

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Adams County is located in south central Pennsylvania and is bordered by Carroll and Frederick Counties in Maryland to the south, and Cumberland, Franklin, and York Counties in Pennsylvania to the north, west, and east. Agriculture remains the predominant land use in the County. During the 1990s, most new development occurred within designated growth areas located either within or adjacent to existing communities. The Gettysburg area has steadily grown to be a center of commercial activity, while a number of outlying boroughs and unincorporated villages are continuing to expand as residential and commercial hubs for various sub-regions. Residential development has been particularly strong in eastern and southwestern Adams County. The County has 13 boroughs and 21 townships.

On a percentage basis, during the 1990s Adams County experienced the fourth highest growth rate among Pennsylvania's counties. Its population increased from 78,274 in 1990 to 91,292 in 2000. This was a 16.6% increase. Additionally, between 1960 and 2000, Adams County's population increased by 75.9%. The County's population is expected to continue to increase at a similar rate in the coming decades. The County has a land area of 526 square miles and, as of 2000, a density of 174 persons per square mile.

Existing Land Use Conditions

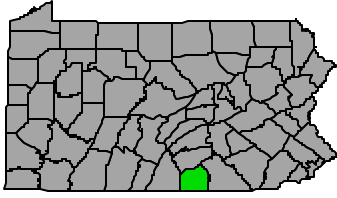
The amount of built up and barren land in Adams County increased from 2.3 percent in 1992 to 6 percent in 2001. Approximately

94 percent of the County's total land area is undeveloped with a majority of this total devoted to agricultural and forest uses.

Adams County is located on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. This mountainous western section adjoins the famous Adams County "fruit belt," which contains more than 20,000 acres of orchard land as well as numerous food-processing facilities. A broad valley containing Gettysburg and the Gettysburg National Military Park extends from the "fruit belt" in the west across the central portion of Adams County. Eastern Adams County is characterized by rolling hills and farmland. These land uses reflect the County's most prominent economic activities — agriculture and tourism.

Key Land Use Issues

- ☑ **The primary land use and growth management issue facing Adams County is ensuring that appropriate levels of municipal services and public infrastructure are maintained to accommodate anticipated population growth in ways which preserve the County's agricultural and rural land base.** The Adams County Comprehensive Plan recommends that most new development occur in settings where public sewer, water, and other services are available. Through the 1980s and 1990s, sewer and water capacity in appropriate settings was made available to accommodate population growth in a manner generally consistent with the land use and related recommendations of the



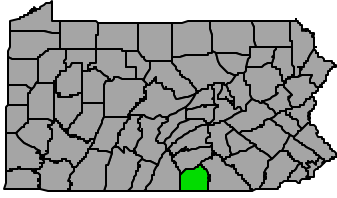
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County Plan. In the 1990s, over 65 percent of new residential units proposed were located on public sewer systems, while 60 percent of such units were located on public water systems. However, in some locations, utility capacity has been fully allocated, and little capacity remains to accommodate additional demand. Therefore, if such service and infrastructure capacity improvements are not made, significant new development could occur in settings that are inconsistent with the County Plan recommendations and outside public utility service areas. In some settings, the location of significant new developments in designated rural resource areas is already occurring.

- ☑ **Improving the appearance and functionality of communities is an important issue.** Adams County and its municipalities made significant improvements in the 1990s with regard to enhancing development regulations to improve the appearance and function of both residential and non-residential projects. As a result, many of the newly developed neighborhoods and commercial centers have done so in an attractive manner. However, many development projects are still being proposed in accordance with outdated development regulations. As a result, limited innovation in attention to site appearance or site amenities is being paid. Continued improvements to municipal development regulations are needed to encourage new development projects to be proposed with

appropriate attention to visual and functional details. Specific attention to vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity within and between existing and proposed development is necessary.

- ☑ **Another pressing concern is the conservation of critical open spaces, especially those related to water supply and water quality, along with the adequate provision of recreational facilities and services.** During 2003, a “Green Ribbon Commission” was appointed by the Adams County Commissioners to identify methods to meet growing recreation and open space conservation needs in Adams County.
- ☑ **The preservation of farmland and retention and expansion of agricultural uses continues to be an important land use issue in Adams County.** According to the 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture, approximately 179,000 acres (or 54%) of Adams County’s land area involved active agricultural production. This agricultural acreage is lower than the 1987 figure of 187,000 acres, but somewhat higher than the 1992 “low” of 172,000 acres. Although the number of full-time farms decreased between 1992 and 1997, average farm size increased slightly and market value of products sold increased significantly. Thus, it appears that existing farm operations are increasing in size and that the County’s competitive position remains strong. Larger operations often have off-site impacts, which may in turn impact surrounding properties. Impacts



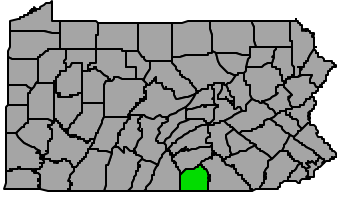
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can particularly be felt by new residents purchasing residential “farmette” properties in rural settings. Limiting the development of non-agricultural uses in agricultural areas where farmers are intensifying their operations plays a significant role in preserving agricultural lands and uses in Adams County.

- Population growth in Adams County has been influenced by increased in-migration.** In some parts of the County, most new residential units are purchased by people moving to Pennsylvania from Maryland. Significant numbers of people from Carroll, Baltimore, and Frederick Counties have moved to Adams County since 1990. In other areas, people are moving to the County from adjoining Pennsylvania counties such as York, Cumberland, and Franklin. Most new residential development is following road corridors, such as U.S. Route 15 from the Frederick, MD, and Harrisburg, PA regions, Routes 97 and 16 from regions in Maryland, and Routes 30 and 234 from the York County region. A considerable amount of Adams County’s in-migration over the past decade involved Latinos. The Latino population in Adams County increased 178 percent from 1990 to 2000. Many Latinos now work permanently in food processing, agriculture, and the service sector.
- A sizable percentage of employed persons residing in Adams County find employment outside of the**

County. The 2000 Census reports that 46 percent of employed persons living in Adams County work in other counties. Of these, 24.5 percent work in York County, while smaller percentages work in Carroll and Frederick County, MD, and Cumberland County, PA. Given these employment patterns, many Adams County residents experience long commutes and traffic congestion. Taxes and local revenues are also affected, as the percent of annual revenues paid in taxes by residential uses versus non-residential uses is proportionally higher in Adams County than some surrounding counties. To address this issue, Adams County continues working in the economic development arena to attract employment opportunities to the County for its residents and to add to the non-residential tax base.

- Continued attention to Adams County’s cultural and historic resources is necessary.** Preserving cultural and historic resources while accommodating regional growth demand continues to be an important growth management issue in the County. As development occurs around Gettysburg, preserving historic and scenic vistas surrounding the nationally renowned Gettysburg National Military Park and the Eisenhower National Historic Site becomes increasingly important. Maintaining these views is essential in terms of maintaining the area’s historic character and sustaining the area’s tourism industry. Preserving

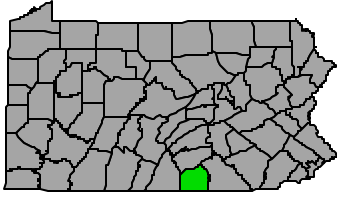


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other historic resources is also very important. Progress has been made in terms of identifying these additional resources, but some historic buildings, for example, are either neglected or unsympathetically renovated. Further efforts are needed to identify and preserve historic resources, such as early schools, election houses, train stations, civil war hospitals, churches, and related structures throughout the County. In addition, recognition of the importance of historic roadways, such as original portions of the “Lincoln Highway,” must increase.

Land Use Planning Activities

- ☑ **A growing number of Adams County municipalities are using basic growth management tools.** Substantial improvement in municipal planning has occurred over the past five years, particularly with regard to plan and ordinance development and adoption. Of Adams County’s 34 municipalities, 19 have adopted comprehensive plans, including at least five that have been updated or were in the process of being updated during this period. In addition, three municipalities have either completed or are preparing their initial comprehensive plans. By January 2004, 29 municipalities had either adopted their own zoning ordinance or they had requested Adams County to adopt the Adams County Zoning Ordinance in their municipalities. This figure increased from 16 municipalities in 1990. Furthermore, eight municipalities
- either completely updated or dramatically improved their zoning ordinances over this period. Finally, at least eight municipalities adopted effective agricultural zoning districts during this period, while other municipalities prepared rural zoning districts designed to protect rural lands and uses. Most of the zoning ordinances update work that has occurred in eastern Adams County. All Adams County municipalities have subdivision and land development ordinances, and at least five municipalities prepared complete updates during the period.
- ☑ **County government continues to prepare and implement countywide plans.** The Adams County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2001. During the 1990s, the Comprehensive Plan was amended twice, first with the adoption of the Southeast Adams Transportation Study in 1997, and the Adams County Vision for Parks, Recreation and Open Space (including the Adams County Natural Areas Inventory) in 1998. During this period, the County also prepared water resources plans, including the Adams County Water Supply/Wellhead Protection Plan adopted in 2001, and the Monocacy River Watershed Stormwater Management Plan completed in 2002. The County is initiating the process to prepare a County Greenways Plan.
- ☑ **Adams County continues to monitor development trends and land conversion.** For several years, Adams



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County has tracked statistics for subdivision and land development submissions. This includes, at a minimum, conversion of land and whether new development is serviced by public water and sewer systems. These statistics are used to develop countywide population projections, which in turn are used to anticipate future community services and infrastructure needs.