

Appendix A

Identification of Issues - Public Participation

For a Joint Comprehensive Plan to be a useful tool for guiding future development and policy in an area, it must represent a consensus among the Region's stakeholders. The residents, business owners, community service providers, and municipal officials must each have a part in forming the policies of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires public input at the *end* of the process, in the form of public meetings and public hearings. Restricting public involvement to merely what is required is not likely to produce a successful plan, as the public will have little sense of participation in the process or ownership of the final document: they are being asked to approve a plan in which they had no voice. Early and frequent public participation is essential to the development of a practical, community-based Comprehensive Plan, regardless of the number of municipalities that are involved.

The public participation component of the Alsace, Oley, and Ruscombmanor Townships Joint Comprehensive Plan surpasses the requirements of the MPC. Public input was sought early in the planning process, well before any policies or future land uses were determined. A three-pronged approach to direct public input was implemented.

- The Committee held monthly meetings, which were open to the public, starting in October 2007 for the duration of the planning process.
- The Committee and SSM prepared a written questionnaire. The questions were largely similar to those asked in the interviews, but were structured in a way that allowed for quantitative analysis of the responses. Questionnaire responses were reviewed and analyzed by Berks County Planning Department.
- SSM conducted a series of telephone interviews with specific individuals identified by the Committee. The selected persons were chosen because of their positions within the community and the particular insights those positions gave them. The interviewees included a variety of public officials, local business leaders, and farmers.
- SSM, The Committee, and Berks County Planning Department Coordinator held a public meeting on July 22, 2008 to review a draft of the plan prior to sending it to the Planning Commissions for review and approval.

This Appendix will include the results of the public outreach, including a summary of the questionnaire results.

Chosen Survey (White)

Written Responses from the Alsace, Oley, Ruscombmanor Municipal Survey

16. Would you be in favor of additional traffic lights through the region?

- Route 12 @ Sunoco & strip mall (Chatty's)
- 72 & Friedensburg Rd. – turn signals/also @ 662 & 73
- Pricetown Rd. & Oley Rd.
- Route 12 & Skyline Road
- Route 12 at intersection south of Route 73
- Route 12 and Mt. Laurel Rd.
- 662 & Oley Turnpike Roads
- As Needed
- Pricetown Rd. & Oley Furnace Road
- Pricetown Rd. near Sunoco & strip mall with Chatty's, Max Creamary Dance Dynamics – dangerous
- Near strip mall on Route 12 (Giannotti's Restaurant)
- Bertolet Mill & Hoch Rd. – also Covered Bridge & 662
- Pricetown Rd.
- Pricetown/Antietam Rd.
- Antietam/Pricetown Rd.
- 662/72 Intersection in Oley
- Route 73 & 662
- Pricetown Rd. (Route 12) (Modify) also Route 73 & Friedensburg put arrows in
- I would like to see a center turning lane on Route 12 from the 4-lane highway to Mt. Laurel Rd., especially at Route 12 and Elizabeth Ave.
- Route 12 in Alsace Twp.
- Route 12 & Mt. Laurel Rd.
- Route 12 – Elizabeth Ave.
- Route 12 – Antietam Rd.

17. Every area has its “treasures” – places that are unique because of their beauty, appeal, historic character, or because of what they offer the citizens of the area. Citizens often want to preserve these special spaces for future generations. In the space provided below, please identify places in the Oley/Alsace, Ruscombmanor area – including neighborhoods, historic buildings, public buildings, businesses, and scenic spots or any other location – that you consider a “treasure.”

- The Village of Oley
- The hillside along Route 73 (formerly owned by Shirley DeTurk) just west of the Weis Market Shopping Center should remain open space. It

consists of approximately 50 acres. If this ground is developed it will spoil the beautiful Oley Valley!! The “Moxon” Land should not be developed! It should remain open space and be used for community park!

- Main St. Oley
- The entire Oley Township is on historical registry – how can development happen with this designation?
- Main St. Oley.
- “Golden Oaks Golf Club” – offers sport attraction while maintaining open space and a restaurant for dining.
- We have a generous mix of woodland and farmland. Maintaining our “Green Jewel” is most important to us. Conservation Zoning and codes requiring architecture appropriate to our neighborhoods should be considered.
- The historic buildings and farmlands of all three townships should be preserved for future generation.
- Oley Main Street
- Main St. Oley & intersection of Main & Friedensburg Rd.
- All of Oley Township is unique in scenic beauty & historic character, and agricultural productivity – Alsace and Ruscombmanor also have many special features.
- Private open space will be the best treasure to leave future generations. Farms & woodland make for a more appealing vista than the roof tops of housing developments or industrial size schools and parking lots. Preserve our private open land.
- Covered bridges – Oley
- All of our historic farmsteads
- Oley farmlands – not to over develop our existing areas – open spaces.
- Main St., Oley; Spangsville; 2 covered bridges.
- Oley Furnace
- Main St. of Oley
- Simply put, STOP destroying quiet/good farm/wooded areas with ridiculous development (homes). People are moving here from out of County. Preserve all good areas that God has given us to enjoy. Thank You.
- Ag. Land – no buildings
- Each person’s property is their treasure. Infringing regulations could be a hindrance to home and landowners.
- Let the townships alone – they are “treasures” as they exist – that’s why we are here!
- I believe that preservation of local “treasures” should be privately funded, not with tax dollars.
- The family owned farms & open space that remains but is being developed because elected officials do stand behind the taxpayers wishes.
- Stop destroying old buildings - fix them up

18. Any other comments or issues that you would like to see addressed?

- Additional beautification of “Main Street” Oley. The Main Street Oley needs to be repaired/resurfaced. The result of the many municipal sewage repairs that have been made.
- Please do something about motorcycles & RMC – they bring noise and lots of unwanted people to Oley. A noise ordinance would be great or actually fine people with illegal pipes.
- Also events @ Fairgrounds in Oley like April Motorcycle Meet are dangerous and too large for our community. STOP THEM before someone gets hurt.
- Too much traffic and residential development in Oley.
- Can’t understand why these communities have not worked more closely together in the past. We share a school district and could do more together to address issues associated with growth, water and sewer, public safety.
- Permits and approvals should be required for any cutting on wood plots. Should be overseen by a department knowledgeable in forestry and erosion. Clear cutting should be banned.
- If the townships decide to work jointly – please focus on developing a future plan that includes businesses and budgeting! Please explore outside sources of funding and grants! Focus on senior developments that won’t tax our school system and increase our taxes! We’re paying a lot of taxes and are not getting much in return!!
- Smart Growth (density) requiring more open space area in new developments.
- As the three townships grow, the following should be looked into: regionalizing police, fire and emergency medical services as well as trash collection and recycling. Also some properties in the townships need to be cleaned up, too much trash lying around makes everyone’s property value’s lower.
- Consolidation of the 3 townships into one. Centralized business development area. Berks County can no longer afford all of the current townships.
- A community swimming pool would give focus to our area – not owned by a municipality, but private. Healthful, safe, financially independent – cultivate a sense of belonging that doesn’t center around the schools – which is all there is now.
- Protect water resources to fullest extent.
- Eliminate property taxes. Regionalization destroys community heritage. Don’t regionalize!
- Better traffic/speed enforcement.
- Safe right-of-ways for horseback riding

- The more townships stick their noses in other townships business the less control the poor tax payer has over anything. P.S. nothing you talked about can lower taxes – only raise them higher.
- Schools should have to stop spending like we do – No more taxes.
- Adding right turn lanes at Breezy Corners and Route 73 & Friedensburg Rd. in Oley
- Use our tax money wisely – Fix Mexico Rd.
- Better enforcement of “Zoning” too many “businesses” in residential zones

Appendix B

space, roads, police, water treatment, parks, and road maintenance, among other services.

Land uses do matter, so it is important to think carefully when development is proposed in a community. Particular attention should be paid to how the development will affect local services and how well those existing services can accommodate new service demands.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DECLINE

When a community's major industry (such as the town steel mill) closes due to economic difficulties, the assessed value of that property can decrease, reducing tax revenues. Water and sewer fee revenues can also decline

drastically, making it difficult to operate the local systems without increasing usage fees for homes and other businesses. Because industrial and commercial land types in general help subsidize homeowners, the loss of their revenue can be especially damaging. The school district and municipality may be forced to choose between cutting services or raising tax rates to make up for the lost revenue. If a school district or municipality relies too heavily on a large commercial or industrial property to fund local services, it leaves itself vulnerable to these kinds of shocks.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL COOPERATION

The influence of school revenues and expenses on the fiscal impacts of different land uses has an important implication for how neighboring boroughs, townships, and cities cooperate. Land uses throughout a school district affect all taxpayers living in the school district, not just taxpayers in the host municipality. Intensive residential land uses in a neighboring municipality will affect your school taxes as much as if those land uses were within your own municipality, if that neighboring community is located within your school district. Commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses in neighboring municipalities similarly can help benefit school tax bills in your own municipality.

These effects illustrate the benefits of cooperation among neighboring municipalities. What happens in a neighboring municipality influences what happens in your municipality. It makes sense for municipal officials and planning commissions at least to communicate among themselves so they can be aware of what is occurring in neighboring municipalities. Cooperation between municipalities can ease coordination of planning activities and provide better control over what happens within the region.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Some residents may not appreciate the smells, sounds, or other inconveniences of living near farms, but these things are reminders that all

residents benefit from farm and open land. The tax revenue from these lands helps keep residents' taxes low.

When farmland is converted for residential purposes, these benefits are lost. If the number of children living in the new houses requires that the school district hire new teachers or build new schools or that the local government increase service expenditures (for roads, sewers, water systems, and so forth), the impacts of farmland loss can be especially dramatic. The land will be converted from a net contributor to the municipality and school district into a net drain.

Some farmland protection programs, such as Clean and Green, reduce the amount of real estate tax paid by farmers. This lessens the revenue that farmland contributes to the school district and municipality. The results in several townships, that had land enrolled in Clean and Green, demonstrate that even when these programs are in use in a township, farmland still contributes more than it requires. Even with preferential assessments, farmland ends up subsidizing the educational costs of residential land and plays a positive economic role in the community.

REFERENCES

American Farmland Trust. *The Cost of Community Services in Deerfield, Massachusetts*. Northampton, Mass.: American Farmland Trust, 1991.

Prepared by Timothy W. Kelsey, professor of agricultural economics.

Visit Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences on the Web: www.cas.psu.edu

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research, extension, and resident education programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This publication is available from the Publications Distribution Center, The Pennsylvania State University, 112 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802. For information telephone (814) 865-6713.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

—. *Density-Related Public Costs*. Northampton, Mass.: American Farmland Trust, 1986.

—. *Does Farmland Protection Pay? The Cost of Community Services in Three Massachusetts Towns*. Northampton, Mass.: American Farmland Trust, 1992.

—. *Fiscal Impacts of Major Land Uses in the Town of Hebron, Connecticut*. Northampton, Mass.: American Farmland Trust, 1986.

Burchell, Robert W., and David Listokin. "Fiscal Impact Procedures and State of the Art: The Subset Question of the Costs and Revenues of Open Space and Agricultural Lands." In Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, *Does Land Conservation Pay? Determining the Fiscal Implications of Preserving Open Land*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1993: 1-32.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County, and American Farmland Trust. *Cost of Community Services Study: Towns of Beckman and Northeast Dutchess County, New York*. 1989.

Kelsey, Timothy W. *Local Tax Bases and Change: The Fiscal Impacts of Alternative Land Uses*. University Park: Penn State Cooperative Extension, 1993.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.

Produced by Ag Communications and Marketing

© The Pennsylvania State University 2007

Code # EC410 Rev2M10/07mpc3969



Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses

THE PENNSYLVANIA EXPERIENCE IN 2006

The way land is used in your community affects your taxes and the quality of your life. Land uses influence the size of your local government, the types of services it offers, the types of equipment it must purchase, and the taxes and tax rates it must levy. Land use also affects the number of students in the local school district, the sizes and number of school buildings, the number of teachers, and the taxes and tax rates the school district levies.

These impacts are significant not only because they affect taxpayers and local residents but because they affect the ability of local government to respond to the needs of its citizens. Identifying the impacts of different land uses will help you recognize what types of land uses should be encouraged in your municipality and what types should be treated cautiously.

This publication discusses the fiscal impact of different land uses in Pennsylvania and the implications for taxpayers and communities. It uses Cost of Community Service studies conducted during 2006 and 2007 to update an earlier extension publication on the same topic.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Land uses can affect the local government's and school district's finances by changing the revenues collected or the amount of public money spent on services. A housing development where many children live, for example, may generate a lot of tax revenue for the municipality while also requiring that the school district operate more classes.

Sorting out the net impact of different land uses requires a consideration of their impacts on both revenues and expenditures.

Impacts on Revenues

The revenues collected through local taxes, such as the real property and realty transfer taxes, depend directly on the land uses in a jurisdiction. High-value uses, like industrial and commercial enterprises or expensive homes, can generate much tax revenue.

Other local taxes depend less directly on land uses

but are still affected by them. Revenues from the earned income tax, occupation tax, and per capita tax are heavily influenced by how many people live in the jurisdiction and their economic status.

The ways people use land also affect the nontax revenues of municipalities and school districts. These include license and permit revenues, sewer and public service fees, highway aid, the amount of money school districts receive from the Commonwealth's Equalized Subsidy for Basic Education, and payments in lieu of taxes made by the Commonwealth and the federal government.

Impacts on Expenditures

How much revenue can be raised is only part of the overall fiscal impact of different land uses. The costs of providing local governmental and school district services for different land uses are also important.

Such services can include sewer, water, fire protection, police, refuse collection, streets, libraries, and

Table 3.
Hierarchy of land uses and typical fiscal impacts.

Land use	FISCAL IMPACT ON:	
	Municipality	School district
Research office parks	+	+
Office parks	+	+
Industrial development	+	+
High-rise/garden apartments (studio/1 bedroom)	+	+
Age-restricted housing	+	+
Garden condos (1-2 bedrooms)	+	+
Open space lands	+	+
Retail facilities	-	+
Townhouses (2-3 bedrooms)	-	+
Expensive single-family homes (3-4 bedrooms)	-	+
Townhouses (3-4 bedrooms)	-	-
Inexpensive single-family homes (3-4 bedrooms)	-	-
Garden apartments (3+ bedrooms)	-	-
Mobile homes	-	-

Note: This is a general listing and may not apply accurately to any one specific development. The fiscal impacts must always be viewed in the context of the specific community, existing surplus capacity of local services, and other development occurring in the jurisdiction.

Source: Burchell and Listokin, 1993.