



# **WESTERN BERKS JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

---

*including the municipalities of*

**Heidelberg Township**

**Marion Township**

**North Heidelberg Township**

**Robesonia Borough**

**Womelsdorf Borough**

**Berks County, Pennsylvania**

**Urban Research and Development  
Corporation**

**Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**



# **WESTERN BERKS JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Adopted By

Heidelberg Township Board of Supervisors - December 21, 1999

Marion Township Board of Supervisors - December 30, 1999

North Heidelberg Township Board of Supervisors - December 22, 1999

Robesonia Borough Council - January 3, 2000

Womelsdorf Borough Council - March 8, 2000

Urban Research & Development Corporation  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

## CONTENTS

|  | <u>PAGE</u> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....                          | 1           |
| The Vision .....                                   | 1           |
| The Plan .....                                     | 2           |
| <b>BACKGROUND REPORTS</b> .....                    | 3           |
| Regional Location .....                            | 3           |
| Historical Origins .....                           | 4           |
| Population, Housing and Employment .....           | 6           |
| Natural Features .....                             | 17          |
| Existing Land Use .....                            | 39          |
| Community Facilities and Services .....            | 49          |
| Parks and Recreation .....                         | 56          |
| Land Use Policies In the Region .....              | 59          |
| Transportation .....                               | 66          |
| Summary of Assets and Constraints .....            | 71          |
| <b>THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE</b> .....               | 73          |
| Goals and Objectives .....                         | 73          |
| Plan Interrelationships .....                      | 75          |
| Timing .....                                       | 76          |
| Future Land Use and Housing .....                  | 76          |
| Environmental Conservation .....                   | 82          |
| Agricultural Preservation .....                    | 88          |
| Historic Preservation .....                        | 90          |
| Transportation .....                               | 91          |
| Community Services and Facilities .....            | 93          |
| Economic Development/Downtown Revitalization ..... | 95          |
| <b>THE ACTION PROGRAM</b> .....                    | 99          |
| Summary of Recommendations .....                   | 99          |
| Implementing This Comprehensive Plan .....         | 102         |
| Funding Sources .....                              | 105         |

## CONTENTS (Cont.)

PAGE

### MAPS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Regional Location .....                            | 3  |
| Historic Landmarks of the Western Berks Area ..... | 5  |
| Geology .....                                      | 19 |
| Topography .....                                   | 23 |
| Hydrology .....                                    | 27 |
| Agricultural Soils .....                           | 31 |
| Soil Suitability for On-Lot Septic Systems .....   | 33 |
| Woodlands and Unique Natural Features .....        | 37 |
| Agricultural Preservation .....                    | 41 |
| Existing Land Use .....                            | 47 |
| Public Water and Sewer Service .....               | 51 |
| Adjacent Zoning .....                              | 61 |
| Roadway Classification .....                       | 69 |
| Future Land Use .....                              | 79 |

### TABLES

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1 - Total Population .....  | 6   |
| 2 - Berks County Planning Commission Population Projections .....             | 7   |
| 3 - Population Density .....  | 8   |
| 4 - Population by Age .....   | 9   |
| 5 - Gender .....  | 10  |
| 6 - Average Persons per Household .....                                       | 11  |
| 7 - Income and Poverty .....  | 11  |
| 8 - Total Housing Units .....   | 12  |
| 9 - Housing Type .....  | 13  |
| 10 - Housing Tenure and Vacancy .....   | 14  |
| 11 - Year Housing Built .....   | 14  |
| 12 - Employment by Sector .....   | 15  |
| 13 - Employment by Industry .....   | 16  |
| 14 - Total Employment .....   | 54  |
| 15 - Zoning Adjacent to the Western Berks Area .....                          | 63  |
| 16 - Summary of Recommended Future Land Use Planning Areas .....              | 78  |
| 17 - Guidelines for Protecting Important Natural Features .....               | 83  |
| 18 - Highway Functional Classifications and Recommended Design Features ..... | 91  |
| 19 - Summary of Recommendations .....   | 99  |
| 20 - Funding Sources .....  | 105 |