

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Bucks County is one of the three original counties of Pennsylvania. It is located north and northeast of Philadelphia, bounded on the northeast and southeast by the Delaware River, southwest by Philadelphia and Montgomery County, and on the north by Lehigh and Northampton Counties. The surface is uneven and rolling and the soil fertile. Large quantities of limestone can be found in much of the area. The length of the County is 40 miles and average width is 15 miles, giving it an area of 600 square miles, equivalent to about 380,000 acres.

A suburb of Philadelphia, Bucks County is comprised of 54 units of local government and is home to 597,635 people, according to the 2000 Census. Of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, Bucks ranks 4th in population. The County's population density is 984 persons per square mile.

Existing Land Use Conditions

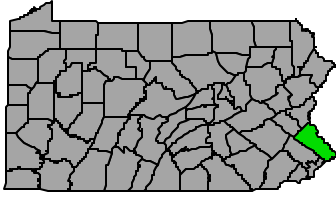
Approximately three-quarters of Bucks County's total acreage remains in agricultural and rural residential use. The largest concentration of agricultural land is located in northern Bucks County. This northern section of the County is bordered by comparable land use in Lehigh and Northampton Counties, the two counties that abut the County to the north. In fact, with only minor exceptions, the existing land use in Bucks County is consistent with the conditions within adjacent counties.

A significant growth factor for the County is its location in relation to New York City and Philadelphia. Approximately 25 percent of

the land is considered developed. With easy access to both areas, the County has an excellent centralized location. Major development in the County continues to occur along and adjacent to its major transportation corridors, including the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Interstate 95, State Routes, 1, 202, 309, 313/663, and 611.

Key Land Use Issues

- ☑ **As lower Bucks County has reached development capacity, development pressures are now being felt in the center of the County.** Commercial development tends to take place on greenfields along transportation corridors. Strong demand for additional commercial space has meant that developers are now looking at less expensive land in central and northern Bucks County.
- ☑ **Upper Bucks County is now growing at a much quicker pace than in previous decades.** One of Bucks County's major growth factors is its location between Philadelphia and New York City. PA Route 611, which runs through central and northern Bucks County, intersects newly completed I-78, providing excellent access to New York City.



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- ☑ **Lower Bucks County contains some of the country's first suburbs.** As first-generation suburbs, older areas of Bucks County have seen their population age and have experienced a loss of jobs and population. In the past, Lower Bucks has responded to growth pressures by providing the infrastructure needed to serve the development. Much of this is now underutilized with the loss of jobs and population.
- ☑ **Central Bucks County is experiencing strong development pressure.** As many of the municipalities in lower Bucks County have aged, more agricultural areas of central and northern Bucks County are feeling development pressure. The area has open space and cultural and natural resources that are an incentive for additional growth.

Land Use Planning Activities

- ☑ Almost all of the municipalities in the County have adopted comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.
- ☑ There are four active multi-municipal planning groups, including the oldest multi-municipal plan and zoning ordinance in Pennsylvania.