INTRODUCTION

This Element includes policies that will ensure the long-term operation and maintenance of community facilities that serve the Centre Region and its residents. The Element recognizes a long-standing policy in the Centre Region of directing the majority of future growth to areas within an established Regional Growth Boundary. The Regional Growth Boundary is a broad planning term, described in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code as a designated growth area to accommodate projected growth for the next 20 years. It is the boundary within which urban services, including public sewer, water, transportation, fire, police and schools, are typically provided or planned for and where a higher density of development is necessary to efficiently and economically support those services. By establishing and maintaining a Regional Growth Boundary, the Centre Region can protect valuable natural resources and important agricultural lands and reduce leap-frog development in outlying rural areas. The policy of directing future development to areas within a Regional Growth Boundary originated with the 1976 Comprehensive Plan, was carried forward with the adoption of the 1990 and 2000 Comprehensive Plans, and is incorporated within this document.

The community facilities listed here are provided as the result of efforts by a range of entities, including local municipalities, authorities, nonprofit organizations, or private entities. Thus, communication and cooperation among the operators is important to the ongoing provision of services to meet community needs.

The community services and facilities provided at the regional level are necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of the Centre Region’s residents. The Centre Region’s community facilities and services are in generally good condition, both in terms of maintenance and operations, and are adequate to serve the community for the 20- to 30-year timeframe of this document.

The Community Services and Facilities Element is organized into the following sections:

- Key Issues and Findings
- Goals, Objectives, and Policies
  - Water - Map M14
  - Wastewater - Maps M14 and M15
  - Refuse and Recycling
  - Utilities - Map M14
  - Emergency Services (Law Enforcement, Fire Protection, Medical) - Map M16
  - Schools and Libraries - Map M17
KEY ISSUES AND FINDINGS

The Centre Region’s community facilities provide vital services, such as clean water, wastewater treatment and disposal, emergency management, and medical and educational opportunities. In preparing the Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions, the following issues emerged as key findings regarding the current status of our community facilities. These key findings point the way toward the development of goals, objectives, and policies that will ensure their long-term viability.

1. Adequate water supply is generally available from multiple providers to serve future development in the Centre Region; however, some smaller community water systems face supply challenges.

2. The University Area Joint Authority (UAJA) is limited with regard to the volume of reclaimed water that can be used for stream augmentation. However, based on UAJA estimates, treatment capacity is expected to be adequate for the 20- to 30-year timeframe of this plan. Stream augmentation capacity and capacity for reuse water customers is also expected to be adequate for the next 20 to 30 years, but upgrades planned for conveyance lines may be needed as development occurs.

3. The Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy may impact future expansion or development of wastewater treatment facilities. How this will influence development patterns in the region continues to evolve as new technologies and best management practices emerge.

4. The Centre Area Transit Authority (CATA) continues to be the primary public transit service provider in the Centre Region.

5. The Alpha, Boalsburg, Warriors Mark, and Port Matilda Fire Companies continue to be viable and successful volunteer fire companies serving the Centre Region municipalities.

6. Volunteers to support the fire companies and Centre LifeLink EMS are crucial to maintaining service to the Centre Region.

7. Multiple medical centers are available throughout the Centre Region to perform acute specialized procedures, and urgent and general medical care.

8. Discussions continue on locations and funding for future State College Area School District facility upgrades or replacement, including the State College Area High School.

9. Penn State University continues to provide state-of-the-art research and education worldwide. Future expansions in physical plant and student enrollment will continue to impact all Centre Region municipalities.
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Water

Water is a critical resource for residents and businesses in the Centre Region and is necessary for the future growth and development of the community. Ninety-nine percent of the Centre Region’s public and private water supply comes from groundwater sources. As a result, protection of the groundwater supply is a high priority and the focus of many regional initiatives, such as riparian buffer programs, well and borehole construction inspections, storm water management, and the on-lot sewage management program. The Centre Region currently enjoys an adequate water supply and good water quality. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are aimed at protection and conservation of water resources to ensure continued quality and supply for existing users and to support future growth.

GOAL 1 - A reliable, safe, and cost-effective water supply will meet the current and future needs of the Centre Region community.

Objective 1.1

Protect the high-quality surface and groundwater resources in the Centre Region.

Policy 1.1.1

Promote the Spring Creek Watershed Association’s Water Resource Monitoring Project by assuring that regular reports on the program are provided to municipal planning commissions and governing bodies for their information and use.

Policy 1.1.2

Encourage educational and monitoring programs offered by the Spring Creek Watershed Commission and others within the Spring and Spruce Creek Watersheds.

Policy 1.1.3

Encourage efforts to identify and monitor groundwater contamination from specific and known pollutant sources and former land uses, such as Bathgate Springs, Nease Chemical, Erie Tech, Balfurd Cleaners, and the former State College Landfill.

Did you know?

• Protection of the Centre Region’s water resources was identified as one of the highest priorities in a survey of residents conducted in 2011. Regional programs to address water resource protection include storm water management, riparian buffer regulations, on-lot sewage disposal management, and well and borehole construction standards.
Policy 1.1.4
Continue implementation of the municipal Well and Borehole Construction Ordinances and development of a well and borehole database.

Policy 1.1.5
Promote and assist with the implementation of the Sewage Management Program to ensure the continued maintenance and long-term operation of existing and future on-lot septic systems in the Centre Region.

Policy 1.1.6
Implement the municipal riparian buffer management ordinances through the land-development plan review process.

Policy 1.1.7
Encourage and support efforts to erect and maintain signage indicating the entrance to important watershed areas.

Objective 1.2
Ensure the efficient use of water supplies by encouraging water conservation, water reuse, and public education about local water resources.

Policy 1.2.1
Support marketing efforts by the University Area Joint Authority and others for high-purity (beneficial reuse) water to identify long-term customers along existing and proposed routes of the high purity (beneficial reuse) water lines.

Policy 1.2.2
Continue to support the University Area Joint Authority’s efforts to advance future phases of the high-purity (beneficial reuse) water project to encourage groundwater recharge.

Policy 1.2.3
Support and promote the development of public education programs by water authorities, water companies, and private and non-profit agencies to increase public awareness of water conservation methods.
Policy 1.2.4

Prepare and maintain accurate growth forecasts and share data with water authorities and private water companies for use in estimating future water use in the Centre Region.

Policy 1.2.5

Encourage the installation of low-flow fixtures in existing structures, particularly in older multi-family buildings.

Policy 1.2.6

Encourage water providers to incentivize water conservation in multi-family structures by offering a cost-per-unit representation of water usage.

Policy 1.2.7

Ensure long-term water quality and quantity by requiring interconnections, where practical and feasible, of existing public water systems and of water systems in new developments meeting minimum thresholds for a community water system as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Policy 1.2.8

Ensure that proposed development of community water systems results in viable, self-sustaining systems capable of meeting state and federal mandates and providing fire protection.

Policy 1.2.9

Utilize available mapping to protect recharge areas during the land-development process to ensure the long-term availability, quality and quantity of groundwater.

Policy 1.2.10

Revisit, with the Public Services and Environmental Committee, the Source Water Protection Agreement signed by University Area Joint Authority, and the College Township and State College Borough Water Authorities, to address concerns regarding provision, distribution, and management of high-purity (beneficial reuse) water.

Riparian Buffers: The Centre Region municipalities have adopted riparian buffering requirements to protect ground and surface waters from contaminants caused by runoff. Riparian buffers can filter out contaminants, reduce flooding by slowing water flows, prevent erosion of stream banks and support aquatic life and biodiversity by providing a source of food and shade.
Objective 1.3

Support municipal, county, and state efforts to reduce the impacts of storm water runoff on water quality by assisting with implementation of storm water management regulations where appropriate, considering policies such as State College Borough’s policy to reduce impervious coverage by 2%, and educating the public regarding the impacts of storm water on water quality.

Policy 1.3.1

Encourage the adoption of regulations that would reduce impervious coverage and would allow pervious alternatives.

Policy 1.3.2

Encourage municipalities to incorporate low-impact design practices to infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source.

Policy 1.3.3

Support efforts by the Centre County Conservation District to educate farmers regarding the use of best management practices to minimize erosion and runoff from agricultural operations.

An example of “critical recharge” areas located in the Penn State University Park main campus.
Policy 1.3.4

Work with the municipalities to maintain and update the inventory of existing storm water facilities and their condition, and to identify options for long-term management of storm water basins.

Policy 1.3.5

Continue to ensure through the plan review process that storm water management requirements are incorporated in new development projects to address runoff and pollution concerns.

Policy 1.3.6

Continue to ensure through the plan review process that National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) plans to address non-point pollution from runoff are prepared and submitted when required.

Policy 1.3.7

Encourage municipalities to work together to implement national best management practices for storm water, including public education about reducing storm water pollution, identifying and eliminating improper discharges and spills from storm drain systems, decreasing impervious coverage, and requiring property owners to address storm-water runoff before and after construction.

Policy 1.3.8

Encourage the development of a list of funding sources to assist in retrofitting deficient storm water facilities.

Wastewater

The Centre Region is located at the headwaters of two high-quality watersheds. As a result, proper conservation, wastewater treatment and reuse are critical to protecting groundwater quality for the Centre Region municipalities as well as downstream communities. Within the established Regional Growth Boundary, wastewater treatment is provided by the University Area Joint Authority and Penn State University wastewater treatment plants. The Sewer Service Area is identified in the Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. It describes the area within which a particular urban service (sewer) is provided or planned. Outside the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area, on-lot systems are used to treat wastewater. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are to ensure that there is adequate capacity available at the treatment plants to meet future development needs for the next 20- to 30-year timeframe of this document and to ensure the proper maintenance of the on-lot systems to ensure their long-term viability.
GOAL 2 - Sewer service in the Centre Region is efficient, cost-effective, and adequate to support future growth.

Objective 2.1

Implement the adopted Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan and Supplemental Plans to ensure the logical provision and extension of public sewer service.

Policy 2.1.1

Periodically review and update the process for considering expansions to the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area as well as increases in Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDU) within the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area.

Policy 2.1.2

Periodically receive and review as necessary requests for the expansion of the existing sewer service area and facilitate discussion of the expansion applications through the Municipal, Centre Regional Planning Commission, and General Forum review process.

Policy 2.1.3

Work with the Public Services and Environmental Committee to study and evaluate the need for alternative technologies for wastewater treatment and reuse.

Policy 2.1.4

Continue to monitor on an annual basis the status of the collection and conveyance system projects that have been identified for upgrade as part of the Act 537 Sewage Management Plan.

Policy 2.1.5

Coordinate activities among Penn State University, State College Borough, and the University Area Joint Authority related to the diversion of wastewater from the Penn State Wastewater Treatment Plant to the University Area Joint Authority's Spring Creek Pollution Control Facility by 2016, as outlined in the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan.

The Regional Growth Boundary:

- was established with the 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan
- is a designated area intended to accommodate projected growth for the next 20-30 years
- is the boundary within which urban services, including public sewer, water, transportation, fire, police and schools, are typically provided or planned for
- is typically reserved for the higher density development necessary to efficiently and economically support urban services
- is roughly concurrent with the public sewer service area
- does not prohibit growth in outlying areas
- is used as a guide—it is not a law
- contains approximately 6,200 acres of developable land
Policy 2.1.6

Continue to ensure that sewer planning is done for all new land-development activities through consultation with municipalities, developers, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the University Area Joint Authority.

Policy 2.1.7

Monitor activities associated with the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy as they relate to regulations on stream discharge or augmentation from point sources and non-point sources, such as farm operations.

Objective 2.2

Assure the long-term viability of on-lot sewage systems to protect surface and subsurface water to retain the high quality of water in the community.

Policy 2.2.1

Continue the Centre Region Code Agency's implementation of the municipal sewage management regulations, including routine inspection and pumping notifications for individual on-lot septic systems.

Policy 2.2.2

Use data collected through the sewage management program to map and identify clusters of problem areas with potential on-lot septic system failures to inform future planning efforts and implement cost-effective solutions.

Policy 2.2.3

Review planning modules submitted with land-development plans to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements of the municipality, the sewage enforcement officer, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regarding the placement and percolation sites for on-lot wastewater treatment, reuse, and disposal systems.

Objective 2.3

Continue to support the University Area Joint Authority’s efforts to expand the use of high-purity (beneficial reuse) water through recharge or by consumption in order to accommodate capacity limitations associated with future growth.
Policy 2.3.1

Work with the Public Services and Environmental Committee, the University Area Joint Authority, and the business community to identify long-term customers along existing and proposed routes of the high-purity (beneficial reuse) water lines.

Objective 2.4

Ensure that adequate wastewater treatment, conveyance, reuse, and discharge capacity is available for future growth within the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area.

Policy 2.4.1

Conduct periodic build-out analyses and population forecasts to determine the need for and timing of projects to add wastewater treatment, conveyance, reuse, and discharge capacity.

Policy 2.4.2

Maintain an inventory of available properties within the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area to assist municipalities in decisions regarding expansion requests.

Policy 2.4.3

Direct new development projects to available properties within the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area where existing infrastructure is available.

Refuse & Recycling

Refuse and recycling collection is a basic service necessary to the health, safety, and welfare of visitors to and residents of the Centre Region. Sanitary disposal of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional solid waste in the Centre Region is provided in a cost-effective and efficient manner by public and private entities through joint contract, municipal service, or individual contract. As a result of municipal regulations requiring the proper disposal of all refuse, there are few incidents of environmental pollution caused by improper dumping. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are to enhance recycling and composting opportunities to conserve landfill space, and to maintain the high level of service offered by refuse and recycling providers.

GOAL 3 - Solid waste disposal and recycling collection is provided in a cost-effective and efficient manner to all residents and businesses in the Centre Region.
Objective 3.1

Reduce the waste stream to landfills by providing convenient and cost-effective refuse and recycling collection.

Policy 3.1.1

Assist the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority in encouraging the state and county to expand the list of items regularly collected for recycling to include pharmaceuticals, household hazardous waste, oil, white goods, and plastics not currently accepted.

Policy 3.1.2

Through the land-development review process, continue to ensure that adequate space is provided for the installation of refuse and recycling receptacles, particularly for multi-family and non-residential development.

Policy 3.1.3

Assist organizations such as the Central Pennsylvania Builders Association and the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority to develop programs that encourage the recycling and reuse of construction materials.

Policy 3.1.4

Assist the COG Refuse and Recycling Administrator to develop a targeted campaign to enhance and encourage recycling efforts of commercial property owners.

Policy 3.1.5

Work with the municipalities and the COG Refuse and Recycling Administrator to evaluate options for municipal collection of residential yard waste and disposal at DEP-approved, municipally designated locations.

Policy 3.1.6

Support and promote efforts to initiate or expand municipal programs for the composting of food waste.

Policy 3.1.7

Support markets for recycled products by utilizing recycled content materials, such as glass-phalt, in municipal operations.

Policy 3.1.8

Explore marketplace incentives to encourage a higher commitment to recycling.
Utilities

The Centre Region is served by all major utilities, including electric, natural gas, land and cellular telephone, broadband Internet, and satellite and cable television; however, some services are not available in all parts of the Centre Region. Rural areas outside of the Regional Growth Boundary may not have the same level or type of services as can be provided efficiently and cost-effectively in the high-density developments typically found within the Regional Growth Boundary. In addition, a limited number of providers and lack of competition can affect pricing and availability of services for all residents of the Centre Region. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are to identify opportunities for expanding utility services to areas of the community designated for future growth and to encourage a wider variety of choice for residents.

GOAL 4 - Public utilities are sited in a manner that will efficiently and economically serve the greatest number of residents of the community with minimal environmental impact.

Objective 4.1

Utilities, including electricity, natural gas, land and cellular telephone, broadband internet, and satellite and cable television facilities should be provided cost-effectively to new and existing developments.

Policy 4.1.1

Work with developers and utility providers to ensure that utility installations are designed and developed to minimize visual impact, to maximize reliability, and to avoid environmental degradation to the extent possible.

Policy 4.1.2

Work with utility providers to map the location of existing lines and/or service areas and to coordinate infrastructure expansions, upgrades, or replacements to coincide with future development and or maintenance projects, such as road construction.

Policy 4.1.3

Work with utility providers to encourage co-location of communication facilities on existing structures to increase coverage and to prevent unnecessary scattering of these facilities.

Policy 4.1.4

Explore opportunities for the extension of high-speed Internet and fiber-optic services to a wider area of the community.
Policy 4.1.5

Work with utility providers regarding the future location of lines and easements for transmission facilities to ensure a safe distance from development activities.

Policy 4.1.6

Create and maintain a list of alternative utility providers and services available to private citizens.

Emergency Services

Public safety is a high priority in the Centre Region. A range of emergency services, from volunteer firefighters to state and municipal police officers to non-profit medical care and transport providers to a regional emergency management coordinator ensure that the Centre Region’s residents and visitors are adequately protected and safe. These providers are linked by the unified emergency communications (9-1-1) system operated by Centre County Government. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan aim to continue the high level of service currently available and to encourage opportunities for improvement where appropriate.

GOAL 5 - Police, fire, and emergency services are available and sufficient to serve all residents of and visitors to the Centre Region.

Objective 5.1

Maintain a high level of fire protection, delivered by a predominately volunteer service through inter-agency cooperation, training, recruitment, and retention efforts.

Policy 5.1.1

Work with the Alpha, Boalsburg, Port Matilda, and Warrior’s Mark fire companies to improve access to GIS data and mapping for firefighting and emergency response purposes.

Policy 5.1.2

Assist the fire companies in identifying demographic trends that affect the future recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Fire protection in the Centre Region is provided by volunteers with the Alpha, Boalsburg, Port Matilda and Warriors Mark Fire Companies.
Policy 5.1.3

Assist the fire companies with exploring opportunities to increase public awareness and interest in the volunteer system to maintain the current levels of service and response times.

Policy 5.1.4

Ensure through the land development review process that new development provides adequate access for fire and emergency responders.

Policy 5.1.5

Continue to support the coordination of emergency services activities among the volunteer fire companies, the Emergency Management Operations Center, and Penn State University.

Policy 5.1.6

Support efforts to maintain the inter-operability of the 9-1-1 system.

Policy 5.1.7

Ensure that water systems installed to serve new development have the capacity to provide fire protection.

Objective 5.2

Prepare for emergencies through public education, emergency-responder training, and public/private sector cooperation and coordination.

Policy 5.2.1

Encourage fire companies and emergency responders to offer public education and awareness programs that advise residents, particularly those outside the Regional Growth Boundary, to have strategies in place for self-reliance until responders can report to the scene of an emergency, such as a fire or an extended power outage.

Policy 5.2.2

Assist the Centre Region Emergency Management Coordinator in the update of the Emergency Operations Plan and related documents for use by municipal officials and emergency-services providers.

The Centre Region Emergency Management program coordinates services among the six Centre Region municipalities and Penn State University, the Centre County Office of Emergency Services and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.
Policy 5.2.3

Work with the Centre Region Emergency Management Coordinator to ensure that locations for new emergency shelters are identified as needed, based on population growth.

Policy 5.2.4

Assist the Centre Region Emergency Management Coordinator to ensure that emergency-services providers have adequate access to new development projects.

Objective 5.3

Maintain a high level of cost-effective public safety service from state and local police forces.

Policy 5.3.1

Monitor legislation that would require payment by municipalities for State Police services to local governments to assist in determining the best way of delivering police protection services in the future.

Policy 5.3.2

Encourage and facilitate collaboration and coordination among municipal police services providers to increase efficiency and maximize levels of service.

Objective 5.4

Ensure the continued availability of high-quality, cost-effective, medical care for residents and visitors to the Centre Region.

Policy 5.4.1

Direct new medical services facilities to locations within the Regional Growth Boundary.

Policy 5.4.2

Monitor the availability of land that is appropriately zoned for health care facilities to ensure adequate opportunity for expansion of existing facilities and the addition of new facilities as needed.

Policy 5.4.3

Encourage medical facilities to work with the local transit provider to ensure that health care services are accessible to all residents.

Policy 5.4.4

Encourage the co-location of health care facilities and health care-related businesses to improve access and choice of services for residents.
Public Schools & Libraries

The Centre Region is served by a first-class school system and an outstanding public library. The State College Area School District’s 6,900 students score significantly higher than state and national averages in critical reading, writing, and math. In recent years, local tax dollars have facilitated multimillion-dollar construction or renovation projects for elementary and middle school facilities to prolong their useful service to the community. Plans for improvement or replacement of the existing high school are on the horizon. Public schools are supported by a variety of parochial, private, and charter schools. In the future, school alternatives may expand to include online options, rather than bricks-and-mortar facilities.

The Schlow Centre Region Library serves as a popular community gathering place, offering books, magazines, newspapers, and other media for loan, as well as access to public computers, Wi-Fi, and meeting rooms for civic, cultural, and educational activities. When compared with libraries in communities with similar population and budget, Schlow’s checkouts and program attendance consistently show above-average performance.

The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are to sustain, promote, and encourage the high-quality services provided by the State College Area School District, including charter schools, technical schools, business schools, and parochial schools, and Schlow Centre Region Library.

**GOAL 6** - High-quality educational facilities and opportunities are available for all residents of the Centre Region.

**Objective 6.1**

Ensure the continued wide variety of educational opportunities and facilities.

**Policy 6.1.1**

Meet annually with school officials to exchange information on development trends and demographic changes that may impact the timing and need for future school facilities.
Policy 6.1.2

Actively engage with school officials to identify appropriate locations within the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area for new or expanded school facilities and, in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, review and provide recommendations regarding any proposed action by the school district to locate, demolish, remove, sell, or lease any school structure or land.

Policy 6.1.3

Assist school officials with planning for the reuse of existing surplus school sites.

Policy 6.1.4

Explore opportunities for increasing coordination between employers and educators to ensure a supply of workers with the occupational skills to attract innovative businesses.

Policy 6.1.5

Advocate for educational services and facilities, both public and private, that address current needs and changing technology.

Objective 6.2

Ensure continued availability of programs and materials provided through the Schlow Centre Region Library.

Policy 6.2.1

Provide information to assist the Schlow Centre Region Library Director and Board with development of the long-range strategic plan for the library.

Policy 6.2.2

Work with the Schlow Centre Region Library Director as requested to monitor community growth to assess needs for branch libraries or additional access points to collections and computers.

Policy 6.2.3

Encourage the state to provide the funding needed to comply with library service requirements or to grant flexibility to reduce hours or services based on the funding provided.

Policy 6.2.4

Support and encourage the expansion of public and private support for the Schlow Centre Region Library and its outreach programs.
Policy 6.2.5
Facilitate opportunities for expanded access to computer and Internet at the Schlow Centre Region Library to serve residents of the Centre Region.

Policy 6.2.6
Encourage and promote access to Schlow's electronic collections to meet changing demands for e-materials and to reduce costs of homebound delivery, when possible.