

# Implementation

## INTRODUCTION

The Centre Region Comprehensive Plan comprises goals, objectives, and policies that help define a collective vision of the Region's future. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the Centre Region municipalities, regional agencies and commissions, community leaders, and citizens. Implementation of the Plan will be crucial if it is to have a lasting impact on the Region's physical development.

The purpose of the Implementation Element is to define the strategy that will be used to implement the Plan and move the Region closer to achieving its goals. Implementation will occur through ongoing and day-to-day actions by the Region and its municipalities as well as through the completion of specific tasks that are identified to implement Plan policies. By using the implementation strategy outlined in this Element, tasks and priorities for implementation can be identified and placed into timeframes for completion. The strategy outlined in this Element will help ensure that necessary actions are taken to move the Region closer to achieving its goals.

This Element also defines the tools that will be used to measure the Region's progress in moving toward achieving the Plan's goals and objectives. The use of metrics, along with periodic assessment of our success, will allow the Region to determine if the goals that have been set are achieved and any new issues are addressed.

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## The Implementation Strategy

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code states that Comprehensive Plans must include a discussion of short- and long-range implementation strategies. To address this requirement, this Element outlines an implementation strategy that will allow the Centre Region to implement the Plan's policies while measuring its success at achieving identified goals and objectives.

The implementation strategy identifies the steps that will be taken to establish implementation issues and priorities, when issues will be addressed, and those who will be responsible or best suited to complete any tasks identified. The strategy outlined in this Element should be carried out separately from the Plan itself, which will allow for greater flexibility and the ability to make amendments when necessary. The steps needed to carry out this strategy can be completed either concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan or after the Plan is approved.

The result of the proposed implementation strategy will be a list of implementation tasks, issues, and timeframes that can be used to guide the activities of the Region and its municipalities. The list should act as an addendum to the Plan and does not replace the need to continue using the Plan regularly as a guide and reference.

## Strategy

The strategy that will be used to create a list of implementation tasks, issues, and timeframes involves several steps. Those steps are as follows:

### **STEP 1: Compile a List of Important Issues and Priorities**

The first step of the implementation strategy will be to receive input from the municipalities on what they feel are the most important issues and priorities from the Plan and those that should be considered for implementation first. When compiling a list of issues and priorities that should be implemented first, Elected Officials may wish to consult their residents, Planning Commission, and other Boards and Commissions. This list of issues and priorities could include general ideas—for example, agricultural preservation—or specific policies or groups of policies.

### **STEP 2: Organization of Issues and Priorities into Timeframes**

Regional and municipal planning staff will organize the issues and priorities identified in Step 1 into timeframes when they can be addressed. This list will consider available staffing and other resources as well as ongoing tasks that staff will also be required to do throughout the lifetime of the Plan. Specific tasks will be identified for issues that have been designated for short-term implementation. Any issues and priorities that are identified for mid- or long-term implementation would include less detail on potential implementation tasks. Staff will also create a list of ongoing tasks that will take place through the course of regular regional and municipal activities that will implement portions of the plan.

### **STEP 3: Review by the Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) and the Transportation and Land Use Committee (TLU)**

The CRPC and COG TLU Committee will review and provide comment on the tasks, issues, and timeframes identified by staff in Step 2. The list will be revised based on comments received.

### **STEP 4: List of Implementation Tasks, Issues, and Timeframes**

The completed list of implementation tasks, issues, and timeframes will be provided to the COG General Forum for informational purposes. Tasks listed for short-term implementation will be incorporated into the COG Annual Program Plan. Short-term implementation tasks can also be incorporated by municipalities into any applicable municipal work programs.

### **STEP 5: Annual Review and Revision**

The list of implementation tasks, issues, and timeframes will be reviewed, revised, and approved on an annual basis by the CRPC and COG TLU Committee. As tasks listed in the short-term category are completed, issues listed in the mid- or long-term categories will be moved to the short-term category and detailed tasks will be identified for any new short-term issue at that time. The mid- and long-term categories will be updated with issues from the Comprehensive Plan that have not been placed into a timeframe for implementation.

## Implementation Timeframes

While the Comprehensive Plan contains hundreds of policies, implementation of these policies should occur over the lifetime of the plan, enabling the Region to move toward its shared goals at a steady pace. Establishing when issues and priorities related to the plan's policies will be addressed is crucial to ensuring that action steps can be adequately planned for by those responsible for implementation. Tasks may not be completed within the identified timeframe if they are large in scope or require ongoing updates. The timeframes refer to when a task will begin, rather than when it will be completed. The timeframes identified for tasks and issues can be amended as the implementation strategy is reviewed and revised on an annual basis. Implementation tasks and issues will initially be organized into one of the timeframes listed below.

### Short Term (1-3 years)

Issues identified as “short term” are those that should be addressed, entirely or in part, within the first 1 to 3 years following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Specific tasks, along with those responsible to complete them, will be identified for issues listed in this timeframe.

### Mid Term (4-6 years)

Issues identified as mid-term should be addressed entirely or in part between years 4 and 6 following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Long Term (7-10 years)

Issues identified as long term should be addressed entirely or in part between years 7 and 10 following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Issues that remain unaddressed at the end of this timeframe as well as those that will require ongoing implementation should be considered for inclusion in the next Comprehensive Plan update.

### Ongoing

Ongoing tasks are those that will be completed through the course of normal regional or municipal operations or activities and may occur multiple times throughout the lifetime of the Comprehensive Plan. These tasks often have a set deadline. Ongoing tasks can include activities such as reviewing subdivision and land development plans, updating the Long Range Transportation Plan, etc.

## Implementation Responsibility

Responsibility for addressing the tasks identified through the use of the implementation strategy can be assumed by regional agencies, individual municipalities, regional authorities and commissions, participating service providers, and government agencies. In addition to primary responsibility, other government agencies, community groups, and organizations may provide assistance and support. In addition to determining implementation responsibility, the need to coordinate implementation throughout the Region is crucial. While primary responsibility for implementation may ultimately require municipal action, the need for regional discussion, coordination, and consensus will help to ensure that the Region is moving together toward achieving its goals.

## Measuring Our Progress

As the Region moves forward with implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the ability to measure success in completing and achieving the Plan’s objectives and goals is crucial. Measuring progress in achieving the vision laid out by the Comprehensive Plan should be accomplished through the use of metrics that measure indicators related to the plans goals and objectives. Metrics can determine if the objectives in the Plan have been met and whether the goals that have been outline are closer to being achieved. By measuring implementation progress, it is possible to make modifications to the plan as needed to ensure that the implementation continues toward achieving the goals.

### Establishing Metrics

Identifying metrics to measure implementation progress is a task that should be completed within the first few years following the Plan’s adoption. Identification of metrics should be completed by the CRPC and should be a recurring task listed for short-term implementation. The use of metrics should remain flexible; as they may need to be refined or changed altogether if new or more reliable data become available. Information used to measure the Plan’s success can come from a variety of sources or can be collected, when possible. As metrics to measure the Plan’s success are identified, it will be important to consider the following:

- Does the metric directly measure progress toward the goal or objective?
- Is the metric something that can be affected or influenced by regional or municipal action?
- How much time, effort, or expense is required to obtain the data?
- Does the metric allow for comparison over time and across geographies?

Metrics should provide a way to measure whether or not implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is moving the Region closer to achieving the Plan’s goals. Metrics can be associated with the Plan’s goals or the Plan’s objectives, which are intended to support the goals. Metrics can also be used to identify thresholds when further implementation actions should be taken or reassessments should be made. One possible method of displaying and tracking metrics is through the use of a metrics table. An example is shown below.

GOAL 2: A Regional Growth Boundary & Sewer Service Area for the Centre Region to continue to guide growth.		
Metric	Desired Trend	Actual Trend
The percent of building permits issued for new construction inside the RGB/SSA.	To remain at or above 90%.	91% (2011)
The development potential of vacant land within the RGB/SSA.	To have adequate land to meet projected population growth for at least 30 years. (This should be calculated by using population projections and median household size and comparing this with development potential of vacant land.)	Current 2012 estimates (REDCAP) indicate that there is adequate land to meet this requirement

## Progress Reports

The Centre Regional Planning Commission Annual Report will include a report on the previous year's Comprehensive Plan Implementation Actions as well as an analysis of the Plan's success through the use of identified metrics. Any unexpected deviations in metric results will also be explained thoroughly in the annual report. By periodically evaluating implementation progress and its success, necessary amendments can be made to the list of tasks, issues, and timeframes to ensure that the Region continues to move toward achieving its goals.

## Periodic Assessment

As the Region moves forward with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the annual review of the implementation tasks, issues, and timeframes list and identified metrics will help to determine if Plan policies are effectively moving the Region toward its goals. If it is determined that desired trends are not being met or that particular implementation actions have not been effective, solutions and remedial actions should be identified.

If it is determined through the annual review process that minor updates to the Comprehensive Plan are needed, steps should be taken to amend the affected Elements as well as any related implementation tasks, issues, or timeframes. The amendment process is identical to that of the adoption process; however, updates could be targeted at specific Elements only, without the need to revise the entire document.

