

### *Land Use and Growth Management Profile*

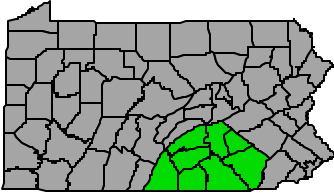
**T**he South Central Region includes Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lebanon, Perry, Lancaster, and York Counties, and 298 municipal governments. Geographically, the region covers 5,143 square miles and is located in southern Pennsylvania bordering Maryland. The region is diverse economically and culturally, including not only the State capitol, but also areas of historical prominence, such as Gettysburg, and some of the nation's most productive agricultural land located in Lancaster County.

South Central Pennsylvania lies within four regions of the Appalachians (Ridge and Valley, South Mountain, Triassic Lowlands and Piedmont), which results in an extremely varied terrain. The Ridge and Valley includes long, wooded ridges and broad agricultural valleys. The Triassic Lowlands are an area of rolling land and abrupt low ridges underlain by two types of rock. The first composed of shale and sandstone sediments formed agricultural land. The second included magma forming low hard rock on which the battle of Gettysburg was fought. The Piedmont is often hilly terrain traversed by streams located in deep valleys. In Lancaster County, the Piedmont is comprised of limestone and shale, which weathers rapidly forming a fertile valley called the Conestoga Lowland – some of the most productive agricultural land in the United States. The South Mountain is the northern tip of the Blue Ridge, the mountain range whose southern end is the Great Smoky Mountains of the Carolinas.

South Central Pennsylvania is very accessible from a highway transportation perspective given that 16,660 miles of roadways, representing 14 percent of the State's total highway miles, traverse the eight counties. The transportation network includes some of the most heavily traveled highways in the State: Interstates 76 (the Pennsylvania Turnpike), 81, and 83, and other major highways, such as U.S. Routes 11, 15, 30, 322, and 422.

Several of the eight counties are included in four metropolitan statistical areas (Harrisburg-Carlisle MSA, Lancaster MSA, Lebanon MSA, and York-Hanover MSA), and two micropolitan statistical areas (Chambersburg and Gettysburg) as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The region's metro- and micropolitan statistical areas are essential to the region's growth and development and produce a diverse, well-balanced economy. While the region has most definitely been impacted by manufacturing decline, the regional unemployment rate is 3.7 percent below the national average of 5.6 percent. The region's primary industry clusters demonstrate the diversity of South Central Pennsylvania's economy including: Agriculture, Business Services, Distribution, Food Processing, Healthcare, Machinery, Plastics, and Printing.

The South Central Region's population growth outpaced the State and all other Pennsylvania regions during the 1990s. Population in the region increased by 9.9 percent during the 1990s, compared to Pennsylvania's growth rate of 3.4 percent.



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### Key Land Use Trends

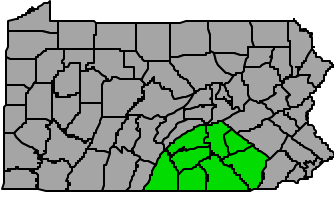
Key land use trends for the South Central Region were identified during a focus group discussion held with several of the region's county planning directors on March 24, 2004, in Mechanicsburg.

The South Central Assembly for Effective Governance (SCA) also participated in the meeting. The SCA, created in 1997, provides regional advocacy on planning and growth issues for South Central Pennsylvania.

- ☑ **Limited funding at the state level is not adequate to preserve the region's agricultural land.** Funding levels for county agricultural land preservation programs are not sufficient to purchase the number of available development easements in the South Central Region. Therefore, the programs are not as effective as intended in curbing wasteful development patterns. The State should develop an agricultural preservation plan at the regional level to set goals and priorities for agricultural preservation efforts.
- ☑ **Agricultural preservation issues differ throughout the region.** Prime agricultural farmland areas, like those that exist in Lancaster County, are quite different from agricultural preservation in Adams County, which promotes the inventory and protection of green infrastructure and quality of life amenities. A regional agricultural preservation plan should be prepared to assess and make recommendations on

preserving the region's agricultural resources.

- ☑ **Many of the region's agricultural production industries require low wage employees.** Cumulatively, low-paying jobs have an impact on the region's economic growth.
- ☑ **Global agricultural competition is impacting the region's traditionally strong agricultural base.** New agricultural technologies should be developed to remain competitive with foreign competition. Traditional farming methods are quickly becoming outdated. The impact of foreign-based agricultural production should be studied at the regional level to determine the region's future agricultural viability.
- ☑ **Due to the location of some of the nation's prime agricultural cropland in the South Central Region, potential national security issues should be identified.** Should the country be faced with political situations where it cannot rely on foreign countries to produce agricultural goods, agricultural contingency plans should be prepared at the national level. South Central Pennsylvania contains some of the nation's most valuable agricultural land and would be an integral component of future discussion on the issue.
- ☑ **The preparation of regional transportation planning studies has helped the region plan for growth.** Recent regional transportation planning



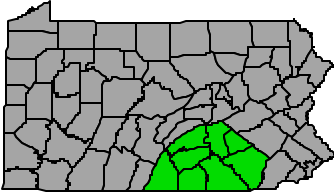
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studies have helped accommodate the demand for warehouse/distribution uses particularly along the I-81 corridor. Preparation of regional planning studies has also prompted municipalities to work together to address the residual impacts of land development.

- ☑ **Harrisburg is becoming an increasingly important rail hub and will soon become the largest rail hub on the East Coast.** Due to Harrisburg's prime central location along the East Coast, rail providers such as Norfolk Southern, are increasing their operations in the area. This increasing activity will impact local land use and transportation in the future. Counties within the region are experiencing a greater number of requests for rail-served sites by business prospects. Even with the increased number of requests for rail-served sites, the region's business community needs to be challenged to begin using rail service more aggressively. The State should examine and consider an increase in state rail funding.
- ☑ **The South Central Region is becoming more diversified both economically and socially as population is being influenced by an increasing number of job and recreation choices.** These opportunities create a tremendous level of regional commuting. Elected officials should be educated on the interrelatedness and importance of neighboring communities and counties on the region's overall economic health. Regional chambers of commerce could

assist in regional economic development by looking beyond their existing service regions to develop a regional economic development plan.

- ☑ **Due to the tremendous amount of regional commuting, regional commuter needs should be addressed. There is a lack of financial resources, however, particularly at the state level, for implementation.** The pressure and desire for regional rail transit is present at the local level, but the State lacks both the planning and fiscal capacity to consider the issues. A State study should examine the increased connectivity of existing and new hubs of live, work, and play communities. Automobile transportation is quite affordable; therefore, the ultimate need for regional transit is not yet realized in the region. Existing regional transit services are beginning to expand their service region to meet the growing need of regional commuting patterns.
- ☑ **Many of the region's newer housing developments are not affordable for first-time homebuyers and lower income households.** Although the South Central Region is the only region in the State that has experienced an increase in housing stock in both first-generation and second-generation communities, there is a lack of housing opportunities that meet the fiscal needs of first-time homebuyers and lower income households.
- ☑ **Housing development in the region is being greatly influenced by corporate**

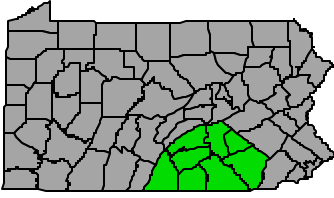


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**developers.** Corporate developers are designing and building residential communities throughout the region. The amount of new housing developments impact the region's school districts and the lack of impact fees to offset the impacts worsen the fiscal pressures. The challenge is creating an impact fee ordinance as enabled under the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

- ☑ **While manufacturing sectors still have an impact on the South Central Region's economy, additional regional economic strengths should be developed.** As the concentration of traditional manufacturing sector jobs continues to decrease, the region should explore the continual development of other sectors such as printing, which is second only to Chicago, and biotechnology, which is being greatly influenced in the region by the presence of the Penn State Hershey Medical Center. Tourism in South Central Pennsylvania should also be capitalized on particularly in its attraction to foreigners. Future economic development marketing should be focused on the industry clusters identified by South Central Team Pennsylvania.
- ☑ **Influx from outside urban areas is causing the South Central Region to become more culturally diversified, especially in the increase in Hispanic population.** Therefore, the region offers a new, diverse set of choices through its numerous urban centers.

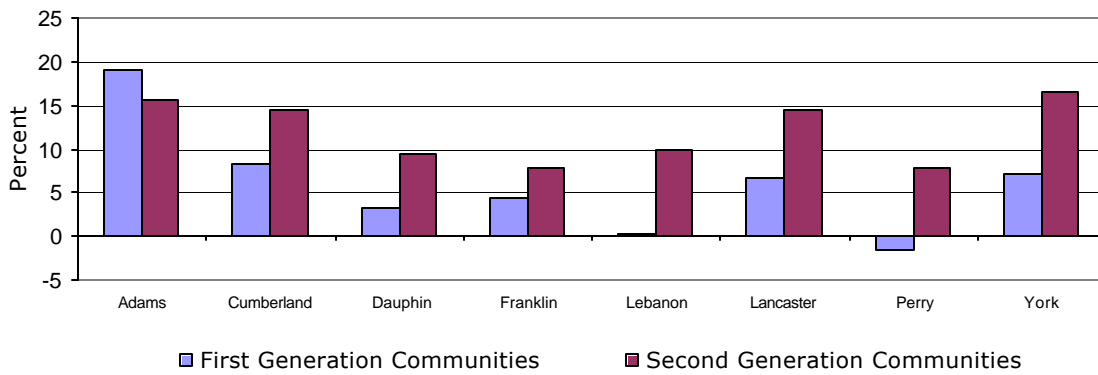
- ☑ **The region's population growth is increasing in both first-generation and second-generation communities.** From 1990 to 2000, the population within the region's first-generation communities increased by an average of 5.91 percent and increased by an average of 8.40 percent within the second-generation communities (Figure 1).
- ☑ **The region's new single-family housing units have been constructed in both the region's first- and second-generation communities.** Although the amount of housing within second-generation communities outpaced construction in first-generation communities during the 1990s, the development of housing stock in first-generation communities was nonetheless sizeable. Adams County experienced a 16.9 percent increase in first-generation community housing. Compared to other Pennsylvania regions, the first-generation communities in the South Central Region added the greatest amount of housing units during the 1990s, an average increase of 9.2 percent. The Northeast Region had the second greatest increase in the State – a 3.83 percent increase. Housing stock increase in many second-generation communities also increased greatly during the 1990s: York (21.6%), Adams (19.7%), and Cumberland (18.4%). The level of new housing construction reflects the region's population increase.



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**FIGURE 1**  
**South Central Region**  
**Population Growth Comparison 1990-2000**

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 & 2000



**FIGURE 2**  
**South Central Region**  
**Housing Growth Comparison 1990-2000**

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 & 2000

