2. **Northeast Upper Beaver Valley Comprehensive Plan**

*(Beaver County)*

**Planning Area**

This plan covers New Brighton Borough and the townships of Daugherty, Franklin, Marion, North Sewickley, and Pulaski in northeastern Beaver County. A diverse area with a combined population of about 23,000, it is bordered on the west by the Beaver River. New Brighton Borough, a river town of about 6,200 people in 2006, lost more than 6 percent of its population since 2000. Together with neighboring Pulaski Township, it constitutes the urban core of the planning area. The other townships are largely rural and have experienced only modest growth in recent years. The region includes two school districts — New Brighton and Riverside.

**Status**

The plan was completed and adopted by all participating municipalities in late 2001. There is no inter-governmental implementation agreement.

**Plan Development**

Since discussions about cooperative planning had begun in the late 1990s, the northeastern Beaver County municipalities were prepared to take advantage of the MPC reforms of 2000 and become one of the first regions to complete a multi-municipal plan under the new guidelines. The effort was prompted by a desire to "plan ahead" before growth threatened the region's rural character and a perceived need to update and, in some cases, adopt municipal land use regulations. (North Sewickley, Franklin, and Pulaski Townships lacked zoning and other land use regulations at the time the plan was being prepared.) The participating municipalities had a history of working together and considered themselves a natural region.

The process was led by a steering committee that included local elected officials, supervisors from both school districts, the COG director, and county officials. Staff support and leadership were provided by the...
manager of New Brighton Borough. Pashek Associates of Pittsburgh was hired as planning consultant. Two grants of $50,000 each were received from LUPTAP and Beaver County; but the actual costs of plan preparation amounted to only about $75,000. The unused grant funds were redirected to support implementation activities.

At a public input meeting held in April 2000, participants identified the following priorities:

- Preserve farmland, forests, open space, natural areas, and historic resources.
- Maintain and improve park and recreation areas and utilize the riverfront.
- Maintain the quality of life and manage growth.
- Stimulate the local economy and job market.
- Develop shared services between some communities.

**Features of the Plan**
Because much of the land area is currently undeveloped, the plan places great emphasis on the “Growing Greener” (conservation subdivision) model of regulating subdivisions and housing development. The plan develops specific land use goals and policies for each municipality, and contains a good implementation table for each goal, with responsibilities, priorities, and potential costs clearly spelled out. The future land use map identifies areas prioritized for agricultural preservation and includes a greenways plan. Land uses are allocated over the entire region; that is, the plan does not assume that all municipalities must provide for all uses.

An unusual feature of the plan is an emphasis on inter-governmental cooperation. The plan urges the municipalities to hire a regional recreation director, to consider shared police services and to explore possibilities for sharing education, emergency, water, sewer, and road maintenance services.

**Implementation**
Following adoption of the plan by all six municipalities, Pashek Associates was hired to develop a model zoning ordinance consistent with the plan. None of the municipalities, however, has adopted the ordinance without substantial modifications.

The model ordinance did serve as the template for a new ordinance that was recently adopted by Daugherty Township, although significant changes were made. Other municipalities rejected the model ordinance outright. North Sewickley Township, for example, hired Pashek Associates to assist in developing their land use ordinances, but newly appointed township officials who had not participated in the planning process objected to the plan’s emphasis on conservation subdivision techniques. Since Pashek did not want to develop land regulations that were inconsistent with the plan, the consultancy was terminated prematurely. About two years ago, Pulaski Township adopted a zoning ordinance that bore little resemblance to the model ordinance. Township officials felt the model ordinance was too general to meet their specific needs. New Brighton Borough declined to adopt the model ordinance for similar reasons.

The municipalities did follow through on one of the plan’s recommendations by hiring a regional recreation director and establishing a joint recreation commission. Although the recreation commission still exists, its functions are limited. And at least one of the townships has withheld funding on the grounds that the commission has not been managed properly and has mainly supported services and events in New Brighton Borough.