

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Franklin County is located in south central Pennsylvania and is bordered by Maryland to the south, and the Pennsylvania counties of Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Perry, Cumberland, and Adams. The County is comprised mostly of rich, rolling farmland and boroughs with steeples and squares. More recently, though, low-density housing and commercial development is spreading across the farmland, particularly in areas adjacent to the boroughs and along major roads. The County has seven boroughs and 15 townships. Chambersburg, the county seat, is the largest and most densely populated municipality in the County.

The mountainous regions and forestland of the County host portions of both the Tuscarora and the Appalachian Trails. Additionally, the mountains in Franklin County host Whitetail Mountain Ski Resort, located in the southwestern corner of the County.

According to the 2000 Census, Franklin County had a population of 129,313 and a land area of 772 square miles. This computes to a population density of 168 people per square mile, ranking it 31st in the state for population density.

Existing Land Use Conditions

The majority of Franklin County's total land area is undeveloped, with 93 percent devoted to agricultural uses and forested land. A significant amount of the development within the County occurs along the major transportation routes of

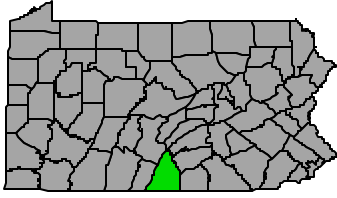
Interstate 81, U.S. Routes 11 and 30, and PA Route 16.

Franklin County's topographic features have largely shaped its land uses. The County is situated in the Cumberland Valley portion of the Great Valley. The mountain ranges of Tuscarora, Kittatinny, and Broad Mountains in the west and South Mountain in the east border Franklin County.

The County contains prime agricultural soils and has been farmed since settlers first arrived in the area. Depending on criteria used, Franklin County is the second or third most important agricultural county in Pennsylvania. Dairy and livestock operations are the chief agricultural activities, but orchard produce and animal fodder are also important contributors to the industry.

Key Land Use Issues

- ☑ **Franklin County's housing unit growth is increasing at a greater pace than its population growth.** While this trend applies to most of the counties in Pennsylvania and many areas of the country, it often is a signal of sprawl, when land consumption exceeds population growth. In the 1980s, housing units increased by 22 percent while population increased by only 7 percent. The pace slowed slightly in the 1990s, still housing unit growth (11 percent) exceeded population growth (7 percent). Additionally, between 1990 and 2000 the average household size in the County decreased by 4 percent,



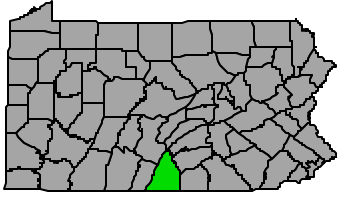
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consequently resized households occupied additional housing units.

- ☑ **Franklin County's rate of population change in the 1990s was twice that of Pennsylvania.** The County's population increased by 6.8% in the past decade. Franklin County is also experiencing a substantial net migration into the County from the south, Washington County (MD), and from the east, Cumberland and Adams Counties (PA). Population increases put additional pressures on school and water and sewage systems, consume open land, add traffic congestion, and require various community improvements. In a bigger context, Franklin County ranked 20th in the state for change in population in the 1990s.
- ☑ Franklin County has a high percentage of seniors, age 65 and older, when compared to the state average and the national average. According to the 2000 Census, 16.0 percent of Franklin County's total population was 65 years or older. This compares to the state average of 15.6 percent and the national average of 12.4 percent. In 1990, 14.5 percent of Franklin County's total population was 65 years and older. This substantial increase affects many services, such as housing types, transportation needs, health care, and recreation programs.
- ☑ **Franklin County's per capita income is slightly lower than the state average.** The 2000 Census revealed that the

County's per capita income in 1999 was \$19,339, 7.4 percent below the state average of \$20,880. This impacts quality of life, as well as purchasing power for the County. Retail sales per resident are significantly lower than the state average. Conversely, the percent of County residents below the poverty level is well below the state's average.

- ☑ **Franklin County is losing farmland to development.** While it is known that the amount of land consumed by development has been increasing at a much faster rate than the growth in population, there is no reliable county data on precisely how much farmland is developed each year. Franklin County has aggressively pursued an agricultural preservation program to preserve its rural character and quality of life.
- ☑ **Most of the ramps of Interstate 81 in Franklin County need significant upgrades to improve safety and reduce congestion.** Many of the Interstate's on-ramps are not long enough for safe merging at high speeds. Many of the intersections near interchanges are not suitable for existing traffic, even though land near them has been zoned industrial and much tractor-trailer traffic has already been and will be generated by this new development.



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Land Use Planning Activities

- ☑ **Roughly, only half of Franklin County's municipalities have zoning regulations.** The zoning regulations that are in place, quite often are very basic or extremely permissive. These regulations are ineffective at preserving farmland or directing the location of different types of development.

- ☑ **Franklin County is progressive in farmland preservation.** According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, as of December 2003, 50 farms and 7,033 acres have been preserved in Franklin County since the inception of the program. The state and the County continue to appropriate funding for the program and additional farms are pending approval.