

Chapter 7

Future Land Use and Housing Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is one of the most important elements of the comprehensive plan. It graphically brings together all of the chapters of the plan and evaluates all of the information that has been mapped and gathered during this planning process. Based on stated goals and objectives, this Plan will determine what future land uses would be most appropriate throughout the region and at what density. Factors such as existing land use, natural features, soil conditions, demographics, housing, economic development trends, road conditions, sewer and water capacities, and village and neighborhood vitality all play a role in the development of the Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan will serve as a guide for future municipal ordinance amendments and regulations. Municipal regulatory controls such as zoning, sewer and water facilities planning, transportation planning, and recreation planning should be based upon the recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan.

It is important to stress that the Future Land Use Plan is **not** a zoning map, nor does it change the zoning ordinances and maps that have been previously adopted by the municipalities in the region. It is a reference tool and a guide that may be used by municipal officials and planners when making decisions regarding future development.

Future Land Use recommendations are based on a variety of factors: The patterns of development and existing conditions within the Borough and Townships; the anticipated path of future growth in the Region; existing environmental conditions and natural resources; capacity of public facilities, such as sewer and water service, and other infrastructure; and goals of *Vision 2020*, the Berks County Comprehensive Plan

Land Use

Goal:

Manage, control, and guide development to preserve natural resources, agricultural uses, and existing communities in order to retain a mix of small town atmosphere, suburban environment, and rural character within the Region.

Objectives:

- Ensure that development occurs in ways that minimize degradation of natural and cultural environments through establishment of standards in zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.

- Ensure that development occurs in an efficient and logical manner, and in ways that minimize short- and long-term costs to the public and private sectors, by designating designated growth areas and potential future growth areas.
- Direct residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development, appropriate in scale and character to the community, to growth areas, where public sewer and water and transportation improvements are most likely and could be phased in concert with new development. Tie the type and intensity of development to the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, drainage, parks and recreation, and community facilities by developers.
- Designate areas for future growth and development where such future development would be consistent with the protection of community character.
- Allocate sufficient land to accommodate projected population within designated growth areas.
- Minimize encroachment of development into areas recommended for retention of rural character and agricultural resource protection, and/or which lack supporting infrastructure and services.
- Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through proper allocation of land use on the Future Land Use Plan and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards in zoning ordinances.
- Accommodate retail and service development sufficient to meet the day-to-day retail and service needs of the region's residents at appropriate locations shown on the Future Land Use Plan.
- Maintain consistent and compatible land use along municipal boundaries pursuant to the Future Land Use Plan.
- Establish developer responsibilities for provision of community facilities and infrastructure improvements within zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.
- Continue to allocate land use on a regional rather than municipality by municipality basis, as is done on the Future Land Use Plan.

- Manage growth through the establishment of efficient, compact patterns of land use and discourage haphazard, uncoordinated, leap-frog development. This is accomplished through encouraging growth to growth areas per the Future Land Use Plan.
- Promote infill and revitalization within the Borough, in conformity with the general character of the Borough.
- Improve the visual image of the Region at entranceways to the Borough and Township and along road corridors, such as the Route 183 and New Schaefferstown Road corridors.
- Permit appropriate development techniques for use within the Region, such as Conservation Development and Traditional Neighborhood Development.
- Establish appropriate policies for residential conversions within the Borough which will be consistent with retention of the character, stability, and upkeep of residential neighborhoods and provision of adequate parking facilities.

Actions:

- A. Update zoning maps and zoning district provisions, to reflect the Future Land Use Plan as necessary.
- B. Update Statements of Community Development Objectives contained in Township and Borough zoning ordinances to be consistent with this Plan.
- C. In zoning ordinances, provide for land development techniques designed to protect existing resources, provide open spaces, enhance streetscapes, and protect the character of existing villages.
 - 1. Conservation Zoning (Growing Greener Concept of Natural Lands Trust) in the Region:

Determine whether Conservation Zoning should be the default and/or encouraged method of development, with density disincentives given to other methods of development which result in less open space and protection of resources. The typical Conservation Zoning development process is:

 - a. Net out natural resources

- b. Establish maximum overall density
 - c. Establish minimum substantial open space requirement
 - d. Establish alternative methods of development
 - e. Require important natural features and resources, such as scenic vistas, historic sites, agriculture, steep slopes, wetlands, and woodland, to be contained in open space
 - f. Provide visual and physical access to open space areas
2. Lot averaging, as appropriate, which provides:
- a. A maximum overall density
 - b. Flexibility in lot size, with a minimum established
 - c. Natural features and resources are contained in larger lots so houses can be sited away from them
3. Traditional Neighborhood Development (Neotraditional Development), and Village Extension and Village Design within the Villages. These methods promote the following concepts:
- a. Creation of a sense of community
 - b. Pedestrian oriented design
 - c. Central community facilities
 - d. Public spaces
 - e. Shallow setbacks
 - f. Street trees
 - g. Alleys where appropriate
 - h. Compact development
 - i. Interconnected streets, closer to a grid pattern

- j. Historic development patterns of towns
4. Adopt corridor overlay zoning along major commercial roads, such as PA Route 183, Main Street in Bernville, and New Schaefferstown Road, to enhance the appearance of these corridors, enhance safety and traffic movement, and maintain economic viability. Such overlay zoning may address:
- a. Coordinate landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, paving materials, design of site improvements, building façade and windows displays throughout the road corridors
 - b. Increase pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjoining properties and within properties
 - c. Increase size and quantity of landscape material
 - d. Integrate historic and cultural resources into development
 - e. Provide site amenities
 - f. Renovate building facades
 - g. Minimize curb cuts and unrestricted access
 - h. Provide more attractive signage
 - i. Locate parking to the rear and side of buildings where appropriate and feasible
 - j. Integrate architecture, landscaping and screening
 - k. Encourage pedestrian oriented design (e.g., sidewalks and benches)
 - l. Encourage pedestrian oriented spaces in the Borough and villages
 - m. Screen loading areas, outdoor storage and dumpsters
 - n. Provide safe bus stops with shelters, with pedestrian connections to buildings

- D. In zoning ordinances, require areas for economic development to be developed through coordinated, attractive commercial and business parks and discourage additional strip commercial development.
- E. Consider allowing convenience commercial uses in or near residential developments to reduce traffic to and from commercial areas in the Region.
- F. The Townships and Borough should continue to monitor zoning along municipal boundaries to provide for compatible zoning districts.
- G. Within zoning district provisions, considering the entire Region as a whole, provide for the accommodation of housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households from all economic and demographic groups within the Region.
- H. Address architectural and related issues within zoning ordinances. For example:
 - 1. In some zoning districts, such as but not limited to neighborhood commercial zoning district, limits on building size will be appropriate to maintain existing character.
 - 2. In some zoning districts, emphasis should be placed on encouraging architecture consistent with existing community and/or architectural character.
- I. Additional zoning actions include:
 - 1. Requiring buffers and/or performance and design standards where there will be potentially conflicting uses.
 - 2. Requiring impact statements (environmental, traffic, services, fiscal, etc.) with requested zoning amendments requiring a zoning district change, to address the impacts of the requested amendment.
 - 3. Giving emphasis to density bonuses for development served by, or with potential to be served by public sewer and public water, rather than development served by package/private systems or individual systems.
- J. Update municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances, as necessary. Options include:
 - 1. Require street furniture/pedestrian amenities as required improvements in the Borough and villages where appropriate.

2. Adopt appropriate refinements to implement the Growing Greener Conservation Zoning Concept.

If the Conservation Zoning concept is used, the design procedure is:

- Identify conservation areas
 - Locate house sites
 - Align streets and trails
 - Draw lot lines
3. Require pre-design meetings between planning commissions and developers prior to preparation and submission of subdivision and land development plans.
 4. Stormwater management ordinances prepared in accordance with Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans should be consistent with the objectives of this Plan.
 5. Require landscaping and buffering of commercial and industrial uses to avoid conflicts with residential uses.
- K. Municipal Act 537 plans and water supply planning should be coordinated with this plan, particularly the Future Land Use Plan, to promote compact, efficient, orderly, and phased development within and contiguous to existing developed areas.
- L. Brownfield properties should be remediated and redeveloped as industrial uses. An authority should be formed to assist in the reclamation and administration of these properties.

Agricultural Resources

Goal

Preserve existing productive farmland for agricultural use and support the continuation of agricultural and agricultural support operations in the Region.

Objectives

- Avoid scattered development which causes conflicts with farming, such as additional vehicular traffic and land use incompatibilities, by designating growth and potential future growth areas.
- Discourage the conversion of productive farmland to non-farm uses.
- Protect farming operations in Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) from incompatible, non-farming-related uses.
- Encourage participation in the “Clean and Green” Act (preferential tax assessment), the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (purchase of development rights), and private land preservation programs.
- Continue and consider opportunities for effective agricultural zoning in productive agricultural areas.
- Minimize costs to farmers caused by excessively restrictive regulations that could interfere with normal farming practices.
- Enhance the potential profitability of farming by facilitating appropriate accessory activities on farms.
- Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of local sources of supply for food processing businesses.
- Provide opportunities for agriculturally-related businesses to locate and expand.
- Ensure that roadways continue to accommodate agriculturally-related traffic.

- Establish policies regarding public sewer and water and other infrastructure improvements that do not encourage development pressure on designated agricultural areas.
- Encourage the designation of Agricultural Security Areas within areas designated for farmland preservation, but not within designated growth areas.
- Encourage farmers markets where locally grown produce and goods can be offered for sale.

Actions:

- A. To promote the long term economic vitality of agriculture, the Townships and Borough should identify and encourage the preservation of the most viable agricultural lands. Lands that should receive priority include:
- Land that is protected by existing restrictions and/or easements against development, including lands that have had easements purchased or are adjacent to such lands;
 - Land that is composed of capability class I, II, or III as defined by the USDA.
 - Land that is currently in agricultural use.
 - Land that is included within an approved Agricultural Security Area..
- B. Penn Township should consider whether to enact Effective Agricultural Zoning regulations (consistent with Jefferson Township) for the lands designated as Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map. Effective Agricultural zones permit a wide variety of farming uses, including farm-related businesses and restrict non-farm uses that can be disruptive to agricultural activities. Non-agricultural dwelling unit density is strictly limited to one dwelling unit per 20 to 25 acres average, with the homes required to be built on small lots.

Examples of effective agriculture preservation techniques include:

- Fixed System Formula – allows one dwelling unit for a specified number of acres (1 du / 5 acres or 1 du / 25 acres);
- Sliding Scale Formula – varies the number of permitted dwelling units based on the acreage of the entire parcel. The result is that larger parcels are permitted to have proportionately less dwellings than smaller parcels;

- Percentage-System Formula – Permits only a percentage of the entire parcel to be subdivided or developed (example 10%).

C. The Townships should encourage preserving agricultural operations through the following administrative actions:

1. Work with local farmers to encourage participation in the Berks County Agricultural Easement Program.
2. Encourage individual participation in other Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Programs.
3. Promote the inclusion of farms in Agricultural Security Areas.
4. Support measures to relieve property tax burden for farmers.
5. Limit extension of planned public sewer and water facilities to agricultural areas only when failing systems are involved.
6. Limit non-farm uses which could cause conflicts with agricultural practices and/or require buffers for non-farm uses around the perimeter of farms.
7. Allow conservation zoning development (Growing Greener) as an option in agricultural areas.
8. Promote enrollment in Act 319 (Clean and Green) tax relief program.
9. Allow for and give incentives to compact development and clustering of housing for development.
10. Give disincentives to inefficient development techniques.

D. The Townships and Borough should allow farmers to supplement income through home businesses, home occupations and farm related businesses; allow farm support businesses and businesses which market or process local farm products; establish appropriate controls on intensive agricultural operations; and permit appropriate recreational activities, such as hayrides, corn mazes, and festivals.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The principal benefit of multi-municipal planning is the opportunity to coordinate land uses among the participating municipalities. Even if the implementation process does not include a joint zoning ordinance, much is gained if the individual ordinances define land uses in the same way. The following text is *not* recommended ordinance language, but indicates the type of use and general function of each land use identified on the Future Land Use map.

While it is not required to specify lot sizes in the Comprehensive Plan, doing so makes it much easier to draft the implementing zoning ordinances. The target densities for every category should be used as a starting point when amending zoning district requirements. Areas with recommendations for higher density development are contingent on the availability of public sewer and water service.

The Draft Future Land Use Plan Map for the Penn, Jefferson, Bernville Joint Comprehensive Plan, Figure 7.1, includes the following Land Use Categories:

- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Village Residential
- Economic Development
- Industrial
- Public Facilities / Open Space and Recreation
- Town Center

GROWTH AREAS

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code introduced the concept of Designated Growth Areas, which are regions within a multi-municipal plan that preferably includes or is adjacent to existing developed areas or villages. In Growth Areas, residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned for at densities of more than one unit per acre, commercial, industrial and institutional uses are permitted or planned for, and public infrastructure services are provided or planned. The intent of the Designated Growth Area is to provide for orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area within the next 20 years.

Berks Vision 2020 defines “Growth Areas” as mostly undeveloped at present. New growth must occur within the natural service areas of existing and proposed public sewer

and water systems, which can accommodate higher densities and greater variety of housing. Medium to higher density development will reduce the amount of land necessary for future growth, and will take advantage of the existing public facilities and infrastructure.

For the purposes of this Joint Comprehensive Plan, Growth Areas will be areas where public sewer and public water service is provided, or could be provided with reasonable ease (for example a tract of land within one quarter mile of the system). Low density residential areas are included as growth areas, however, they are not expected to have public sewer and water service in all cases.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP CATEGORIES

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION:

Description – Cultivation of the soil, forestry, and the raising of livestock for commercial or private purposes, including ancillary uses such as the residence of the farm operator. Commercial uses which directly support farm operations are typically allowed.

Planning Objective – Target critical areas where agricultural activities are practiced for future preservation. Uses related to agriculture including support businesses should be encouraged. Limited residential development may follow Conservation by Design Zoning techniques in some areas to preserve open space.

Recommended Land Uses – Cropland; Pastureland; Farm-related structures and businesses; Woodlands; Limited residential; Public and municipal uses.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – If residential development is permitted, it should be at lower average densities (one dwelling per 2 acres) and should not encroach on active farmland. Conservation by Design Zoning development, and effective agricultural zoning techniques such as sliding scale, where larger parcels have proportionately less dwellings than smaller ones or percentage-based lot calculation methods should be encouraged in this district. Public sewer and water service is not recommended for Agricultural areas unless public health issues are imminent. Participation in the Township's Agricultural Preservation Program should be encouraged.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL:

Description – These areas contain a mixture of agricultural, woodland, open space, and low density residential uses. Factors such as the presence of steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, and/or floodplains limit the development potential of these areas.

Planning Objective – Accommodate limited very low density development; agricultural uses; rural resources; open space and recreation.

Recommended Land Uses – Limited Very Low Density Residential; Cropland; Pastureland; Open space; Farm-related structures and businesses; Woodlands; Public, Semi-Public; and municipal use.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Larger lots of at least one to three acres or more per dwelling unit. Conservation Development techniques are encouraged in this district. Public sewer and water service is not recommended for Rural Conservation areas.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

Description - The lowest density of residential. The defining characteristic of these areas is that only single-family detached homes (and accessory uses) are permitted.

Planning Objective – To accommodate continued low density residential development where such development is occurring, in a setting that will continue to contain some rural characteristics such as woodland and open space.

Recommended Land Uses – Single Family detached dwellings; Woodlands; Parks/Open Space; Municipal Use.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Density of approximately 20,000 square feet to one unit per acre. Higher density development may be allowed through Conservation Zoning development, provided that public sewer and water service is available. Conservation Zoning development should be used for developments of 8 acres or more. Public sewer and water service should be provided in developments where overall density is approximately 20,000 square feet or less.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

Description - This area is recommended for higher densities than the Low Density Residential category, and allows narrower lots. Also, single-family semi-detached homes, townhomes, and mobile homes may be permitted as well as detached houses.

Planning Objective – Recommended areas where continued residential development should occur.

Recommended Land Uses – Single family detached dwellings; Single family semi-detached dwellings; Park/Open Space Uses.

Recommended Development Densities / Strategies – Maximum density range up to 5 units per acre (8,000 square foot lots), depending on the availability of public facilities. Lower densities if on-site facilities are used. Conservation Zoning development is appropriate in these areas.

VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL:

Description - These areas will be characterized by a mix of uses including residential uses and related convenience-commercial areas, second floor apartments, and professional offices at a variety of densities.

Planning Objective – Provide areas to encourage a mixture of residential and appropriate commercial uses within the village of New Schaefferstown and sections of the PA 183 Corridor. The critical element here is the creation of an environment where the commercial uses are compatible with existing residential uses. Commercial uses within these areas will be at a smaller neighborhood scale. Highway oriented uses, such as garages and service stations, are not recommended in these areas.

Recommended Land Uses – Offices; Small-scale retail and local commercial and personal service uses. Single family dwellings, semi-detached dwellings; Parks and Recreation; Public, institutional, and municipal uses.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Density will vary depending on the use and the availability of public facilities, but it should mirror the existing development pattern and density. Traditional Neighborhood Design development may be appropriate within these areas to blend in with the Region’s existing development pattern.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Description - This category includes most kinds of retail sales, businesses, light manufacturing, and highway-oriented businesses like those found along PA Route 183.

Planning Objective – Provide for appropriate commercial and business development in locations where a cluster of commercial uses exist. These uses should be environmentally friendly, with proper landscaping and buffering required to not impact adjacent residential development.

Recommended Land Uses – Highway oriented commercial uses such as retail; offices; supermarkets; multi-tenant shopping plazas; light manufacturing uses; automobile related uses.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Lot sizes may vary, with density appropriate as needed by use, and type of sewer and water service. Access management on PA Route 183 should be stressed.

INDUSTRIAL:

Description – This category will be intended to accommodate a variety of industrial uses, due to access to major highways and availability of required utilities.

Planning Objective – Provide areas to accommodate a wide range of industrial uses.

Recommended Land Uses – Offices; Printing and Publishing uses; Warehousing and Distribution; Manufacturing; Food Processing; Transportation.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – One acre minimum lot size (smaller in the Borough) or larger as appropriate for use.

TOWN CENTER:

Definition - This area will be a mix of medium to high density residential, commercial areas, professional offices, and public facilities.

Planning Objective – Area intended to allow continued growth of the existing Town Center, providing services including the niche specialty shops. The critical element here is the creation of a flexible, pedestrian-friendly environment where the commercial uses are compatible with existing uses. Commercial uses within this district will be at a smaller scale and should include uses such as corner grocery stores, coffee shops, restaurants and cafes, specialty retail shops, and offices. A continuing pattern of high density residential is appropriate.

Target area for economic activity and re-development of vacant buildings with the goal of re-establishing the town center as a destination. Emphasis should be on protection of the character of the historic character of the area.

Recommended Land Uses - Medium to high density residential; small-scale commercial and specialty retail professional and government offices; conversion and loft apartments; parks and recreation; day-to day commercial uses.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Density requirements should be flexible in this area, depending on the use. Lot sizes of 5,000 square feet or less average, provided pedestrian facilities are provided. Neo traditional development may be appropriate within these areas to create a sense of ‘place’, while discouraging automobile-dependent uses and large parking lots. Access management strategies are extremely important in this area and off-street parking areas should be to the side or rear of the structures. Buildings and sites with historic attributes should be targeted for preservation.

PUBLIC FACILITIES / OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND RECREATION:

Definition - These are open space, recreational, and sensitive natural resource areas that should remain in such use for the foreseeable future, including the lands owned and operated by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Planning Objective – Provide for existing public and semi-public owned parks, facilities, and open space.

Recommended Land Uses - Parks; Pavilions; Greenways; Open Space; Natural Areas; Churches and cemeteries; Schools; Post Offices; Municipal buildings and facilities.

Recommended Development Densities/Strategies – Not recommended for private development other than low-impact accessory uses related to the recommended land uses.

Future Land Use Map Acreage by Category

Future Land Use	Acres (Approximate)
Agricultural	9,917
Town Center	50
Economic Development	610
Rural Residential	2,475
Public Facilities / Open Space and Recreation	3,073
Industrial	74
Village Residential	152
Low Density Residential	4,087
Medium Density Residential	1,402
Roads (not a category)	672
Total	22,512

HOUSING PLAN

The objectives for housing are to provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents; to allow for a variety of housing densities, development patterns, and attractive residential housing types for all age groups in appropriately designated areas within the natural and service constraints of the Region; to provide for maintenance of the character of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate coordinated land use controls, and address the housing needs of the elderly and disabled in the community.

Provision for a variety of housing densities, housing types, and development patterns in appropriately designated areas is accomplished through the Future Land Use Plan. Maintenance of the existing housing stock and adequacy of new housing can be accomplished through enforcement of building codes and utilization of property maintenance codes.

Another concern is providing for housing for people trying to enter the housing market and housing for those families living and working in the Region. Allowing for a variety of housing types, including multiple family, and higher densities of development when public sewer and water is available, is important to addressing this need.

While housing affordability issues typically reflect market conditions, the Township and Borough can maintain construction and housing codes which are reasonably based on protecting public health, safety and general welfare, and which do not contain provisions solely to increase the luxury of dwelling units. This is facilitated by use of the Uniform Construction Code. Excessive standards in municipal regulations can unnecessarily raise housing costs.

New housing developments should be well-planned, attractive living environments. A variety of development options can be made available, such as conservation zoning development, traditional and village patterns, in addition to more typical single family development.

The existing character of residential areas can be maintained through appropriate zoning provisions and review of subdivision and land development plans.

Goal

Provide for a diversity of housing opportunities for the economic and demographic groups within the Region, in harmony with existing development and the historical and

natural environments and in a manner that allows existing and potential residents of the region to live in the region throughout the life cycle.

Objectives

- Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods in and around the Borough.
- Identify appropriate infill housing opportunities within the Borough and between housing developments in the Townships.
- Identify policies that can facilitate provision for the housing needs of elderly and physically impaired residents.
- Encourage use of the existing housing stock. Promote rehabilitation and renovation of existing housing in such need, through participation in appropriate federal, state, and county housing programs.
- Explore opportunities for regional administration of the Uniform Construction Code.
- Ensure that opportunities exist to promote the development of affordable housing that, in particular, meets the needs of the Region's current and likely future work force.
- Ensure that opportunities exist to promote the development of housing necessary to meet the Region's likely demographic make-up, with particular emphasis on retirees and younger households.
- Encourage owner occupancy of dwelling units in the Borough and Townships.
- Discourage absentee landlords.

Actions:

- A. Establish and maintain adequate housing and property maintenance codes and zoning ordinance provisions as necessary to maintain the building stock and properties within the Region.

- B. Foster programs which encourage home renovation and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods. Enact land use regulations that provide adequate opportunities for affordable workforce housing.
- C. Work with residents of the Region and regional taxing entities to identify programs and policies that will help residents maintain and enhance their properties, and meet housing expenses and retain their homes as owner-occupied single family residences.
- D. Regulate housing conversions through zoning provisions and require adequate parking to be provided.
- E. Provide for a variety of housing types and densities through zoning.
- F. Enact zoning regulations that provide incentives for senior housing in the Residential Areas on the Future Land Use Map. Consider appropriateness of such techniques or density incentives or overlay treatments.
- G. Encourage housing development in existing villages at densities consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Capacity for Future Development

The Future Land Use and Housing Plan must provide documentation that there is a sufficient amount of available land for future development to accommodate the future population projected up to the year 2020. Table 7.1 illustrates the Region's population projections for 2010 and 2020. The projected increase for the Region from 2000 to 2020 is approximately a range of 5,818 to 6,528 persons. Comparing this to the 2005 population estimate, the Region can expect an additional 763 to 1,473 persons by 2020. Table 7.2 provides the projected need for additional housing units in the Region. In order to accommodate the projected population increase, there will be a need to provide a range of 273 to 527 additional housing units by 2020.

Jefferson Township's 2005 population estimate has already surpassed the BCPC (1,699-1,744) and DEP projections (1,801-1,915) for the years 2010 and 2020. The projections (Jefferson Township only) found in Table 7.1 were made by using the population trends from 1970 and 1980 to 2005 and extrapolating them out to 2010 and 2020 (to give an approximate growth rate range of 10.7% to 19.3%). This method will give us a reasonable projected population range for calculating fair share requirements for the Region.

Table 7.1: Population Projections; U.S. Census Bureau Estimated 2005 Population

	1970 CENSUS	1980 CENSUS	1990 CENSUS	2000 CENSUS	2005 EST	2010 PROJ (range)	2020 PROJ (range)
Bernville Borough	848	798	789	865	881	892- 916	948- 971
Jefferson Township	854	1,310	1,410	1,604	2,039	2,257- 2,432	2,498- 2,901
Penn Township	1,205	1,254	1,831	1,993	2,135	2,238- 2,392	2,372- 2,656
REGION	2,907	3,362	4,030	4,462	5,055	5,387- 5,740	5,818- 6,528

SOURCE: US Census; Berks County Planning Commission; PA DEP; SSM

Projection range for Bernville and Penn Twp, the top number is the BCPS projection, the bottom number is the DEP projection.

Jefferson Township projections were prepared as described above.

Table 7.2: Housing Need Projections

	2000 CENSUS	2005 Estimate	2010 PROJ (range)	2020 PROJ (range)
Bernville Borough	865	881	892- 916	948- 971
Borough housing requirement @2.6 persons/household** (2000 Census)	351 *	339	343- 352 (4 to 13 additional units)	364- 373 (25 to 34 additional units)
Jefferson Township	1,604	2,039	2,257- 2,432	2,498- 2,901
Jefferson Township housing requirement @2.8 persons/household** (2000 Census)	580*	728	806- 868 (78 to 140 additional units)	892- 1,036 (164 to 308 additional units)
Penn Township	1,993	2,135	2,238- 2,392	2,372- 2,656
Penn Township housing requirement @2.8 persons/household** (2000 Census)	714 *	763	799- 854 (36 to 91 additional units)	847- 948 (84 to 185 additional units)
REGION POPULATION	4,462	5,055	5,387-5,740	5,818-6,528
REGION HOUSING REQUIREMENT (units)	1,645 *	1,830	118 to 244 additional units	273 to 527 additional units

SOURCE: US Census; Berks County Planning Commission; PA DEP 2006;

- *Total existing occupied housing units as of 2000
- ** The average household size has increased from 1990-2000, thus in some cases the requirement for units may decrease.

Table 7.3: Build Out Capacity for Population in Growth Areas

Future Land Use Plan Category	Approx. Available Undeveloped Acres	Available Acres Minus 20%	Likely Development Density Range	Likely Maximum Potential Range for Dwelling Units at Build Out	Likely Maximum Potential Range for Additional Persons*
Low Density Residential	3,050	2,440	1- 2 D.U./Acre	2,440-4,880 units	6,832-13,664
Medium Density Residential	766	612	2-5 D.U./Acre	1,224-3,060 units	3,427-8,568
Village Residential	20	16	2-5 D.U./Acre	32-80 units	90- 224
Town Center	16	13	5-8 D.U./Acre	65-104 units	182- 291
TOTALS	4,350	3,031	--	3,761-8,124 units	10,531-22,747

*Used 2.8 persons per dwelling unit, average for Jefferson and Penn Townships, the highest average in the Region. Source: US Census Bureau.

– assumed 20% of tract would not be available for inclusion within residential lots

Table 7.3 calculates a maximum build out capacity range for population in the growth areas as from 10,531 to 22,747 additional persons, depending on the density of development. This figure does NOT include additional available acreage within the categories outside of the growth area such as agricultural preservation and rural residential, where undoubtedly there will be some additional growth, nor does it include non-residential categories. Even after excluding these categories, this build-out capacity far exceeds the initial projected 2000-2020 population increase for the Region. It is a safe assumption that the Region will have more than enough capacity to handle anticipated future growth for the life span of this Plan and beyond.

This Joint Comprehensive Plan recommends that the majority of residential growth occur within areas capable of providing public sewer and public water service. However, undoubtedly, there will be lower density development occurring outside of these areas. Between 2000- 2007, there were 336 building permits for housing units issued in the Region. These units count toward the Region’s needs analysis, which shows that if the housing trend continues at this pace, the Region can expect to be well below the lower end of the calculated ranges.

Environmental Considerations for Future Development

As development occurs in the Region, particularly in the Agricultural areas, which contain the greatest extent of sensitive environmental resources in the Region, care must be taken to preserve and protect the resources identified within each tract of land. The following approaches should be taken, in a consistent manner within the Region, to development in these areas:

- An ongoing awareness of and sensitivity toward the natural resources of the area should be encouraged.
- Development should be concerned with geologic stability, soils suitability, groundwater supplies and stream flows.
- Groundwater resources should be protected against depletion and contamination.
- Methods of encouraging replenishment of the groundwater supply should be utilized.
- Streams, ponds and wetlands should be protected against pollution from point sources and runoff.
- Floodplains and poorly drained soils should be protected from encroachment.
- The loss of topsoil should be minimized.
- The retention and establishment of trees and other vegetation should be encouraged to control erosion, shade surface waters, control stormwater flow, create wind breaks, provide animal habitats and provide visual amenities.
- The preservation of scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors should be encouraged.
- Steep slopes should generally be avoided.
- The protection, preservation and enhancement of historic resources should be encouraged.
- The adaptive reuse of historic structures should be encouraged where appropriate.

- Innovative land development techniques should be used to minimize land consumption, preserve ecosystems, preserve agricultural lands and preserve natural resources and open space.
- The provision of open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation should be encouraged. Visual and physical access to the open space system should be provided.
- The coordination of open space and circulation systems among adjoining developments should be encouraged.
- A system of bicycle paths and sidewalks should be encouraged.
- Incorporation of resources into development plans should be encouraged.
- Flexible approaches to site design to recognize resources should be encouraged.
- Not permitting invasive species to be planted by developers as part of landscaping plans.

Recommended Development Concepts

The Action Plan contains recommendations for land development techniques and processes designed to protect existing resources, provide open spaces, encourage appropriate development which is consistent with existing development patterns, and enhance streetscapes. Because of the rural character of much of the Region and the existing population centers and Villages, techniques which are especially recommended include Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and Conservation Zoning Development. TND is particularly appropriate within and surrounding existing settlements such as the Borough and villages, and would be appropriate in designated growth areas in the Region. Conservation Development could be used to help preserve open space and agricultural resources when development occurs in more rural areas of the Townships.

The Elements of Traditional Neighborhood Design

- **Limited Size:** A village or neighborhood is limited to a 1/4 mile radius (up to 200 acres), or a five minute walk from the center to the edge.
- **Mixed Uses:** The inclusion of retail and commercial activity with residential uses brings the needs of life within walking distance for all ages and social groups. A variety of housing types is a standard element, including single family, duplex,

townhouses, and apartments over shops, which can bring safety and vitality to the town center.

- **Street Network:** A traditional grid or web pattern creates a more understandable system and more choices for travel routes, which is effective for pedestrians as well as the automobile.
- **On-Street Parking:** Helps to slow down traffic, acts as a buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic, and increases opportunities for drivers to find convenient parking.
- **Alleys and Lanes:** Give secondary access to property for deliveries: locating parking garages, utilities and garbage collection here preserves the beauty of the streetscape.
- **Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths:** An emphasis on "walkability," or the needs of the pedestrian, makes destinations accessible to residents, including children and the elderly.
- **Borough Center:** A central focal point for community life, providing a special place for public events, and is the appropriate place for mixing retail, civic and business life.
- **Shallow Setbacks:** Placing buildings close to sidewalks creates a friendlier "outdoor room." Distances across streets, from building to building, do not exceed five times the building height.
- **Outbuildings:** Secondary structures normally located at a rear alley allow for parking, storage, workshop space, home offices or a rental apartment.
- **Porches:** Create spaces for a sociable transition from the public street to the private home and provide shelter and shade.
- **Building Types:** Designed to allow for adaptation from one use to another, as markets dictate, with an emphasis on local historical style.
- **Open Space:** A variety of types are included for specific needs, from the regional parks, to the neighborhood playground, to a green buffer, bringing nature into the human environment.

Conservation Zoning (Growing Greener)

Growing Greener¹ is a statewide community planning initiative which is designed to help communities use the development regulation process to their advantage to protect interconnected networks of greenways and permanent open space.

Each time a property is developed into a residential subdivision, an opportunity exists for adding land to a community-wide network of open space. Although such opportunities are seldom taken in many municipalities, this situation could be reversed fairly easily by making several small but significant changes to the Township's basic local land-use documents – the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and land development ordinance. Conservation Zoning rearranges the density on each development parcel as it is being planned so that only half (or less) of the buildable land is consumed by house lots and streets. Without controversial “down zoning” (decreasing the number of house lots), the same number of homes can be built in a less land-consumptive manner, allowing the balance of the property to be permanently protected and added to an interconnected network of community green spaces. This “density-neutral” approach provides a fair and equitable way to balance conservation and development objectives.

Currently, Penn Township is updating their zoning ordinance to include the Growing Greener Conservation Zoning concepts for selected zoning districts.

Infill Policies

Two of the objectives for land use are to encourage new residential development to take place as infill within and near the Borough and other existing settlements with infrastructure of adequate capacity and functionality and promote infill and revitalization within existing centers, in conformity with the general character of the existing centers. There are a number of strategies which can be used to promote infill. The following policies can be reviewed as a starting point in determining the most appropriate methods for use in the Region. Land consumption for new development can be minimized if development or redevelopment occurs on vacant or underutilized parcels within existing developed areas. Development costs can sometimes be reduced because of the accessibility of existing infrastructure and services.

Potential Infill Promotion Strategies

Zoning Strategies

1. Target and map areas for infill development. Identify parcels, developments, and existing vacant or underutilized buildings and lots.

¹ Source: Natural Lands Trust, Media, PA

2. Determine types of development desired.
3. Zone areas appropriately to allow desired land uses.
4. Create infill development opportunities overlay districts as necessary.
5. Consider whether more design flexibility in ordinances is necessary to achieve the desired end – such as flexibility in setbacks, yard requirements, lot widths, and lot size.
6. Consider density bonuses to lowest acceptable lot size or highest intensity of use consistent with available sewer and water facilities.
7. Consider allowing nearby convenience services in designated economic development, mixed use, or infill overlay areas.
8. Apply appropriate standards to non-conforming lots which can allow reasonable development.
9. Where appropriate, consider well-designed, buffered mixed uses or dwelling types, if appropriate infrastructure is available.
10. Consider transfer of development rights with bonuses to target development areas from areas targeted for preservation or conservation.
11. Eliminate incentives to development in non-growth and non-targeted areas.

Subdivision and Land Development Strategies

12. Streamline procedures and permitting.
 - reduce delays and hearings
 - have expeditor
13. Review level of service standards (such as amount of recreation) or design standards (such as road widths) for appropriateness in each situation.
14. Consider appropriateness of incentives for infill projects
 - reduced development/permit fees
 - reduced impact fees
 - reduced infrastructure connection fees

15. Consider appropriateness of allowing/promoting re-subdivision or redesign of very low density tracts to more efficient, land conserving patterns if appropriate infrastructure is available.

Public Relations Strategies

16. Stimulate developer interest in infill development and educate consumer/public regarding benefits and availability of infill:
 - promotional/publicity campaign for infill
 - make parcel data available
 - establish cooperative demonstration project
 - seminars
 - training programs
 - design competition for demonstration project
17. Prepare neighborhood strategies with input from residents; cooperation with, involvement of, and information to existing residents.
18. Inform existing residents of projects, invite participation in review, hold project meetings with developers at initial stages.
19. Prepare appropriate protective design standards such as traffic calming, landscaping, vegetation retention or replacement, and permissible land uses.
20. Encourage lending institutions to be supportive of infill initiative in providing lending.

Municipal Financial Policies

21. Consider appropriateness of real estate transfer tax relief for purchase of properties in target areas.
22. Consider appropriateness of property tax abatement in target areas.
23. Foster programs which encourage building renovation and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods.
24. Identify strategies for assembling parcels (with realtors and developers).

Municipal Infrastructure Policies

25. Identify need for Infrastructure improvements (new or improved roads, parks, utilities, streetscape improvements, drainage facilities, pathways).
26. Facilitate accessibility to community facilities and services (senior centers, community centers, etc.).
27. Locate municipal services near growth and target areas.

Official Map

Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code authorizes the governing body of each municipality with power to create an official map of all or a portion of the municipality which may show elements of the Joint Comprehensive Plan with regard to public lands and facilities, and which may include, but need not be limited to:

1. Existing and proposed public streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widening, narrowing, extensions, diminutions, openings or closings.
2. Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds, and open space reservations.
3. Pedestrian ways and easements.
4. Transit right-of-ways and easements.
5. Flood control basins, floodways and floodplains, stormwater management areas and drainage easements.
6. Support facilities, easements and other properties held by public bodies undertaking the elements described in the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

The Township Supervisors and Borough Council members may make surveys and maps to identify the location of property, traffic way alignment or utility easement by use of property records, aerial photography, photogrammetric mapping or other method sufficient for identification, description and publication of the map components. For acquisition of lands and easements, boundary descriptions by metes and bounds must be made and sealed by a licensed surveyor.

The adoption of any street lines or other public lands as part of the official map does not constitute the opening or establishment of any street nor the taking or acceptance of any land, nor does it obligate the municipality to improve or maintain any such street or land.

The adoption of proposed watercourses or public grounds as part of the official map does not constitute a taking or acceptance of any land by the municipality.

For the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the official map, no permit shall be issued for any building within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground shown or laid out on the official map. No person shall recover any damages for the taking for public use of any building or improvements constructed within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground after the same shall have been included in the official map, and any such building or improvements shall be removed at the expense of the owner. However, when the property of which the reserved location forms a part, cannot yield a reasonable return to the owner unless a permit shall be granted, the owner may apply to the governing body for the grant of a special encroachment permit to build.

The Townships or Borough may fix the time for which streets, watercourses and public grounds on the official map shall be deemed reserved for future taking or acquisition for public use. However, the reservation for public grounds shall lapse and become void one year after an owner of such property has submitted a written notice to the governing body announcing his intentions to build, subdivide or otherwise develop the land covered by the reservation, or has made formal application for an official permit to build a structure for private use, unless the governing body shall have acquired the property or begun condemnation proceedings to acquire such property before the end of the year.