

CHAPTER 6.0 Recommendations

The recommended actions that follow were developed through an intensive and extensive collaborative effort that included many groups, agencies, and individuals. The final recommendations to be moved forward by South Mountain Partnership were developed in partnership with Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and York County planning agencies, and approved by the Leadership Committee of South Mountain Partnership.

This document is intended for decision-makers and policymakers in the South Mountain region. There are two sets of recommendations: highest priority recommendations and other recommendations. The Action Plan is a summary table that presents the recommended action, the lead organization, and potential partner organizations involved, the length of time which the action is likely to take, potential funding sources (with hyperlinks), initial next steps to implementation, intended audience, existing resources available, and measurements to evaluate the success of the action.

Some recommended actions are already underway in some of the counties and municipalities within the South Mountain landscape; however, since this State of the Region initiative is focused on the entire landscape and all the governments and organizations within it, the recommended actions remain valid for those places that have not undertaken them yet. While some of the recommendations are directed at individual municipalities, the cumulative and coordinated actions of municipalities and others are needed to address these challenges at the landscape scale.

6.1 Implementation Schedule & Strategies

To ensure implementation of recommendations, South Mountain Partnership has come up with five strategies as a plan of action to remain on schedule. These strategies are as follows:

- I. Integrate the State of the Region**
- II. Align with core partners' priorities,**
- III. Use to secure additional funding/grant resources**
- IV. Build a communications and public participation strategy**
- V. Take the State of the Region initiative on a “road show.”**

These strategies will ensure the completion of their recommendations. Below is how SMP Partners and other organizations can assist with implementing this plan:

- I. Incorporation of the State of the Region Report initiative goals, recommendations, and actions into your own strategic planning process.**
- II. Leverage the results and information of the report when providing technical assistance.**
- III. Use your organization's communication channels to help spread awareness.**

6.1.1 Sustainability Development Principles

Sustainable development is an approach to achieving communities that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. Sustainable development provides choices — in housing, transportation, jobs, and amenities (including cultural, social services, recreational, and educational, among others) — using comprehensive planning to guide, design, develop, manage, and revitalize inclusive communities and regions. (source: American Planning Association)

Principles of Sustainability

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods; provide additional transportation choices
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, and critical environmental areas
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in decisions

It should be noted that these principles are flexible and adaptable and have been successfully applied in rural areas, small towns, suburbs, and cities throughout the United States. As this report was being prepared, the Steering Committee felt that any recommendations made should be viewed through the lens of these principles, where they are relevant.

As a future undertaking, reviewing these principles and adapting them to respond to South Mountain's needs and SMP's goals and mission may be helpful.

6.1.2 Development and Analysis

Previous chapters of this Report have provided background and context for the regional challenges that face the South Mountain region. Recommended actions were developed to address these challenges using several sources, including relevant county planning documents, the questionnaire and survey performed early in the process, input from local subject matter advisors, the Steering Committee, the SMP Leadership Committee, participants at several SMP Partnership events, and analysis of the metrics and the interactive map. The Steering Committee reviewed all potential recommendations, sorted by regional challenge, against two criteria: ease of implementation and effectiveness. Those recommendations that were easier to implement and very effective were seen as higher priority.

To further prioritize the top candidate recommendations, a SMART analysis was then performed. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. A table presenting the results of this SMART analysis is attached in the Appendix. All comments were synthesized and presented back to the Steering Committee for review. Following a robust discussion of the recommendations, five recommendations emerged as being the highest priority for SMP to work on and with the most benefit to county planning agencies.

The final five highest priority recommendations are:

- I. Update Natural Heritage Areas inventories
- II. Expand the regional trail system & connectivity to parks and towns
- III. Plan for a wildlife corridor to connect South Mountain and Kittatinny Ridge and expand/strengthen greenways
- IV. Inventory South Mountain's historic resources
- V. Track land conversion

These recommendations will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Seven's Action Plan.

6.1.3 Other Recommended Actions

The Further Recommended Action list is attached in the Appendix. Listed above are the highest-priority recommendations elaborated on in Chapter Seven's Action Plan.