

## COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Any community conservation and land use management effort by its very nature, must include goals. Without goals, there would be little direction to the future of the community. In the case of planning for a rural community such as the Northern Tier Coalition (NTC) area, goals establish the framework for change and growth management, and the foundation for maintaining key community characteristics. Goals pronounce the community's expectations and provide a vision of how the community is expected to evolve into the future. Objectives are specific actions which are designed to achieve goals and satisfy community needs. Effecting objectives improves the physical condition of the community and sustains and enhances the overall quality of life.

The goals of all residents of the community will not be the same. Some residents will favor increased economic development, while other residents demand environmental protection. Some residents will demand more community facilities and services, while others prefer lower taxes. Some residents will strive for land use diversity, while others would prefer to live in a residential community. One function of the community conservation and land use management process is to strike a balance between these varied expectations to meet the overall goals of the community.

The authors of Rural Environmental Planning for Sustainable Communities suggest that rural communities and residents of rural communities are characteristically unique from their more urban counterparts, and have the opportunity to directly mold their communities. They go on to say,

*The rural community is seen as the conservator of its own resources, habitat, and culture. Local citizens are directly involved in the control of community assets as they plan for the retention, enrichment, and equitable use of those assets for present and future generations.<sup>1</sup>*

1. *Rural people place a high value on self-reliance*

*and self determination. They have experience with techniques for cultural and economic survival. They can make decisions regarding their long-term interests, design and carry out programs, evaluate the results of their work, and make necessary adjustments.*

2. *Rural people value cooperation as a guide to problem solving. This attitude has evolved from generations of experience in rural living, where cooperation is a major tool of survival and community maintenance.*

3. *Long-term sustainability of a rural environment is achieved when citizens guide economic development according to the "physical carrying capacities" of the ecosystem (local environment). Land ownership is valued not just for its market value but also for sustaining a way of life. Consideration of the ecosystem's physical carrying capacity assumes that, although efficiency of use can vary, physical and natural resources are finite and can bear only so much use.*

4. *Increasing the self-reliance of citizens in rural communities can be the basis for sustainability. A self-reliant community possesses the knowledge, skills, resources, and vision to identify changing conditions, locate appropriate technical assistance, and initiate actions in a manner that conserves the rural environment and distributes benefits in an equitable manner.<sup>2</sup>*

*Along with the community's goals, specific objectives must be identified; actions and methods for achieving the goals. Some objectives will be the direct responsibility of local elected and appointed officials. Others will require the cooperation and participation of other levels of government and the private sector.<sup>3</sup>*

Another key factor in formulating a set of local goals and objectives is any planning conducted at the County and regional level. As mandated by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Susquehanna County Planning Commission has

<sup>1</sup> P. Lusk, J. A. Rivera, F. O. Sargent, M. Varela, (1991) *Rural Environmental Planning for Sustainable Communities*, Island press, Washington, D. C., p. 5

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 5

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

developed and the Board of Commissioners have adopted a county comprehensive plan. Typically, a county comprehensive plan establishes a broad framework for the future growth and development of the county. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, at §301.4, states, *Municipal comprehensive plans which are adopted shall be generally consistent with the adopted county comprehensive plan.* The intent of this *Northern Tier Coalition Comprehensive Plan* is to be consistent with the County Plan.

This *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to serve as a means of addressing the future growth and development of the Coalition area by identifying key issues and establishing goals and objectives. The community planning process also is aimed at fostering cooperation between the County and the twelve participating municipalities as envisioned by §306 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code which states, *both the county and the municipality shall each give the plan of the other consideration in order that the objectives of each plan can be protected to the greatest extent possible.*

The following goals and objectives were developed by the Northern Tier Planning Committee based on the planning process, resident opinions and expectations expressed in the Community Survey conducted in March 2003, and at public meetings conducted as part of the process. The goals and objectives are intended to serve the municipalities as a guide for land use management and community facilities and services decision making. Any significant action taken by a local municipality, be it the adoption of a zoning ordinance or the improvement of a municipal building, should be evaluated in terms of the community's goals and objectives. In addition, community planning and land conservation and development management is an on-going process, and the Boroughs and Townships must periodically evaluate the goals and objectives to ensure that they adequately reflect current community conditions and the expectations of residents and officials.

### **Conservation Planning Targets and Threats**

*A Rural Resource Inventory & Report for the Northern Tier Coalition of Susquehanna County (RRIR)*, the study conducted by students of Cornell University, included conservation planning targets and threats. These were developed based on interviews with many of the local officials of the Coalition municipalities and are summarized here for background and to put

the *Plan* goals and objectives in context with the Cornell Study.

### **RRIR Conservation Targets**

Target 1: *Preserve the rural and agricultural character of the landscape.*

- Involves physical, social, economic, and cultural issues.
- Visual imagery is a major component of rural character.
- Preservation of open spaces is critical to preserving rural character
- Traditional values such as family, community, independence, self-government, conservation, and entrepreneurship.
- Must identify the specific elements that are most desirable and focus on methods of preserving them.

Target 2: *Conserve critical natural resources, by sustaining working landscapes and mitigating objectionable land uses.*

- Forest covered ridges, meandering streams, wetlands, lakes and rich soils create a rich ecological framework.
- Valued as both open spaces for recreation and amenity, and as economic resources.
- Includes a variety of natural resources (agriculture, forestry, and mining) vital to economic health.
- Such activities have consequences for water quality, forest health and wildlife habitat, as well as the overall health of many natural systems.

### **RRIR Conservation Threats**

Threat 1: *Development Pressure: Second Homes, Commuters & Rural Sprawl Development.*

- Residential development pressures from commuters working in New York (primarily in Binghamton) and Scranton.
- Expectation of expanded municipality services, such as water and sewer infrastructure and paved roads.
- Influx of newcomers with different values impacts previously accepted norms for the local community.

- Much of the new construction in the NTC is road frontage and flag lots along paved roads, creating a sense of sprawl and unseemly change, even though vast interior spaces remain largely wooded.

*Threat 2: Lack of Planning and Enforcement Capacity and Structure.*

- The greatest threat to the rural character is the lack of land use protection.
- Frustration at not being able to enforce some existing local land use ordinances that regulate such activities as junk cars in yards and quarry sites.
- The ability to guide growth in the municipalities will be severely limited without a major investment in local ordinance enforcement capacity.

*Threat 3: Loss of the Family Farm in Susquehanna County.*

- Rural character is directly associated with the family farm economy and the traditions of the small family farm.
- Farms and other agricultural uses dominate the rural landscape, and the health of the farm economy lies at the forefront of any discussion of threats to the preservation of rural character.
- Several troublesome trends could result in a severe decline in the coming years.
- The majority of farms are medium sized, and owned by a family or individual who is now approaching retirement.
- The number of farm owners who list farming as their primary occupation has been steadily decreasing over the past fifteen years, and often, these individuals have no one to whom they might transfer operation of the farm.
- The choices open to the individual or family owner are seemingly few -- subdivide for development, sell for the consolidation into a larger farm, or stop farming the property leading to reversion to woodland.
- Another serious threat to family farms is intensive corporate agriculture which comes with a variety of

environmental and human health problems.

*Threat 4: Clean and Green and Rural Fragmentation in Susquehanna County.*

- The Clean and Green tax relief program was created by the Commonwealth to preserve farmland and forest land.
- In Susquehanna County the Act has resulted in a pattern of subdivisions with ten-acre lots.
- Most of Susquehanna County qualifies for the tax benefit program, even though the majority of program participants are not actually farmers, or even own farmland.
- The tax savings on a ten-acre parcel enrolled in Clean and Green outweigh the costs of the extra land, making it economically attractive to own a ten-acre parcel.
- High priced homes on large acreage may pay less property tax than modest homes on small parcels.
- Such fragmentation into large parcels means less workable land in the case of farms and smaller contiguous woodlands in forest management areas.

*Threat 5: Stream Degradation, Sedimentation and Water Quality.*

- A chief concern of NTC officials.
- Overall watershed health, and good water quality across the region, is crucial to ensuring a reliable source of groundwater for local residents.
- Water quality of streams and lakes is a prime source of community recreation and potential source of tourist revenue.
- Much of the growth in several NTC townships is associated with second homes around the lakes.
- Improper lake development can adversely affect water quality.
- Vegetative buffers along streams and lakes minimize bank erosion, filter surface water drainage, and helps maintain the cold water temperatures.

- Development disturbances to stream corridors and lake shores can cause chemical, biological and/or physical damages.
- The EPA lists agriculture and mining, which both often occur in close proximity to streams, as two major contributors to water pollution in Susquehanna County.
- Poor agricultural practices resulting in nutrient input may lead to stream degradation.
- Residential and commercial development also affects water resources with earth disturbance, increased stormwater and flooding, and on-site sewage disposal systems.

*Threat 6: Siting Landfills and Issues of Contamination.*

- Landfills can be characterized as a land use with economic benefits to the community; however, not without a host of additional potential environmental problems.
- The landfill in Middletown Township has apparently resulted in water and soil contamination.
- In Bridgewater Township, the former Bendix Company used a portion of its land to dump wastes from its chemical processing plants, which has apparently resulted in local well contamination and the loss of prime commercial/industrial space.
- Similar to many rural areas with lower land values, the NTC area is attractive to waste processors and landfills, but the local municipalities in the NTC do not have local laws or regulations to guide the siting of landfills.
- Zoning case law and Pennsylvania law in particular, prohibit the exclusion of land uses in local zoning laws, meaning municipalities must provide within their jurisdiction for every type of legal land use.
- The best protection for the municipalities would be to designate areas for landfills in the comprehensive plan (and zoning ordinances).

*Threat 7: Poor Forestry Planning and Management Practices and Habitat Degradation.*

- Though much of the forestry that takes place within the Coalition area is minimal compared to the rate of regenerating), it does not lessen the importance for sustainable forest management. Improper forestry practices present threats to many of the NTC municipalities.
- Incorrectly or over-intensive logging may significantly disrupt habitats and lead to erosion and ultimately impact surface water quality
- All Coalition municipalities should implement and enforce best management forestry practices.
- Poor forestry practices and an inattention to a changing mix of forest species is a serious long-term threat and controlling invasive exotic plant species must be part of forest management.
- White-tailed deer have become the most pressing forest problem in recent years. Browsing by deer can completely change forest composition, biodiversity, and sustainability and controlling the deer population is a critical element of maintaining long term viability of forests and the forest industry.
- Managing development in forested and agricultural areas will indirectly result in a minimization of the amount of the edge habitat preferred by deer. Conservation of larger tracts of forest and crop land can have an affect on deer populations through enabling concentrated hunting to continue.

*Threat 8: Loss of Cultural/Natural Resources: Timber Theft and Stone Wall Poaching.*

- As the value of standing timber and stone has increased, so has the appeal of stealing timber and stone.
- Increasing landowner awareness of timber theft problems is the best way to address the problem. Planners should work with landowner associations, professional forestry organizations, and state and extension foresters to develop such educational programs.

- The product of land clearing for agriculture and property delineation, stonewalls represent a link to the cultural history of Susquehanna County.
- The walls represent a great monetary wealth in addition to their historical value.
- Many citizens of the Northern Tier Coalition area have expressed concern over the poaching of stone walls and view this crime as both unlawful and a loss of local heritage.

### General Community Development Objectives

The following general community development objectives are included to provide a broad statement of the Coalition's expectations for the future growth and development of the NTC area:

- A. To protect the rights of property owners to enjoy and make productive use of their land while offering incentives to preserve agriculture and open space while allowing for reasonable residential and commercial development. This will ensure that the varying uses of land will complement one another and thus improve the economic, social, and aesthetic character of the community.

#### **Note About Open Space**

The preservation of open space is a common thread of this *Comprehensive Plan*. Open space is land which has not been developed for a constructive or productive use and is intended for environmental and natural resource protection, scenic, or recreational purposes. Open space may include, for example, woodland, wetlands, watercourses, reverting farmland, and floodplain. In the case of a development project, open space may include passive recreation areas such as ballfields, lawns and buffer areas. Agricultural land is certainly open land, but not truly open space because it is in fact highly developed for crop and livestock production.

- B. To provide for a wide range of residential and commercial uses at appropriate locations and establish performance standards to ensure that such uses do not unduly affect adjoining properties or the public health, safety and general welfare and are consistent with the historic character of the community.
- C. To establish realistic population densities in order to ensure health standards, privacy and open space and in order to provide utilities and community

services and facilities in the most convenient and efficient manner.

- D. To maintain and improve the road system for better internal circulation and movement of through traffic, which will facilitate the efficient and safe movement of people and goods.
- E. To provide the necessary community facilities and services to meet the needs of increased development and the growing population.
- F. To ensure that adequate sewage disposal is provided to maintain the public health and protect water quality, and consider the impact of central sewage on stimulating development.
- G. To guide the location of future development and establish developmental standards in such a way that negative impacts on the natural environment and natural resources are minimized, and to minimize existing and future water, air, land and noise pollution.
- H. To provide the opportunity for a wide-range and variety of housing types at reasonable densities to meet the needs of all residents; newly-formed households, growing families and senior citizens.
- I. To update and revise planning goals and objectives, and the operational tools necessary for implementation, in light of new data and changing conditions, and to meet a changing population, both current and new residents, in concert with maintaining a rural character.
- J. To provide the opportunity for local business and strengthen the area economy by encouraging well-planned commercial, industrial, residential, and recreational growth which will provide for local employment, shopping facilities, and recreational opportunities which in turn will strengthen the local tax base.
- K. To strive for coordination between policies, plans, and programs in the community through continued cooperation among governing officials, community interest groups, and the general populace.
- L. To use the comprehensive planning process to expand the level of intermunicipal cooperation.

**GOAL 1****Maintain NTC's existing rural working landscape and quality lifestyle; and, conserve agricultural land and forest land as important elements of the local economy, character, and scenic setting.**

The area's physical environment, regional location and past development practices have shaped and maintained its character as a rural-residential community with minimal commercial development and no industrial development. Agriculture and forestry remain important parts of the local economy, and open land is the predominate feature of the landscape. Although agriculture is declining, much agricultural land remains along with forest land. Residential development is concentrated in the Boroughs, small villages and subdivisions, the most concentrated commercial development is found in Bridgewater Township along Route 706, and industrial development is very limited. In much of the NTC area agricultural and forest land is interspersed with residential dwellings and small businesses and home occupations.

Open land was the cornerstone of the foundation of the area when its earliest settlers arrived, and has played a key role in the growth and development of the Coalition area and Susquehanna County as a whole. Without this open land, the timber and mineral resources it held, and the agricultural capability it offered, the character of the planning area would be dramatically different. Maintaining open land and the quality lifestyle associated with it is key to the future of the area. The twelve participating municipalities are perceived as attractive communities offering a high quality of life, and many are within commuting distance to employment in the greater Binghamton and Scranton metropolitan areas. Future development must be controlled and managed with an overriding concern to sustain the area's community character while meeting the needs and expectations of residents for employment, shopping and services with controlled commercial development.

**Objectives:**

- A. Preserve and conserve agricultural land, forest land, open space, significant natural features, and sensitive land areas
- B. Consider local land use management tools including flexible zoning performance standards to control density and minimize conflicts between existing and future development, and update the

management tools periodically to address changing conditions.

- C. Consider the use of *conservation subdivision design* zoning to cluster residential development away from important agricultural land and natural, historic, scenic and cultural features, and preserve the resulting open space.
- D. Encourage landowners to participate in the *Agricultural Security Program*, and the *Agricultural Preservation Program* for purchase of easements.
- E. Work to modify the *Act 319 Clean and Green* tax incentive program so it meets its original intent of preserving farmland and forest land.
- F. Do not overly restrict agriculture and forestry enterprises with unnecessary zoning and other regulations.
- G. Evaluate, in cooperation with the Susquehanna County Planning Commission, more progressive means of open land preservation including open land zoning, purchase of easements, and transfer of development rights, especially in cooperation with conservancy and land trust organizations.
- H. Consider the use of joint zoning with neighboring municipalities as a means of directing higher density residential and commercial/industrial development to areas best suited for such development.
- I. Ensure that adequate community facilities including sewage disposal and water supply are provided for all development.
- J. Where soils are suitable, encourage the use of soil based methods for sewage disposal; that is, on-site subsurface disposal and land application, instead of collection and treatment facilities with a surface water discharge.
- K. Carefully consider the expansion of community facilities such as central water supplies and central sewage collection and treatment facilities in terms

- of stimulating unwanted development in agricultural areas and areas with important natural, scenic and cultural features.
- L. Direct higher density development to areas already served by existing sewer and water systems.
  - M. Carefully control the location and scale of commercial establishments while recognizing the importance of such development to the convenience of local residents and to strengthen the tax base.
  - N. Limit heavy commercial uses and industrial uses to certain areas and establish performance standards to control noise, outdoor manufacturing, processing and storage; lighting; and other potential effects.
- O. Provide for a wide range of residential and commercial uses in appropriate areas which when developed in accord with zoning performance standards are consistent with rural character.
  - P. Control common law nuisances and threats to public health and safety due to, among others, noise, lack of property maintenance, poor building practices, junk accumulation, odors and uncontrolled burning.
  - Q. Cooperate with local business development organizations to promote commercial and industrial development which will not compromise the qualities of the NTC area which make it so attractive.

## **GOAL 2**

### **Conserve natural resources and open space and use the resources in a way to sustain the area's economy.**

Without careful planning and management, the use of the natural resources and sensitive environmental areas in the area can lead to the decline of the attractive rural character of the area and the quality lifestyle it affords, with eventual direct threats to the environment and public health and safety. Of special concern are soil and surface and ground water resources. Continued conservation of soil is vital to agriculture, and keeping the soil on the land prevents stream siltation. Most residents of the NTC planning area rely on ground water wells and springs for potable water. The Municipalities also recognize that the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) mandates that municipal planning and land use ordinances must be consistent with and cannot exceed the requirements of the *Clean Streams Law*, the *Agricultural Area Security Law*, the *Right to Farm Law*, the *Nutrient Management Act*, and state mining laws. The MPC also requires that forestry activities must be allowed as a principal permitted use in all zoning districts, prohibits zoning from unduly restricting agricultural activities, and requires zoning ordinances to provide for the reasonable development of minerals.

#### **Objectives:**

- A. Identify sensitive natural areas such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, steep slopes, poor soils and flood plains, and adopt regulations to protect such areas by limiting development.
- B. Evaluate and develop land use management tools in terms of effects on open space with the goal of maintaining open space to the greatest extent possible while allowing a reasonable density of development.
- C. Maintain up-to-date regulations and standards for storm water control, soil erosion and sedimentation control, well development, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal and other environmental concerns.
- D. Consider the use of land use control incentives, such as a density bonus, for the preservation of large sensitive natural areas, agriculture and open space.
- E. Consider the use of *conservation subdivision design* to cluster residential development away from important natural, historic, scenic and cultural features, and preserve the resulting open space.
- F. Encourage home occupations and small businesses as a means of allowing the owners of large parcels to realize economic gain thereby forestalling the development of open land.
- G. Use land use management tools to direct new residential and commercial development away from

- floodplain to areas where land is adequate to provide facilities necessary to support development and flood damage is minimized.
- H. Require as part of the land use control process the assessment of impacts of residential and nonresidential development on water quantity and quality.
- I. Encourage the use of soil based methods for sewage disposal; that is, on-site subsurface disposal and land application, instead of collection and treatment facilities with a surface water discharge.
- J. Monitor the effectiveness of existing on-lot sewage disposal systems and ensure that new systems are installed in accord with DEP standards
- K. Monitor ground water quality and consider the adoption of well installation and wellhead protection regulations.
- L. Monitor development projects in adjoining municipalities and assess impacts on the planning area.
- M. Evaluate zoning regulations in terms of effects on the viability of agriculture and the reasonable opportunity for mineral extraction.

### **GOAL 3**

#### **Ensure that commercial and industrial development is located and designed to be compatible with existing land use and community character.**

A healthy economy fosters a healthy community by providing business development and employment opportunities. Given the historical agricultural and later residential development pattern of the Coalition area with limited commercial development in most of the twelve municipalities, residents have historically relied primarily on nearby areas for major shopping and personal services and the greater Susquehanna County area, and employment centers in Binghamton and Scranton. Local government may choose to take no direct role in economic development, but can institute land use control and development policies that have a positive effect on the local economy and tax base, while addressing community conservation concerns and recognizing that residents will continue to rely on the greater region for employment and shopping and service needs.

community character, and to minimize conflicts with the tourism-recreation trade by limiting such characteristics as noise; outdoor manufacturing, processing and storage; lighting; and other potential effects.

#### **Objectives:**

- A. Direct new commercial development to areas of existing commercial development and where community facilities are adequate.
- B. Develop guidelines for commercial development to encourage design sensitive to the environment and community character.
- C. Adopt, monitor and update commercial and industrial development standards to protect the public health, welfare and safety, to preserve
- D. Promote local economic viability by allowing home occupations and home businesses consistent with residential districts and small businesses consistent with agricultural uses and the overall community character.
- E. Recognize the importance of the regional economy and monitor and participate in county and regional business development activities.
- F. Encourage commercial cluster development to avoid commercial strip development.

**GOAL 4****Provide for a variety of housing types and densities.**

Families and individuals of all income levels reside in the Coalition area and need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed.

**Objectives:**

- A. Allow residential development of various types (single-family, two-family, multi-family, mobile home parks) in certain areas at a density sufficiently high to moderate the land cost of the increasing cost of housing, yet assuring adequate water supply and sewage disposal.
- B. Encourage where it can be adequately be accommodated, the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing older homes which typically are larger and more difficult to maintain, especially for individuals on fixed incomes.
- C. Investigate and encourage participation in all county, state and federal housing rehabilitation and assistance programs to ensure residents receive full benefit from such programs.
- D. Require all residential development to meet adequate design standards and provide proper community facilities via the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- E. Require in any locally enacted Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance the continued ownership and maintenance by the Municipalities or a homeowners association of all improvements and facilities associated with residential development.
- F. Foster a housing market affordable to younger and fixed-income residents by carefully evaluating the affect of land use management tools on the cost of housing.
- G. Consider the adoption of an ordinance to regulate nuisances and safety hazards associated with dilapidated and dangerous structures.

**GOAL 5****Ensure that community facilities and services will be adequate to meet expected needs.**

Residents rely on community and public facilities and services to meet their transportation, educational, water supply, sewage disposal, police protection, emergency response, recreation and other daily living need. Local municipalities do not, and cannot, provide all the facilities and services demanded by residents, many such services being provided by other levels of government or volunteer organizations. Nevertheless, without diligent and ongoing attention to the operation and maintenance of existing facilities and services, and planning for new facilities and services, a municipality can fall short in adequately serving its residents.

**Objectives:**

- A. Systematically identify the need for local municipal community facilities and services, including useful life replacement of existing facilities, and develop a capital budget to meet the needs.
- B. Provide necessary maintenance of existing municipal buildings, equipment and other community facilities to extend the useful life and forestall unnecessary capital expenditures.
- C. Encourage and continue to support volunteer fire, ambulance and other public service organizations.
- D. Ensure that an adequate and safe water supply system, proper sewage disposal system, well designed and constructed roads and other facilities are provided by developers as part of any residential development.
- E. Manage all municipal facilities and services efficiently and effectively.

- F. Encourage and participate in any area intergovernmental cooperation efforts for community facilities planning and economies of scale for joint purchasing, recreation and other facilities and services.
- G. Maintain up-to-date standards for storm water control, soil erosion and sedimentation control, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal and other environmental concerns.
- H. Work with local volunteer fire and ambulance companies to develop measures to improve emergency response.
- I. Encourage NTC municipalities to implement enhanced 911 system provisions for road names, and structure addressing and numbering.

## GOAL 6

### Establish and maintain a road system adequate to safely and efficiently move goods and people through the Northern Tier Coalition area.

Safe and well maintained roads are vital to all communities, serving not only as the means of travel within the community, but as the direct link to the region and beyond. Route 29, Route 167, Route 267 and Route 858 are the primary north-south routes serving the NTC area, with Route 706 to the principal east and west route serving the southern section of the Coalition area. East west travel in the northern section of the NTC area is more less convenient given the lack of a higher capacity route. Connection to Interstate Route 81 is made via Route 706 east and New York State Route 17 is accessed via the north/south routes. The twelve municipalities have direct jurisdiction over some 425 miles of the roads in the community, being responsible for improvements and maintenance. The more heavily traveled routes are owned and maintained by the state, and total more than 200 hundred miles. Land use management tools must take into consideration the capacity of roads, directing commercial and higher density development to areas served by roads capable of carrying increased traffic and the trucks necessary to serve commercial establishments. Local officials must plan carefully to ensure adequate funding for the improvement and maintenance of locally-owned roads.

#### Objectives:

- A. Inventory and classify according to function all public roads in the twelve municipalities and assess maintenance and improvements needed.
- B. Identify key intersections and other problem areas, and plan for improvements.
- C. Maintain the adequacy of roads by requiring adequate off-street parking and loading, limited curb cuts, controlled and well designed access points, and standards for public dedication of roads.
- D. Limit higher density and higher traffic impact development to areas with adequate highway capacity to accommodate such development.
- E. Develop a road and intersection maintenance and capital improvements program.
- F. Maintain an up-to-date local municipal road ordinances setting standards for construction of public roads and establishing procedures for public dedication.
- G. Actively participate in all County and PennDOT highway planning programs.
- H. Encourage intermunicipal cooperation as a means of addressing local road maintenance and regional highway needs.
- I. Require as part of any zoning and land development approval for new or expanded uses, the issuance of a highway occupancy permit by the municipality or PennDOT, as appropriate.
- J. Maintain an up-to-date local municipal road occupancy ordinance setting standards for driveway access to Township and Borough roads and storm water and utility improvements within the road right-of-way.

- K. Establish in accord with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, a memorandum of understanding with PennDOT for the mutual review of land subdivisions and developments, and applications for state highway occupancy permits.
- L. Use weight limit posting and bonding to preserve the structural integrity of local roads.

### **GOAL 7**

#### **Protect historic structures as an important part of the character of the Coalition area.**

Many historic structures are found in the NTC planning area, ranging from farm residences and outbuildings, to the older homes villages, to old schools and churches. These buildings were merely erected as part of a growing community, and although many of the early structures are now gone, the many which remain add tremendously to the character of the area. In addition to buildings, stone walls and fences are significant historic features throughout the twelve municipalities. Originally an integral part of early agricultural practices, stone wall and fences are now being incorporated into home design and as the prime feature in landscaping. The preservation of historic buildings and other features, and encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing historic character are critical to the future of the community.

#### **Objectives:**

- A. Develop an inventory of historic resources in each municipality.
- B. Based on the historic resources inventory, create a local historic register and consider nomination of qualifying structures and places to the National Register of Historic Places.
- C. Include in development design standards the consideration of historic features. For example, use conservation residential subdivision design to preserve farm residences and stone walls.
- D. Develop guidelines for residential and commercial development to encourage historically sensitive design. These guidelines would be recommended to developers in areas not included in a formal historic district where specific architectural design standards can be applied by ordinance.
- E. Allow the *adaptive use* of large older homes to enable owners to adequately maintain the structures. For example, allowing the inclusion of an apartment unit or a bed and breakfast business would generate income for overall building maintenance.