

# HSPS Regional Planning Priorities

July 17, 2020

The Regional Task Force for the Hamilton, Stroud, Pocono, and Stroudsburg Regional Comprehensive Plan identified a variety of planning topics that the regional comprehensive might address. Brief descriptions of each topics were prepared; words and phrases used by the Task Force or in the survey are underlined to keep local concerns in clear view.

The Task Force prioritized these topics to focus the plan’s development on the most important needs—known as planning priorities (listed as 1-6 below). A potential direction for how the plan should address each topic was also prepared (shown by ➤). Additional topics may be integrated into the planning priority discussions as appropriate or addressed as resources allow.

### How We’ll Use the Planning Priorities

On behalf of the Regional Task Force, Gannett Fleming will conduct focus groups with stakeholders to review and refine the draft direction and explore ways to make policy and program changes that move the region toward desired outcomes for 2030.

<b>Planning Priorities</b>	
<b>1. Intermunicipal Coordination</b>	can enhance the provision and efficiency of public services – such as police and fire protection, emergency medical services, trash and recycling pick-up, as well as local road, water, and sewer infrastructure. Strategically sharing service contracts, municipal equipment and staff, can prove to be less costly.
	➤ The plan should identify methods for the municipalities to coordinate their services. It could entail cooperative land use policies (including zoning and open space protection), local road maintenance services, safety services, etc.
<b>2. A Prosperous Economy</b>	is one that grows, evolves, and reinvents its products, services, and buildings/spaces to serve the market, sustains employment, and expands the tax base.
	➤ The plan should examine trends in the economy/employment (prior to COVID-19), identify sectors for potential growth, decline, or other change, and infer land use-transportation-infrastructure needs to support desired economic growth.
	➤ The plan should identify tools and approaches that... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ target areas for redevelopment/reinvestment.</li> <li>▪ encourage bike/ped/transit access and use.</li> <li>▪ help education and industry sectors strengthen the workforce pipeline.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Housing Issues</b>	such as affordability and variety constrain the market, particularly affecting the young- and old-aged ends of the population spectrum. The housing market tends to favor single-family detached homes, which have been developed on larger lots and carry higher property values and real estate taxes from the municipality, Monroe County, and the school district. Older residents

struggle to downsize from their family homes and are thus forced to leave the region while younger people have the same trouble finding smaller, perhaps rental, units.

- The plan should identify land use (zoning) approaches (coordinated with water/sewer service areas) to diversify housing options.

**4. Traffic Congestion** slows emergency response and inconveniences residents, employees, and visitors. The most congested corridor is PA 611, where is both local and regional through traffic. Additional local and regional development is likely to generate more traffic and thus more congestion.

- The plan should identify tools and approaches to manage congestion and make bike/ped/transit access safe and convenient – along PA 611 and other areas, as identified.

**5. Parks and Recreation** are a point of civic pride in the region. Survey results indicated support for more spending on parks and recreation.

- The plan should recommend maintenance of facilities and programs that are well-used and replacement of those not used with alternative facilities and programs that meet residents' recreational needs.

**6. The Open Space/Green Space to Development ratio** is good. Open space (or green space) is comprised of forest, farmland, parks, cemeteries, and other minimally developed lands. These uses generally retain the natural topography and maintain a vegetated cover condition that is essential to the character of the Pocono Mountain region. Some lands are protected from development by public ownership or easement. Open space can provide important context for natural and historical/cultural resources (and their protection) in rural areas. The term green space is sometimes used to describe minimally developed parcels in urban settings.

- If the balance is good, the plan should recommend tools and approaches to maintain the balance, which could involve land protection in proportion to development growth.

## Additional Topics

- A. **Regional Employers**, such as Health Care/Pharmaceuticals and Resort Destinations, who provide direct economic benefits such as employment and income and property tax revenue as well as indirect benefits, such as spillover spending at local businesses.
- B. **Schools and Higher Education Institutions** offer continuing education and job training.
- C. **Limited Walking/Biking and Transit options** impact safety, congestion, and travel choice.
- D. **Lack of Industrial Development** limits employment in construction, manufacturing, utilities, etc.
- E. **Lack of Broadband** limits residents' full engagement with today's highly digitalized world.
- F. **Poor Quality Roads**, particularly state roads and borough streets, are a nuisance and a hazard.
- G. **Downtown Parking** seems inadequate.
- H. A **High Cost of Living** results from two of region's greatest concerns – limited housing and transportation options.
- I. **Loss of Local Schools** disrupts neighborhood/community identity.
- J. **Lack of Civic Volunteerism** threatens the low cost of living (municipal tax rates).