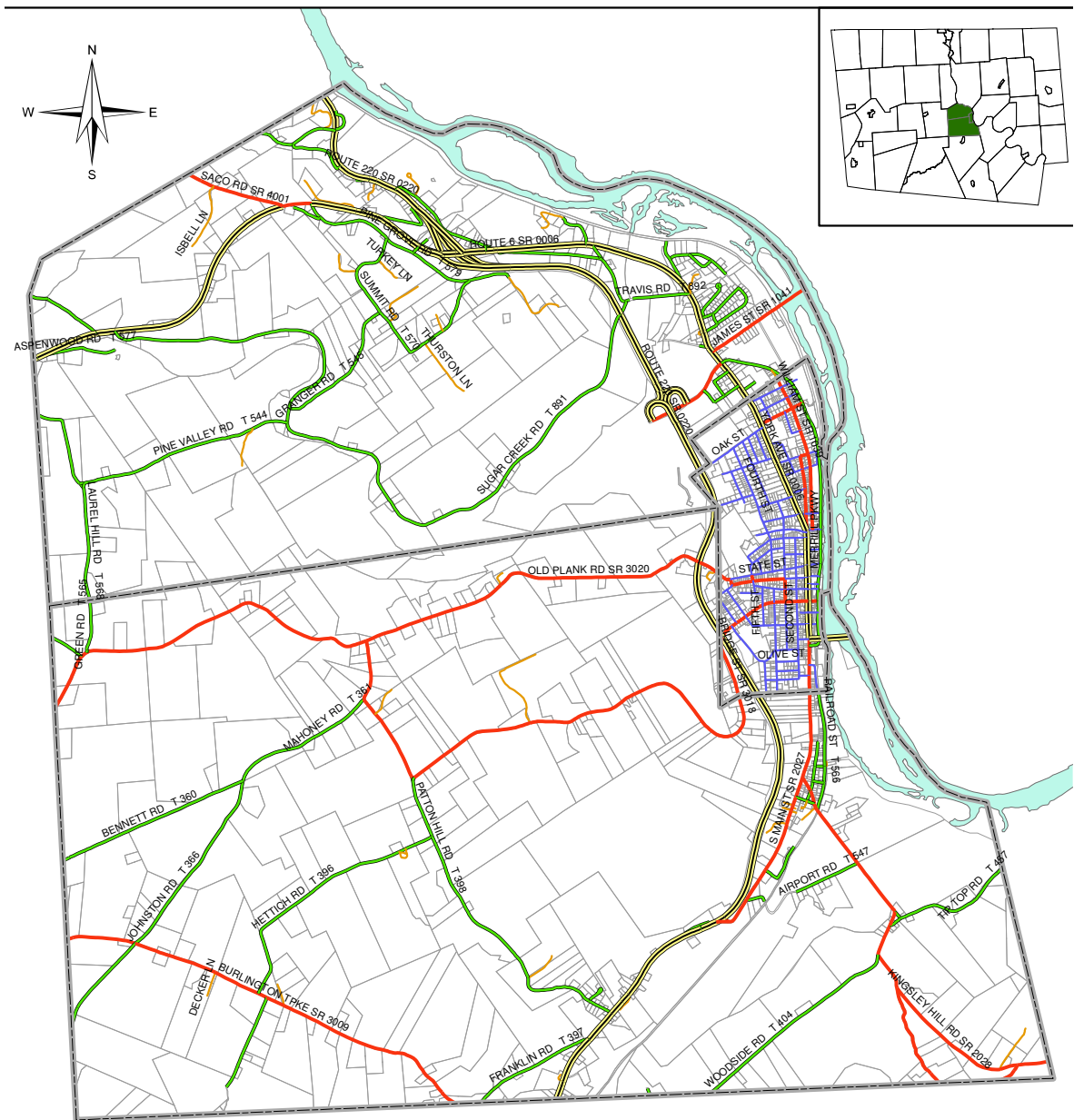


Executive Summary



Study Area: **North Towanda Township
Towanda Borough
Towanda Township**



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Municipalities develop comprehensive plans to assess their current situation, consider what they would like to see for their area in the future, and formulate strategies to achieve that vision.

Comprehensive plans consider many aspects of life: jobs and the economy, housing, new development, transportation, utilities, and the area's natural and historic resources. The Comprehensive Plan itself is a thick document filled with data, maps, goals, and objectives. It includes plans to address each of the above issues, and recommendations on how to move forward.

A Comprehensive Plan is a tool, not a regulation. It helps guide decisions regarding the development of a region over a 10- to 20-year time period. It is used by municipal officials, county planners, other government agencies and authorities, private citizens, and the business community.

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan.

A framework for future decision-making

How was this plan developed?

The Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan was developed jointly by North Towanda Township, Towanda Borough, and Towanda Township, recognizing that cooperation among neighboring municipalities produces broad benefits.

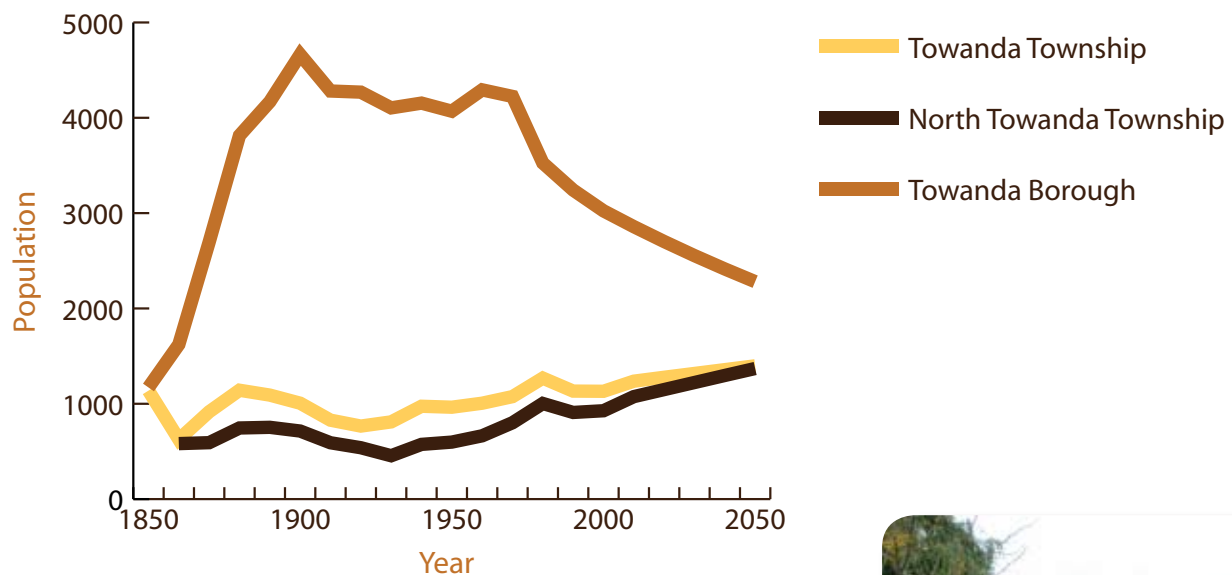
The planning process was guided by a nine-person Advisory Committee comprised of three representatives of each study area municipality. Private citizens participated along with municipal officials and other local leaders. Public outreach meetings were held to listen to the ideas and concerns of area residents and business owners.

Cummings & Smith, Inc., was the comprehensive planning consulting firm engaged on the project. Funding was provided in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration through the Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission. The Bradford County Office of Community Planning and Grants provided extensive support, including use of their Geographic Information System to generate the digital maps used to display project information.

Collaboratively, with a regional approach

What trends are shaping our area?

Population History and Projection

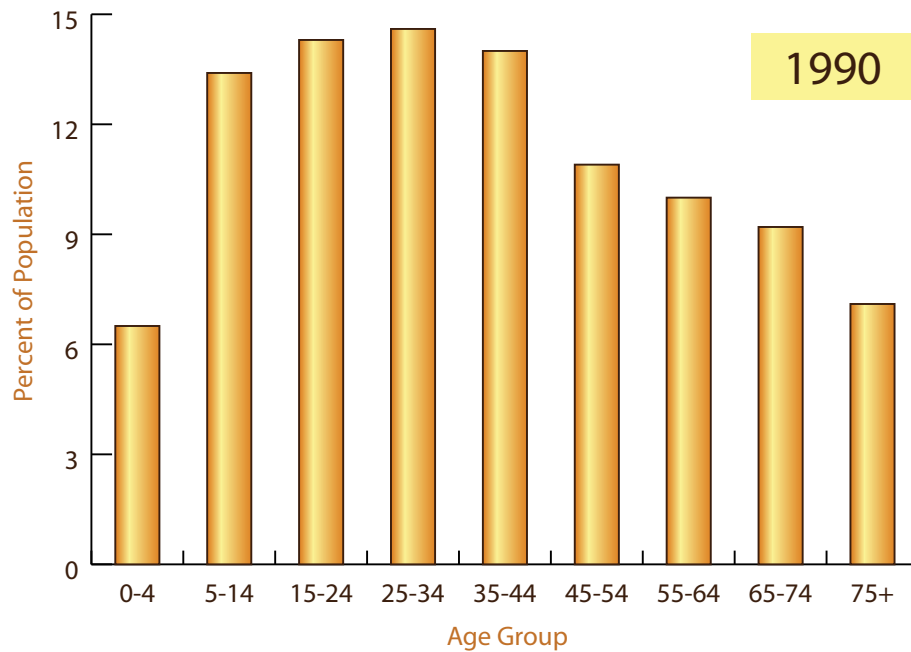


Population is declining in Towanda Borough, with only modest growth in the townships.

This suggests that efforts should be made to build on the area's assets and make this an even more appealing place to live.



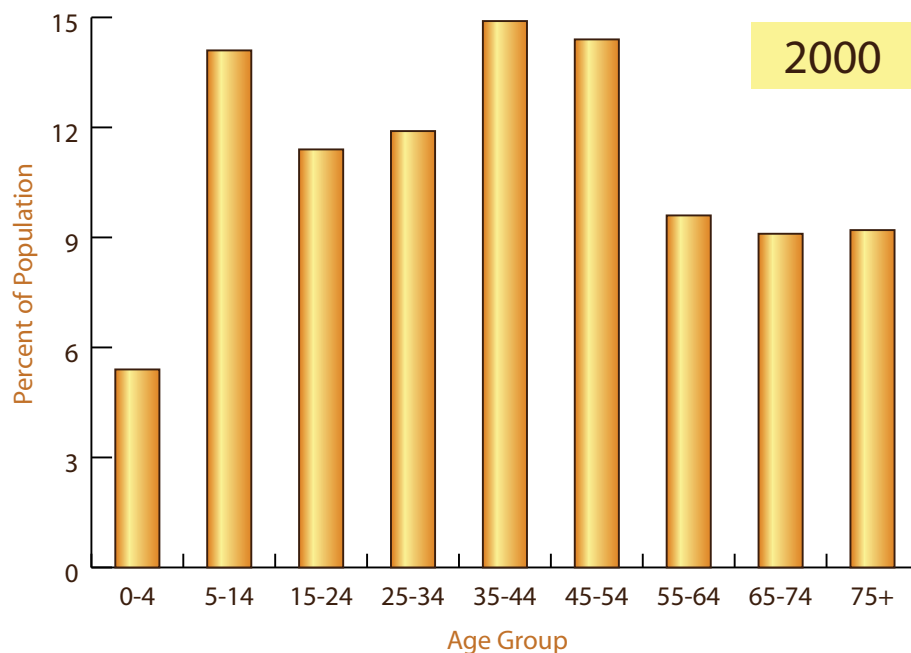
Age Group Distribution Central Bradford Region



In 1990, the percent of the population in each age group followed a typical “bell curve.”

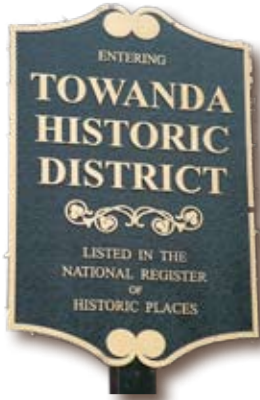
Just a decade later, in 2000, the percentage of young people and early retirees dropped noticeably.

Many young adults leave the area for college and careers. Similarly, local people often retire elsewhere and the area does not attract significant numbers of retirees from other areas.



This trend emphasizes the importance of considering the employment, housing, transportation, and community life needs of the full spectrum of age groups.

What trends are shaping our area? (continued)

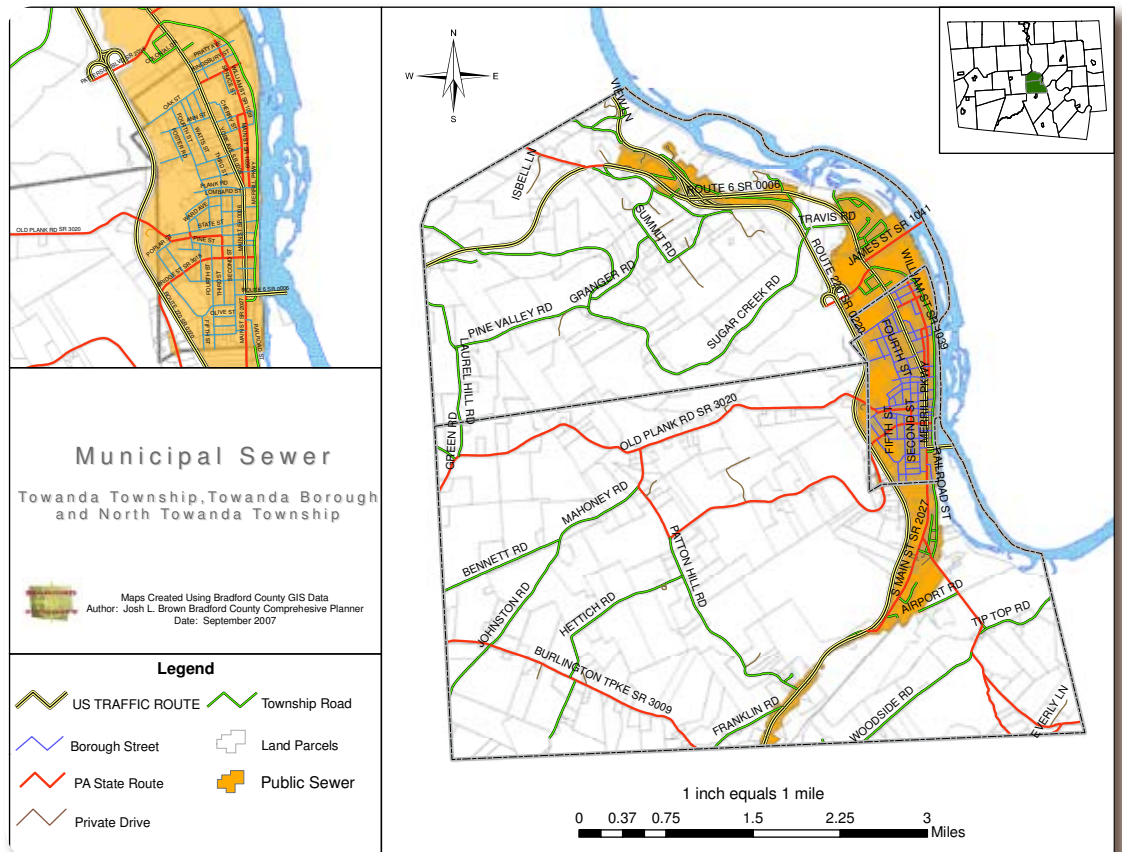


Many homes and buildings are historic—68% of the houses in the study area were built before 1940.

This presents an opportunity to build on the area’s historic character—but also suggests that a wider variety of homes would appeal to a wider range of residents.

Improvements are underway on water and sewer systems on a regional basis through the Towanda Municipal Authority.

This accommodates new development while helping consolidate growth around the Towanda community.



The area has a strong, modern highway network.

This suggests that maintaining and maximizing the use of the existing highway infrastructure should be a higher priority than new construction, and that transportation projects should consider all modes.



The area is home to large manufacturing companies—in fact, within the study area there are more jobs than workers.

This gives the area a strong economic advantage compared to other small towns and rural areas of Pennsylvania, and underscores the importance of the area's transportation system.



*Collectively, these trends and opportunities indicate that the focus of the Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives, and recommendations should be **revitalization**, rather than reining in growth.*

What are our area's goals?

There are many good things about the Central Bradford region. Working toward the following goals—developed with extensive public input—is the next step in making the community great.

Goal 1:

Enhance and maintain the Towanda region's role as an economic and community center in the Pennsylvania Northern Tier.



Goal 2:

Develop and sustain an appropriate level of community facilities and services for the Greater Towanda community, including roads; sanitary and storm sewer systems; water systems; medical and health services; educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities; and public safety provisions.

Goal 3:

Develop programs or solutions to land use issues that the community is facing, including expanded housing types for all income levels, upgrading of older residential structures, rehabilitation and reuse of commercial districts, and flood-plain mitigation.





Goal 4:
Investigate and pursue opportunities afforded by Sugar and Towanda Creeks and the Susquehanna River through a re-orientation of the community to these outstanding natural features.

Goal 5:
Develop attractive community gateways in suitable locations; develop appropriate community heritage themes, including opportunities to showcase them.



Goal 6:
Maintain and improve all facets of the region's transportation network, including roads, rail, air, water, pedestrian, and bicycling to ensure the mobility of people and goods within the municipality and to bring residents of outlying areas to the region for employment, commerce, and services.

How will we achieve those goals?

Objectives Recommendations Collaboration



Each of the six goals is further defined by approximately 10 objectives, which describe how to make progress toward the goal. For example, Goal 3, which addresses land use, housing, and rehabilitation of residences and commercial districts, includes the following objectives:

Goal 3 Objectives:

1. An education campaign will be needed to overcome community resistance to townhouses or other housing options needed to diversify the local housing market.
2. Encourage the private sector to perform a market analysis for non-subsidized townhouses.
3. Recognize the importance of a positive community image in motivating the private sector to invest in the rehabilitation of older residential structures.
4. Identify suitable locations for housing options; make sure that utilities are available at these sites.
5. Building conversions should be made in strict conformance with building codes and based on sensitivity to the building design.
6. Develop housing rehabilitation programs, make improvement grants available, and encourage private rehabilitation.
7. Develop incentive programs, e.g., grants and loans for first time home buyers.
8. Maintain strong code enforcement efforts to ensure property maintenance.
9. There is a great need for commercial building rehabilitation, however viable building uses will be required to achieve this.
10. The Borough should consider re-establishing the Main Street Manager program to address downtown issues.





The goals and objectives are the basis for each component of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Future Land Use Plan
- Future Transportation Plan
- Community Facilities and Services Plan
- Housing Plan
- Natural and Historic Resources Plan
- Economic Development Plan

Each of those “sub-plans” includes specific recommendations to achieve the goals and objectives. Because all the above issues are interrelated, and because the three municipalities function as an integrated region, a coordinated, comprehensive approach to implementation will be most effective in shaping the area’s future in desirable ways.

In fact, it is recommended that North Towanda Township, Towanda Borough, and Towanda Township formalize that coordination by establishing an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement. By committing to a regional approach to planning and project development, municipalities can reduce expenses, qualify for new funding sources, use land more logically and effectively, and produce more substantial improvements, while retaining adequate local management.



What happens next?

Plan Adoption and Implementation

After public review and comment, the Advisory Committee will revise the Draft Comprehensive Plan as necessary. Next, the governing bodies of North Towanda Township, Towanda Borough, and Towanda Township will vote to adopt the Comprehensive Plan. The adopted plan will then serve as a guide for decisions and policies made by the three municipalities.

For example, the municipalities may each choose to prepare and adopt or update their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, establishing standards for new development consistent with the priorities identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Zoning regulations are another tool used by municipalities to help align development with community plans. The municipalities may also consider establishing Historic Architectural Review Board Districts to ensure that work done on historic buildings is in keeping with the structure's character.

Other initiatives may not require formal regulations, but rather cooperation with the private sector, promotion of the area's natural assets, or investments in facilities or services that advance the community's goals as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.



Where can I get more information?

www.NorthernTier.org

The full plan is available in area libraries and online at www.northerntier.org. You may also contact any of the study participants below with questions, ideas, or to become involved in plan implementation.

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