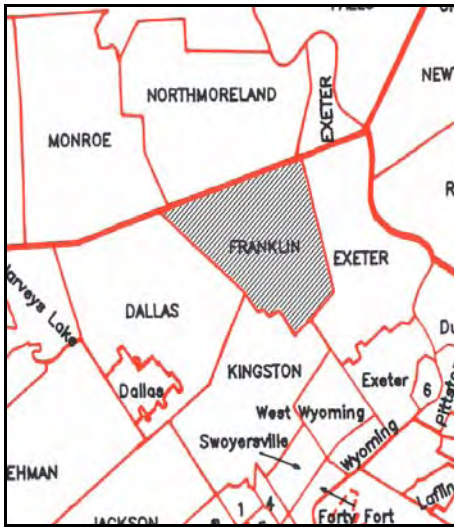


**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE COUNTY, CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES AND THE REGION**



Franklin Twp/Contiguous Municipalities

**Planning Code**

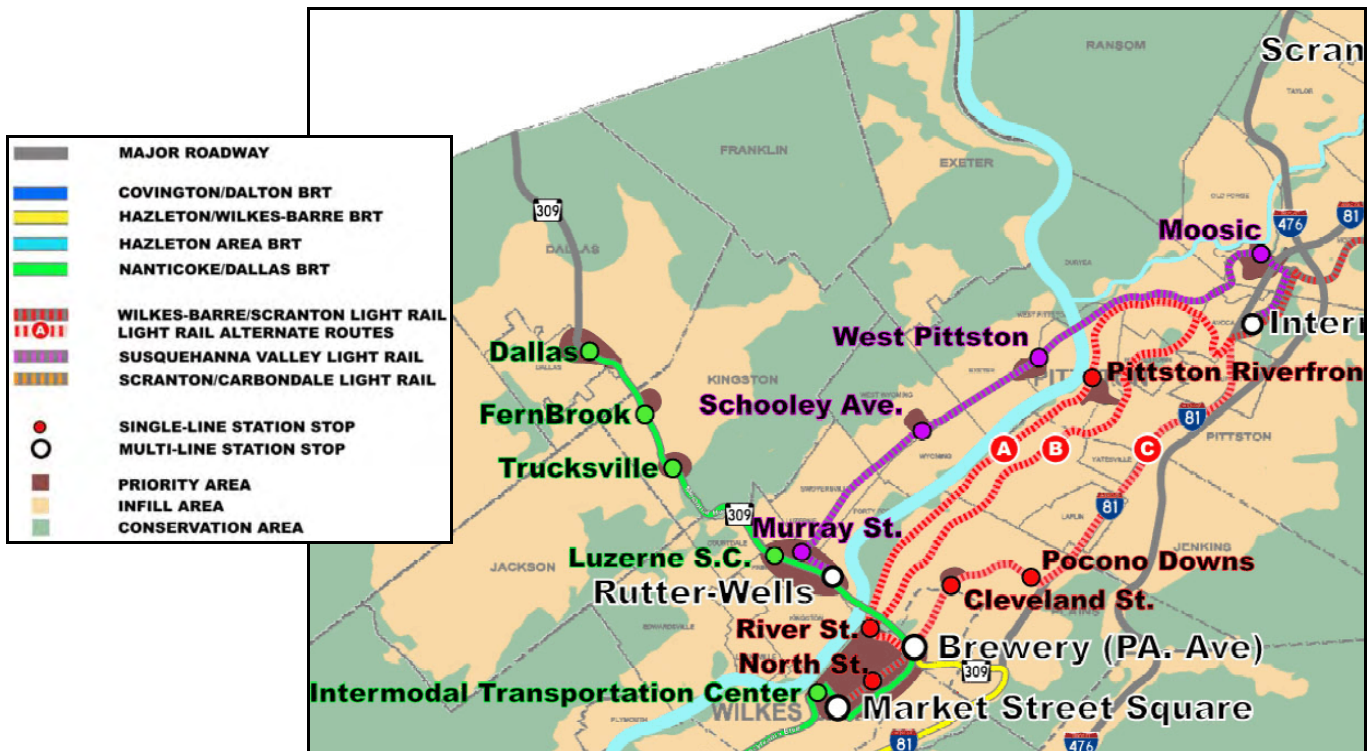
In 1988 the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code was amended to require all counties in the Commonwealth to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan within three years. The MPC dictates, and common sense suggests, that planning and development in contiguous municipalities, the county and the region be considered when a local municipal plan is adopted. MPC §301.4(a) goes on to state that *municipal comprehensive plans which are adopted shall be generally consistent with the adopted county comprehensive plan.*

**Contiguous Municipalities**

Franklin Township lies in the northwest section of Luzerne County and is bordered by Wyoming County. Three Luzerne County townships, Dallas, Exeter and Kingston, and three Wyoming County Townships, Exeter, Monroe and Northmoreland adjoin Franklin Township.

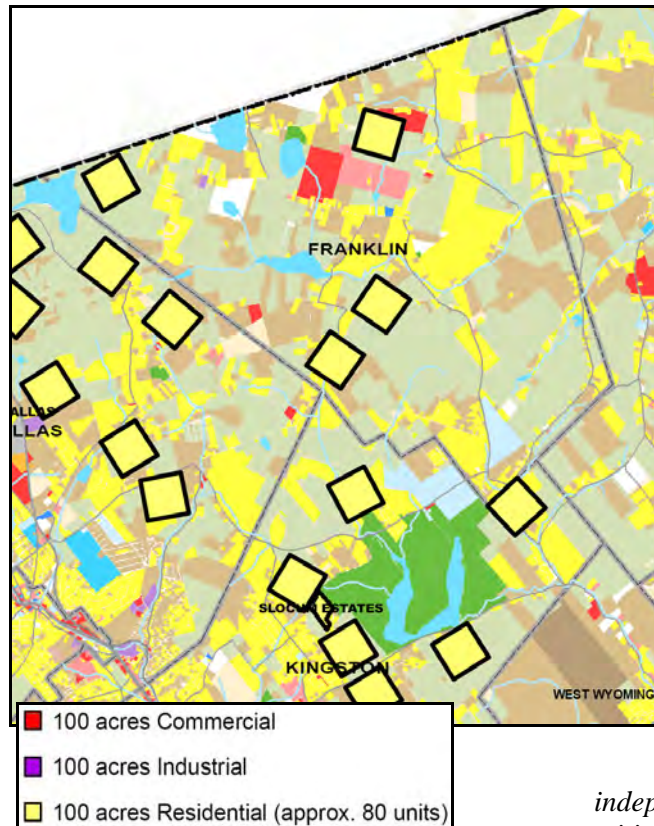
**Luzerne County**

Luzerne County is working with Lackawanna County on a bi-county plan. The planning process is progressing and plan completion is anticipated by the end of 2010. A draft land use plan has been published that envisions Franklin Township primarily as a conservation area. This is consistent with Franklin Township’s vision of conserving existing farms and orchards and promoting conservation design residential development, and relying on the larger area for intensive commercial and industrial development. (See the *Lackawanna-Luzerne Preliminary Land Use Plan Figure.*)



Lackawanna-Luzerne Preliminary Land Use Plan (2009 Draft)

Lackawanna-Luzerne Trend Scenario 2008-2030



The bi-county planning process has also developed a draft development projection as shown in the *Lackawanna-Luzerne Trend Scenario 2008 - 2030 Figure* based on current development trends. The projection shows four areas of increased residential development, but not intensive commercial or industrial development. Again, this is consistent with the Township’s conservation vision. In any case, the long term development of Franklin Township will depend on the local and regional economy and the application of local land use management ordinances.

**County Plan and Local Plan Consistency**

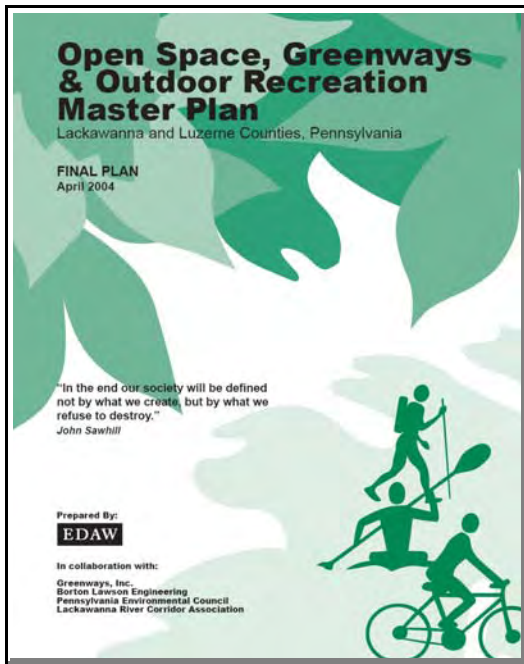
The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), at §301.4, requires general consistency between local municipal comprehensive plans and a county comprehensive plan. The Lackawanna-Luzerne Comprehensive Plan website notes: *The Comprehensive Plan will serve as an overall planning guide for the counties and their municipalities. It will establish a framework for future growth, conservation and preservation that strengthens our existing communities and responsibly stewards our natural, agricultural and cultural resources. As part of this overall plan, the counties will also develop independent plans for future transportation needs and hazard mitigation matters.*

Given the approach taken by the Lackawanna-Luzerne Plan, consistency between this Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan and county planning is not anticipated to be an issue. As noted earlier, the *conservation area* designation included in the Lackawanna-Luzerne draft land use plan and limited scale of commercial and industrial development is consistent with Franklin Township goals and objectives.

In any case, the Luzerne County Planning Commission will, in accord with the MPC, have the opportunity to review the Franklin Township plan and provide comments on any inconsistencies. In short, the Township Comprehensive Plan will serve to be more specific than the county plan in terms of growth and development in the local community.

Finally, the MPC provides a mechanism to reconcile any local-county planning inconsistencies by giving local municipalities the opportunity to request a change in the county plan to ensure consistency with local plans. The county must accept the requested change unless a refusal can be clearly justified. In any case, the MPC requires counties to update their plans every ten years. MPC §302(d) states: *Counties shall . . . consider amendments to their comprehensive plan proposed by municipalities which are considering adoption or revision of their municipal comprehensive plans so as to achieve general consistency between the respective plans. County comprehensive plans shall be updated at least every ten years. Where two or more contiguous municipalities request amendments to a county comprehensive plan for the purpose of achieving general consistency between the municipal plans or multimunicipal plan and the county comprehensive plan, the county must accept the amendments unless good cause for their refusal is established.*

**Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties  
Open Space, Greenways & Outdoor Recreation Master Plan**



In 1994, Lackawanna County and Luzerne County adopted the Open Space, Greenways & Outdoor Recreation Master Plan which notes: *With 40 separate local governing bodies in Lackawanna County and 76 in Luzerne County, the importance of a unified approach to address these concerns became necessary. Providing a planning framework for the preservation of open spaces and the development of greenways and outdoor recreation areas at the county level will provide local leaders at the municipal level with a defensible blueprint for decision making. This plan sets forth recommendations for achieving a balance between natural resources and the built environment so that the region may continue to thrive and benefit from its rich natural, recreational and cultural resources.*

The Open Space, Greenways & Outdoor Recreation Master Plan includes an inventory of open space and recreation resources, identifies important resources and recommends actions for enhancement and conservation of the resources. The intent of this Comprehensive Plan is to be consistent with the Open Space Plan as it applies to Franklin Township.

**Planning in  
Contiguous Municipalities**

All of the municipalities adjoining Franklin Township have adopted comprehensive plans. In Wyoming County, Monroe Township and Northmoreland Township cooperated with Eaton Township and Noxen Township on a multimunicipal plan adopted in 2006, and Exeter Township’s comprehensive plan dates to 1972. In Luzerne County, Exeter Township’s comprehensive plan also dates to 1972, and Dallas Township, Lehman Township, Kingston Township and Dallas Borough recently prepared a multimunicipal comprehensive plan which was not formally adopted by either Dallas Township or Kingston Township, with each of the two township continuing to rely on their existing plans.

Although the contiguous municipal plans vary widely in date and to a degree in content, each concentrates on similar issues related to quality of life and conservation issues and no significant inconsistencies are anticipated between those municipal planning programs and ongoing planning in Franklin Township. The public review and adoption process for this *Comprehensive Plan* enabled municipal officials of the contiguous municipalities to review and comment on the Plan and no potential inconsistencies were identified.

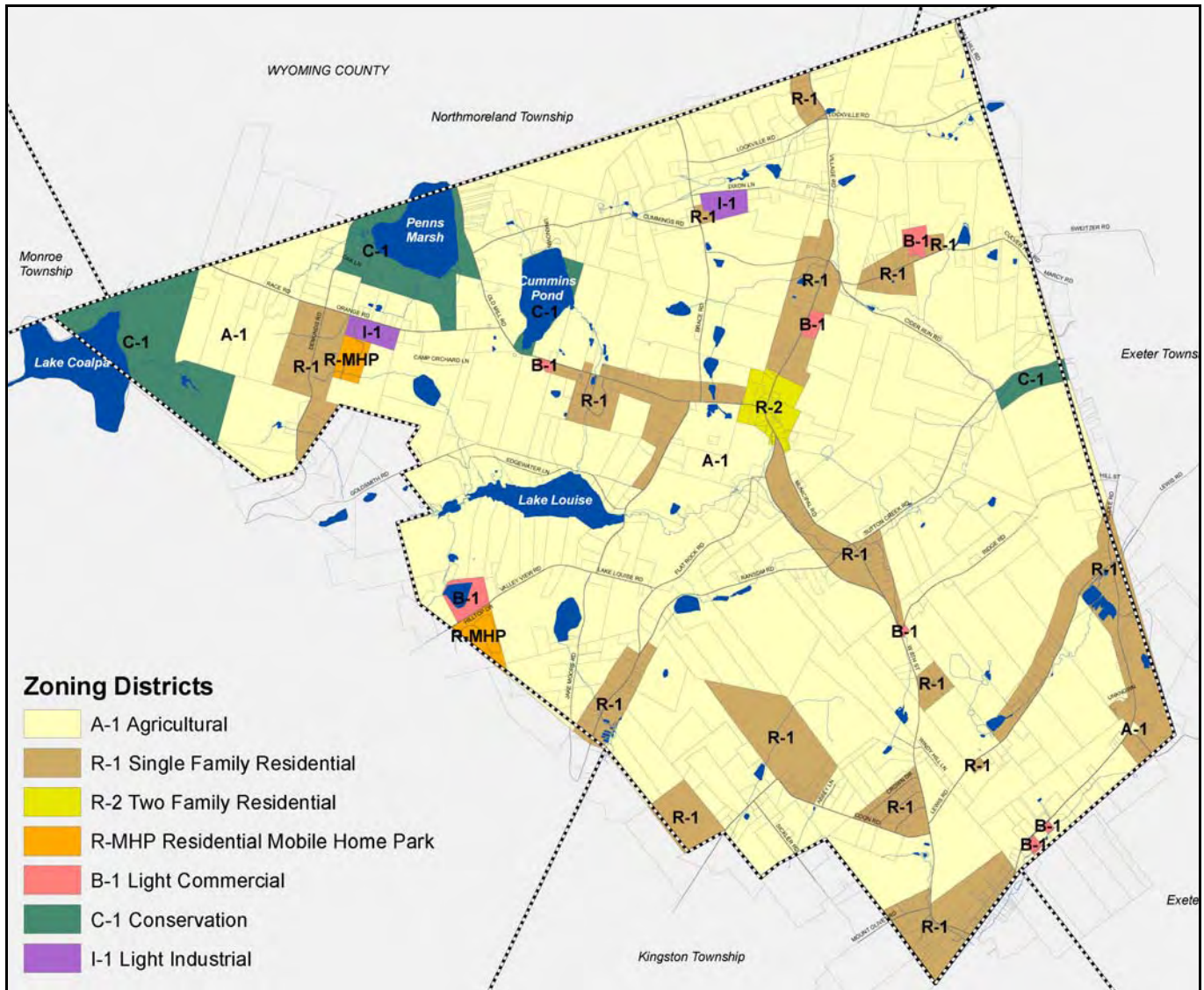
**Zoning in  
Contiguous Municipalities**

The real issue in terms of effects on adjoining municipalities is zoning. All of the townships adjoining Franklin Township have adopted zoning except Northmoreland Township. The potential for land use conflicts in Franklin Township is discussed below.

- In the area along the common borders, the adjoining municipalities are generally similar in existing land use character, that is, residential generally adjoins residential, commercial adjoins commercial, and open land adjoins open land.
- The zoning ordinances of all zoned municipalities include development

performance standards to minimize impacts between residential and nonresidential development. Such standards include increased setbacks and buffers, noise and lighting control, and similar provisions.

- While the potential for conflicting land uses certainly does exist and the long standing zoning districts are not likely to be changed to address potential conflicts, this is the case where any two dissimilar districts adjoin and zoning ordinance performance standards are expected to provide protection for adjoining uses.



Franklin Township Zoning Map

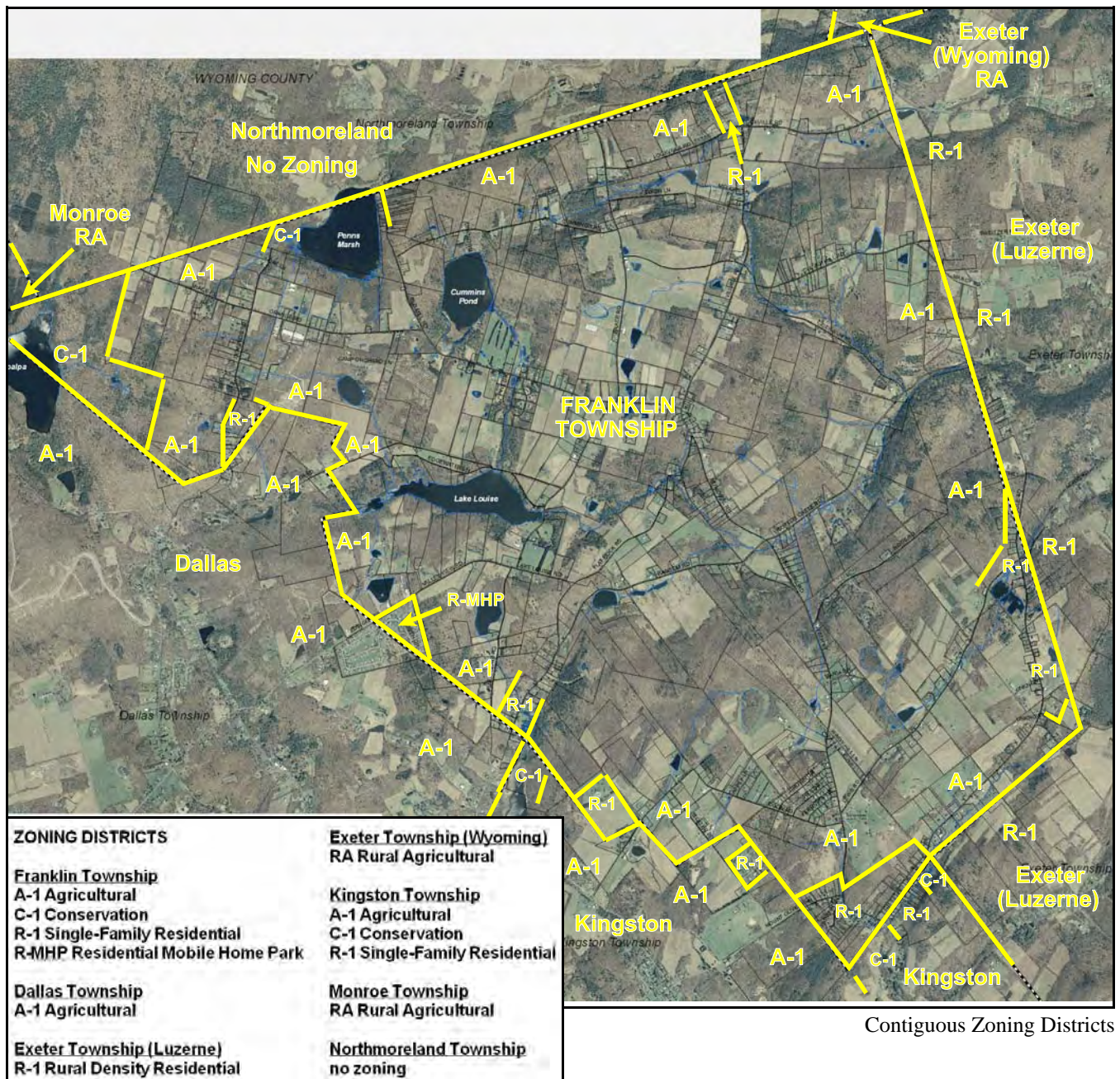
**Contiguous Zoning Districts**

Wyoming County - Significant conflicts are not expected along the Wyoming County border. (See the following *Contiguous Zoning Districts Map* which shows zoning districts along Franklin Township borders. See the *Franklin Township Zoning Map* for interior zoning districts.)

- Northmoreland - Most of the Wyoming County border is comprised of Northmoreland Township which is un-zoned in so no land use control is provided.

The performance standards in the Franklin Township zoning ordinance will be expected to minimize conflicts between land uses.

- Exeter - The Exeter Township Rural-Agricultural District (RA) adjoins Franklin’s Agricultural District and the types of uses allowed in each district are similar and primarily agriculture related along with single-family dwellings and public uses.
- Monroe - The Monroe Township Rural-Agricultural (RA) District adjoins the Franklin Conservation District. The Monroe RA District includes a wide range of commercial uses in addition to agriculture and residential which is not inconsistent with the Franklin Commercial District.



Contiguous Zoning Districts

Luzerne County - A number of dissimilar zoning districts adjoin along the Township boundary in Luzerne County creating the potential for conflicting types of development. As noted, performance standards in the zoning ordinances are necessary to minimize conflicts.

- Dallas - Dallas Township is zoned Agricultural (A-1) along the entire Franklin border with allowed uses similar to the Franklin Agricultural (A1) District. Most of Franklin is also zoned Agricultural (A-1); however parts of Franklin are zoned Commercial (C-1), Single-Family Residential (R-1) and Residential Mobile Home Park (R-MHP). The greatest potential for conflicts arises along the interface of the Dallas Agricultural District (A-1) and Franklin Conservation District (C-1).
- Exeter - The Exeter Township R-1 Rural Density Residential District adjoins the entire Franklin Township border. The District allows single-family residential and agricultural activities and is generally consistent with the Franklin Agricultural (A-1) and Single-Family Residential (R-1) Districts. A small area of the Franklin Conservation District (C-1) adjoins Exeter Township.
- Kingston - The potential for conflicts along the Franklin-Kingston border is limited. Kingston Township zoning along the Franklin border includes the Conservation District (C-1), the Agricultural District (A-1), and the Single-Family Residential District (R-1). Again the uses allowed in the Kingston A-1 District are similar to the Franklin A-1 District. The Kingston Conservation District (C-1) allows only agricultural, forestry and open space uses and cell towers.

**Contiguous Municipality Review**

The Municipalities Planning Code §502.1(b) provides standing for local municipal governing bodies to appear before and provide comments to any contiguous municipality considering a proposed subdivision, change of land use, or land development, thereby allowing issues of conflicts to be raised. Any changes made to zoning districts must be considered in terms of the zoning and existing land uses in any adjoining municipality to avoid such land use conflicts. For example, it would be inappropriate to designate an industrial or heavy commercial area adjacent to an existing residential development or residential zoning district in an adjoining municipality.

Township officials should work with the officials of adjoining municipalities to establish agreements to formalize this process among contiguous municipalities so that any municipality potentially affected by a zoning change or a development project has the opportunity for review. The MPC already requires this for comprehensive plans and plan amendments.

**Regional Planning**

Regional planning in Northeastern Pennsylvania is not formalized in any municipally organized body. Each county planning agency is responsible for review and coordination of planning within its jurisdiction. The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance, located in Pittston, Luzerne County, serves as a community and economic planning and development information source and funnel for grants and special projects for Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne Counties, but has no municipally authorized regional planning responsibility.

See the Transportation Section of this Plan for a discussion of state highway improvement project planning coordinated by the Lackawanna/Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization for Franklin Township.