officially named "New Freedom" in 1873. Railroad Borough owes its existence and name to the Northern Central Railway, which was built to connect Baltimore, Maryland, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Shrewsbury Borough, part of the large area once known as Shrewsbury Township, was developed by Baltzer Faust in 1797 and was officially named "Shrewsbury" in 1830. Shrewsbury Township, also part of the original Shrewsbury Township, was established in 1742. The four (4) Boroughs were once Shrewsbury Township.

Development of this plan was funded by York County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Dollars and York County Open Space and Land Preservation Program Dollars. It was a joint effort between all five municipalities and championed by the Southern York County Regional Planning Commission, comprised of elected or appointed officials from each municipality. C.S. Davidson, Inc. was hired to facilitate the completion of the plan and met multiple times with the SYCRPC between 2022 and 2024 to develop the plan and its themes. Once the themes were developed, in-depth community outreach was conducted to inform and prioritize the plan's recommendations.

The structure of this plan is such that each of the identified goals above is presented in its chapter and includes a discussion of what was heard from residents and the public, what the data and analysis revealed, what is necessary to be successful, and what the vision of success will look like. The plan is then followed by the appendix, which includes the community profile. The community profile consists of the background data and assessment used to inform this plan's strategies regarding future land use, housing, transportation, community facility, service, and utility needs. This comprehensive plan is designed to be implementable, with clear steps and strategies for achieving the region's goals.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan serves as a blueprint for a region's future, encapsulating its vision, goals, and strategies for sustainable development. It is a strategic document that outlines policies and initiatives aimed at shaping the physical, social, and economic landscape over a defined period. By integrating various aspects of community life, from land use and transportation to housing and environmental conservation, comprehensive plans provide a holistic framework for decision-making and growth management.

Implementable comprehensive plans are essential for regions seeking to navigate the complexities of urbanization, population growth, and environmental challenges. They offer a structured approach to addressing current needs while safeguarding the well-being of future generations. Through thoughtful analysis, community engagement, and collaboration among stakeholders, these plans ensure that development aligns with overarching objectives, such as equity, resilience, and sustainability.

In an era marked by rapid change and uncertainty, the importance of comprehensive planning cannot be overstated. It empowers regions to proactively address emerging issues, capitalize on opportunities, and foster inclusive and vibrant communities. By articulating a shared vision and providing actionable strategies, comprehensive plans serve as invaluable tools for guiding responsible and balanced development, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents and fostering a resilient and thriving region.

Role of Past Plans

The 2010 Southern York County Region Comprehensive Plan is the current comprehensive plan in use by Shrewsbury Township and Shrewsbury, Railroad, and Glen Rock Boroughs. An update is necessary to include New Freedom Borough as well as various changes that have occurred in the past 14 years. As this new plan is adopted by the individual municipalities of the region, it will replace the previously adopted comprehensive plan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Developing the 2024 comprehensive plan update for the Southern York County Region was a thorough and inclusive process to create an implementable plan. The process began with key stakeholder interviews with municipal officials and regional volunteers. These interviews provided valuable insights into each municipality's unique needs and challenges and helped shape the direction of the plan.

In addition to these interviews, public meetings were held with the Southern York County Region Planning Commission. These meetings served as a platform for open dialogue and discussion, allowing a wide range of perspectives to be considered. They also ensured transparency and accountability in the planning process.

It was through these meetings that the plan's five (5) themes or goals were developed, which are:

◦ Preserve the Region's Community Character
◦ Engage in Targeted Intergovernmental Cooperation and Regionalization
◦ Increase Safety and Access to Transportation
◦ Being an Inclusive Community
◦ A Thriving Rural Economy

One of the most significant aspects of the process was deploying a comprehensive 52-question community survey. This survey was designed to capture the views and aspirations of the Southern York County Region residents. The responses to this survey were instrumental in identifying and prioritizing the strategies and action steps identified as part of each of the plan's themes.

The combination of stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and the community survey ensured a robust and inclusive planning process. The result is a comprehensive plan that not only addresses the current needs of the Southern York County Region but also lays a strong foundation for its future growth and development. The 2024 comprehensive plan update is more than just a document; it reflects the collective vision of the Southern York County Region's community. It is a roadmap guiding the region towards a sustainable and prosperous future.

OUTREACH

Stakeholder Meetings

The stakeholder meetings identified the following regional priorities:

◦ Regionalization and Intergovernmental Cooperation
◦ Regionalizing Stormwater Management
◦ Increasing Housing Quantity/Quality and Affordability
◦ Increasing Access to Broadband Internet

The stakeholder meetings identified the following municipal priorities:

New Freedom Borough

◦ To increase diversity and access to recreation and public events.

◦ To incorporate and implement the Peer-to-Peer Recreation Study between the Borough and Shrewsbury Township.

◦ To improve walkability both on and off the Heritage Rail Trail and within the Franklin Street and Main Street corridors and intersections.

◦ To create a business and expansion strategy/plan.

◦ Explore the development of a regional economic development entity.

Glen Rock Borough

◦ To identify potential barriers to economic development and develop LERTA and RETAP Ordinances.

◦ To increase homeownership within the borough.

◦ To encourage the redevelopment and rehabilitation of housing units.

Railroad Borough

◦ To explore solutions to mitigate flooding of low-lying areas along the South Branch of the Codorus Creek and its tributaries.

◦ To explore intergovernmental coordination.

◦ Facilitate and encourage infill redevelopment, i.e. furniture factory.

Shrewsbury Borough

◦ To improve pedestrian safety and walkability.

◦ To facilitate infill redevelopment.

◦ To improve congestion along Forest Avenue and Main Street.

Shrewsbury Township

◦ To determine the status of the Township's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program and any necessary changes to the size of the receiving zoning districts.

◦ To coordinate and collaborate with the region's growing Amish community.

◦ To preserve and redevelop historic Seitzland Village.

◦ To mitigate abandoned and dilapidated buildings.

◦ Loosen zoning regulations to facilitate additional housing development.

Survey

◦ To engage the public in the planning process, the Southern York County Region Planning Commission created and promoted a regional 52-question online and paper survey tool.

◦ The intent of the survey was to educate the public about the new comprehensive plan and its purpose, and gather input regarding the plan's themes.

◦ The survey ran from February to May 2024 and received over 571 responses, or 3.2% of the region's population.

◦ The following results were recorded regarding the survey questions and the plan's themes:

Community Character

◦ 98% to 100% of survey respondents believe that it is "Very Important" to "Somewhat Important" to preserve farmland and open space.

◦ 78% to 100% of respondents feel that "All types of Open Space" should be preserved; however, streams and their surrounding areas were prioritized.

◦ Species and habitat conservation was the number one purpose for open space conservation, followed by improving air quality and enhanced recreation.

◦ 88% to 100% of respondents would support the establishment of easements to preserve and protect agriculture and open spaces.

◦ 79% to 100% of respondents would support local government purchasing land to preserve and protect agriculture and open spaces.

◦ The community's clear priority is to protect wildlife habitats and wetlands (87%), followed by promoting renewable energy (44%) and reducing greenhouse gases (42%).

◦ Over 90% of all respondents felt it "Very Important" to "Somewhat Important" to preserve local historic sites. As a follow-up, 76% to 79% of respondents supported adopting an ordinance restricting the demolition of historic structures.

◦ 95% to 100% of respondents felt it was "Very Important" to "Somewhat Important" to preserve the area's small-town community character.

◦ 70% of survey respondents would be willing to pay between $50 to more than $200 to support preservation activities.

◦ Survey respondents most valued living in a small town because they are community-oriented, walkable, and host local events.

◦ 50% to 67% of respondents would favor zoning regulations that increase access to local amenities.

◦ 25% of respondents favored zoning regulations that would increase housing densities and mixed-use development in County growth areas.

Active Transportation

◦ Most respondents primarily utilize their motor vehicles to commute to work or school; only 2% to 4% can walk to work/school.

   How Often

   ▪ 5% to 10% of the region's population walk, bike, or bus daily.

   ▪ 10% to 20% report a few times a week.

   ▪ 73% to 86% report rarely or never.

◦ The preferred mode of active transportation for most respondents:

   ▪ 14% to 19% cycling

   ▪ 70 to 75% walking

   ▪ 9% to 14% other

◦ 80% of survey respondents reported being close enough to a destination to walk to, while only 60% of residents in Shrewsbury Township reported having a destination to walk to.

◦ In order of priority, what is most likely to encourage you to use active transportation?

   ▪ A destination to walk or bike to

   ▪ Better pedestrian infrastructure

   ▪ Road signage

   ▪ Parks with walking trails

◦ The most limiting barriers to using active transportation are a lack of walking destinations and access to sidewalks and crosswalks. Topography was relatively low on the list of barriers.

◦ 52% to 60% of respondents feel that investments in active transportation are "Very Important" to "Somewhat Important".

◦ The top four active transportation goals:

   ▪ Develop trail networks.

   ▪ Improve pedestrian infrastructure.

   ▪ Develop trails in existing parks.

   ▪ Ensure all new parks have a trail network.

A Thriving Rural Economy

◦ The most critical factors in creating a thriving local economy:

   ▪ More small businesses.

   ▪ More job opportunities.

   ▪ Access to training and education.

◦ Most respondents believe tourism to be a viable economic development strategy.

◦ 22% to 34% of respondents stated that they would support an increase in residential densities near rail trail access points.

◦ 50% to 60% of respondents would support an initiative to increase mixed-used near rail trail access points.

◦ Most respondents (69% to 89%) would like to see more amenities near the rail trail.

◦ 65% to 75% believe they have adequate access to culture and recreation.

◦ 86% to 100% of respondents said they would support an initiative to relax zoning regulations to assist farmers with establishing secondary income streams.

◦ 95% to 96% of respondents feel it is "Very Important" to "Somewhat Important" to have access to locally grown food in their community.

◦ 64% to 86% of respondents would support branding efforts in the region.

Consolidation/Regionalization

◦ 78% to 86% of respondents stated they would favor establishing a regional recreation entity.

◦ 69% to 78% of respondents stated they would favor the SYCRPC significantly exploring consolidation and regionalization.

◦ The top three reasons to justify a consolidation or regionalization are:

  ▪ Better Services

  ▪ Increased Efficiency

  ▪ Lower Taxes

◦ The highest-ranked services to be consolidated or regionalized:

  ▪ Police Protection

  ▪ EMS

  ▪ Recreation

  ▪ Fire Prevention

  ▪ Code Enforcement

  ▪ Road Maintenance

  ▪ Analyses and Studies

◦ The top-rated concerns regarding a potential regionalization or consolidation effort

  ▪ Decreased Level of Service

  ▪ Distribution of resources

Being an Inclusive Community

◦ Most respondents believe they have appropriate access to health services, though it varies throughout the region. The highest access was reported in Shrewsbury Township and lowest in Glen Rock Borough.

◦ 97% - 100% of respondents reported feeling safe in their home and community.

◦ 30% of respondents would support increased access to downsized housing opportunities.

○ 79% - 87% of respondents believe they can age in place in their current home.

○ Most respondents reported that it was "Not Very Important" to "Not At All Important" to have access to public transportation. 21% to 36% of respondents feel that access to public transportation is "very important" to "somewhat important".

○ Most respondents stated that they feel safe walking or biking in their community. In order of most safe:

    1) New Freedom Borough

    2) Glen Rock Borough

    3) Shrewsbury Township

    4) Shrewsbury Borough

    5) Railroad Borough

○ 82% to 90% of residents have access to transportation, though there is a disconnect for about 10% to 18% of the Region's population.

○ 74% to 87% of respondents reported having adequate access to social opportunities.

○ 70% to 83% of respondents believe they are "Very" to "Somewhat" connected.

○ 83% to 93% live in an age-inclusive community, Shrewsbury Borough had the lowest ranking at 83%.

○ 84% to 90% of respondents stated it was important for their community to be age-friendly and inclusive.

○ Respondents ranked the following needed programs:

    ▪ Meal programs

    ▪ Health and Fitness

    ▪ Information Sessions

    ▪ Volunteering and Advocacy

    ▪ Medical Appointment. Transport

    ▪ Storytelling

    ▪ Counseling

    ▪ Job Training

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS & STRATEGIES

Where possible, this regional comprehensive plan relies upon the following best practices for plan implementation.

Place-Based Planning

Place-based planning leads to a variety of community-focused projects, such as creating community hubs that offer multiple services in one location, enhancing public spaces and parks to foster social interaction, and developing affordable housing to ensure safe living options. It also includes improving transportation infrastructure for better connectivity and supporting local businesses through grants and training programs. These initiatives address the unique needs of the community, promoting sustainable development and enhancing residents' quality of life."

Simplify Zoning

Simplifying zoning refers to zoning practices that aim to streamline and simplify zoning code to make it more understandable and easier to navigate. Simplified zoning includes allowing for a range of uses within certain zones to adapt to changing community needs, minimizing the number of zoning districts, organizing the code in a way that is easy to follow, and creating a uniform code across the Region.

Complete Streets

Complete streets is a planning approach that emphasizes the importance of the public right-of-way in community building. The complete streets approach incorporates planning and design, aesthetics, sustainability, and safety into the construction, operation, and maintenance of streets and sidewalks within the public right-of-way. Creating a streetscape that is accessible and safe for all users includes elements such as sidewalks, bike lanes, public transportation stops, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, etc. The goal of complete streets is to create safe, comfortable, and convenient streets for everyone, regardless of their mode of transportation.

However, this doesn't imply that every road needs specific features like bike lanes or wider shoulders; rather, it depends on the regional context, with different environments requiring tailored solutions.

Infrastructure and Public Services

Sufficient water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure are essential to support even slight expansion. Without these, local businesses face limitations on growth, hindering efforts to develop more densely. Understanding the availability and capacity of water and sewer services is crucial, indicating the need for a comprehensive regional study on water and sewer infrastructure to guide future decisions and policy-making.

Official Map Ordinance

An Official Map Ordinance is a legally adopted map that shows the locations of planned public improvements, such as streets, parks, and other public facilities. Official Maps help ensure that necessary public infrastructure is in place to support growth and development, and it provides a clear framework for planning efforts.

Middle Housing

Middle housing is a range of housing types represented by pedestrian-scale residential buildings designed to enhance walkability and connectedness and fall between single-family homes and apartment buildings, such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, and small multifamily buildings. Middle housing types provide diverse and affordable options that fit the scale of existing residential neighborhoods.

Third Places

A third place is a social environment separate from the two primary places where people spend most of their time: home (first place) and work (second place). These third places are essential for fostering Community connections and social interactions; common examples of third places include cafes, parks, libraries, and community centers.

Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements are enhancements made to the physical elements of a street to improve its functionality, safety, and aesthetic appeal. Improvements can include ADA enhancements, sidewalk conditions, landscaping, street furniture, traffic management, building fonts, signage, etc.

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development is a planning strategy that combines various land uses within one location. It seeks to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that minimize the reliance on cars, bolster local tourism, and offer diverse housing choices. This method enhances quality of life by making it convenient for people to live close to daily necessities like services, work, and local stores.

Transportation/ Mobility Hub

Mobility hubs are places of connectivity where different modes of travel converge. These hubs are designed to facilitate easy, safe, and efficient transfers between different modes of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, public transportation, and driving, enhancing overall mobility and accessibility for residents. Typical features of transportation hubs include shelter, real-time information, supportive infrastructure, accessibility, security, etc., to support safer walking and biking, rideshare, microtransit services, and more.

Microtransit

Microtransit is a tech-enabled, shared transportation service that combines elements of traditional fixed-route transit and ride-hailing technology. Microtransit services enhance mobility by offering flexible, on-demand transportation options through smaller vehicles like vans, shuttles, or minibuses. Microtransit offers residents access to essential services, employment, and other destinations to provide more efficient and convenient public transportation options, especially where traditional fixed-route services may not be feasible or effective.

Collaborate

As mentioned in other sections of this plan, many of the region's challenges are most effectively addressed through collaborations involving each other as well as public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Matters such as traffic congestion, stormwater management, affordable housing, trail development, stream restoration, and landscape protection are regional concerns that necessitate regional solutions.

Align Resources

The emphasis lies in preventing redundant efforts and leveraging our time, skills, and resources more effectively. By coordinating regional resources to support the major concepts and policies outlined in our regional and countywide plans, we can significantly enhance our likelihood of achieving success.

ADA Transition Plan

An ADA Transition Plan is a strategic document required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that outlines how a public entity will ensure its facilities, programs, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. It involves a comprehensive assessment to identify physical barriers that limit accessibility in public spaces, such as buildings, sidewalks, and transportation systems. The plan details the methods and strategies for removing these barriers, along with a timeline for implementation. It also specifies the public officials or departments responsible for carrying out the plan and includes procedures for regularly reviewing and updating the plan to ensure ongoing compliance and address new barriers as they arise. The ultimate goal of an ADA Transition Plan is to create an inclusive environment where individuals with disabilities have equal access to all public services and facilities.

PLAN THEMES

The Southern York County Regional Planning Commission developed the following plan themes.
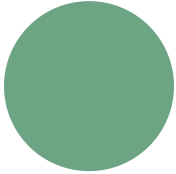
Preserving the Region's Community Character

The Southern York Region is well known for its access to agriculture, meadows, and natural lands in Shrewsbury Township and the small town environs of Glen Rock, New Freedom, Railroad, and Shrewsbury Boroughs.

Growth, development, land preservation, and conservation represent two integral aspects of land use planning. While growth and development focus on expanding infrastructure, housing, and economic opportunities, land preservation and conservation aim to protect natural resources, maintain biodiversity, and ensure sustainable land use. Though seemingly opposite, these two objectives are interconnected and essential for creating a balanced and sustainable community.

How To Achieve Success

✓ Preserve large, contiguous areas of agricultural and natural land.

✓ Direct new development towards growth areas.

✓ Create a mix of uses in the Region's growth areas.

✓ Make borough downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive.

✓ Preserve the community's history.
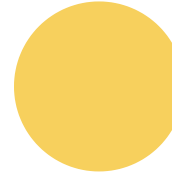
Targeted Intergovernmental Cooperation & Regionalization

The Southern York Region is comprised of five (5) local government jurisdictions over a relatively small geographic area. Such a situation lends itself to multi-municipal collaboration and cooporation.

How To Achieve Success

✓ Improve water quality and work together on stormwater management.

✓ Improve regional coordination of EMS and fire prevention and protection services.

✓ Identify opportunities to further regionalize police protection as they arise.

✓ Simplify zoning across municipal boundaries by utilizing the same zoning districts and regulations throughout the region.

✓ Maintain public infrastructure.

✓ Expand participation in the Southern York Regional Recreation Commission to all of the Region's Municipalities.
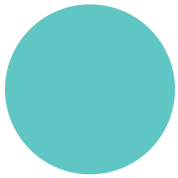
Increasing Safety and Access to Transportation

Transportation is crucial for connecting communities and driving economic growth, but many individuals face obstacles to safe and accessible transportation. Enhancing transportation safety and accessibility through innovations and policies, including active transportation like walking and bicycling, can reduce traffic congestion, lower emissions, and promote a healthier environment. Creating more places to hike, bike, and enjoy nature, along with strategic urban planning, supports economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

How To Achieve Success

- ✓ Make it easier for residents and visitors to get around without a car.

- ✓ Connect housing, jobs, schools, transportation, and other destinations.

- ✓ Make our downtowns into regional hubs.

- ✓ Create more places to hike, bike, play, and enjoy nature.

Being An Inclusive Community

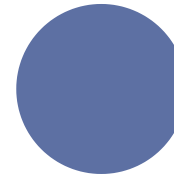Creating an inclusive community in Southern York County involves addressing key areas to foster belonging and equity among all residents. Ensuring affordable housing for a diverse population is crucial, with strategies to improve housing affordability and policies encouraging a mix of housing types. Accessible community programming, ranging from recreational activities to educational workshops, is vital for inclusivity, catering to the needs of various demographic groups. Enhancing both physical and digital connectivity, along with effective communication channels and ensuring ADA accessibility in public spaces, helps build a socially cohesive community where all residents feel included and valued.

How To Achieve Success

- ✓ Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent.

- ✓ Increase access to recreation and social programming for all residents, but especially for seniors.

- ✓ Create well-maintained community connections

- ✓ Provide widespread internet access.

- ✓ Develop and maintain dynamic communication plans.

- ✓ Prioritize ADA Improvements
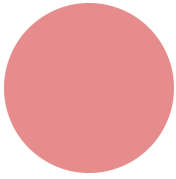
A Thriving Rural Economy

This chapter of the regional plan seeks to bolster the agricultural community and strengthen borough cores through traditional economic development strategies such as increasing workforce development and infill development and redevelopment; and by focusing on increasing Trail Town and agriculture tourism in the Region.

How To Achieve Success?

✓ Intentionally cultivate, retain, and expand priority sectors

✓ Preserve the Farmer as well as the Farm

✓ Grow Trail Town Tourism

✓ Promote entrepreneurship and help local businesses grow.

✓ Maintain, attract, and retain a skilled workforce that earns a competitive wage.

✓ Strengthen the Region's Sense of Community and Connectivity

✓ Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent.

HOW EACH THEME IS ADDRESSED

In this plan, each theme is divided into four parts: What Was Heard, What the Data Revealed, How to Achieve Success, and How To Measure Progress. Each part represents a different stage in the planning process.

Input was gathered regarding residents' hopes and concerns for the region's future. Those observations were then compared to the data analysis to determine whether there were any differences between regional perceptions and the existing condition. From here, policies were created to guide the region.

The Southern York County Region Planning Commission worked alongside local leaders, York County Planning Commission (YCPC) staff, and other community stakeholders to create this plan.

What Was Heard

Local leaders and residents provided input regarding their hopes and concerns for the region's future, which was grouped into comprehensive statements.

What The Data Revealed

Data was gathered from various sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the York County Planning Commission, the 2010 Southern York County Region Comprehensive Plan, and the Realtor's Association of York and Adams County.

How To Achieve Success

Resident observations were compared with the data collected and used to create the policies associated with each theme. Rather than telling the region exactly what to do, these policies set a direction for the region's municipalities to follow.

How To Measure Progress

A series of indicators will be used to determine the effectiveness of implementing the policies identified in this plan. Rather than listing everything that could be helpful, realistic measures of success have been set based on the data that's available.

FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Plan is a strategic guide that outlines how land within the Region should be used and developed in the future. Exhibit A, Future Land Use accompanies this plan component and visually represents the desired development patterns, land uses, and character of different areas.

The Future Land Use Plan is essential because it provides a clear vision for future growth and development, ensuring land is used efficiently and sustainably. Additionally, it aids in planning for infrastructure needs such as roads, utilities, and public services, ensuring they are in place to support future development. The plan also reflects the community's aspirations and goals, guiding decisions that align with the desired character and quality of life. Furthermore, it helps protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas by directing development away from these regions. In essence, a Future Land Use Plan is a crucial tool for managing growth, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing the overall well-being of a community.

The 2024 Southern York County Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use component guides and supports the strategies and activities identified in each of the plan's five (5) focus areas; however, it is most closely aligned with the plan's first theme of Preserving the Region's Community Character.

The goals of the future land use plan are to:

◦ Preserve agriculture, open space, and natural areas.
◦ Conserve and protect community character.
◦ Identify growth areas.
◦ Encourage new development in the Region's established growth areas.
◦ Meet the Region's projected housing demand and fair share of multi-family housing.
◦ Simplify zoning regulations across the Region.

Growth Areas

Growth areas are regions within a community designated for development and expansion. They are identified based on their potential to support new growth through existing infrastructure, strategic location, or other favorable conditions.

The Southern York Region's proposed growth areas or boundaries are based upon existing land uses, prior development, existing and proposed public utilities, current zoning, the existing transportation network, population projections, future housing needs, development constraints, and prime agricultural land.

The 2010 Southern York County Regional Comprehensive Plan established Primary, Secondary, and Future growth areas. This plan proposes designating the 2010 Future Growth Area as a Primary Growth Area. The Secondary Growth Area is not being changed.

New Freedom Borough, Shrewsbury Borough, and the adjoining lands to the south, east, west, and southwest of Shrewsbury Township are designated as a Primary Growth Area. These areas are intended to accommodate a full array of land uses at varying densities, as they have existing access or the ability to access public infrastructure and services necessary for more intensive development.

Glen Rock Borough and adjacent lands to the southwest in Shrewsbury Township are designated as a Secondary Growth Area. This area is intended to provide a mix of land uses that will serve a more localized market, and development will be less intensive than in the Primary Growth Area.

The balance of the Region, outside the Primary and Secondary Growth Areas, is designated as rural. This area focuses on protecting the Region's natural resources, including prime agricultural soil, and development is to be restricted. Also, public water and sewers should not be extended into rural areas unless necessary to address health or safety problems.

Future Land Use

The following briefly describes the distribution of future land uses for each of the Region's five (5) municipalities.

Glen Rock Borough

Suburban residential neighborhoods comprise much of the borough, with older, higher-density land uses radiating out from the intersection of Main Street, Baltimore Street (SR 0616), and Manchester Street (SR 0216).

Residential suburban areas of the borough are intended to accommodate a variety of dwelling types on lots that are generally a third of an acre or greater in size. The intensity and density of land uses increase as one approaches Main Street in the heart of the Borough. Mixed-use neighborhoods surround the area bounded by Main Street, Hanover Street, and Water Street and extend southeast along Baltimore Street (SR 0616). A small area is also designated for mixed-use land uses immediately east of Ronald Street. Mixed-use neighborhoods are intended to accommodate a diverse mix of residential dwelling units and small retail, service, and commercial uses to serve the local population. Mixed-use neighborhoods provide convenient walking access to shopping and the York County Heritage Rail Trail Park. Moving out from the borough's downtown, urban residential neighborhoods extend out along Church Street and New Street and for a distance along both sides of Hanover Street and along the west side of Manchester Street.

New Freedom Borough

Entirely within the Primary Growth Area, a large portion of the borough is comprised of suburban-style neighborhoods in its northern, eastern, and southern portions. These areas are intended to accommodate a variety of dwelling units on lots that are generally a third of an acre or greater in size.

Mixed-use neighborhoods are located within the western central portions of the borough, extending from the borough's western boundary, east to South Charles Street, and Logan Drive north to Revere Drive. These areas are characterized by a mix of residential and commercial uses intended to serve the local population and provide diverse housing types. The borough has two areas designated for Industrial use along Pleasant Avenue and North Constitution Avenue to the north and off East High Street to the south. There are two areas designated as Conservation to preserve natural resources and open space in the very southern portion of the borough and the north immediately surrounding the South Branch to the Codorus Creek.

Railroad Borough

The borough is bisected by the South Branch of the Codorus Creek; as such, the creek and its surrounding areas have been designated as Conservation to limit environmental impacts and preserve natural resources. The borough's outskirts are comprised of lands designated for agricultural purposes and extend from the municipal boundary lines to areas designated for Conservation. Areas surrounding Main Street have been reserved for development within the borough. Main Street is bookended by Rural Residential neighborhoods with Mixed-Use designations along East Main Street and South Main Street. Rural Residential neighborhoods are intended to accommodate various housing types, generally on lots of a half-acre or greater. Areas of the borough designated for mixed-use development are intended to accommodate a diverse mix of residential dwelling units and small retail, service, and commercial uses to serve the local population. Mixed-use areas extend along the east side of Main Street from its intersection with Kirchner Road, north along South Main Street, and then east along both sides of East Main Street.

Shrewsbury Borough

Shrewsbury Borough is located entirely within the Region's Primary Growth Area. The borough has a north/south orientation along Main Street, which runs the entire length of the borough. The density and intensity of land use are greatest immediately surrounding and radiating from the Forrest Avenue and Main Street intersection. Most of the borough comprises suburban-style residential neighborhoods that accommodate various dwelling types. Three areas are designated for Residential Urban land uses intended to accommodate residential development and infill development at higher densities along North Main Street, South Main Street, and West Forrest Avenue as they approach the Main Street/Forrest Avenue Intersection. Five Mixed-Use neighborhoods are designated along Main Street and are intended to accommodate both residential and commercial uses to serve the local population.

·Valley Road and Main Street
·Plank Road and Main Street
·Forrest Avenue and Main Street
·East Forrest Avenue (north-side)
·Main Street between East Tolna Road and Constitution Avenue

Three areas along West Clearview Avenue, Northbrook Lane, and Onion Boulevard are intended for industrial and manufacturing development and provide easy access to utilities and the transportation network.

Shrewsbury Township

Most of the Township's suburban-style development is located east of Shrewsbury Borough and along the Interstate 83 corridor. West of 1-83, Suburban Residential neighborhoods are planned to extend south from behind the Forrest Avenue Commercial area to Windy Hill Road. These neighborhoods will accommodate various dwelling types and provide convenient access to Shrewsbury Elementary School.

Most land east of 1-83 is designated as Industrial and incorporates a large industrial park. In the northern part of the Township, an Industrial area is designated between the Susquehanna Trail and I-83, north of Hain Road, where industrial development had traditionally occurred. Just south of Hain Road, lands are designated Commercial, again accommodating existing development. The Industrial area north of Hain Road and the Commercial Area south of Hain Road are also located within one of the Region's Secondary Growth Areas. Several large-lot residential subdivisions are scattered amid the Township's southern agricultural setting. Two (2) areas of older residential development extend into the agricultural areas adjoining Glen Rock Borough, designated as Rural Residential. The balance of the Township, designated as Agricultural on the Future Land Use Map, is comprised of severe development constraints, as shown in Exhibit 8.5 in the Community Profile (Appendix B), or prime/productive agricultural soils planned for permanent agricultural production.

Agriculture

Agriculture has played a primary role in the Region, and this is still true today. Areas depicted as Agricultural for future use mirror the areas currently zoned for agriculture. The PA Municipality Planning Code permits agricultural activities in every zoning district; however, the future land use map has specifically designated agricultural lands in Shrewsbury Township and Railroad Borough. The township and the borough have sufficient farmland (critical mass) to create land use impacts on adjoining parcels and thus warrant the designation of Agriculture.

In planning for agricultural land, it is the policy of the township and borough to consider farmland as "developed land;" it is being used to produce a product. Farming is a land-intensive manufacturing process that converts raw materials into a product comparable to other industrial operations, with occasional accompanying nuisances of noise, odor, and dust.

The areas designated as agricultural are not to be considered holding areas but rather areas with a positive purpose of utilizing quality natural resources to benefit the entire community. Lands designated for agricultural use should be protected from interference by incompatible uses that break down the area's integrity and interfere with usual and customary farming operations.

Under this Plan, areas for long-term agricultural use include concentrations of prime/productive farmlands with a critical mass to sustain long-term agricultural use and are characterized predominantly by active farming. Shrewsbury Township and Railroad Borough have placed areas planned for long-term agricultural use in an effective agricultural protection zoning district that severely limits nonagricultural development in favor of continuing agriculture.

Owners, occupants, and users of any property within the Agricultural areas should be prepared to accept the impacts associated with normal farming practices.

Shrewsbury Township restricts residential development in its Agricultural District using an area-based sliding scale to avoid conflicts between residential and agricultural uses. The permissible number of dwelling units increases with the size of the parcel, but not in direct linear proportion. Once the residential development rights allocated to a parcel of land in the Agricultural District have been exhausted, no further residential development is permitted. Other principal non-agricultural uses permitted in the township's Agricultural District require special exception approval by the Zoning Hearing Board. Specific regulatory criteria have been established for such uses to assure compatibility and additional conditions can be placed on the use by the Zoning Hearing Board if deemed necessary to protect public health, safety, or welfare. The township also permits various compatible accessory uses, many of which are considered agricultural support uses.

Railroad Borough's agricultural protection zoning restricts residential development to one (1) existing or proposed single-family dwelling, excluding the prime farmstead, regardless of the parcel size. The dwelling can be located on the farm parcel or a subdivided lot; the minimum lot size is one (1) acre. No maximum lot size limitations based on soil types are established. The borough's zoning ordinance was established in 1977 and should likely be updated to reflect changes in case law since that time. Another key element of Shrewsbury Township's farmland preservation strategy is a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program. Through this Program, landowners in the Agricultural District can receive economic benefits from their allocation of development rights while preserving their land for agricultural use. Thus, this Program provides a voluntary means to preserve, conserve, and protect prime/productive agricultural land in the Township.

DRs can be purchased privately and transferred to one of two receiving zoning districts: Rural Residential Receiving and Suburban Residential Receiving.

◦ Rural Residential Receiving - The Rural Residential Receiving District provides low-density residential and institutional development using on-lot water, septic or public water, and/or public sewer. Since this is a development right-receiving district, non-agriculture uses require the use or transfer of DR to develop beyond the DR allocation in the Agriculture Zoning District in 1976.

◦ Suburban Residential Receiving—The Suburban Residential Receiving District provides medium—to higher-density residential development. To make the most efficient use of the land involved, the Township has created base densities by dwelling type. Non-agricultural uses in this zone shall utilize public water and public sewer service.

The Township has approximately 390 development rights remaining in its agricultural areas.

In addition to the TDR program mentioned above, conservation agencies such as the York County Agricultural Preservation Board and the Farm and Natural Lands Trust use conservation easements to provide additional assurances of long-term land preservation.The Region has also been successful in enrolling property owners into the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program.

The Region believes that prime agricultural lands do not represent "logical" areas for growth and development, but rather, that such growth and development should be directed into areas where it will not mandate the loss of prime farmland.

Residential

The Residential Future Land Use Category is intended to maintain existing residential development patterns and work within the bounds of service availability (water/sewer) while encouraging increased access to housing unit diversity.

The acreage needed to accommodate residential growth is directly tied to the population and housing projections in the Community Profile (Appendix B). The Region's projected housing demand is presented in the table to the right.

Additionally, the fair share housing analysis within the Community Profile (page 73) determined that Glen Rock Borough, Railroad Borough, and Shrewsbury Borough are providing their fair share of multi-family housing. According to the analysis, case law suggests that the following reflects a community providing its fair share of multi-family housing:

◦ 15% of the total housing stock is comprised of multi-family units.
◦ 7% of the total land area will permit the development of multi-family units.

**Residential Housing Demand Projections,
Southern York County Region**

	2030	2040	2050	Total
Glen Rock Borough	63	70	74	207
New Freedom Borough	29	167	185	381
Railroad Borough	1	1	1	3
Shrewsbury Borough	64	34	52	150
Shrewsbury Township	136	103	114	353
Region	293	375	426	1,094

Approximately 5.3% of Shrewsbury Township's housing stock and 10% of New Freedom Borough's housing stock is comprised of multi-family units. Additionally, 5.7% of Shrewsbury Township permits multi-family housing development, compared to New Freedom Borough at 86%.

According to the Build-Out Analysis in Appendix C, New Freedom Borough is near total build-out. It can develop up to 64 single-family detached units utilizing cluster development regulations or 8 single-family attached or multi-family units. However, the borough cannot meet its projected housing demand of 251 single-family detached units, 50 single-family attached units, 65 multi-family units, and 15 mobile homes or other types of affordable housing, totaling 381 units, as shown in the Community Profile on page 19 (Appendix B) and the table to the right.

Glen Rock Borough has approximately 21 acres of vacant land that permits the development of housing units. Vacant land is distributed throughout the Borough and could accommodate a maximum of 29 single-family detached units or up to 40 multi-family units. There are approximately 45 acres of farmland, which, depending on zoning, could support the development of between 91 to 152 additional single-family detached units or between 68 and 220 multi-family units. Exhibit A: Future Land Use (Appendix A) currently identifies this area as urban residential, which could support the development of 152 single-family detached units or 220 multi-family units, allowing the Borough to meet its projected future housing demand of 207 units.

Shrewsbury Borough has approximately 18.7 acres of vacant land, which could support the development of up to 30 additional single-family detached units. The borough also has approximately 108 acres of farmland that could be used to develop 165 additional single-family detached units. In total, the borough has the ability to develop an additional 195 single-family detached units, which would meet its projected future housing demand of 150 units. These areas are identified as Suburban Residential on Exhibit A: Future Land Use (Appendix A).

The fair share housing mixes for New Freedom Borough and Shrewsbury Township are shown below:

Residential Housing Demand Projections
2030 to 2050
Fair Share Housing Mix
New Freedom Borough and Shrewsbury Township

	New Freedom Borough	Shrewsbury Township
Single Family Detached - 67%	251	237
Single-Family Attached - 13%	50	47
Multi-Family Units - 15%	65	54
Mobile Homes - 4%	15	15
Total	381	353

Railroad Borough has approximately 16 acres of vacant land that could support the development of 33 single-family detached or two-family units, sufficient to meet the borough's projected housing demand.

Shrewsbury Township will need to provide additional capacity for developing housing units, especially multi-family units, to assist the Region with meeting the projected future housing demand and its fair share of multi-family housing.

According to the Build-Out Analysis, the township can support the development of 125 single-family detached units within the Residential Receiving Area surrounding Glen Rock Borough. Additionally, there is capacity for 324 single-family detached units or 161 single-family detached units and 161 multi-family units in the Suburban Residential Receiving Zone. This is sufficient to provide the Township's projected fair share of future housing needs. However, it is insufficient to cover the housing shortfall in New Freedom Borough.

Meeting the Region's fair share housing need would require that the Township identify approximately 180 acres of agricultural land located between Railroad Borough and Shrewsbury Borough and bounded to the south by Kirchner Road and Constitution Avenue as Rural Residential within the Primary Growth Area. These actions would support the development of 156 single-family units, bringing the total future unit capacity between the Rural Residential Receiving and the Suburban Residential Receiving areas to a minimum of 475 single-family detached units and a maximum of 161 multi-family units, which is likely sufficient to meet the projected housing demand and its fair share of multi-family housing in both Shrewsbury Township and New Freedom Borough (See Appendix C page 16).

The Residential Future Land is comprised of three (3) sub-categories:

Rural Residential

The Rural Residential areas of the Region have limited or no access to public water or sewer services and are characterized by large lot sizes in rural and agricultural settings. Development should be limited to maintaining the surrounding rural character and minimizing environmental impacts. Where access to public water and sewer is available, middle housing types (duplexes, triplexes, etc.) may be permitted by special exception; but water and sewer services should not be extended in any condition.

As in the 2010 comprehensive plan, the Rural Residential designation only reflects existing developed areas and the limited infill opportunities they may still possess, as shown on the Future Land Use Map (Appendix A). These areas are located, for the most part, outside of the established growth boundaries and are not recommended for the extension of sanitary sewer service. There is one exception: approximately 180 acres of farmland in Shrewsbury Township, bounded by Railroad Borough and Shrewsbury Borough, Kirchner Road, and Constitution Avenue in Shrewsbury Township. This area is located within the region's primary growth area and is identified as Rural Residential due to the character of adjoining development. It is intended to receive development rights.

Lot sizes in Rural Residential areas should reflect public water and sewer access. Given the current and foreseeable lack of public utilities in these areas outside the growth boundaries, a minimum lot size of one (1) acre should be applied.

Per Exhibit A, the Region's Rural Residential Areas are located within Shrewsbury Township and Railroad Borough. Within the township, four (4) small, existing subdivisions, located in the southern tier and consisting of single-family detached dwellings, are depicted within this category. In addition, two (2) areas adjacent to Glen Rock Borough are designated as Rural Residential. The first area is situated south of Glen Rock along Pleasant Valley Road and extends southwest along Fissels Church Road.

This area, which encompasses the village of Seitzland and the Southern School District campus, predominantly consists of single-family detached dwellings with a variety of lot sizes. In the second area, which is located north of the Borough and west of Main Street, the primary use is also single-family detached dwellings.

The Region should also rely on critical environmental area tools and regulations to preserve natural and sensitive areas within areas designated as Rural Residential.

In addition to Shrewsbury Township, areas within Railroad Borough are designated as Rural Residential.

The Build-out Analysis (Appendix C) identified approximately 298 acres of available land in areas designated as Rural Residential on the Future Land Use Map, which could reasonably support the development of 292 dwelling units.

Cluster development regulations, discussed in greater detail below, within the Suburban Residential Future Land Use discussion, could be employed in Railroad Borough to further assist with preserving natural areas and open space while meeting the Region's housing demand.

The Rural Residential designation includes areas currently zoned for Rural Residential in Shrewsbury Township and Residential in Railroad Borough.

Suburban Residential

These areas typically have access to either or both public water and sewer and are characterized by suburban residential subdivisions with curvilinear streets and a limited number of cul-de-sacs. Lot sizes vary but generally range from a third of an acre (New Freedom Borough) to just under an acre (Glen Rock Borough).

Each municipality in the Region features neighborhoods with suburban-style residential development. These areas are designed to support a variety of dwelling types while preserving the neighborhood's character. Pedestrian-scale middle housing options, such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, should be allowed where water and sewer services are available, using lot sizes and building types that reflect the surrounding residential area.

A full complement of public utilities and facilities should be provided within Residential Suburban areas. This includes sidewalks, trails and connectivity, parkland, and lighting, where appropriate.

Municipalities in the Region recognize the importance of providing adequate housing for all citizens regardless of income. The Region needs new, higher-density housing to support economic stability and prosperity. Housing is also needed to accommodate new workers and their families and to economize on infrastructure costs while preserving open space and reducing the distance between homes and jobs.

Cluster development is a land-use design option that can assist in meeting these needs within Residential Suburban areas. It enables units to be located closer together on a site to protect some common open space.

New Freedom Borough has successfully used cluster development regulations to guide much of its Suburban Residential growth while preserving open space and natural areas. Implementing cluster development regulations within Shrewsbury Township's land use regulations, i.e., zoning, and subdivision and land development, would help further guide development within the Township's established growth areas.

Permitting the cluster development option by right, subject to specific criteria outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, would encourage its use. Some may prefer permitting the clustering option as either a special exception use (Zoning Hearing Board approval) or a conditional use (Governing Body approval), which requires a public hearing review process and the opportunity to place additional reasonable conditions and safeguards on the development to assure its compatibility from a health, safety and welfare standpoint. In either case, specific criteria would need to be outlined in the Zoning Ordinance to provide for the development/open space desired by each locale.

The Build-out Analysis (Appendix C) identified approximately 581 acres of available land in areas designated as Suburban Residential on the Future Land Use Map, which could reasonably support the development of 638 dwelling units.

Urban Residential

In the past, development in Glen Rock Borough and Shrewsbury Borough has relied heavily upon an "in-town" style of residential development, and preservation of this style is critical to ensuring a vibrant "Main Street" or "Downtown."

These areas are planned to accommodate a full array of dwelling types serviced by public water and sewer. Shrewsbury Borough and Glen Rock Borough have set the minimum residential lot size at 9,000 SF, and as density increases, so does the minimum required lot size.

This has the unintended consequence of creating residential land uses that do not fit within the urban residential neighborhood character. Decreasing minimum lot size requirements for middle housing types in the boroughs will help to encourage the development of more varied housing types while maintaining the character of each borough. An average density of six (6) dwelling units per acre is suggested.

Mixed-Use

Each borough has an existing mixed-use core that has evolved over time. These areas contain a variety of residential dwelling types and neighborhood-oriented commercial uses in a compact development pattern. Often, an array of public and semipublic uses, such as churches, community buildings, fire stations, and post offices, are intermingled. These areas have and do serve as the focal point of their municipality and are proven to be important community resources. The Region's mixed-use neighborhoods are intended to provide daily access to non-residential amenities like retail, restaurants, and services while maintaining pedestrian-scale development and community connectivity. The historic buildings and streetscapes must be maintained and improved if the small-town charm valued by so many is to be retained. This land use category responds to the need to preserve and revitalize these areas.

The Region's mixed-use neighborhoods are intended to provide:

◦ A robust mix of housing types with lot sizes that preserve the area's traditional village character and promote the development of pedestrian-scale middle housing types. An average density of six (6) dwelling units per acre is suggested.

◦ Mixed-use developments, such as pedestrian-oriented commercial on the first floor with residential above or live/work units.

◦ Flexible zoning provisions that accommodate and encourage infill and development.

It is important to note that no other areas in Glen Rock and Railroad Boroughs are designated for commercial uses, nor have they been designated for industrial uses. Lands designated for commercial and industrial use in the other participating municipalities are intended to serve the region.

Should either borough wish to provide an opportunity for some types of more intensive commercial or light industrial uses within the Mixed-Use area, such uses should be deliberately regulated with special exception criteria (design and performance standards, buffering, landscaping) to ensure compatibility within the neighborhood and meet the intent of the Mixed-Use designation.

The size of non-residential uses should be limited to not exceed their pedestrian orientation or encourage the demolition of existing historic structures in favor of expansions or new construction. Wherever possible, adaptive reuse of existing buildings should be encouraged, demolition of historic buildings should be prohibited, and all structural alterations should be scrutinized through the establishment, locally or regionally, of a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) or Historic District Committee.

Design guidelines can help maintain the pedestrian feel of historic neighborhoods by guiding the installation of signs, canopies, and benches and encouraging the development of multi-modal transportation amenities. Also, relaxing off-street parking requirements for pedestrian-oriented uses and those near public parking can help maintain the existing development characteristics.

In conjunction with commercial use and live/work units, second-story apartments should be permitted to offer a greater variety of housing options and efficiently use floor space that is often unusable for commercial purposes.

In conjunction with commercial use and live/work units, second-story apartments should be permitted to offer a greater variety of housing options and efficiently use floor space that is often unusable for commercial purposes.

Zoning requirements should prohibit the placement of off-street parking and/or loading within the front yard in favor of sidewalk "build-to" lines with outdoor cafes and limited site-to-site compatibility.

Zoning Regulations in areas designated for Mixed-Use should be developed using the following goals and objectives in mind:

◦ Use existing historic buildings to retain the "historic" charm of the area.

◦ Develop properties with uses that contribute to the area's economic vitality.

◦ Propose uses sized and designed to serve local residents and businesses, i.e., they maintain a pedestrian scale.

◦ Minimize detrimental effects to existing sensitive natural features and adjoining uses.

◦ Prevent or abate light pollution.

◦ Ensure adequate vehicular and multi-modal circulation, along with appropriate parking requirements.

◦ Wherever practical, use shared amenities with other nearby uses for parking, loading, vehicular access, signage, stormwater management, etc.

Commercial

The economic goals articulated for this Plan emphasize the need for commerce and industry as an important component of future land use and the sustainability of the Region. As previously discussed, commercial uses are provided for, to a limited degree, within the Mixed-Use land use category that applies to each of the boroughs and the township.

The primary goal of Mixed-Use areas is to foster investment and reinvestment in the "downtown" central cores where a mix of land uses presently exists or to provide an area for developing pedestrian-oriented non-residential uses in the Township. Glen Rock and Railroad Boroughs also want to target commerce along the Heritage Rail Trail County Park.

On the other hand, the Commercial category is intended to accommodate more intensive and larger commercial uses than the Mixed-Use category. Highway-oriented development that services not only the Southern Region but also areas outside the Region is appropriate in these areas. Entertainment, lodging, and dining establishments are desirable uses to attract visitors to the region. From a design standpoint, municipalities are against creating new "strip" commercial development.

A Commercial land use category has only been designated within Shrewsbury Borough and Shrewsbury Township. These areas are intended to serve the Region; no Commercial areas are designated within the boroughs of New Freedom, Glen Rock, or Railroad.

All Commercial areas within the Region should support access to multi-modal infrastructure, sustainable and green building construction, and a Complete Streets design approach, where feasible.

Design guidelines can help maintain the pedestrian feel of historic neighborhoods by guiding the installation of signs, canopies, and benches and encouraging the development of multi-modal transportation amenities.

Also, relaxing off-street parking requirements for pedestrian-oriented uses and those near public parking can help maintain the existing development characteristics.

In conjunction with commercial use and live/work units, second-story apartments should be permitted to offer a greater variety of housing options and efficiently use floor space that is often unusable for commercial purposes.

Zoning requirements should prohibit the placement of off-street parking and/or loading within the front yard in favor of sidewalk "build-to" lines with outdoor cafes and limited site-to-site compatibility.

Industrial

Industrial uses have been identified in New Freedom Borough, Shrewsbury Borough, and Shrewsbury Township. These areas are intended to provide industrial and manufacturing land to serve the region's needs. However, industrial uses may be permitted to a very limited degree in the Glen Rock Borough and Railroad Borough Mixed-Use areas. It is also important to reiterate that under the Agricultural area discussion, the Future Land Use Plan acknowledges agriculture as one of the Region's primary industries and protects its continuation.

The Industrial designation is suitable for a wide range of industrial activities that contribute to the well-being of the Region by diversifying its economy and providing valuable employment opportunities. Zoning regulations for industrial uses in these designated areas should allow for small, start-up businesses and light industries as permitted uses. These regulations should also provide design standards that encourage functional yet attractive sites when viewed from adjoining properties and roads. Landscaping provisions are key to site attractiveness, and outdoor lighting controls can prevent or abate light pollution.

Buffering and screening provisions are also important when there are neighboring residential areas. Additionally, municipalities could encourage developers to construct "green" buildings.

Other heavier and potentially more objectionable industries should require a special exception or conditional use approval, necessitating public hearings and input.

Conservation

Regional goals commit to conserving unique, sensitive, or valuable natural resources critical to protecting the environment and public welfare. Areas designated for conservation are located within Railroad Borough and New Freedom Borough along the South Branch to Codorus Creek.

The Region's parks and open spaces are also included in the region's Conservation Future Land Use Designation.

Historic Village Overlay District

Shrewsbury Township has established a Historic Village Overlay District to acknowledge and protect existing historical village areas and provide limited opportunities for additional nonresidential uses in a traditional manner. The HVO District is located in an area of the Township with a documented historical connection as a village still recognized as such, specifically, the Village of Seitzland, located along the York County Heritage Rail Trail outside of Glen Rock Borough. These regulations are designed to encourage and sustain existing rural community values and environments, preserve historic and architectural heritage, and facilitate future development that will strengthen the economy and vitality of the Township.

PRESERVING THE REGION'S COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Preserving the Region's Community Character relies heavily on where and at what intensity development is allowed. Maintaining community character generally depends on preserving and reserving agricultural lands, open spaces, and natural areas and habitats. At the same time, it will direct growth and development to areas with existing access to public water and public sewer services and allow for an increase in development densities in the boroughs and at the Interstate-83 Interchange, at densities appropriate to meet projected housing demands and the Region's walkability and economic development goals.

The first goal of the Southern York County Regional Comprehensive Plan is to preserve large tracts of contiguous land. This involves safeguarding agricultural lands, open spaces, and natural habitats from encroaching development. Maintaining these areas protects the environment and biodiversity, upholding the rural character that defines the community. This preservation effort ensures that future generations can enjoy the natural beauty and resources integral to the region's identity.

Another critical goal is directing new development to the Region's designated growth areas. By focusing development in these areas, efficient use of existing infrastructure, such as public water and sewer services, is maximized, reducing pressure on undeveloped lands. This strategy promotes sustainable growth, minimizes urban sprawl, and helps create livable and economically vibrant, well-planned communities. Concentrating development in growth areas also supports the creation of mixed-use spaces, which combine residential, commercial, and recreational uses to foster dynamic and walkable neighborhoods.

Creating a mix of uses in Growth Areas is essential for building vibrant communities. Mixed-use development encourages various activities and services within proximity, enhancing the quality of life for residents. It supports local businesses, reduces the need for long commutes, and promotes a sense of community. Integrating different land uses creates more cohesive and resilient neighborhoods that meet the population's diverse needs.

A key objective is making downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive while preserving community history. Revitalizing downtown areas involves enhancing public spaces, improving safety, and promoting cultural and historical preservation. These efforts attract visitors and businesses and instill pride among residents. By celebrating heritage and investing in the future, the Region's downtowns can remain the heart of the communities, reflecting both the past and aspirations for the future.

Preserving the region's history is fundamental to maintaining its unique identity and character. This involves protecting historical sites, buildings, and landmarks that tell the story of Southern York County's past. Efforts to preserve history include promoting heritage tourism, supporting local museums and historical societies, and integrating historical preservation into planning and development processes. By valuing and preserving historical assets, the region can ensure its rich cultural legacy is honored and passed down to future generations.

What Was Heard

Preservation and conservation of agricultural and natural lands are critical components to preserving the region's character.

◦ Residents continue to support private property owners' efforts to conserve land through preservation easements with the York County Agriculture Land Preservation Board, the Farm and Natural Lands Trust, and other similar land conservancies.

◦ 98% to 100% of survey respondents believe that it is "Very Important" to "Somewhat Important" to preserve farmland and open space.

◦ 80% to 100% of survey respondents would support using municipal easements and acquisitions to preserve and protect natural areas.

◦ The majority of residents surveyed prioritized the conservation of species habitat and open space.

◦ A majority of those surveyed would support municipal land acquisition to further land conservation and preservation efforts.

New growth should primarily occur within existing growth areas.

◦ Protecting our natural and agricultural land is an important responsibility.

◦ Redeveloping vacant or underutilized properties is preferable to building on undeveloped fields, meadows, and forests.

◦ There is little connectivity between housing and commercial or industrial development. There should be an effort to create more connections between existing developments.

Development outside of established municipal growth areas can be permitted but on a limited basis.

◦ The construction of less compact housing should be limited to certain areas but not completely prohibited.

◦ Housing constructed outside growth areas should be located near existing infrastructure whenever possible.

Compact development projects should be designed to complement the character of the local community.

◦ Builders can help meet this goal by incorporating parks and open spaces and providing more connections to adjacent developments. As a region, individual municipalities should work to simplify zoning requirements and increase their flexibility to facilitate this goal.

◦ More compact development should only be built in areas where existing infrastructure and services can support it.

Historic centers like the Glen Rock Historic District, New Freedom Borough, Railroad Historic District, Shrewsbury Historic District, and Historic Seitzland Village contribute to the region's character.

◦ Repurposing or redeveloping vacant structures is one way to revitalize our boroughs.

◦ Additional housing should be developed in our borough cores. Developing these areas increases the housing supply without impacting existing natural and agricultural land.

What The Data Reveals

Agriculture Security Areas

The number of acres enrolled in Agriculture Security Areas has increased by 24% from 6,898 in 2007 to 8,586 acres in 2023.

Agriculture Easements

The number of acres enrolled in conservation easements with the York County Agriculture Land Preservation Board has increased by 40%, from 2,095 acres in 2010 to 2,906 acres in 2023.

The number of acres permanently preserved by the Farm and Natural Lands Trust increased nearly threefold, from 155 acres in 2010 to 429 acres in 2023.

Slowing Growth in Agricultural Areas

Preservation efforts by private property owners and agricultural preservation zoning regulations have limited the loss of agriculture and rural areas to 5%, from 72% of total land area in 2009 to 67.7% in 2023.

Easements and Acquisition of Sensitive Areas

The Shrewsbury Township Green Action Plan identified the following sensitive environmental areas that would benefit from conservation and preservation activities:

◦ Shaffers Hollow
◦ Seitzland Marsh
◦ Deer Creek Woods

Alignment of Ag Security Areas

Aligning Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) with conservation easements from the Farm & Natural Lands Trust (FNLT) and the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board enhances land preservation efforts by providing multiple layers of protection for agricultural and natural landscapes. This dual approach ensures that land remains dedicated to agriculture and conservation, maintaining large, contiguous tracts of farmland and natural areas. This strategy supports regional goals of preserving community character, promoting sustainable development, and maintaining the rural heritage and ecological benefits of Southern York County for future generations.

How To Achieve Success

Region	Glen Rock Bor.	New Freedom Bor.	Railroad Bor.	Shrews. Bor.	Shrews. Twp.	Policy
✓					✓	Preserve large, contiguous areas of agriculture and natural land.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Direct New Development to the Region's Growth Areas.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Create a mix of uses in regional .
	✓	✓	✓	✓		Make our borough downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Preserve our community's history.

Preserve large, contiguous areas of agricultural and natural land.

◦ Continue to encourage property owners to collaborate with the York County Agriculture and Land Preservation Board and the Farm and Natural Lands Trust to establish preservation easements on critical land assets.

◦ Consider utilizing a Regional Official Map to identify lands that are critical to achieving the Region's land conservation goals.

◦ Encourage partnerships with Land Conservancies to permanently preserve valuable lands.

◦ Coordinate with local environmental organizations to share educational events and volunteer opportunities with residents. Encourage residents to get involved with local organizations.

◦ Create a Regional Official Map Ordinance and identify important natural and agricultural areas in the map and ordinance to further conservation efforts through the establishment of easements and or land acquisition.

◦ Increase Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) receiving areas in the Township.

◦ In collaboration with professional foresters, review municipal forest or open space zoning standards to ensure that they protect the rights of private property owners while still allowing land and/or ecosystem preservation. (Shrewsbury Township)

◦ Continue to enforce the Township's critical environmental area provisions in its Zoning Ordinance and consider requiring the protection of critical sites and greenways, such as those identified in the Township's Official Map Ordinance, to be addressed as part of any Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), when applicable.

◦ Consider implementing zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations to protect scenic vistas and viewsheds within the region, such as inclusion in Shrewsbury Township's definition of a Critical Environmental Area.

◦ Consider implementing "Critical Environmental Area" regulations in the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances for applicable areas and features in Glen Rock, Railroad, and Shrewsbury boroughs.

◦ As a Region, work to adopt and routinely evaluate policies, procedures, and material requirements related to road maintenance, property owner and resident education, land use regulations (dimensional requirements, setbacks, land use, and EIA requirements), and assessments to ensure the efficacy of environmental protection measures regarding the region's most environmentally sensitive areas and resources.

◦ Consider adopting zoning, subdivision, and land development standards that limit tree removal in sensitive areas and encourage the preservation of wildlife corridors, as applicable, in the Region's boroughs.

   Example Action Steps:

   ▪ Glen Rock and Railroad Boroughs should consider adopting protective measures for woodlands, while Shrewsbury Borough and New Freedom Borough should consider improving their existing provisions. Provisions such as limiting the removal of trees adjacent to streams, in steeply sloped areas, and in or adjacent to identified Natural Areas should be considered. In addition, developers and woodlot managers should be encouraged to maintain established wildlife corridors through linkages to other wooded areas.

◦ Identify opportunities to improve the tree canopy in developed areas.

◦ Establish a routine communication method with the region's growing Amish community to coordinate secondary income opportunities and agricultural and stormwater best management practices.

◦ Align Agricultural Security Areas with permanent preservation efforts. i.e., advocate that land owners enrolled in ASAs also consider permanent conservation easements.

Direct New Development to the Region's Growth Areas

◦ Continue to avoid development in areas with severe soil constraints.

◦ Target new development to the Region's Growth Areas. See Exhibit A: Future Land Use.

◦ Increase allowed residential and mixed-use densities near high amenity locations, such as the I-83 Interchange, existing trails and parks, and within existing high-density and mixed-use areas of the boroughs.

◦ Promote new construction development of middle housing types, such as duplexes, tri-plexes, and quad-plexes, in established medium—and low-density (but not rural) residential areas.

Make borough downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive.

▪ Identify areas needing "placemaking" and enhance these locations' safety, attractiveness, and vibrancy. Gather community input alongside technical expertise to identify needed improvements.

◦ As was identified in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, Glen Rock Borough and Shrewsbury Borough may want to consider decreasing the minimum size lot requirements for Residential Uses in Urban Residential and Mixed Use areas to ensure that all new residential development contributes to the existing neighborhood character.

◦ Implement design guidelines to help maintain the pedestrian feel of historic and commercial neighborhoods by guiding the installation of signs, canopies, benches, and multimodal transportation facilities.

◦ Explore the possibility of decreasing minimum parking requirements in Urban Residential and Mixed Use areas.

◦ Explore opportunities to encourage small startup businesses and light industries as permitted uses, along with design standards that encourage functional and attractive sites within the Zoning Ordinance.

Create a mix of uses in the Region's growth areas.

◦ Identify communities that have the potential for redevelopment and reinvestment projects. Work with local organizations, such as the York County Economic Alliance, the York County Planning Commission, and the Realtors Association of York and Adams Counties, to analyze the region's demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

  Example Action Steps:

  ▪ Streetscape Improvements

    • Manchester Street & Baltimore Street in Glen Rock Borough.

    • Main Street and Forrest Avenue in Shrewsbury Borough.

    • North 2nd Street and Franklin Street in New Freedom Borough.

  ▪ Targeted property redevelopment, ex. Lamott Building, New Freedom Borough

◦ Amend zoning ordinances to add new uses to existing zoning districts or replace traditional single-use zoning districts with mixed-use districts.

  Example Action Steps:

  ▪ Explore adding middle housing types to all residential districts within the boroughs and growth areas of the township.

  ▪ Consider replacing high-density residential and commercial-only zoning districts with mixed-use zoning districts.

  ▪ Create mixed-use land uses near existing rail trail, transportation, and retail amenities.

◦ Implement Cluster Development Regulations in both Railroad Borough and Shrewsbury Township to better guide residential development within growth areas.

◦ Coordinate across municipal boundaries when revising zoning ordinances to ensure consistent regional standards.

  ▪ Review municipal land use and development ordinances and identify any barriers to redeveloping smaller properties. Ensure that approval processes do not contain similar barriers.

Preserve the community's history.

◦ Identify historically significant resources and places and identify them on a Regional Official Map.

◦ Consider the adoption of additional regulatory controls, such as a stay of demolition ordinance or requiring historic reviews consistent with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's (PHMC) Section 106 Review Process.

◦ Explore identifying the Historic Seiztland Village on the National Register of Historic Places.

◦ Create a regional Historic Preservation Committee.

How To Measure Progress

△ Increase

▽ Decrease

Protected Agricultural Land		
Agricultural Land Preserved	△	Increase the total acres of agricultural land preserved.
Contiguous Agricultural Land Preserved	△	Increase the % of contiguous agricultural land preserved.
Protected Natural Land		
Natural Land Preserved	△	Increase the total acres of natural land preserved.
Contiguous Natural Land Preserved	△	Increase the % of contiguous natural land preserved.
Development in Growth Areas		
Mixed-Use Land	△	Increase the amount of new development that is mixed use.
Third Places/ Social Gathering Places	△	Increase the number of third places in boroughs and growth areas.
New Dwelling Units	△	Increase the % of new dwelling units in growth areas to accommodate the projected housing need of 1,094 additional units by 2050.
New non-residential development	△	Increase the % of new non-residential development on best suited land in growth areas. See Exhibit A: Future Land Use.
Development Outside of Growth Areas		
New Dwelling Units	▽	Reduce the % of new dwelling units outside of growth areas.
Total Acres Developed		Reduce the number of acres developed per year outside of growth areas.

TARGETED INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION & REGIONALIZATION

Effective governance and regional development in Southern York County require robust intergovernmental cooperation and strategic regionalization. This chapter explores the importance of collaboration between local governments, regional entities, and community stakeholders to address shared challenges and leverage collective resources. Fostering strong partnerships will enhance service delivery, optimize resource allocation, and create a more resilient and cohesive region.

Key focus areas include coordinating infrastructure projects, such as transportation and utilities, to ensure seamless connectivity and efficiency across municipal boundaries. Collaborative efforts in infrastructure development can lead to more efficient use of resources, reduced costs, and improved service delivery for residents. Additionally, regionalization aims to streamline public services, improve effectiveness, and reduce costs. By working together, local governments can better address environmental sustainability, economic development, and social equity, ensuring that all communities within Southern York County benefit from shared progress and prosperity.

What Was Heard

The Southern York Region Municipalities are providing many of the same services to the community over a relatively small geographic area.

◦ According to residents, the highest-ranked services to be consolidated or regionalized include police protection, EMS, recreation, fire prevention, code enforcement, road maintenance, and analyses and studies.

◦ 69% to 78% of survey respondents stated that they would be in favor of the Southern York County Region Planning Commission significantly exploring consolidation and regionalization.

◦ Residents reported better services, increased efficiency, and lower taxes as the top three (3) reasons to justify regionalization in Southern York County.

Stormwater management and improving water quality are becoming more challenging.

◦ Local water bodies like the South Branch of Codorus Creek, Trout Run, and Deer Creek are significant environmental and recreational amenities that should be protected and restored.

◦ Existing forested/natural buffers along waterways play a significant role in protecting and improving the overall water quality in the region.

◦ Low-lying areas along the south branch of Codorus Creek and its tributaries are subject to flooding.

The various intergovernmental agreements that established regional wastewater treatment and conveyance are dated and need to be updated.

◦ Wastewater treatments and conveyance agreements should be updated to reflect additional municipal participants, such as Railroad Borough, Shrewsbury Township, and Hopewell Township.

◦ Shrewsbury Township and Hopewell Township have identified an additional 1400 EDUS requiring a multi-million dollar wastewater treatment plant upgrade.

The future of Emergency Management Services (EMS) and Fire Prevention and Protection Services will likely rely on regionalization due to a persistent lack of funding and volunteers.

◦ Local ponds and streams within the region are critical to ensuring appropriate access to water for fire-fighting activities.

◦ Local roads throughout the region have limitations, such as height and width, and can impact response times or damage apparatus.

◦ A regional fire and EMS agency should be considered with a physical location north of the study area at Susquehanna Trail and Seaks Run Road.

◦ More funding and volunteers are needed to provide these services to meet the needs of a growing population.

A peer-to-peer recreation analysis for Shrewsbury Township and New Freedom Borough has led to the creation of the Southern York County Regional Commission. However, Shrewsbury, Glen Rock, and Railroad boroughs are not members.

◦ 78% to 86% of survey respondents stated that they would be in favor of establishing a regional recreational entity.

◦ A volunteer for the entire region currently coordinates field scheduling for youth and adult teams.

What The Data Revealed

Area

The region is comprised of approximately 34.4 square miles.

- Glen Rock Borough - 0.80 square miles
- New Freedom Borough - 2.08 square miles
- Railroad Borough - 0.64 square miles
- Shrewsbury Borough - 1.81 square miles
- Shrewsbury Township - 29.07 square miles

Boards and Commissions

Elected Officials

- Borough Councils - Each borough has an elected body of 7 individuals.
- Township Supervisors - The Township's elected body of 5 individuals.

Planning Commissions

The Region boasts a total of 5 volunteer planning commissions of varying sizes. Glen Rock Borough and Railroad Borough have existing vacant seats on the planning commission.

Zoning Hearing Boards

Each municipality has a zoning hearing board. Railroad Borough's Zoning Hearing Board has two (2) vacant positions.

Land Use Regulations

Each of the Southern York County Municipalities enforces their own, individual Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances.

Existing Intergovernmental Organizations

- Southern York Regional Police Department

- Southern York Regional Recreation Commission

- Southern York Regional Planning Commission

Impaired Streams

According to DEP's emap tool, there are over 34 miles of impaired streams located throughout the region.

Grant Competitiveness

Multi-municipal cooperation increases the competitiveness of funding requests at all levels of government.

✎ How to Achieve Success

Region	Glen Rock Bor.	New Freedom Bor.	Railroad Bor.	Shrews. Bor.	Shrews. Twp.	Policy
✓						Improve regional coordination of Fire Prevention and Protection Services
✓						Identify opportunities to further regionalize, as they arise.
✓						Simplify Zoning.
✓						Maintain public infrastructure and existing buildings.
✓						Region-wide membership in the Southern York County Regional Recreation Commission
✓						Improve water quality and work together on stormwater management

Improve regional coordination of Fire Prevention and Protection Services.

◦ Create a regional opportunity and constraints map that identifies:

▪ Hydrants and static sources of water (ponds and streams) can be used as dry hydrants.

▪ Roadway limitations due to: bridge height, width of roadway, weight limits, angle of approach/ departure, and private access drives with a bridge or culverts.

◦ Declining volunteer rates suggest that municipal governments may, in the future, need to find and fund alternative solutions to ensure the provision of fire prevention and protection services. Such initiatives should investigate the following:

▪ Maintain (and increase as necessary) the municipal fire hydrant, fire equipment/firehouse, and EMS mil rates as needed.

▪ If feasible, create a joint regional fire and EMS station. One such location, identified during key stakeholder interviews, could be in the vicinity of Susquehanna Trail and Seaks Run Road (Springfield Township).

◦ In collaboration with local fire and EMS providers prioritize and implement the following recommendations from the 2023 Peer-to-Peer Emergency Medical Services Study, including:

- Merge of Rose Ambulance and Glen Rock EMS to one entity. This will increase response time and provide financial benefits.

- Internal studies to plan ambulance crew shifts more efficiently.

- EMT-A providers up to full status.

- Glen Rock to set up a training center to host free classes.

- Increases in pay to $18/hour for EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians), and $27/hour for Paramedics with the addition of an EMT-A role at $21/hour.

- Institution of 0.5 mil real estate tax to contribute to EMS specifically.

◦ Encourage the Region's Fire Prevention and Protection providers to identify qualitative or quantitative metrics with which to track facility conditions and user experience.

- The feasibility of future paid regional fire protection personnel.

Identify opportunities to further regionalization, as they arise.

◦ Consider consolidating boards, committees, and authorities as the need and opportunity arise.

◦ Currently, police protection in Shrewsbury Township is provided by the State Police. Given the Township's rural development patterns, the level of service provided by the State Police is sufficient. However, as development increases in identified growth areas, additional regionalization activities may be necessary to provide an increased police presence in higher-density areas.

◦ Ensure frequent and long-term communication channels with the Southern York County School District, especially into the 2030s when projected growth could impact the district's capacity.

Simplify zoning.

◦ Coordinate across municipal boundaries when revising ordinances to ensure consistent standards throughout the region. Consider implementing a regional ordinance or at a minimum separate ordinances that utilize the same zoning districts and regulations.

Maintain Public Infrastructure.

Historic Resources

◦ Update the region's historic resource survey to identify and inventory historically significant buildings in the region.

◦ Discourage demolition when the structure can meet the desired use without imposing a financial burden on the property owner.

◦ Work with housing and historic preservation organizations to identify resources that could help property owners maintain and preserve historic structures. For low-income, elderly, or physically disabled owners, encourage volunteerism and community outreach efforts to assist with repairs and maintenance.

◦ Consider revising subdivisions and land development ordinances to require Phase I archaeological surveys of proposed development sites in areas of suspected archeological significance.

◦ Consider the adoption of local historic preservation ordinances that contain suitable historical review standards for proposed demolitions, alterations, and removals of structures. These ordinances should also ensure that new development is architecturally and historically compatible with each district's existing character.

Public Infrastructure

◦ Align water and sewer service areas with the Region's Growth Areas. See Exhibit 7.5 in Appendix B: Community Profile.

◦ Implement upgrades to public infrastructure regionally. Whenever feasible, coordinate improvements across municipal boundaries.

◦ Encourage cellular phone companies to co-locate to limit the number of towers needed in the region and provide complete coverage.

◦ Implement communication facility legislation in Glen Rock, Shrewsbury, and Railroad boroughs to assist in guiding the location and placement of communications facilities to protect the existing character of the neighborhood/area.

Sanitary Sewer

◦ Intergovernmental agreements should be updated to reflect additional municipal participants, such as Shrewsbury Township, and Hopewell Township.

◦ The Region or portions of the region may want to conduct capacity analyses to determine the system's capacity and current flow / usage requirements.

Region-wide membership in the Southern York County Regional Recreation Commission

All five (5) Southern York County Municipalities should participate in Southern York County Regional Recreation Commission.

The Southern York County Region Municipalities are providing many of the same services to the community over a relatively small geographic area.

Watershed-Level Planning

Many of the recommendations below relate to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Program (MS4 Program). Due to their population and developed land, the Region's municipalities have qualified for waivers to the MS4 Program requirements. The waivers cover five (5) years. The current program waivers took effect in January 2023.

How long the Region's communities will remain eligible to secure a waiver of the MS4 Program requirements is not guaranteed or known.

When and if the MS4 Program requirements take effect in the region, the following strategies will assist the Region in meeting the program's requirements.

◦ The region's municipalities should consider formally joining the York County Stormwater Consortium during the next MS4 NPDES Permit Cycle.

◦ Increase water quality improvement efforts by working with the York County Stormwater Consortium and other water quality organizations to identify priority streams/watersheds in the region. Identify potential Best Managment Practices (BMP) project sites, such as basin retrofits or stream stabilization, within priority watersheds. Rank projects based on their potential impact on water quality, potential MS4 Credits, willingness of property owners, and other relevant factors.

◦ Consider the adoption of Region-wide regulations that prioritize and permit the establishment of low-impact development BMPs, similar to those adopted by New Freedom Borough and Shrewsbury Township.

◦ Periodically and region-wide, review and adjust stormwater management provisions based upon changing local (Act 167 Planning) and state (NPDES MS4) regulations.

◦ Work with partners, such as the York County Stormwater Consortium, the York County Coalition for Clean Waters, and the York County Conservation District to seek out funding and implement priority BMP projects on public land.

◦ Conduct an inventory of existing stormwater management infrastructure, Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as stormwater basins and rain gardens, and Pollutant Reduction Plan (Recommendations, such as stream restorations and basin retrofits.

◦ Implement routine outreach and education targeted to private property owners to encourage the implementation of BMP Projects. A particular priority is providing the region's growing Amish community with stormwater best management practices.

◦ Provide residents and property owners with educational materials highlighting the importance of clean waterways and offering implementable solutions such as vegetated buffers.

◦ Establish a regional MS4 Administration program to encourage regional cooperation and coordinate resources. This could also include applying for a regional MS4 permit. Such a program would seek to regionalize standard operating procedures, reporting, and enforcement activities.

◦ Coordinate across municipal boundaries to set consistent standards that protect existing riparian buffers and encourage the establishment of new ones.

◦ Identify opportunities to improve the tree canopy in densely developed areas.
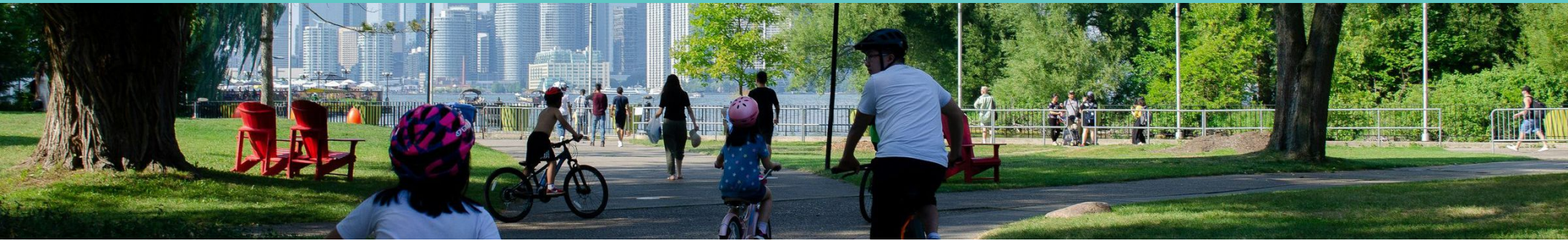
How To Measure Progress

▲ Increase

▽ Decrease

Stormwater Management		
Impaired Streams	▽	Reduce the miles of impaired streams.
Nitrogen / Phosphorus / Suspended Sediment	▽	Reduce the total levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, and suspended sediment.
Riparian Buffers	▲	Increase the total miles of riparian buffers.
Tree Canopy	▲	Increase the % of land covered in the tree canopy.
Water and Sewer Infrastructure in Growth Areas		
Parcels with Public Water/ Sewer Service	▲	Increase the % of growth areas served by public water/ sewer.
Recreation		
Recreational Programming	▲	Increase access to and amount of recreation programs.
Emergency Services		
Fire Protection and EMS	▲	Increase collaboration and coordination of Fire Protection and EMS.
Police Protection	▲	Increase areas covered by the Southern York Regional Police as the need arises.
Historic Resources		
Historic Preservation	▲	Increase historic preservation activities, including rehabilitation and reuse.

INCREASING SAFETY AND ACCESS TO TRANSPORTION

Transportation is vital for connecting communities and driving economic growth. However, many individuals encounter obstacles to safe and accessible transportation. Innovations and policies aimed at enhancing transportation safety and accessibility are essential to ensure that everyone has the chance to travel safely and efficiently. A significant aspect of this initiative is active transportation, which involves walking and bicycling. Unlike motorized transportation, active transportation encourages physical activity and offers numerous health and well-being benefits. Additionally, it helps reduce vehicle miles traveled, improves access to public transportation, and fosters mixed-use neighborhoods where suitable.

Making it easier for residents and visitors to get around without a car can reduce traffic congestion, lower emissions, and promote a healthier environment. This approach benefits the planet and enhances the quality of life for individuals who may not have access to a vehicle. Connecting housing, jobs, schools, transportation, and other destinations ensures that all community members can access essential services and opportunities conveniently. This connectivity is crucial for fostering economic growth and social equity, as it allows people to live, work, and play within their communities without the need for long commutes.

Transforming downtowns into regional hubs can revitalize local economies, making them vibrant centers of activity and commerce. These hubs can attract businesses, tourists, and residents, creating a dynamic and thriving urban core.

Focusing on mixed-use development can create spaces where people can live, work, shop, and socialize, all within a walkable area. This can boost the local economy and build a sense of community and belonging.

Another critical component of this initiative is creating more places to hike, bike, play, and enjoy nature. Access to green spaces and recreational areas promotes physical health, mental well-being, and social interaction. These spaces allow residents to engage in outdoor activities, connect with nature, and enjoy leisure time with family and friends. Moreover, they contribute to the region's overall aesthetic and environmental quality, making it a more attractive place to live and visit.

These efforts will build a more connected, sustainable, and thriving community. By integrating transportation innovations, active transportation, and strategic urban planning, this plan can create a community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. This holistic approach ensures that our transportation system supports economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

What Was Heard

Safety and congestion issues along the region's major transportation corridors are a concern.

◦ According to survey responses, traffic congestion is becoming an increasingly significant issue along Main Street in Shrewsbury Borough, Forest Avenue (SR 0581) in Shrewsbury Township, and Shrewsbury Borough, Main Street (SR 0616) and Manchester Street (SR 0216) in Glen Rock Borough, N 2^(nd) Street (SR0581) and N Constitution Avenue in New Freedom Borough.

◦ Agricultural (and industrial) development is an integral part of the region's economy, but traffic impacts should be studied and appropriately managed.

Expand existing infrastructure that helps people get around the region without a vehicle.

◦ Survey respondents prioritized the extension of trails and greenways throughout the region.

◦ There should be more connections between housing and local trails, parks, and natural areas – residents shouldn't need a vehicle to access nature.

◦ Residents feel unsafe or uncomfortable when bicycling or walking between different communities. There are limited public transportation options, which are often inconvenient for residents to use.

◦ Industrial development is often inaccessible by walking, bicycling, or taking transit. Residents must rely on a vehicle to take advantage of local employment opportunities.

Residents rely on personal motor vehicles to commute to work and school.

The majority of residents utilize a motor vehicle to commute to work or school; only 2% to 4% walk or bike.

Walking is the overwhelming preferred Mode of Active Transportation

70% to 75% of respondents reported walking as their preferred mode of active transportation, and 14% to 19% reported cycling as their preference. Only 5% to 10% of respondents walk, bike, or bus daily.

Additional pedestrian infrastructure is likely to result in more walking among the Region's residents.

Residents reported that more destinations to walk or bike to and better pedestrian infrastructure would encourage them to walk and bike more.

What the Data Revealed

Roadway Fatalities

Between 2014 and 2023, there were 5 fatal crashes in the region, all of which occurred in Shrewsbury Borough and Shrewsbury Township.

VRU Crashes

The PA Crash Information Tool defines a vulnerable road user as a pedestrian, a pedestrian conveyance (wheelchair, scooter, skateboard, etc.), a bicyclist (not including e-bikes), and other pedal cyclists.

The Region's 5-year average of VRU-involved crashes is 2.8 per year. The majority of the crashes occurred in Shrewsbury Borough, with 6 VRU Crashes between 2019 and 2023, and Shrewsbury Township, with 4 VRU-involved crashes.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Stress

Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analyses are data-driven evaluations of the stress level experienced by pedestrians and bicyclists according to roadway design, traffic volumes, and motor vehicle speeds. According to the York County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, two road segments within the region have high bicycling levels of stress: Mt. Airy Road in Shrewsbury Borough and Church Street in Glen Rock Borough. In addition, Forrest Avenue (SR0851) was identified as having high bicycle stress levels during the planning process.

Regional Trails

The Southern York County Region has 25.2 miles of regional recreational trails, including the York County Heritage Rail Trail.

Parkland to Population Ratio

The region has 142 acres of recreation area, serving 17,902 residents. Although the region falls approximately 37 acres short of the recommended 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, DCNR's Outdoor Recreation Access Maps indicate that each of the region's municipalities has adequate access to recreation within a 10-minute walk.

Public Transportation

Rabbittransit is also a regional development stakeholder and should be routinely coordinated with during the planning stages of new medical, grocery/food access, industrial development, high pedestrian generators, or medium—to high-density residential projects.

Rabbittransit serves as the county's public transportation provider. There are no fixed route services in the Southern York County Region. However, Rabbittransit does provide several paratransit programs, including the Senior Shared Ride and Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP). Rabbit EXPRESS provides commuter services to Hunt Valley, Timonium, and Towson, MD, from the park-and-ride facility on Elm Drive in Shrewsbury Township, east of I-83.

Walk Score

Walk Score is a large-scale, public access walkability index that assigns a numerical walkability score to any address in the United States. A Walk Score and a Bike Score, may be assigned to a particular address or an entire region, and the company maintains a ranking of the most walkable cities in the United States. Higher walk scores correlate with higher property values and lower mortgage default risk.

Shrewsbury Borough has a Walk Score of 61, the highest of the region, and is considered to be somewhat walkable. New Freedom and Glen Rock Boroughs follow with Walk Scores of 49 and 33, respectively, and are deemed to be car-dependent. Railroad Borough and Shrewsbury Township are the least walkable of the region's municipalities, with Walk Scores of only 4 and 6, respectively.

Bike Score

New Freedom Borough, with a Bike Score of 51, is the region's only bikeable municipality. Shrewsbury Borough, Glen Rock Borough, Railroad Borough, and Shrewsbury Township are considered somewhat bikeable to not at all bikeable, with Bike Scores of 39, 30, 25, and 1, respectively.

How To Achieve Success

Region	Glen Rock Bor.	New Freedom Bor.	Railroad Bor.	Shrews. Bor.	Shrews. Twp.	Policy
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Make it easier for residents and visitors to get around without a car.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Connect housing, jobs, schools, transportation, and other destinations.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Make our downtowns into regional hubs.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Create more places to hike, bike, play, and enjoy nature.

Make it easier for residents and visitors to get around without a car.

◦ Collaborate with Rabbittransit to implement gaps identified in the Adams and York County "Human Services Transportation Plan" and before planning new medical, grocery/food access, industrial, high pedestrian generators, or medium—to high-density residential projects.

◦ Identify the concentration of housing, jobs, and other amenities in the Region that transit could serve. Review significant destinations outside the area or the county that residents require and may need better connections.

◦ Continue working with partners (Rabbittransit), county staff, and state or federal agencies to pursue funding to help establish more regional transit services or expand existing services to meet current and future demand. The Region's elderly, disabled, and homebound residents most need improved access to public transportation.

◦ Develop guidelines and work with developers to construct facilities that can accommodate paratransit users and vehicles, when appropriate.

Connect housing, jobs, schools, transportation, and other destinations.

Trail Development and Maintenance

◦ Identify local destinations such as parks, neighborhoods, schools, or employment centers that trails could connect. Prioritize trail corridors for construction by level of need, interest, or other metrics.

◦ Work with partners to pursue funding or grant opportunities that can be put towards feasibility studies, property acquisition, or construction costs.

◦ Identify proposed trails and greenways on a Regional Official Map Ordinance.

◦ Prioritize acquiring right-of-way and implementation funds for the trails and greenways   identified on Shrewsbury Township's Official Map

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

◦ The Region is a hub of Amish and Plain Sect growth. Outreach efforts should be directed at these groups to understand their transportation habits and needs better. The Amish use regional safety committees to coordinate these issues with the surrounding English communities.

◦ Provide and advocate for the use and study of the Amish Buggy Operators Manual.

◦ Adopt and implement a complete streets ordinance(s) as a region or individually.

◦ Identify routes that connect local neighborhoods and communities with regional destinations like parks and retail. Prioritize these corridors for bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements.

  ▪ Shrewsbury Borough is struggling with pedestrian mobility which has resulted in more than one fatality. Connecting and improving sidewalks in the Borough is a high priority.

◦ Work with YAMPO, PennDOT, and other partners to identify roads with ongoing safety issues that must be addressed. Pursue funding or grant opportunities to finance potential projects that will help increase non-motorized travel.

  ▪ Conducting walk audits can identify problem areas.

◦ Create and implement an Active Transportation and ADA Transition plan to identify and improve intersections and connectivity for pedestrians, including those with disabilities.

Roadway Safety

◦ Add a signal light at the intersection of Tolna Road and Main Street in Shrewsbury Borough.

◦ Create, adopt, and implement a regional official map.

◦ Prioritize completion of transportation improvements identified on the Shrewsbury Township Official Map.

◦ Develop streetscape and traffic calming improvement plans for the following roadways:

  ▪ Main Street/Baltimore Street/and Manchester Street in Glen Rock Borough

  ▪ Forrest Avenue and Main Street in Shrewsbury Borough

  ▪ Franklin Street, Main Street, N 2nd Street, and N Constitution Avenue in New Freedom Borough

  ▪ Northbrook Lane (accidents), West Forrest Avenue (speed), and East Tolna Road (volume).

  ▪ Mt. Alry Road between East Forrest Avenue and East Tolna Road.

Make downtowns into regional hubs.

<u>**Transportation Hubs**</u>

◦ Identify areas where major transportation corridors intersect with borough cores. Within the areas that intersect, determine the locations that would be best suited for hub facilities. Work with partners, local businesses, and residents to identify amenities needed. Pursue funding or grant opportunities to finance potential projects.

◦ Amend municipal zoning ordinances and/or maps to permit services or encourage land uses that support hub facilities.

Create more places to hike, bike, play, and enjoy nature.

◦ Public Parks

   • Conduct research to identify gaps in the availability of the region's public parks and green spaces. Use these results to identify areas that could become public parks or expand existing sites. Place potential locations on a regional Official Map.

   • In collaboration with the Southern York County Recreation Commission pursue funding and coordinate community resources to upkeep parklands and improve facilities.

How To Measure Progress

△ Increase

▽ Decrease

Health and Safety		
Crashes Involving Vulnerable Road Users (VRU)	▽	Reduced crashes involving vulnerable road users. The region averages 3 VRU-involved crashes per year. Shrewsbury Borough and Shrewsbury Township had the highest instances of VRU-involved crashes in the region.
Commuting		
Time Spent Commuting	▽	Reduce vehicle miles traveled and increase reliance on active transportation modes of travel by building mixed-use developments near retail and employment hubs. Such as those commercial areas discussed on page 12 of the Community Profile.
Roadway and Sidewalk Safety & Connectivity		
Walkability	△	Increased Walk Scores © through out the Region as a result of the construction of new and replacement pedestrian facilities within the borough's and residential hubs within the Township.
Sidewalk Coverage	△	Increase % of roads with sidewalks in growth areas.
Connectivity of New Development	△	Increase connections between new development and the Region's growing active transportation system.
Transportation Choices		
Commute Mode Split	△	Increase % of people walking, biking, or taking transit to work.
Public Transit	△	Increase access to public transit via increased service offerings between the Southern York County Region and Downtown York City, and the addition of micro-transit or on demand service offerings to employment and retail destinations.

How To Measure Progress

△ Increase

▽ Decrease

Access to Parks and Trails		
Miles of Regional Trails	△	Increase miles of regional trails
Parks per Capita	△	Increase acreage of parks per 1,000 people
Park and Trail Access	△	Increase the % of residents located within a 1/2 mile of a park or trail.

BEING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Creating an inclusive community in Southern York County involves addressing several key areas for fostering a sense of belonging and equity among all residents. Firstly, the affordability of housing is crucial. Ensuring affordable housing for a diverse population fosters inclusivity and stability within the community. This includes implementing strategies to improve housing affordability, housing developments, and policies encouraging a mix of housing types. Access to diverse housing options, from single-family homes to apartments and townhouses, ensures everyone can find suitable living arrangements that meet their needs regardless of economic status.

Access to community programming, in addition to housing, is vital for inclusivity. Community programs should be accessible to all residents, offering opportunities for engagement, education, and support. These programs range from recreational activities and cultural events to educational workshops and social services. Ensuring that these programs are inclusive and cater to various demographic groups' needs helps build a more cohesive community.

Furthermore, enhancing both physical and digital connectivity is essential. Physical connectivity through well-maintained transportation networks, pedestrian pathways, and bike lanes ensures that residents can easily navigate the community. Digital connectivity, such as widespread internet access, is equally important in today's digital age, enabling residents to stay informed, connected, and engaged.

Finally, fostering a connected community requires effective communication channels, including community newsletters, social media, and public forums, which are essential for keeping residents informed and engaged. Ensuring ADA accessibility in public spaces and programs is critical for inclusivity, allowing all residents to participate fully in community life regardless of ability.

By focusing on these areas—affordable and diverse housing, accessible programming, robust connectivity, effective communication, and ADA accessibility—the Region can build a community that is not only physically connected but also socially cohesive, ensuring that all residents feel included and valued.

What Was Heard

Being an inclusive community is important.

84% to 90% of residents surveyed reported it being important to be an inclusive community.

It is important for residents to feel connected to their community.

70% to 80% of residents feel they are very to somewhat connected to their community.

Many residents who own older properties do not have the resources to maintain their homes.

Ensuring the long-term health of existing housing and neighborhoods starts with educating homeowners about maintenance and repairs. The region should look for ways to create a network of technical advisors or volunteers who can provide guidance or assistance at a reasonable cost.

Increased access to recreation, education, and social programming is necessary to maintain the community's inclusivity.

◦ The Region's growing Amish population may benefit from targeted programming and community resources.

◦ Residents and property owners would like to see an increase in adult activities, special events, and concerts.

◦ The Region needs targeted recreation, education, and social resources and programming to better support the entire community, especially the rapidly growing population of residents over 65. Programming priorities identified in the Community Survey included meal programs, health and fitness opportunities, information sessions, volunteering and advocacy, and transportation to medical appointments.

◦ The top five activities that residents participated in were walking, highking, biking, soccer, and using community playgrounds.

While the majority of residents surveyed reported having access to transportation, this remains a critical need for some in the community.

10% to 18% of residents reported having inadequate access to transportation.

Additionally, 21% to 36% of residents surveyed reported that access to public transportation was very to somewhat important.

The ability to age-in-place is a concern for some of the Region's residents.

Nearly 13% to 19% of residents reported that they would not be able to age in place in their current home.

Residents surveyed reported having the following goals regarding connectivity.

◦ Develop Trail Networks
◦ Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure
◦ Develop Trails in Existing Parks
◦ Ensure All New Parks Have a Trail Network

What the Data Revealed

Housing Affordability

Throughout the region, renters are becoming increasingly cost-burdened, with 40.6% paying 30% or more of their monthly income on housing. An additional 20.3% of homeowners are considered cost-burdened.

Increased access to new affordable and appropriate housing opportunities is necessary to combat rising housing costs, leading to an increase in households that are cost-burdened or living in poverty throughout the Region.

Housing Composition

The region's existing housing stock consists mostly of single-family detached homes (76%), which also comprise the majority of all new construction within the region. Comparatively, since 2000, the number of single-parent and one-person households have both more than doubled, indicating the need for smaller, more diverse, and affordable housing units.

Additionally, a smaller and more diverse housing stock will help to close the affordability gap.

Vacancy

The region has a tight housing market, with a region-wide housing vacancy rate of only 4.3%.

Aging Population

The region's population is aging, with an overall increase in residents aged 65 and over in New Freedom Borough, Shrewsbury Borough, and Shrewsbury Township since 2000.

Indicators of Potential Disadvantage

Elderly, low-income, minority, disabled, and single-parent households need increased access to affordable and appropriate housing. These households within the Region are most likely to be disadvantaged, so increased access to affordable and appropriate housing is critical to creating financial stability.

Youth Programming and Services

Glen Rock Borough needs additional resources and programming to accommodate an increasing number of single-parent households and children under 20.

Projected Housing Demand

According to the community profile the region will need an additional 1,094 additional housing units by the year 2050.

	2050
◦ Glen Rock Borough	207
◦ New Freedom Borough	381
◦ Railroad Borough	3
◦ Shrewsbury Borough	150
◦ Shrewsbury Township	353

How to Achieve Success

Region	Glen Rock Bor.	New Freedom Bor.	Railroad Bor.	Shrews. Bor.	Shrews. Twp.	Policy
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Increase access to recreation and social programming for all residents, but especially for seniors and those with disabilities.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Create well-maintained community connections.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Provide wide-spread internet access.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Develop and maintain dynamic communication plans.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Prioritize American's with Disability Act (ADA) related Improvements.

Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent.

Place-Based Planning

◦ In coordination with the York County Land Bank and other stakeholders, identify blighted properties and areas that are opportunities for housing rehabilitation or redevelopment.

Housing Supply

◦ Work with local community housing organizations, such as Affordable Housing Advocates, Tenfold, and the Realtors Association of York and Adams Counties, to analyze the regional housing market and identify gaps in the current housing stock. Aim to provide appropriate housing options at every price point.

◦ Implement region-wide land use regulations that support the development of middle housing (pg. 12) options.

◦ Develop partnerships with local housing organizations to help low-income and senior residents find affordable housing or make the transition from renting to homeownership.

◦ Work to diversify housing types in the region. Although public input surveys show that Southern York County residents prefer single-family neighborhoods, residents also expressed support for mixed-use development. In addition, housing advocacy organizations recognize the need for a broader array of housing types throughout York County.

<u>Simplify Zoning</u>

◦ Consider permitting middle housing types in the Region's growth areas as principal permitted uses. Easing the development of middle housing units will assist the region in meeting the projected housing demand. As stated in the Community Profile (pp. 69-72), Glen Rock, Shrewsbury, and New Freedom boroughs will need to increase the rate of residential development to meet the projected demand for housing.

Increase access to recreation and social programming for all residents, but especially for seniors.

◦ Encourage Glen Rock, Shrewsbury, and Railroad Borough to join the Southern York County Regional Recreation Commission. Shrewsbury Township and New Freedom Borough formed the commission with only two members.

◦ In collaboration with community partners and stakeholders, such as the South Central York County Senior Center and the YMCA of the Roses, create a variety of programming to help connect residents and their communities in collaboration

Create well-maintained community connections.

◦ Assess areas needing improved connectivity, such as sidewalks, bike paths, and public transit routes, and prioritize projects that enhance connections between neighborhoods, retail and service areas, recreation, and civic spaces.

◦ Establish routine inspection and maintenance schedules for all community infrastructure to ensure safety and usability and allocate budget and resources for timely repairs and upgrades.

◦ Ensure all infrastructure projects comply with ADA standards to accommodate individuals with disabilities, incorporating features like ramps, tactile paving, and audible signals at crosswalks.

◦ Develop and promote safe walking and biking routes to encourage active transportation and install bike racks, benches, and rest areas to support pedestrians and cyclists.

◦ Involve residents in planning and decision-making through public forums, surveys, and workshops, and encourage community-led initiatives to maintain and beautify public spaces.

◦ Partner with local businesses, schools, and organizations to support and fund connectivity projects and coordinate with regional agencies to ensure cohesive planning and implementation.

◦ Implement lighting, signage, and surveillance in public areas to enhance safety, educate the community about safety practices, and encourage reporting issues.

Provide wide-spread internet access.

◦ The Southern York County Region should collaborate with county officials to identify priority areas for broadband expansion within the region and facilitate access to public lands and rights-of-way to construct broadband infrastructure.

◦ Assist in identifying and applying for federal and state grants to support broadband expansion and advocate for allocating local funds to supplement county and state investments in broadband infrastructure.

◦ Launch awareness campaigns to inform residents about the benefits of improved broadband access and upcoming projects. Provide information on affordable internet options and digital literacy programs to ensure all residents can benefit from new services.

◦ Partner with local libraries, schools, and community centers to offer digital literacy training and workshops. Ensure these programs are accessible to all age groups and skill levels to help residents make the most of new internet capabilities.

◦ Work with neighboring municipalities to coordinate broadband efforts, share best practices, and participate in regional planning initiatives to ensure a cohesive approach to broadband expansion across Southern York County.

Develop and maintain dynamic communication plans.

◦ Conduct annual reviews and updates of the communication strategies to adapt to the community's evolving needs and ensure ongoing transparency, responsiveness, and inclusivity in all interactions.

◦ Create and implement a comprehensive communication plan that utilizes multiple channels, including newsletters, social media, public forums, and community meetings, to ensure regular updates and active engagement with residents. Increased communication may also assist with connecting former Maryland residents to the community and increasing engagement from those residents who continue to work and recreate in their former state of residence.

◦ Conduct annual reviews and updates of the communication strategies to adapt to the community's evolving needs and ensure ongoing transparency, responsiveness, and inclusivity in all interactions.

Prioritize ADA Improvements

◦ Develop Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) and strategies to incrementally improve ADA facilities throughout the Region.

◦ Annually, include ADA Improvement funds in municipal operating budgets.

◦ Routinely seek funding from organizations such as the York County Planning Commission or the Department of Economic and Community Development (DCED) to secure funding via the Community Development Block Program (CDBG) or from

◦ Explore the creation of ADA Transition Plans. See page 14 for additional information regarding ADA Transition Plans.

How To Measure Progress

△ Increase

▽ Decrease

Vacancy Rates		
Homeowner Vacancy Rate and Rental Vacancy Rate	△	Increased vacancy rates will indicate availability in both the homeowner and rental housing markets.
Housing Type Diversity		
Housing Diversity	△	Increase the overall housing diversity and an increase middle housing's share of the total housing stock.
Affordability		
Affordable Housing	△	Increase the overall number of affordable housing units.
Programming		
Variety	△	Increase the variety of recreation, educational, civic, and social programming and activities.
Building Condition and Protection		
Property Maintenance Codes	△	Increase municipal resources available for property maintenance inspection activities.
Stay of Demolition of Historic Building Ordinance	△	Increase number of municipalities with demolition review ordinances.
Community Connectivity		
Trails and Pedestrian Pathways	△	Increased access to trails and pathways that connect neighborhoods to retail/service and recreation areas.

How To Measure Progress

▲ Increase

▽ Decrease

Dynamic Communication Plans		
Measure digital communication metrics	▲	Increased website traffic, social media impressions, and email open rates.
Internet Access		
Broadband Coverage	▲	Increased expansion of broadband coverage over time.
ADA Facilities Improvements		
Removal of Barriers	▽	Decrease in pedestrian barriers at public facilities in buildings, parks, and transportation systems.

A Thriving Rural Economy

Creating and maintaining a thriving rural economy relies on a multi-pronged approach focusing on individual sector development, workforce development, and community and connectivity.

As page 82 of the Community Profile discusses, various sectors comprise the region's local economy. Each sector represents a large grouping of companies with similar business activities, such as agriculture, manufacturing, retail, service, and tourism. A thriving rural economy seeks to grow and strengthen its priority sectors, such as those mentioned above.

Workforce development relates to various activities, policies, and programs to create, sustain, and retain a viable workforce. It involves equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to meet the labor market's current and future demands.

Workforce development components include education and training, job placement and career counseling, business support, community development, support services assisting with childcare, transportation, and health and wellness programs.

Community and connectivity rely on community development, economic connectivity, and place-based planning. Community refers to the social and cultural aspects that make a place livable and attractive. Connectivity refers to the physical and digital infrastructure that links the community to the world. Community and connectivity include providing services and amenities critical to quality of life, such as transportation infrastructure, access to broadband, healthcare, childcare, arts, and culture.

What Was Heard

The most critical factors in creating a thriving local economy are an increase in small businesses, increased living-wage job opportunities and access to education and training.

◦ Incorporating more mixed-use development could create opportunities for residents to live in closer proximity to local stores and services.

◦ Borough main streets and centers need revitalization. In most instances, investing in new businesses and residences will bring new life to these areas and support active transportation and tourism efforts.

◦ Local businesses should be supported – they attract visitors and encourage investment in the region.

◦ Local restaurants and entertainment venues are critical to attracting and keeping young people in the region.

Agriculture is important to the region's identity, but farmers are struggling to sustain their operations.

◦ Relaxing some zoning regulations, such as those regulating off-street parking, could help farmers establish accessory revenue streams, such as, agritourism, farm-to-table dining, and on-farm processing.

◦ 95% to 96% of community survey respondents felt that it is "Very Important" to "Somewhat Important" to have access to locally grown food in their community.

Tourism is an opportunity and viable economic development strategy.

◦ More amenities near trail access points will increase use of the trail and support an increase in tourism.

◦ 64% to 86% of residents reported that they would support branding efforts in the region, the majority agreeing that tourism is a viable economic development strategy for the region.

◦ 40% to 60% of survey respondents living in one of the region's four boroughs would support an increase in mixed-use developments near Rail Trail access points.

The region has a strong sense of community and connectivity.

◦ A majority of residents surveyed (82% to 90%) reported having access to transportation, though there is a disconnect for about 10% to 18% of the region's population.

◦ 74% to 87% of residents surveyed reported having adequate access to social opportunities.

◦ 70% to 83% of residents surveyed consider themselves to be "very" to "somewhat" connected to their community.

◦ Survey respondents prioritized the following programmatic needs: meal programs, health and fitness, information, volunteering and advocacy, medical appointment transportation, storytelling, counseling, and job training.

What the Data Revealed

Top Industries

- Between 2011 and 2017, the market value of crops sold in York County increased by nearly 200%, from $46 million in 2011 to almost $135 million in 2017. Meanwhile, the market value of livestock, poultry, and related products decreased by 58%, from $302.6 million to $126 million during the same period, indicating that the agricultural community in the Region continues to struggle with financial viability.

- Sectors and Occupations contribute to the overall economy. Sectors represent large segments of economic activity, while occupations represent the workforce that drives these activities. The following data points were taken from the Community Profile Pages 86 - 91

  - Sectors:

    ◦ 23% of the Region's workforce is employed in the Educational, Health, and Social Service sector.

    ◦ 14% of the Region's workforce is employed in the Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management sector.

    ◦ 12% of the Region's workforce is employed in the Manufacturing sector.

    ◦ The Educational, Health, and Social Service Sector employs the largest percentage of the workforce in Shrewsbury Borough, Shrewsbury Township, and New Freedom Borough.

    ◦ The Wholesale and Retail Trade Sector employs the largest percentage of the workforce in both Glen Rock Borough and Railroad Borough.

  - Occupations:

    ◦ The following occupations increased across all sectors within the Region between 2010 and 2020:

      - Management, Business, and Financial
      - Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
      - Service
      - Production, Transportation, and Material Moving

    ◦ The following occupations increase across all sectors within each municipality:

      - Glen Rock – Computer, Engineering, and Science
      - Railroad Borough – Management, Business, and Financial
      - Shrewsbury Borough – Management, Business, and Financial
      - Shrewsbury Township – Management, Business, and Financial; and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
      - New Freedom Borough - Management, Business, and Financial; Healthcare Practitioners and Technical; Service; Production, Transportation, and Material Moving.

Workforce

The region's workforce is aging and has decreased as a result. 59% of the region's 2020 population is in the civilian workforce compared to 66% of the County's population.

An educated and skilled workforce is more likely to attract living wage employers and investment in a community.

Household Income and Costs

The region's median household income of $75,683 is slightly higher than the York County median of $68,940, a 9.8% difference. Comparatively, the region's median housing unit cost is $239,700, while the county's is $190,600, a 25.8% difference.

However, as reported in teh Community Profile on pages 58 through 61, while increasing housing costs have stabilized to some degree the cost of housing remains inflated throughout the region.

Commuting

Commuting patterns can indicate services and amenities needed to support the region's workforce. The Southern York County Region's workforce generally commutes longer than other areas. The region also has a small work-from-home population of 7.1%, which will likely increase over time. Close to home recreation, access to trails, and multi-modal transportation will support and help to build a thriving workforce.

✎ How To Achieve Success

Region	Glen Rock Bor.	New Freedom Bor.	Railroad Bor.	Shrews. Bor.	Shrews. Twp.	Policy
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Intentionally cultivate, retain, and expand priority sectors.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Grow Trail Town Tourism
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Maintain, attract, and retain a skilled workforce that earns a competitive wage.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Preserving the Farmer as well as the Farm
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Promote entrepreneurship and help local businesses grow.

Sector Development

Intentionally cultivate, retain, and expand priority sectors

Manufacturing

∘ Work with YCEA staff and other partners to identify sites that are desirable locations for industrial development. Identify potential points of conflict between desirable industrial sites and other priorities (natural lands, agricultural lands, historic sites, etc.).

∘ Assess infrastructure needs or deficiencies for identified industrial sites at full buildout, and identify needed improvements for sewer, water, and road infrastructure.

∘ Conduct a review of permitted industrial uses and determine which can be allowed by-right versus special exception or conditional uses.

∘ Review municipal zoning standards to ensure that requirements adequately address screening, landscaping, etc. to minimize the visual impact of new industrial development.

Preserve the Farmer as well as the Farm

Despite significant success in land preservation efforts, the Region's farmers continue to face economic challenges that threaten the sustainability of their operations. While agricultural land preservation has been achieved, the financial viability of farming has not seen corresponding improvements. This disconnect highlights the need for comprehensive strategies that protect farmland and enhance farmers' economic resilience. Addressing this issue is crucial to ensuring that preserved lands remain productive and that farming remains a viable livelihood for current and future generations.

◦ Work with partners to conduct a market analysis identifying the demand for agricultural support businesses or processing facilities.

◦ Amend municipal zoning ordinances to include small-scale retail, event spaces, and experience-based uses in agricultural and industrial zoning districts. Allow uses based on market demand, partners' guidance, and local farmers' input.

◦ Identify opportunities for local farmers to collaborate in making the region a more desirable place to farm.

◦ Increase access to produce and animals products produced in the Region.

　Example Action Step:

　▪ Participate in policy development through collaboration with the York County Farm Bureau and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

◦ Connect local farmers to financial resources available through coordination with the following entities: US Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, PA Industrial Development Authority, York County Economic Alliance, and the York County Conservation District.

　Example Action Steps:

　▪ Ensure that new farmers in the region know about DCED's New Farmer Tax Credit Program. (Shrewsbury Township)

　▪ In partnership with YCEA, Southern York County Agricultural Operations will be connected to available capital at the local and state levels.

◦ Support and facilitate the creation of an agricultural community network, including developing methods of regular communication and collaboration with the Region's growing Amish community.

◦ In collaboration with local farmers and the school district, create a farm to school food program.

Simplify Zoning

◦ Review Shrewsbury Township's Zoning Ordinance to identify standards or regulations that hinder agriculture from adapting to changing market conditions.

◦ Coordinate across municipal boundaries when revising zoning ordinances to ensure consistent regional standards.

Grow Trail Town Tourism

◦ Allow mixed-use development near rail trail access points to support trail use and increase trail-related tourism.

◦ Work with local stakeholders to support Trail Town branding efforts. If successful, these efforts could lead to the creation of a regional Main Street Program or Chamber of Commerce.

◦ Increase the number of local businesses in the Boroughs designated by YCEA as "Trail Friendly Businesses."

◦ Support Glen Rock Borough's efforts to establish an outside event space at The Ruins Hall.

◦ Identify Shrewsbury Township as a Trail Town.

Promote entrepreneurship and help local businesses grow.

◦ In collaboration with the region's small business community, identify regulatory barriers that may hinder the development or expansion of small businesses.

◦ Coordinate across municipal boundaries when revising zoning ordinances to ensure consistent regional standards.

◦ Conduct Place-Based Planning initiatives and implementation projects in areas where small businesses are located.

◦ Encourage mixed-use development within walking distance of small businesses.

Workforce Development

Maintain, attract, and retain a skilled workforce that earns a competitive wage.

◦ Survey the region's business community to identify gaps in the local workforce. Collaborate with the Southern York County School District, partners, and higher education institutions to ensure that programs exist to address gaps in the local workforce.

◦ Continue working with partners like YCEA, the Southern York County School District, the Penn State Extension, and others to develop and improve connections between educational institutions and the business community.

◦ Collaborate with the Southern York County School District and local manufacturing and agricultural businesses to develop a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Training Program for high school-aged students.

◦ In collaboration with YCEA, learning institutions, and local manufacturing and agricultural businesses create a regional apprenticeship program.

Community and Connectivity

Strengthen the Region's Sense of Community and Connectivity

◦ Maintain a comprehensive and regular schedule of community events.

◦ Coordinating with Rabbittransit as the community's transportation needs change over time will maintain access to transportation resources for the 10%-18% of the Region's residents who rely on them for daily living.

◦ Coordinate with the Southern York County Recreation Authority, the South Central York County Senior Center, and Southern Community Services (SCS) to maintain the region's current level of programming and to expand programming as necessary to ensure residents have access to resources such as, meal planning, health and fitness, information, volunteering and advocacy, medical appointment transportation, storytelling, counseling, and job training.

◦ Invest in public spaces and infrastructure, such as parks, community centers, libraries, and other public facilities where people gather.

◦ Support and assist York County's efforts to install the "last mile" of broadband infrastructure in Southern York County.

Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent.

◦ Work with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to incentivize and create more housing options at every price point. Housing affordability impacts local businesses' ability to attract and retain workers.

How To Measure Progress

△ Increase

▽ Decrease

Workforce Development		
Workforce Partnerships	△	Increase partnerships between education institutions and businesses.
Apprenticeships	△	Increase in apprenticeships with local businesses.
Business Starts	△	Increase in new businesses started.
Agricultural Economy		
Total Value of Agricultural Products Sold	△	Increased financial stability for the Region's farmers.
Value of Agricultural Products Sold Directly	△	Increase the Region's access food grown and produced in the region, such as being sold in grocery and convenience stores, and farmstands.
Employment Location		
Jobs in Growth Areas	△	Increase % of jobs in growth areas.
Jobs in Employment Centers	△	Increase % of jobs in employment centers.
New Development Connectivity and Mixed-Use		
Connectivity of New Development	△	Increase connections between residential neighborhoods and regional recreation and retail areas.
Mixed-Use Plans	△	Increase # of new subdivision and land development plans that include mixed-use development.
Redevelopment/Infill		
New Redevelopment and Infill	△	Increase % of new development categorized as redevelopment or infill.
Redevelopment Intensity	△	Increase redevelopment density to meet the project housing demand of 1,094 housing units by 2050.
Infill density	△	Increase infill density to meet the projected housing demand of 1,094 additional housing units by 2050.

SYCRPC

SOUTHERN YORK
COUNTY REGION
PLANNING
COMMISSION

Southern York County Region Comprehensive Plan
York County, Pennsylvania
Drafted May 2024