

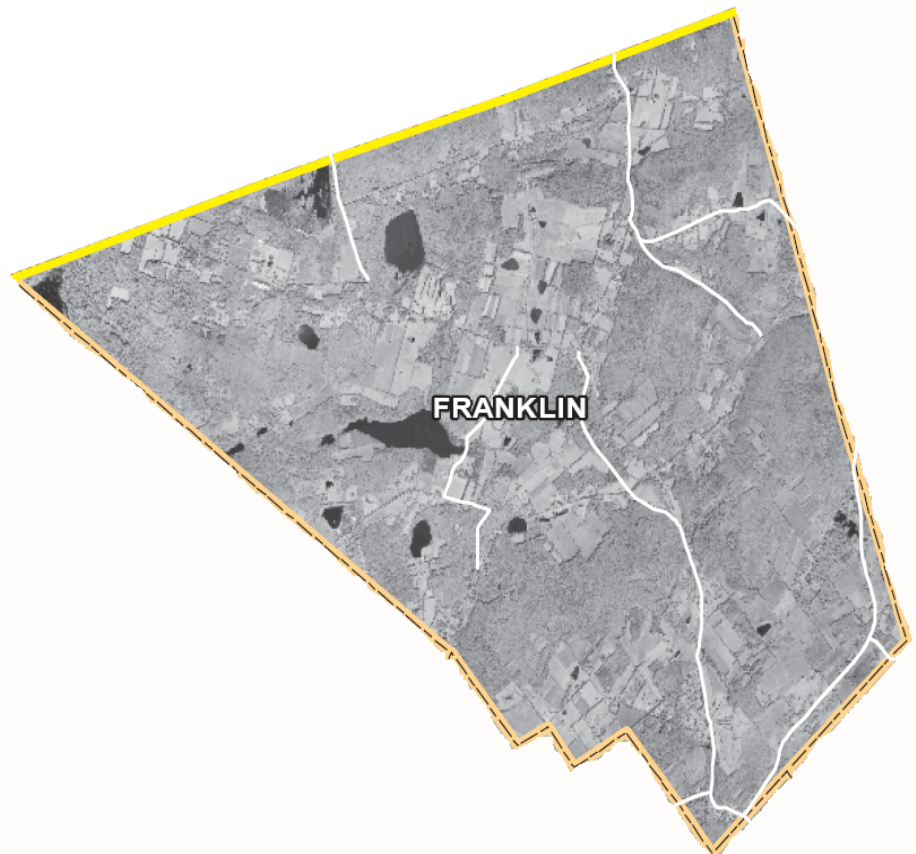
**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

**Planning Needs**

This *Comprehensive Plan* was undertaken by the local officials of Franklin Township in recognition of a number of principal critical community needs:

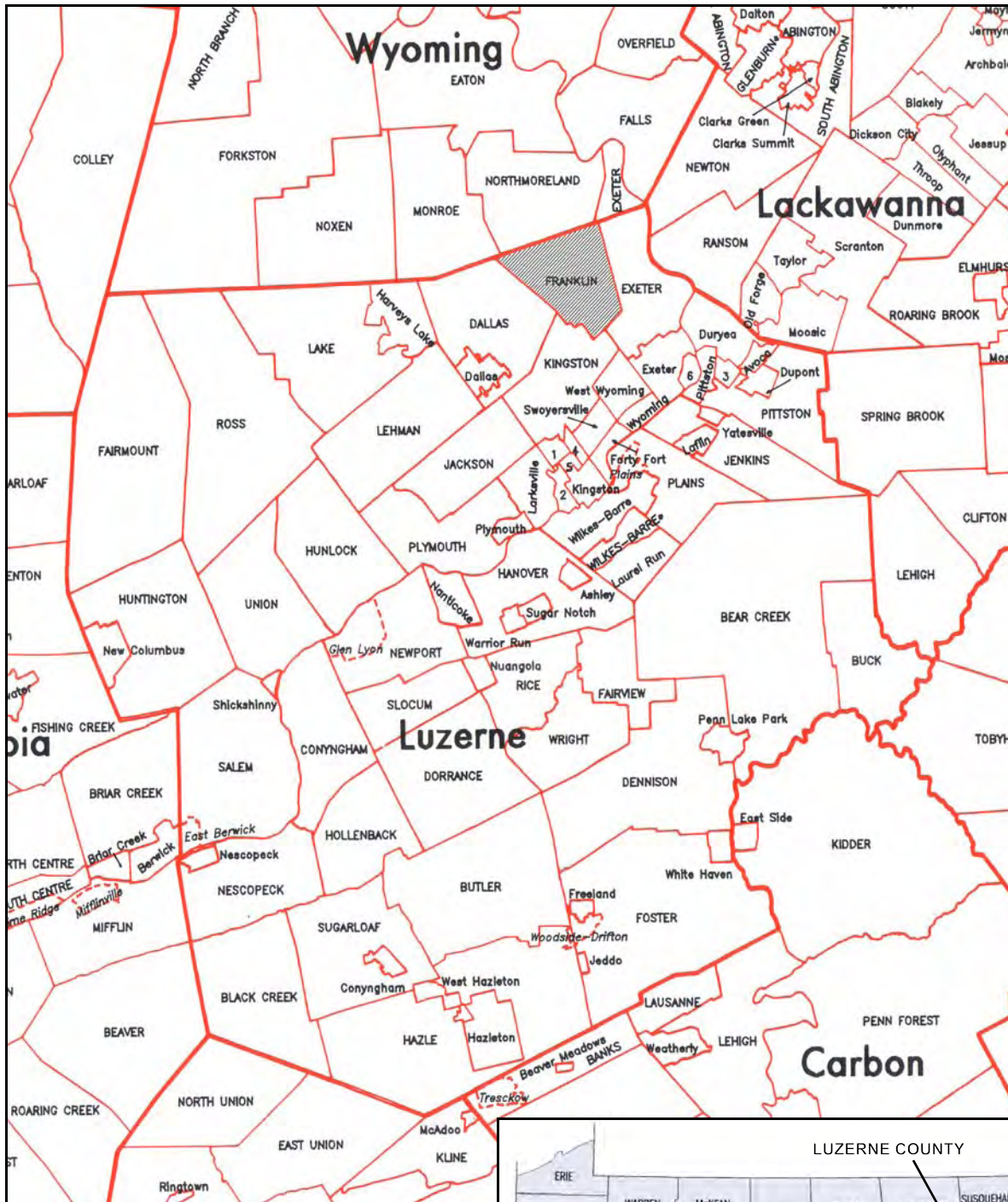
- to identify and inventory the changes which have taken place in the Township, particularly over the last 10 or 15 years.
- to address growth and development issues related to the sprawl of Wilkes-Barre and Kingston into Dallas and neighboring rural municipalities.
- to establish a framework for the conservation of the rural character, residential neighborhoods, open land, and the environment while concurrently providing for sustainable growth and development.
- to provide the foundation for updated land use management tools, principally the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and land development ordinance to ensure well designed development and to minimize sprawl.
- to organize for the most efficient administration of local government and the delivery of community facilities and services.
- to address consistency with the *Lackawanna - Luzerne Counties Comprehensive Plan*.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP POPULATION (U.S. CENSUS)	
YEAR	# PERSONS
1990	1,414
2000	1,601
2005*	1,604
2008*	1,621
*Census estimate	

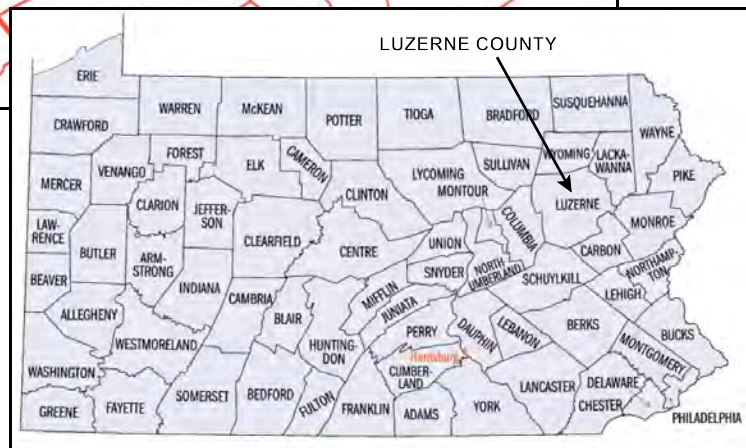


**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
 A comprehensive plan does not have the force of law. Instead, it serves as a policy statement and an action guide. As community conditions change, the actions in the Plan may require adjustment. The Plan should be continually reviewed to assess what adjustments are necessary to address these community changes.

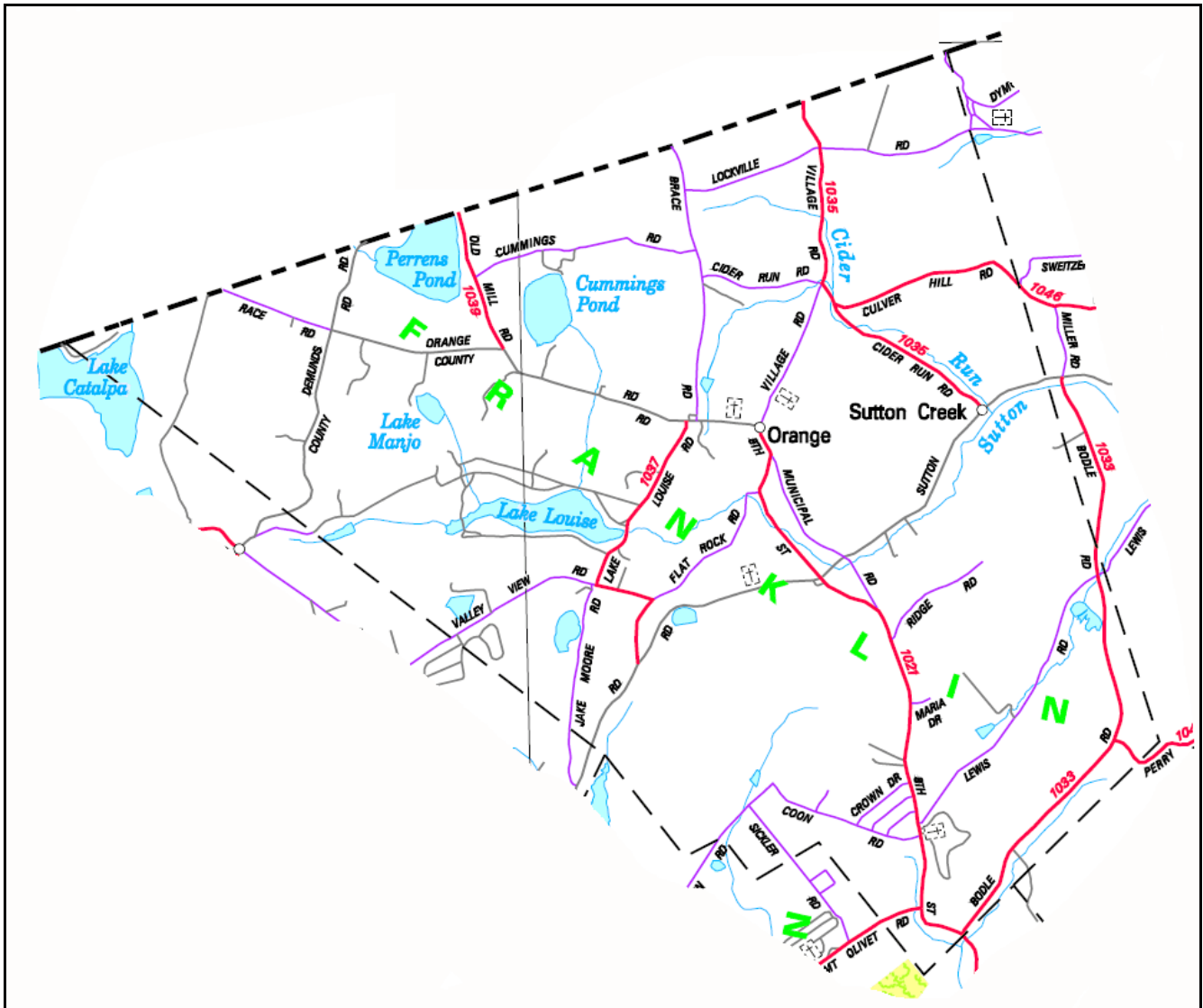
Source: Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties Comprehensive Plan (NAIP 2004 Imagery)



Regional Setting  
Franklin Township in Luzerne County



Luzerne County in Pennsylvania



Franklin Township (PennDOT Type 10 Map, 2009)

### Planning Issues Overview

Over the past 20 years, Luzerne County municipalities such as Dallas Borough, Dallas Township and Kingston Township have experienced much growth and development associated with sprawl creeping from the City of Wilkes-Barre and the Borough of Kingston. Given its location somewhat distant from urban centers and with no major highways crossing it, Franklin Township has not suffered from such development. (See *Regional Setting Figure*.) The Township remains largely undeveloped with scattered residential dwellings, very limited commercial development, and no industry. Although Franklin Township has not experienced such growth, Township officials realize the importance of planning for the future to anticipate change and take the necessary steps to address the issues associated with growth and development.

Agriculture continues to be a part of the local economy and open land is the key element of the rural working landscape. Timber harvesting also continues to be an integral part of the productive use of open lands. Given the amount of undeveloped land in the area, the attractive lifestyle associated with the rural character, and the Township's proximity to urban areas of Luzerne County, continued growth in population and number of housing units is expected. Many of the soils in the



Township which have historically supported agriculture are also suitable for development in terms of suitability for subsurface sewage disposal and construction of dwellings.

Clearly, Franklin Township holds great potential for development, particularly residential development. This anticipated change presents to the Township the challenge of providing public services and facilities to meet the demands of an increasing population. Concurrently, the Township is responsible to ensure that the growth and development occurs in accord with sound planning principles with the goal of preserving the environment and community character, while at the same time encouraging economic development to provide jobs for residents and increase the overall tax base.

This combination of growth and development issues clearly demonstrates the importance of this *Comprehensive Plan* and consideration of new and innovative land use management techniques in the Township. A subdivision and land development ordinance and a zoning ordinance can play a vital role in the growth and development planning program by directing residential and commercial development to the areas best suited for such development and requiring adequate community facilities and infrastructure. The Township must choose its direction, and continue to work to accomplish the goals of the *Plan*.



The citizens and public officials must resolve the land use conflicts which result from the necessary balance between new development and the need for facilities and services, environmental protection, community character and open land conservation. This combination of growth and development issues clearly demonstrates the critical need for this *Comprehensive Plan*, and the consideration of new and innovative land use and community management techniques. The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance will continue to play a vital role in the growth and development planning program by directing residential and commercial development to the areas best suited for such development and requiring adequate community facilities and infrastructure.

**Planning Process:  
Key Questions**

The Board of Supervisors appointed a Planning Committee to conduct the planning process. Citizen participation included community meetings, key person interviews and the Planning Commission meeting and Supervisors' hearing required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code prior to the adoption of the plan. Community Planning and Management, LLC, of Paupack, PA, and Sarcinello Planning and GIS Services of Swarthmore, PA, provided professional assistance with the financial support of the Luzerne County Office of Community Development.

In short, the planning process involves finding the sometimes complex answers to four simple questions:

1. *Where are we?*

2. *Where do we want to be?*

3. *How do we get there?*

4. *How are we doing?*

***Where are we?***  
**Background Studies**

The initial step in the process is the collection and analysis of information on a wide range of community characteristics and concerns aimed at defining the existing condition of the community and identifying planning implications. Data is compiled for the following:

- Growth and Development, and Existing Land Use
- Natural Features, Land Suitability for Development and Development Concerns
- Demographics and Economic Base
- Community Facilities and Services
- Highways and Transportation
- Planning and Development in Luzerne County, the Region and Contiguous Municipalities

***Where do we want to be?***  
**Goals & Objectives/ Plans**

The *Plan Goals and Objectives* are a vision of how residents and local officials expect the community to develop and evolve into the future. Objectives are specific actions which are designed to achieve goals and satisfy community needs. The *Goals and Objectives* were formulated by the Planning Committee based on public input and the findings of the background studies. Based on this community vision and the needs identified in the planning process, the Planning Committee formulated the various plans to guide the future growth and development of the Township including:

- *Land Use Plan*
- *Natural Resource Conservation Plan*
- *Community Facilities and Services Plan*
- *Transportation Plan*
- *Housing Plan*
- *Historic Resources Plan*

***How do we get there?***  
**Implementation Strategies**

The specific means to effect the various plans are included in the *Planning Process and Interrelationship of Plan Elements And Implementation Strategies* section and are discussed at various points in the specific plans. In addition, and to facilitate on-going use of the *Plan*, the actions and the responsible entities required to carry out the plan's expectations are summarized in the *Findings and Summary of Actions* section. Examples of *implementation strategies* include zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, historic structures preservation, and capital improvement budgeting.

While the ultimate responsibility for the Township lies with the Board of Supervisors, much of the work of implementation, assessment of the accomplishment of goals and objectives, and periodic comprehensive plan review can be accomplished by the Planning Commission and citizen volunteers who are appointed to special committees or task forces along with Township officials. These groups can provide evaluations and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for action.

***How are we doing?***  
**Need for**  
**Continued Planning**

It is important to emphasize that a comprehensive plan should not simply be considered a *document on a shelf*, but instead, one element of a community management process dependent upon the attitude and on-going foresight of the public officials charged with the responsibility of guiding the growth and development of the community. The *Plan* should be used by the community when important decisions are made and its goals and objectives and prioritized actions should be reviewed at least each year to assess the community's accomplishments or the need to shift priorities for action.

Simply stated, a comprehensive plan is a starting point - a blueprint to guide the future development of the Township and should be revised and updated periodically to reflect changing conditions, attitudes, situations, and goals of the community. The success of the planning program will be measured only in the form of accomplishment. The effectuation of the plan will be the responsibility of the area's residents. It will require public support and positive action by the Township Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

**State Mandated Plan Review**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (§301,c) requires local municipal comprehensive plans to be reviewed *at least every ten years*. The change suggests a greater Commonwealth emphasis on planning and the need for local municipalities to incorporate the planning process into normal functions. However, the ten-year review window is certainly far too long. Planning, that is, assessing how decisions and community changes fit into the plan, should be practiced continually.

**Community Survey**

As part of the planning process a community survey was conducted. Although the results of the survey are mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan it is important to note that the survey results do not represent the majority opinion of Planning Area residents. Instead, it simply reflects the opinions of those who responded to the survey.