

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Clearfield County is located slightly west of the center of the state. It is surrounded by the counties of Jefferson, Elk, Cameron, Clinton, Centre, Cambria, and Indiana. At one time, large numbers of bison created openings, or “clear-fields,” near the Clearfield Creek. Today, 51 municipalities and 83,382 people (2000 Census) call Clearfield County home. Twenty of these municipalities are boroughs, 30 are townships, and one is a city, DuBois. Clearfield Borough is the county seat.

Clearfield County contains 1,147 square miles and is the third largest county in the state. The County’s population (83,382 in 2000) grew by 6.8 percent in the 1990s, twice the rate of Pennsylvania. Townships experiencing the most growth in the past decade were Woodward, Pine, Karthaus, Goshen, and Bradford. Overall the County maintains a modest population density of 72.7 people per square mile.

Existing Land Use Conditions

The overall rural character of Clearfield County is reflected by its current land use conditions, with only 10.9 percent of the land considered developed. As such, approximately 89 percent of the County’s total land area is undeveloped with a majority of this total devoted forest and agricultural uses.

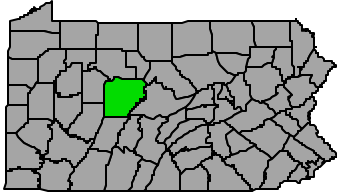
Clearfield County’s topographic features have largely shaped its land uses. The County is located in the western foothills of the Bald Eagle Mountains, a chain of the Appalachian Mountains. While over 75

percent of the County has a slope of less than eight percent, the overall irregular pattern of steep slopes limits specific development potential in certain areas. In addition, a few areas have massive strip mining excavations that have altered the landscape. Still, a good portion (over 50% of the County) is modestly sloped and is either used for agricultural purposes or is vacant and available for development. The traversing of Interstate 80 from east to west across the County, as well as the major highways of U.S. 219, 322, and 119, have greatly affected development patterns.

Key Land Use Issues

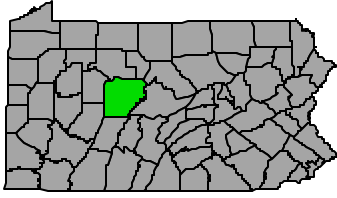
- ☑ **Many economic factors in Clearfield County are below the state’s average; therefore job creation and development opportunities are strongly encouraged.** Two dramatic statistics came out of the 2000 Census for Clearfield County. First, the County ranks 6th in the state for the percentage of children below the poverty level at 18.3 percent. Second, it ranks 10th in the state for the percentage of adults with bachelor’s degrees or higher educational attainment. In general, the percent of unemployed was somewhat greater in Clearfield County than for the state as a whole, 6.9 percent (county) compared to 5.7 percent (state), according to the 2000 Census. Clearfield County’s median household income was \$31,357 compared to \$40,106 for Pennsylvania, also reported in the 2000 Census.

☑



Land Use and Growth Management Profile

- ☑ **Development and new job creation is encouraged in the County, but there is concern over the type and location of development.** Development is encouraged to locate adjacent to existing development to maximize infrastructure investment. Infill projects are also encouraged over strip development and, as land is gradually consumed for residential and commercial development, municipalities and economic development organizations are encouraged to reserve suitable sites for future industrial development. Clearfield County is moving in this direction with the development of the Clearfield County Technology Park on a former brownfield site.
- ☑ **Not surprisingly, coal mining has been a blessing and a curse for Clearfield County.** Through the years, the coal mining industry in Clearfield County has brought numerous people to the area, provided a livelihood for many, and generated substantial indirect economic impacts. Conversely, operations of the mines and abandonment of the mines have discharged acid into a number of waterways in the County. Abatement has taken place or is underway for some of these waterways, but it is costly. Additionally, many of the strip mines have scarred the landscape and the property is difficult to reuse.
- ☑ **Clearfield County residents are concerned about their water quality, but are also patient.** County residents have to be patient; generations of effort have gone into harvesting the coal located in this County. During much of this time, there were no regulations in place to protect the waterways from the acid mine discharge that resulted from coal mining operations. Additionally, the Allegheny Front in Clearfield County suffers from heavy loads of acid rain and acid deposition from industrialized areas in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Much of this acid rain is deposited in the northern tier of the County. Much effort has gone into controlling emissions and curbing mine discharge as well as reclaiming local streams. These efforts are paying off. In the past few years, several sections of Clearfield County's streams have been added to the list of waters supporting trout fishing.
- ☑ **Clearfield County is challenged by an aging housing stock.** Over 37 percent of the housing stock in the County was built before 1940. This is considerably above the state average where 30 percent of the housing stock was built before 1940. Aged housing stock can be more expensive to own and maintain than newer homes. It can also detract prospective residents and businesses from locating in the area. Additionally, Clearfield County has a higher percentage of mobile homes than two-thirds of the counties in the state.



Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Land Use Planning Activities

- ☑ **The majority of Clearfield County's municipalities are not using the more common planning tools of comprehensive planning and zoning.** Seventeen of Clearfield County's municipalities have adopted a comprehensive or a multi-municipal plan. This is only a third of the County's 51 municipalities. Also, some of the comprehensive plans are rather old (four were adopted in 1984 or earlier). While the number of municipalities with comprehensive plans is rather limited, some have joined together to comprehensively plan. Even fewer municipalities have adopted a zoning ordinance. Seven of the County's municipalities are using a zoning ordinance to manage growth and development.
- ☑ **On the other hand, all of Clearfield County's municipalities are guided by a subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO).** Nineteen municipalities have adopted their own SALDO. The other 32 municipalities are covered by the County's SALDO. In this situation, the County's Planning Commission reviews subdivision and land development applications submitted in these municipalities.