

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Mifflin County is located in central Pennsylvania and encompasses 431.1 square miles of ridge and valley terrain. The County shares its borders with Centre, Huntingdon, Juniata, Snyder, and Union Counties. Mifflin County is subdivided into 16 municipalities, which includes six boroughs and 10 townships. Lewistown Borough is the county seat, which recorded the largest municipal population (8,998) within the entire County.

According to the 2000 Census, the County boasts a population of 47,464, which represents a 2.7 percent increase over its 1990 population. It ranks 45th in total population among Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

During the 19th Century, Mifflin County was a central hub for transportation and economic development activities between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. These activities were centered on the main line of the Pennsylvania Canal and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Geographically, the County is located between the anthracite and bituminous coal regions, and played a significant role in the state and region's history in terms of iron ore mining, the iron fabrication industry, and the cloth and shirt making industries.

Existing Land Use Conditions

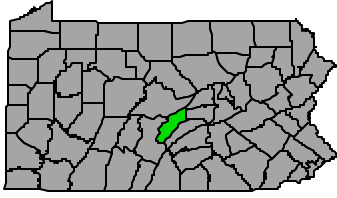
Mifflin County's 2000 Comprehensive Plan reveals that the County is a predominantly rural and undeveloped region of the state as less than six percent of its total land area is

developed. By far the greatest share (63 percent) of the County's undeveloped land area is classified as forest, a significant portion of this total is held in public lands. Agricultural land constitutes the second largest share (30.7 percent) of the County's undeveloped land area.

In Mifflin County, development of residential, commercial, and industrial uses primarily reside in the boroughs. Beyond the urban and suburban fringe, scattered, low-density residential development prevails.

Key Land Use Issues

- ☑ **Mifflin County's boroughs are depopulating as their residents are migrating into the nearby suburban and rural townships.** From 1990 to 2000, the share of the County's population living within its boroughs declined from 28.4 percent to 27.2 percent. In contrast, the share of the County's population residing within the suburban and rural townships increased from 71.6 percent to 72.8 percent.
- ☑ **An increasingly greater share of the County's total housing units are being located in Mifflin County's suburban and rural townships as opposed to its boroughs.** From 1990 to 2000, the share of the County's total housing units located in the townships increased while the share located in the boroughs decreased.



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- ☑ **Mifflin County is increasingly becoming a bedroom community as highway improvements are promoting the County's accessibility to nearby Harrisburg and State College employment markets.** Migration patterns collected from IRS records show that Mifflin County's greatest share of new residents migrated from neighboring Juniata, Huntingdon, Centre, and Snyder Counties. Accessibility to these market areas from Mifflin County will continue to improve as improvements are made to U.S. Routes 22/322 and 522.
- ☑ **Residential growth pressures are jeopardizing Mifflin County's agricultural and open space land areas.** A farmland loss analysis performed by the Mifflin County Mapping Department determined that 3,248 farmland acres were lost between 1975 and 1995. Of this total, 1,531 acres (47 percent) were converted to residential uses.
- ☑ **Mifflin County Agricultural Land Preservation Board has experienced a moderate level of success in its efforts to preserve the County's farmland.** Currently, the County has preserved over 1,000 acres of its nearly 80,000 farmland acres. The County's efforts, however, have to an extent been hindered by the limited funds available to purchase the available easements.

Land Use Planning Activities

- ☑ **Mifflin County has taken a proactive lead in a number of community planning initiatives.** For example, the County adopted a brand new comprehensive plan in 2000, which served as the foundation for the development and adoption of the County's first multi-municipal comprehensive plan in 2001. Other strategic planning initiatives include the Associate Planning Commission Program, Brownfields Project, County Solid Waste Plan, County Sewer Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Historic Preservation, Kish Creek Stormwater Management Plan, Subdivision Ordinance Update, Transportation Planning, and Water Supply Study.