



SEAD

BOROUGH OF ST. LAWRENCE

RESOLUTION 942-2026

BOROUGH OF ST. LAWRENCE, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA APPROVING THE ADOPTION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE, EXETER, AMITY, AND DOUGLASS (SEAD) JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (“MPC”) authorizes municipalities to adopt a multi-municipal comprehensive plan;

WHEREAS, the Borough of St. Lawrence, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and Douglass Township are part of the Berks County SEAD Joint Comprehensive Plan, which is a multi-municipality comprehensive plan for land uses, including future growth, preservation, and conservation in the region.

WHEREAS, the socioeconomic and housing data, transportation, and land use patterns, cultural and environmental resources, and community facilities and services were analyzed to create the framework for the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Comprehensive Plan is a guide to future growth, development, land use, and community character; and

WHEREAS, advisory meetings were held in September of 2024, engaging in public outreach directly with communities to seek input and transparency

WHEREAS, public surveys and meetings were held from December 2024 through March 2025, to share the Plan, get public input, and share the importance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan in the region

WHEREAS, the St. Lawrence Planning Commission held a public meeting on June 24, 2026, and approved the draft SEAD Plan; to send it for review to the Borough of St. Lawrence Council

WHEREAS, the Council of St. Lawrence Borough has reviewed and accepted the Joint Comprehensive Plan as submitted by the Berks County Planning Commission, which will hereby be attached to this resolution

WHEREAS, the Borough of St. Lawrence has published two advertisements in the local circulation newspaper for public notice; and has conducted a public hearing pursuant to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code on August 13, 2026, to receive

public comment and vote on the adoption of the Berks County SEAD Joint Comprehensive Plan

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of St. Lawrence, Berks County, Pennsylvania:

The Berks County St. Lawrence, Exeter Township, Amity Township, Douglass Township (SEAD) Joint Comprehensive Plan, as prepared by the Berks County Planning Commission in its entirety, and including all text, maps, charts and plans contained therein, is approved and adopted as the comprehensive plan of the Borough of St. Lawrence.

Approved this 13th day of August 2026

BOROUGH OF ST. LAWRENCE

ATTEST:


Amanda Muso, Borough Secretary


Robert May, Council President




Corrine Zana, Mayor

**EXETER TOWNSHIP
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
RESOLUTION NO. 2026-30**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF EXETER TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING MULTIMUNICIPAL PLAN
(JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR EXETER TOWNSHIP)**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Exeter Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, approved and adopted the Joint Comprehensive Plan at its regular public meeting held on July 27, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors desires to memorialize its adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan by formal resolution; and

WHEREAS, Amity Township, Douglass Township, Exeter Township and the Borough of St. Lawrence will be undertaking a project to develop a multi-municipal comprehensive plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Berks County Planning Commission (BCPC) is authorized to serve as the lead agency for administrative purposes such as but not limited to project oversight and management of invoicing; and

WHEREAS, the BCPC is authorized to serve as the lead agency to apply for additional funding for the multi-municipal comprehensive plan to programs such as but not limited to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's Municipal Assistance Program; and

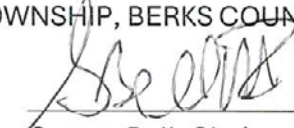
WHEREAS, Exeter Township agrees to the calculation of costs by acreage and hereby commits municipal resources of up to \$9,707.79 as a match for said project; and

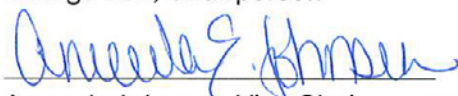
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Resolution shall take effect upon adoption of similar resolutions by the Townships of Amity and Douglass and the Borough of St. Lawrence.

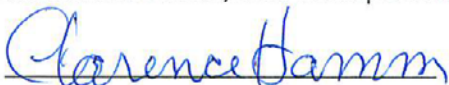
RESOLVED AND ADOPTED as a Resolution by the Supervisors of Exeter Township, in lawful session duly assembled, this 10th day of August 2026.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF EXETER
TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

By: _____


George Bell, Chairperson


Amanda Johnsen, Vice Chairperson

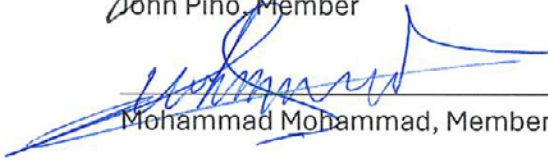

Clarence Hamm, Member



Attest:


Larry Piersol, Township Manager


John Piho, Member


Mohammad Mohammad, Member

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of a Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of Exeter Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, which was fully adopted at a public meeting held pursuant to notice as required by law on the 10th day of August 2026.

Dated: August 10, 2026


Secretary of Exeter Township

RESOLUTION NO. 24-16

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF AMITY TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING THE ST. LAWRENCE, EXETER, AMITY, DOUGLASS JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Section 1103 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, 53 P.S. §10302, (the "MPC") authorizes the adoption of municipal, multi-municipal and county comprehensive plans and plan amendments and provides that the same shall be adopted by resolution in the name of the municipality, and duly enacted by the governing board of said municipality; and

WHEREAS, in October 2005, Amity Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania (the "Township"), Exeter Township, and St. Lawrence Borough, completed the first regional joint comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, Douglass Township desired to update its comprehensive plan, and recognizing the benefit of regional planning, joined with Amity, Exeter, and St. Lawrence in a joint comprehensive plan update; and

WHEREAS, in September 2024, the St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, Douglass Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee (the "Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee") began work on the St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, Douglass Joint Comprehensive Plan the "Joint Comprehensive Plan"; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee has recommended the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan to the Township Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Township have complied with the requirements and procedures as set forth in the MPC for adopting the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

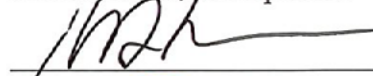
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ENACTED by the Board of Supervisors of Amity Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, that the Township hereby adopts the St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, Douglass Joint Comprehensive Plan, a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference, made a part hereof and attached hereto as Exhibit A.

RESOLVED and ENACTED this 19th day of August, 2026.

AMITY TOWNSHIP BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS



Kim McGrath, Chairperson



Kevin Keifrid, Vice Chairperson



Paul Weller

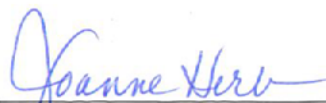


Terry Jones



Nate Halter

Attest:


Joanne Herb, Assistant Secretary

RESOLUTION NO. 2026- 18
DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF DOUGLASS
TOWNSHIP ADOPTING THE 2026 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
AMONG DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP, AMITY TOWNSHIP, EXETER
TOWNSHIP AND ST. LAWRENCE BOROUGH**

WHEREAS, the Douglass Township Board of Supervisors desires to update the Douglass Township Comprehensive Plan and has engaged in a review and update of that certain 2026 Joint Comprehensive Plan among Amity Township, Exeter Township and St. Lawrence Borough (the "Comprehensive Plan Update") pursuant to Article III of Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code, 53 P.S. §10301, *et. seq.* (the "MPC");

WHEREAS, Douglass Township has provided the Comprehensive Plan Update to the Berks County Planning Commission, the Montgomery County Planning Commission, the Douglass Township Planning Commission, the Boyertown Area School District, and all contiguous municipalities for their review and comment in compliance with the MPC;

WHEREAS, in accordance with MPC, the Douglass Township Planning Commission held a public meeting on June 16, 2026, at which it recommended that the Board of Supervisors adopt the Comprehensive Plan Update;

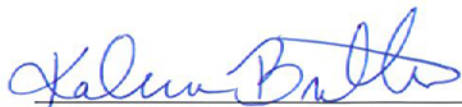
WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has met the procedural requirements of the MPC for the amendments to a municipality's comprehensive plan, including the holding of a public hearing thereupon;

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan Update is attached in its entirety to this resolution as Exhibit "A," and is incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Douglass Township Board of Supervisors that the Comprehensive Plan Update is hereby **APPROVED** and amends in its entirety the Douglass Township Comprehensive Plan.

RESOLVED and ADOPTED this TENTH day of AUGUST, 2026.

Attest:



Kaleena Breitbarth
Township Manager/Secretary

**DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

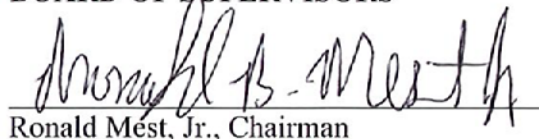
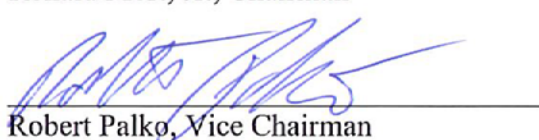
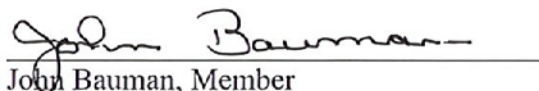

Ronald Mest, Jr., Chairman
Robert Palko, Vice Chairman
John Bauman, Member

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND DEMOGRAPHICS	1
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	7
NATURAL FEATURES	11
TRANSPORTATION PLAN	15
COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND ENERGY CONSERVATION	32
HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	41
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN	46
SEAD COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR.....	62
GOALS ACTION PLAN	78

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Existing Use, Region.....	58
Figure 2: Existing Land Use, St. Lawrence Borough.....	59
Figure 3: Future Land Use, Region	60
Figure 4: Future Land Use, St. Lawrence Borough	61
Figure 5: St. Lawrence Borough Development Zone.....	65
Figure 6: Exeter Township Development Zone (1 of 3).....	66
Figure 7: Exeter Township Development Zone (2 of 3)	67
Figure 8: Exeter Township Development Zone (3 of 3).....	68
Figure 9: Amity Township Development Zone (1 of 3).....	69
Figure 10: Amity Township Development Zone (2 of 3).....	70
Figure 11: Amity Township Development Zone (3 of 3).....	71
Figure 12: Douglass Township Development Zone.....	72
Figure 13: St. Lawrence Borough Concept A.....	73
Figure 14: Exeter Township Concept B.....	74
Figure 15: Amity Township Concept C.....	75
Figure 16: Amity Township Concept D.....	76
Figure 17: Douglass Township: Concept E	77

Additional Mapping: bit.ly/seadmaps*

INTRODUCTION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

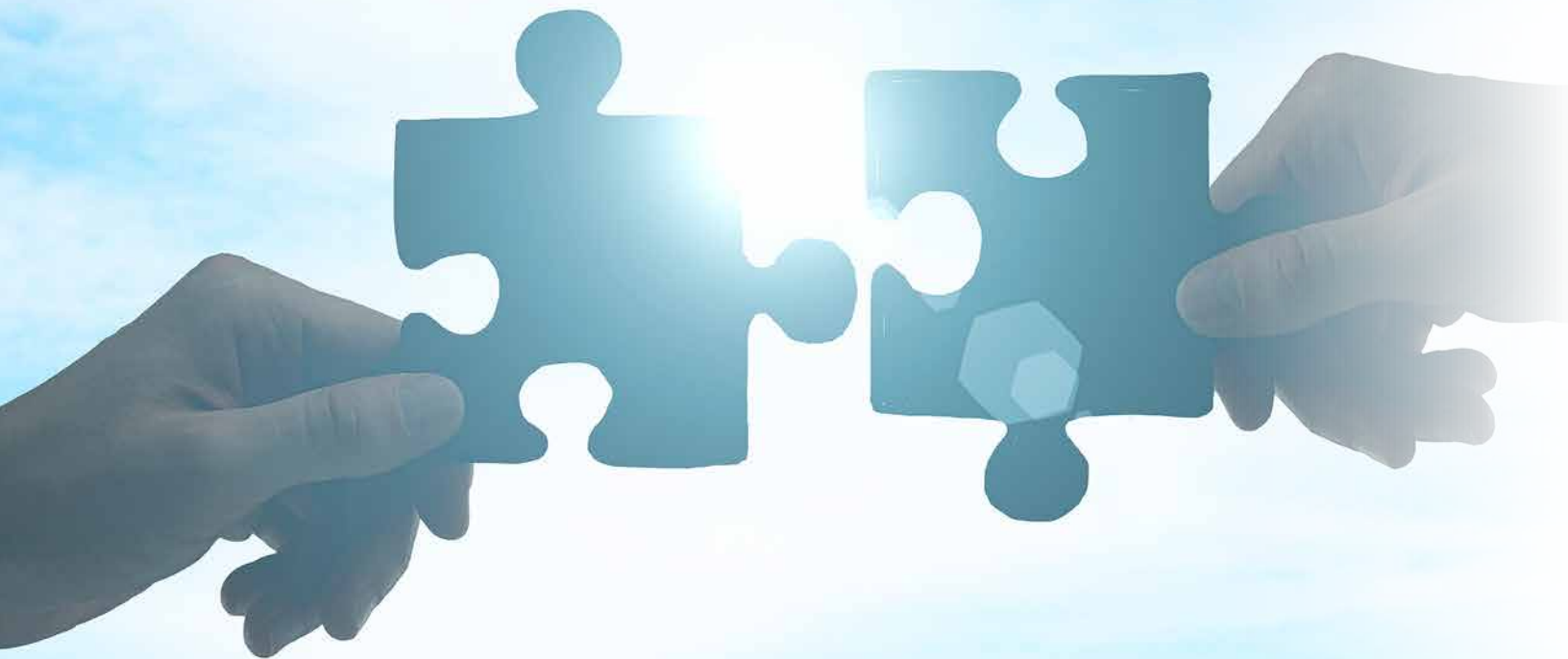


INTRODUCTION

The **St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, Douglass (SEAD) Joint Comprehensive Plan** represents a shared commitment to responsibly guiding future growth, preservation, and conservation for our Region. By working together, our communities recognize we are stronger collaborating on common goals, while balancing each of our unique identities and challenges.

COMMUNITY VISION

Together our communities envision a plan for economic resiliency through infill development and redevelopment along our commercial corridors while celebrating our heritage through farmland preservation and environmental stewardship in our most sensitive areas.



WHY JOINT PLANNING?

In 2004 through 2005, recognizing a need for a shared vision throughout the Region, Amity, Exeter, and St. Lawrence worked together a plan with a shared vision to maintain targeted growth and associated infrastructure needs while preserving the remaining rural character surrounding those developments. Since then, much has changed in the Region, and the need for an update to the original had become inevitable. Meanwhile, Douglass Township had begun consideration for an update to their last comprehensive plan amended in 2013. With the shared concerns and pressures that its neighbors had also experienced and recognizing the benefits of working towards solutions regionally, the Township began discussions to cooperate on (what has now become) the St. Lawrence-Exeter-Amity-Douglass Joint Comprehensive Plan (SEAD).

DEMOGRAPHICS

Up through the 1990s, the Region saw significant amounts of housing and population growth. Closely mirroring National trends, the substantial levels of growth seen in this period began to stabilize starting in St. Lawrence and Douglass in the early 2000s and Exeter and Amity in the 2010s. With the significant increase in demand for housing seen presently nationwide, development pressures have again become prevalent, particularly in Amity and Douglass Townships.

Population	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass	Plan Region	Berks
US 2020 Decennial Census	1,892	25,466	13,396	3,670	44,424	428,849
% Change 10–20*	4.6%	–0.3%	6.5%	11.0%	2.7%	4.2%
Land Area (Sq. Mi.)*	0.91	24.57	18.40	12.75	56.63	865.3
2020 Population Density (Pers./Sq. Mi.)**	2,079.1	1,036.5	728.0	287.8	784.5	495.6
2022 % Below Poverty Level (Persons)**	11.9%	6.6%	10.4%	6.1%	8.8%	11.8%

Data Sources: *2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses, **2012 and 2022 5–year American Community Surveys

Like Berks County as a whole, the Region is growing older and the student-aged population is getting smaller. However, the Region statistically is older than the County average, most notably in Douglass Township, while the other three municipalities' aging populations are only slightly above average. As the Region ages, consideration should be taken into account for aging in place as well as its healthcare, senior living, and other services for older residents. Conversely, the future of the Region's next generation will need to be taken into account from housing availability to educational needs to assure opportunity for multiple generations continue to grow within the community.

Population	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass	Plan Region	Berks
2020 Median Age (Years)	42.0	43.8	41.4	52.1	44.8	40.4
2010 <18 Years	421	6,075	3,700	590	10,786	98,136
2020 <18 Years	425	5,202	3,097	647	9,371	95,184
2010 65+ Years	272	3,873	1,498	612	6,255	59,558
2020 65+ Years	366	5,020	2,116	1,041	8,543	77,530

Data Sources: 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses

This area is also rapidly becoming more diverse, more than doubling the percentage of both non-white and Hispanic populations from 2010 to 2020. As the Region continues to diversify, it is important to take into account a wider audience than had been traditionally served such as a potential need for English as a second language programming or translation services to more varied parks activities.

Population	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass	Plan Region	Berks
2010 Non-white	151	2,069	1,021	219	3,275	69,294
2020 Non-white	369	4,077	1,921	448	6,815	119,742
% Change 10–20	144.4%	97.1%	88.1%	104.6%	108.1%	72.8%
2010 Hispanic	136	923	304	35	1,398	67,355
2020 Hispanic	247	2,224	552	81	3,104	99,550
% Change 10–20	81.6%	141.0%	81.6%	131.4%	122.0%	47.8%

Data Sources: 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

At least ten advisory committee meetings were held beginning in September 2024, and responsibilities of the committee included: supplying requested information on the communities represented, providing input on draft documents, promoting transparency and public outreach throughout the planning process, engaging directly with their communities to seek input, and periodically dispersing information to their respective governing bodies. Progress updates and survey solicitation were shared via social media, municipal webpages, and municipal newsletters.

SURVEY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A 12-question public digital survey was launched on December 6, 2024. The survey closed on March 28, 2025.

The survey overwhelmingly reached homeowners, represented by over 87% of all responses. Just over 4% reported renting in the Region. With the help of the participating school districts, library, and other local resources, this survey reached a wide age range, most successfully with 36–45, 46–55, and 65+ age groups.

Approximately one quarter of the population was unemployed or retired, approximately one quarter work in Berks County outside the study area, and approximately one quarter work outside of Berks County. Of the remaining responses, most survey takers work in Exeter, representing over 15% of those that answered.

1,118 individuals responded; assets highlighted within the Region include:

- As a community still rich in surrounding farmlands, availability of locally produced food
- Access to natural areas of outdoor passive recreation
- A safe, close-knit community atmosphere with a mix of open space, commercial businesses, and a variety of housing options
- The Region has good school districts to raise families in. Boyertown, Exeter Township, and Daniel Boone School Districts are considered assets to the community.

Top areas of concerns cited:

- Residents suggest that the area needs more variety in business.
- Responses indicated sufficient “big box” retail options as well as fast food and diners; however, residents felt certain areas of commercial development were lacking. Suggestions including “high-end” restaurants, businesses revolving around nightlife, and small business retail options were cited frequently.
- Lack of alternative transportation options
- Residents cited frequently connectivity issues, with lack of sidewalks, trails, or bicycle infrastructure in between and within housing developments and points of interest. Some responses have suggested a need or desire from public transit as well.
- Desire for a wellness or community center
- Residents have offered a wide breadth of suggestions for amenities at such a place, including after school care, mental health support, group exercise for seniors, sports courts, walking trails, and a splash pad. The addition of dog parks was among the most popular suggestions for the expansion of recreational facilities.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Advisory Committee held two public meetings to gather feedback from residents in and surrounding the Region. The first was held on March 4, 2025 at Daniel Boone Area Middle School from 6:00–8:00pm in the lobby outside of the school's auditorium. Between 10–20 residents attended as well as representatives from Amity, Douglass and Exeter Townships and Daniel Boone School Board to help speak to the public and answer questions.

Vision boards were set up, two of which explained the Plan in progress and two encouraging guests to add feedback to the following questions:

What Attractions Should your Municipality Focus on Attracting?

What Should Your Municipality Seek Funding for Future Projects?

Feedback largely mirrored that of the survey results with residents demonstrating a desire for a wider variety of retail uses, late night options, entertainment for teenagers, and a community and/or wellness center. Walkability was cited as a concern as well along with a desire for more connectivity through a trail system, bike lanes, and/or additional sidewalks. Concerns were voiced about increasing support for emergency services– fire, police, and EMS.

The second public meeting was held at Exeter Township Junior High School on March 6, 2025 from 4:00–6:00pm in the school's auditorium. Approximately 40–50 members of the public attended. Members from St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and Exeter Township School District attended as well to support the project. Representatives of Berks County Planning Commission explained the ongoing process and importance of joint planning through an interactive process, answering questions throughout the presentation. Afterwards BCPC and members of the advisory committee spoke one on one to audience members to address further questions and concerns.

Attendees at this meeting also voiced a desire for more retail and restaurant choices, particularly in the US 422 (Perkiomen Avenue/Benjamin Franklin Highway) corridor. The audience suggested entertainment facilities, dog parks, community centers, and safe places to walk again at this meeting. Discussion also revolved around tourism in this meeting, with residents suggesting the municipalities should be promoting assets already present in the community. With hotel accommodations lacking in the area, it was suggested that those attending large baseball tournaments already held locally are travelling to Reading, Wyomissing, and Montgomery County for lodging, and a conference center in the area could be worthwhile to attract.



SEAD COMMUNITY SURVEY OVERVIEW

Respondents Agree that...

65%

Municipalities should work together when providing emergency services

77%

The Region needs to attract new business development

63%

There should be more opportunities for biking

80%

It is important to preserve farmland in rural areas

78%

It is important to conserve open space in rural areas

53%

The Region has enough housing

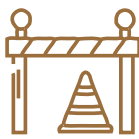
51%

Improving streetscapes will attract new businesses

Top Suggestions for Investments Improving SEAD



Small Business Development



Street Repair

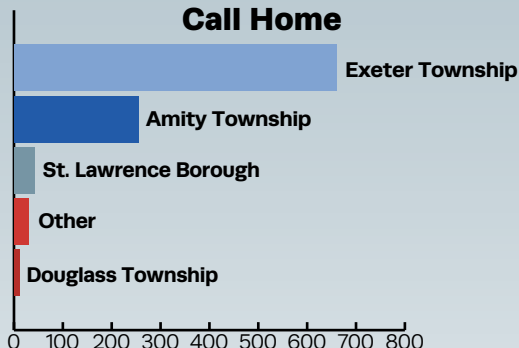


Police Service



Fire Service

Where Participants Call Home



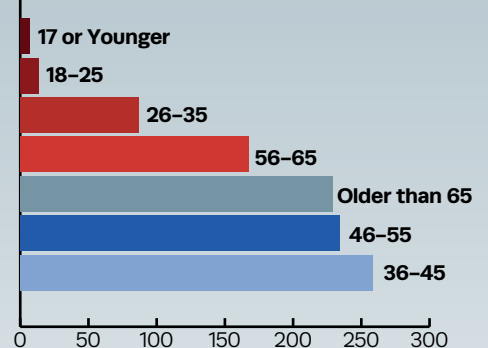
94%

Own Home



Approximately 1 in 4 participants work in the Region

Participants Age Group



Very Important Priorities According to Participants



Quality Education



Crime and Safety



Traffic and Congestion



Healthcare Access



Neighborhood Deterioration

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

AMITY TOWNSHIP

Amity Township, established in 1719, is the oldest township in Berks County. It marked its 300th anniversary in 2019. The township's origins trace back to 1701 when William Penn granted land to about a dozen individuals, primarily those to whom he owed debts. These 10,500 acres were known as the Swede Tracts, which now form Amity Township. The land stretched from the Schuylkill River to the northern border of the township, with each tract having access to the river, which served as the primary transportation route to and from settlements along the Delaware River.

Of all the Swede Tracts, only Mouns and Ingabor Jones are known to have settled in the area. In the early 1700s, they built a log cabin along the Schuylkill River, and Mouns Jones became a trader with the Lenape Indians. By 1716, the Jones family had constructed a two-story stone house, the oldest surviving structure in Berks County. This house, built in 1716, and other 1700s era buildings, are still standing today in Morlatton Village.

Douglassville, originally called Warrensburg, became the central hub of Amity Township. The town is named after George Douglass, a wealthy justice of the peace and prominent figure. The Douglass Mansion, located about 100 yards from the Mouns Jones House, still stands today.

Douglassville was also served by two active railroad lines, with stations that operated until commuter service ceased in 1982.

Amity Township is home to several significant historical buildings, including:

- The White Horse Tavern
- The Michael Fulp/Bridge Keepers House
- St. Gabriel's Churches (1801 and 1900)
- Numerous residences dating back to the 1700s.

The township is made up of six villages:

- Douglassville
- Weavertown
- Yellow House
- Monocacy
- Amityville
- Earlville

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP

Douglass Township is the fourth oldest Township in Berks County. It was founded in 1736. A petition was presented to the Court of Quarter Sessions in Philadelphia in 1736, stating that for several years the high road west from McCall's Corner, now Glasgow, toward the newly developing city of Reading was impassable. Surveyor General Benjamin Eastburn made a draft of the said land petitioned for and certified that the same did not interfere with any other township. Containing 7,000 acres, Douglass Township, in the language of that Court, was erected on June 7, 1736. John Ball and James Yokum were appointed overseers of the highway.

While the condition of the road which would eventually evolve into Route 422 prompted the establishment of the township, the growth of population and development of the township started along the waterways of the Manatawny, and particularly, Ironstone Creek, rather than along the road.

In 1716, Thomas Rutter, a Quaker, established the first successful forge in Pennsylvania along the Manatawny Creek in what is now Douglass Township. The forge went through many changes and owners, with the last steel production occurring in 1954, although the site remains industrial. Under later owners, it was the first producer of diamond plate stainless steel. The site of the original mill is unmarked, but the remains of the first dam on the Manatawny are visible where the railroad today crosses Manatawny Drive.

The pioneers recognized the value of waterpower and built many mills along the Ironstone Creek. Bechtel's sawmill was one of the first. In 1840, it was taken over for Wren's Woolen Mills by Amos Bower. Later, John Castle enlarged the building. In 1883, it bore the name of William Preston & Co.

The Colebrookdale Iron Works was built on the site of the George Gresh Mill. Jonas and W.W. Weaver took over the mill in 1831 and installed a tilt hammer and added a foundry. They made cast iron wood burning stoves, coffee mills, sadirons, wash kettles and meat grinders. In 1867, it was sold by the Weavers to Brendlinger & Co. It is now the site of Colebrookdale Industries.

Reflecting the axis of development, the first post office in the township was in the town of Limestone, renamed Greshville in honor of its leading resident when the post office was established in 1853. Glendale, now known as Pine Forge, and Little Oley received post offices in 1871.

The Colebrookdale Railroad was built in 1867, following the industrial developments along Douglass's waterways. In 1892 offered four trains daily between Pottstown and Barto. The stops within Douglass Township were Manatawny, Ironstone, and Colebrookdale.

Near the Little Oley Post Office, Jacob Albright had a tannery and Henry Gresh a sawmill, oil mill, and a brickyard. Several mills of various types, including multiple grist mills, were built along the Ironstone. Buildings of the Levengood Gristmill (1846) and the earlier Nagle Gristmill remain.

The first school in the Township was of log construction and was located across from what is now Gresh's Greenhouse in Little Oley, located in the area of Farmington Avenue and Englesville Hill Road. One of the many Greshes in the area at that time taught at the school which was operated on a tuition basis of "a few pennies per day".

The Fritz Burial Ground, near the eastern border of the Township with Montgomery County, now cared for by the Township, contains the graves of early settlers many of whom served in the Revolutionary War. The crude stone markers, many in Pennsylvania German, bear many family names familiar in the township, and there are still many residents who can trace their lineage from among those buried there.

Thomas Rutter's estate, including 18th century mansions, remained essentially intact for over two hundred years. It is now the site of the Pine Forge Academy, a boarding school sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventist Church which was founded in 1946.

The township filled out as land west of the Ironstone Creek focus and north of the Reading Pike became agricultural land, and the area remains primarily agriculture and low-density residences to this day.

The legacy of Douglass's foundation as a township, Benjamin Franklin Highway, again needs some focused attention, and the Township would like to see increased multipurpose development of this corridor for both retail and residential development, as a center of social and economic activity, to complement the rural, and agricultural pattern of our township as it rises north from the floodplain of the Schuylkill River.





One of the first European settlements in Berks County was made in the rich Oley Valley in the early 1700's because of the good soils, plentiful streams, and abundance of lumber. Most of these early settlers in the area were French Huguenots, Germans and English. In 1741, when the boundaries of Oley Township were established, it was discovered that over 50 families had been excluded. Many of these families grouped together and petitioned that they be able to establish their own Township. On December 7, 1741, this petition was approved, and the Township of Exeter was established.

Several famous people were born or had a homestead in the Township. There were several Boone families, however, the most well-known Boone was Daniel Boone. Daniel Boone was born in the Township in 1734 and later became a famous pioneer. His homestead is now the property of the State.

Exeter is also the home of Abraham Lincoln's great-great-grandfather, Mordecai Lincoln. He had a homestead built in 1733, which is still standing on Lincoln Road near Heister's Creek.

The Manatawny section of Berks County, in which Exeter is located, was for many years active in iron production, but in the last half of the 19th century, this industry died out almost completely. The change can be attributed to the trend in the late 1800's to localize iron industries at relatively few points near the source of raw materials.

After 1900, Exeter's population has steadily increased. Between 1900 and 2020 the population increased from 2,503 to 25,500 persons. This growth can be attributed to suburban growth from Reading rather than local industries or agriculture. Reiffton, one of the first suburban communities, was developed shortly before and after the first World War and was named for the Reiff family, prominent in Berks County at the time. Suburban growth was at first limited to public transportation; however, the use of the automobile changed that trend. Its use for commuting purposes has led to further residential development. In 1927, the borough of St. Lawrence was incorporated from the western section of Exeter.

There were many successful industries that helped to shape the growth in the area. These included: Washington Kissinger's store, hotel in 1860, and first distiller; H.B. Levan opened a creamery in 1881, and a grove for a picnic area in 1892; James Toole operated a broom factory; in 1883, Henry Graeff built a dwelling and large poultry plant on Neversink street; in 1892, John H. Close and A.H. Kretz (operated by the name of Kretz & Close) built a distillery and a warehouse No. 1 having a capacity of 12,000 barrels, and in 1893, warehouse No. 2 having a capacity of 25,000 barrels (in 1894 the name was changed to Neversink Distilling Co., Ltd).

St. Lawrence Borough was a small village that was initially interchangeably called "Esterly" (named after a Frank Esterly, owner of the Black Bear Hotel, a property dating back to the Revolutionary War) and St. Lawrence, after a fabric developed locally by mill-owner Jacob Brumbach. It wasn't until the 1926 expansion of Oley Turnpike into State Route 562 and the need for safety measures such as sidewalks that a movement for localized government began. A year later, the Borough of St. Lawrence was incorporated.

Bordered by forest, field and stream, it was a self-sustaining village of tightly knit families. Here stores like the Charles H. Adams' General Store, located next to the 1898 two-story, four room, brick schoolhouse, thrived because, prior to the automobile, the only available public transportation to the City of Reading was by the Reading to Birdsboro trolley line boarded at the Black Bear Inn, or by the Reading to Boyertown trolley of the Oley Valley Railway Company. The daily social life of the village revolved around the centrally located combination of schoolhouse and store.

St. Lawrence differed from neighboring villages because of the employment opportunities and the scope of personal services offered. St. Lawrence began around the location of the largest employers, which were the two woolen mills (the A.J. Brumbach Woolen Mill and the Esterly Woolen Mill), both established well before 1900. They were followed by the St. Lawrence Dairy, founded in 1888, which also employed many and the John F. Lutz Furniture and Undertaking business, founded 1884, and maintained a steady work force. The Behm Butcher Shop and the Adams Store employed local help as well, and all these companies had their employees located near their jobs. In the village, one could find the services of a family doctor, a veterinarian, a painter, a cabinetmaker, a plumber, and carpenters. A shoe repairman and a blacksmith were nearby at Jacksonwald. From these beginnings followed the residential development of St. Lawrence.



Historic Sites

The cultural heritage of the Region is evident in the many older individual buildings, structures, and sites throughout the Region. Local officials and residents recognize the value of conservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of these historic features as a means of providing a glimpse into the Region's important past. Additionally, historic preservation can provide educational opportunities regarding historic life and architectural styles. Well-maintained historic sites and areas can create a sense of unique identity and stimulate civic pride, economic vitality, and tourism opportunities.

For a comprehensive list of historic resources within the Region, click [HERE](#)¹.

GOAL:

Protect, preserve, and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural heritage of the Region through education, advocacy, regulations and/or incentives.

1
2
3

UPDATE existing zoning regulations to resolve conflicts with historic preservation goals like incompatible uses, excessive setbacks, required off-street parking, and reduced lot coverage. Encourage property owners and developers to take historic resources and their context into consideration by providing review of demolitions, design guidelines for infill construction, historic Overlay Zones, incentives for adaptive reuse, and/or demolition by delay.

REQUIRE new development to reflect and consider the history, architecture and development patterns of the municipalities in order to preserve the important historic and architectural resources of the region.

DEVELOP partnerships with community groups and organizations to facilitate a public education initiative about local history and the historic resources in each municipality. Seek cost-effective ways of preserving historic buildings, including providing information and advice to property owners. Support efforts of organizations to protect historic resources through the application process for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>

NATURAL FEATURES

St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, and Douglass are rich with a variety of natural features and resources. The Neversink Mountain anchors the northwestern part of the region, as the Schuylkill River flows southeast from this area down into rolling farmland and open rural areas. Development is present in many pockets along the way, but large swaths of scenic open space with limited development can be found in the region.

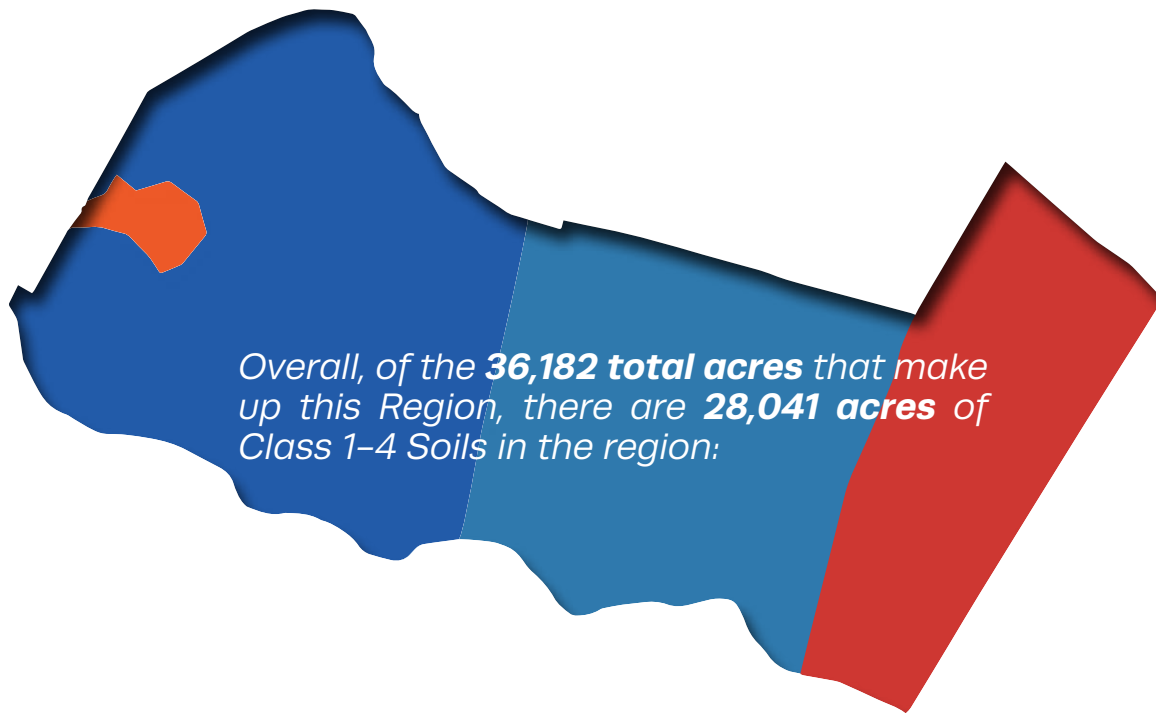
PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#)¹ defines and rates soils by their agricultural capabilities. The land capability classification generally shows the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. They are grouped based on limitations of the soil, the risk of damage to the soils when used and the way they respond to treatment. Capability classes are then designated by numbers 1 through 8, indicating progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use as the class number increases. The Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code (MPC) defines prime agricultural lands as that of which contain soil classes 1-3. However, soils ranked as Class 1-4 are regarded by [Berks County Agricultural Conservation Easement \(ACE\) Program](#)² as the most desirable and ideal for farming practices and should be protected from development and fragmentation accordingly to ensure they remain viable for future generations.



1. <https://www.ars.usda.gov/ARSUserFiles/np215/Food%20security%20talk%20inputs%20Lunch%203-15-11.pdf>

2. <https://www.berkspa.gov/departments/agriculture/ace-program-overview>



CLASS ONE:

Soils that have few limitations that restrict their use. **96 acres or 0.3% of the total land area**

CLASS TWO:

Soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices. **14,335 acres or 40% of the total land area**

CLASS THREE:

Soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices, or both. **8,860 acres or 24.5% of the total land area**

CLASS FOUR:

Soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or require very careful management, or both. **4,750 acres or 13.1% of the total land area**

These soils can be found mapped [HERE](#).

HYDRIC SOILS

The United States Department of Agriculture's [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#)³ defines hydric soil as a soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. They are the foundation of wetland ecosystems and an important contributor to the ecological health in the Region. [The areas of hydric soil](#)⁴ are generally found in the vicinity of the watercourses.

There is a total of 1,595 acres of hydric soils in the region representing 4.5% of the total land area.

NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS (NHA)

Information for this section was obtained from the 2014 [Berks County Natural Heritage Inventory](#)⁵, a document written by the Pennsylvania Science Office of the Nature Conservancy. In turn, this document draws heavily from the [Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program \(PNHP\) database and field inspections](#)⁶. "Natural heritage" refers to the collective biological diversity, including plants, wildlife, ecosystems, and geological structures. This list includes current and proposed vulnerable, rare, threatened, endangered, and uprooted species, as well as species of interest with unique or specific habitat needs or declining populations.

³ <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/hydric-soils> ⁴ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>
⁵ https://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/CNAL_PDFs/Berks_CNHI_Update2014.pdf ⁶ <https://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/>

The PNHP gathers and provides current, reliable, and objective information on the location and status of these important and sensitive ecological resources in Pennsylvania to help inform environmental decisions. PNHP information can be used to guide conservation work and land-use planning, ensuring the maximum conservation benefit with minimum cost.

To access a map of NHA core habitats, visit here:
<https://conservationexplorer.dcnr.pa.gov/content/map7>

WATERSHEDS

Watersheds⁸ are land areas that channel rainfall and snowmelt to creeks, streams, and rivers, and eventually to outflow points such as reservoirs, bays, and the ocean. The size of a watershed (also called a drainage basin or catchment) is defined by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on several scales—referred to as its Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC)—based on the geography that is most relevant to its specific area. A watershed can be small, such as a modest inland lake. Water from hundreds, and often thousands, of creeks and streams flow from higher ground to rivers that eventually wind up in a larger waterbody. Not all water flows directly to the sea, however. When rain falls on dry ground, it can soak into, or infiltrate, the ground. This groundwater remains in the soil, where it will eventually seep into the nearest stream. Some water infiltrates much deeper, into underground reservoirs called aquifers. In other areas, where the soil contains a lot of hard clay, very little water may infiltrate. Instead, it quickly runs off to lower ground.

SURFACE WATER FEATURES

The way in which water moves through our environment has implications for land use planning. First, rivers, streams, creeks, runs, and their floodplains present hazards to development. Second, land areas adjacent to **surface waters⁸** offer high quality habitat, conservation, and recreational opportunities. Finally, the drainage basin within which surface waters flow is a basic geographic unit used to plan and design sanitary and storm sewers; systems that can make use of gravity-fed lines can reduce the costs of these types of utilities.

There are approximately 176 miles of streams in the region.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

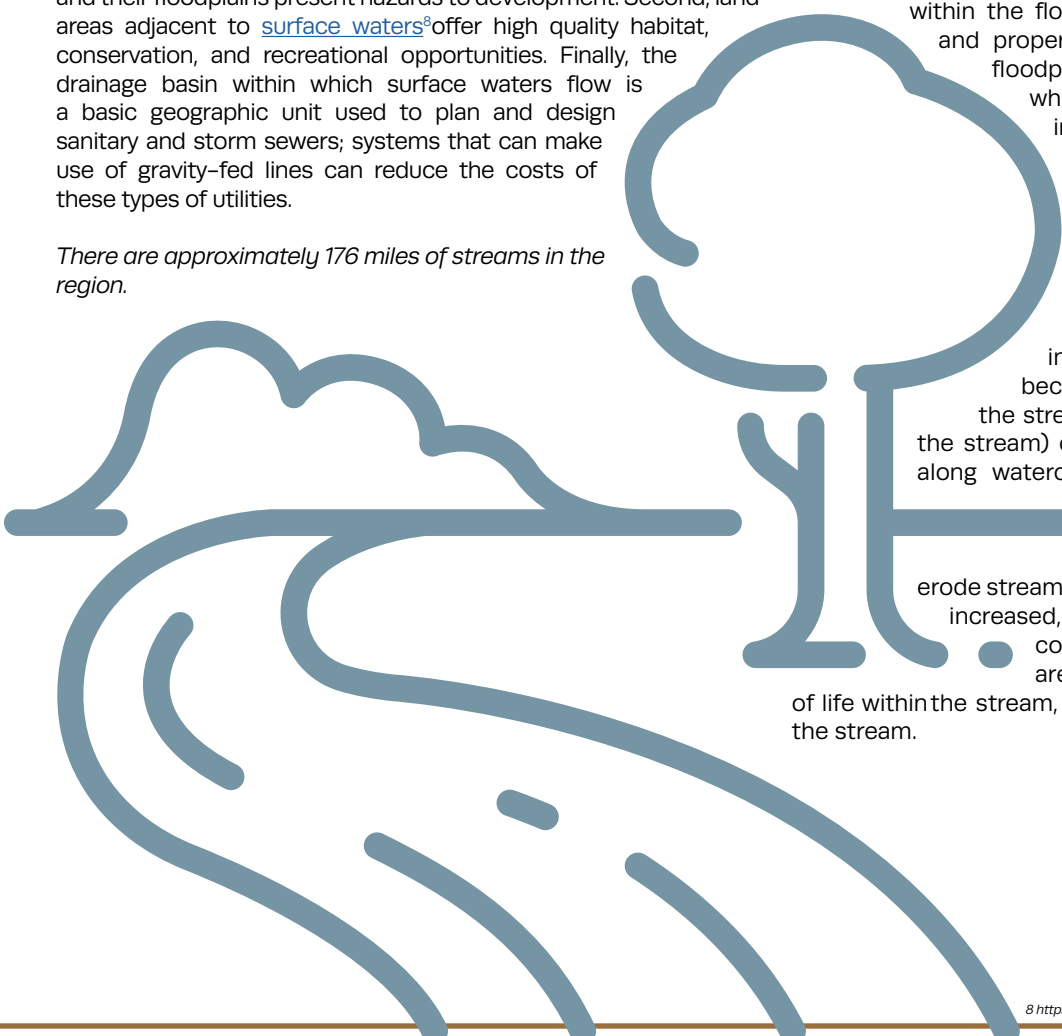
Source water refers to sources of water (such as rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and groundwater) that provide water to public drinking water supplies and private wells. Protecting source water can reduce risks by preventing exposures to contaminated water. Drinking water utilities that meet the definition of a public water system are responsible for meeting the requirements of United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) drinking water programs under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Protecting source water from contamination helps reduce treatment costs and may avoid or defer the need for complex treatment. There are many additional benefits associated with source water protection, such as protecting water quality for wildlife and recreational use and protecting the availability and quantity of water supplies.

In the region, the following source water protection areas exist:

- Paw Glen Alsace Div Groundwater Protection Zone in St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, Douglass.
- Mt. Penn Municipal Authority in St. Lawrence, Exeter.

FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are areas adjacent to watercourses which are covered by floodwater during times of flooding. A 100-year floodplain is the area which has a 1% chance of being flooded during any one year, and which is typically used for regulatory purposes. It is best if the floodplains are not developed, because development within the floodplains results in danger to persons and property. If development occurs within the floodplain, this may constrict the area over which floodwaters may flow, resulting in increased flood damage downstream because of resultant increased flood velocities downstream. Outdoor storage of materials within floodplains is not desirable because of the possibility of the materials entering the stream when flooding of the banks occurs. Care must be taken in disturbing areas along watercourses because increased sedimentation within the stream (increased depositing of soil within the stream) can occur. Increased impervious cover along watercourses typically increases the storm water runoff in the streams. The runoff can erode stream banks and channels. If sedimentation is increased, filling of streambeds can occur, which could cause floodwaters to cover a larger area, meandering of streams, and choking of life within the stream, detracting from the aesthetic value of the stream.



⁷ <https://conservationexplorer.dcnr.pa.gov/content/map>
⁸ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbba64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>

WETLANDS

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Wetlands](#)⁸ are areas where water covers the soil or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season. Water saturation (hydrology) largely determines how the soil develops and the types of plant and animal communities living in and on the soil. In general, no developmental activity or placement of fill material may occur within wetlands without obtaining a DEP permit.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

One of the most frequently described planning problems is the impact from storm water runoff. As an area develops, the patterns, volume and velocities of storm water runoff are likely to change. Individual developments produce marginal impacts; however, these impacts produce major cumulative problems unless measures are used to protect the capacity of watersheds to discharge surface water in a timely manner and at a safe rate. Storm water runoff can and should be managed.

MS4

Municipalities that are designated MS4 communities (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) by the EPA and DEP are required to control stormwater runoff through six minimum control measures. An MS4 is defined as: a state, city, town, borough, county, parish, district, association, or other public body which has a drainage system which conveys only stormwater (i.e. curbs, gutters, basins, storm pipes, ditches, swales, municipal streets).

The MS4 does not include pipes that convey sanitary sewage, nor does it include the stormwater entering the system that receives treatment prior to entering local waterways.

The six minimum control measures (MCMs) are: 1. Public education, 2. Public participation, 3. Illicit discharge detection and elimination, 4. Construction site storm water runoff control, 5. Post-construction storm water management in new development and redevelopment, and 6. Pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations maintenance.

In addition to the six minimum control measures, permittees must have an Act 167 stormwater management ordinance as well as pollution reduction plan (PRP) or total maximum daily load plan (TMDL) for impaired streams. Further details on stormwater management is available in the Community Facilities chapter of this plan.



In the region, Amity and Exeter Township are part of the Berks County MS4 Committee.

For more information on MS4 and stormwater management:

<https://www.berkspa.gov/departments/planning-commission/stormwater-management-in-berks-county.-pa>

WOODLANDS

Wooded areas are scenic amenities and habitats for wildlife and home to most of the native species in the County. They increase capacities for absorption of storm water runoff, diminishing flood potentials and decreasing erosion. Wooded areas are especially valuable when on steep slopes, playing the important role of reducing runoff and erosion and sedimentation by binding the soil. They also provide visual relief from developed land areas. Wooded areas are concentrated at Monocacy Hill and Neversink Mountain as well as in the northern portions of Exeter, Douglass and St. Lawrence. They are also scattered in smaller bands and along the stream corridors within the region.

GREENWAY, PARKS, AND RECREATION PLAN

The 2022 [Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan](#)⁹ is an update to the 2007 Plan. This plan sets specific goals for the direction Berks County should take to provide future open space, greenways, and recreation for its citizens. The 2022 Plan provides information for the development of future recreational facilities and the preservation of the greenway system which the County, municipalities and nonprofit organizations should use to seek and apply for various grants and funding. This plan is to be used as a guideline by the County and municipal officials for how this can be achieved.

GOAL:
Maintain, preserve, and
enhance natural features
within the Region.

- 1** **REVISE** and update local ordinances to ensure natural resource protection is up to date with best management practices, and any unique or special natural features are identified with specialized protection emphasis.
- 2** **PRESERVE** open space and protect natural resources by directing development away from historic and environmentally sensitive areas, limiting or restricting development within any [FEMA](#)¹⁰ designated 100-year floodplain areas, and protecting and improving water quality through streamside plantings within the region.
- 3** **UTILIZE** existing or new programs/ordinances to protect and/or acquire development rights or title to the key natural resources in the region, such as agricultural areas, woodlands, hills, and greenways/buffers along waterways and wetlands.

⁹ <https://www.berkspa.gov/departments/planning-commission/plan-topics/the-berks-county-greenway,-park-and-recreation-plan>

¹⁰ <https://www.fema.gov>

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Moving into, around and through the Region is reliable and predictable. The area is connected to Berks and surrounding counties, enabling local and regional access for businesses and neighborhoods. These municipalities are served by an extensive transportation system comprised of roads and bridges, bus and paratransit services and rail. In addition, an extensive sidewalk and trail system serves pedestrian and bicycle travel. The roads, bridges, and public transit system accommodate thousands of trips every day.

Although slow, the population grew and the characteristics of the population in the planning area have changed and will continue to change in the future. These ever-changing demographics provide challenges for the provision of transportation facilities and services. For example, as the population ages, it may become more important to provide transportation options and services geared to their needs with more emphasis on safety improvements tailored to elderly drivers.

It is also important to remember that there is a direct correlation between land use and transportation needs. As residential, commercial, and industrial land is developed, more and more people use the roads, and the roads become congested for longer periods of time. This is particularly true for rush hours or what are known as peak times. In response, as roads are improved to address the traffic congestion, the adjoining land becomes easier and more lucrative to develop, and more traffic is generated.

The primary goal of this plan, with respect to the transportation network, will be to continue to maintain and improve the existing transportation infrastructure that supports the movement of people and goods where financially feasible while still maintaining the character of the municipalities.



ROADS AND BRIDGES

ROADS

According to Berks County Department of Emergency Services (DES) centerline Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, the Region has approximately 318 miles of roads, including approximately 107 miles of state-owned routes, 199 miles of municipal roads, 1 mile of ramps, and 11 miles of private lanes. Nearly all of the roads are paved or improved. All roads owned by the municipalities are part of the Pennsylvania State Liquid Fuels Programs that provides state payments to the municipalities for road maintenance and reconstruction based on population and miles of roads meeting PennDOT specifications. A municipality may also use up to 20% of their net allocation for the purchase of major equipment every year. However, the Liquid Fuels Funds (LFF) comprise only a small part of the municipal maintenance budgets and do not cover the cost of long-term maintenance and reconstruction.

Shown below is a comparison of the liquid fuels allocations in 2020 and 2024. The amount of money allocated to each municipality has generally decreased and overall, Liquid Fuels Funding (LFF) in the Region has decreased by an average of 4%. This decrease is not based on a loss of eligible road miles or loss of population, but due to slightly decreased funding. The difference in percent change over this time period between each municipality is due to the different rate of population growth each municipality experienced, with Amity, St. Lawrence, and Douglass facing a higher rate of population growth compared to Exeter during this period. Streets and roads owned and maintained by these municipalities are mostly in good condition. Municipalities will focus on continued maintenance, including resurfacing, and monitor the need to correct specific drainage problems and add shoulders based on available funding. Paving projects are scheduled annually based on street/road condition and available funding.

Liquid Fuels Net Allocations by Municipality 2020 & 2024						
2020			2024			% Change
Municipality	Miles	Allocation	Municipality	Miles	Allocation	
St. Lawrence	5.19	\$52,030.94	St. Lawrence	5.28	\$50,824.63	-2.32%
Exeter	104.11	\$837,683.85	Exeter	104.11	\$789,429.72	-5.76%
Amity	61.61	\$447,044.04	Amity	62.26	\$439,160.05	-1.76%
Douglass	25.00	\$146,863.92	Douglass	25.00	\$145,635.98	-0.83%

Source: PennDOT Bureau of Municipal Services MLF Allocation Report, 2020 & 2024

The [online mapping](#)¹ shows the federal functional classifications assigned to roads in the area. The functional classification of a roadway may change over time based on changing traffic conditions. Classification of a road is based on an analysis of the volume of traffic using the facility, the type of trip provided, the length of trip, and the speed of the trip.



¹<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>

BRIDGES

As the area's bridges continue to age and deteriorate, it is sometimes necessary to close bridges unexpectedly due to problems revealed during routine inspections. Bridges closed to traffic are those structures deemed unsafe to carry any type of traffic.

Load posting a bridge is required by the National Bridge Inspection Standards when a bridge is not capable of safely carrying a legal load. If a bridge is deemed deficient, officials will post a maximum load for the bridge. Bridges may be posted for other load-capacity restrictions including speed and number of vehicles permitted on the bridge. There are five (5) load-posted bridges in the area, one is state-owned and the other four are local-owned.

Poor condition bridges are characterized by deteriorated conditions of the major components of a bridge. This may include cracked concrete, the bridge deck, the support structure, or the entire bridge itself. A poor designation does not imply that a bridge is unsafe.

However, such bridges typically require significant maintenance and repair to remain in service and would eventually require major rehabilitation or replacement to address the underlying deficiency. There are nine (9) such bridges in the area. Three (3) bridges are owned by PennDOT, five (5) are municipality owned, and one is County owned. The state currently plans on a rehabilitation/ replacement for the Park View Road bridge over the Antietam Creek in Saint Lawrence. Figure 13 shows the location of the poor and posted bridges.

The table below shows the bridges of most concern in the region because municipalities own them, and they are in poor condition as of April 2024. However, plans are underway to conduct preventative maintenance activities/rehabilitation on these bridges to lift them out of poor condition status.

Bridges of Concern					
Bridge/Location	Built	Municipality	Length (ft)	Deck Area (sq ft)	Condition/Issue
Park View Rd over Antietam Creek	1968	St Lawrence	56	1680	Poor/Posted for Load
Valley Rd over Spring Creek	1964	Amity	71	2946.5	Poor/Posted for Load
Browns Mill Rd over Monocacy Creek	1967	Amity	53	1998.1	Poor/Posted for Load
Gristmill Rd over Ironstone Creek	1900	Douglass	51	816	Poor
Winding Rd over Ironstone Creek	1963	Douglass	31	886.6	Poor

Source: PennDOT Bridge Condition Summary Report April 3, 2024

**ROADS AND
BRIDGES
GOAL:**
Maintain and improve the
safety and operation of
roads and bridges where
financially feasible.

1

EVALUATE conditions on local-owned transportation infrastructure. Implement low-cost improvements where such measures provide an immediate impact.

2

COLLABORATE and coordinate improvements and/or rental of necessary equipment to focus limited funding on the most effective solutions while maximizing the potential for cost sharing and savings.

3

THE MUNICIPALITIES will work to develop a joint committee to engage with the legislature in applying for funding for transportation issues within the Region, and to have a united voice when engaging with RATS through the TIP and LRTP process.

CONGESTED CORRIDORS

RATS adopted the most recent [Congestion Management Process \(CMP\)](#)² in November 2023 which included an examination of 33 congested corridors in the County. These corridors were identified using 8 factors: National Highway System Designation, High Volume/Capacity (V/C) Segments, Travel Time Index (TTI), Planning Time Index (PTI), High Crash Corridors, Freight and Intermodal Corridors, Bottlenecks, and Transit Routes. Of the 33 congested corridors examined in Berks County, four (4) have been identified with at least a portion in the Region. Much of the heavy congestion occurs in the more developed area around the interchange where the West Shore Bypass and Business 422 connect in Exeter Township. Special consideration should be given to planning and any future development along this corridor. Strategies to preserve the corridor capacity are provided on page 84 of the Congestion Management Process document.

Corridor	Peak TTI	AADT	Length (Miles)	Truck %
US 422 (West Shore Bypass)	+1.5	32,549 – 97,491	7.00	5–13
US 422 (WSB to Montgomery County Line)	+1.5	32,159 – 40,912	10.08	5–13
US 422 Business (Penn St to US 422 Merge)	+1.5	4,739 – 24,563	4.84	1–7
SR 345 (SR 724 to US 422)	>1.20 and <1.49	3,679 – 7,503	1.17	13–14

Source: RATS Congestion Management Process, 2023

FREIGHT

TRUCKS

Trucks move a great majority of freight (in terms of both tonnage and value) within and through Berks County, illustrating the importance of the county's highway network. From Berks County, business can reach nearly 40% of the United States population and 50% of Canadian customers within a one-day drive.

Truck freight is the most utilized method of transporting goods in the region. Berks County has one of the largest manufacturing concentrations of the surrounding counties and serves as a major conduit between warehousing hubs elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Of note, Route 422 is a primary inter-county truck freight corridor. Route 422 links the Reading metropolitan area with Lebanon and Montgomery counties.

Land use and zoning should help determine where to locate these industries as last mile truck traffic can sometimes find its way onto local roads and through residential communities. The municipalities should examine their current zoning ordinances and potentially update them to accommodate truck generating industries in locations such as those convenient to highway access, while restricting them in areas that could potentially create a nuisance in residential neighborhoods. This only addresses future land use and is not a foolproof strategy. To deal with present issues, the municipalities can sign local roads to discourage use. The municipalities can benefit from having open communication with the facility itself, asking them to consider more appropriate routes through the community when possible.

Truck parking has been an issue affecting drivers in recent times especially since the inception of the Electronic Logging Device (ELD) Mandate in December of 2017. With Route 422 being a primary inter-county truck freight corridor, truck parking is in high demand in the Region, as is elsewhere. When adequate truck parking is unavailable or full, some truck drivers resort to parking on the shoulders of ramps and highways and in non-designated commercial parking lots. A lack of truck parking has been recognized in Pennsylvania and state officials are searching for solutions. The municipalities in the Region should encourage areas of truck parking to reduce truck parking in non-designated areas. In addition to developing designated truck parking areas and rest stops another way to increase truck parking would be to encourage developers to include an area of safe truck parking within the property they are developing for the drivers that are delivering or picking up goods at their location. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Truck Parking Development Handbook should be referenced for quantitative approaches for estimating truck parking demand, conducting a cost-benefit analysis of truck parking developments, and siting truck parking facilities all while maintaining quality of life for residents of the Region.

Rail



Norfolk Southern's Harrisburg Line, Class I Railroad runs through the southwestern borders of the townships that make up the Region. There are three at-grade crossings along this line, one in each township. Out of the 109 at-grade crossings in Berks County, these rank 7th, 53rd, and 54th at the end of 2023 for Predicated Accidents per Year at Public Highway–Rail Crossings in Berks County as shown in the US DOT Federal Railroad Administration, Accident Prediction Report for Public At–Grade Highway–Rail Crossings. There was one collision at the crossing of this line with Main Street (SR 2047) in Amity Township resulting in the high ranking in this report.



The Eastern Berks Gateway Railroad's Colebrookdale Line, Short Line Railroad runs through Douglass Township. There are two at-grade crossings along this line in Douglass Township. Out of the 109 at-grade crossings in Berks County, these rank 56th and 59th at the end of 2023 for Predicated Accidents per Year at Public Highway–Rail Crossings in Berks County as shown in the US DOT

Federal Railroad Administration, Accident Prediction Report for Public At–Grade Highway–Rail Crossings.

The accident prediction formula is based upon two variables which include: (1) basic data about a crossing's physical and operating characteristics, and (2) the last full five years of accident history data available at the crossing. This data can be used when nominating crossings for physical safety improvements or enhancements. Note that changes to railroad operations may increase or decrease rail traffic at a crossing, affecting type of capital and safety improvement needs. Demand for rail service can change with the arrival or departure of industrial customers on the line. These and other economic changes can affect the volume, location, and timing of rail traffic.

Given the regional nature of airport development and support, this Comprehensive Plan calls for no specific regard to air and rail service and instead adopts the RATS FFY 2023–2045 Long Range Transportation Plan in regard to these modes by reference.

FREIGHT GOAL:

Ensure freight accommodation while keeping other travelers safe.

- 1** **MEET** with developers early and often throughout the stages of the land development process to encourage the inclusion of an area for safe truck parking for drivers servicing that location to reduce trucks parking in non-designated or unsafe areas.
- 2** **MAINTAIN** an open line of communication with local business owners and operators of regional commercial and industrial facilities, specifically regarding issues with regular truck movements and designated routes.
- 3** **STAY AWARE** of any roadway, equipment, and/or safety issues at At-Grade Railroad Crossings, communicate any issues with At-Grade Railroad Crossings with Norfolk Southern, the US DOT Federal Railroad Administration, and PennDOT. Continue to advocate for safety improvements where the Colebrookdale Railroad intersects at Greshville Road and Manatawny Drive Rail Crossings such as warning lights and gates.

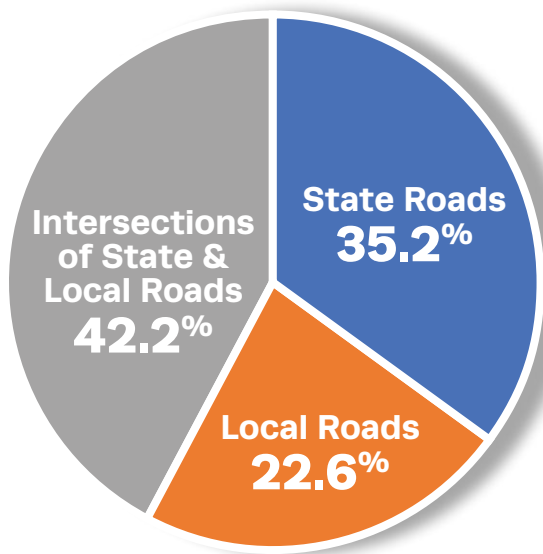
SAFETY

Maintaining a safe transportation system is essential to sustaining and enhancing the quality of life throughout the SEAD Region. Deaths and injuries resulting from traffic crashes are a public health concern and impact local communities with medical costs, lost wages, insurance costs, taxes, police, fire, and emergency medical services, legal and court costs, and property damage.

As part of its safety program, PennDOT collects traffic crash data for the entire state and reports data at the state, county, and municipal level. For the purposes of this plan, crash data for Berks County was analyzed. Motor vehicle crashes generally involve multiple contributing factors that may be related to drivers, the roadway, or the vehicle(s) involved, thus making transportation safety a multidisciplinary concern.

Analyzing crash trends allows PennDOT, RATS, and the region municipalities to focus on setting goals to improve upon those trends by programming safety improvements to the road system itself or encouraging greater emphasis on education and enforcement.

State and local officials have been attempting to reduce the number of crashes occurring on the roads. According to the 2023 Pennsylvania Crash Facts and Statistics released by PennDOT, Berks County ranked seventh in the state in the number of overall crashes and sixth in the number of fatal crashes in 2023. During the time period of 2019 through 2023, there were 2,060 crashes in the Region. Approximately 35.2% of those crashes occurred on state roads, 22.6% on local roads, and 42.2% at intersections of state and local roads. Between 2019 and 2023, crashes decreased by 3.1% in the Region. Nineteen (19) of the 2,060 crashes were fatal.



Crash Locations in the Region 2019–2023

- STATE ROADS
- LOCAL ROADS
- INTERSECTIONS OF STATE & LOCAL ROADS

The two tables below show the total number of crashes and fatal crashes in each municipality for the years 2019 through 2023. The number of crashes in St. Lawrence represents 4.1% for the entire planning area and crashes have increased 78.6% over these years. The Borough has not experienced any fatalities due to crashes from 2019 through 2023. The number of crashes in Exeter Township accounts for 49.6% of the crashes in the planning area. Exeter Township experienced 10 fatal crashes over the same five years. This can be attributed in part to the size of the Township, which contains higher speed arterial roadways. Amity Township, which is comparable in size to Exeter, carries 36.5% of the Region's crashes during the 5-year period. Amity Township had 6 fatalities due to crashes between 2019 and 2023. Both Amity and Exeter townships have seen decreases in crashes while St. Lawrence and Douglass have seen increases in crashes. Overall, the amount of crashes has decreased in the Region.

Number of Crashes in the Region						
Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
St. Lawrence	14	11	16	19	25	85
Exeter	224	163	199	234	202	1,022
Amity	147	133	156	172	144	752
Douglass	40	42	40	38	41	201
Total	425	349	411	463	412	2,060

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2019–2023

Number of Crashes Resulting in Fatalities in the Region						
Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
St. Lawrence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exeter	1	1	4	3	1	10
Amity	0	1	0	3	2	6
Douglass	0	0	0	1	2	3
Total	1	2	4	7	5	19

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2019–2023

Unsafe driving behavior plays a significant role in crashes in Berks County. Aggressive and distracted driving are major factors and increasingly present contributors to crashes. Drivers are more distracted and more prone to speeding than they were in the 1990s or 2000s. Of note, crashes because of distracted driving in Berks County began to rise with the mass adoption of smartphones in the early-mid 2000s.

For more information on distracted driving as well as Pennsylvania's Distracted Driving Law adopted in June of 2025, please visit: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/traveling-in-pa/safety/traffic-safety-driver-topics/distracted-driving>

Number of Crashes Involving Aggressive Driving Behavior in the Region						
Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
St. Lawrence	2	0	0	0	0	2
Exeter	13	13	29	44	84	183
Amity	6	7	13	24	11	61
Douglass	2	3	10	5	7	27
Total	23	23	52	73	102	273

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2019–2023

Number of Crashes Involving Distracted Driving Behavior in the Region						
Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
St. Lawrence	2	1	4	3	5	15
Exeter	19	16	18	27	19	99
Amity	18	11	24	16	18	87
Douglass	1	2	5	5	2	15
Total	40	30	51	51	44	216

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2019–2023

Vulnerable road users are non-motorists that are walking, bicycling, rolling, or using a mobility device such as a wheelchair. For purposes of this plan, vulnerable road users will be referred to as pedestrians and bicyclists.



The chart below shows there were twenty (20) crashes involving pedestrians from 2019 to 2023. One (1) of these crashes resulted in a pedestrian fatality in Exeter Township during these same years. There were fourteen (14) crashes involving a bicycle during the same time period, one of these resulted in a fatality. The majority of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists between 2019 and 2023 occurred in Exeter Township. Thirteen (13) of the fourteen (14) crashes involving a bicycle were during the daytime in normal driving conditions and ten (10) were at intersections. To minimize the amount of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists, the municipalities should focus on creating safe links between residential areas and popular destinations, such as schools, parks, and shopping centers. This could be achieved through widening of shoulders, the addition of protected bike lanes, filling gaps in the sidewalk network, and safety focused intersection improvements. Recent safety improvements along route 422 business in Exeter Township is an example of these types of projects.

Number of Crashes Involving Pedestrians in the Region						
Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
St. Lawrence	2	1	0	0	0	3
Exeter	5	0	2	4	2	13
Amity	1	1	0	0	0	2
Douglass	0	0	1	0	1	2
Total	8	2	3	4	3	20

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2019–2023

Number of Crashes Involving Bicycles in the Region						
Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
St. Lawrence	0	0	0	1	0	1
Exeter	0	2	2	1	3	8
Amity	0	0	1	2	1	4
Douglass	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	0	3	3	4	4	14

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2019–2023

Of the nineteen (19) crashes in the Region that resulted in fatalities from 2019 through 2023, two (2) of these crashes involved vulnerable road users.

Although technically not classified as a vulnerable road user. The safety of motorcyclists is a concern. From 2019 through 2023, seventy-two (72) crashes occurred involving a motorcycle, with five (5) of them resulting in fatalities.

Number of Crashes Involving Motorcycles in the Region						
Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
St. Lawrence	1	0	0	1	3	5
Exeter	6	5	6	4	8	29
Amity	5	5	2	14	6	32
Douglass	0	1	0	1	4	6
Total	12	11	8	20	21	72

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2019–2023

SAFETY GOAL:

Keep travelers of all modes safe and secure as they travel throughout the region.

- PROMOTE** educational safety programs in the Region such as senior and first-time drivers courses and bicycle and road safety events for youth.
- MAINTAIN** a relationship with those that police the region, informing them of concern or repeat offenses to help mitigate undesirable driving behaviors. Establish a reporting system for drivers to submit feedback.
- IMPLEMENT** low-cost safety improvements where such measures provide an immediate impact on safety.
- CREATE** safe links between residential areas and popular destinations, such as schools, parks, and shopping centers in an attempt to minimize the number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. Consider safety improvements such as widening of shoulders, filling gaps in the sidewalk network and the addition of ADA ramps, crosswalk painting, and signage to help achieve a safer transportation system for all users.

TRANSIT

While most travel in the area is by automobile, there is a significant and growing segment of the population that relies on public transportation to fulfill their needs. Public transportation is provided by both non-profit and profit organizations, supplying fixed route and demand response services. For reference, transit routes in the Region at the time of this publication are depicted on the [online mapping](#)¹ at the end of this chapter.

The principal provider of public transportation services in Berks County is the South Central Transit Authority (SCTA). This authority oversees two divisions: Berks Area Regional Transit Authority (BARTA) that serves Berks County and the Red Rose Transit Authority (RTTA) that serves Lancaster County.

BARTA provides two (2) routes that service the Region, Route 7 and 8.

Route 7 services Pennside, Stony Creek and Butter Lane. This route runs weekdays and Saturdays and services the Stony Creek Towne Houses and returns to the BARTA Transportation Center.



¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>

Route 8, which provides service between Reading along Perkiomen Avenue to the Reading Mall, Route 422 East, and Birdsboro. This route currently runs only on weekdays. Major stops along this route include the Exeter Commons Shopping Center, Redners Park-N-Ride, and the Exeter Square Walmart.

SCTA updated their Transit Development Plan (TDM) in March of 2024 which included recommendations for changes to occur over time. Route 7 is planned to be simplified by following the same alignment in both directions. It will continue to operate between downtown Reading and Stony Creek Townhouses via Carsonia Avenue. The service along Butter Lane would be eliminated due to low ridership. The recommendation to come out of the plan is for Route 8 to be realigned to operate between downtown Reading and the Walmart at Exeter Square Mall to focus on areas with the highest ridership potential. Service to Birdsboro will be cut due to low ridership.

One of the objectives of the TDM is to *“Connect people to jobs, community services, healthcare, and educational institutions.”* One way to improve access to jobs would be for developers and planners to consider bus stop locations early in the design process. As more businesses and jobs come to the Region, planners and developers should work with SCTA/BARTA early in the design process of a new project, rather than placing stops at later stages of construction, with considerations for pedestrian access, existing bus operations, and potential stop facilities.

Special Services Operations

BARTA's Special Services Division is responsible for operating and administering most human service transportation in Berks County. These services including the Shared Ride, ADA, and Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) programs, and are specialized, demand-responsive paratransit service and provide public transportation to persons whose disabling condition prevents the use of fixed route transit.

CommutePA

Berks County joined CommutePA of Pennsylvania, a program of the nonprofit Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership in 2009. The program goal is to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and to increase the efficiency of the highway system by reducing congestion and improving air quality. Participation in the program is free.

When new businesses move into the Region, it is important to promote CommutePA. CommutePA can provide free assistance in tailoring programs to meet employer's needs and aid in building a program that works at getting employees out of their individual vehicles and/or rush hour traffic. Benefits to employers from working with CommutePA can include recruiting and retaining workers, savings on payroll taxes, reducing parking costs and/or spaces, getting employees to work on time, improving attendance, improving morale, and achieving environmental benefits. These benefits can be provided through working with CommutePA to achieve plans specific to each employer. Options tailored to employers can include carpooling/vanpooling, transit promotion, Emergency Ride Home program, preferential parking, active transportation options, teleworking, staggered shifts, compressed work weeks, payroll tax savings, and promotional/educational activities.

Not only do employers have an option to partner with CommutePA, but communities can as well. Community Partners work with the CommutePA program to provide commute option assistance to their member organizations, residents, and other interested parties within their communities.



TRANSIT GOAL:
Promote the use of transit
when available

PROMOTE the use of transit, cooperative, and demand operated services with the help of a standing transportation committee made up of representatives of each municipality.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation facilities in the region can be viewed on the [online mapping](#). Active transportation is defined as any form of human-powered transportation that engages individuals in healthy, physical activity while traveling from place to place. These trips take place on a variety of different facilities, some reserved exclusively for non-motorized users such as sidewalks and trails, while others take place on multi-function transportation facilities such as bike lanes on streets. Walking and biking are important parts of the area's overall transportation system as they are two of the most basic and affordable forms of transportation available.



The Schuylkill River Trail (SRT) is a major north-south trail corridor consisting of continuous and unconnected segments of trails from Philadelphia into Schuylkill County. There are currently about 75 miles of the SRT in sections. A major part of the trail runs on-road in neighboring Robeson Township. Opportunities for establishing an off-road trail along the Schuylkill River in Exeter Township have been explored and continue to be a possibility with continued outreach and planning. This trail could connect to the already existing Exeter Scenic River Trail.

Most pedestrian trips are short; therefore, sidewalks along key corridors connecting residences to nearby amenities have the greatest influence on creating viable pedestrian transportation networks. Sidewalk networks provide a safe means for residents of the Region to access nearby attractions such as schools, parks, and adjacent subdivisions. Going forward, new land developments and subdivisions, served by public sewer and water utilities, should be encouraged to have sidewalks on at least one side of all streets when within two (2) miles of a school, or half (0.5) of a mile of a greenway, park, shopping center, business complex, transit stop, or when there is an existing sidewalk network adjacent to the proposed development.

RATS updated their Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan in 2020 and identified potential projects based on public, municipal, and non-profit survey responses. Potential projects identified in the Region include a bike lane along Oley Turnpike Road, safe bicycle crossings along route 422 in Amity and Douglass Townships, SRT trail connections, and a trail from Shelbourne to the Exeter Commons shopping center.

For more information on bicycle and pedestrian access, refer to the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan 2020 located at:

<https://www.berkspa.gov/getmedia/57816316-a53e-45b9-9d69-8996c3708129/Bike-Ped-Plan-Update-2022-Group-1.pdf>

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all users including those traveling by active transportation. The design of Complete Streets considers people and place and varies by user need, but safety for all users is always priority. Ensuring Complete Streets integration into future projects can be done through the adoption and enforcement of Complete Streets Policies.

On November 15, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58), also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law" (BIL), was signed into law. Section 11206 of the BIL, titled Increasing Safe and Accessible Transportation Options (ISATO), requires certain funds to be used on Complete Streets planning activities as part of the transportation planning process. Potential projects that increase safe and accessible transportation options were identified to fulfill this requirement. These potential projects are elaborated on in the Future Projects section.



Because Pennsylvania municipalities range from bustling metro areas to quaint townships and boroughs, and historic rural communities. Local governments are involved and, in some cases, responsible for, the planning, constructing, and maintaining streets, bridges, and active transportation facilities and networks.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION GOAL:

Apply for grant funding to develop an active transportation plan evaluating existing active transportation infrastructure for improvements throughout the region to address maintenance needs, completion of missing links, safety, and accessibility improvements focusing on accessibility to schools, parks, shopping, and business centers.

1

ENSURE that local ordinances and regulations include requirements for active transportation accommodations into and within all new developments. Encourage new land developments and subdivisions, especially ones served by public water and sewer utilities, to have sidewalks on one side of all streets when within two (2) miles of a school, or half (0.5) of a mile of a greenway, park, shopping center business complex, transit stop, or when there is an existing sidewalk network adjacent to the proposed development.

2

ENCOURAGE businesses to provide bike racks for visitors and storage facilities for employees; seek or support funding when applicable.

3

ENGAGE with PennDOT officials and RATS staff during the PennDOT Connects process on all state roadway projects to ensure active transportation infrastructure is included in projects when appropriate.

4

ADOPT and enforce Complete Streets policies to ensure the entire public right-of-way is available for users.



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School Programs aim to make it safer and easier for students to walk and ride to school. The first federally funded Safe Routes to School program was created in 2005 and variations continue to date.

The importance of a diverse active transportation system was explored in the active transportation section. It was also stated that sidewalks should be provided on at least one side of every street that is within two (2) miles of a school of new major housing developments with public sewer and water infrastructure improvements. Many active transportation concepts and benefits are closely associated with Safe Routes to School Programs. These programs have many benefits for the student age population as well as the residents in the surrounding communities. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes Safe Routes to School Programs as cost effective programs that show significant population health impacts within the first five (5) years.

Benefits of the program include cost savings to residents using their cars less and to schools by cutting down on busing costs. Traffic safety is improved through road safety education and reduced dangers for students and community members through street improvements near schools. Climate benefits and cleaner air occur through reduced tailpipe emissions due to reduced congestion at drop off and pick up times. Students can become healthier by strengthening muscles, bones, and joints through active transportation methods, which also aid in reducing chronic disease, obesity, and diabetes. Students are also said to perform better academically through improved attendance, focus, and concentration. Community benefits also include increased safety through better lighting, infrastructure design, and community connectedness.

ENGAGEMENT

All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.

EQUITY

Ensuring that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for low-income students, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others.

ENGINEERING

Creating physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer, more comfortable, and more convenient.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, and programs.

EDUCATION

Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.

EVALUATION

Assessing which approaches are more or less successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes, and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GOAL:

Increase physical activity, health, and safety for students of the Boyertown Area, Daniel Boone Area, and Exeter Township School Districts.

1

THE TOWNSHIPS, Borough, and School Districts should work together to engage the community and student population to inform and draw support for an official Safe Routes to School Program. Use public input to identify safety concerns and infrastructure improvement opportunities on routes where students walk or bike followed by a walk audit covering those locations.

2

THE MUNICIPALITIES, working with the School Districts, should pass a resolution to create a Safe Routes to School Plan incorporating the Six E's and detailing specific commitments and implementation steps. These routes can be identified through low-cost improvements such as signage and/or paint. When applying for funding, all municipalities represented in this plan should support each other, providing letters and, where appropriate, collaborating together.

3

THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS should provide bike racks and storage facilities for employees and students.

4

ENGAGE with PennDOT officials and RATS staff during the PennDOT Connects process on all state roadway projects to ensure safe routes to schools districtwide are included in projects where appropriate.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

The introduction of alternative fueled vehicles, primarily liquid propane gas (LPG) and electric have been somewhat of a novelty in the past, but over recent years the growth of this sector has had dramatic impacts on the environment by lowering emissions. PennDOT has been working with the federal government and other stakeholders to designate numerous interstates for the Federal Highway Administrations (FHWA) Alternative Fuel Corridor (AFC) Program. This program is designed to expand the nation's alternative fueling network for electric, propane, and natural gas vehicles. U.S. Route 422 has been identified as a route for Alternative Fuel Corridor (AFC) designation or charging deployment in the Pennsylvania State Plan for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment. With the region containing a nationally designated AFC it is important to consider the potential for alternative fuel infrastructure throughout the planning area to support travel of these vehicles.

An Electric Vehicle (EV) AFC must have EV charging infrastructure installed every 50 miles along the route and located within 1 travel mile of an exit or highway intersection that consists of at least four 150kW DC fast chargers (DCFCs) with Combined Charging System (CCS) ports capable of simultaneously DC charging four EVs with a minimum station power capability at or above 600kW.

Electric Vehicle registrations are recorded by county and zip code. As of July 2024, 0.62% of all vehicles registered in Berks County are EVs, which ranks Berks as 20th in the percentage of EVs registered out of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. Nearby

to this region, Lehigh and Montgomery Counties are ranked 2nd and 9th. There are eight zip codes present throughout the planning region which have all experienced growth in the number of electric vehicles registered from December 2022 through July 2024 all ranking within the top half of EV registrations by zip code in Pennsylvania.

There are currently two public alternative fueling stations in the planning area, which are both electric charging stations, shown on the [online mapping](#)¹. There is one charging station at the Wawa convenience store in Exeter Township and another at a business off Old Swede Road in Amity Township. Planning for additional alternative fueling stations should be considered to prepare for additional infrastructure as demand rises.

¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>

ALTERNATIVE FUELS GOAL:

Prepare for the increasing use of alternative fuel vehicles throughout the region.

1
2

INCORPORATE recommendations from documents such as the Berks County Planning Commission Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Planning Advice when considering updates to zoning, building codes, and parking requirements to better accommodate and expedite the development of alternative fuel infrastructure.

WORK with state agencies such as PennDOT and PA DEP to obtain funding to support the addition of alternative vehicle infrastructure when available.

For more on Transportation see [MAPPING](#)¹.

PennDOT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING RESOURCES

The world of transportation planning and engineering can be complex, especially at the local level when a municipality may not have all of the resources to efficiently undertake transportation planning activities on their own. PennDOT provides resources to municipalities free of charge through two programs, PennDOT Connects and the PennDOT Local Technical Assistance Program.

PennDOT Connects

PennDOT is committed to bettering the transportation systems of Pennsylvania's communities through collaborative planning. This means improving the planning process to reflect changing demographics and technological innovation. PennDOT Connects starts by considering community needs at the beginning of the planning process. This collaboration provides the opportunity for details unique to a community to be identified and discussed for each project in planning, prior to developing project scopes and cost estimates. The best part, its free!

PennDOT Connects Website: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/research-planning-and-innovation/penndot-connects.html>

PennDOT Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

The LTAP program is designed to help Pennsylvania's municipalities, which maintain over 78,000 miles of roadways, make the best use of their roadway maintenance dollars. PennDOT LTAP provides technical information and proven technologies dealing with roadway maintenance and safety methods to meet the growing demands on municipal governments. PennDOT LTAP has provided technology transfer services to Pennsylvania's 2600 municipal governments since 1983. All LTAP services are free to municipalities.

PennDOT LTAP Website: <https://gis.penndot.gov/ltap/>

FUTURE PROJECTS – SCHEDULED AND POTENTIAL

The [online mapping](#)¹ shows the location of the proposed projects and their corresponding project numbers as shown in the RATS FFY 2025–2028 Transportation Improvement Plan, as well as other significant potential and/or upcoming projects that the municipalities should consider planning with other agencies for implementation.



¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>

Transportation Project Prioritization

The transportation projects list on the following pages were identified, developed, and proposed through the creation of this plan. These projects were further analyzed and prioritized. Although meant to give general guidance, this ranking system is not meant to be the "last word" in defining the importance or constructability of a project. Each project is important to the overall system on its individual merits. The following ranking methodology was used:

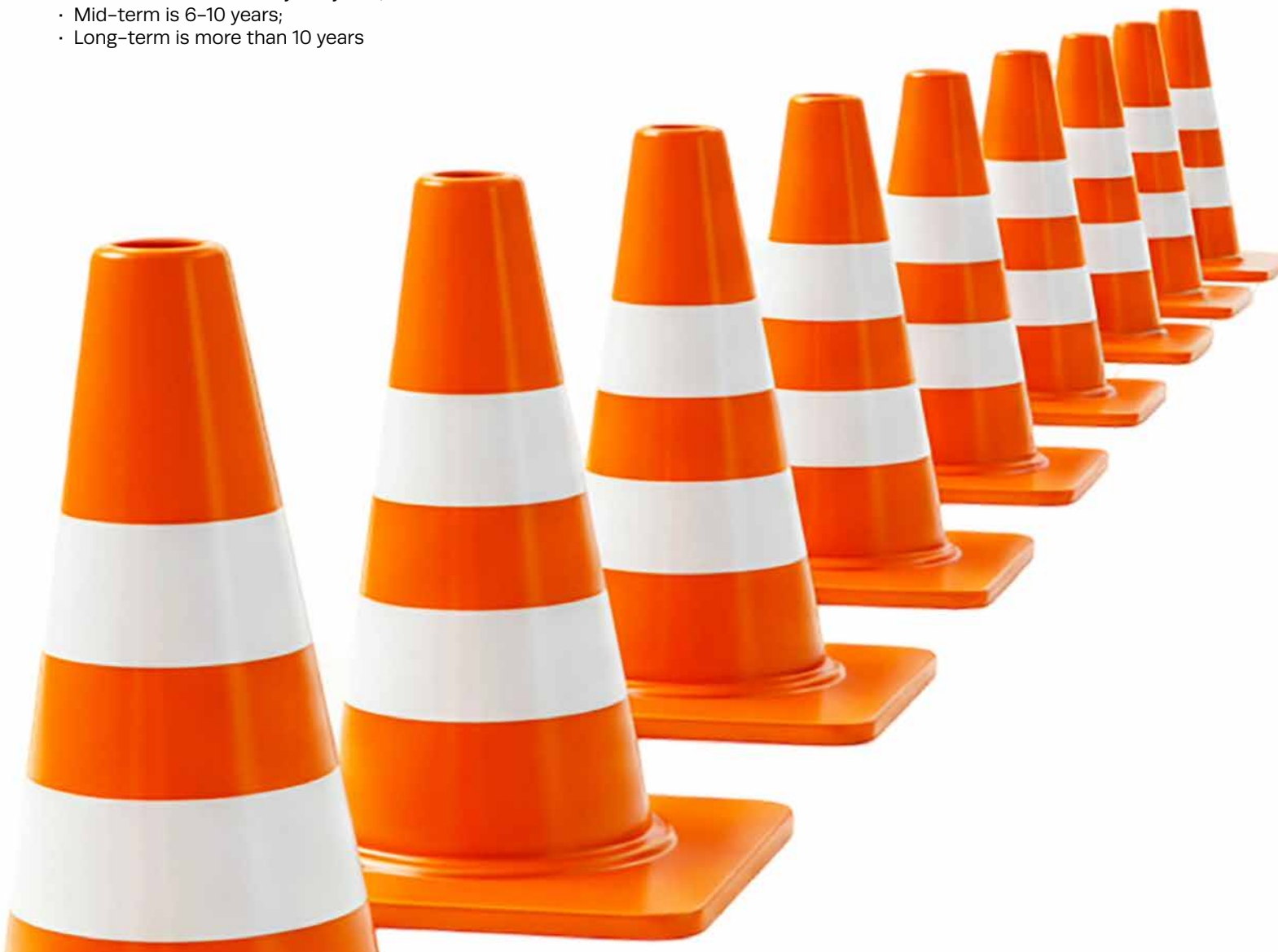
1. Projects were separated between Active Transportation and Road and Bridge Improvements.
2. Factors used for scoring were identified: (1 point = Yes, 0 point = No; 0.5 point if indirectly/generally identified)
 - a. Does it improve access to a community asset?
 - b. Does it improve pedestrian/bicycle safety?
 - c. Is it on a municipal capital improvement plan?
 - d. Is it on the RATS Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)?
 - e. Was it previously identified in a municipal level plan?
 - f. Was it previously identified in a County level plan?
 - g. Was it previously and directly identified in a State level plan?
 - h. Is it a maintenance type project?
3. Projects were prioritized high to low based on how many factors were satisfied.

Projects were ranked High/Medium/Low based on the above system, specifically:

- Projects scoring 4–5 points were ranked High;
- Projects scoring 2–3 points were ranked Medium; and
- Projects scoring 0–1 points were ranked Low

As for timing, these were all ranked more subjectively based on potential costs, difficulty of implementation, partnerships involved, potential need for land acquisition, PennDOT or railroad involvement, among other factors:

- Short-term is essentially 1–5 years;
- Mid-term is 6–10 years;
- Long-term is more than 10 years



Potential Project – Active Transportation	Municipality	Priority Ranking	Timing
East Neversink Road Pedestrian Improvements – Explore the potential for creating safe pedestrian access along East Neversink Road between the West Shore bypass interchange and route 422 Business.	Exeter Township	2 Med	Mid
Pedestrian Safety Improvements Saint Lawrence & Exeter Townships – Pedestrian Safety Improvements Oley Turnpike Road – Coordination between the Borough and PennDOT regarding pedestrian safety improvements along Oley Turnpike Road where it intersects with Perkiomen Avenue.	Saint Lawrence Borough / Exeter Township	2 Med	Mid
Pedestrian Safety Improvements Oley Turnpike Road – Coordination between the Borough and PennDOT regarding pedestrian safety improvements along Oley Turnpike Road where it intersects with Perkiomen Avenue.	Saint Lawrence Borough	2 Med	Mid
Pedestrian Accessibility Exeter Village Apartments to Shelbourne Square – Consideration should be given to implementing a project to add a trail or pathway in order for persons living in the area have better access to the shopping center and transit stop located there. There is potential for more need based on the future development south of the shopping center.	Exeter Township	3 Med	Mid
Lorane Elementary School Neighborhood Sidewalks – Provide sidewalk access in the neighborhood adjacent to Lorane Elementary School. Adding sidewalks, to at least one side of the street, would provide a safer environment for students walking to school as well as provide a connector to other neighborhoods within the community.	Exeter Township	3 Med	Mid
Lincoln Road Pedestrian Improvements – Improve pedestrian access along Lincoln Road and the Walmart Shopping Center. The Township should consider the potential to create better access for pedestrians from developments along Lincoln Road to the Walmart Shopping Center. This would also facilitate better access to transit.	Exeter Township	2 Med	Mid
Perkiomen Avenue Bike Lanes – Potential for bike lanes along Perkiomen Avenue as identified in the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan 2020.	Saint Lawrence Borough / Exeter Township	3 Med	Mid
Gibraltar Road Sidewalks – Sidewalks should be installed where feasible to facilitate safe pedestrian circulation along the road. This project has a high ranking according to the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan 2020.	Exeter Township	2 Med	Mid
Rt 422 Enhanced Pedestrian Crossings – The Townships should investigate the potential for enhanced pedestrian improvements at various crossings along the RT 422 corridor. Intersection safety improvements can provide safe connections to neighboring communities and trails. This project is identified in the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan 2020.	Amity Township / Douglass Township	3 Med	Mid
Rt 562 Improved Bicycle Infrastructure – The region should explore working with PennDOT to provide bike lanes on Route 562 where financially feasible. Route L of Pennsylvania's BicyclePA network is currently located on a portion of Route 562 in Amity Township. Providing bike lanes would provide safety improvements and make connections to other existing areas of interest and networks.	Saint Lawrence Borough / Exeter Township / Amity Township / Douglass Township	3 Med	Mid
Connection through Ganshawny Park and/or along Old Philadelphia Pike and River Bridge Road to connect to the Schuylkill River Trail – Consideration should be given to establishing a connection between Ganshawny Park and the Schuylkill River Trail. The connection could follow Old Philadelphia Pike and River Bridge Road to connect to the already established SRT. The municipality, Schuylkill River Greenway Association and PennDOT should coordinate to establish this connection.	Douglass Township	3 Med	Mid

Planned and Potential Projects – Road and Bridge	Municipality	Priority Ranking	Timing
Parkview Road Bridge (Planned) – This project involves the replacement of the Parkview Road bridge over the Antietam Creek in St. Lawrence Borough.	Saint Lawrence Borough	4 High	Short
Colebrookdale Road Guiderail Improvement (Planned) – This project involves the replacement/upgrade of guiderail in various locations throughout Berks County. This improvement will occur along Colebrookdale Road in Douglass Township.	Douglass township	4 High	Short
Bridge Preservation/Restoration Multi from TIP – Shelbourne Road / Scotland Drive / Pennsylvania Avenue (Planned) – This project involves the preservation, design, and/or construction of various bridges throughout multiple counties within Pennsylvania. This specific project as it pertains to the region will include various safety and reconstruction activities along Shelbourne Road between Scotland Drive and Pennsylvania Avenue in Exeter Township.	Exeter Township	4 High	Short
Limekiln Road Resurfacing (Planned) – This project includes the resurfacing of Limekiln Road from SR 562 (Boyertown Pike) to route 422 in Amity Township.	Amity Township	4 High	Short
Grant Street/40th Street Extension – This proposal involves the extension of 40th Street into the commercial property located adjacent to the current end of 40th Street in Exeter Township.	Exeter Township	5 High	Short
Tollgate Road Realignment (Planned) – This project involves the realignment of Tollgate Road with Nicholson Avenue at the intersection with Old Swede Road (Route 662). Provide exclusive left turn lanes in the northbound, southbound, and westbound approaches. A possible traffic study can be done to determine if signals and/or signage are warranted as well. Currently this is an offset intersection and realignment will make the intersection safer for all users.	Amity Township	2 Med	Mid
Limekiln Road / Monocacy Creek Road (SR 2025) and SR 422 (Planned) – Modification of signal timings to protected/prohibited phasing. Providing exclusive dual left turn lanes in southbound approach, exclusive left turn lane in northbound approach and exclusive right turn lane in westbound approach.	Amity Township	4 High	Short
Monocacy Creek Road / N. Monocacy Creek Road (SR 2025) and SR 422 (Planned) – Reconstruction of the center median, signage, signal modification, and changes to left-turn phasing.	Amity Township	4 High	Short
Freeway Service Patrol – PennDOT Project ID 94900 – This ongoing project involves the implementation of an active freeway service patrol along the route 422 corridor. Although implemented along the length of the route 422 corridor (West Shore Bypass) a portion of the covered area is located on the limited access part of the bypass from the I-176 interchange to the merge with business 422 in Exeter Township.	Saint Lawrence Borough / Exeter Township / Amity Township / Douglass Township	4 High	Short
West Shore Bypass Project– Exeter Township – This project is located along a corridor that intersects multiple other municipalities in Berks County. Implications could include increased congestion along Perkiomen Avenue (RT 422 Business) as motorists try to avoid congestion caused by construction activities along the West Shore Bypass	Exeter Township	4 High	Short

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

Community facilities are public buildings, parks, infrastructure, and structures that house functions, programs, and activities essential to municipal government operations and provide necessary services to residents of the area. Public services include activities ranging from police and fire protection to libraries and recreation programs. The extent to which facilities and services are available in any one municipality is dependent on many factors including population, tax base, transportation, and regional location. Financing for such facilities and services can be provided through available funding or through contracts with private or quasi-public entities, thereby tailoring activities and expenditures for specific needs. Ultimately, a joint approach to providing such facilities and services is recommended as it allows for several municipalities to share in the cost of these facilities and services.

Education

This Region is served by three public school districts. Additionally, each public school district has a cyberlearning option for students. Below are the number of schools in each district, as well as their current enrollment numbers:

School District Information			
Information	Exeter Township School District	Daniel Boone Area School District	Boyertown Area School District
# of School Locations*	6	4	10
Municipalities Served	Exeter, St. Lawrence	Amity, Birdsboro, Union	Douglass (Berks), Earl, Boyertown, Colebrookdale, Washington, Bally, Bechtelsville, Douglass (Montgomery), New Hanover, Upper Frederick
2019–2020 Enrollment**	3,882	3,254	6,914
2023–2024 Enrollment**	3,902	2,947	6,653
	0.5%	-10.4%	-3.9%
Student– Teacher Ratio***	15:1	14:1	16:1

* Boyertown Area, Daniel Boone Area, Exeter Township School Districts' websites

**Pennsylvania Department of Education

*** US & World News

Like many school districts in Berks, Daniel Boone and Boyertown Area School Districts have seen a decline in enrollment, with Exeter Township School District seeing a slight increase in student population since 2019. However, as operation costs continue to rise, it is important to consider how the area's three school districts will be impacted when planning development within the Region.



Keeping the correlation between municipal and student enrollment growth in mind, cooperative recommendations include:

School districts can benefit from their involvement early in the residential land development process.

By learning of proposed developments as they are approved, the districts can better prepare for needed school expansions and bus routing on the horizon. Each municipality should consider revising its subdivision and land development application requirements so that adequate and timely notification to the school districts is assured. The school districts in turn should allocate manpower and resources to be equipped to properly respond to such applications and provide meaningful feedback to the municipalities by coordinating development within the Region with public school capacity in mind.

As new school facilities are proposed by the school districts, the municipalities should work with the school districts to assure that school facilities are located to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

For instance, it would be desirable to consider location of school facilities in areas where development has or is expected to take place, rather than locate school facilities in Agricultural or Rural Conservation and Rural Preservation areas, which are intended to preserve the rural and open space character of the region. School facilities should be located where public sewer and water is available, and closer to existing residential developments to provide more opportunities for safer routes to schools.

The school districts should continue to provide parks and recreation opportunities to the surrounding communities when not in use for a district event. By allowing access to these resources, the school districts are providing in some instances much needed recreational opportunities, in particular in the more rural areas of the Region where access to such facilities may be minimal. This represents potential savings of millions of dollars to the four municipalities who would otherwise need to fulfill this demand for the community.

Library Service

The only library located within the region is the Exeter Community Library, which is open to any member of the public with a Berks County library card. Relatively new in the library system, Exeter Community Library began in the lower level of the Dunn Community Center in Exeter Township in 1999. In 2006, the library moved to its current location at 4569 Prestwick Drive. It is the busiest library in the County library system, seeing 111,347 visits in 2023 and a yearly circulation of over 245,000. More than just a place to borrow books in the Region, this library provides over 500 free programs to adults and children locally throughout the year. Programs like the PA Forward Initiative adopted in 2019 help improve the lives throughout this Region and beyond, by improving 5 areas of essential literary skills- basic, information, civic and social, health, and financial. Assess to public computers, Wi-Fi, and printing services are also available to those within the Region and beyond.

Additionally, there are two libraries in neighboring municipalities, which are partially funded by members of this Joint Comprehensive Plan. First, Amity Township donates funds to the Boone Area Library. Located in the Borough of Birdsboro, the Boone Area Library serves the areas of Amity Township as well as Birdsboro and neighboring Union Township. Boone Area Library offers a summer reading program and growing list of events to enrich the surrounding community. Services provided include Wi-Fi, copier, fax machine, public computers, and a community room. Also, Douglass Township contributes to the Boyertown Community Library. The Boyertown Community Library, in addition to Douglass Township, serves Boyertown Borough, Colebrookdale Township, and Earl Township. They offer diverse services and programs to the public including Wi-Fi and public computer access, a fax machine, a study room, and notary services.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Exeter, Amity, and Douglass Townships have their own police forces. Exeter Township Police Department, the largest in the Region, consists of three divisions: Patrol Division comprised of traffic, K-9, and bicycle patrol units, a Detective Bureau, and an Administrative Office. Central Berks Regional Police provides police service to the Borough of St. Lawrence. Amity Police Department has 15 officers and Douglass Police department has six. Collectively, Central Berks serves over 13,000 residents around a 30-mile region with a staff of 17 officers and one civilian employee.

According to the Center for Excellence in Local Government's Emergency Medical Provider (EMP) Initiative study completed in October of 2024, primary ambulance service in this Region is covered by five EMS companies: Life Lion EMS covers Exeter, Lower Alsace EMS covers St. Lawrence, Tower Direct covers Amity, and Douglass has the majority of its primary EMS coverage provided by Boyertown EMS with the southernmost portion of the Township covered by Goodwill Steam Fire Engine Company. The same study concluded, through meetings with all 17 EMS organizations in Berks that provide primary emergency services coverage, that much like the rest of Pennsylvania, local EMS companies are in a budgetary crisis. Increasingly, municipalities are called on to provide more funding to help close this gap in revenue. Municipalities should meet with the local EMS providers to establish an appropriate annual subscription rate per household contracted cost, and each municipality within that EMS provider's service area should commit to equal costs/in-kind services based on this agreement. Where funding is provided, the municipality should require a detailed operational budget for consideration within the timelines of the municipality's budget approval. If an increase in funding is asked, the service provider should substantiate the added expense with a detailed justification report. Quarterly operational and financial updates must be provided to each municipality.

Some of the recommendations and action steps from this study have been included in the goals section of this chapter, which align with the needs of the local EMS agencies that cover this Region.

A number of volunteer-based fire companies serve as the primary responders to the municipalities within this Region. Exeter Township Volunteer Fire Department (Station 25) serves Exeter Township and St. Lawrence Borough. It has two stations located in Reiffton and Stonersville, both privately owned, as well as a training site at 5535 Boyertown Pike, all within Exeter Township. St. Lawrence is also covered by Mt. Penn Fire Company (Station 1), located on the border of St. Lawrence and Mt. Penn Boroughs. Amity Township has Amity Fire Company (Station 49) in the northeast portion of the Township near Amityville and Monarch Fire/Rescue (Station 6) located in the southern part of the Township in Monocacy Station. Amity Fire Company also provides coverage to the southern sector of Douglass and the northern sector covered by Boyertown Area Fire (located to the north of Douglass outside this Region).

These fire companies, like most in Pennsylvania, have continuing concern over adequate numbers of volunteers to allow them to provide necessary fire protection as current members typically age out faster than they are replaced. Fire companies provide mutual assistance to each other in fire emergencies, but like with EMS, it may be necessary for the fire companies and municipalities to work more closely together in the future to assure continued adequate fire protection across municipal borders. Additionally, water planning should involve fire companies in the area to ensure that there will be adequate fire hydrants and volume and pressure of water to provide adequate fire protection in water service areas.



SOLID WASTE

St. Lawrence Borough offers weekly resident curbside trash and recycling pickups. Trash is handled privately by each property owner in all three Townships. However, Amity and Exeter Townships have weekly curbside recycling pickup programs through JP Mascaro, and they have brush recycling within their municipalities. The Delaware County Landfill in Earl Township accepts recycling of glass and cardboard from local residents at no cost. Additionally, Berks County provides several recycling programs to residents at 1316 Hilltop Road Leesport, PA 19533 and hosts recycling events throughout the year. For more information, visit:

www.berkspa.gov/departments/solid-waste-authority

PUBLIC SANITARY SEWER AND WATER FACILITIES

One of the major efforts of any comprehensive plan is to coordinate land use and utility planning, so that future land use patterns reflect the availability of public sewer and water facilities, while assuring that sewer and water planning in the area are not at odds with the goals for future land use.

PUBLIC SANITARY SEWER FACILITIES AND ON-LOT SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Small portions of St. Lawrence and Exeter along their northwestern borders with Lower Alsace township are served by the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority, with the sewage treatment plant located within the Borough. The Authority also serves Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township. The majority of Exeter is served by Pennsylvania American Water located in the southern portion of the Township. PA American is upgrading the system over the course of the past five years, planning approximately \$66 million in investments in the system serving 17,000 residents and businesses of Exeter and surrounding areas. Most of St. Lawrence is served by the St. Lawrence Borough Authority collection system which flows to the PA American plant. Amity and the southern portion of Douglass (as well as portions of Earl and Union Townships) are served by the Amity Township Wastewater Plant. Douglass owns and maintains the collection system within its township, flowing to Amity's treatment plant located at Douglassville. Additionally, a private wastewater treatment plant is located in the Pine Forge area of Douglass serving the Pine Forge Academy, a private boarding educational facility.

The majority of Douglass Township properties as well as a number of the northern properties in Exeter and Amity rely upon individual on-site sewage disposal systems. Public education is paramount to the prevention of groundwater contaminants. While on-lot systems can be very effective at filtering wastewater before it reaches the groundwater, problems can occur when systems are placed too closely together, outlive their useful life, or are improperly installed and maintained. Of importance, property owners must understand the need to pump their systems regularly, typically at least once every three years. While Amity has implemented this through their permitting software, it is recommended that the other townships consider on-site sewage disposal regulations that require residents' systems pumped and inspected regularly.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority serves approximately 3,600 customers located in St. Lawrence, a small portion of Exeter Township, and Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace (outside the study area). The Municipal Authority also maintains the storage facilities, located near their wells in Lower Alsace Township. Douglass has public water supply in the southeastern portion of the Township covering the Douglass Village Modular Home Park and Traprock Business Center; this system is operated by the nearby Pottstown Borough Authority which draws water from the Schuylkill River near Stowe, Montgomery County. The majority of Exeter and Amity residents receive public water service through Pennsylvania-American Water Company. PA American draws water from two local wells as well as two interconnections in Mt. Penn and Reading (RAWA) to serve their population.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Parks, recreation programs, and open space areas support the improvement in the quality of life in an area by preserving natural and cultural amenities for the enjoyment of all residents and providing active and passive recreational opportunities. They also provide opportunities for community residents to interact and thereby strengthen the sense of community. For a comprehensive map of parks, recreation, and open space facilities, click [HERE](#)¹.

In 2009, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) revised their recommendations to create a new dynamic plan based on several factors within a given municipality. This helps tailor a recreation plan that would be more customized particularly to rural municipalities' needs that don't necessarily have uniform and tight population densities such as that within cities and the surrounding areas. NRPA offers a performance survey tool that a municipality can enter metrics such as agency size and budget, jurisdiction population and geography, and compare its performance to other peers. However, in 2024 NRPA reports that in general a typical park and recreation agency offers one park for every 2,386 residents served, with 10.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. For more information on the performance survey tool, refer to

www.nrpa.org/publications-research/ParkMetrics/.



¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>



Recreation Acreage by Population

Municipality	Population*	Acreage**	Acreage/1,000 Residents	NPRA Guidelines***
St. Lawrence	1892	74	39.1	20.1
Exeter	25466	1776	69.7	269.9
Amity	13396	703	52.5	142.0
Douglass	3670	292	79.6	38.9
Total	44424	2845	64.0	470.9

*US 2020 Census **Berks County GIS ***NPRA National Benchmark of 10.6 acres per 1,000 residents, Agency Performance Review 2024

Recreation by Ownership Type

Municipality	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass	Total
State	0	690	0	0	690
County	1	61	0	0	62
Municipal	57	671	630	210	1568
Nonprofit	16	292	69	70	447
School	0	62	4	12	78
Total	74	1776	703	292	2845

Source: BCPC GIS

Using the general guidance offered by NPRA, when combining state, county, municipal, school, the Region as a whole contains over five times the acreage as the NPRA benchmark reported in 2024. However, what works for a given municipality's parks and recreation agency, may not be the right fit for another's as these programs are as diverse as the residents and neighborhoods they serve. While the amount of parkland is important, the distribution of park and programs throughout the municipalities is critical, and special attention should be given to isolated housing developments lacking in amenities such as smaller neighborhood parks nearby within a walkable/bikeable distance. It is recommended that each municipality audit the parks and recreation resources using the performance survey tool above to better understand their community's recreation needs.

Continued efforts are needed to rehabilitate older recreation areas as well, particularly to make sure they meet modern safety standards, to add recreation in underserved higher density areas, and wherever practical, new developments should be required to include pedestrian connections to nearby parks, residential developments, and existing trails to greater increase access to these amenities. Ideally a resident should be able to walk or bicycle to a park that is suitable for informal recreation without having to cross a heavily traveled road within urbanized areas.



Perhaps equally important is the diversification of recreational assets and programming. Instead of each municipality installing the same of one activity at the expense of another, opportunities exist to collaborate amongst each other as well as local school districts and nonprofits to provide a wider variety of recreation options to residents and visitors.

Some of the more prominent recreational facilities in the area include:



Daniel Boone Homestead – The homestead is located on 579 acres of rural historic Exeter countryside. The site interprets the life of local frontiersman Daniel Boone and the history of the Oley Valley. It contains a visitor's center and the Boone House, which was restored and furnished with period-appropriate household items. The Daniel Boone Homestead Associates, a non-profit community-

based organization, supports and assists the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in the operation of the site. In 2021, Exeter Township partnered with Daniel Boone Homestead to develop a master site plan. Exeter has a lease agreement with Friends of Daniel Boone Homestead that the Township provides the maintenance for Pineland Park within the Homestead site.

Exeter Township

Exeter Scenic Trail – The Exeter Scenic Trail runs approximately 2 miles through southern Exeter, providing a connection from the SRT to Neversink Mountain, a 900 acre preserve managed by Berks Nature that is located on the border of Exeter and Lower Alsace, offering hiking and biking opportunities. The Exeter Scenic Trail was recently named a Must-Ride Gravel Bike Trail in Pennsylvania by Visit PA, Pennsylvania's tourism website. Primarily for walking and biking, the trail also gives users boat access to the Schuylkill River.

Exeter Township

Reeser's Landing– In 2023, Schuylkill River Greenway Association obtained Reeser's Landing, and has been pursuing funding to improve launch area similar to those proposed at Ganshaw Park. SRGA has proposed expanded parking, a bicycle-fix-it pad, and an improved launch site. Currently, funding is being pursued, with improvements anticipated in Spring of 2026.

Exeter Township

Trout Run Park – Trout Run Sports Complex is located off the intersection of East and West Neversink Roads. Several sports fields are available there including football, soccer, and baseball. Exeter Township is seeking grant funding to redevelop Trout Run Playground into a recreation resource for users of all abilities. The funding would aid in the installation of accessible play structures, sensory-rich equipment, smooth surfacing for mobility devices, shaded rest areas, and ADA-compliant pathways, drawing concept from the input received by community advocates.

Exeter Township



Amity Community Park – This park is located adjacent to Daniel Boone Middle School. There are two pavilions available to rent and public restroom facilities available here. Amity Community Park offers a wide variety of recreation for all ages and interests from basketball and tennis courts to baseball, soccer, football, and multipurpose fields as well as a walking trail system. A popular recreation destination for Township residents, it is important to maintain and periodically upgrade aging playground equipment and sports fields for future generations continual use.

Amity Township

Lake Drive Park – Lake Drive Park is a 25 acre park between Park Lane and Rosewood Drive. It has two baseball fields with manual scoreboards, two basketball courts, a skateboard park, tennis courts, a playground, a short walking trail, restrooms, and a picnic area with a pavilion.

Amity Township

Monocacy Hill Recreation Area – Monocacy Hill is a 428-acre natural resource area located in Amity Township. Primary recreation at Monocacy Hill includes hiking and educational walks, with activities being offered at no cost to the public by the Monocacy Hill Conservation Association. This area is also open to hunting during appropriate seasons.

Amity Township

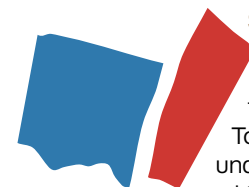


Douglass Township Park – Located on the 15-acre site of the municipal offices, Douglass Township Park contains many active recreational amenities for Township residents including basketball courts, tennis courts, playgrounds, baseball fields, walking trails, pavilions, restroom facilities, and ample parking to accommodate such use. The Pine Forge Athletic Association has partnered with Douglass to provide investments in ballfield lighting, batting cages, and other associated improvements.

Douglass Township

Ganshaw Park – Ganshaw Park is a 6-acre park owned by Douglass along the Schuylkill River. As mentioned above, the Township has recognized the importance of this park and access point to both residents and visitors alike, and as such, has partnered with Schuylkill River Greenways Association (SRGA) to improve the property for visitors. Phase 1 includes improvements to the river access and launch site, parking, bathrooms, and associated stormwater facilities. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026.

Douglass Township



Schuylkill River Trail/Thun Trail – The SRT is a multiuse path managed by the Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area that runs through Amity and Douglass Townships. It currently has improvements underway. This resource, both a recreational and transportation corridor, connects the Region to their neighbors and to various important recreational resources such as Ganshaw Park in Douglass, Morlatton Village in Amity, and Exeter Scenic Trail in Exeter Township; it leads users south to Philadelphia and north to Schuylkill County.

Douglass and Amity Townships

Running mostly parallel to the SRT, the Schuylkill River Water Trail is a National Recreation Trail used by paddlers throughout the Commonwealth with one public access point in Douglass Township (Ganshaw Park) and one in Exeter Township (Reeser's Landing), and two more across the Schuylkill River from the Region in Union Township. Currently underway, Douglass Township has partnered with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association to improve this access located in Ganshaw Park.

For more information on recreation areas, see [Mapping](#)¹.

Energy Conservation & Sustainability

Energy conservation and energy sustainability go hand in hand when planning for the future. Energy conservation is the prevention of the wasteful use of energy. Energy sustainability is energy that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. "Efficiency and conservation measures can help to directly lower consumers' energy bills. Consumers also benefit indirectly when reducing their electricity consumption helps to reduce demand on the electric system. High electricity demand often results in higher costs for generating and transmitting electricity that may be passed on to utility customers." As municipalities plan and consider energy usage and infrastructure, it will be beneficial to consider ways to reduce costs, increase sustainability, and lower the demand on energy infrastructure systems.

*Source <https://www.eia.gov/consumption/>

Renewable and Clean Energy Sources

Harnessing the kinetic energy from wind movement, light energy from the sun, and heat energy from inside the earth can save on energy production and reduce the amount of non-renewable resources needed to create energy. Wind, solar, and geothermal are forms of renewable and clean energy. The use of these renewable and clean energy sources reduces the amount of pollution created from burning non-renewable resources and fossil fuels.

One of the key resources that is available to assist with the planning of renewable energy initiatives is The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). This is a national laboratory of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Efficiency and

Renewable Energy. NREL provides decision support, technical assistance, resources, and tools to help municipalities plan for and implement clean energy solutions.

Building Considerations

Sustainable ("Green") building involves using practices and techniques through all the phases of the development process that minimize and reduce negative environmental impact. The development process includes everything from siting and design, to maintenance, renovation, and demolition. Green buildings reduce negative impacts on human health, minimize air pollution generated during all phases of development, and minimize waste. In addition, they reduce negative impacts by efficiently using energy, water, and other resources. "LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the world's most widely used green building rating system. LEED certification provides a framework for healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving green buildings, which offer environmental, social and governance benefits. [LEED certification](https://www.usgbc.org/projects)³ is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement."

In the region, there are [two LEED projects](#)² (both located in Exeter Township) to note:



Exeter Township School District

Exeter School District is pursuing solar energy development within its schools. Currently, Owatin Creek Elementary School in the district is a LEED Certified Gold project since 2012.



Exeter Commons

Exeter Commons, a shopping center with a large grocery store and department store as anchors was certified in 2014.

¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37fd66d6>

² <https://www.usgbc.org/projects>

³ <https://www.usgbc.org/leed>

Incentives

The increase on energy dependent devices adds into higher energy consumption rates. Incentives help encourage the public to transition from energy demanding habits to energy conserving habits. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the average Pennsylvania family consumes more than 10,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity annually and spends more than \$2,000 per year on energy bills. To mitigate these costs there are renewable energy and energy efficiency financial incentives to help at the residential level.

Through Act 129, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) ensures that electric utilities throughout the state provide energy efficiency and conservation programs to customers. Residential electric energy efficiency measures through this program that are available to residents of the region include those regarding LED lamps and fixtures, energy efficient appliances, HVAC programs, home and online energy efficiency audits, new home constructions, appliance recycling, thermostat upgrades, and insulation/weatherization. Programs are also available to teachers to help develop and disseminate curricula about important issues.

Incentives are also provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) and the Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED). These incentive programs are available for school districts, municipal

authorities, political subdivisions, nonprofit entities, corporations, limited liability companies or partnerships incorporated or registered in Pennsylvania. These incentives include rebate, loan, and grant programs, solar alternative energy credit programs, as well as tax credits and deductions. Energy audits can be conducted by professionals that analyze each municipality's facilities such as administration, public works, or police buildings, recreational facilities, or even fleet vehicles and will review utility bills. They will consider the facility as its own ecosystem analyzing lighting, heating/cooling, insulation, windows, and doors, appliances, and even stormwater facilities searching for signs of wasted energy.

The state provides a cash rebate to consumers that purchase a new plug-in hybrid, plug-in electric, natural gas, propane, or hydrogen fuel cell vehicle through the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate Program. The Plug-In Electric Drive Motor Vehicle Federal Tax Credit is another incentive for those making the switch to an electric vehicle. Fleet electrification incentives are also available through the PA DEP Alternative Fuels Incentive Program and the Alternative Fuels Technical Assistance Program.

GOAL:
Identify and implement regional opportunities for sharing resources: plan for improved facilities.

- 1** **IDENTIFY** opportunities for cooperation among municipalities, local organizations, and school districts in providing facilities and programs to area residents. Identify opportunities and/or needs for regionalization and/or sharing of services amongst, equipment and facilities and determine what efficiencies can be obtained in the provision of services to the region's residents.
- 2** **NOTIFY** police, fire, and EMS personnel of proposed subdivision and land development plans and provide opportunity for their input. Ensure that water-related planning involves fire companies in the area to confirm that there will be adequate fire hydrants and volume and pressure of water to provide adequate fire protection in water service areas.
- 3** **PUBLICIZE** the efforts and accomplishments of the various police, fire, and EMS services in the Region in municipal communications such as newsletters, website, and social media. Maintaining a positive image and goodwill within the community is essential for efficient, safe, and secure emergency response and plays an important role in fundraising efforts for these services.

GOAL:
Help maintain adequate EMS Service through responsible funding and oversight.

- 1** **MUNICIPALITIES** should meet with servicing EMS providers to establish an appropriate annual actual subscription rate/ per household contracted cost including optional in-kind services.
- 2** **WHERE** any public funding is provided, within an EMS service area, there should be a standardized reporting process to report planned and actual staffing of units including the level of service delivery. A budget should be presented to the municipalities no later than October 1 of any year or within the process already established by the municipalities for their own budgets.

GOAL:
Maintain, Improve, and/or
expand sewer and water
facilities.

1

THE MUNICIPALITIES, should maintain an up-to-date Sewage Facilities Plan (Act 537). Direct development of public sewer and water facilities away from areas proposed to remain rural and in open space instead focusing on the extension, maintenance, and improvement of facilities in areas of existing services and adjacent to current services

2

CONTINUE the implementation of an On-Lot Disposal Ordinance in place that promotes the maintenance of on-lot septic systems. Encourage connecting areas with malfunctioning on-lot systems, areas with contaminated water supplies, and small privately owned sewer or water systems to existing sewer or water systems where economically and physically possible.

3

REQUIRE that development projects demonstrate adequate capacity that will not adversely affect existing developments' water supplies throughout the Region

1

UPDATE outdated parks and recreation plans. This can potentially be a joint effort to better inventory, program, and distribute a more diverse variety of activities and amenities throughout the Region at a lower cost to residents. Seek funding jointly and/ or support each other as partners to demonstrate greater demands beyond municipal boundaries in particular for larger, more regionally significant recreation projects.

2

WHEN APPROPRIATE, require developers to provide open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation; to coordinate open space systems among adjoining developments; and provide both visual and physical access to the open space system. Otherwise, require fees in lieu to implement recreation, park, and open space plans.

3

CONTINUE to support and promote partners' recreational areas and grow potential recreation economy throughout the Region, including spaces like Daniel Boone Homestead, Monocacy Hill Recreation Area, and Schuylkill River Trail.

4

PLAN for the increased use of new technologies in recreation areas such as e-bikes, Electric Vehicle charging stations, Wi-Fi connectivity, mobile app-based recreation games or QR code-based activities or information in order to expand services, increase safety, and attract and retain new generations of visitors into the future.

5

CONTINUE to expand upon existing programming and resources in order to provide diverse recreation for all through efforts such as a planned boat launch in Ganshawny Park in Douglass, all abilities playground at Trout Run in Exeter, and the addition of an environmental education center at Monocacy Hill in Amity.

GOAL:
Maintain, Evaluate,
Promote, and Collaborate
together to offer a variety
of recreation facilities and
programs accessible to all
area residents.

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



HOUSING PROFILE

The municipalities within the SEAD region all have a stable housing stock with slightly below average vacancy rates according to the US Decennial Census taken in 2020. A healthy vacancy rate is between 5–8% generally. Under 5% can indicate that there is a greater demand for housing than supply offered. As demand rises, often prices rise as well, and which could also make it difficult for tenants to afford their rental units. Conversely, too high of a vacancy rate, and a community risks an increase blight as unoccupied homes potentially fall into disrepair.

	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass	Plan Region	Berks
2010 Total Housing Units	763	10,051	4,545	1,478	16,837	164,827
2020 Total Housing Units	794	9,977	5,045	1,589	17,405	170,742
2010 Owner Occupied Units	70.4%	86.2%	84.4%	85.3%	81.6%	71.7%
2020 Owner Occupied Units	67.6%	81.8%	78.6%	86.2%	78.6%	69.7%
2010 Renter Occupied Units	29.6%	13.8%	15.6%	14.7%	18.4%	28.3%
2020 Renter Occupied Units	32.4%	15.2%	21.4%	13.8%	20.7%	30.3%
2010 Vacant Housing Units	21	385	250	144	800	10,471
2020 Vacant Housing Units	25	362	243	71	701	9,257
2010 % Vacant Housing Units	2.8%	3.8%	5.5%	9.7%	5.5%	6.4%
2020 % Vacant Housing Units	3.1%	3.6%	4.8%	4.5%	4.0%	5.4%

Data Sources: 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses

No significant housing problems have been identified in this Region. However, Berks County along with most communities across the nation is experiencing a housing shortage that is likely to attract potential residents from out of the study area to settle here. Continual analysis and adjustments to municipal subdivision and land development and zoning ordinances in response to local housing supply and demand will ensure diverse and adequate future housing choices will prevail. We recommend concentrating the direction of growth to infill redevelopment within current and proposed sewer service areas.

The makeup of single-family housing in the SEAD region skews higher than the County average; St. Lawrence Borough's makeup of 52.6% 1-unit detached and 24% 1-unit attached mostly closely resembles the County average of 56.3% and 22.8%. However, the housing stock in the Region is still diverse, providing a variety of choices from mobile homes to apartment communities to large lot rural housing.

Profile of Housing Characteristics								
Type	St. Lawrence		Exeter		Amity		Douglass	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
HOUSING OCCUPANCY								
Total housing units	739		10,005		4,859		1,619	
Occupied housing units	718	97.2%	9,531	95.3%	4,712	97.0%	1,580	97.6%
Vacant housing units	21	2.8%	474	4.7%	147	3.0%	39	2.4%
1-unit, detached	389	52.6%	7,400	74.0%	3,840	79.0%	1,418	87.6%
1-unit, attached	177	24.0%	1,386	13.9%	273	5.6%	19	1.2%
2 units	33	4.5%	150	1.5%	25	0.5%	49	3.0%
3 or 4 units	10	1.4%	378	3.8%	61	1.3%	45	2.8%
5 to 9 units	14	1.9%	211	2.1%	88	1.8%	3*	0.0%
10 to 19 units	47	6.4%	94	0.9%	125	2.6%	0	0.0%
20 or more units	69	9.3%	58	0.6%	228	4.7%	0	0.0%
Mobile home	0	0.0%	328	3.3%	219	4.5%	88	5.4%

US Census American Community Survey 2017–2022 DP04

*Douglass Township

With a need for a variety of reliable quality housing stock, not just in this Region, but nationwide exists. If residents intend to continue raising generations of their families locally, they will need affordable places to live. For the Borough, most of the residential development proposed would likely be small scale infill and redevelopment using already-existing infrastructure. Infill development should match the density and character of the neighborhood; if the infill lot is nonconforming, consideration could be given to reducing the setback requirements to the average setback of the surrounding home lots (Encourage Infill Development Sustainable Development Code). Infill development will allow more housing for future generations to live locally while reducing the tax burden of residential properties through connections to existing infrastructure. Infill in the Townships also reduces suburban sprawl in the more rural areas to the north, providing places to live in already-developed neighborhoods primarily in close proximity to the US 422 corridor.

All four municipalities should consider adopting ordinances that address accessory dwelling units particularly in low density residential areas. An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone (i.e., detached) single-family home. The secondary unit, also known as in-law suites and granny flats, can be converted portions of the existing homes, standalone accessory structures, or portions converted of existing

accessory structures. ADUs can lower housing costs for both the homeowners and the tenants and therefore make very attractive housing options to those residents who would like to age in place in a multigenerational family environment while maintaining their privacy and independence.

TAX BASES

From the perspective of municipal administration, the Region's tax base drives the ability to invest in amenities, infrastructure, and professional services that the residents rely on and expect. From a resident's perspective, a given Region's tax burden influences their decision on where they move and how long they stay in a given area, whether they invest in properties, and where they develop businesses. The existing and future real estate of the municipalities provides both opportunities and constraints for maintaining and attracting homeowners, businesses, and jobs. Overall, the key to economic stability or growth is to optimize the tax base by making every acre of land as productive as it can be without compromising the community's wants and needs and without infringing on the Region's characteristic natural and environmental resources that have made this community such a desirable place to live, work, and play.

SEAD Workforce								
	St. Lawrence		Exeter		Amity		Douglass	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Resident Workers	876		13,085		6,914		1,700	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	3	0.3%	20	0.2%	21	0.3%	12	0.7%
Mining, quarrying, and oil gas extraction	9	1.0%	12	0.1%	0	0.0%	49	2.9%
Construction	62	7.1%	628	4.8%	481	7.0%	127	7.5%
Manufacturing	138	15.8%	1,722	13.2%	893	12.9%	294	17.3%
Wholesale Trade	21	2.4%	230	1.8%	180	2.6%	26	1.5%
Retail Trade	117	13.4%	1,855	14.2%	812	11.7%	438	25.8%
Transportation and warehousing	22	2.5%	434	3.3%	188	2.7%	50	2.9%
Utilities	17	1.9%	246	1.9%	99	1.4%	79	4.6%
Information	2	0.2%	208	1.6%	120	1.7%	21	1.2%
Finance and insurance	62	7.1%	681	5.2%	348	5.0%	107	6.3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	19	2.2%	303	2.3%	330	4.8%	11	0.6%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	42	4.8%	1,180	9.0%	746	10.8%	16	0.9%
Management of companies and enterprises	3	0.3%	12	0.1%	37	0.5%	0	0.0%
Administrative/support and waste management	28	3.2%	497	3.8%	181	2.6%	11	0.6%
Educational Services	81	9.2%	1,183	9.0%	617	8.9%	74	4.4%
Health care and social assistance	94	10.7%	2,068	15.8%	998	14.1%	181	10.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	8	0.9%	135	1.0%	41	0.6%	0	0.0%
Accommodation and food services	50	5.7%	525	4.0%	246	3.6%	93	5.5%
Other services, except public administration	58	6.6%	779	6.0%	405	5.9%	81	4.8%
Public administration	40	4.6%	367	2.8%	191	2.8%	30	1.8%

Like much of Berks, the majority of the SEAD Region works in manufacturing and healthcare as well as a large proportion of retail employees. With the majority of residents' commutes exceeding 15 minutes, data suggests the majority of residents work outside of the Region. Approximately a third of Amity and Douglass residents travel over 35 minutes to work, suggesting that population largely works outside of Berks County.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK				
	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
Less than 10 minutes	14.0%	8.9%	5.8%	12.0%
10 to 14 minutes	8.8%	12.1%	5.3%	12.6%
15 to 19 minutes	13.0%	21.6%	9.4%	10.8%
20 to 24 minutes	16.0%	19.0%	17.1%	8.5%
25 to 29 minutes	14.3%	8.6%	13.6%	7.1%
30 to 34 minutes	13.4%	8.7%	10.9%	15.5%
35 to 44 minutes	5.4%	8.1%	10.2%	17.8%
45 to 59 minutes	6.0%	5.4%	12.5%	11.1%
60 or more minutes	9.1%	7.8%	15.2%	4.7%

US Census American Community Survey 2017-2022 S0802

Agriculture and Industry

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF TAX BASE BY CATEGORY									
	School	Municipality	Residential	Mobile Homes	Lot	Industrial	Commercial	Agriculture	Land
2023	Boyertown Area	Douglass	62.1%	9.3%	0.7%	6.6%	11.2%	9.6%	0.4%
	Daniel Boone Area	Amity	83.4%	0.5%	0.3%	2.3%	11.1%	2.1%	0.2%
	Exeter Township	Exeter	77.7%	0.9%	0.5%	1.7%	17.2%	2.0%	0.1%
	Exeter Township	St. Lawrence	76.6%	0.0%	0.5%	2.0%	20.7%	0.1%	0.0%
2013	Boyertown Area	Douglass	71.2%	0.8%	1.1%	6.6%	9.8%	9.8%	0.8%
	Daniel Boone Area	Amity	83.6%	0.4%	0.9%	2.1%	10.5%	2.1%	0.4%
	Exeter Township	Exeter	78.5%	0.6%	0.8%	1.5%	16.3%	2.1%	0.1%
	Exeter Township	St. Lawrence	74.7%	0.0%	0.5%	1.9%	22.6%	0.2%	0.0%
2003	Boyertown Area	Douglass	73.2%	–	1.6%	4.4%	9.0%	10.8%	1.0%
	Daniel Boone Area	Amity	81.4%	–	2.6%	1.1%	11.4%	2.9%	0.7%
	Exeter Township	Exeter	77.2%	–	1.5%	1.0%	18.0%	2.2%	0.1%
	Exeter Township	St. Lawrence	73.1%	–	0.5%	1.5%	24.4%	0.2%	0.1%
% Change 03-23	Boyertown Area	Douglass	11.0%	–	0.9%	–2.2%	–2.3%	1.2%	0.6%
	Daniel Boone Area	Amity	–2.1%	–	2.2%	–1.2%	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%
	Exeter Township	Exeter	–0.5%	–	1.0%	–0.6%	0.08%	0.2%	0.0%
	Exeter Township	St. Lawrence	–3.5%	–	0.0%	–0.5%	3.7%	0.1%	0.1%

Source: Pennsylvania State Tax Equalization Board Market Value Reports 2003, 2013, 2023

Agriculture still plays an important role in the identity of this Region, especially in Douglass Township where nearly 10% of its tax base is contributed by agricultural operations. Douglass also has a sizeable tax base from 6.6% of industrial, 9.3% mobile and manufactured homes and 11.2% commercial development, and commercial comprises the vast majority of St. Lawrence's non-residential tax base. The Townships each have less than 20% of their tax base represented by commercial use. However, the US 422 corridor offers a number of redevelopment and infill development opportunities.

Residents also require quality jobs preferably nearby that will also provide services to the community to continue to maintain the quality of life characterized in this Region. In the northern

reaches of this Region, topographic and infrastructure constraints limit commercial and industrial development. However, there is potentially room for growth in agriculture-supporting industries and ecological and agricultural tourism. In the US 422 corridor, potential for growth and infill exists. In the [Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update adopted in January of 2020](#)¹, all three Townships have areas along this important transportation corridor that were identified as potential Economic Development Areas (EDAs). These parcels neighbor current industry and have nearby access to infrastructure already in place. They leave room for expansion of the existing businesses and new businesses alike while minimizing impact on the more rural areas of the community.

¹ <https://www.berkspa.gov/departments/planning-commission/plan-topics/economic-development/berks-county-comprehensive-plan-2030-update>

GOAL:
Support smart housing opportunities as a component of economic growth particularly in areas with reuse and infill opportunities.

1

CONTINUE to support construction of a diverse housing stock to meet community demands, particularly with housing rehabilitation, infill development, and the addition of 55+ communities by examining current zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to ensure regulations align with that of nearby existing development. Direct housing to areas with existing or nearby infrastructure to minimize cost and impact to the surrounding communities.

2

PROMOTE adaptive reuse and revitalization efforts for vacant commercial and industrial sites such as the Exeter Promenade.

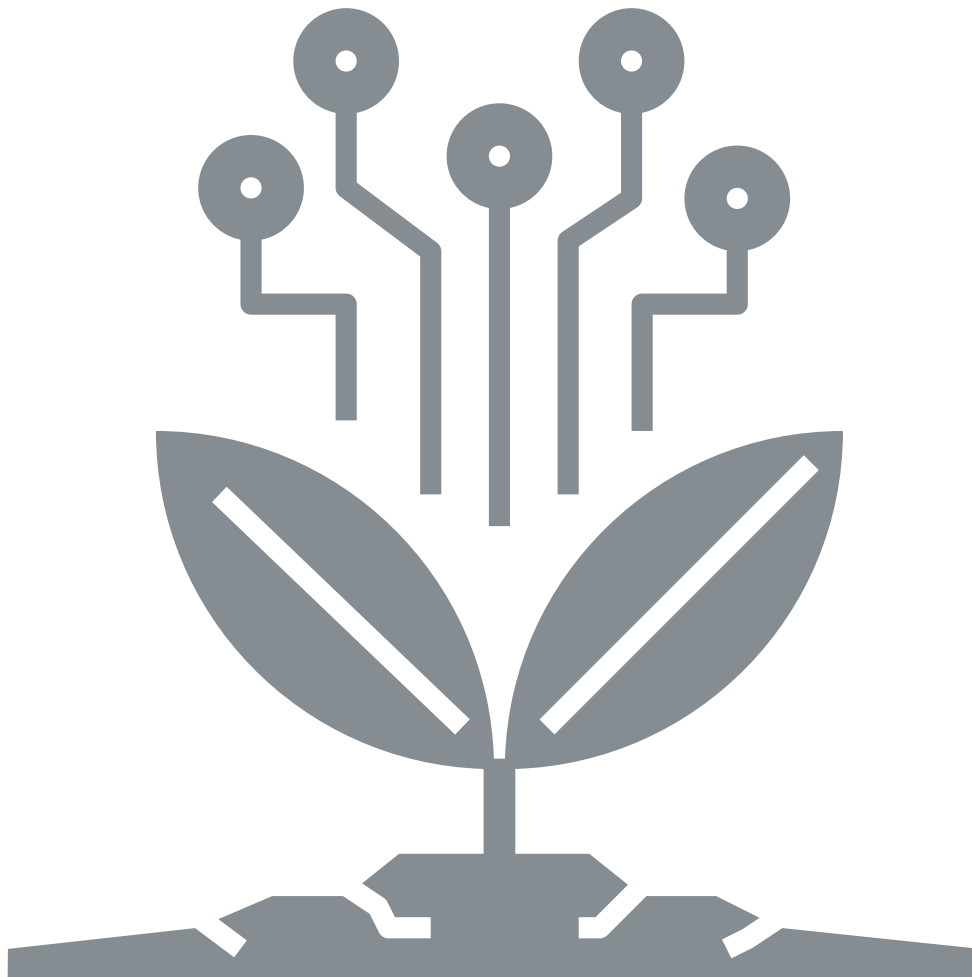
GOAL:
Continue to support local area farmers as economic drivers for the Region.

1

EXPLORE options for strengthening protection of agricultural resources in the Region, particularly in Amity and Douglass Townships, through effective agricultural zoning. Exeter Township should support this effort by providing feedback regarding their own effective agricultural zoning district.

2

FOSTER agribusiness entrepreneurship by permitting a range of farm-based businesses. Many farmers cannot earn a full-time living on their farm work; to encourage the continuation of farming, the Region's Zoning Ordinances should offer reasonable flexibility to farmers on larger tracts to have small businesses. These businesses could include small engine repair, sharpening services, wood crafting, farm equipment repair, sale of seeds and fertilizers and similar activities. These activities can also be useful to encourage the repair and reuse of old barns.



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

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. It suggests a roadmap for Commercial, Industrial, and Residential Development/Re-development/Revitalization so as to provide balanced economic benefits for Residents, Employers, Employees, Visitors, and Developers alike. The core purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to manage the amount, intensity, character, and timing of development.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following describes land use categories, as shown on the Future Land Use Plan Maps. The Future Land Use section of this Plan is not a zoning map nor does it change the zoning of a municipality. In most cases, these categories are intended to generally relate to zoning districts providing guidance for future regulations.

THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN IS PRIMARILY INTENDED TO:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) protect existing residential neighborhoods | d) avoid serious traffic congestion and safety problems as the Region continues to grow |
| b) moderate the rate and type of housing construction to avoid overloading the public-school system, roads, utilities, and groundwater supplies while addressing the community's present growth needs | e) promote new business development in appropriate locations, including the strengthening and revitalization of older business areas, with careful attention towards the types of businesses allowed in areas near homes |
| c) coordinate development across municipal borders, including municipalities that are not part of the St. Lawrence Exeter Amity Douglass Joint Comprehensive Plan | f) make sure development properly relates to the natural features of the land, particularly to protect steeply sloped areas, major water supplies and creek valleys. |

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 Maps. Additional GIS data such as public water and sewer areas, slopes, floodplains, tax parcels, and preservation 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, conservation areas, recreation, as well as areas where industrial and commercial development should occur. The results are shown on Figures 3 –4 at the end of this Chapter as well as online [HERE](#)¹.

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 eleven (11) categories:

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Mixed Residential / Commercial
- Agriculture
- Rural Conservation
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Recreation

Future Land Use in St Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, Douglass Joint Planning Area, 2025										
Future Land Use	St Lawrence		Exeter		Amity		Douglass		Joint Planning Area	
	# Acres	% of Area	# Acres	% of Area	# Acres	% of Area	# Acres	% of Area	# Acres	% of Area
Low Density Residential	74	12.8%	2,676	0.0%	3,612	30.7%	3,459	42.5%	9,821	27.1%
Medium Density Residential	135	23.4%	1,482	9.4%	1,938	16.5%	2	0.0%	3,557	9.8%
High Density Residential	93	16.1%	1,307	8.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1,400	3.9%
Mobile Home Park	0	0.0%	125	0.8%	104	0.9%	96	1.2%	325	0.9%
Mixed Residential / Commercial	50	8.7%	0	0.0%	144	1.2%	260	3.2%	454	1.3%
Agriculture	0	0.0%	3,127	19.9%	1,659	14.1%	2,646	32.5%	7,432	20.5%
Rural Conservation	45	7.8%	2,588	16.5%	1,177	10.0%	349	4.3%	4,159	11.5%
Commercial	27	4.7%	1,090	6.9%	2,300	19.6%	167	2.1%	3,584	9.9%
Industrial	16	2.8%	1,111	7.1%	0	0.0%	515	6.3%	1,642	4.5%
Public / Institutional	90	15.6%	500	3.2%	124	1.1%	382	4.7%	1,096	3.0%
Recreation	47	8.1%	1,706	10.9%	692	5.9%	269	3.3%	2,714	7.5%
Total	577	100.0%	15,712	100.0%	11,750	100.0%	8,145	100.0%	36,184	100.0%

¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/66d1542fbaa64a63a398cd9f37d66d6>

The following describes the eleven (11) land use categories portrayed in the Future Land Use Plan:



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 depending on the municipality. With central water and sewage services, a lot size of approximately ½ acre to 1/3 acre would be appropriate in most areas.

The Low-Density Residential designation accounts for approximately 27.0% or 9,769 acres of the planning area. It is the most widely spread use throughout the Region, mostly due to tricky challenging topography and lack of sewer and water infrastructure in parts of the Region. It is found in part in every municipality represented in this study.



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 4 to 5 homes per acre would 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.

The Medium Density Residential category encompasses approximately 3,628 acres or 10.0% of the land use within the region.



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 to 12 homes per acre) could be appropriate in some instances with careful consideration if the housing was limited to persons aged 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 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.

High Density Residential makes up 1,393 acres or 3.8% of the land area in this Region. It is appropriate to locate this type of development in areas already served by existing or proposed infrastructure particularly by use of infill development and redevelopment.



Mobile Home Park

Mobile home parks can be considered a high-density type of residential development and can be developed at the density described above. Because of the small down payment and low monthly payments associated with purchasing a mobile home, along with the inherent mobility of mobile home living it is considered a desirable option for some, especially low-income populations. Careful consideration should be given when locating and regulating mobile home parks within a specific area.

Mobile home parks are designated on 325 acres or 0.9% of the total planning area of the Region.



Mixed Residential / Commercial

This category is intended to provide for a mix of light businesses and a mix of housing types. These areas should provide for retail stores, offices, personal services, day care centers, banks, exercise clubs and similar uses. The intent is to prohibit the heaviest commercial uses that are most likely to spur demolition or create nuisances for neighbors, such as 24-hour convenience stores, gas stations, vehicle repair, adult bookstores, restaurants with drive-through service and vehicle sales.

In the Borough and older villages, development should be encouraged that complements, rather than detracts from, the existing character of historic areas. In older areas, new buildings should be placed with setbacks from the road/street that are like nearby older buildings. To the maximum extent feasible, parking should be located to the rear or side of buildings. If desired, the Traditional Neighborhood provisions of the State Planning Code could be used to require that new construction be consistent with existing buildings (such as requiring front porches for new homes).

In the planning area this designation encompasses just 786 acres or 2.2% of the total land area. This land use designation has potential for smart growth along the US 422/422B corridor where current infrastructure is most likely to support a denser development that often characterizes this type of use.



Agriculture

The need for agricultural preservation and methods to achieve it are described in the Natural Features and Agricultural Conservation section of this Plan. The Region's history has its roots partly in agriculture, and agribusiness is another important facet of the Region's economy that should be considered when addressing future growth.

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 its operations, and preferably should be upwind from agricultural activity.

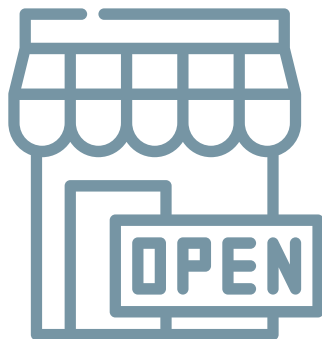
Areas designated for agriculture cover 7,432 acres of land contained within the three Townships. This equates to 20.5% of the land being utilized for some form of agricultural production. It is recommended that Amity and Douglass Townships consider adopting policies to support and protect agriculture in their municipalities.



Rural Conservation

This category is intended to emphasize conservation of important natural features. This area is not proposed to be served by central sewage systems. 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 agriculture, 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.

Rural Conservation accounts for over 4,159 acres or 11.5% of the region's total acreage and is found in all four municipalities. This designation also contains some agricultural activity but typically does not have agricultural zoning within those areas.



Commercial

This category is intended to provide for a wide range of commercial development. As opposed to the Mixed Residential / Commercial areas described earlier in this chapter, these areas should provide opportunities for uses such as gas stations, vehicle sales and drive-thru restaurants. A careful set of standards are needed to require coordinated traffic access among different uses. In most cases, these areas are not adjacent to residential development.

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.

9% or a total of 3,262 acres of the region includes this Commercial designation, much of this designation centered along SR 0422 across the four municipalities as well as Limekiln Road in Amity Township.



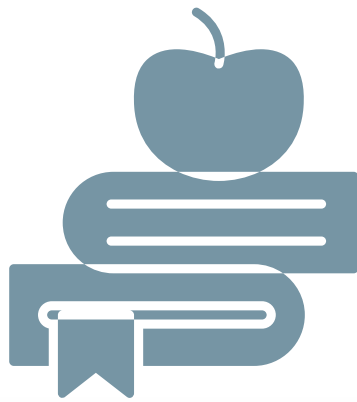
Industrial

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 supervisors/borough council.

Because this plan involves multiple municipalities, it will not be necessary for each municipality to provide for all types of industrial uses. It is recommended that the heavier industrial uses be concentrated around the existing industrial areas within the region.

A high-quality setting will help to attract additional desirable types of business development and higher paying types of jobs. In newer industrial areas, a set of site design regulations should be used to promote light industrial/office parks in a well-landscaped campus-like environment. Truck parking and outdoor storage areas should be required and should be screened from view from roads. The majority of the first 30 feet along a road should be landscaped, with truck loading docks and truck parking located to the side or rear of buildings.

Approximately 1,639 acres or 4.5% of the region's total land area is reserved for Industrial use.



Public / Institutional

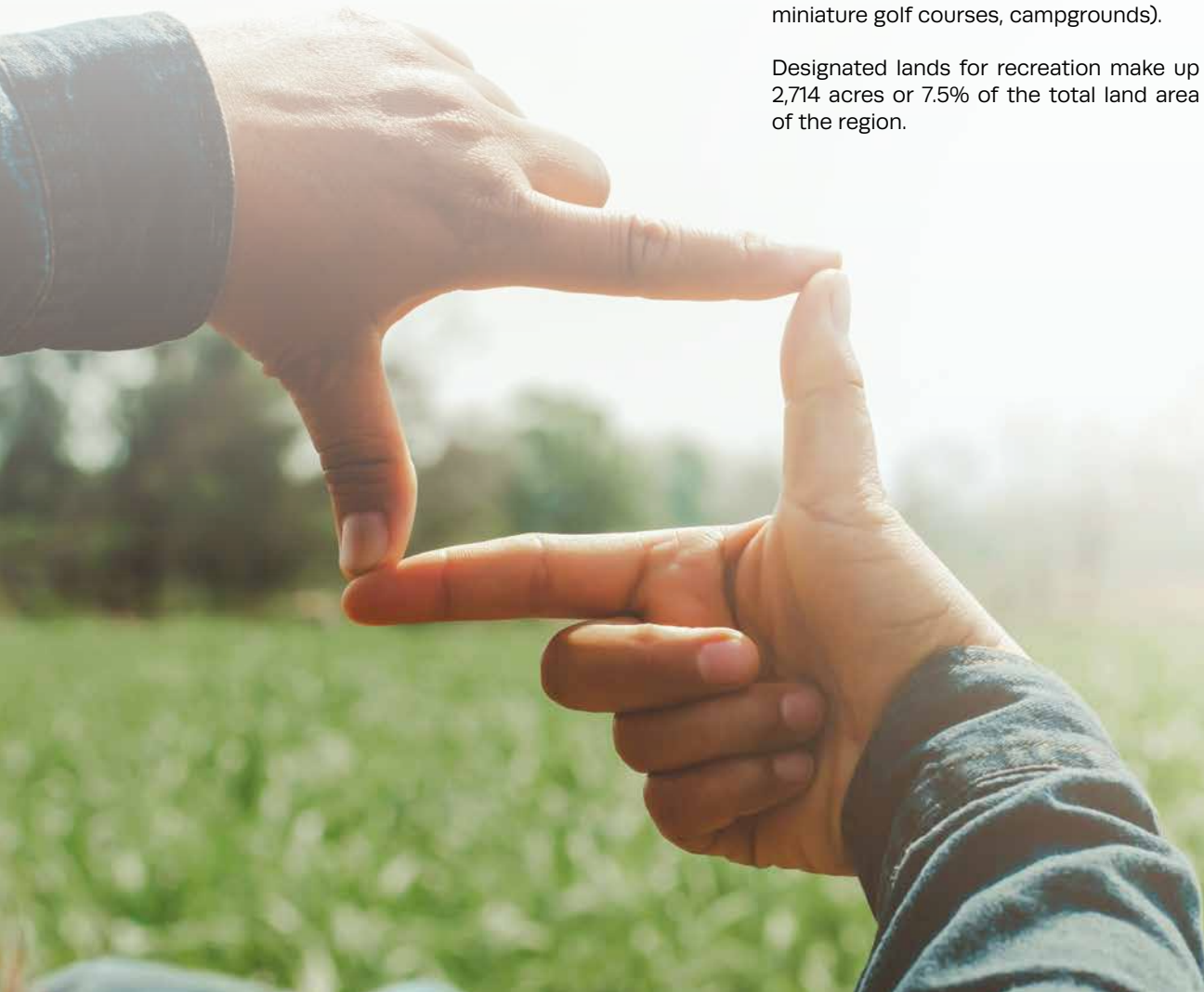
This category recognizes existing large public, semi-public and institutional uses, such as hospitals, schools, and municipal buildings. A total of 1,076 acres or 3.0% are designated as Public/Institutional within the planning area.



Recreation

Recreation land provides space and facilities for people to engage in active and passive recreation activities. These include playgrounds, parkland, trails, 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, campgrounds).

Designated lands for recreation make up 2,714 acres or 7.5% of the total land area of the region.



Recommendations for Future Development

1

Extend the best features of older development into newer development.

Consideration should be given to strongly encouraging forms of “traditional neighborhood development.” This involves extending the best features of the older areas into new neighborhoods, especially as development occurs in and around St. Lawrence Borough. As discussed later in this Chapter, this concept also involves making sure that development or redevelopment of lots within older neighborhoods occurs in a way that fits within the “urban fabric.” Traditional neighborhood development primarily involves the following:

- Street trees could be planted to eventually provide a canopy of shade over streets where appropriate. Studies show that mature street trees can increase the value of homes up to 10 percent. If it is not appropriate to have shade trees in the right-of-way, they can be required immediately outside of the right-of-way.
- Requiring that new streetlights meet a certain design standard that is similar to older styles of streetlights.
- Sidewalks should be provided. There should be an orientation to pedestrians, with an ability to walk or bicycle to stores, schools and parks. Overly wide residential streets and intersections should be avoided to discourage speeding and to make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street.
- A modest density should be encouraged that is similar to the typical development that occurred during the 1930s through 1940s. This density (such as 5 to 8 homes per acre) should make best use of available land, while avoiding overly dense development and parking problems.
- Whenever practical, parking should be located to the rear or side of buildings, so that the front yard can be landscaped.

If rear access to garages is not practical, then garages should enter onto the side of homes whenever possible, particularly on corner lots. If a front-entrance garage is proposed, it should be designed so that it is not an overly prominent part of the street. For example, a one lane driveway can pass along the side of a house and then widen to enter a two-car garage that is setback from the front of the house. “Snout” houses should be avoided that have a front entrance garage as the home’s most prominent feature.

Care is needed to discourage new twin and townhouse development that have numerous driveways entering directly onto a street from the front. Garage doors should not be an overly prominent part of the views of housing from the front. Where garages and parking cannot be avoided in the front yard, larger lot widths should be required to make sure that there is green space in the front yard. Regulations are needed to make sure that the majority of the front yards of housing developments are not covered by paving and parking problems.

- Buildings should be placed relatively close to the street, with front or side porches, to encourage interaction among neighbors. On a corner lot, a side porch can have the same effect.



This concept can be used to maintain the character of older residential areas, especially within areas within St. Lawrence Borough. For example, driveways can be required to access onto an alley or side street where it is available, as opposed to having a front garage and driveway. This design avoids conflicts between sidewalks and vehicles backing into the street and allows the entire curbside to be available for on-street parking. Otherwise, new driveways may remove as many parking spaces as they create.

New buildings can be required to have a maximum setback from the street that is similar to other buildings on the block. New buildings can also be required to include front porches. Front porches encourage interaction among neighbors, which builds more of a community spirit.

Most new parking can be required to be placed to the rear or side of the main building on the lot, which makes the building and not parked cars the most visible feature along the street.

New street trees can be required by a zoning ordinance as part of the construction of any new principal building, instead of only being required for new subdivisions. Neighborhood character can also be established with older styles of streetlights and street name signs.

Under the State Planning Code, a municipality can require some of these features in zoning ordinances, or a municipality could offer density incentives for this type of traditional development.

2

Traffic Access Control

If traffic access onto a major road is properly managed, the road will be able to safely handle large volumes of traffic. However, if a road combines a large number of business driveways entering a road at many locations, there will be right-hand turns and left-hand turns at many locations. The constant stopping and starting from these turns greatly affect the smooth flow of vehicles and create safety hazards. This is known as “strip” commercial development.

At best, intense business development should be concentrated in well-planned developments with internal roads that access a major road with a traffic signal and turn lanes. Where a traffic signal is not warranted at the present time, there should still be a plan for where traffic signals are intended to be built in the future. This will allow driveways and street intersections to be directed towards those intersections so that the traffic signal will be well-placed in the future. Where traffic signals are not appropriate, adjacent commercial uses should have shared driveways and interconnected parking lots. The interconnected parking lots are particularly valuable so that a person can visit more than one adjacent business without having to enter and re-enter a major road.

3

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)

This concept should be considered as a voluntary option in the Zoning Ordinances of the municipalities. TDRs offer incentives for private developers to pay to preserve land. If a developer of one tract of land pays an owner of another tract to permanently preserve their land, then the developer could receive approval to build at a higher density on the developer's tract. The tract that receives the higher density would need to be in an area that the municipality has designated as being suitable for a higher density. The tract that would be permanently preserved would need to be in an area that the municipality has targeted for preservation. The developer and the owner of the open land would negotiate on their own to determine how much the developer pays to the other landowner for the preservation.

This method allows development to be shifted from locations where preservation is desired to allow a higher density on other tracts in a municipality that are well suited for development. The municipality would then approve the development at a higher density at the same time as a conservation easement went into effect to preserve the other land. The preserved land would remain privately owned but could never be developed. The preserved land could be re-sold and could be used for agriculture or certain open space uses. For example, this process might allow preservation of land in the Rural Conservation area, in return for allowing a higher density in a Low Density Residential or Medium Density Residential area. Or density might be transferred from one part of a Rural Conservation area to another part of the Rural Conservation area. The number of homes that could be transferred from one tract to another would be based upon a “Yield Plan.” This sketch plan would show how many homes would have been permitted on the tract that is to be preserved. Once the township accepts this Yield Plan, that number of homes could be transferred from one tract to another tract. However, there would still be limits on the density of the tract being developed to make sure that it is not excessive.

TDR can also be used in combination with commercial development. For example, for every housing unit that is transferred from one area of a municipality, an additional amount of building coverage or impervious coverage could be allowed in a business district.



Currently, Douglass Township has TDR provisions within their zoning ordinance.

4

Work to Preserve Open Space in New Development

Throughout the nation, there is increased emphasis in permanently preserving important open spaces as part of new development. This concept has been promoted by the Natural Lands Trust and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources using the term “Conservation Design” development. This Plan uses the term “Open Space Development.”

Attractive incentives are needed so that any development of the large open tracts of land available in any given municipality would be developed with substantial areas of preserved open space (such as 35 to 70 percent), as opposed to standard “cookie-cutter” type lots.

The intent is to design development in a manner that conserves the important natural, scenic, and historic features of a site. Large percentages of a tract are permanently preserved in open space. In comparison, “Conventional Subdivisions” typically involve very little or no open space preservation. Conventional Subdivisions are also known as “Cookie Cutter Subdivisions” because every lot is typically the same size and shape, regardless of the features of the land.

Advantages of Open Space Developments – Based upon the work of the Natural Lands Trust, the following are some of the major advantages of Open Space Development:

- **Important natural features can be preserved.** Regulations and incentives should direct buildings away from steep slopes, wetlands, waterways, and other important natural features. As a result, homes are placed on portions of the tract that are most environmentally suitable for development – as opposed to being evenly spread across the land. Large contiguous areas can remain in woods and other natural vegetation – which are important as wildlife corridors. Thick natural vegetation can be preserved along creeks – which is essential to filter out eroded soil and other pollutants from runoff before it enters the creek. This vegetation along creeks is also important to maintain high quality fishing habitats.

In comparison, if an entire tract is divided into lots, it is likely to mostly be in mowed grass which is a “mono-culture” that does not have the same environmental benefits.

With open space preservation, stormwater runoff can be managed in a more natural manner that encourages recharge into the groundwater. This may negate the need to build extensive stormwater systems which are costly to build and maintain.

- **Recreational opportunities can be increased.** Open Space Developments typically include attractive areas for walking, jogging, cross-country skiing and nature study. In some cases, active recreation facilities can be included. These open spaces can also increase interaction among neighbors.
- **Developers can achieve lower costs** for grading, lengths of roads, lengths of utilities and other improvements.

Developers may also be able to save time and money by avoiding wetland alterations and waterway crossings.

Open Space Developments can provide the flexibility in layout to move homes off of steep slopes, which are more expensive to build upon. Avoiding steep slopes can also reduce the need for blasting.

By allowing flexibility in placement of buildings, it is easier to find suitable sites for septic systems.

- **Reliable central water and sewage services** can be extended. It is usually uneconomical to provide central water and sewage services with lot sizes of 2 acres or larger. However, if homes are clustered on a tract, then it is often possible and/or necessary to provide central water and sewage services.

Central sewage service avoids the threat of groundwater contamination from failing malfunctioning septic systems. Central water service avoids the risks of well water contamination from various sources.

Open Space Development can also occur with a design that allows homes to be “hidden in the woods” and in clusters that resemble a rural village, while allowing most of the farmland to be preserved.

The following major policies should be emphasized to encourage Open Space Developments:

- **Strong incentives and disincentives** are needed to encourage open space preservation in new development. It typically is not sufficient to allow the same density for an Open Space Development as for a conventional subdivision. This is because developers prefer to build what has been successful in the past, as opposed to trying new concepts. Also, developers may feel (often inaccurately) that the homes on larger lots may have a higher market value than homes on smaller lots with open space. Therefore, density bonuses are needed for open space preservation. A community needs to trade-off a modestly increased number of dwelling units in return for substantial open space preservation.
- The process for approval of an Open Space Development should not be much more burdensome or time-consuming than the process for a Conventional Subdivision. Where practical, the process to gain approval for a desirable type of development should be easier than the process for a Conventional Subdivision. Discipline is needed in writing Open Space Development standards to make sure that they are not overly restrictive. If Open Space Development standards are too detailed or too extensive, they may not allow enough flexibility for a good design. If the standards get in the way of a developer’s marketing plans or cause excessive costs, a developer may choose to do a Conventional Subdivision.
- Proper standards are needed to make sure that the preserved open space is well-located and improved so that it serves important public functions. In many cases, mature woods, steep slopes, and creek valleys should simply be preserved in their natural state. In other cases, the open spaces may be intended for active recreation. In still other cases, trees should be planted in the open spaces and trails should be installed. The key is to avoid a process in which the “open space” is simply the land that is left over after the most economical set of lots and roads are laid out. Narrow strips of open space should be avoided unless they would preserve a scenic tree line or provide an important trail link.

Currently, Exeter Township has provisions for open space developments written into their zoning ordinance. Douglass and Amity Townships as well as St. Lawrence Borough also have open space guidelines in their ordinance under “cluster development”.

5

Strengthen Older Residential Areas

It is extremely important that the older areas of the Region remain strong and viable business and residential areas. This includes the older areas of St. Lawrence Borough and the Jacksonwald, Reiffon, and Amityville villages in Exeter and Amity Townships. The best way to control sprawl is to make sure that older areas remain healthy and desirable places in which to live and conduct business.

This section recommends actions to stabilize and improve older residential neighborhoods. Stable neighborhoods are not only important to provide desirable places to live, but also to protect the health of nearby business areas. If the residential areas deteriorate, they will cause crime and vandalism problems that will discourage business activity. If the surrounding residential areas are strengthened, they will provide a strong base of customers who will hopefully find the commercial centers to be convenient places to serve their shopping, entertainment, and service needs.

To maintain its economic health, it is important to continually work to attract and retain middle-income households in older areas. This is particularly true because there will always be existing residents moving into newer and more expensive houses, and because there will always be older residents who will be moving to nursing homes, personal care centers, or retirement communities. To maintain the same owner-occupancy rate, there needs to be a continual stream of new homebuyers.

Maintaining Housing Conditions – It is important to prevent blight and deterioration before it occurs. A single problem property can encourage responsible residents of nearby properties to move out of the neighborhood and can discourage new homebuyers from investing in the neighborhood. A problem property can also discourage homeowners from investing in improvements to their home because they do not believe they will be able to see any return on their investment if they sell.

The municipalities must continue to emphasize enforcement of the basic property maintenance codes to require property owners to: a) properly maintain their buildings or b) sell the buildings to another party who will make the needed improvements. The goal in code enforcement must be to intervene before buildings deteriorate to the point where it is no longer cost effective to repair them. If property owners are forced to complete basic maintenance and repairs in a timely manner, severe deterioration can be avoided.

Many older communities have adopted programs for the periodic inspection of rental properties to make sure they meet basic safety standards. These programs aid in maintaining homes primarily to keep tenants safe from

fires and other hazards, but also can help encourage regular maintenance on rental properties to preserve the character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Presently, St. Lawrence has a rental inspection program. Amity and Exeter are considering adding one in the future.

Emphasize housing rehabilitation – Most housing efforts primarily involve low-interest loans to rehabilitate homes owned by households with low or moderate incomes. Expanded marketing efforts are needed to make sure that eligible owners of properties in need of rehabilitation are aware of the financing programs that are available. Particular attention needs to be paid to low-income resident owners of property who need to make improvements to comply with municipal codes.

The Berks County Area Agency on Aging also offers a “Home Modification” program for minor household repairs and safety modifications. In most cases, the homeowner only pays for the cost of materials. The program is mainly aimed towards older persons with limited incomes and persons with disabilities.

Buyers of older homes should be encouraged to take advantage of the Federal Housing Administration’s 203(k) program. This allows a homebuyer to receive a single loan to purchase a home and to complete a major rehabilitation of it.

Densities – Higher densities should only be considered for: a) housing developments that are limited to senior citizens and the physically handicapped, b) the conversions of older non-residential buildings (such as old mills) into apartments, or c) in areas where the higher density fits the already-established character of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed project

Compatibility in Uses – It is important to protect older residential areas from incompatible development. This is particularly a concern in older areas where there is typically a relatively dense mix of commercial, industrial and residential uses, with small setbacks.

In commercial areas near neighborhoods, the types of commercial uses should be carefully controlled. Most commercial areas near neighborhoods should not allow for heavy commercial uses, such as warehouses, gas stations, 24-hour convenience stores, nightclubs, and auto repair.

In industrial areas near neighborhoods, great care is needed about the types of uses that are allowed. The heavier types of industrial uses should be prohibited from these areas or need special exception or conditional use approval.

Neighborhood Character – Zoning provisions can be put into place to require that new buildings in older neighborhoods be compatible to nearby buildings.

6

Locate New Development Where it is Efficiently Serviced by Existing Infrastructure

Commercial, industrial, and high-density residential housing should be located where it can easily access the available sewer and water systems of the region. Furthermore, thought should be given during the design phase of proposed development to involve the local transit provider. This is beneficial in allowing the efficient and safe transport of workers to and from a given facility or commercial business.

7

Encourage the Continuation of Agricultural Activities in the Region

It is important to continue to encourage and promote these activities, not only because they are a major component of the Region’s economy, but it will help preserve part of its history that residents are accustomed to and appreciate. The municipalities should support the area through promotion of programs such as:

Agricultural Conservation Easements

Berks County established its Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program in 1988. Funded largely by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and County of Berks, the program is designed to purchase the development rights of prime agricultural land areas in perpetuity. Landowners submit applications to the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Office on a volunteer basis by December 31st of any given year. Farms are ranked based on soil quality, development pressure, productivity of farm and the ability to create clusters of preserved farmland and funding is allocated on a yearly basis. Municipalities may choose to participate in the ACE program along with the County and Commonwealth. The County of Berks has purchased over 80,000 acres of prime farmland to date

through the ACE program, 914 acres of which are located within the SEAD study area. There are just 13 agricultural parcels eased in this Region, the majority of which are located in Exeter Township.

Agricultural Security Areas

Under Pennsylvania Act 43 of 1981 (as amended), local governments are authorized to create Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) on a voluntary basis of land areas consisting of at least 250 acres upon petition of interested landowners. Once established, an ASA is protected from local laws and ordinances that otherwise may unreasonably restrict farm structures or farm practices. Likewise, any political subdivision law or ordinance regarding public nuisance must exclude any

agricultural activity conducted using normal farming operations within the ASA as long as the operations do not affect public health and safety. ASAs are largely protected from condemnation and eminent domain of productive agricultural lands; Act 43 requires the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board to accept the proposal prior to condemnation. Since its enactment 165,564 acres have been designated Agricultural Security Areas. All of the Townships within this Region have ASAs, and 4,737 acres of land within the region are enrolled in the program. St. Lawrence Borough understandably has no enrolled agricultural lands within this program due to the nature of their development.

Clean & Green

The Clean & Green Act of 1974 is a tax assessment program by the Commonwealth that was enacted as a tool for encouraging the protection of valuable farmland, forestland and open spaces. A land assessed using the Clean & Green program is assessed at its use value rather than fair market value. This typically amounts to tax savings for the average landowner. Generally, the property must be 10 or more acres, the exception being agriculture producing at least \$2,000 of farm income annually. This designation is not permanent. However, if a landowner breaches the covenant, the landowner is subject to seven years rollback taxes, the difference in use and fair market value, plus interest. Limited subdivision, land development and non-agricultural activities are still allowed on the property while enrolled in this program.

Effective Agricultural Zoning

Effective agriculture zoning, sometimes called agricultural protection zoning, was first used in Pennsylvania in Berks County, in Lower Heidelberg Township in 1973. Since then, the practice has spread throughout much of rural Berks County and across the Commonwealth. Effective Agriculture Zoning can be used to protect many large tracts of prime farmland all at once efficiently and at a relatively low cost. It is easy to modify when needed as well. The agricultural zoning designations help reduce conflict between farms and other uses. However, Effective Agriculture Zoning is an effective tool as preserving farmland, but it is not permanent; a municipality can change zoning in these areas at any time and leave the farmlands open for development. In order for this tool to protect farmland at its maximum potential, it needs both the support of the municipality's elected body and its local farmers.



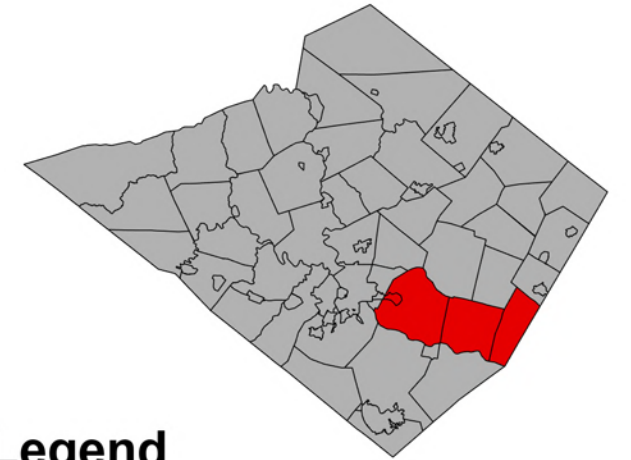
Currently, Exeter Township has Effective Agriculture in their zoning ordinance located primarily in the northeastern portion of the Township bordering Oley and Amity Townships. However, it is suggested that Amity and Douglass consider adopting policies to support agriculture in their municipalities such as effective agriculture zoning or alternative protections.

GOAL: Update and Enforce documents supporting the Joint Comprehensive Plan

- 1** **UPDATE** the municipalities' zoning ordinances where needed to reflect the vision of the Region's Comprehensive Plan. This can be done independently, or the municipalities can explore funding to write a coordinated zoning ordinance that will share uses but maintain municipal autonomy.
- 2** **UPDATE** the municipalities' subdivision and land development ordinances where needed to reflect the Comprehensive Plan either independently or jointly.
- 3** **CONTINUE** to place a high priority on the enforcement of all housing and property maintenance codes to maintain quality housing in the Region. Identify blighted properties and develop a database of housing conditions. Consider establishing a fund for a small grant or loan program that assists property owners for minor house repairs or façade improvements. This could be funded potentially using county, state, or federal grants as well. Course programs on home maintenance could be offered to residents through a partnership with the local library, local businesses, or other groups.

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August 19, 2026

Existing Land Use



Legend

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Open Space
- Recreation
- Residential High
- Residential Low
- Transportation
- Water
- Railroads
- County Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries

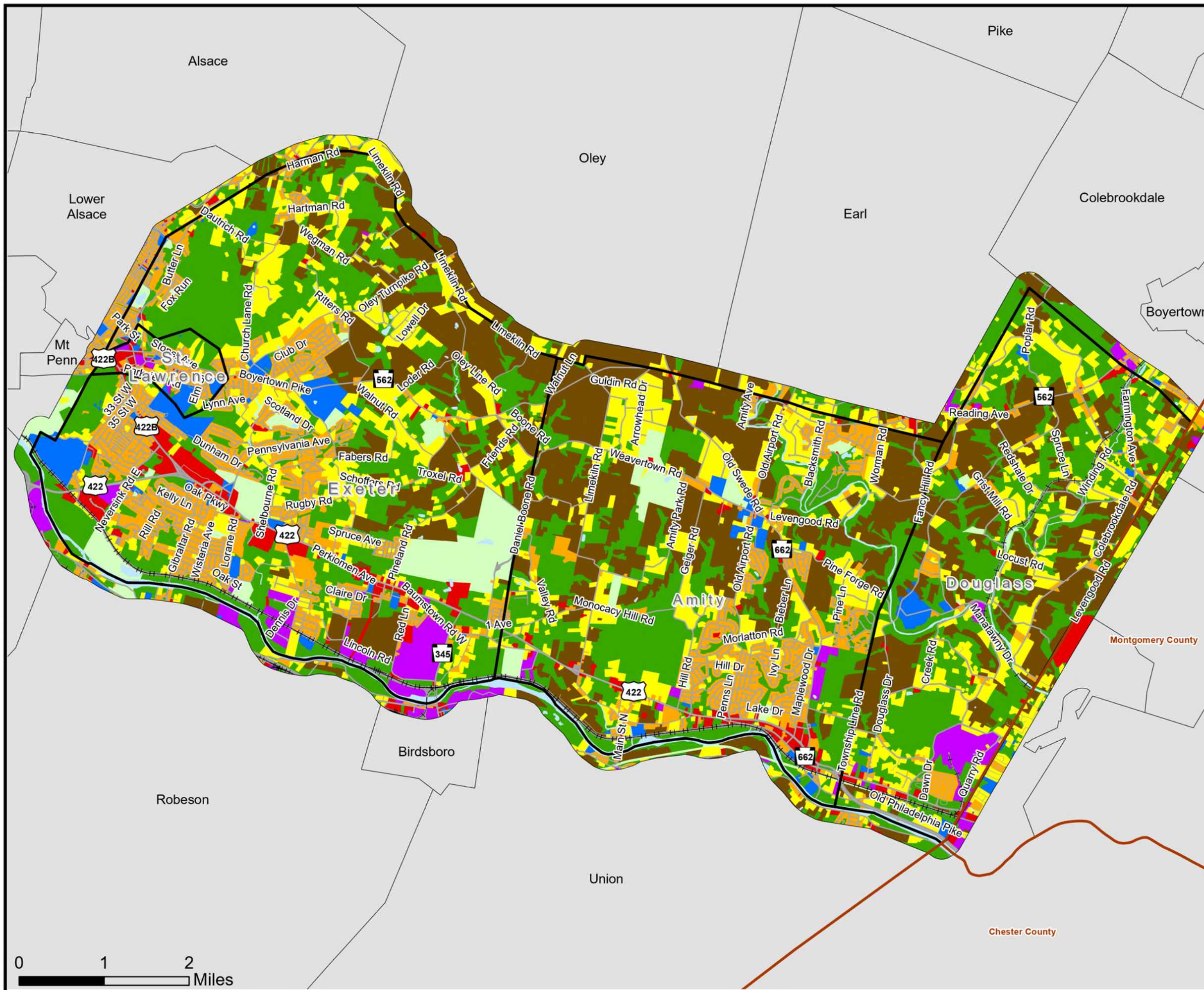
Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks County Mapping, Berks DES

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

BAB 8/26



www.berkspa.gov/planning



0 1 2
Miles

FIGURE 02

St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, and
Douglass
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update
August 19, 2026

St Lawrence Borough Existing Land Use



Legend

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Open Space
- Recreation
- Residential High
- Residential Low
- Transportation
- Water
- Municipal 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 8/26



www.berkspa.gov/planning

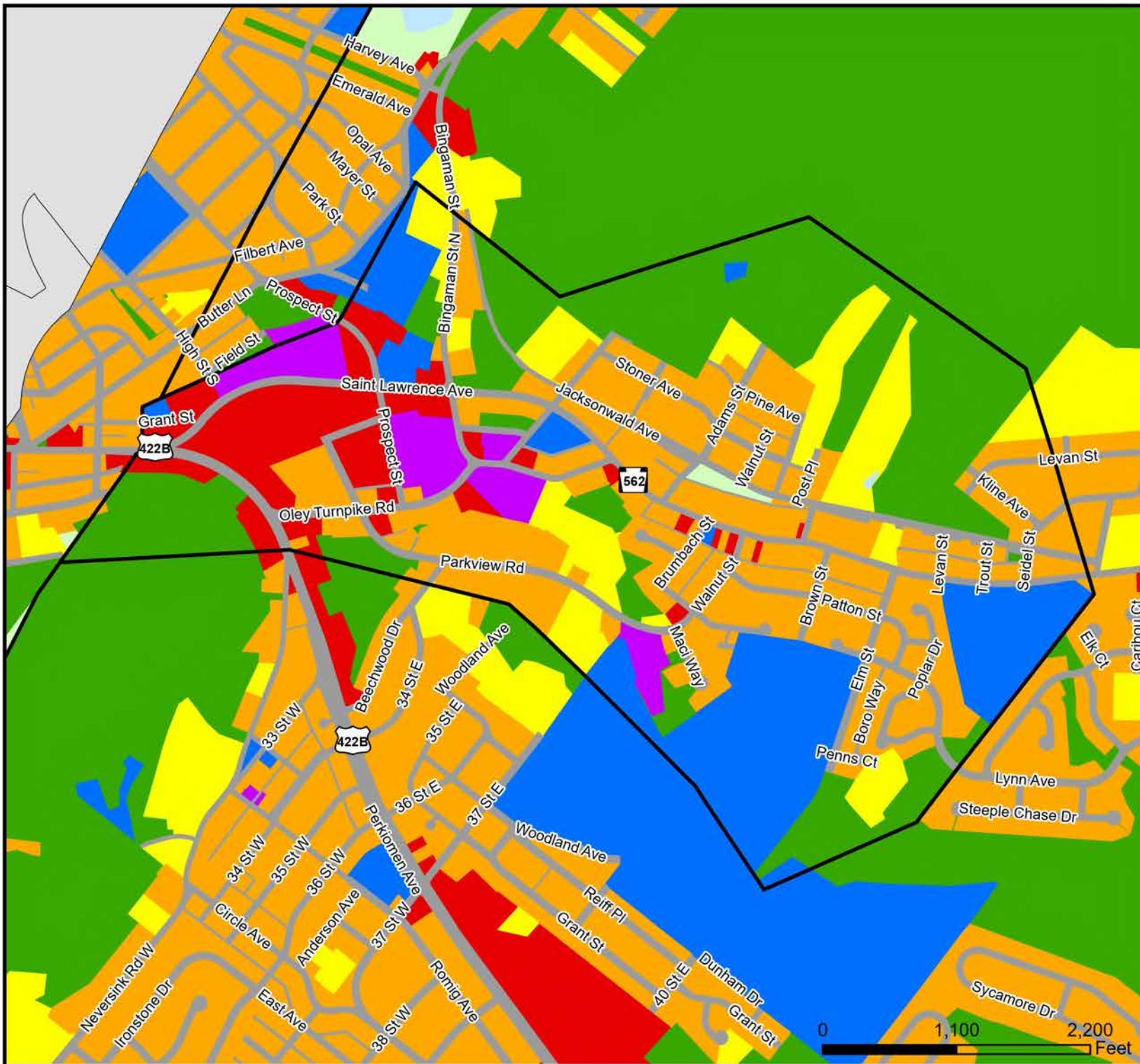
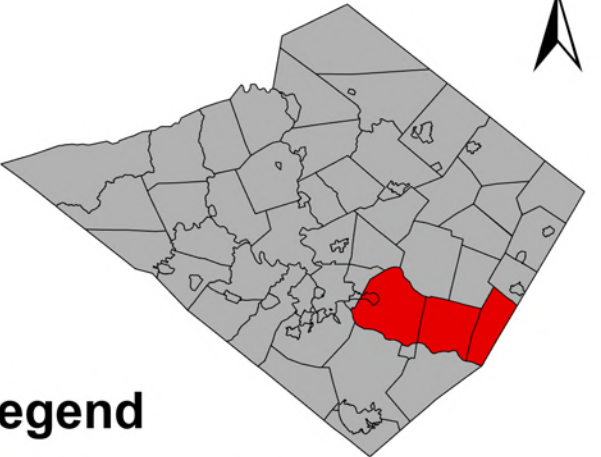


FIGURE 03

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August 19, 2026

Future Land Use



Legend

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Mixed Residential / Commercial
- Agriculture
- Rural Conservation
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Recreation
- County Boundaries
- Railroads
- Roads
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Boundaries

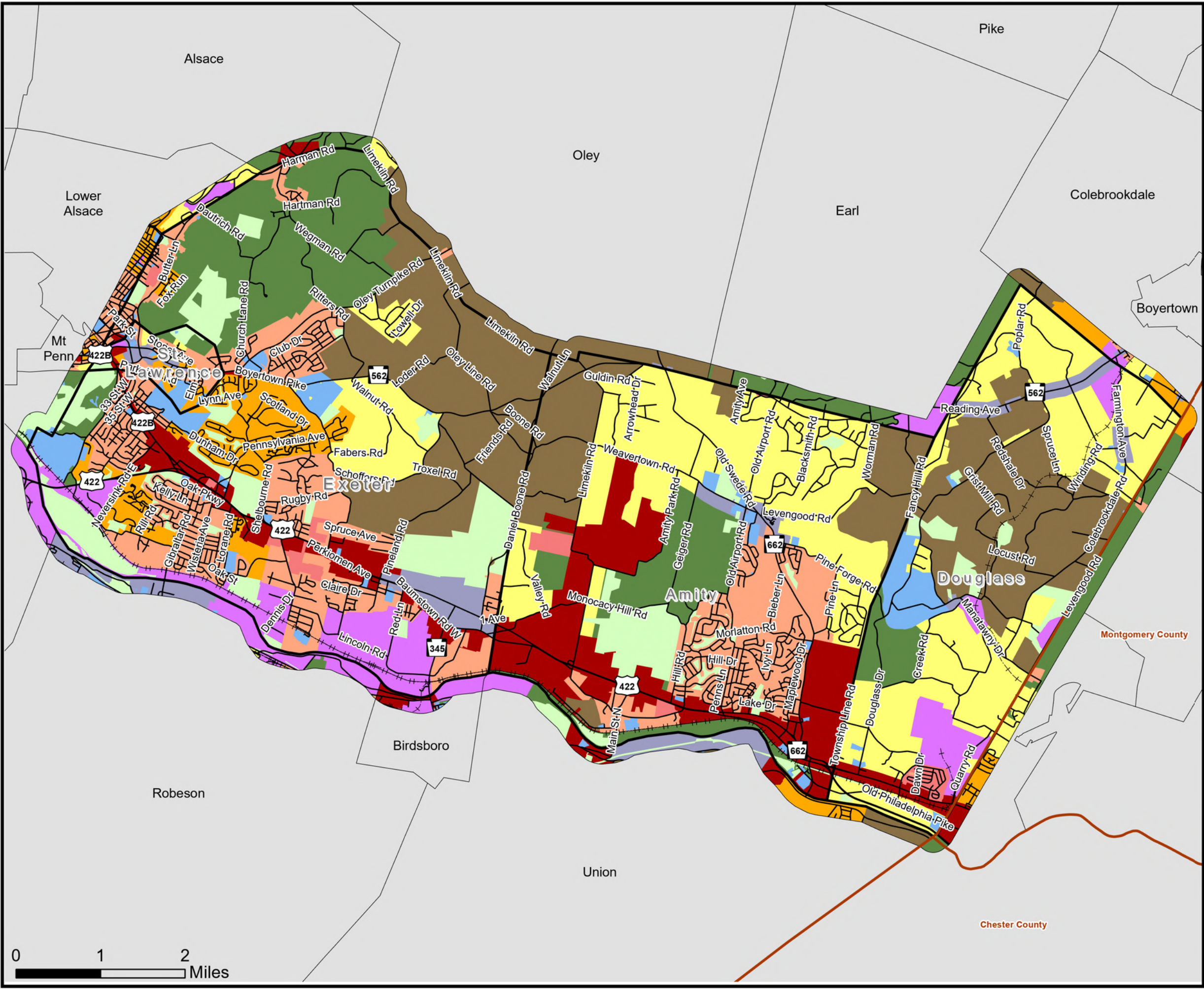
Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks County Mapping, Berks DES

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

BAB 8/26



www.berkspa.gov/planning



0 1 2 Miles

FIGURE 04

St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, and
Douglass
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update
August 19, 2026

St Lawrence Borough Future Land Use



Legend

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Mixed Residential / Commercial
- Agriculture
- Rural Conservation
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Recreation
- Roads
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Boundaries

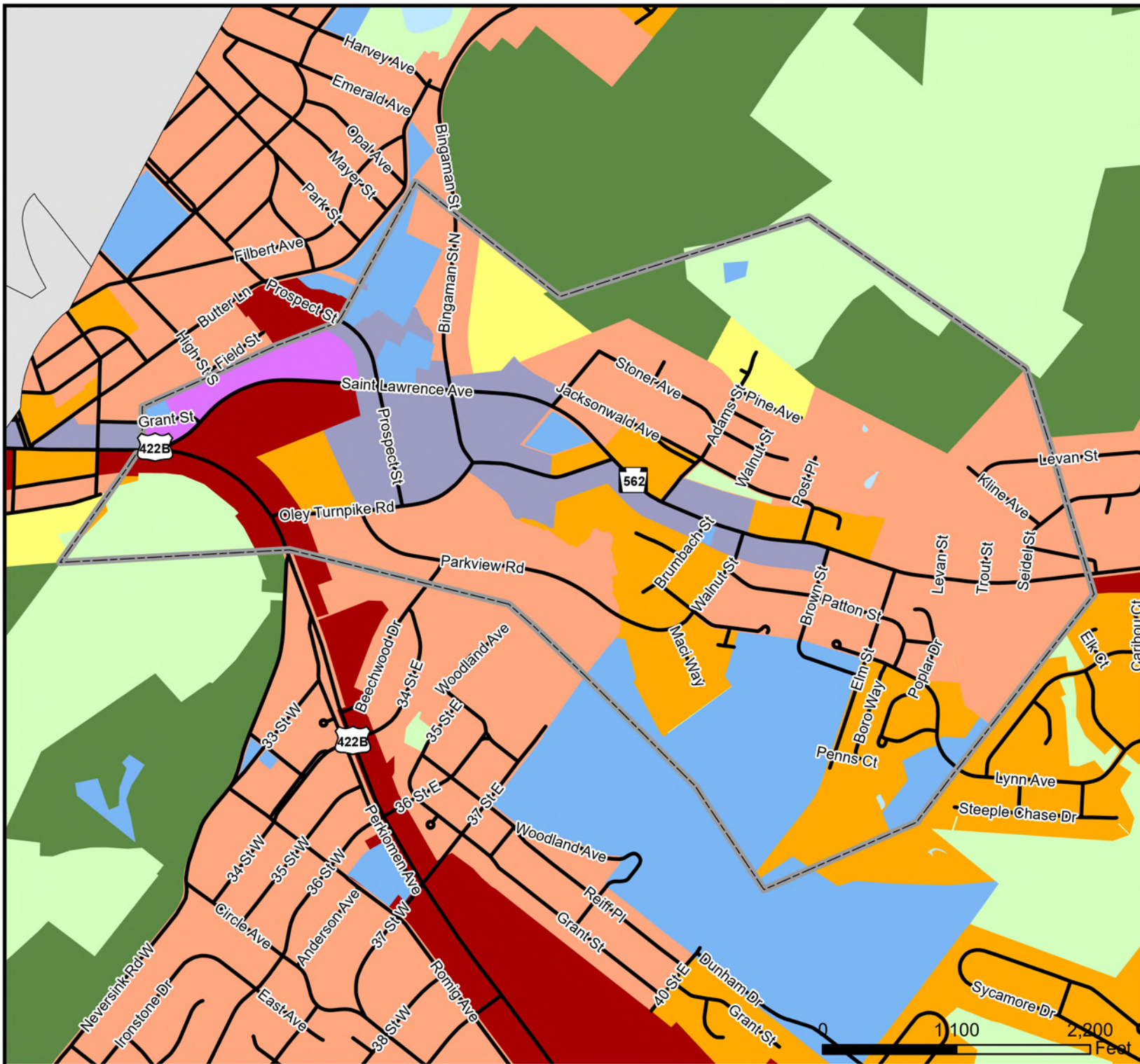
Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
Berks County GIS/IS, Berks County Mapping,
Berks DES

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

BAB 8/26



www.berkspa.gov/planning



SEAD COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

The commercial corridor in the SEAD study area is defined as the southern portions of St. Lawrence, Exeter, Amity, and Douglass along SR 422 (Benjamin Franklin Highway/Perkiomen Avenue) and including area in the Borough along SR 562 (St. Lawrence Avenue). It is the area containing the largest concentration of existing commercial and industrial businesses in the Region and combine with readily available highway access, and the most logical focus for infill and redevelopment. By developing areas near existing infrastructure, filling urban voids with diverse uses, and promoting a more compact, walkable environment, these communities can continue to grow sustainably. The Development Zones in this chapter are identified in the maps within a black line, as shown on FIGURES 05 through 12. The Development Zones contain proposed development destination areas outlined in red, proposed improvements marked as numbered green circles, and parcels that can potentially be developed or redeveloped. Additionally, some of the design proposals for these focus areas are included here FIGURES 13 through 18 aim to enhance pedestrian and vehicle safety as well as area aesthetics at strategic locations. Finally, parcels in yellow reflect properties that have been reviewed for subdivision or land development plans from 2020 into 2025. These parcels demonstrate potential projects the Region can anticipate in the near future.

ST LAWRENCE BOROUGH



FIGURE 05 depicts the targeted development zone within St. Lawrence Borough. To promote a more walkable environment, proposed are elements to increase safety for pedestrian traffic in the area, granting better access from the neighborhood

to local businesses. It is recommended that sidewalk gaps are filled on at least one side of (1) Perkiomen Avenue (SR 422B) and St. Lawrence Avenue (SR 562) parcel by parcel as businesses experience growth or change of use. Pedestrian improvements are also desirable at the corner of Perkiomen and St. Lawrence Avenues, but the current transportation infrastructure makes it difficult to install such improvements. The Borough should support and advocate for PennDOT to redesign the intersection, creating right angles, realigning traffic lights, and minimizing pavement for pedestrians to cross. Part of that project could include painted crosswalks with a leading pedestrian interval system to the realigned stop lights at this intersection. This will

help pedestrians from the nearby residential neighbors as well as those utilizing the public transit stop at this intersection to more easily cross Perkiomen Avenue granting safe access to existing businesses on the south side of Perkiomen Avenue. FIGURE 13 shows examples of what these improvements can look like.

The large strip mall property located on St. Lawrence Avenue just east of Perkiomen Avenue also is currently experiencing a great deal of redevelopment with façade improvements attracting new businesses to the Borough. Even though it is technically located within walking distance of residential areas, this commercial property has virtually no safe pedestrian access currently. Recommended upgrades for the parcel and surrounding area includes sidewalks and shading improving connections within the surrounding neighborhood.

Continuing east on St. Lawrence Avenue properties along SR 562 can potentially house pockets of commercial developments if zoned as such. With much of St. Lawrence built-out, such a change should allow the inclusion of a variety of new commercial uses such as mixed-used developments, offices, and small business operations. Commercial zoning could also enable flexibility for construction off-street parking spaces to serve patrons at these potential new uses.

EXETER TOWNSHIP



The study areas along Perkiomen Avenue in Exeter Township already have some well-established commercial and industrial sites and are largely surrounded by nearby suburban and rural residential neighborhoods to the north and south.

Northwest of the interchange of Benjamin Franklin Highway (SR 422) and Perkiomen Avenue (SR 422B) in Reiffton, the parcel of the former strip mall known as “The Promenade” presents great potential for redevelopment as a mixed-use development (FIGURE 06). This could be a good opportunity for Exeter to increase the variety of housing options. Currently, Exeter Township is working with the Berks County Redevelopment Authority to maximize this property’s potential use. In the immediate area surrounding the Promenade, there are also some opportunities for infill development, for both commercial and residential uses. Throughout the planning process, the public has expressed interest in more entertainment in Exeter. This area

of Reiffton would be an ideal area to attract an entertainment center development to the Township. The area also appears to be underserved by the hotel industry. Zoning should be reviewed to determine if the Restrictive Office Commercial District could support such uses in the future.

To the southeast, centered within the intersections of Perkiomen Avenue and Shelbourne Road and Perkiomen Avenue and Lincoln Road in Lorane, there are currently a variety of housing types including mobile home parks as well as suburban and rural residential developments (FIGURE 07). Sufficient opportunities for commercial activity exist along this section of SR 422, particularly in the Shelbourne Square Shopping Center; however the parcel appears to be underutilized.

The pedestrian access to the commercial uses in that section of SR 422 can be difficult and uncomfortable in places. Some intersections, like that of SR 422 and Shelbourne Road (SR 2033) do have crosswalks; however there are many areas with sidewalk gaps leading up to the intersections and to the nearby commercial uses. Therefore, connecting the existing residential uses to the commercial uses can increase mobility and independence for area residence here. Additionally, any new residential developments should have pedestrian connections to reach core shopping areas such as (3) Shelbourne Square and (4) 5900 Perkiomen Avenue (currently a Walmart Supercenter). Proposed are sidewalk connections to the proposed residential community south of Shelbourne Square as well as to the existing developments on the north side of SR 422. Likewise, connections on Lincoln Road on both sides of SR 422 are advised. To connect residents from one side of this destination area to the other is challenging considering the nature of SR 422 on this section of the corridor. To discourage pedestrians from SR 422 and increase access, Exeter can partner with the developers on the various projects in this section to provide a more informal connection such as a gravel trail. This improvement would not only connect residents where they live, work, and shop, but also provide recreational opportunities, some of which may be able to be expanded on in the future.

Continuing southeast to the area near the existing Pioneer Crossing Landfill in Baumstown, most of the existing underdeveloped parcels by SR 422 are zoned as Flex Industrial or Light Industrial (FIGURE 08). Here, there are many cases where the driveways that access the highway are not very well defined. With driveway access management through design, this section of SR 422 in this area could see improved safety and traffic flow by implementing well-defined driveways, signage, and the adoption of curbs and grass strips where applicable. As this area continues to grow, it is important to focus on employing such safety measures with new and expanding developments.

In fitting with much of the current makeup of this section of Exeter, existing industrial and commercial uses should continue to be prioritized in that area. Opportunities for additional industrial development will be limited due to infrastructure and access. However, there is an area in the western portion of this focus area around the intersection of SR 422 with Sunset Manor Drive (5) that has commercial or mixed-use redevelopment potential. FIGURE 14 depicts a lot located in this intersection that, at the time of this study, is the location of a convenience store. This site is a relatively large lot, having once housed gas pumps that have since been removed. This parcel has capacity to hold a more intensive use with commercial and potentially residential possibilities. Figure 14 shows an example of such a use with commercial and parking on the ground floor and residential units

living above. Desired uses identified by community members such as adult care, childcare, or pet care facilities, restaurants, or indoor recreation would be appropriate, providing more diverse activities both to the potential residents living above and those from the surrounding existing communities. Likewise, the neighboring properties surrounding SR 422 at the same intersection through east to the Township line has potential for similar redevelopment opportunities, specifically for Mixed Residential/Commercial. Several of the sites could accommodate retail and commercial uses and amenities that align with the residential components of a mixed-use development.



AMITY TOWNSHIP

The focus area continues southeast into Amity Township at its border with Exeter Township and is characterized by a majority Highway Commercial Area land use FIGURE 09. It is recommended that Amity consider amending the Highway Commercial zoning district to allow more flexibility with mixed-use developments broadening potential for new residential housing as well as commercial uses to support those units in this area and throughout the corridor as well. One such example is the area near the Monocacy Creek and Limekiln Rd (6). The property on the northeastern corner presently holds a farmhouse and undeveloped land. A parcel of this size and location can be another opportunity for a small mixed-use or commercial development, with denser housing such as apartments or condominiums with a supporting use such as a grocery store or hotel. Here, some improvements for the pedestrian infrastructure and safety should also be considered (FIGURE 15).

A little further southeast along the Benjamin Franklin Highway in the section between Limekiln Rd and the Old Airport Rd there are some prime redevelopment opportunities of small parcels currently the locations for two motels and a nightclub. Here, consolidation and redevelopment of the lots support a larger hotel chain with potentially a restaurant/bar in-house. It is recommended to maintain relationships with the current property owners, and periodically review the zoning in that area to encourage prime redevelopment opportunities for when these parcels change ownership.

At the intersection of Monocacy Creek Road and SR 422 (7), some improvements for the pedestrian infrastructure and safety should be considered to generate safe crossing from the homes on the south side of the highway to businesses on the north side (FIGURE 10). This intersection currently is experiencing growth on the southwestern portion with new apartment construction. New residents as well as those from the existing mobile home park should have safe access to the commercial properties across SR 422 such as the property at 103 North Monocacy Creek Road currently utilized as a Dollar General. Suggested improvements include crosswalk maintenance, a leading pedestrian interval, and closed sidewalk gaps on at least one side of Monocacy Creek Road.

In Amity Gardens, the eastern portion of Amity where the Benjamin Franklin Highway crosses into Douglass, there are parcels available zoned for Light Industrial uses in (FIGURE 11). Here, there is room for some industrial use expansion particularly on the Township line with Douglass, but also potential opportunity for supporting businesses and residences for the employees that such industries will attract. Opportunities for infill development including potential commercial and/or mixed uses here, as well as attractive options to redevelop some

historic buildings along the highway. Some improvements may help improve the attraction for development/redevelopment in the immediate area such as more comfortable connections to existing attractions like Douglassville Hotel (8 Old Swede Road) or Royal Farms (1340 Benjamin Franklin Highway) to the existing Morlatton Village Trailhead for the Schuylkill River Trail. While heavy traffic in this area can present challenges, in areas where pedestrians are observed, the Township should promote safe pedestrian crossing by encouraging driveway access management, well maintained sidewalks, and safe, well-marked pedestrian crossings where feasible, especially in areas adjacent to upcoming developments. This is especially important when reviewing new commercial and mixed-use developments along the corridor. (FIGURE 16).

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP

Douglass's study area runs along the Benjamin Franklin Highway (SR 422B) from its western boundary to its eastern boundary; it is predominantly zoned as Highway Commercial and Rural Residential (FIGURE 12). The proximity directly north to a significantly sized rural suburban neighborhood and the Schuylkill River Trail to the south makes it a potential area for a new mix of retail and service options to attract both residents and trail users. As Lower Pottsgrove and Pottstown to the east in Montgomery County continue to grow, developers may seek more opportunity along Benjamin Franklin Highway here as well. In order to position the Township to maximize on future growth in this limited area, a few area improvements are suggested.

This area of the highway does not have any sidewalks connecting these resources to existing and potential highway commercial development. The only crosswalk currently available is at the intersection of Benjamin Franklin Highway with Broadmoor Boulevard, but that is completely disconnected from any sidewalk network. The proposed plan depicts a sidewalk connection

between the Study Area, the Schuylkill River Trail, and East towards Pottsgrove providing multimodal options within the surrounding area and beyond.

Also, potentially hindering business development, the current road design, a four-lane highway with a median, does not allow vehicles to make left turns to Douglass's existing businesses. Instead, drivers must do U-turns at intersections when travelling west on SR 422B to commercial properties. Benjamin Franklin Highway in Douglass Township appears to be oversized for the traffic capacity it is currently experiencing. The partnering municipalities should support Douglass in petitioning to Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for a traffic study to determine if a "road diet" is warranted. A road diet (or roadway reconfiguration) is a term for the reduction of capacity on a roadway, usually through lane reductions and potentially provides space for other modes of transportation such as sidewalks for pedestrians.

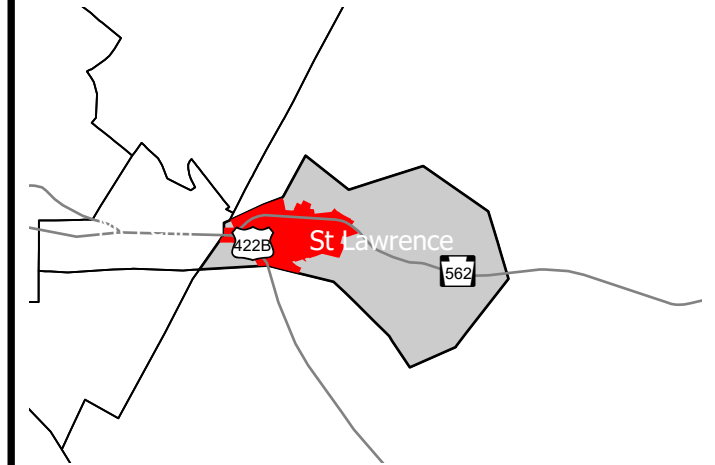
Proposed in FIGURE 17 is the removal of the concrete median in this focus area and reduction of SR 422B in Douglass to a three-lane roadway consisting of two through lanes and a center left-turn lane. To more safely control traffic, Douglass should promote driveway access management through design by implementing well-defined vehicle entrances and exits, signage, and advocate for physical barriers such as curbing and grass strips. These strategies should help promote overall traffic safety for vehicles and pedestrians in the area. Additionally, Douglas can advocate for and potentially partner with other agencies as well as private developers to build up a well-maintained streetscape through planting trees and other vegetation, installing public light and street furniture (such as benches, bike racks, or trash bins), and/or implementing standardized signage for the businesses as well as directional signs as the area's needs grow.

GOAL:
Explore options for revitalizing the SR 0422 commercial corridor running through all four municipalities. Consider what is in demand in both the Region and its surrounding municipalities to attract businesses that fill in gaps in service and provide attractive amenities to both those living and visiting the Region.

- 1** **IN AMITY,** review the Highway Commercial zoning district and consider revisions to ease restrictions on mixed use throughout this corridor.
- 2** **IN EXETER,** evaluate zoning to consider changing some parcels' designations from Light Industrial and Office Business Park to commercial and mixed uses that may be more compatible with desired uses within the corridor
- 3** **IN DOUGLASS,** advocate for a reconfiguration of Benjamin Franklin Highway (SR 422B) including improvements that will increase access to area businesses both by vehicular and active transportation.
- 4** **IN ST. LAWRENCE,** explore mixed use/commercial designations along St. Lawrence Avenue in the Borough in order to incentivize targeted business development and redevelopment.

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

ST LAWRENCE BOROUGH Development Zone



Legend

-  Proposed Change of Zoning from Suburban Residential to Mixed Commercial
-  Intersection Improvements
-  Preferred Sidewalk Path to Fill Gaps
-  Potential Infill Development
-  Potential Redevelopment
-  Recently Reviewed Plan Development
-  100 years Floodplain
-  Tax Parcels
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  St Lawrence Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25



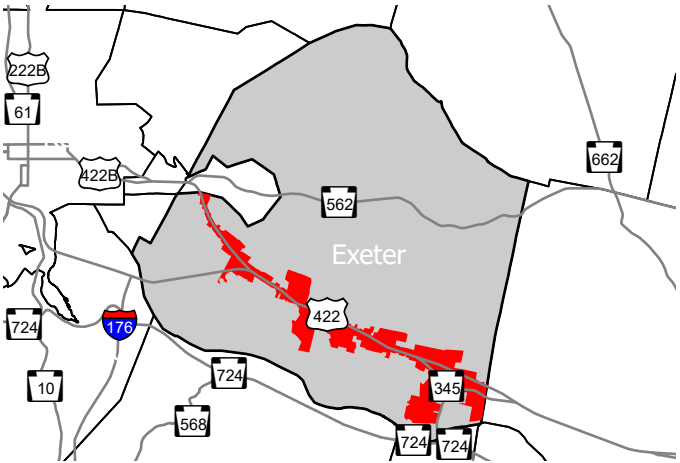
www.berkspa.gov/planning



FIGURE 06

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

EXETER TOWNSHIP Development Zone



Legend

- Potential Destination Area
- Potential Infill Development
- Potential Redevelopment (Mixed Use)
- Potential Residential Development
- Recently Reviewed Plan Development
- 100yr Floodplain
- Tax Parcels
- Municipal Boundaries
- Exeter Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25



www.berkspa.gov/planning

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

EXETER TOWNSHIP Development Zone

N



Legend

-  Intersection Improvements
-  Potential Trail
-  Proposed Sidewalk Connection
-  Potential Destination Area
-  Potential Commercial or Mixed Use Development
-  Potential Infill Development
-  Recently Reviewed Plan Development
-  100yr Floodplain
-  Tax Parcels
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Exeter Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25



www.berkspa.gov/planning



0 1,000 2,000
Feet

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

EXETER TOWNSHIP Development Zone



Legend

-  Intersection Improvements
-  Proposed Sidewalk Connection
-  Potential Destination Area
-  Potential Commercial or Mixed Use Development
-  Potential Industrial/Office or Commercial Development
-  Potential Redevelopment (Mixed Use)
-  Recently Reviewed Plan Development
-  100yr Floodplain
-  Tax Parcels
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Exeter Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25



www.berkspa.gov/planning

Concept B

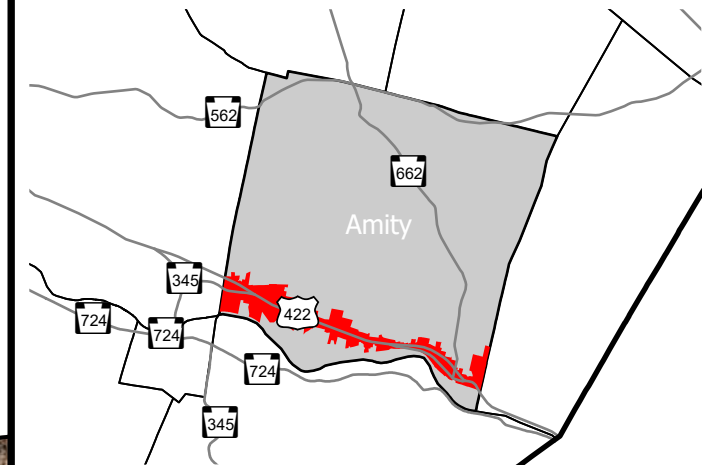
0 1,000 2,000 Feet

Exeter
Robeson

Amity
Union

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

AMITY TOWNSHIP Development Zone



Legend

- Potential Change of Zoning to Allow Mixed Use Developments
- Intersection Improvements
- Proposed Sidewalk Connection
- Potential Destination Areas
- Potential Commercial Development
- Potential Commercial or Mixed Use Development
- Potential Industrial/Office or Commercial Development
- Recently Reviewed Plan Development
- 100yr Floodplain
- Tax Parcels
- Municipal Boundaries
- Amity Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25



www.berkspa.gov/planning

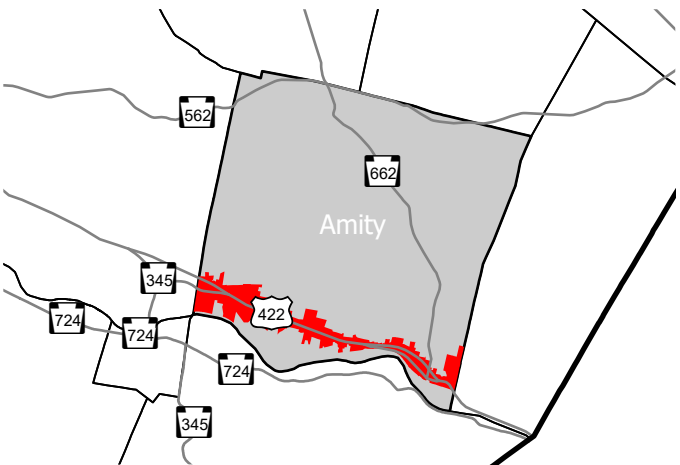


0 750 1,500
Feet

FIGURE 10

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

AMITY TOWNSHIP Development Zone



Legend

- Intersection Improvements
- Proposed Sidewalk Connection
- Potential Destination Areas
- Potential Commercial Development
- Potential Commercial or Mixed Use Development
- Potential Infill Development
- Recently Reviewed Plan Development
- 100yr Floodplain
- Tax Parcels
- Municipal Boundaries
- Amity Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25



www.berkspa.gov/planning

Concept D



Amity
Union

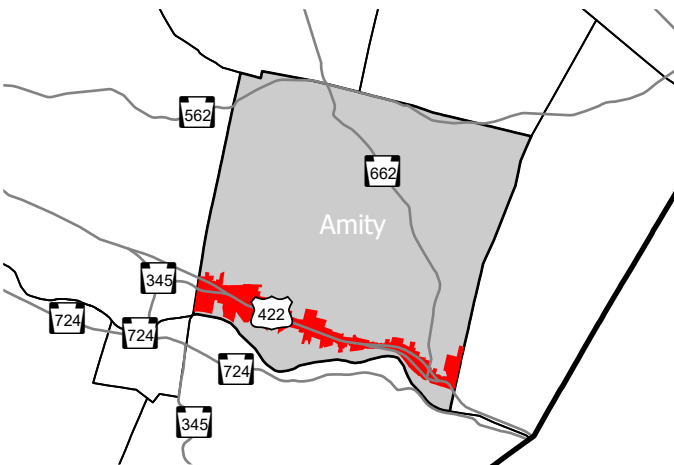
Schuylkill River Trail- Thun Trail

0 750 1,500 Feet

FIGURE 11

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

AMITY TOWNSHIP Development Zone



Legend

-  Intersection Improvements
-  Proposed Sidewalk Connection
-  Potential Destination Areas
-  Potential Commercial or Mixed Use Development
-  Potential Infill Development
-  Recently Reviewed Plan Development
-  100yr Floodplain
-  Tax Parcels
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Amity Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25



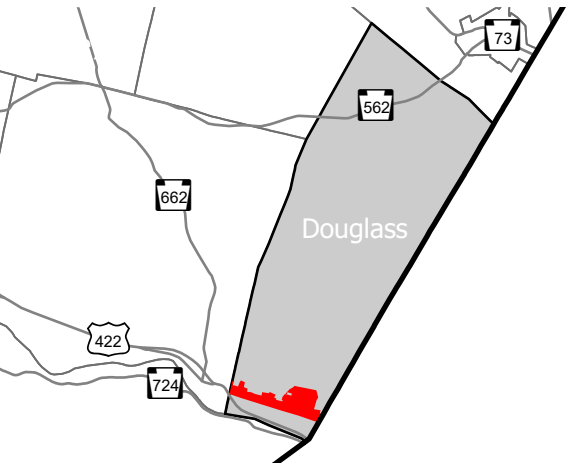
www.berkspa.gov/planning



FIGURE 12

St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and
Douglass Township
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update: August, 19, 2026

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP Development Zone



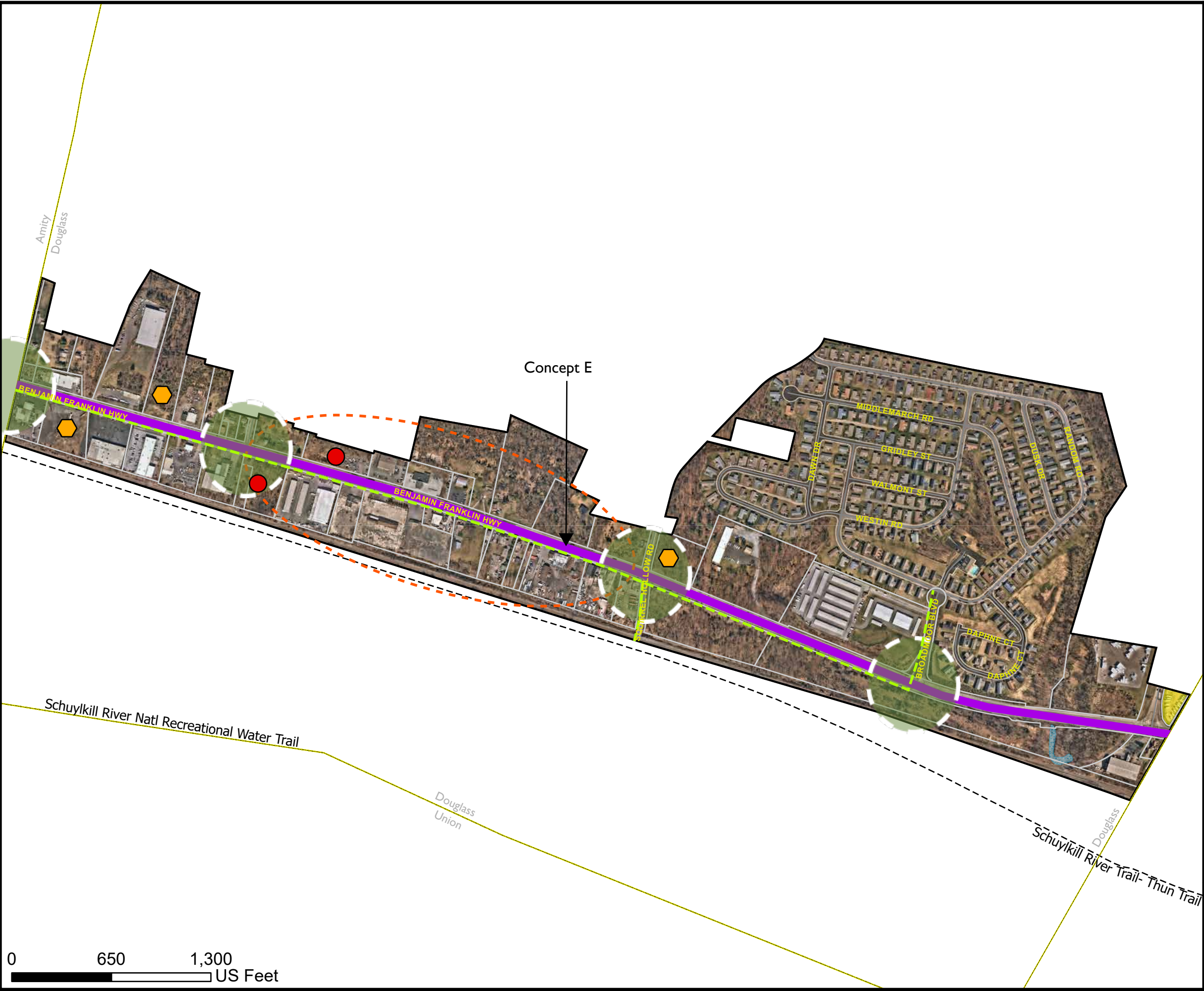
Legend

- Intersection Improvements
- Proposed Sidewalk Connection
- Potential Destination Areas
- Three-lane Roadway (Two Through Lanes and a Center Two-way Left-turn Lane)
- Potential Commercial Development
- Potential Commercial or Mixed Use Development (Commercial + Residential)
- Recently Reviewed Plan Development
- 100yr Floodplain
- Tax Parcels
- Municipal Boundaries
- Douglass Development Zone

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

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

TRCA 12/25

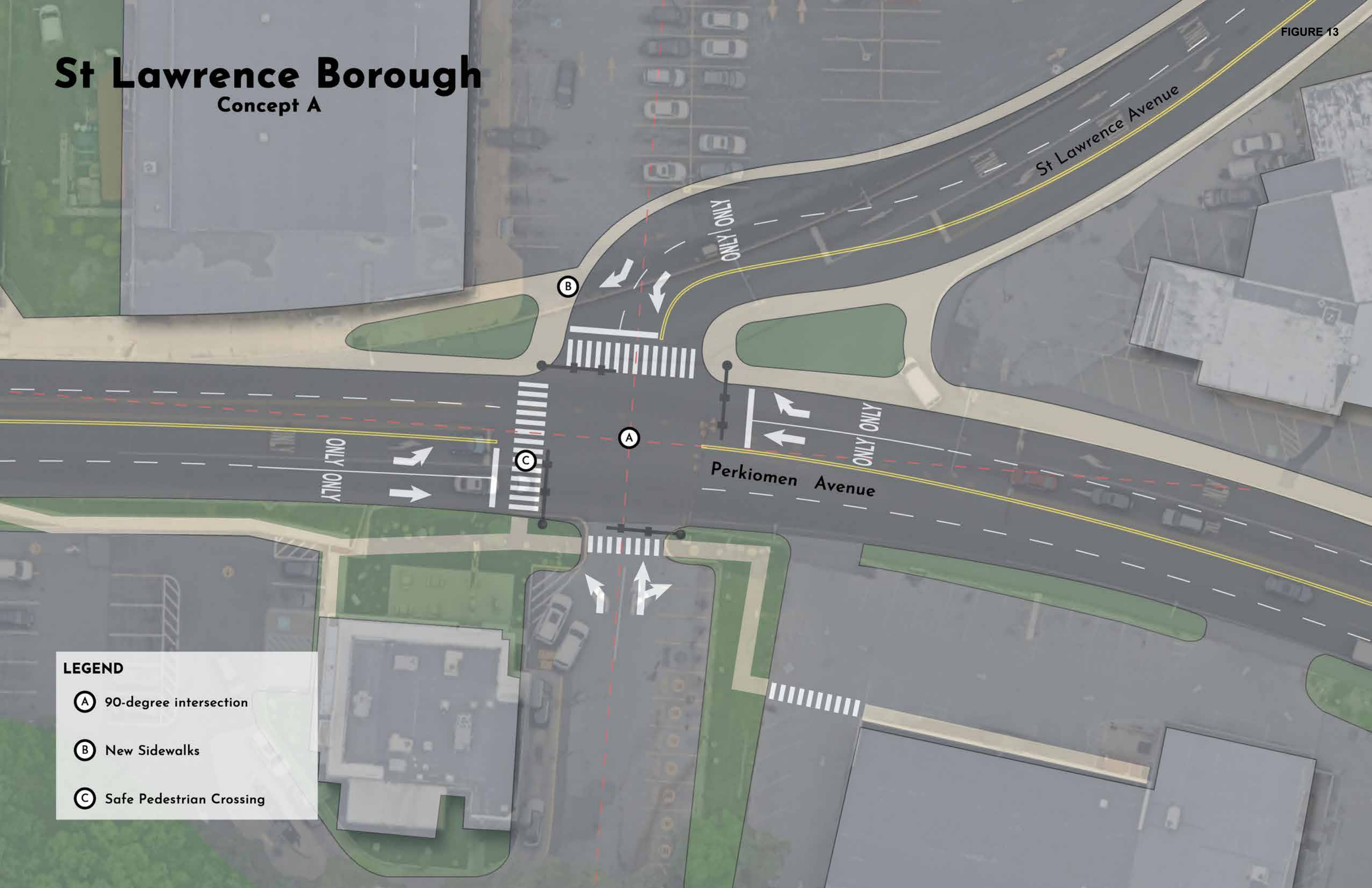


www.berkspa.gov/planning

St Lawrence Borough

Concept A

FIGURE 13



LEGEND

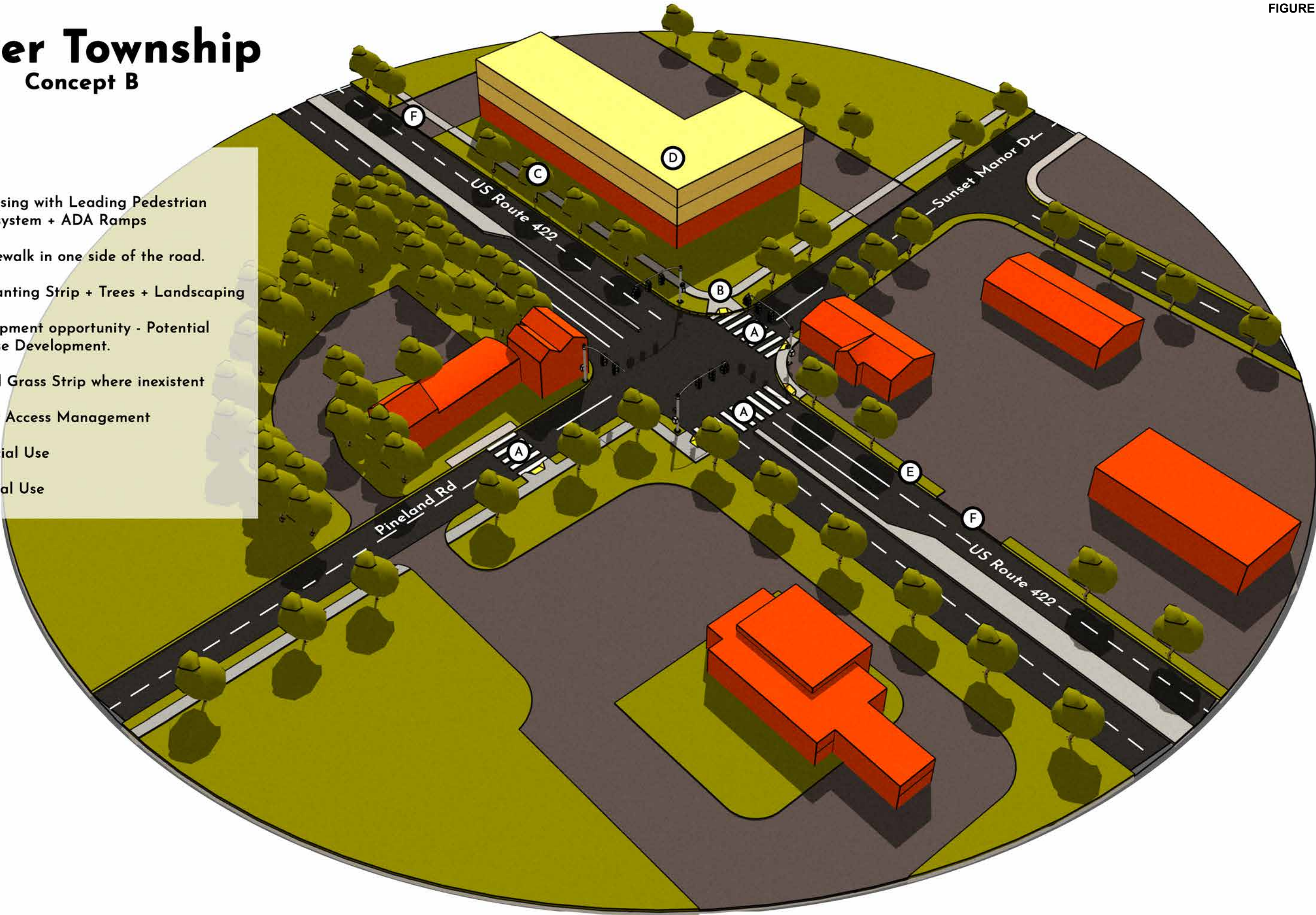
- Ⓐ 90-degree intersection
- Ⓑ New Sidewalks
- Ⓒ Safe Pedestrian Crossing

Exeter Township

Concept B

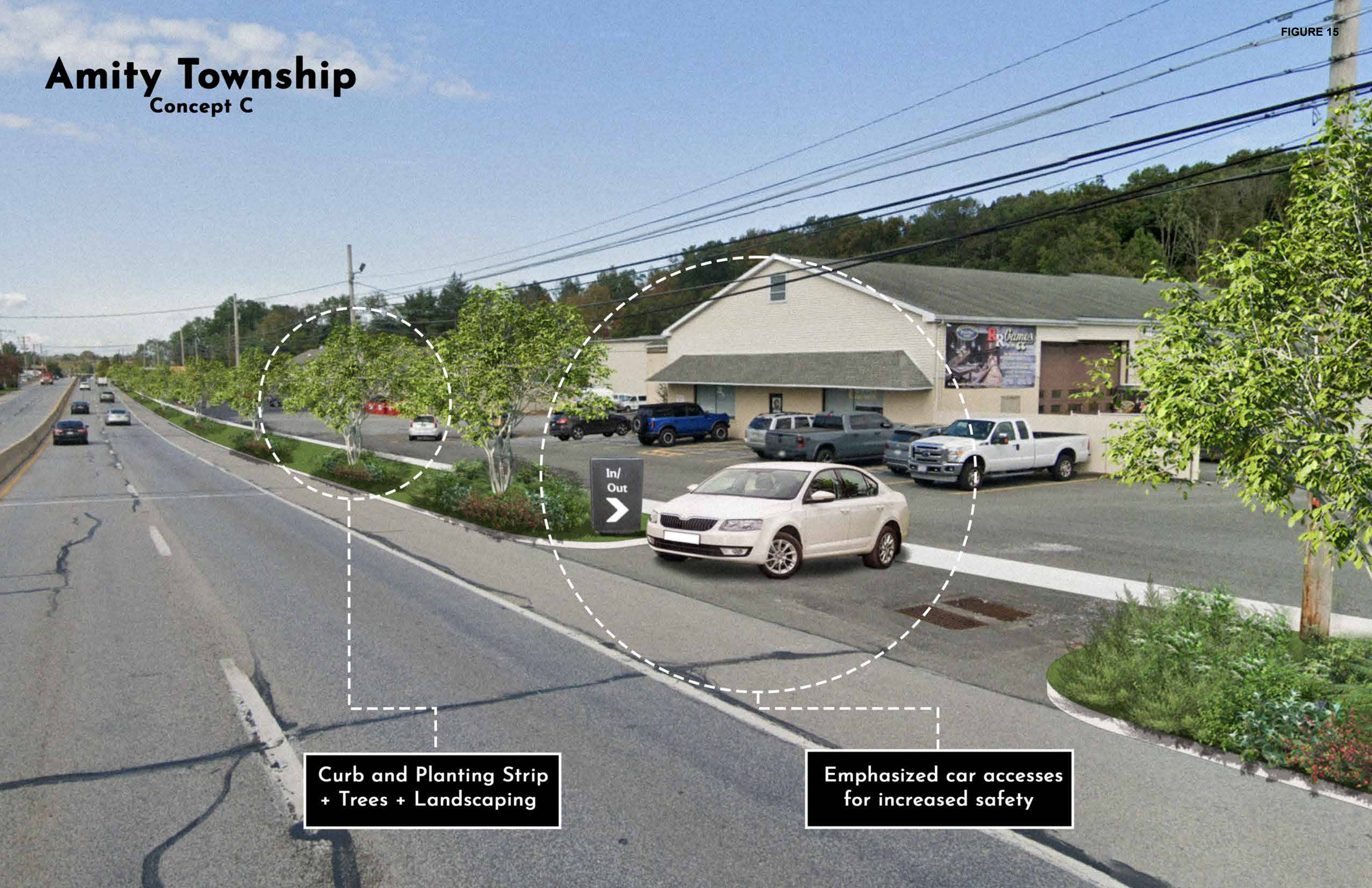
LEGEND

- (A) Safe crossing with Leading Pedestrian Interval system + ADA Ramps
- (B) Safe Sidewalk in one side of the road.
- (C) Grass/Planting Strip + Trees + Landscaping
- (D) Redevelopment opportunity - Potential Mixed Use Development.
- (E) Curb and Grass Strip where inexistent
- (F) Driveway Access Management
-  Commercial Use
-  Residential Use



Amity Township

Concept C

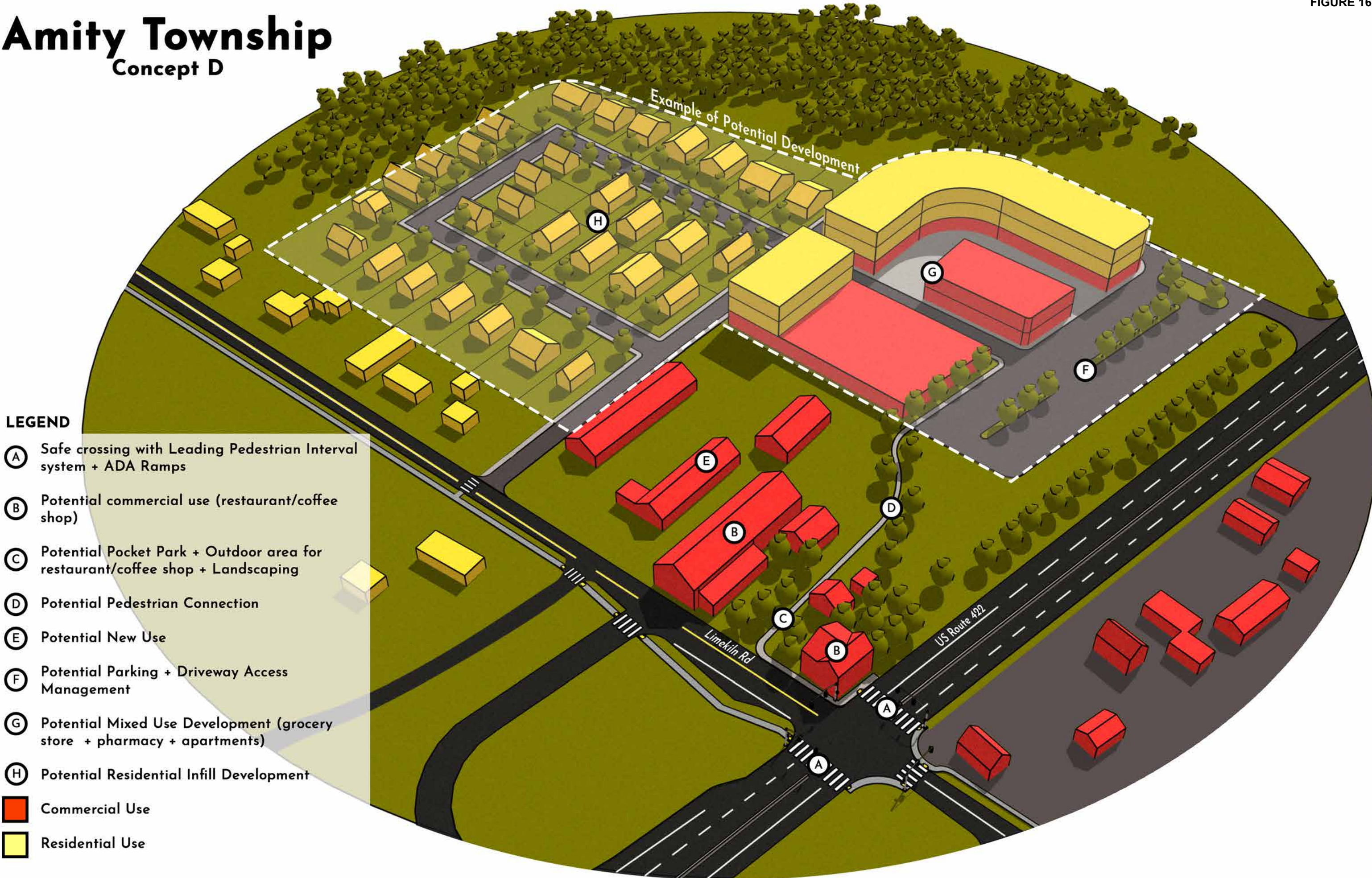


Curb and Planting Strip
+ Trees + Landscaping

Emphasized car accesses
for increased safety

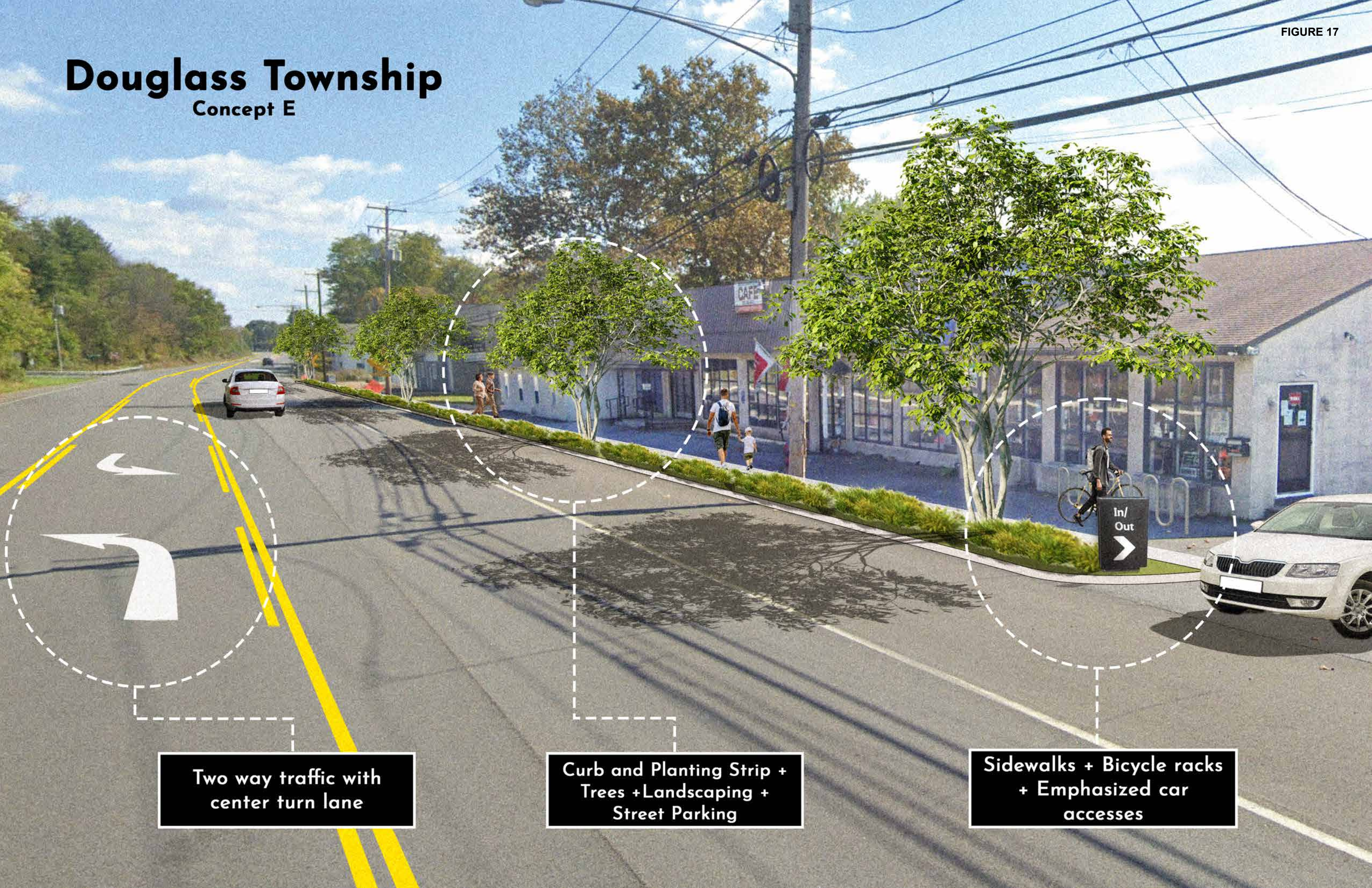
Amity Township

Concept D



Douglass Township

Concept E



Two way traffic with
center turn lane

Curb and Planting Strip +
Trees + Landscaping +
Street Parking

Sidewalks + Bicycle racks
+ Emphasized car
accesses

GOALS ACTION PLAN



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

HISTORIC GOALS

Protect, preserve, and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural heritage of the Region through education, advocacy, regulations and/or incentives.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Update existing zoning regulations to resolve conflicts with historic preservation goals like incompatible uses, excessive setbacks, required off-street parking, and reduced lot coverage. Encourage property owners and developers to take historic resources and their context into consideration by providing review of demolitions, design guidelines for infill construction, historic Overlay Zones, incentives for adaptive reuse, and/or demolition by delay.	☒	☒	☒	☐
☐	Require new development to reflect and consider the history, architecture and development patterns of the municipalities in order to preserve the important historic and architectural resources of the region.	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐	Develop partnerships with community groups and organizations to facilitate a public education initiative about local history and the historic resources in each municipality. Seek cost-effective ways of preserving historic buildings, including providing information and advice to property owners. Support efforts of organizations to protect historic resources through the application process for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.	☒	☒	☒	☐

NATURAL FEATURES GOALS

Maintain, preserve, and enhance natural features within the Region.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Revise and update local ordinances to ensure natural resource protection is up to date with best management practices, and any unique or special natural features are identified with specialized protection emphasis.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Preserve open space and protect natural resources by directing development away from historic and environmentally sensitive areas, limiting or restricting development within any FEMA designated 100-year floodplain areas, and protecting and improving water quality through streamside plantings within the region.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Utilize existing or new programs/ordinances to protect and/or acquire development rights or title to the key natural resources in the region, such as agricultural areas, woodlands, hills, and greenways/buffers along waterways and wetlands.	☐	☒	☒	☒

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES GOALS

Continue to implement and expand upon facilities where need is identified by the municipalities.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Identify opportunities for cooperation among municipalities, local organizations, and school districts in providing facilities and programs to area residents. Identify opportunities and/or needs for regionalization and/or sharing of services amongst, equipment and facilities and determine what efficiencies can be obtained in the provision of services to the region's residents.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Notify police, fire, and EMS personnel of proposed subdivision and land development plans and provide opportunity for their input. Ensure that water-related planning involves fire companies in the area to confirm that there will be adequate fire hydrants and volume and pressure of water to provide adequate fire protection in water service areas.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Publicize the efforts and accomplishments of the various police, fire, and EMS services in the Region in municipal communications such as newsletters, website, and social media. Maintaining a positive image and goodwill within the community is essential for efficient, safe, and secure emergency response and plays an important role in fundraising efforts for these services.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Provide the area YMCA in-development plans for the Exeter Promenade redevelopment.	☐	☒	☐	☐

Help maintain adequate EMS Service through responsible funding and oversight.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Municipalities should meet with servicing EMS providers to establish an appropriate annual actual subscription rate/ per household contracted cost including optional in-kind services.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Where any public funding is provided, within an EMS service area, there should be a standardized reporting process to report planned and actual staffing of units including the level of service delivery. A budget should be presented to the municipalities no later than October 1 of any year or within the process already established by the municipalities for their own budgets.	☒	☒	☒	☒

Maintain, Improve, and/or expand sewer and water facilities.					
COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Direct development of public sewer and water facilities away from areas proposed to remain rural and in open space instead focusing on the extension, maintenance, and improvement of facilities in areas of existing services and adjacent to current services	☒	☒	☒	☐
☐	Continue the implementation of an On-Lot Disposal Ordinance in place that promotes the maintenance of on-lot septic systems. Encourage connecting areas with malfunctioning on-lot systems, areas with contaminated water supplies, and small privately owned sewer or water systems to existing sewer or water systems where economically and physically possible.	☐	☒	☒	☒
☐	Require that development projects demonstrate adequate capacity that will not adversely affect existing developments' water supplies throughout the Region	☒	☒	☒	☐

Maintain, Evaluate, Promote, and Collaborate to offer a variety of recreation facilities and program accessible to all area residents.					
COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Update outdated parks and recreation plans. This can potentially be a joint effort to better inventory, program, and distribute a more diverse variety of activities and amenities throughout the Region at a lower cost to residents. Seek funding jointly and/ or support each other as partners to demonstrate greater demands beyond municipal boundaries in particular for larger, more regionally significant recreation projects.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	When appropriate, require developers to provide open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation; to coordinate open space systems among adjoining developments; and provide both visual and physical access to the open space system. Otherwise, require fees in lieu to implement recreation, park, and open space plans.	☐	☒	☒	☒
☐	Continue to support and promote partners' recreational areas and grow potential recreation economy throughout the Region, including spaces like Daniel Boone Homestead, Monocacy Hill Recreation Area, and Schuylkill River Trail.	☐	☒	☒	☒
☐	Plan for the increased use of new technologies in recreation areas such as e-bikes, EV charging stations, Wi-Fi connectivity, mobile app-based recreation games or QR code-based activities or information in order to expand services, increase safety, and attract and retain new generations of visitors into the future.	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐	Continue to expand upon existing programming and resources in order to provide diverse recreation for all through efforts such as a planned boat launch at Ganshawny Park in Douglass, all abilities playground at Trout Run in Exeter, and the addition of an environmental education center at Monocacy Hill in Amity.	☐	☒	☒	☒

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Explore options for revitalizing the SR 0422/0422B commercial corridor running through all four municipalities taking into consideration what services are in-demand regionally to residents and visitors.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	In Amity, review the Highway Commercial zoning district and consider revisions to ease restrictions on mixed use throughout this corridor.	☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	In Exeter, evaluate zoning to consider changing some parcels' designations from Light Industrial and Office Business Park to commercial and mixed uses that may be more compatible with desired uses within the corridor	☐	☒	☐	☐
☐	In Douglass, advocate for a reconfiguration of Benjamin Franklin Highway (US 422B) including improvements that will increase access to area businesses both by vehicular and active transportation.	☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	In St. Lawrence, explore mixed use/commercial designations along St. Lawrence Avenue in the Borough in order to incentivize targeted business development and redevelopment.	☒	☒	☐	☐

LAND USE GOALS

Update and Enforce documents supporting the Joint Comprehensive Plan

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Update the municipalities' zoning ordinances where needed to reflect the vision of the Region's Comprehensive Plan. This can be done independently, or the municipalities can explore funding to write a coordinated zoning ordinance that will share uses but maintain municipal autonomy.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Update the municipalities' subdivision and land development ordinances where needed to reflect the Comprehensive Plan either independently or jointly.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Continue to place a high priority on the enforcement of all housing and property maintenance codes to maintain quality housing in the Region. Identify blighted properties and develop a database of housing conditions. Consider establishing a fund for a small grant or loan program that assists property owners for minor house repairs or façade improvements. This could be funded potentially using county, state, or federal grants as well. Course programs on home maintenance could be offered to residents through a partnership with the local library, local businesses, or other groups.	☒	☒	☒	☒

HOUSING AND ECONOMY GOALS

Support smart housing opportunities as a component of economic growth particularly in areas with reuse and infill opportunities.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Continue to support construction of diverse housing stock to meet community demands, particularly with housing rehabilitation, infill development, and the addition of 55+ communities by examining current zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to ensure that regulations align with that of nearby existing development. Direct housing to areas with existing or nearby infrastructure to minimize cost and impact to the surrounding communities.	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐	Promote adaptive reuse and revitalization efforts for vacant commercial and industrial sites along the SR 0422 corridor.	☒	☒	☒	☒

Continue to support local area farmers as economic drivers for the Region.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Explore options for strengthening protection of agricultural resources in the Region, through effective agricultural zoning or alternate protections. Exeter Township could support this effort by providing feedback regarding their own effective agricultural zoning district or alternate protections.	☐	☒	☒	☒
☐	Foster agribusiness entrepreneurship by permitting a range of farm-based businesses. Many farmers cannot earn a full-time living on their farm work; to encourage the continuation of farming, the Region's Zoning Ordinances should offer reasonable flexibility to farmers on larger tracts to have small businesses. These businesses could include small engine repair, sharpening services, wood crafting, farm equipment repair, sale of seeds and fertilizers and similar activities. These activities can also be useful to encourage the repair and reuse of old barns.	☒	☒	☒	☒

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

Maintain and improve the safety and operation of roads and bridges where financially feasible

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Evaluate conditions on local-owned transportation infrastructure. Implement low-cost improvements where such measures provide an immediate impact.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Collaborate and coordinate improvements and/or rental of necessary equipment to focus limited funding on the most effective solutions while maximizing the potential for cost sharing and savings.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	The municipalities will work to develop a joint committee to engage with the legislature in applying for funding for transportation issues within the Region, and to have a united voice when engaging with RATS through the TIP and LRTP process.	☒	☒	☒	☒

FREIGHT GOALS

Ensure freight accommodation while keeping other travelers safe.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Meet with developers early and often throughout the stages of the land development process to encourage the inclusion of an area for safe truck parking for drivers servicing that location to reduce trucks parking in non-designated or unsafe areas.	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐	Maintain an open line of communication with local business owners and operators of regional commercial and industrial facilities, specifically regarding issues with regular truck movements and designated routes.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Stay aware of any roadway, equipment, and/or safety issues at At-Grade Railroad Crossings, communicate any issues with At-Grade Railroad Crossings with Norfolk Southern, the US DOT Federal Railroad Administration, and PennDOT. Continue to advocate for safety improvements where the Colebrookdale Railroad intersects at Greshville Road and Manatawny Drive Rail Crossings such as warning lights and gates.	☐	☒	☒	☒

SAFETY GOALS

Keep travelers of all modes safe and secure.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Promote educational safety programs in the Region such as senior and first-time drivers courses and bicycle and road safety events for youth.	☐	☒	☒	☒
☐	Maintain a relationship with those that police the region, informing them of concern or repeat offenses to help mitigate undesirable driving behaviors. Establish a reporting system for drivers to submit feedback.	☐	☒	☒	☒
☐	Implement low-cost safety improvements where such measures provide an immediate impact on safety.	☐	☒	☒	☒
☐	Create safe links between residential areas and popular destinations, such as schools, parks, and shopping centers in an attempt to minimize the number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. Consider safety improvements such as widening of shoulders, filling gaps in the sidewalk network and the addition of ADA ramps, crosswalk painting, and signage to help achieve a safer transportation system for all users.	☐	☒	☒	☐

TRANSIT GOALS

Promote the use of transit when available.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Promote the use of transit, cooperative, and demand operated services with the help of a standing transportation committee made up of representatives of each municipality.	☐	☒	☒	☒

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION GOALS

Apply for grant funding to develop an active transportation plan evaluating existing active transportation infrastructure for improvements throughout the region to address maintenance needs, completion of missing links, safety, and accessibility improvements focusing on accessibility to schools, parks, shopping, and business centers.

COMPLETED	ACTION	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Ensure that local ordinances and regulations include requirements for active transportation accommodations into and within all new developments. Encourage new land developments and subdivisions, especially ones served by public water and sewer utilities, to have sidewalks on one side of all streets when within two (2) miles of a school, or half (0.5) of a mile of a greenway, park, shopping center, business complex, transit stop, or when there is an existing sidewalk network adjacent to the proposed development.	☒	☒	☒	☐
☐	Encourage businesses to provide bike racks for visitors and storage facilities for employees; seek or support funding where applicable.	☒	☒	☒	☒
☐	Adopt and enforce Complete Streets policies to ensure the entire public right-of-way is available for users.	☒	☒	☒	☐

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GOALS

Increase physical activity, health, and safety for students of the Boyertown Area, Daniel Boone Area, and Exeter Township School Districts.

COMPLETED	ACTIONS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	The Townships, Borough, and School Districts should work together to engage the community and student population to inform and draw support for an official Safe Routes to School Program. Use public input to identify safety concerns and infrastructure improvement opportunities on routes where students walk or bike followed by a walk audit covering those locations where practical.	☒	☐	☒	☐
☐	The municipalities, working with the School Districts, should pass a resolution to create a Safe Routes to School Plan incorporating the Six E's and detailing specific commitments and implementation steps. These routes can be identified through low-cost improvements such as signage and/or paint. When applying for funding, all municipalities represented in this plan should support each other, providing letters and, where appropriate, collaborating together where practical.	☒	☒	☒	☐
☐	The school districts should provide bike racks and storage facilities for employees and students.	☐	☒	☐	☐

ALTERNATIVE FUELS GOALS

Prepare for the increasing use of alternative fuel vehicles throughout the region.

COMPLETED	GOALS	St. Lawrence	Exeter	Amity	Douglass
☐	Incorporate documents such as the Berks County Planning Commission Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Planning Advice Plan when considering updates to zoning, building codes, and parking requirements to better accommodate and expedite the development of alternative fuel infrastructure.	☒	☒	☒	☐
☐	Work with state agencies such as PennDOT and PA DEP to obtain funding to support the addition of alternative vehicle infrastructure when available.	☒	☒	☒	☐

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project, in part, was funded by a Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development (DCED) Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) Grant. MAP provides funding to assist local governments to plan for and efficiently implement a variety of policies, programs, or projects, and soundly manage development with an emphasis on intergovernmental approaches. Funding is available for two groups of activities: shared services and community planning.

Additional funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration under the Increasing Safe and Accessible Transportation Options (ISATO) (Section 11206) of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). This funding allowed planners to work with the Advisory Committee to identify, rank, prioritize, and visualize potential projects that support Complete Streets Policies within this Plan.

The Berks County Planning Commission would like to acknowledge those members of the Advisory Committee who contributed to and oversaw the preparation of this Plan update:

St. Lawrence Borough: Warren Lubenow

Exeter Township: Jason Hunter, Michele Kircher, Jeff Witman

Amity Township: Troy Bingaman, Nate Halter, Terry Jones

Douglass Township: Kaleena Breitbarth, Peter Dannecker, Robert Palko, Jerry Silberman

Daniel Boone School District: Christian Lellig, Thomas Voelker

Exeter School District: Dr. Christy Haller, Jason Mell, Timothy Morgan

All maps and aerials presented within this Plan rely upon digital information of the Berks County Geographic Information System. While the accuracy of this information is believed to be very high, it should only be used for community planning purposes and cannot be relied upon for definitive site survey delineation.

This Plan was prepared by Berks County Planning Commission Staff:

Laura Mursch Hosie– Intergovernmental Affairs Planner III

Ashley Showers– Executive Director

Beth Burkovich, GISP– GIS Analyst

Thiago Correa de Almeida– Planner II

Mike Golembiewski– Transportation Modeler III

Taylor Lawrence– Planner III

Matthew F. McGough– Transportation Planner III

Richard L. Royer– Design Planner

Amanda M. Timochenko– Planner II

