

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Lycoming County is located in north central Pennsylvania and is bordered by the counties of Bradford, Clinton, Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union. Predominantly rural in character, the County is comprised of 52 municipalities, including 42 townships, nine boroughs, and the City of Williamsport. Williamsport, the county seat, serves as the major metropolitan center for the state's north central region.

Of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, Lycoming is the largest in land area and, according to the 2000 Census, ranks 30th in population with 122,437 persons. The County encompasses 1,234.9 square miles - larger than the State of Rhode Island, which is only 1,054 square miles. The County's population density is 99.1 persons per square mile.

Existing Land Use Conditions

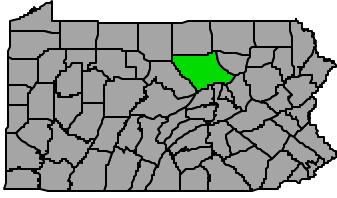
The majority of Lycoming County is undeveloped with 95.4 percent devoted to forest and agricultural uses.

Lycoming County's topographic features have largely shaped its land uses. The County occupies parts of two geomorphic provinces, the Appalachian Plateau Province and the Ridge and Valley Province, thereby resulting in a varied and scenic landscape. Separating these two provinces is the Allegheny Front, which is a striking escarpment trending east-west across the middle of the County. These natural features have caused major concentrations of urban and suburban

development to be located along the Susquehanna River Valley corridor. Beyond the river and creek valleys, development is sparse and coexists with extensive public land holdings consisting of both state and federal lands.

Key Land Use Issues

- ☑ **Lycoming County's household formation rate is exceeding its population growth rate.** From 1980 to 2000, the County's population increased by only 6 percent, while the number of households increased by 11.7 percent. This trend is due to the demographics of smaller households translating into a greater demand for housing units, thus consuming more land for residential development.
- ☑ **Lycoming County's population is on the move.** Since 1970, the County has experienced a substantial population shift from the City of Williamsport and boroughs to the outlying suburban and rural townships. This has produced a concentric ring of growth within the rural townships located just beyond the suburban fringe of Williamsport.
- ☑ **Lycoming County's rural character is being jeopardized** as its agricultural lands are slowly being converted to low-density, scattered, residential development. This trend is also negatively impacting the County's natural and scenic resources.



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- ☑ **Improvements to I-99 and I-180 will influence the County's future growth and development patterns** and will likely increase the development pressures on the suburban and rural townships.
 - ☑ **Existing municipal zoning ordinances in the rural areas of the County often encourage low-density, scattered residential development**, contributing to the consumption of the County's agricultural and rural open spaces. This also increases the traffic volumes on secondary and local roadways.
 - ☑ **The amount of land dedicated to transportation infrastructure has increased.** Besides the development of I-99 and I-180, the outward migration of Lycoming County's population from the City of Williamsport and boroughs and into the outlying suburban and rural townships has contributed to the growth of new communities and their internal roadway systems. This, in turn, contributes to the increasing cost of services carried by local municipalities.
 - ☑ **Agricultural use of land is in a long-term decline.** According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 44 farms and 6,335 acres were lost between 1987 and 1992. This equals an annual average loss of 1,056 acres.
- awarded a \$200,000 LUPTAP grant to prepare an update to the County's comprehensive plan. The grant also assists local officials in preparing six multi-municipal comprehensive plans encompassing 26 municipalities, one of which was located in Union County.
- ☑ **Lycoming County is one of the state's leaders in agricultural land preservation activities.** According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Lycoming County ranks 14th (out of 51 counties) in the number of acres preserved (5,522).

Land Use Planning Activities

- ☑ **Lycoming County has successfully conducted one the state's largest multi-municipal comprehensive planning efforts.** In 2001, Lycoming County was