

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Lancaster County is located in south central Pennsylvania, and is surrounded by the Pennsylvania counties of York, Dauphin, Lebanon, Berks, Chester, and the Maryland state line. A mixture of small towns, agriculture, and an urbanized and industrialized core around the City of Lancaster, the County has 41 townships, 18 boroughs, and one city. The City of Lancaster is the county seat, and it is a substantial employment and services center for many residents of the County.

According to the 2000 Census, Lancaster County had a total population of 470,658. The County ranks 8th in terms of population among Pennsylvania's 67 counties and it ranks 11th in terms of density of population per square mile. The County's population density was 496 people per square mile in 2000, with a land area of 949 square miles. County population figures in Pennsylvania range from 12 people per square mile in Forest County to 11,234 in Philadelphia.

From 1990 to 2000, Census figures show an 11.3 percent population gain for Lancaster County, placing the County in 9th position among Pennsylvania's 67 counties in rate of population loss/gain. There were 190 housing units per square mile in Lancaster County in 2000, compared to housing densities of 11 and 4,900 per square mile, respectively, for Potter and Philadelphia Counties. The number of households rose from 1990 to 2000 by 14.3 percent, ranking Lancaster County 11th among the 67 counties. The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is 20.5 percent,

placing the County in 15th position, statewide.

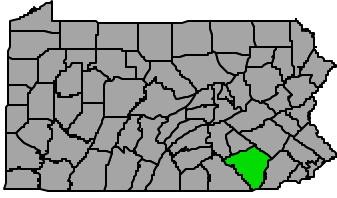
The County has experienced the state's biggest increase in congested roads, from 13 percent in 1995, to 23 percent in 1999. About 24,000 vehicles travel U.S. Route 30 every day, 15 percent of about 3,600 of which are large trucks

Existing Land Use Conditions

Approximately 89 of the County is undeveloped, with about 85 percent of this land devoted to agricultural and forest uses.

Like many Pennsylvania counties, Lancaster County's development has an urban core, suburban communities, and farms. However, as suggested by the density figures, above, these uses are intensively developed. With a total square mile area of 984 miles, Lancaster ranks as the 14th largest of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. However, its 4,556 farms and its 392,000 acres of farmland are the highest of any county in the state. The 86-acre average size of a farm ranks Lancaster as 64th among the 67 counties. The average earnings per farm of \$168,293 ranks Lancaster's per farm income as third among all of Pennsylvania's counties. The County's rich Class 1 agricultural topsoil is a unique resource, and a significant factor in the productivity of these small farms.

Lancaster County also has the highest number of farms enrolled in the agricultural preservation program, with 367 farms and 33,063 acres purchased at a total cost of just



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under \$70 million, again the largest number of farms, acres, and investment in the agricultural preservation program of any county in Pennsylvania.

Farmland preservation was the most frequently mentioned issue in responses received by the County for its updated County Policy Plan. The response to the agricultural preservation program has been positive. The preservation of more than 2,500 acres for open space uses, such as recreation and natural areas, also drew a positive response. Definition of urban growth boundaries and preservation of the City of Lancaster's urban core also received support. In addition, there was strong support for the U.S. Route 30 reconstruction project intended to increase traffic capacity and reduce congestion.

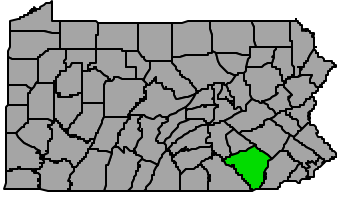
These accomplishments were also perceived as areas in which more needed to be done in terms of reducing the loss of farmland to suburban sprawl, and in terms of reducing sprawl and improving public transportation to reduce traffic congestion. There was concern about storefront and office vacancies in downtown Lancaster, as well as in many of the boroughs, and strong support for measures to preserve established communities throughout the County.

Key Land Use Issues

- ☑ **The Route 30 corridor through the County has generated strong growth pressures for development of the rich farmland surrounding the corridor.** Increased traffic capacity along this

corridor seems likely to increase development pressures, and enlarge the number of communities subject to these pressures, if commuting times decrease. At the same time, Lancaster's many small farms are highly productive, given rich Class 1 agricultural soils and a renowned work ethic among residents. At present, County leadership is addressing these issues with agricultural preservation projects, urban growth boundaries, and highway corridor improvements.

- ☑ **Current updating of the Growth Management Plan will have to address a shortage of land presently available for manufacturing and industrial development.**
- ☑ **The County's agricultural heritage has been a significant factor in its thriving tourism business, with the large Amish population in the County.** However, as development pressures drive agricultural land prices higher, and traffic congestion complicates the mobility of the Amish with their horse-drawn transportation, some Amish farm families are relocating to less urbanized counties. If this leads to a decreased reliance on family farms, the sale of agricultural land for development could increase.
- ☑ **Particularly among Amish farmers who typically raise larger families, small farms do not always provide sufficient employment and income.** Some Amish men are finding employment and forming businesses in the production of



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handicrafts and other wood-based items. A growing number of these businesses are located on their farms. Where new structures are erected and parking is provided, the increase in impervious surface can create storm water runoff problems. Most municipal agricultural zoning ordinances do not provide standards for the permissibility of such establishments.

Land Use Planning Activities

Envision Lancaster County is a coalition of public, private, and non-profit sectors for the implementation of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. The effort to build this coalition is being led by the Lancaster County Planning Commission. The purpose of this coalition is to further implement the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan through a series of "Smart Growth Initiatives." These initiatives will include:

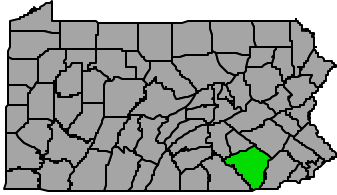
- Smart Growth Series
- "Smart Growth Communities" Designation Program
- Smart Growth Speakers Bureau
- Smart Growth Conference
- Zoning Lexicon
- Consistency Reviews of Plans and Ordinances
- Community Image Survey
- Smart Growth Pilot Projects
- Updated Lancaster County Growth Management Plan
- Rural Smart Growth Program
- Updated Lancaster County Housing Plan

- Lancaster County Preservation Plan
- Master Plan for Urban Growth Area
- Long-Term Smart Growth Funding Mechanism
- Lancaster County Greenprint
- Envision Lancaster County Website

Zoning Lexicon for Lancaster County.

With 60 zoning ordinances in 60 municipalities, Lancaster County has over 500 different zoning districts. This project entails categorizing similar zoning districts among many municipalities and devising a common name for each category. Consistency and predictability are primary elements in the location of development projects. This project will also bring Lancaster County's comprehensive plan into compliance with recently enacted amendments to the PA Municipalities Planning Code.

Urban Growth Boundaries: Forty-five of the County's 60 municipalities are actively participating in a County-led voluntary and cooperative growth management program to establish Growth Areas and corresponding Growth Boundaries. Twenty-eight townships established urban and/or Village Growth Areas. Five townships are in the process of establishing Growth Areas. Municipalities directed a majority of their population growth to Growth Areas inside established Growth Boundaries. Seventy-five percent of the dwellings constructed



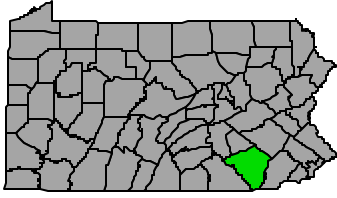
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between 1944 and 2001 were built inside Growth Boundaries. The current re-assessment of the Urban Growth Boundaries will also consider whether each one is in need of adjustment, either because demand has outpaced supply of land, or because lagging demand suggests that current boundaries include more land than needed. Additionally, the current Urban Growth Boundaries will work to effect an improved spatial alignment between urban growth boundaries and water and sewer service areas.

- Agricultural Land Preservation Program**, with continuous GIS-based tracking of conversion of agricultural land. From 1994 through 2001, 22,382 more acres were preserved than were converted for development in Lancaster County. Using perpetual easements, the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board and the Lancaster Farmland Trust preserved 29,998 acres of farmland. County and local governments purchased 2,752 acres of land for public parks and recreational use. A total of 10,368 acres were converted for development.
- Transportation Planning: the Planning Commission staffs the Lancaster County Transportation Coordinating Committee (LCTCC)**, which is the officially designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the County. The LCTCC has two permanent subcommittees: the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), representing a wide

range of transportation interests, and the Citizens Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory council (BPAC), which focuses on implementation of the County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan. Currently, the Route 30 Corridor and the Route 23 Study with its accompanying East Lancaster County Land Use Study of land outside the Route 23 Corridor are major transportation planning projects in Lancaster County.

- Work on a new countywide housing plan is just beginning.** A paramount concern is housing affordability, identified as an important issue by housing advocates.
- There is continuing work on brownfields revitalization**, especially in core communities. An important focus of this effort is the design and implementation of streamlined permitting procedures.
- Lancaster County's Long-Range Planning:** Specializes on countywide projects, such as the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, including the Policy Plan or vision for the future with goals, policies, and implementation actions, and the Growth Management Plan. Also included is an annual growth tracking report based on a GIS system that tracks the location and extent of development. Other countywide issues include those related to sewer and water resources, natural resource protection, cultural and



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historic preservation, tourism planning and development.

- ☑ **Water Resources Project:** This is a three-phase project involving the application of GIS for water resources planning, management, and development of GIS databases; updating as needed of the 1996 Lancaster County Water Resources Plan, including a water supply plan and wellhead protection program; the Water Resources Educational Program, which focuses on topical public displays and presentations, and on training concerning emergency management considerations related to water supply.