

IX. ADJACENT & REGIONAL PLANNING

The preparation of any comprehensive plan must always consider and, if possible, complement the planning policies in effect in adjoining communities. The highest level of consideration could include a cooperative planning effort of several adjoining municipalities, such as that of this Regional study. At a minimum such effort should seek to coordinate land use activities across municipal boundaries to assure compatibility and function. This Chapter presents this analysis and findings of general consistency with the stated planning policies of Berks County for the Region.

The Existing Land Use and Adjacent Planning Map, following Section VIII, depicts the planned land uses in municipalities that adjoin the Region. As can be seen, many adjoining areas too recognize the rural/natural features of the Region. The following is a brief summary of those land uses planned for each municipality bordering the Region.

A. Hereford Township – Adjoining the eastern edge of the Region along the District Township boundary is Hereford Township. The Hereford-Washington Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted in January, 2006. It depicts Rural Resource Protection and Airport Overlay land use. The Rural Resource Protection category intends to protect agriculture, open space and environmentally sensitive conditions such as steep slopes, woodlands and important headwaters. The average densities of future development are expected at about 3-5 acres. The Airport Overlay category is designated to protect airspace flight path and have an average density for future development of 2 acres.

B. Washington Township – Adjoining the southeast tip of the Region and District Township is Washington Township. The Hereford-Washington Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted in January, 2006. Here the Future Land Use Plan depicts only one adjoining land use category – Rural Conservation. This category intends to protect agriculture, open space and environmentally sensitive conditions such as steep slopes, woodlands and important headwaters. The average densities of future development are expected at about 3-5 acres.

C. Pike Township – Adjoining the southern border of the Region along District and part of Rockland Township is Pike Township. The Boyertown-Colebrookdale-Pike Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted March, 2005. Within adjoining Pike Township future land uses are mostly Rural with a very small area of Industrial. Within the Rural areas regulations should discourage dense developments because of sensitive environmental conditions and agricultural areas. New homes should have a minimum lot area of 3 acres or if using Open Space subdivision 1-1/2 – 2 acres. There is also a small section of Industrial designated area that allows for a variety of industrial uses.

D. Oley Township – The southwestern tip of Rockland Township and the Region adjoin an area of Oley Township planned for Rural and Agriculture land uses. Here regulations should treat agriculture as an industry and farmland as a resource. Strict agricultural zoning should site non-farm uses away from productive soils, minimize land use friction, maintain agricultural vitality, avoid utility extensions and visual intrusions and preserve historic farm structures. Rural includes agriculture, woodlands, open space and low density residential at very limited low densities. The Alsace-Oley-Ruscombmanor Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted April, 2009.

E. Ruscombmanor Township – The western edge of Rockland Township adjoins Ruscombmanor Township. The Oley-Alsace-Ruscombmanor Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted in April, 2009. It depicts Rural and Low Density Residential uses adjoining the Region. Rural includes agriculture, woodlands, open space and low density residential at very limited low densities. Low Density Residential includes single family detached residences at a density of about 1 to 1-1/2 acres.

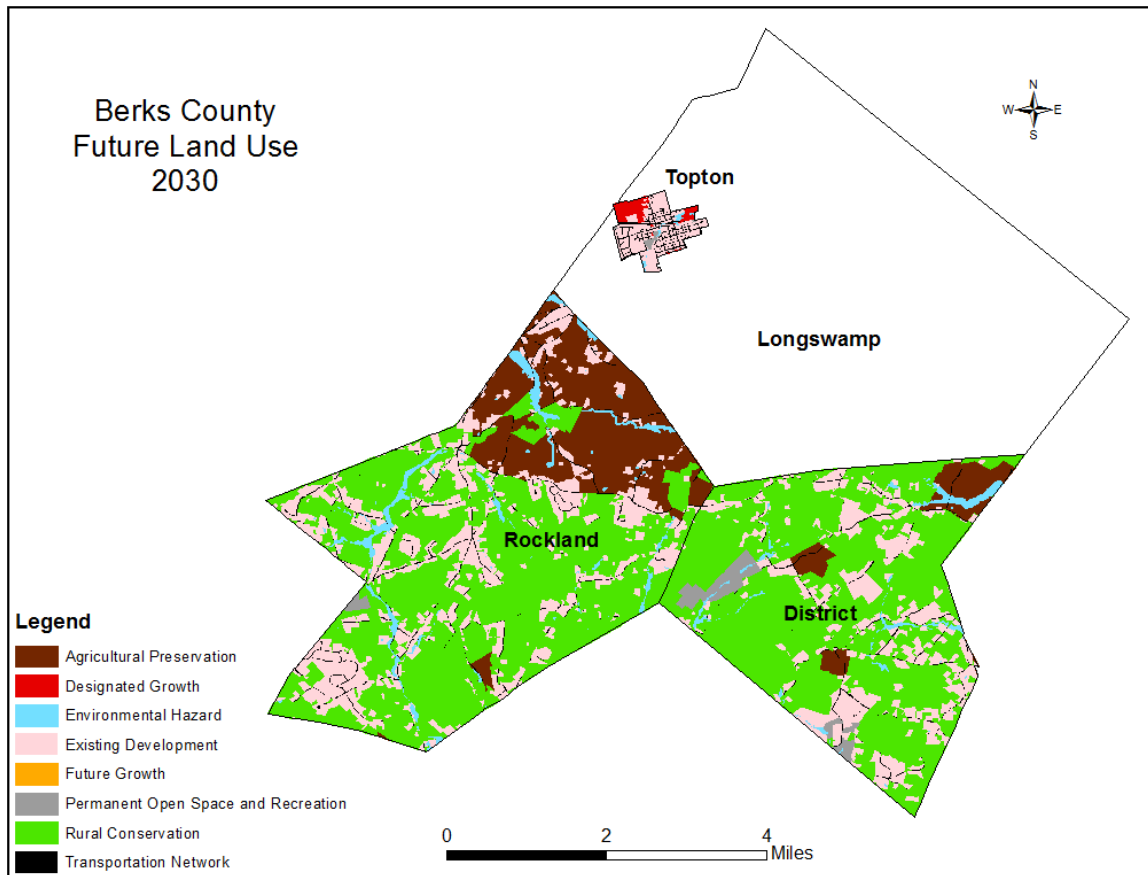
F. Richmond Township – Rockland Township’s western border also abuts Richmond Township. The Fleetwood-Maidencreek-Richmond Joint Comprehensive Plan was adopted in September, 2011. It plans Rural Conservation land uses next to the Region recognizing the landscape’s steep slopes and thick woodlands. Here low-density residences and farming should be the predominate activities. Residences should be required to have larger lot sizes as slopes increase and the use of clustering should be permitted if at least 40% of the site is preserved in open space and reforested.

G. Maxatawny Township - Maxatawny Township adjoins Rockland and Longswamp Townships along the Region’s western boundary. The Maxatawny Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted October 6, 1996. It depicts four different planned land uses adjoining the Region. First at the extreme north and south are two nodes of Residential use. These areas are intended for single family detached and semi-detached dwelling units on 1- acre lots. Also near the southern tip of the Township is an area depicted as Village Institutional where infill developments should be promoted at similar designs and densities as the existing uses in and around the Borough of Lyons. Finally, a large band of Agriculture is planned along the area of Topton Borough’s northwest boundary line. Here the Township hopes to preserve its agricultural economy and rural lifestyle and discourage nonfarm developments with infrastructure investment.

H. Longswamp Township – Longswamp Township adjoins District and Rockland Townships on their northern and northeastern boundaries and almost entirely surrounds Topton Borough. Longswamp Township withdrew from the Eastern Berks Region Comprehensive Plan in 2014 and is in the process of adopting its own Comprehensive Plan.

I. Berks County Comprehensive Plan – Berks Vision 2030 is the official Comprehensive Plan for Berks County as prepared by the Berks County Planning Commission.

The purpose of the Berks County Comprehensive Plan, known as Berks Vision 2030, is to revise and update certain aspects of the Comprehensive Plan of 2003, and subsequent Plan documents. This revision serves as a set of recommendations rather than a regulatory document. It acts as a guide to growth and development and assists the Berks County Planning Commission in evaluating various development proposals and requests for financial assistance by local agencies to County, State, and Federal agencies. This Plan is a general guide and does not reflect in detail the location for all future development nor the precise boundary of such development. This revision is not a fixed or rigid document, but will be modified by the Commission when changes in the development of Berks County indicate the need to update the Plan. Berks Vision 2030, unless otherwise noted, completely supersedes the Comprehensive Plan Vision 2020. The following depicts the Future Land Use Plan for the Region:



Unsurprisingly, this County-wide Plan recognizes the importance of the Region's unique and sensitive natural features. Accordingly the Plan calls for the preservation of its Rural/Conservation landscape throughout much of the Region. Agriculture preservation is planned in the northern portion of Rockland Township due to its soils and geology and in smaller areas of District Township where there is currently land in farming and agricultural preservation easements. Floodplains, parks and open spaces are scattered throughout the Region as they exist. Similarly, scattered settlement patterns are reflected as existing developments throughout the rural areas. However, designated and future growth areas are principally confined to areas within Tipton Borough and in the Villages of Rockland Township. Another smaller designated/future growth area is depicted along the northwestern boundary of Rockland Township with Maxatawny Township. This designation appears to be related to development potential around the Village of Bowers in Maxatawny Township.

The Future Land Use Plan contained in Chapter XII generally follows the County's suggested land use scheme.