

FUTURE LAND USE ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan emphasizes land use planning that accommodates projected community and economic growth, directs growth to areas of existing or planned infrastructure, and protects sensitive resources from development and its impacts. The core purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to manage the amount, intensity, character and timing of development.

Methodology

The Future Land Use Plan was created digitally using a geographic information system (GIS). The existing land use and zoning GIS data was used as the foundation to create the Future Land Use map. Additional GIS data such as public water and sewer areas, slopes, floodplains, tax parcels, and easements were overlaid onto the existing land use. The combination of all the different GIS data allowed an analysis to be performed which determined areas that are currently developed, areas where growth should occur at different densities, the location of agriculture, recreation, as well as areas where industrial and commercial development should occur.

The Future Land Use Plan depicts the pattern of projected land use, targeting areas that are appropriate for urban growth and reinvestment, as well as areas that should be preserved/conserved for their agricultural, recreational or natural resource assets.

The Future Land Use Plan is divided into ten (10) categories:

1. Low Density Residential
2. Medium Density Residential*
3. High Density Residential
4. Mixed Use
5. Agriculture
6. Rural Conservation
7. Commercial
8. Industrial
9. Recreation
10. Transportation Network

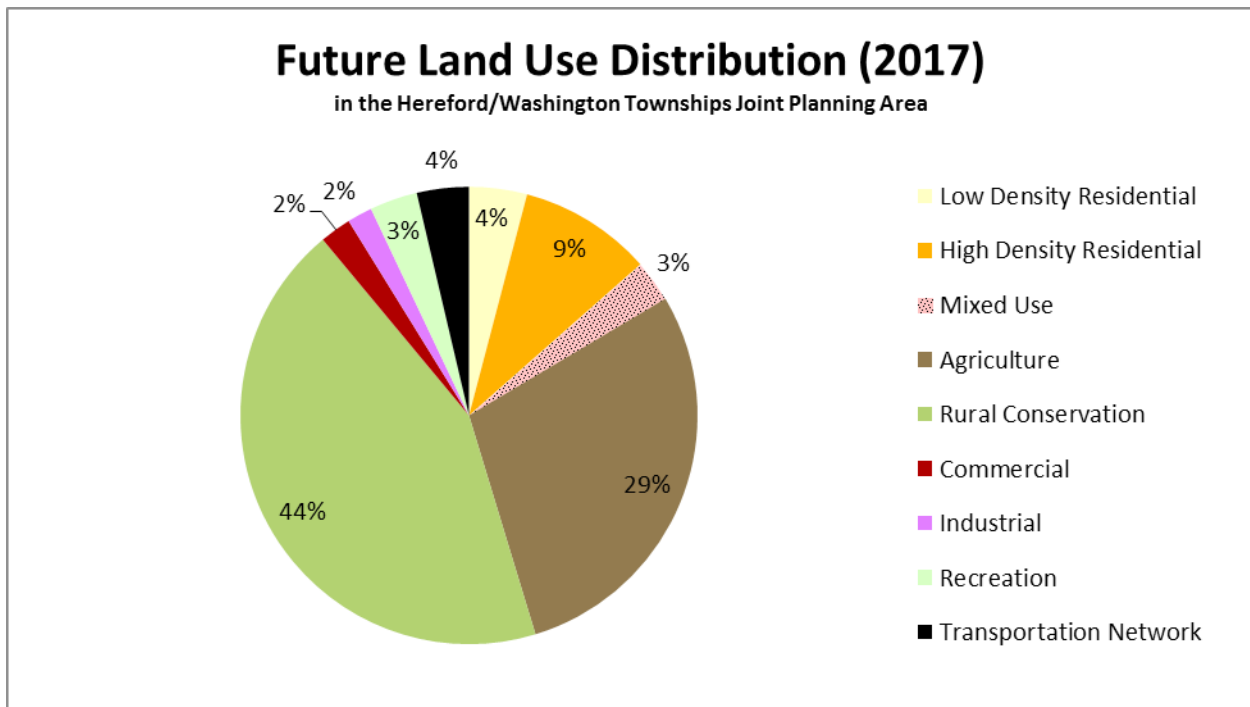
* The Medium Density Residential category is only within the boundaries of the boroughs of Bally and Bechtelsville. It is shown because of the 1000 foot buffer that identifies land uses in neighboring municipalities.

The table and chart on the next page shows the acreage for each of the Future Land Use categories in the region.

Chapter 11 - Future Land Use Analysis

Future Land Use in the Hereford-Washington Township Joint Planning Area, 2017						
LANDUSE	Joint Planning Area		Hereford Township		Washington Township	
	# Acres	% of Area	# Acres	% of Area	# Acres	% of Area
Low Density Residential	773	4.1%	81	0.8%	692	7.7%
High Density Residential	1,772	9.4%	206	2.1%	1,566	17.4%
Mixed Use	558	3.0%	558	5.7%	0	0.0%
Agriculture	5,432	28.8%	3,796	38.6%	1,636	18.2%
Rural Conservation	8,227	43.7%	4,355	44.3%	3,872	43.0%
Commercial	419	2.2%	0	0.0%	419	4.7%
Industrial	333	1.8%	98	1.0%	235	2.6%
Recreation	636	3.4%	374	3.8%	262	2.9%
Transportation Network	693	3.7%	366	3.7%	327	3.6%
Total	18,843	100.0%	9,834	100.0%	9,009	100.0%

Source: Berks County Planning Commission



The following describes the ten (10) land use categories portrayed in the Future Land Use Analysis.

Low Density Residential

This category is primarily intended to provide for single family detached development. With on-lot well and septic systems, a one or one-and-a-half acre minimum should be required. With central water and sewage services, a lot size of approximately ½ acre to 1/3 acre could be appropriate. Also, lot sizes as small as 1/5 acre could be appropriate through the Transfer of Development Rights (described in Chapter 10).

There are approximately 773 acres of Low Density Residential Development in the Hereford and Washington region. This category makes up about 4.1% of the joint planning area.

Medium Density Residential

This category is primarily intended to provide for single family detached homes and twin houses. With central water and sewage services, an average of approximately 2.1 to 6 homes per acre could be appropriate without open space preservation. The Open Space Development option could provide for approximately 1/4 or 1/6 acre average lot sizes with 30 percent of the tract preserved as open space. Also, lot sizes as small as 1/6 acre average lot sizes could be appropriate through the Transfer of Development Rights.

The Medium Density Residential designation does not fall within the boundaries of either Township. This category can be found in the 1000 foot buffer that identifies the adjacent land uses in the neighboring boroughs.

High Density Residential

This category is intended to provide for a mix of housing types at densities at over 6 homes per acre. Higher densities (such as 8 or 9 homes per acre) could be appropriate if the housing was limited to persons age 55 and older or through transfer of development rights. These areas should allow for all housing types. These areas are particularly important to meet obligations under State law to offer opportunities for all types of housing. It also is important to provide opportunities for various housing types in order to meet the needs of different types of households, such as empty nesters, singles, low income and senior citizens. All apartment and townhouse developments (except the smallest) should be required to include some recreation or open space area for residents.

The majority of this designation is located in the southern corner of Washington Township along SR 100 between Old Route 100 and County Line Road. There are also clustered areas of this designation found around the villages of Seisholtzville, Harlem and Huff's Church in Hereford Township. The High Density Residential category contains approximately 1,772 acres or 9.4% of the joint planning area.

Mixed Use

This category is intended to provide for a broad mix of office, commercial, limited industrial, community institutional, and specialized residential development. The Mixed Use designation is also intended to provide for large-scale and automobile-oriented uses which may not be compatible within conventional residential or historic village areas.

The Mixed Use category is only found in Hereford Township along State Route 29. Approximately 558 acres in Hereford Township are designated as Mixed Use.

Agriculture

The need for agricultural preservation and methods to achieve it are described in the Environmental Resource Analysis section of this Plan. A goal of the agriculture designation is to avoid dense residential subdivisions in the middle of active farmland - to protect the investment of the adjacent farmers.

In general, the desire is to preserve large contiguous areas of prime farmland, mainly through encouraging landowners to sell conservation easements to the County, Townships or non-profit agency. As an alternative, owners of land are encouraged to consider selling conservation easements to a developer in return for a "transfer of development rights" (as described in Chapter 10). Townships can also enact Effective Agricultural Zoning (EAZ) regulations. EAZ focuses on preserving agriculture by permitting a wide variety of farm-related uses and restricting non-farm activities that are disruptive to agricultural activities. In EAZ non-farm dwelling unit development is stringently limited (in number and size of lot); typically through sliding scale and fixed area based zoning techniques. Washington Township's "A" zoning district qualifies as EAZ.

Chapter 11 - Future Land Use Analysis

In addition to discouraging large numbers of homes in prime agricultural areas, it is also desirable to carefully locate new homes on a tract to minimize conflicts with agricultural activities. New homes should be placed as far as is reasonable from livestock operations, and preferably should be upwind from livestock.

Agriculture is the second largest Future Land Use category as it encompasses over 5,000 acres or 28.8% of the joint planning region.

Rural Conservation

These lands are characterized by low density development, prominent forest cover, and may contain slopes greater than 15%, as well as fragmented areas of farmland and land eased for open space, natural resource or woodland conservation. Development should be subject to flexible siting standards, conservation design standards, and disturbance limitations designed to avoid the most critical environmental constraints, and allow land to be developed efficiently with the least degree of environmental impact.

Just driving through the Townships one can recognize the rural nature of the region. It's no wonder that the Rural Conservation designation is the number one land use identified on the Future land Use map. Over 8,200 acres of Rural Conservation covers the municipalities. That's nearly half of the acreage of the two municipalities combined.

Commercial

This category is intended to provide for a wide range of commercial development, particularly in areas of more "highway" oriented commercial development. As opposed to the Mixed Use area described earlier in this chapter, these areas should provide opportunities for uses such as gas stations, vehicle sales and auto sales. A careful set of standards are needed to require coordinated traffic access among different uses.

If an excessive amount of commercial zoning is allowed at one time, it may encourage sprawled development, with businesses simply relocating from one business site to a new site, leaving the old site vacant. If the supply of commercially zoned land is held to a moderate amount, it will encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment of older commercial sites.

Hereford Township has no Commercial land; instead they rely on the Mixed Use designation for commercial development. Washington Township, on the other hand, has over 400 acres identified for commercial development. The Commercial land use designation can be found along the State Route 100 corridor from the southern municipal border to northern municipal border with Hereford Township.

Industrial

The Industrial areas are intended to provide for a wide range of industrial uses. These areas are particularly important to meet obligations under State law to provide opportunities for all types of business uses, including some uses that are less desirable. The heaviest industrial uses should need special exception from the zoning hearing board or conditional use approval from the township supervisors.

Both municipalities provide for Industrial uses. In Washington Township Industrial areas are located in close proximity to the Boroughs to take advantage of access to sewer and water. Hereford Township has an area of Industrial designation on the east side of Tollgate Road along the Montgomery County border. Together the Industrial use makes up about 1.8% or 333 acres of the joint planning area.

Recreation

Recreation land provides space and facilities for people to engage in active and passive recreation activities. These include playgrounds, parkland, state gamelands/forests, as well as recreation land owned by non-profit recreational groups (i.e. sportsman clubs, and little league organizations) and commercial recreation (i.e. golf courses, miniature golf courses, racetracks, campgrounds).

Recreational land is located sporadically across the joint planning area. Recreation makes up about 636 acres of land throughout both Townships.



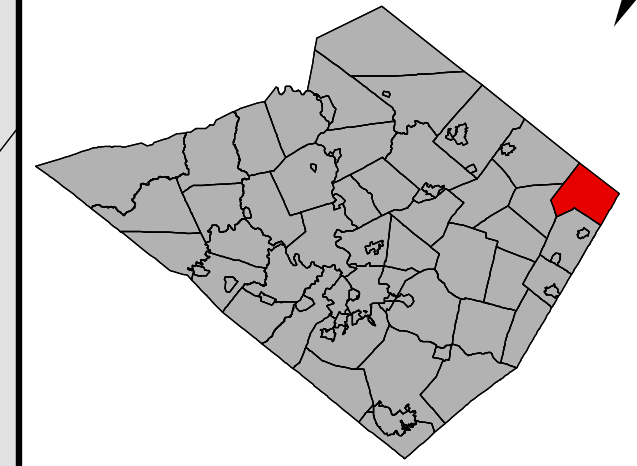
Barto Community Park

Transportation Network

Land in this category contains roads and railroads. While the network of transportation modes that serves Berks County also includes air service, bus and motor freight services, these land uses, as well as parking garages are included in the commercial category.

While many factors can influence growth and development patterns, the existing transportation network has always been prominent in shaping Berks County, as well as the Hereford and Washington planning region. Over time development has historically concentrated near major transportation facilities to take advantage of their accessibility.

Future Land Use Hereford Township

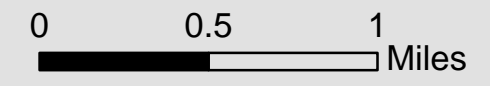
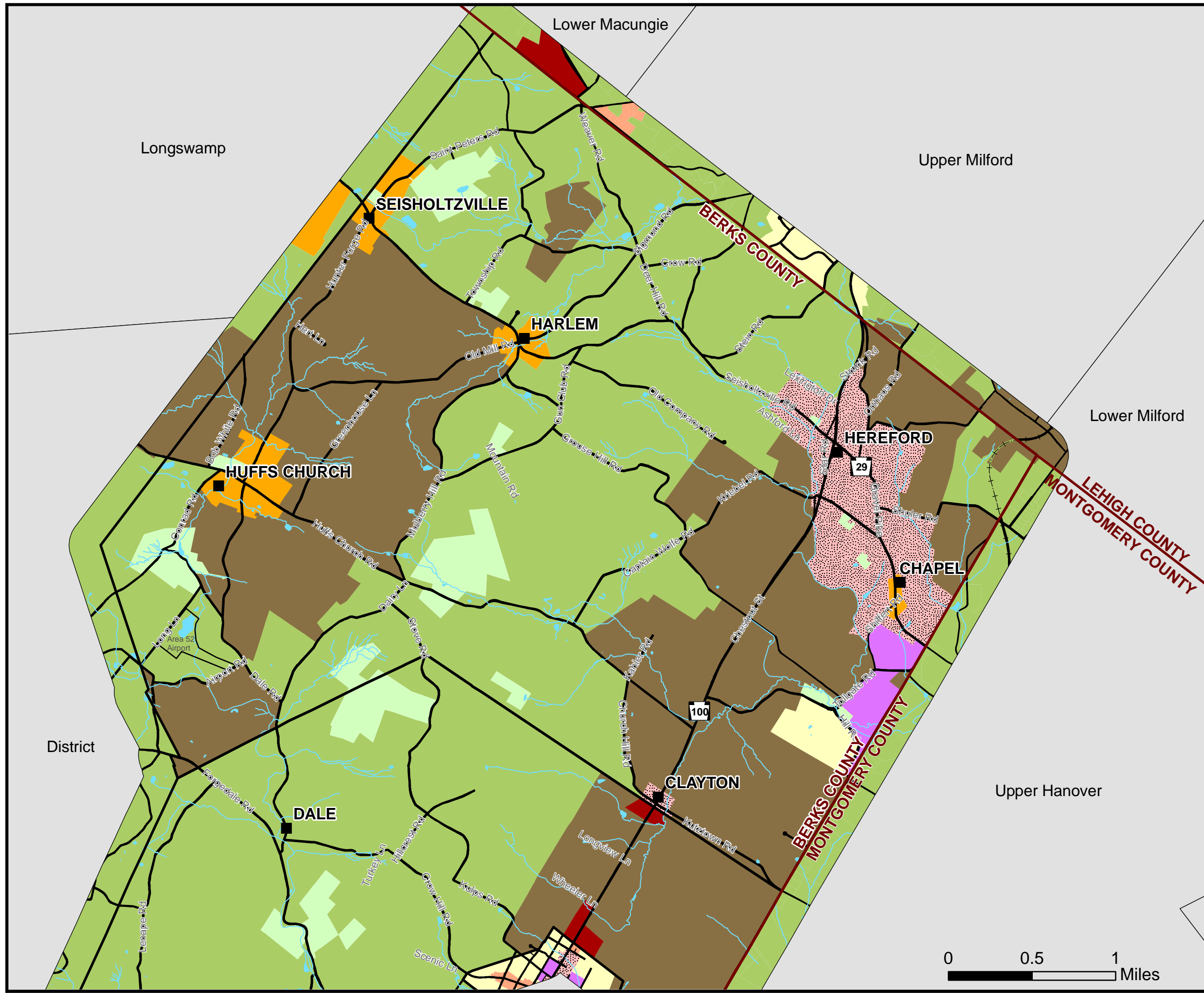


Legend

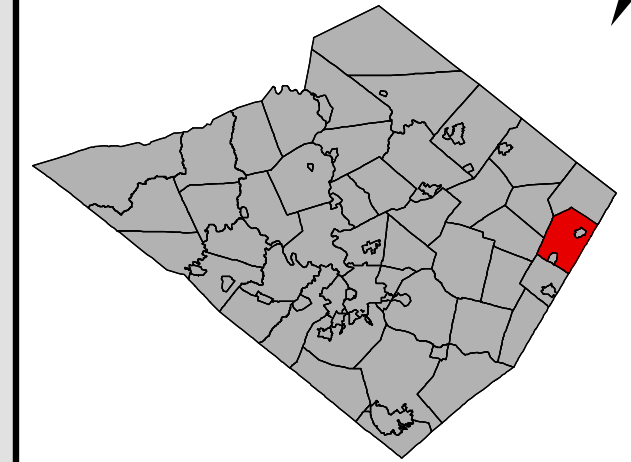
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Agriculture
- Rural Conservation
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreation
- Transportation Network
- Villages
- Railroads
- Streams
- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries

Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks County Mapping, Berks DES
Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

BAB 8/18



Future Land Use Washington Township



Legend

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Agriculture
- Rural Conservation
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreation
- Transportation Network
- Villages
- Railroads
- Streams
- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries

Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks County Mapping, Berks DES

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

BAB 8/18

