



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP

LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

2011

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP LUZERNE COUNTY

**ADOPTED
JULY 5, 2011**

**Franklin Township Planning Commission
Franklin Township Board of Supervisors**

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<p>WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER COMMUNITIES</p>	

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

**SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

Planning Needs 1
 Planning Issues Overview 3
 Planning Process: Key Questions 4
 Community Survey 6

**SECTION 2
COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Need for Goals and Objectives 1
 Community Balance 1
 County Planning and Area Wide Planning 1
 A Guide and Policy Statement 2
 General Community Development Objectives 2
 Goal 1 - Quality Lifestyle 4
 Goal 2 - Land Use 8
 Goal 3 - Natural Resources and Open Space 10
 Goal 4 - Community Facilities and Services 13
 Goal 5 - Circulation System 16
 Goal 6 - Housing 18
 Goal 7 - Historic Resources 20
 Goal 8 - Recreation and Heritage 21

**SECTION 3
FINDINGS AND SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

Demographics and Economic Base 1
 Planning and Development in Luzerne County, Contiguous Municipalities and the Region 3
 Land Use 4
 Housing 13
 Community Facilities and Services 17
 Natural Resources 23
 Transportation 28
 Historic Resources 31

**SECTION 4
PLANNING PROCESS AND INTERRELATIONSHIP OF PLAN ELEMENTS
AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Framework for the Future 1
 Planning *Process* 1
 Conservation of Community Character 1
 Key Recommendations 1
 Community Vision and Community Effort 2
 Community Involvement 2
 Implementation Strategies 2

SECTION 5
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN LUZERNE COUNTY,
CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES AND THE REGION

Planning Code 1
Contiguous Mission 1
Luzerne County 1
County Plan and Local Consistency 2
Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties Open Space, Greenways and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan 3
Planning in Contiguous Municipalities 3
Zoning in Contiguous Municipalities 3
Contiguous Zoning Districts 4
Contiguous Municipality Review 6
Regional Planning 6

SECTION 6
LAND USE PLAN

Introduction
Growth and Development 1
Land Use Goal and Objectives 1
Existing Conditions
Land Use Pattern 7
Build-Out Analysis
Overview 9
Planning Implications
Overview 11
Current Land Use and Environmental Controls 11
Contemporary Planning Tools
Overview 13
Conservation Subdivision Design 13
Conservation Design Process 15
Transferable Development Rights 17
Traditional Neighborhood Development 18
Considerations for Conservation Design, TDR and TND 18
Conservation Easements 19
Farmland Preservation Program 20
Agricultural Security Areas 20
Tax Incentives - Clean and Green 21
Agricultural Protection Zoning 21
Future Planning Policies and Actions
Future Land Use Plan 21
Residential Development 23
Nonresidential Development 23
Agriculture 23
Forestry 24
Mineral Extraction (Including Natural Gas) 24
Open Space 25
Natural Resources 27
The Official Map for Open Space and Public Facilities 27
Implementation Strategies
Zoning Ordinance Actions 27
SALDO Actions 28
Voluntary Actions 28

**SECTION 7
HOUSING**

Introduction 1

Housing Goal and Objectives 1

Housing Considerations

 Municipalities Planning Code Requirements 2

 Housing Affordability 2

 Affordability in a Growing Community 2

Existing Housing Conditions

 Overview 4

 2010 Census 4

 Housing Trends 4

 Age of Housing 6

 Housing Demand 7

 Home Ownership 7

 Housing Value 7

 Housing Structural and Vacancy Characteristics 9

 Housing Affordability in the Township 11

Planning Implications

 Affordability - A Regional Issue 12

 Housing Condition 12

 Housing Programs 12

Future Planning Policies and Actions

 Overview 13

 Policies 13

Implementation Strategies

 Overview 14

 Zoning Ordinance and SALDO 14

 Housing Programs 14

 Property Maintenance 14

 Dangerous Structures 14

**SECTION 8
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Overview 1

Community Facilities and Services Goal and Objectives 1

Community Facilities and Services Existing Conditions and Actions

 Growth and Development 3

 Planning and Cooperation 3

 Plan Focus 4

 Facility and Service Providers 4

 Intermunicipal Cooperation 5

 Schools 5

 Township Government 6

 Facilities and Services 6

 Local Priorities 6

 Township Facilities 6

 Local Road Maintenance 9

 Road Maintenance Cooperation 9

 Recreation Facilities 9

 Cooperation 10

Community Survey 10

park master site Plan 12

Recreation and the Planning Code 14

Specific Actions Related to Recreation 14

Police Protection 15

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Service 15

Franklin Township Fire Department 15

Franklin-Northmoreland Ambulance association 16

Volunteers 16

911 Addressing 17

Emergency Response Actions 17

Emergency Management 18

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling 19

Water Supply 19

Sewage Disposal 19

On-Lot Sewage Disposal 20

Sewage Disposal Actions 21

Public Libraries 21

Community Facilities for New Development 21

Community Facility and Service Priorities 21

Intermunicipal Cooperation 22

Taxing Authority 23

Other Revenue Sources 23

Franklin Township Revenue/Expenditure 23

Demand for Facilities and Services 25

Revenue Potential 25

Future Spending 25

Capital Improvements Program 25

Informal v. Formal 25

Prioritization of Municipal Needs 26

**SECTION 9
NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION PLAN**

Introduction

Overview 1

The Plan 1

Natural Resources Goal and Objectives

..... 1

Existing Conditions

Overview 4

Physiography and Topography 4

Planning Implications: Steep Slopes 4

Geology and Hydrology 6

Glaciers in Luzerne County 7

Glacial Deposits 8

Groundwater 8

Groundwater Recharge 8

Recharge in the Planning Area 9

Withdrawal Regulation 9

Planning Implications: Need for Conservation 9

Planning Implications: Groundwater Quality 10

Soils 10

Soils: Findings 13

Planning Implications: Soils 14

Forest and Vegetative Cover 14

Forest Pests 15

Invasive Species 16

Planning Implications: Forest Lands 17

Wetlands 17

Wetland Regulation 18

Planning Implications: Wetlands 18

Watersheds and Surface Waters 19

Water Quality Regulation and Stream Classification 21

Surface Water Quality 21

Planning Implications: Watersheds and Surface Waters 21

Floodplain 22

Floodplain Regulation 22

Floodplain Maps 22

Township Flood Zones 22

Natural Areas 22

Planning Implications: Natural Areas 24

Forestry 24

Minerals 25

Minerals and the MPC 26

Future Planning Policies and Actions

Overview 27

Environmental Protection 27

Local Authority for Regulation 27

Integrated Approach 28

Topography and Geology 28

Improving Stormwater Management 29

Groundwater Conservation and Protection 30

Soils 32

Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control 32

Forest and Vegetation 32

Wetlands 33

Watersheds and Surface Waters 33

Floodplain 34

Habitat and Natural Areas 34

Forestry Actions 34

Minerals Actions 34

Dark Skies 35

Zoning Standards for Lighting and Glare 35

**SECTION 10
TRANSPORTATION**

Introduction

Transportation System 1

Access - Mobility 1

Transportation Goal and Objectives 1

Existing Conditions and Actions

Highway Classification Factors 2

Highway Functional Classification 2

Expressways 5

Arterial Highways 5

Collector Roads 5

Local Roads 7

Public Roads in Franklin Township 7
 Traffic Volume 7
 Road Network Level of Service 8
 Level-of-Service in the Township 8
 Land Use Planning Considerations 8
 Need for Regional Transportation Planning 10
 Township Roads - Condition and Future Plans 10
 Township Road Posting and Bonding 11
 New Road Construction and Public Dedication 11
 Condition of State and County Roads 11
 Specific Areas of Concern 13
 Bridges 13
 Subdivision Roads 13
 Airports, Railroads and Public Transportation 13
 Bicycle Routes 14
Planning Policies and Actions
 Overview 14
 Local Roads 14
 Local Ordinances 14
 Official Map 15
 State and County Roads 15
 Public Transportation 15

**SECTION 11
 HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Introduction 1
Historic Resources Goal and Objectives 1
Brief History 2
Historic Resources Inventory
 Overview 3
 Locally Significant Resources 3
 National Register of Historic Places 4
Legal Framework
 Local Historic District Act 6
 Municipalities Planning Code 7
Future Planning Policies
 Overview 7
 Policies 7
Implementation Strategies
 Overview 8
 Historic Resource Inventory 8
 Education and Outreach 8
 Recreation 8
 Ordinances 8
 Site and Sign Design Guidelines 8
 Certified Local Government 8

**SECTION 12
DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMIC BASE**

Introduction 1

Population Trends

 Population 1970-2008 1

 Population Trends by Age 4

 Population Projections 6

Socioeconomic Characteristics

 Educational Attainment 7

 Income 8

 Employment Status 10

 Occupation and Industry 10

 Commute to Work 12

Planning Considerations 13

PLAN MAPS

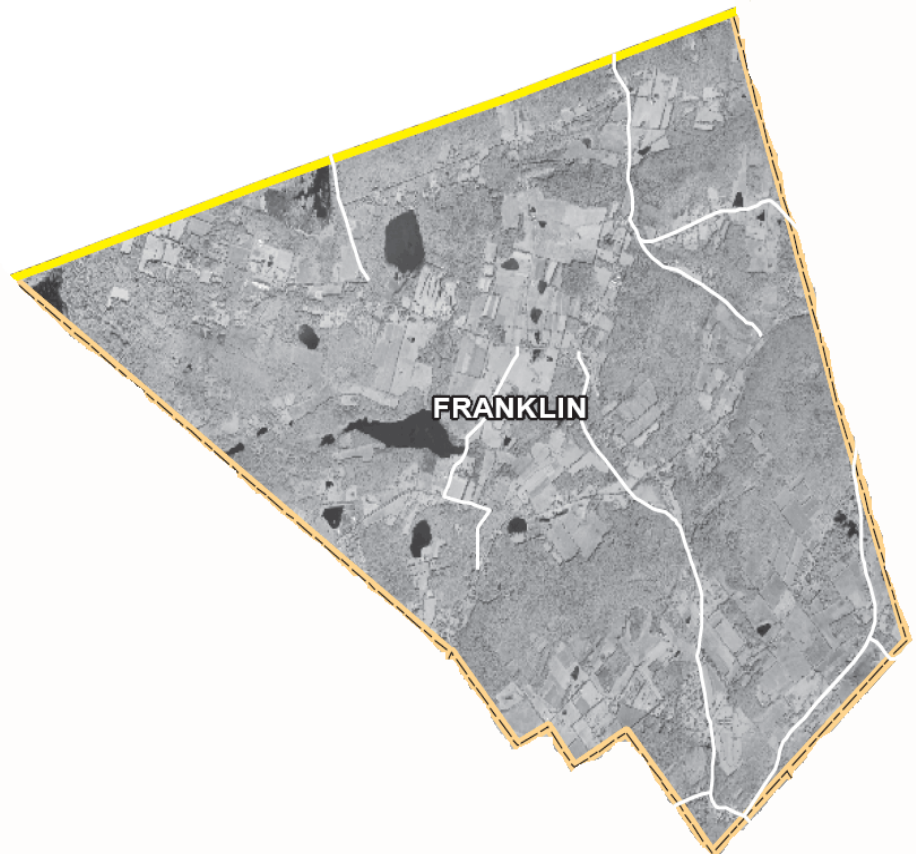
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Planning Needs

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

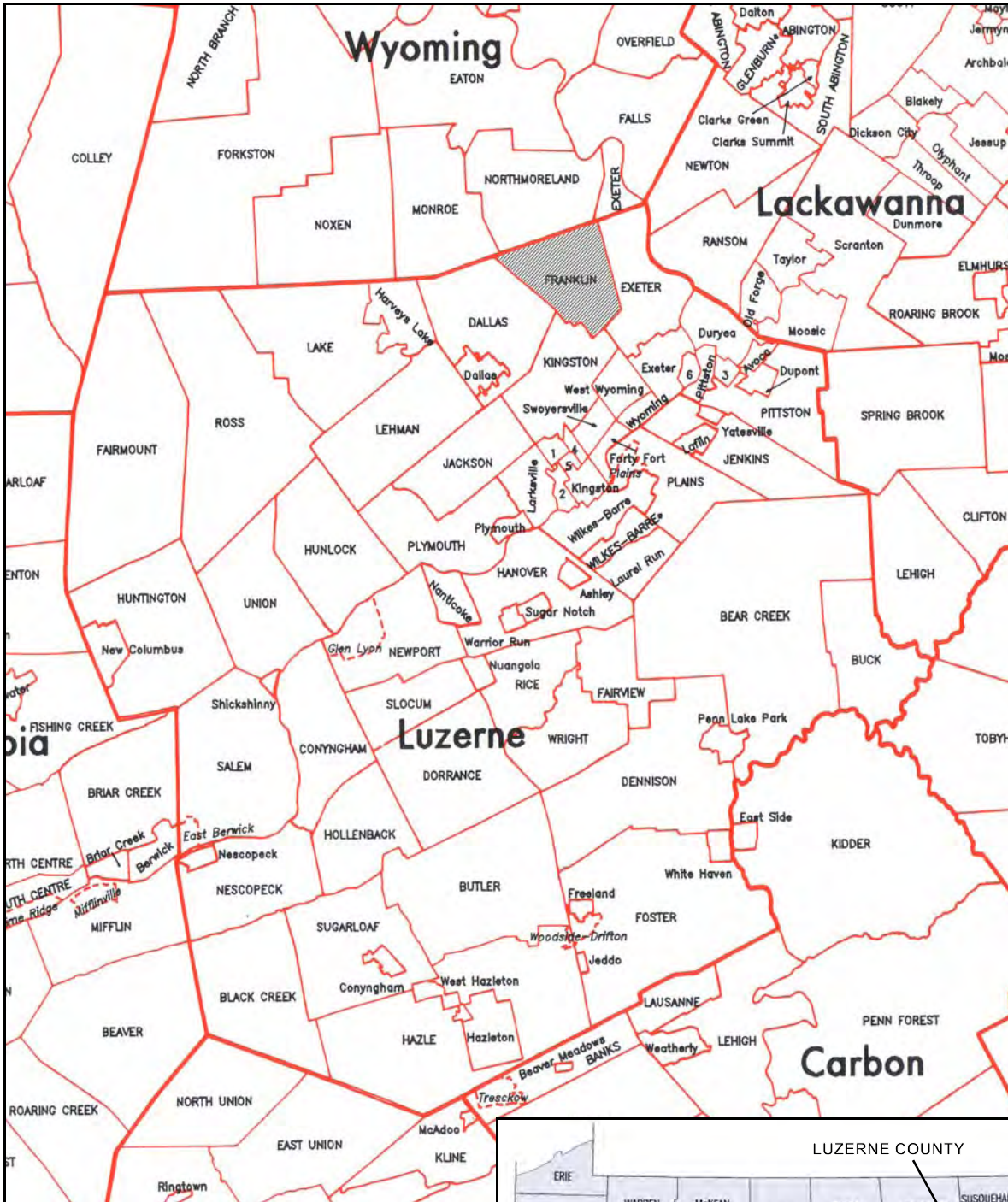
- to identify and inventory the changes which have taken place in the Township, particularly over the last 10 or 15 years.
- to address growth and development issues related to the sprawl of Wilkes-Barre and Kingston into Dallas and neighboring rural municipalities.
- to establish a framework for the 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	

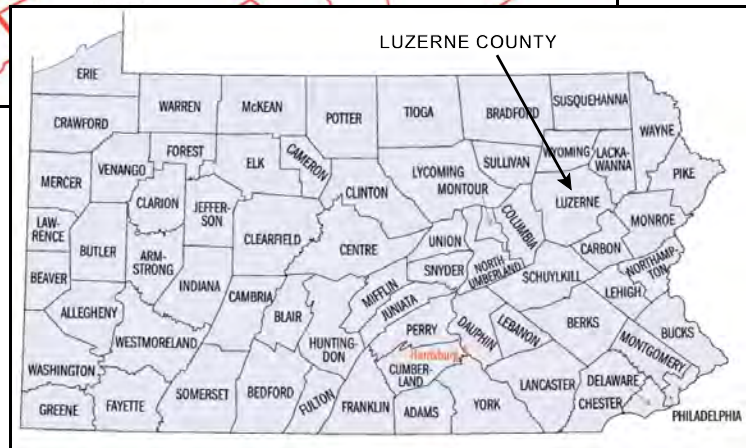


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 A comprehensive plan does not have the force of law. Instead, it serves as a policy statement and an action guide. As community conditions change, the actions in the Plan may require adjustment. The Plan should be continually reviewed to assess what adjustments are necessary to address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

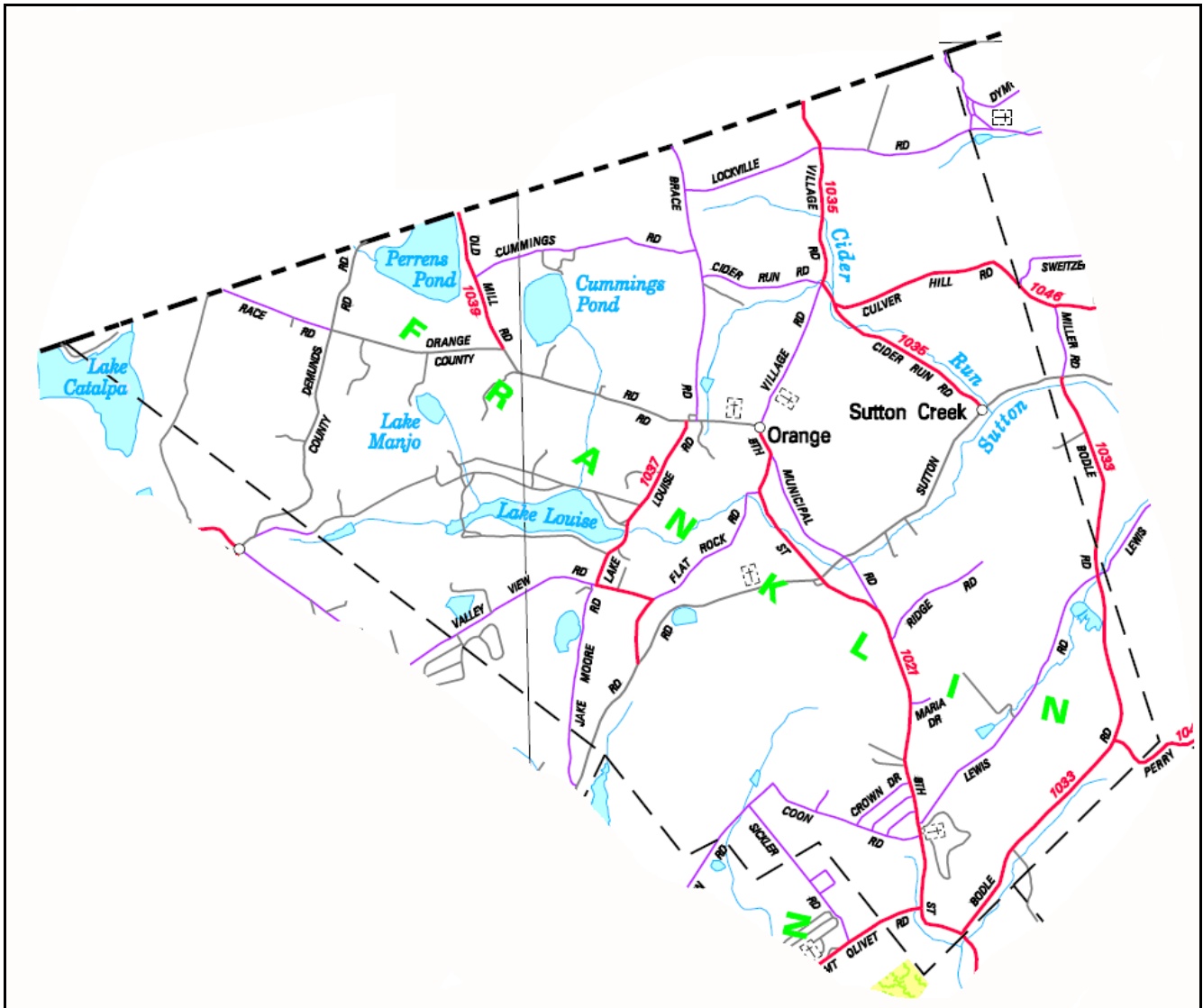
Source: Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties Comprehensive Plan (NAIP 2004 Imagery)



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.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Need for Goals and Objectives

Any community planning effort by its very nature must include goals. Without goals there would be little direction to the future of the community. In the case of planning for a rural/agricultural community such as Franklin Township, goals establish the framework for change and growth management, and the foundation for maintaining key community characteristics. Goals pronounce the community's expectations and provide a vision of how the community plans to evolve into the future. Objectives are specific actions which are designed to achieve goals and satisfy community needs. Making decisions based on planning goals and attaining specific objectives improves the physical condition of the community and sustains and enhances the overall quality of life.

Shared Vision - Every successful business, organization, or individual has a plan for the future. Communities are no different. If nothing else, a community needs to agree on a shared vision of what it wants to become. This vision should address the full range of local concerns: schools, housing, economic development, neighborhoods, parks and open space. Creating a shared vision is important because it provides a blueprint for the future of the community. People may differ on how to achieve the community's vision, but without a blueprint nothing will happen.

Source: Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities, Howe, J., McMahon, and Propst, L., Island press, Wash., D.C., 1997, p. 48.

Community Balance

Rural communities and residents of rural communities are characteristically unique from their more urban counterparts, and have the opportunity to directly mold their communities. The same can be said for Franklin Township which is clearly a rural community in transition. *The rural community is seen as the conservator of its own resources, habitat, and culture. Local citizens are directly involved in the control of community assets as they plan for the retention, enrichment, and equitable use of those assets for present and future generations.*

*Along with the community's goals, specific objectives must be identified; actions and methods for achieving the goals. Some objectives will be the direct responsibility of local elected and appointed officials. Others will require the cooperation and participation of other levels of government and the private sector.*¹

The goals of all residents of the community will not be the same. Some residents will demand community conservation and environmental protection while other residents will favor increased economic development. Some residents will demand more community facilities and services, while others prefer lower taxes. Some residents will strive for land use diversity while others would prefer to live in a residential community. One function of the community planning process is to strike a balance between these varied expectations and develop a shared vision to meet the overall goals of the community.

County Planning and Area Wide Planning

A key factor in formulating a set of local goals and objectives is the planning conducted at the county level. Typically, a county-wide comprehensive plan establishes a broad framework for the future growth and development of the county.



¹ P. Lusk, J. A. Rivera, F. O. Sargent, M. Varela, (1991) *Rural Environmental Planning for Sustainable Communities*, Island press, Washington, D. C., p. 5

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) mandates counties to adopt comprehensive plans and update the plans every 10 years. Luzerne County is currently working with Lackawanna County on a joint comprehensive plan and the two Counties recently completed an open space and recreation plan. MPC §301.4 states *municipal comprehensive plans which are adopted shall be generally consistent with the adopted county comprehensive plan*. This *Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan* is intended to maintain consistency with the recommendations of the *Lackawanna-Luzerne Comprehensive Plan* to the extent that the county plan is not untenable in terms of the key provisions of the *Township Plan*.

Another test of consistency for this plan will be addressed in terms of the plans of neighboring municipalities along with the plans of other public entities and community organizations providing community facilities and services and dealing with growth and development issues. The Dallas School District is a good example of such an entity.

A Guide and Policy Statement

This *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to serve as a means of addressing the future growth and development of the Township by identifying key issues and establishing goals and objectives. The community planning process is also aimed at fostering cooperation between Luzerne County and the Township as envisioned by §306 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code which states, *both the county and the municipality shall each give the plan of the other consideration in order that the objectives of each plan can be protected to the greatest extent possible*.

The following goals and objectives were developed by local officials based on the public participation and planning process. The goals and objectives are intended to serve the Township as a guide and policy statement for land use management and community facilities and services decision making. Any significant action taken by a local municipality, be it the adoption of a zoning ordinance amendment or the improvement of a municipal building, should be evaluated in terms of the community's goals and objectives. In addition, community planning and land conservation and development management is an on-going process, and the Township should periodically evaluate the goals and objectives to ensure that they adequately reflect current community conditions and the expectations of residents and officials.

General Community Development Objectives

This statement of the General Community Development Objectives is intended to set the overall tone for the *Comprehensive Plan* and its implementation. More detailed goals and specific objectives for particular aspects of the community follow in a later section.

Cooperation - To use the comprehensive planning process to explore the potential for cooperation between the Township and other municipalities and the County on growth and development issues of area wide concern.

Internal Coordination - To strive for coordination between policies, plans, and programs in the community through cooperation among governing officials, appointed boards, community interest groups, and residents.

Public Information - Achieve greater awareness, understanding and participation of residents with the recommendations in the *Comprehensive Plan* via an active public information process with such methods as a web site, newsletter, and public meetings.

Use of Land - To achieve the best use of the land within the while allowing for reasonable residential and commercial development. The focus will be on the preservation the environment and open space. This will ensure that the varying uses of land will complement one another and thus improve the economic, social, and aesthetic character of the overall community.

Range of Land Uses - To allow a range of residential and commercial uses at appropriate locations and establish performance standards through zoning to ensure that such uses do not unduly affect adjoining properties or the public health, safety and general welfare and are consistent with the historic and gateway character of the communities.

Population Density - To establish realistic population densities in order to ensure health standards, privacy and open space and in order to allow for the provision of community facilities and services in the most convenient and efficient manner.

Streets and Roads - To maintain and improve the street and road system for better internal circulation and to protect residential neighborhoods from through traffic.

Facilities and Services - To provide the necessary community facilities and services to meet the needs of increased development and the increasing and changing population.

Environmental Protection - To guide the location of future development and establish performance standards to minimize negative impacts (*externalities*) on the natural and community environment.

Housing - To provide the opportunity for a wide-range and variety of housing types.

Economic Development - To provide, within the context of overall community conservation, the opportunity for local business and strengthen the area economy by encouraging well-planned commercial, industrial, residential, and recreational growth which will provide for local employment, shopping facilities, and recreational opportunities which in turn will strengthen the local tax base.

Monitoring - To update and revise planning goals and objectives, and the operational tools necessary for implementation, in light of new data and changing conditions, and to meet a changing population, both current and new residents, in concert with maintaining small town character and quality environment

GOAL 1 - Quality Lifestyle

Protect and enhance the Township's quality lifestyle by maintaining open space, and recognize agricultural land, forest land and other open land as important elements of the local economy, character, and scenic setting.

The Township's physical environment, regional location and past development practices have shaped and maintained its character. The key element is currently the Township's rural-agricultural landscape located so close to the City of Wilkes-Barre, Kingston Borough and other Wyoming Valley Boroughs. Without careful planning, vigilant land use management, and continued community conservation, the quality lifestyle sought by so many from nearby metropolitan areas can succumb to the cumulative effects of the demands of an increasing population.

Franklin Township is perceived as an attractive community offering a high quality of life within an easy commute to the metropolitan area. While agriculture once dominated the landscape, more and more families have located in the Township. In recent years, large lot subdivisions with very large homes have been the norm. Future development must be and managed with an overriding concern to sustain the area's community character based on open space while meeting the needs and expectations of residents for employment, shopping, services and community facilities.

Without careful planning and management, the use of the natural resources and sensitive environmental areas in the Township can lead to the decline of community character and the quality lifestyle it affords, with eventual direct threats to the environment and public health and safety. Of special concern are lakes, streams, ground water, agricultural, forest and soil resources. If the quality of the area's natural resources are diminished, the quality of life and the local economy will suffer.

OBJECTIVES:**Open Land and Rural/
Agricultural Character**

Conserve agricultural land, forest land, open space, significant natural features, and sensitive land areas to maintain rural-agricultural character.

- Important Areas - Identify and prioritize areas important for conservation.
- Identification Identify sensitive natural areas such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, steep slopes, poor soils and flood plains, and adopt regulations to protect such areas by requiring resource sensitive development.
- Critical Resource Areas - Promote the conservation of open space within the Township and the County and actively promote the long-term preservation and maintenance of valuable natural resource areas through public negotiated acquisition, private dedication of easements, and other cooperative efforts.
- Connections - Maintain a connected network of open space to facilitate natural resource and habitat protection and passive recreational opportunities (e.g., trail networks).

Note About Open Space

The preservation of open space is a common thread of this *Comprehensive Plan*. Open space is land which has not been developed for a constructive or productive use and is intended for environmental and natural resource protection, scenic, or recreational purposes. Open space may include, for example, woodland, wetlands, watercourses, reverting farmland, and floodplain. In the case of a development project, open space may include passive recreation areas such as ballfields, lawns and buffer areas. Agricultural land is certainly open land, but not truly open space because it is in fact highly developed for crop and livestock production.

- Land Use Ordinances - Evaluate and develop land use ordinances in terms of effects on natural resources with the goal of maintaining open space to the greatest extent possible while allowing a reasonable density of development.
- Innovative Conservation Methods - Evaluate more progressive means of open land conservation including, conservation subdivision design, purchase of conservation easements and transferable development rights, especially in cooperation with conservancy and land trust organizations.
- Conservation Design - Use optional *conservation subdivision design* to cluster residential development away from important natural, historic, scenic and cultural features, and preserve the resulting open space.
- Transferrable Development Rights - Use optional transferrable development rights to direct development to locations with adequate infrastructure and enable conservation-minded landowners to preserve their properties.
- Development Incentives - Implement adopted municipal policies to conserve a variety of irreplaceable and environmentally sensitive resource lands, including provisions for reasonable incentives to create a greenway and trail system for the benefit of present and future residents.
- Area Wide Cooperation - Coordinate environmental preservation efforts with neighboring jurisdictions, and establish an action plan targeting environmental concerns that require a regional approach.
- Economic Development - Encourage local economic development groups to make natural resource protection an integral part of all promotion efforts.

Agriculture and Forestry

Preserve agriculture and forestry as an important elements of the local economy.

- Economic Value - Recognize agriculture and forestry as a significant economic industry in the community and encourage economic opportunities in this industry.
- Right to Farm - Protect and promote the abilities and rights of farmers to engage in all sound agricultural management practices by recognizing the Right to Farm Law as an important element of farmer protection from nuisance complaints related to normal agricultural practices.
- Land Base - Preserve a large contiguous land base to assure that agriculture and forestry remain viable, permanent land uses.
- Conservation Design - Provide farmers and other owners of large parcels flexibility in the use of their property and allow them to benefit from area growth without developing all of their land by offering the option of *conservation subdivision design*.
- Programs - Encourage landowners to participate in the *Agricultural Security Program*, and the *Agricultural Preservation Program* for purchase of easements by Luzerne County.

- Tax Incentives - Encourage the use of *Act 319 Clean and Green* and other tax incentive programs as a means of forestalling development.
- Agricultural Advisory Committee - Consider creating a Township Agricultural Advisory Committee to promote agricultural preservation activities and other open space preservation activities in the Township in cooperation with the County and State agencies.
- County Action - Encourage Luzerne County to take an aggressive approach to preserving agriculture and forestry through planning, marketing and land preservation.
- Local Regulations - Do not overly restrict agriculture and forestry enterprises with unnecessary zoning and other regulations.

Commercial Uses

Ensure consistency of commercial uses with existing community character.

- Performance Standards - Apply zoning performance standards to address noise, lighting, outdoor storage, and other potential effects as well as ensuring appropriate landscaping and signage.
- Commercial Design - Develop guidelines for commercial building design, landscaping and parking that will ensure high aesthetic quality and while meeting basic development needs.
- Community Scale - Encourage community-scaled businesses with innovative design as opposed to strip commercial development.

Nuisances

Control common law nuisances and threats to public health and safety due to, among others, noise, lack of property maintenance, poor building practices, junk accumulation, and odors.

Water Supply/Quality and Surface Water Quality

Protect the supply and quality of drinking water and protect surface water quality.

- E & S Control - Reduce erosion and sedimentation by requiring compliance with DEP regulations
- Stormwater - Adopt an up to date stormwater ordinance to control runoff through the use of BMPs.
- Water Quality - Consider the impacts of residential and nonresidential development on water quantity and quality and encourage the use of best management practices.
- Sewage Disposal - Monitor the effectiveness of on-lot sewage disposal systems and evaluate central sewage disposal as a means of correcting any widespread problems.
- Well Ordinance - Apply well construction standards with a well ordinance in areas not served by community water supply.

- Community Water Supplies - Apply well head protection standards to maintain good drinking water quality.

Wildlife Habitat**Protect critical wildlife habitat areas.**

- Natural Areas Inventory - Protect sites of rare, threatened, and endangered species as identified in the Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Forest - Conserve large forested areas that provide habitat.
- Corridors - Protect wildlife corridors, consisting of networked open space areas and stream corridors.

Ridge Lines and Scenic View Sheds**Conserve ridge lines and scenic view sheds.**

- Development Standards - Consider measures that will preserve the characteristics of important ridge lines and scenic view sheds by limiting the amount and type of clearing associated with development.

GOAL 2 - Land Use

Develop a land use plan for Franklin Township that integrates all aspects of growth and development including residential, commercial, industrial and open space.

Land use management is a complex process that depends on the interrelationship of a number of factors including the historic development pattern, regional location, demographics, the regional economy, the transportation network, and soils and land capability. Most of these factors are beyond the control of local municipalities.

In the case of Franklin Township, the landscape remains largely undeveloped while neighboring municipalities in Luzerne County have been experiencing increased development pressure. While large parcels owned by long term resident families may seem secure from development, increasing property values may shift the balance to residential development. Conversely, the potential for natural gas development and the value of gas leases and royalties may temper the residential development trend. In any case, this *Comprehensive Plan* gives the Township the foundation to manage the growth and development of the community using innovative land use management ordinances, careful programming of public facilities, and active participation of residents.

Rampant land conversion is a first consequence of the way Pennsylvania is growing. Quite literally, development-as-usual is consuming the Commonwealth's traditional rural landscape of farmland, forests, wetlands, and open spaces. Overall, Pennsylvania developed some 1.14 million acres, or 1,800 square miles, of fields, open space, and natural land between 1982 and 1997 – the sixth-largest such conversion after Texas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and California.

This also means that fully one-third of all the land that the Commonwealth has ever urbanized since its founding was developed in just 15 recent years. Put another way, over those 15 years the state consumed land at a rate equivalent to 209 acres a day, or 9 acres an hour, every hour.

Source: *Back To Prosperity, A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania*, p. 47.

OBJECTIVES:**Incompatible Uses****Provide adequate separation between incompatible land uses.**

- District Location - Evaluate the location of zoning districts relative to one another.
- Commercial - Evaluate the allowed uses in commercial zoning districts and encourage retail, office, and service uses.
- Industrial - Create a separate zoning district for industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and similar high impact uses.
- Setback/Buffers - Provide appropriate setbacks and buffers between land uses.
- Landscaping - Provide landscaping along road frontages in commercial and industrial areas.

Residential**Encourage the development of livable communities and preserve existing neighborhoods.**

- Open Space Access - Create neighborhoods with direct visual access to open land, with amenities in the form of neighborhood open space, and with a strong neighborhood identity.

- Diversity - Provide for a diversity of lot sizes, building densities, and housing choices to accommodate a variety of age and income groups and residential preferences, so that the community's population diversity may be maintained.
- Landowner Development Options - Provide multiple development options for landowners in order to minimize impacts on environmental resources (sensitive lands such as stream corridors, wetlands, flood plain, and steep slopes) and disturbance of natural or cultural features (such as mature woodlands, hedgerows and tree lines, critical wildlife habitats, historic buildings, and fieldstone walls)..
- Design - Provide greater design flexibility and efficiency in the siting of services and infrastructure, including the opportunity to reduce length of roads, utility runs, and the amount of paving required for residential development.

Commercial

Promote innovative forms of commercial development that are in harmony with the rural-agricultural character of the community.

- Scale - Provide opportunities for innovative and community-scaled retail commercial use as opposed to strip commercial development.
- Services - Facilitate community service uses such as a convenience store and medical center.

Economic Development

Expand the Township's existing economic base by exploring economic development opportunities consistent with and building on the existing rural-agricultural character in order to strengthen the existing economy, create employment opportunities and generate tax revenue.

- Location - Welcome new commercial and industrial development to areas of existing similar development and where community facilities are adequate so that the development is compatible with existing land use and community character.
- Home Occupations - Encourage local economic viability by allowing home occupations consistent with residential districts.
- Economic Development - Recognize the importance of the regional economy and cooperate with local business development organizations to promote commercial development which builds on community assets and which will not compromise the quality of life.
- Government Efficiency - Continue to maintain an efficient government and keep taxes low as an incentive for economic development.
- Existing Business - Support the continued development and possible expansion of existing businesses providing local employment and contributing to the tax base.

GOAL 3 - Natural Resources

Conserve natural resources and open space and use the resources in a way to sustain the area's economy, including maintaining agriculture and forestry as an integral part of the local landscape and economy.

Without careful planning and management, the use of the natural resources and sensitive environmental areas in the Township can lead to the decline of community character and the quality lifestyle it affords, with eventual direct threats to the environment and public health and safety. Of special concern are lakes, streams, ground water, forest and soil resources. If the quality of the area's natural resources are diminished, the quality of life and the local economy will suffer.

The purpose of conservation: The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time.
- Gifford Pinchot

I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use our natural resources, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.
- Theodore Roosevelt

If we learn, finally, that what we need to "manage" is not the land so much as ourselves in the land, we will have turned the history of American land-use on its head.
- Gaylord Nelson, Founder of Earth Day

OBJECTIVES:**Agriculture and Forestry Promote the long term sustainability of agriculture and forestry.**

- Include soil erosion and sedimentation and stormwater control provisions in the Township zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance.
- Encourage landowners to use agricultural best management practices and use the technical service available from the Luzerne County Conservation District, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Encourage landowners to participate in the *Agricultural Security Program*, and the *Agricultural Preservation Program* for purchase of easements being developed by Luzerne County.
- Encourage the use of *Act 319 Clean and Green* and other tax incentive programs as a means of forestalling development.
- Do not overly restrict agriculture and forestry enterprises with unnecessary zoning and other regulations.
- Evaluate more progressive means of open land preservation aimed at agricultural land preservation including agriculture protection zoning, conservation subdivision design, purchase of easements, and transfer of development rights, especially in cooperation with conservancy and land trust organizations.
- Economic Development - Encourage local economic development groups to make the use of local agriculture and forest products an integral part of all promotion efforts.

Conservation and Sensitive Natural Areas

Conserve open land, including those areas containing unique and sensitive natural features such as woodlands, steep slopes, streams, flood plains and wetlands, by setting them aside from development.

- Identification Identify sensitive natural areas such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, steep slopes, poor soils and flood plains, and adopt regulations to protect such areas by requiring resource sensitive development.
- Critical Resource Areas - Promote the conservation of open space within the Township and the County and actively promote the long-term preservation and maintenance of valuable natural resource areas through public negotiated acquisition, private dedication of easements, and other cooperative efforts.
- Land Use Ordinances - Evaluate and develop land use ordinances in terms of effects on natural resources with the goal of maintaining open space to the greatest extent possible while allowing a reasonable density of development.
- Development Incentives - Implement adopted municipal policies to conserve a variety of irreplaceable and environmentally sensitive resource lands, including provisions for reasonable incentives to create a greenway and trail system for the benefit of present and future residents.
- Conservation Design - Use *conservation subdivision design* to cluster residential development away from important natural, historic, scenic and cultural features, and preserve the resulting open space.
- Transferrable Development Rights - Use transferrable development rights to direct development to locations with adequate infrastructure and enable conservation-minded landowners to preserve their properties.
- Area Wide Cooperation - Coordinate environmental preservation efforts with neighboring jurisdictions, and establish an action plan targeting environmental concerns that require a regional approach.

Water Supply/Quality; Surface Water Quality

Protect the supply and quality of drinking water and protect surface water quality.

- E & S Control - Reduce erosion and sedimentation by requiring compliance with DEP regulations
- Stormwater - Adopt an up to date stormwater ordinance to control runoff through the use of best management practices.
- Water Quality - Consider the impacts of residential and nonresidential development on water quantity and quality and encourage the use of best management practices.
- Sewage Disposal - Monitor the effectiveness of on-lot sewage disposal systems and evaluate central sewage disposal as a means of correcting any widespread problems.
- Buffers - Establish setbacks/buffers for streams, lakes and wetlands.

- Well Ordinance - Apply well construction standards with a well ordinance in areas not served by community water supply.
- Community Water Supplies - Apply well head protection standards to maintain good drinking water quality.

Wildlife Habitat**Protect critical wildlife habitat areas.**

- Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory - Protect sites of rare, threatened, and endangered species as identified in the Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Forest - Conserve large forested areas that provide habitat.
- Corridors - Protect wildlife corridors, consisting of networked open space areas and stream corridors.

Ridge Lines/Scenic View**Conserve ridge lines and scenic view sheds.**

- Development Standards - Consider measures that will preserve the characteristics of important ridge lines and scenic view sheds by limiting the amount and type of clearing associated with development and controlling the location of buildings.

GOAL 4 - Community Facilities

Ensure that community facilities and services are provided to meet the needs of the Township.

Residents rely on community and public facilities and services to meet their transportation, educational, water supply, sewage disposal, police protection, emergency response, recreation and other daily living need. Municipalities, particularly rural municipalities such as Franklin Township, do not, and cannot, provide all the facilities and services required by residents. Instead, many such services are provided by other levels of government or volunteer organizations. Nevertheless, without diligent and ongoing attention to the operation and maintenance of existing facilities and services, and planning for new facilities and services, a municipality can fall short in adequately serving its residents.

Community facilities and utilities should be considered resources with limited capacities that are to be provided in appropriate places to support and implement a multi-municipal comprehensive plan. The location of certain key facilities, including water, sewer, schools, and roads, are often essential to providing the necessary services to accommodate more intensive residential and nonresidential development. Conversely, these services will facilitate unintended development in areas, such as important farming areas or areas with limiting natural resources, where growth may not be appropriate. The location of other services, facilities, and utilities should be considered in relation to their ability to support or conflict with the land use planning for the multi-municipal area. The land use planning should facilitate the efficient and economic provision of public, quasi-public, and privately provided community services wherever possible.

Source: *Planning Beyond Boundaries*, p. 3-18.

OBJECTIVES:**Public Facilities and Services****Maintain existing public facilities and services and plan carefully for new public facilities and services.**

- Maintenance - Provide necessary maintenance of existing municipal buildings, equipment and other community facilities to extend the useful life and forestall unnecessary capital expenditures.
- Efficiency - Manage all municipal facilities and services efficiently and effectively.
- Capital Improvements Program - Systematically identify the need for local municipal community facilities and services, including useful life replacement of existing facilities, and develop a capital budget to meet the needs.
- Water and Sewer Extensions - Evaluate the development of any central water supply or central sewage disposal service in terms of stimulating unwanted development.
- Cooperation - Encourage and participate in any area intergovernmental cooperation efforts for community facilities planning and economies of scale for joint purchasing, recreation and other facilities and services.
- Cable/Internet Access - Work with Comcast via a Township franchise ordinance to ensure universal access to cable television service high-speed (256 KBPS or higher) internet service.

- Cellular Telephone - As a matter of public safety, work with cellular communications providers to ensure the entire Township is adequately served with 3G service, including the federally mandated locating abilities for mobile phone users within the bounds of the zoning ordinance relative to tower location and antenna collocation.
- Child Care / Elder Care - Monitor the need for additional child care and elder care facilities and work with community organizations to meet any identified needs.
- Urgent Care Service - Encourage the County and regional health care providers to develop urgent care facilities to bridge the gap between doctors and emergency rooms to better use health care resources.

Emergency Services

Protect the Township with effective emergency services.

- Expanded Service - Identify isolated and under served areas and assess the need for expanded or additional fire and ambulance stations.
- Volunteer Organizations - Acknowledging the critical importance of such groups to the community, encourage and continue to support volunteer fire, ambulance and other public service organizations.
- Police Protection - Continue to rely on the State Police, but monitor the need for local police protection.
- Communications - Enhance public safety by ensuring local emergency management officials have access to television and radio broadcasts over-the-air and via cable and satellite providers.

Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

Ensure adequate water supplies and sewage disposal facilities.

- Well Ordinance - Apply well construction standards with a well ordinance in areas not served by community water supply.
- Community Water Supplies - Apply well head protection standards to maintain good drinking water quality.
- On-Site Sewage Systems - Ensure that on-site sewage systems are maintained, and that failing systems are repaired, and new systems are installed in accord with DEP standards.
- Sewage Disposal - Monitor the effectiveness of on-lot sewage disposal systems and evaluate soil-based central sewage disposal as a means of correcting any widespread problems.

Storm Water

Improve Stormwater Management.

- Existing Problems - Evaluate storm water management facilities and develop a plan to address existing problems.

- Improvements - Include require stormwater management improvements in the capital improvements program.
- Innovative Controls - Incorporate innovative stormwater management techniques into new development projects consistent with Department of Environmental Protection and any adopted stormwater management plan.
- Education - Address existing problems with stormwater runoff through outreach and education of landowners.

New Development

Ensure that an adequate and safe water supply system, a proper sewage disposal system, well designed and constructed roads, stormwater management and other facilities are provided by developers as part of any residential or commercial development.

- SALDO - Periodically update the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to include standards to ensure most current and sound development practices.

GOAL 5 - Circulation System

Establish and maintain an adequate circulation system to safely and efficiently move people and goods.

Safe and well maintained roads are vital to all communities, serving not only as the means of travel within the community, but as the direct link to the region and beyond. No major state routes cross Franklin Township, with Eighth Street (State Route 1021) serving as the primary route between the Village of Orange in the center of the Township to West Wyoming Borough and the greater Wilkes-Barre area. Local officials must plan carefully to ensure adequate funding for the improvement and maintenance of locally-owned roads. Franklin Township owns and maintains 15.96 miles of roads, PennDOT owns 11.18 miles, and Luzerne County owns 6.96 miles. Land use management tools must consider the capacity of roads, directing commercial and higher density development to areas served by roads capable of carrying increased traffic and the trucks necessary to serve commercial establishments.

Circulation - Planners typically talk about "circulation" rather than transportation because circulation (getting around) is the goal of the citizens they serve, whereas transportation is just a method of achieving that goal. A good circulation plan includes more than streets and roads – it includes means of pedestrian and bicycle circulation and, in many communities, some form of mass transportation.

Although good circulation plans involve more than roads, the starting point for an existing conditions analysis of circulation is a map of streets and highways in the community.

Source: *Community Planning, an Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan*, p. 80.

OBJECTIVES:**Classification**

Inventory and classify according to function all public roads and bridges, and assess maintenance and safety concerns and the improvements needed.

- Road Task Force - Consider organizing a local Road Task Force with nearby municipalities to address regional traffic impacts and highway improvement needs.
- Planning - Actively participate in all County and PennDOT highway planning programs.
- Improvements Program - Develop a local road and intersection maintenance and capital improvements program.

Local Actions

Develop a coordinated Township program to maintain an adequate capacity of the road network.

- Development Location - Limit higher density and higher traffic impact development to areas with adequate highway capacity.
- Parking and Access - Require adequate off-street parking and loading, limit curb cuts, and require well designed access points.
- New Development - Maintain up-to-date standards for construction of new subdivision roads.
- Road Linkages - Include the consideration of through road connections as part of the development review process.

- Road Dedication - Continue the policy of not accepting development roads for public dedication unless the road serves a clear benefit that accrues to the public as a whole and not only residents of the development.
- Official Map - Using an official map, establish and reserve public street alignments and adequate rights-of-way for planned street improvements.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in all transportation planning.

GOAL 6 - Housing**Provide for secure and sound housing in a variety of types and densities.**

Families and individuals of all income levels live and work in the Township with homes ranging from very modest mobile homes to more recently constructed *McMansions*. Families with low to moderate incomes need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. Similar to commercial development, the Township can employ zoning to direct housing types and densities to the most appropriate locations. Conservation subdivision design with a density bonus and allowing multi-family dwellings as part of conservation design in all zoning districts are examples.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires *a plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.*

Zoning must provide for housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements, mobile homes and mobile home parks.

OBJECTIVES:**Current Residents****Meet the housing needs of current Township residents.**

- Sound Housing - Encourage preservation of presently sound housing.
- Rehabilitation - Promote rehabilitation of houses in decline.
- Housing Programs - Encourage participation in all county, state and federal housing rehabilitation and assistance programs to ensure residents receive full benefit from such programs.
- Maintenance - Consider adopting standards which require the maintenance of dwellings to prevent dilapidation.

Housing Growth**Accommodate anticipated housing growth in appropriate locations, at appropriate densities, and with suitable amenities.**

- Location - Coordinate the location of new housing with pending road improvements
- Density - Provide for varying densities suited to the Townships' character and landscape.
- Multi-Family - Allow multi-family dwellings in conservation design in all zoning districts at the same density as single-family dwellings.
- Amenities - Provide for recreation and open space amenities within residential developments

Types and Affordability**Provide a diversity of housing types and affordability levels.**

- Senior Housing - Encourage the development of nursing homes, adult care centers, assisted living facilities and other housing types which provide amenities that are attractive to retirees.
- Type and Density - Allow residential development of various types in suitable areas at a density sufficiently high to moderate the land cost of the increasing cost of housing, while requiring adequate off street parking, water supply and sewage disposal.
- Fair Share - Ensure that the Township provides for its required *fair share* of housing in any land use management ordinances.
- Innovative Design - Advocate conservation design, village style or traditional neighborhood development.
- Incentives - Consider density and design incentives to encourage the development of age-restricted and affordable housing.

GOAL 7 - Historic Resources**Protect historic resources as an important part of the character of the Township.**

A number of historic sites and structures are found in Franklin Township, ranging from residences and outbuildings, to churches, to a former Grange Hall. Buildings were erected as part of a growing community, and although many of the early structures are now gone, the many which remain add tremendously to the character of the community. In addition to buildings, stone walls and fences are significant historic features throughout the Township. Originally an integral part of early agricultural practices, stone walls and fences are now being incorporated into home design and as the prime feature in landscaping. The preservation of historic buildings and other features, and encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing historic character are critical to the future of the community.

Pennsylvania has more than 100,000 historic resources identified by the National Register of Historic Places. Thousands more could be identified across the state, in cities, towns and villages, and rural areas. This rich heritage is under threat-from abandonment and demolition of decaying urban building stock, destruction of rural landscapes and prime farmland for housing and business, and highway construction to accommodate the tidal wave of trucking and passenger traffic. As with our natural resources, we must strengthen our values and develop strategies to maintain our historic resources. Historic resources are worth saving. Without these resources, communities would lose their integrity, identity, and their attractiveness to newcomers. The goal is to strike a balance between development and saving what's important to the community's past.

Source: Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania, p. 83.

OBJECTIVES:**Historical Society**

Work with the Luzerne County Historical Society to promote historic preservation in the Township.

- Historical Society - Consider the creation of a local historical society.

Identify and Evaluate

Develop an inventory of historic resources and evaluate the resources for register status.

- Historic Register - Based on the historic resources inventory, create a local historic register and consider nomination of qualifying structures and places to the National Register of Historic Places.

Adaptive Reuse

Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic resources.

- Adaptive Use - Allow the adaptive use of large older homes to enable owners to adequately maintain the structures.

Design Guidelines

Develop guidelines for residential and commercial development to encourage historically sensitive design.

Education

Educate property owners on the significance and value of historic resources, and of the opportunities for their preservation.

Funding

Identify funding sources for historic preservation.

GOAL 8 - Recreation and Heritage
Provide adequate recreation facilities and programs for Township residents and conserve open space.

The Township owns and maintains a park on the Township Building parcel and, under the direction of the Township Recreation Board, a Master Site Plan for the Park has recently been completed. Cooperation among area municipalities, the School District, and sports leagues will be critical to meeting long term recreation needs. Funding for the continued maintenance of facilities, particularly new facilities, is a critical issue.

National Recreation and Parks Association
We believe that parks and recreation:

- *Enhances the human potential by providing facilities, services and programs that meet the emotional, social and physical needs of communities.*
- *Articulates environmental values through ecologically responsible management and environmental education programs.*
- *Promotes individual and community wellness that enhances the quality of life for all citizens.*
- *Utilizes holistic approaches to promote cultural understanding, economic development, family public health and safety, by working in coalitions and partnerships with allied organizations.*
- *Facilitates and promotes the development of grassroots, self-help initiatives in communities across the country.*

Source: <http://www.nrpa.org>.

OBJECTIVES:

Coordinated System

Create a coordinated system of parks and recreation facilities available to Township residents.

Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- Source of community pride.
- Increased property values.
- Attracts and retains businesses.
- Primary factor in quality of life.
- Provides opportunities for fun and play.
- Builds strong family bonds, the foundation of our society.

- Existing Facilities - Focus on maintaining and improving existing Township recreation facilities.
- Master Plan - Use the Township Park Master Plan as the foundation for recreation planning.
- Improvements - Ensure improvements at existing facilities are made in accord with an overall plan and all facilities are maintained.
- Future Needs - Monitor population growth and demographic changes and consider the recreation needs of all age groups.
- Standards - Ensure that all facilities meet current safety and handicapped accessibility requirements.
- Official Map - Show planned recreation facilities on an Official Map to ensure that the land can be acquired.
- Cooperation - Work with area municipalities, the School District, and community recreation organizations to improve recreation facilities and programs.

Efficiency

Provide an efficient parks and recreation management system.

- Staff - Provide adequate staff to manage and maintain facilities to maximize effectiveness of Township and volunteer resources.
- Capital Expenditures - Consider land acquisition and capital improvements carefully in terms of community needs and the Township’s ability to finance and

maintain new facilities.

- Management Plan - Develop a management plan that clearly identifies management needs and assigns responsibilities.
- Communication - Establish clear communication channels among the Board of Supervisors, Recreation Board, assigned staff and volunteers.

Natural Heritage

Preserve the natural heritage of the Township by conserving large blocks of open space and scenic areas.

Benefits of Open Land Preservation

- Maintains and honors a link to the past.
- Provides a legacy for future generations.
- A source of community pride.
- Maintains overall community property values.
- Sustains the local recreation economy.
- Promotes environmental health.
- Preserves the quality of life.
- Maintains the viability of the forest industry.

- Land Protection - Work with landowners and land trusts to encourage the use of an array of land protection options including conservation easements, land donations, and bargain sale of land to trusts and other conservation organizations.
- Land Stewardship - Promote land stewardship by supporting the conservation and public education efforts of Luzerne County, land trusts and other conservation organizations.
- Key Parcels - Identify key parcels of land and focus preservation efforts on these parcels via acquisition, easement, or allowing innovative development techniques.
- Innovate Development design - Incorporate innovate design options in the Township zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance such as conservation subdivision design and transfer of development rights.
- Local Funding - Explore options for the funding of acquisition of conservation easements including the use of local tax funds.

Funding

Establish stable, equitable funding to support open space and recreation actions.

- Continued Funding - Continue to budget Township funds for park and recreation facilities in concert with the increasing population and expanding tax base.
- Capital Budget - Develop a capital improvements budget to set money aside for anticipated facility needs.
- Operation and Maintenance - Always consider long term operation and maintenance costs as part of funding requirements.
- Grants - Use local capital expenditure funds to leverage grants for planning, acquisition and development.

FINDINGS AND SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMIC BASE

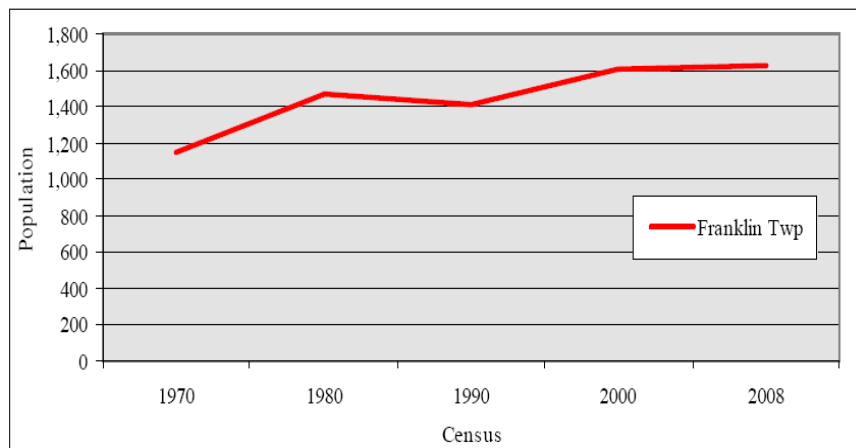
Findings

- ☞ Franklin Township experienced population growth between 1970 and 1980, declined somewhat between 1980 and 1990, but has increase since then.

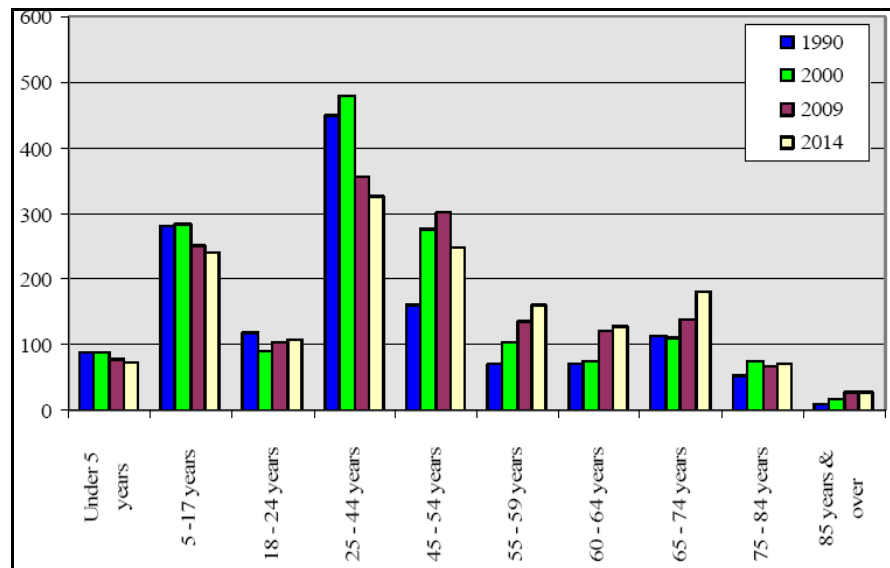
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP POPULATION (U.S. Census)					
Census Year →→	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008
Franklin Township	1,145	1,473	1,414	1,601	1,621

POPULATION PROJECTIONS				
Year →→	2000 Census	2010 Estimate	2015 Projection	2020 Projection
by Avg Annual Growth	1,601	1,626	1,639	1,652
by Linear Regression	1,601	1,735	1,802	1,866

- ☞ Similar to Franklin Township, the population of each of the neighboring municipalities remained essentially unchanged between 2000 and 2008, with the exception of Dallas Township.
- ☞ Dallas Township continued its steady growth trend, increasing by 7.97% during this time.
- ☞ Luzerne County has experienced a steady population decline since 1980.
- ☞ Franklin’s population density is expected to remain relatively low in the near term given the extent of the stable ownership of the agricultural and other open land.
- ☞ If housing demand increases and the land ownership status changes, the Township holds great potential for population growth.



Franklin Township Population, U.S. Census



Franklin Township Population by Age - 1990 to 2014

- ☞ The age of a community's population is important in terms of the types of community facilities and services which must be provided.
- ☞ Younger age groups have been declining and are expected to continue declining in number while the population over age 55 has been, and is expected to continue increasing in the future.
- ☞ By 2014, the Township's median age is expected to be 46.5 years, up from 40.8 years as of the 2000 Census. This is a dramatic increase in the median age and, if the projections are accurate, confirms the assertion that the Township's population is aging.
- ☞ The majority (53%) of Franklin Township residents have a high school education or less than a high school education; 21% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher.
- ☞ The educational level of Franklin Township residents is higher than Luzerne County and the Commonwealth.
- ☞ Income levels in Franklin Township exceed the County and the Commonwealth as evidenced by its higher median household income, median family income, and per capita income, and its lower percentage of families and individuals in poverty.
- ☞ At 3.08%, the Township's unemployment rate in 2000 was nearly the same as the County and slightly lower than the Commonwealth.
- ☞ One can only surmise that Franklin Township's current unemployment rate has climbed along with the regional unemployment figures, though the exact percentage might be different. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of April 2010 unemployment was 10.2% in Luzerne County.
- ☞ Franklin Township residents' two leading occupations are "management, professional and related" and "sales and office," each employing an equal number of workers.

- ☞ The leading industries where residents are employed are “education, health, and social services”, “manufacturing” and “retail trade.”

Planning Implications

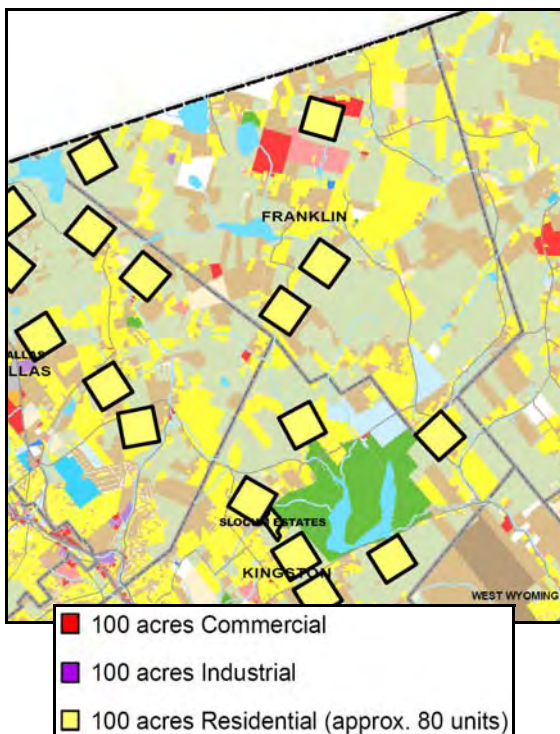
- ☞ Franklin Township is an aging lower-middle to middle income community with education levels that are slightly above average.
- ☞ The demographic data support the notion that Franklin Township is a bedroom community, providing residence for individuals that commute to work in surrounding communities.
- ☞ Although population growth is expected to be modest, the Township must identify areas that are most suitable for new development in order to provide housing and related uses, and areas that are most suitable for conservation in order to ensure that water supply, wildlife habitat, and natural resources remain productive and sustainable.
- ☞ Planning for community facilities and services, such as recreational facilities, social centers, and emergency services must be appropriate for the Township’s current large number of middle-aged and young persons, but must also consider the trend toward an aging population.

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

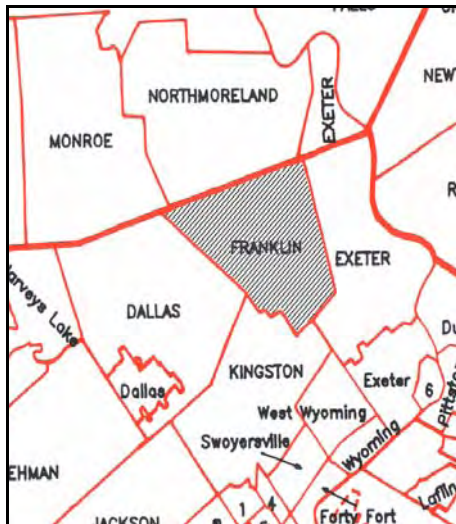
Findings

- ☞ Luzerne County is working with Lackawanna County on a bi-county plan that envisions Franklin Township primarily as a conservation area.

Lackawanna-Luzerne Trend Scenario 2008-2030



- ☞ The bi-county planning process projects four areas of increased residential development, but not intensive commercial or industrial development which is consistent with the Township’s conservation vision.
- ☞ 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.
- ☞ The 1994 Lackawanna County and Luzerne County Open Space, Greenways & Outdoor Recreation Master Plan 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.*



Franklin Twp/Contiguous Municipalities

- ☞ The intent of this Comprehensive Plan is to be consistent with the Open Space Plan as it applies to Franklin Township.
- ☞ All of the municipalities adjoining Franklin Township have adopted comprehensive and though 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.
- ☞ All of the townships adjoining Franklin Township have adopted zoning except Northmoreland Township.
- ☞ Zoning districts along common borders are relatively similar as is existing land use character, and the zoning ordinances include development performance standards to minimize impacts between residential and nonresidential development.

- ☞ The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance serves as a planning and development information source and funnel for grants and special projects for the Township and County, but has no municipally authorized regional planning power.

LAND USE

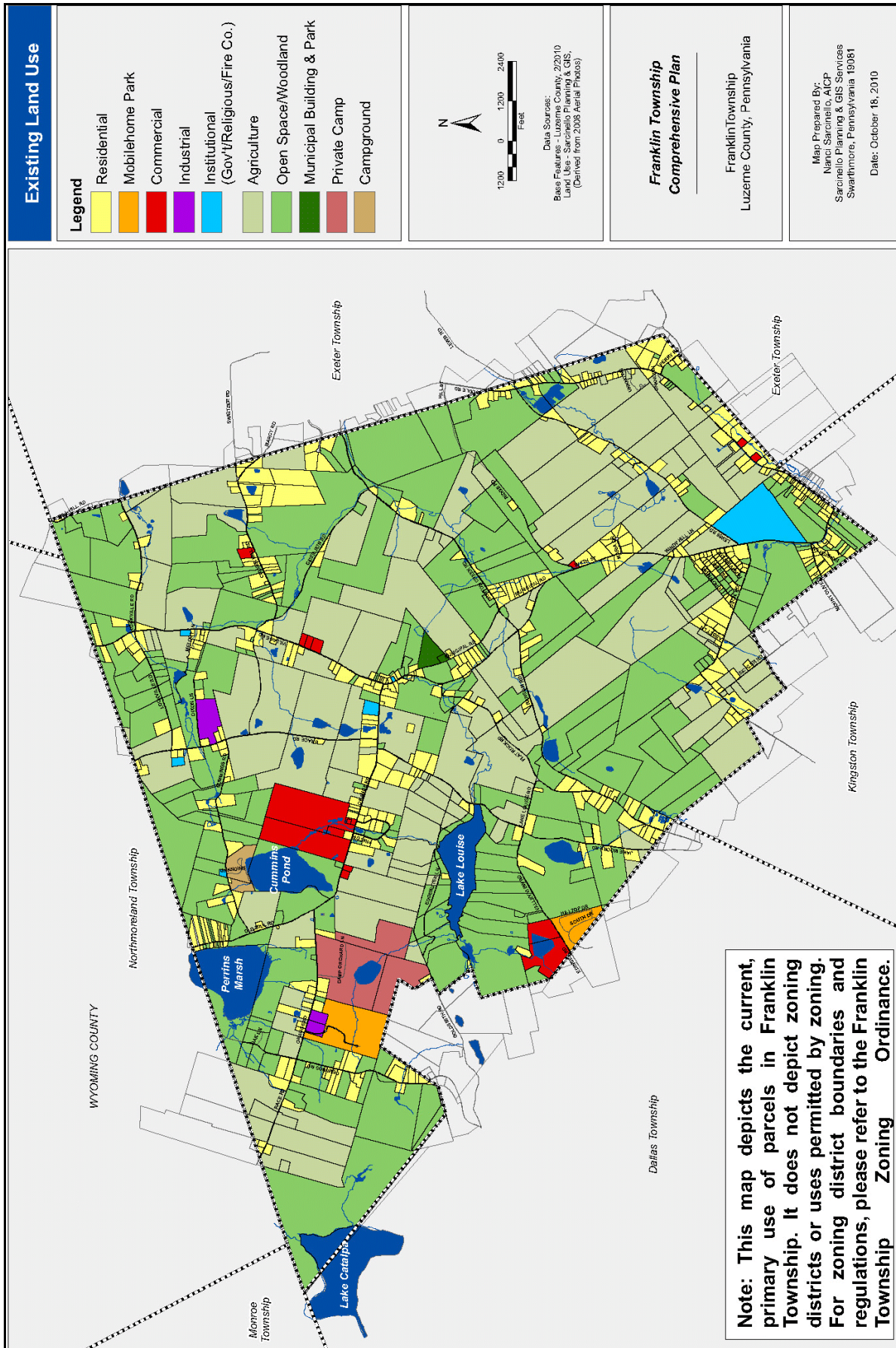
Findings

- ☞ Franklin Township encompasses approximately 8,114 acres, or 12.68 square miles of land area.

Existing Land Use		
Land Use	Acres	% of Total
Residential	919.51	11.3%
Mobilehome	82.15	1.0%
Commercial	155.62	1.9%
Industrial	25.94	0.3%
Institutional	72.23	0.9%
Agriculture	2895.35	35.7%
OS/Woodland	3701.40	45.6%
Twp Bldg & Park	12.61	0.2%
Private Camp	138.87	1.7%
Campground	20.89	0.3%
Roads/Water/Other	89.46	1.1%
Total	8114.04	100.0%

- ☞ The Township’s land use pattern is one dominated by agriculture and woodland with residential use primarily spread along the Township’s main roads.
- ☞ Open Space/Woodland is the principal land use type in the Township occupying 3,701 acres (46% of the Township’s land area). None of the land in this category is protected - it is all in private ownership and as such, has the potential to be developed at anytime.
- ☞ Agriculture is the second largest land use type in the Township at 2,895 acres (36% of the Township’s land area). Historically, dairy farms and orchards were the mainstay of the Township’s agriculture industry. Today, two working farms are in operation – Brace’s Orchard and Dymond’s Farm –as wells as a honey bee operation.
- ☞ Residential land use (including mobile home parks) accounts for about 1,000 acres or 12.3% of the land area.

- ☞ Commercial and industrial land uses total only some 180 acres.



Build-Out Analysis

The build-out analysis compares the impact of the Township's current zoning provisions with the effect that the use of Conservation Subdivision Development would have on the landscape.

- Currently, 78% of the Township's land is agriculture and woodland.
- Under current zoning, the Township would see an additional 2,052 residential units and would lose nearly all of its agriculture and woodlands.
- Implementing Conservation Subdivision Design would allow the Township to accommodate *at least* 2,052 dwelling units, protecting and even increasing property values while simultaneously preserving much of its agricultural land and woodland.

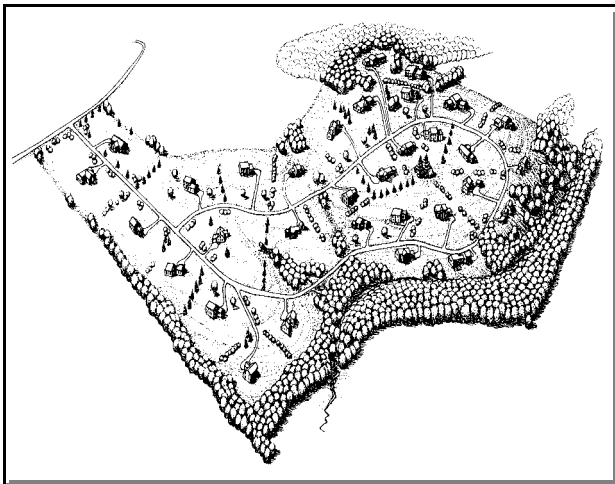
Planning Implications

- ☞ Given its location near the metropolitan area and its small town character, clean environment, quality of life, and open land, Franklin Township holds great potential for growth and development.
- ☞ The challenge is to balance the need for essential economic growth and development of the Township while concurrently conserving its scenic, historic and natural environment and the remaining open land.
- ☞ New development will occur primarily on new lots subdivided from large agricultural and forested lands.
- ☞ Local officials must begin an outreach effort and partner with landowners and local conservation organizations to preserve these properties and with innovative development techniques and land conservation tools while simultaneously protecting property rights.
- ☞ More residential development in the Township and surrounding municipalities will spawn more pressure for retail/service commercial development. Providing for small scale commercial uses within the Township could serve to meet some of the retail and service needs of residents and could offset some of the costs associated with residential development.
- ☞ Directing growth to appropriate areas will not only preserve open space, but will also enable the Township to manage its facilities, services and roads in a more cost effective and efficient manner.
- ☞ The Village of Orange and the nearby Franklin Township Volunteer Company are the focal point of the community.
- ☞ Aside from its floodplain management provisions, the Township's zoning ordinance does not contain specific protection measures for natural resources. The ordinance also lacks any provisions for open space preservation.

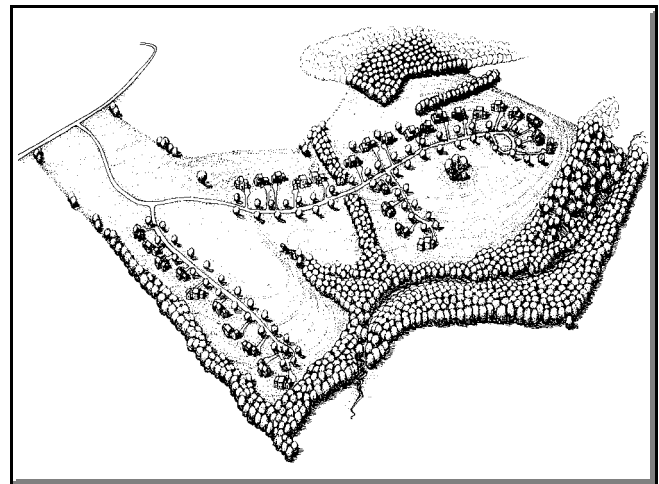
- ☞ The Township must be prepared to manage whatever development is proposed by adopting, administering and updating the necessary land use management regulations.
- ☞ Conservation subdivision design, transferrable development rights and conservation easements are important tools for preserving agricultural, forest and other open land.
- ☞ The Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program, Agricultural Security Areas and the Act 319 Clean and Green tax incentive are all aimed at preserving agricultural and forest land.

Use in Franklin Township:

- Farmland Preservation Program - no agricultural easements purchased.
 - Agricultural Security Areas - 1,555 acres or almost 20% of Township area.
 - Clean and Green - finding more use following recent reassessment.
- ☞ Without careful planning and land use control, growth will certainly change the rural landscape of the Township by fragmenting agricultural and forest lands and increasing demand for community facilities and services.
 - ☞ Taking a regional approach to economic development and sustaining natural resources will provide the greatest opportunity for sustaining Franklin Township's rural character and regional economy.



With Conventional Development



With Conservation Design

Franklin Township Basic Land Use Planning Approach

- conserve and protect vulnerable environmental resource areas
- preserve agriculture, forestry and the rural working landscape
- protect residential neighborhoods and subdivisions from incompatible development
- provide for well-situated and appropriate development areas to accommodate projected growth
- allow throughout the Township residential development at densities consistent with the rural working landscape
- provide incentives and standards for good design and open space preservation as property is developed
- provide for limited scale businesses and light manufacturing which is consistent with the rural working landscape
- rely on the larger region for major retail and service needs
- carefully control the development and expansion of public water and sewer service areas
- encourage the preservation of historic buildings and sites.

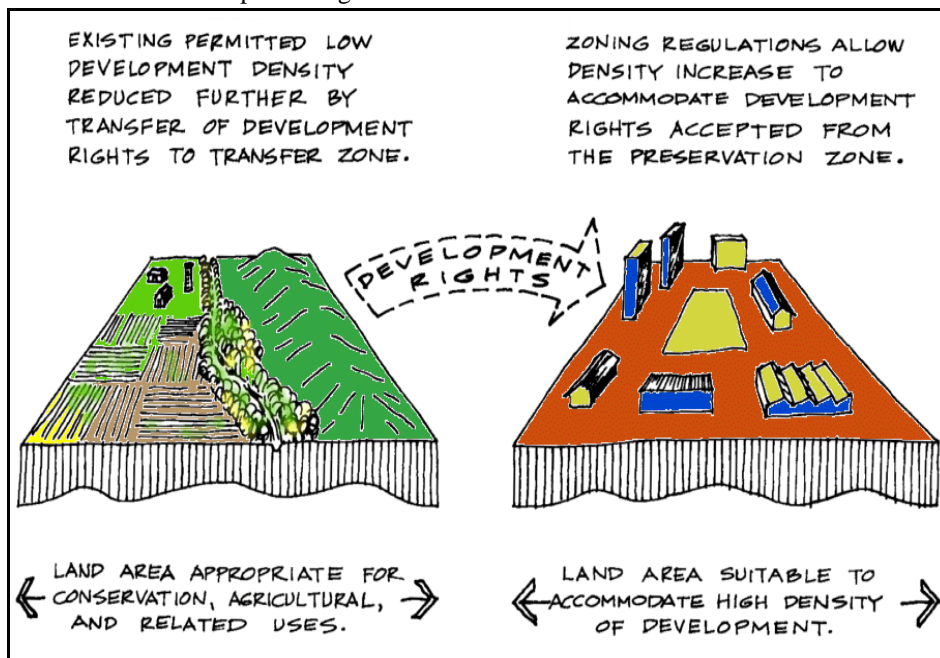
Note About the Summary of Actions

The timing of actions is an estimate and may change, or actions may not be undertaken, depending upon available funding and staff resources. Much of the work of carrying out the Plan, the assessment of the accomplishment of goals and objectives, and the 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.

LAND USE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
1	Future Land Use - Conserve the rural working landscape, including timbering, and protect the natural environment. Concurrently encourage smaller scale retail and service establishments, while looking to the greater region for major shopping and service needs.	Planning Commission Supervisors Zoning Officer	ongoing zoning
2	Zoning Districts Affirmed and Updated - The future land use plan is based on the affirmation of the current zoning districts with the caveat that the Township will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the districts and the range of uses in each district.		
RESIDENTIAL			
3	Zoning Districts - Provide protection for residential areas by maintaining separate residential and nonresidential zoning districts, applying environmental, development and operational performance standards to commercial and industrial uses, and establishing increased lot sizes, setbacks, and buffers where such uses adjoin residential development.	Planning Commission Supervisors Zoning Officer	ongoing zoning
4	Higher Density - Allow higher density residential development only in areas where community water supply and community sewage disposal is available.		

LAND USE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
5	Home Occupations - Amend the zoning ordinance to include no-impact home-based business as a permitted use in all zoning districts. Include home occupation as conditional use in all residential districts.	Planning Commission Supervisors	1 year
6	Conservation Design - Include conservation design in zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances (particularly for A-1 District) to provide an additional development option for landowners and to conserve open land, conserve sensitive natural areas, preserve historic resources and maintain community character.		
7	R-1 District - Amend the R-1 zoning district to permit single-family attached, two-family, and multi-family residential development at appropriate densities, as well as small scale retail uses.		
8	R-2 District - Amend the R-2 zoning district to permit single-family attached, two-family, and multi-family residential development at appropriate densities, as well as small scale retail and office uses. Include design guidelines to promote development that is compatible with the historic village character.		
9	TDR - Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a Transferable Developments Rights article that designates properties in the A-1 District as Sending Areas, and properties in the R-1 and R-2 Districts as Receiving Areas. Provide appropriate density incentives to encourage use of TDR.		
10	Lot Area - Include a Lot Area definition that deducts a proportion of land occupied by critical natural features such as steep slopes, wetlands, hydric soils and floodplain.		

Transferrable Development Rights



LAND USE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
NONRESIDENTIAL			
11	Performance Standards - Review and update as needed the nonresidential performance standards to address changing development patterns and ensure community and environmental protection.	Planning Commission Supervisors	ongoing zoning
12	Reasonable Standards - Do not make standards and the development review process so onerous that commercial and manufacturing development is discouraged.		
13	Location - Allow commercial, manufacturing and institutional land uses only in appropriate districts based on compatibility with surrounding land uses, access potential, and logical extension of utilities.		
14	Site Characteristics - Require nonresidential development to consider the physical characteristics of the site as part of the design in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas.	Planning Commission Supervisors	SALDO 1 year
15	Site Clearing - Restrict the clearing of vegetation and grading in buffer areas until a development plan has been approved, but provide for timbering the interior of the property.		
16	Design Guidelines - Work on design guidelines for commercial, industrial, and institutional development to encourage the most efficient use of commercial land and development consistent with community character.	Planning Commission Business Committee Supervisors	3 years

Commercial Design Standards and Guidelines

Design guidelines, along with development standards and permit approval requirements for specific location and site requirements, can be used to retain rural character. Standards and design guidelines in rural areas should consider historic design trends in the built environment and should specifically address issues surrounding the massing, form, materials, and color of new buildings or structures. Zoning performance standards in Pennsylvania generally cannot be used to govern the specific architectural appearance of buildings. Design guidelines, which can be suggested by the municipality and voluntarily adopted by the developer, can be effective for ensuring building designs are consistent with community character.

Site design zoning standards should include, for example, maximum impervious cover, landscaped setbacks between buildings and the road, modest parking lot size, interior landscaping for larger parking lots, sign requirements, and vegetated buffers along property lines. A critical requirement is the retention of existing vegetation to the greatest extent possible. Development standards for lighting, circulation, parking, landscaping, and noise should be consistent with the rural-recreational area.

ADVANTAGES OFFERED BY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Private Ownership: The property remains in private ownership and continues to contribute to the local tax base. The landowner may choose to live on the land, sell it, or pass it on to heirs.

Owners Satisfaction: Gives the landowner the satisfaction that the land will remain unchanged.

Flexibility: Easements are flexible and can be written to meet a particular land-owner’s needs while protecting the property’s resources.

Permanency: Most easements are permanent, remaining in force when the land changes hands. The easement holder ensures that the restrictions are maintained.

Tax Reduction: There are significant tax advantages if easements are donated rather than sold.

Charitable Taxes: The donation of a conservation easement to a land trust is treated as a charitable gift of the development rights. The donation creates a charitable tax deduction, equal to the value of the conservation easement, on the landowner’s Federal and State income tax returns.

Estate Taxes: Estate taxes are significantly lower, sometimes making the difference between heirs holding onto the family land or selling it to pay inheritance taxes.

Property Taxes: Conservation easements will sometimes lower property taxes, a result of reduced valuation on property subject to the conservation easement.

Minimizes Effect of Development: Minimizes other impacts of residential development such as increased population, traffic, and demand for community facilities and services.

LAND USE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
FORESTRY			
17	Permitted Use - Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include forestry as a permitted use in all districts and include language to encourage the use of best management practices for forestry operations	Planning Commission Supervisors	1 year
18	Businesses - Provide ample opportunity for the development of <i>value added</i> enterprises that use the plentiful forest resources available in the Township.	Planning Commission Supervisors	ongoing
MINERAL EXTRACTION (Including natural gas extraction.)			
19	Zoning - Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include mineral extraction as a conditional use in the A-1 zoning district with restrictions as permitted by state law and case law.	Planning Commission Supervisors	1 year
20	Roads - Adopt posting and bonding requirements for Township roads to ensure road damage is minimized and corrected by gas drilling operations.	Planning Commission Supervisors	2 years
LAND CONSERVATION PLANNING			
21	Committee - Form a Township Open Space Committee to conduct education and outreach to encourage landowners to conserve land through conservation easements and other available means	Supervisors County Planning Local Land Trust	1 year
22	Criteria - Develop criteria for identifying parcels important for preservation and prioritize identified parcels..	Planning Commission Supervisors Open Space Committee Local Land Trust	2 years
23	Landowner Commitment - Include as a basic tenet that both in-fee or conservation easement acquisition would be on a willing seller basis except in an extraordinary circumstance such as a direct development threat to a critical natural area on a parcel with a high priority.		

LAND USE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
24	Outreach and Education - Contact the various land trusts and conservation organizations in the region to conduct outreach and education. If a landowner wishes, facilitate communications between the landowner and land trust.		
25	Programs - Encourage landowner participation in Act 319 Clean and Green, Agricultural Securities Areas, and County Farmland Preservation Program.	Planning Commission Supervisors Open Space Committee Local Land Trust	ongoing
OFFICIAL MAP FOR OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES			
26	Ordinance and Map - Consider an official map and required ordinance in accord with Planning Code Article IV.	Planning Commission Supervisors Open Space Committee	3 years
27	Identified Priorities - Include on the maps needed community facilities and road and intersection improvements, and critical open space areas identified in this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> .	Recreation Board	

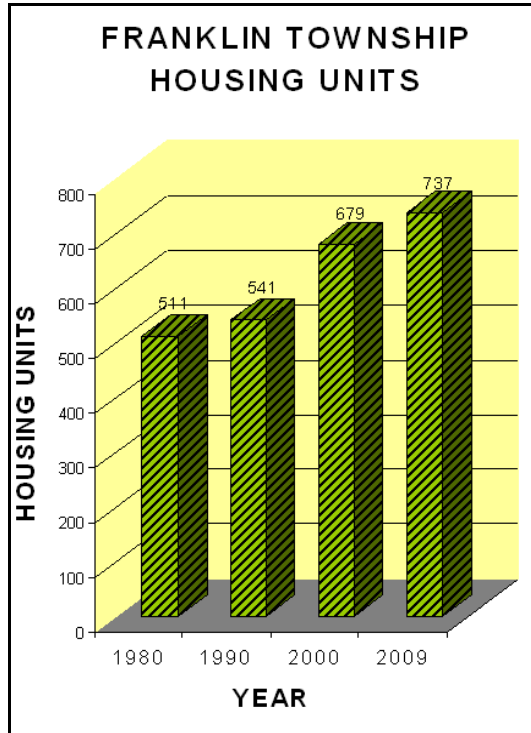
The Official Map
 Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code grants the authority to municipalities to adopt an official map to show the location of areas which the municipality has identified as necessary for future public streets, recreation areas, and other public grounds, or for open space. This little used land use management tool can be invaluable for minimizing the cost of public facilities and open space acquisition.

By showing the area on the official map, the municipality puts the property owner on notice that the property has been identified for future acquisition for a public facility or purpose or for open space. The municipality may refuse to issue a permit for any building or development on the designated parcel; however, the municipality has up to one year to purchase the property, or an easement in the case of open space, upon notice by the owner of intended development.

HOUSING

Findings

☞ Housing unit construction in Franklin Township increased significantly between 1990 and 2000 with the addition of almost 140 units, compared to the 30 units added between 1980 and 1990.



☞ Although Franklin Township housing units increased at a rate higher than Dallas Township and Kingston Township, the number of new units in those two Townships were significantly higher, reflecting the sprawl from the City of Wilkes-Barre and Kingston Borough.

☞ An additional 58 permits were issued for homes in Franklin Township between 2000 and 2009, taking the total to some 737 units.

☞ Although much of the agricultural and woodland in the Township appears to be stable in terms of long-term ownership, if tax, family or market conditions change, this land holds great potential for development.

☞ Given the attractive landscape and proximity to the Wyoming Valley, the number of housing units in the Township will certainly continue to increase, and there is no reason to expect that the pace of housing development will decrease.

☞ The greatest number of units in Franklin Township were reported as constructed prior to 1939.

☞ A number of dwellings, including a number of mobile homes and a number of single-family dwellings, are dilapidated or in less than optimum condition and current economic conditions may add to the problem.

☞ Generally, the age of the housing stock does not appear to be a factor in housing condition and dilapidated housing in the Township is not a widespread issue.

HOUSING UNITS U.S. CENSUS							
	1980 Total Units	# 80-90	% 80-90	1990 Total Units	# 90-00	% 90-00	2000 Total Units
Franklin Township	511	30	5.9%	541	138	25.5%	679
Dallas Township	2,415	398	16.5%	2,813	312	11.1%	3,125
Kingston Township	2,265	308	13.6%	2,573	350	13.6%	2,923
Wilkes-Barre City	21,389	-655	-3.1%	20,734	-440	-2.1%	20,294
Luzerne County	136,201	2,523	1.9%	138,724	5,962	4.3%	144,686
PA (1,000s)	4,596	342	7.4%	4,938	312	6.3%	5,250

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires a plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.

Zoning must provide for housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of

- ☛ In 2000, the home ownership rate in the Township continued to be higher than Luzerne County and the Commonwealth, as it was in 1990, due largely to the predominance of single-family dwellings.
- ☛ In 2000, median value of owner-occupied homes in Franklin Township, at \$119,600, was higher than the Luzerne County and State values. Generally newer housing on larger lots most likely accounting for the value being higher.
- ☛ The recent construction of very large and high value homes on large lots suggests that median home value in the Township has increased since the 2000 Census.
- ☛ At 81%, the Township’s housing stock is dominated by single-family detached dwellings.
- ☛ Multi-family housing units account for less than 1% of the total housing stock in the Township.
- ☛ In 2000, mobile homes, often more affordable, accounted for almost 15% of all occupied units in Franklin Township.
- ☛ In the Township, a significant proportion of home owning households (21.1%) and renting households (20.8%) had Year 2000 housing costs which exceed the *thirty percent rule* for household income and housing expense indicating housing affordability issues.

Affordable Housing

Federal governmental guidelines, primarily those established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), define affordable housing as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income—referred to here as the 30 percent rule. The income counted is derived from all wages earned by people fifteen and older in the household. For homeowners, affordability is generally defined as owning a house with a value equal to slightly more than twice the household’s annual income. The homeowner costs counted typically include a mortgage payment (principal, interest, taxes, and insurance) and utilities. For renters, the costs usually include contract rent and utilities. The 30 percent rule leaves seventy percent for food, clothing, health care, child care, transportation to work, and other basic expenses. Because of increasing housing costs, many lower income Americans are forced to make tradeoffs and go without necessities. Tenants experiencing unexpected emergencies typically fall behind in their rent and face eviction. If not assisted, they may become homeless.

Planning Implications

- ☛ With the exception of ensuring that land use and building regulations are reasonable in terms of affecting costs, small municipalities can do little to manage housing affordability which is so dependent on regional economic real estate market factors.
- ☛ Municipalities can take steps to encourage innovative forms of housing that meet the community’s needs and satisfy the market; age restricted housing is a good example.
- ☛ The occupied housing stock in the Township generally appears to be healthy in terms of condition. Nevertheless, a number of single-family dwellings and mobile

Housing Policies

- Promote mixed-use development that would accommodate various dwelling types in proximity to commercial and civic services.
- Provide for a variety of housing types, including single-family attached and multi-family dwellings, in order to accommodate individuals and families of various income levels.
- Review land use controls in terms of standards not directly linked to public health and safety which increase housing costs.
- Provide for age-restricted housing in proximity to services to accommodate seniors.
- Investigate ways to bring relief to cost burdened households (owner and renters).
- Permit a mix of lot sizes within residential developments to encourage diversity of housing structures and styles.
- Encourage rehabilitation of substandard housing.
- Cooperate with area municipalities and the County to plan for housing needs regionally and as housing needs are identified consider the development of joint housing plans with neighboring municipalities.

homes are in less than optimal condition, and the recent economic downturn may have contributed to the problem.

- ☛ The Township must look to the Luzerne County Housing Authority and its contacts with private affordable housing organizations to meet the specific housing needs of lower income residents.

HOUSING SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
ZONING ORDINANCE & SALDO			
1	Flexible Design - Promote the use of conservation design, transferrable development rights, and development incentives such as density bonuses as a means of providing more affordable housing.	Planning Commission Supervisors	1 year part of zoning
2	Multi-Family Allow multi-family housing where compatible with surrounding land uses, with access to transportation corridors, and in keeping with the logical extension of utilities and public services.		
3	Age / Affordable Incentives - Consider providing some incentives (density or design) for developers who provide age restricted and/or affordable housing.		
4	TDR - Offer the use of transferrable development rights to enable the shift of density from more remote parcels to zoning districts allowing higher residential density.	Planning Commission Supervisors	2 years part of zoning
5	Road Standards - Make road width and other construction standards in the SALDO reasonable in terms of meeting safety and durability requirements without adding unnecessary costs to housing.	Planning Commission Supervisors	ongoing

HOUSING SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
HOUSING PROGRAMS			
6	Housing Programs - Ensure area residents receive fair consideration for available assisted housing programs.	Community Advocates Residents	ongoing
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE			
7	Building Code - Enforce the Uniform Construction Code.	Supervisors Building Inspectors	ongoing
8	Property Maintenance/Dangerous Structures - Consider the adoption of a property maintenance code and/or dangerous structures ordinance with reasonable public health, safety and welfare standards to ensure the structural integrity of dwellings, prevent dilapidation and preclude negative effects on the community.	Supervisors Building Inspectors	based on need

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Findings

School Districts and the Municipalities Planning Code
Section 305. The Legal Status of Comprehensive Plans Within School Districts. Following the adoption of a comprehensive plan . . . , any proposed action of the governing body of any public school district located within the municipality or county relating to the location, demolition, removal, sale or lease of any school district structure or land shall be submitted to the municipal and county planning agencies for their recommendations at least 45 days prior to the execution of such proposed action by the governing body of the school district.

- ☞ Community facilities and services can serve as a tool, or as an unexpected trigger, to guide or stimulate community growth and development. Public sewage disposal systems can stimulate commercial and residential development.
- ☞ Public community facilities and services to serve Franklin Township residents are provided on several levels, and the provision of these facilities and services is dependent on tax dollars, whether in the form of federal and state aid, county supported programs, or locally funded facilities and services.
- ☞ Emergency services, police protection and road maintenance were ranked as most important by the respondents to the Township community survey, which is typical of rural communities.
- ☞ Recycling facilities and health care facilities ranked somewhat lower, but higher than other facilities and services.
- ☞ In terms of quality of service, fire protection and emergency medical service were ranked primarily good to excellent, while road maintenance and State Police service were ranked fair to good.
- ☞ The Township owns and maintains a municipal building, associated maintenance facility, a salt/anti-skid storage shed, and vehicles and equipment necessary for maintaining roads.
- ☞ Staffing at the Township is adequate because the Supervisors have added personnel as new programs and increased work loads have dictated.
- ☞ Office and meeting space are currently adequate, and there are no immediate plans for expansion.
- ☞ The Township’s equipment is maintained in good condition and is replaced or upgraded as necessary.



Franklin Township Building

☞ Capital expenditures anticipated:

Essential as Needed

- replace trucks and equipment
- road paving

Desirable

- implement park master plan

Deferrable

- improve/enlarge Township office

- ☞ The Townships contract for larger scale road maintenance and improvement projects, primarily major improvement projects such as paving and shoulder reconstruction.



Existing Municipal and Park Facilities, Franklin Township (www.ftvp.com)

- ☞ Recreation facilities and programs in Franklin Township are provided by the Dallas School District, sports league organizations, the Franklin Township Fire Company and the Township.
- ☞ The Township recently adopted a Master Site Plan for the park on the 13-acre Township parcel which poses two alternatives - the full development of the current Township Park and the continuation of the current park facilities with an additional park developed at another location.
- ☞ Franklin Township, along with other upper Luzerne County municipalities and all of Bradford, Sullivan and Wyoming Counties, is served by Troop P of the Pennsylvania State Police from their barracks located in Wyoming Borough and satellite stations in Laporte, Shickshinny, Towanda and Tunkhannock.
- ☞ Fire protection and basic life support service is provided by two volunteer companies, the Franklin Township Fire Department and the Franklin - Northmoreland Township Ambulance Association serve the entire Township.



Franklin Township Fire Department

Ambulance 535 (<http://fntaa.synthasite.com/>)

- ☞ Similar to other rural areas throughout the Country, finding and retaining volunteers is a critical issue. The Fire Department currently has 12 active firefighters that respond to some 60 calls each year.
- ☞ Township officials and emergency service organizations have historically maintained good working relationships and each Township has annually provided funding to support emergency services.
- ☞ Adequate emergency service will continue to be an important element of maintaining the existing quality of life in the Township. The issues should be addressed as a long term goal of the Township and area wide municipalities.
- ☞ The Township will continue to work with the volunteer organizations to maintain and improve emergency services, and will explore regional solutions for police service when the need dictates and financial resources permit.
- ☞ Recycling ranked very high in importance to Franklin Township community survey respondents, but the quality of recycling facilities was rated very low.
- ☞ Groundwater is the source for all potable water in the Township with most homes served by individual wells and the two mobile home parks served by a common water supply and distribution system.
- ☞ The primary means of sewage disposal in Franklin Township is the use of a septic tank and subsurface soil disposal of the effluent, which includes both in-ground seepage beds and elevated sand mounds.
- ☞ In recent years, more and more municipalities in the Commonwealth have begun working together on a number of issues and programs. The Back Mountain Community Partnership, which includes Dallas Borough and Dallas, Franklin, Jackson, Kingston and Lehman Townships, has been focusing on regional land use issues. The Partnership will likely progress to joint purchasing and service provision.
- ☞ Franklin Township operates on an annual general fund budget of approximately \$320,000 with most revenue raised by taxes.
- ☞ Road maintenance now accounts for much of the municipal budget and this will continue to be a primary role of the Township.

- ☞ Increased spending for additional facilities and services must be assessed in terms of the total local tax burden (township, county, and school district) and the real need and demand.
- ☞ Given the overall tax burden on Township residents and the current national economy, the Board of Supervisors intend to limit any tax increases to those required to maintain the existing level of facilities and services unless resident demand for new facilities and services is clear or additional funds are required to maintain the service.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP FACILITIES AND STAFF			
Township Building	- 13 acres along Municipal Road, excellent condition, small office and maintenance		
Maintenance Buildings	- located on Township Building parcel - equipment garage part of Township Building, excellent condition - salt / anti-skid storage shed, excellent condition		
Other Property	- none		
Meetings	- Franklin Township Fire Company		
Employees	- Secretary/Treasurer, part-time - Road Foreman, full-time - Equipment Operator, full time - Zoning Officer, part-time - Township Solicitor, part-time	- Planning Commission Secretary, part-time - Planning Commission Solicitor, part-time - Sewage Enforcement Officer, part-time - Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor, part-time - Building Inspector, part-time (contract)	
Volunteer Boards	- Planning Commission - Zoning Hearing Board - Recreation Board		
Vehicles & Major Equipment	- 2010 Ford dump truck, plow, spreader - 2080 Chevy dump truck, plow, spreader - 2006 F250 pickup truck	- 2008 Case backhoe/loader - 1991 John Deere grader - John Deere tractor	
Recreation Facilities	- Park on Township Building parcel		
Anticipated Capital Expenditures	Essential as Needed -replace trucks and equipment -road paving	Desirable -implement park master plan	Deferrable -improve/enlarge Twp office

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
TOWNSHIP FACILITIES			
1	Staff - As the population continues to increase over the long term and administrative functions become more complex, increased staff and office hours will be provided to meet resident needs.	Supervisors	as needed
2	Road Projects - Continue to contract for road maintenance and improvement projects.	Supervisors Staff	ongoing
3	Council of Government (COG) - Fully explore and take advantage of any opportunities to improve facilities and services offered by intermunicipal cooperation via the Back Mountain Community Partnership.	Supervisors Staff	ongoing
4	Capital Budget - Continue to prioritize needs and plan for road improvements, purchase of vehicles and equipment, and other large expenditures.	Supervisors Staff	ongoing

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
RECREATION FACILITIES			
5	<u>Park Master Site Plan</u> - Use the Master Site Plan as the basis for improving and developing recreation facilities and services in the Township	Recreation Board Sports Organizations Supervisors	ongoing
6	<u>Cooperation</u> - Work cooperatively to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan for recreation and open space from an area wide perspective. • coordinate individual municipal efforts. • maximize use of resources. • improve standing for state grants. • provide a broader base of support for recreation and open space planning. 	Recreation Board Sports Organizations School District Supervisors	long term as needed
7	<u>Funding Plan</u> - Develop a funding plan to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of fees assessed for residential development under the subdivision and land development ordinance. • solicitation of private contributions. • grants. • direct municipal contributions. • a special fund for land acquisition and capital improvements 	Recreation Board Supervisors	immediate
8	<u>State Assistance</u> - Obtain technical assistance from State agencies.	Recreation Board	ongoing
EMERGENCY SERVICES			
9	<u>Police</u> - Monitor the need for increased local police services and consider intermunicipal cooperation if such service is provided in the future.	Supervisors	ongoing
10	<u>Financial Support</u> - Provide financial support for emergency services.	Supervisors	ongoing
11	<u>Local Companies</u> - Work with the Franklin Township Fire Department and the Franklin-Northmoreland Township Ambulance Association to maintain adequate services and buildings and other support equipment and facilities	Supervisors Fire Company Ambulance Association	ongoing
12	<u>Volunteers</u> - Support efforts to petition the State Office of Fire Prevention and Control to set reasonable qualification and training standards for volunteer firefighter and ambulance personnel in rural areas.	Supervisors Fire Company Ambulance Association	ongoing
RECYCLING			
13	<u>Township Program</u> - Work with the Luzerne County Department of Solid Waste Management to evaluate options for recycling in the Township.	Supervisors	2 years

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
ON-LOT SEWAGE DISPOSAL			
14	Existing Systems - Continue to monitor the functioning of existing on-lot sewage disposal systems and order corrections when malfunctions occur.	SEO	ongoing
15	New Systems - Continue to ensure that all new on-lot systems meet DEP regulations and Township ordinance standards.		
16	Management - Consider an on-lot sewage system management program, particularly in areas where malfunctions are occurring or are likely to occur (e.g., poor soils, concentrated numbers of small residential lots).	Supervisors SEO	5 years
COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT			
17	SALDO - Carefully enforce the subdivision and land development ordinance, and continue to update it to ensure that roads, drainage and other community facilities are installed to standards which will result in quality, durable facilities.	Planning Commission Supervisors	ongoing

NATURAL RESOURCES

Findings and Planning Implications

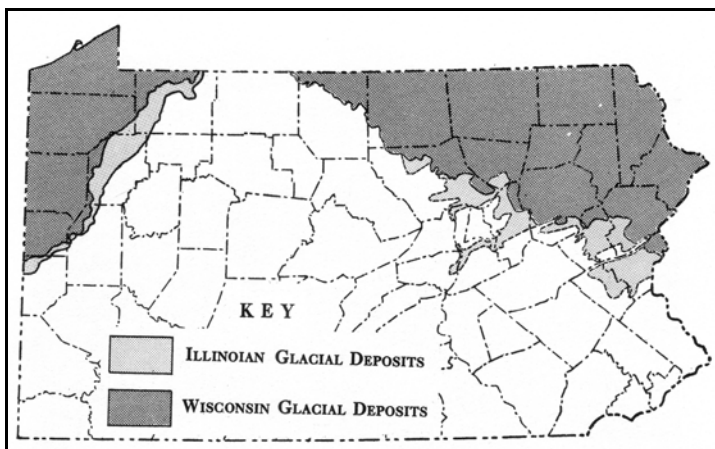
☞ Franklin Township lies in the Glaciated Low Plateau Section of the Appalachian Plateaus Province, a land classification based on geologic formations and landscape characteristics.

Glaciated Low Plateau Section
Includes an area of diversified topography in northeastern Pennsylvania. The topography consists of rounded hills and broad to narrow valleys all of which have been modified by glacial erosion and deposition. Swamps and peat bogs are common in the eastern part of the Section. The Section reflects the interplay between bedrock of various types, mainly sandstones and siltstones, and glacial erosion and deposition. The more erosion-resistant rocks form the hills, while the less erosion-resistant rocks occur in the valleys. Glacial deposits, mainly glacial till or sand and gravel, may occur anywhere, but are found mainly in the valley bottoms and margins.
www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo/map13/13glps.aspx

- ☞ Most of Franklin Township falls below the steep slope threshold, and steep slopes in the Township are not significant in terms of limiting overall development.
- ☞ Although development on steep slopes is technically feasible, development costs increase dramatically as the slope increases, and the environmental concerns also escalate.
- ☞ Bedrock geology and glacial geology are key factors affecting the natural environment and development pattern of the Township by providing the base for the formation of soils.
- ☞ Franklin Township as a whole is underlain by shale, claystone, siltstone, sandstone and conglomerates of the Devonian Age which are some 350 to 400 million years old.
- ☞ The glaciation affecting Franklin Township has had considerable effect on the soils and groundwater water supply by depositing varying depths of overburden on the underlying rock formations.

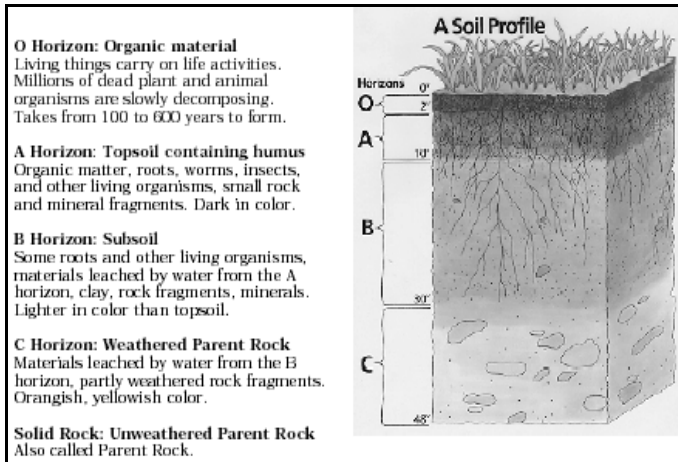
☞ Groundwater is the sole source of water supply in the Townships with most of the supply pumped from deep wells.

☞ Based on recharge rates and water use, the overall supply of groundwater in Franklin Township should be adequate to sustain development and meet the needs of the foreseeable future. However, groundwater availability is a regional issue and adequate supply is not a valid reason for postponing or avoiding action to ensure continued adequate supply.



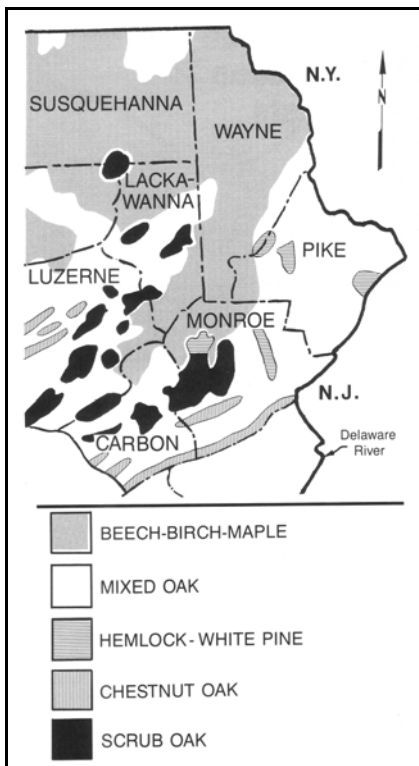
Glacial Deposits in Pennsylvania (Source: *Pennsylvania and the Ice Age*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1962.)

- ☞ No significant groundwater contamination problems have been reported in the Townships, but quality protection is important.
- ☞ Proper siting, design, installation and maintenance of on-site disposal systems and water supply wells, and groundwater quality, should continue to be a municipal concern and proper land use controls must be applied to protect groundwater recharge areas.
- ☞ Soil conditions, along with slope and underlying geology, pose severe limitations to septic absorption throughout the Townships. Poorly renovated effluent from existing sewage systems on poor soils poses a threat to the quality of surface waters and groundwater supplies.



Source: <http://home.earthlink.net/~pdf2krech/SoilProfile.pdf>

- ☞ The soil formation process resulted in stoniness in many areas and the presence of a fragipan or hardpan that inhibits the downward movement of water. These cemented soil layers can impede the downward movement of water and create a seasonal high water table below the soil surface. This creates the shallow groundwater which carries nutrients from on-lot disposal systems to surface waters.
- ☞ Limitations for septic absorption, aging and poorly maintained on-lot sewage systems on poor soils, and the lack of sufficient ground for on-lot septic replacement threaten to contaminate soil and groundwater and lakes and streams.



Five Major Forest Types (*The Poconos, An Illustrated Natural History Guide*, Oplinger, C. S. And Halma, R., Rutgers, 1988, p. 44)

- ☞ The soil limitations in many areas with older on-lot systems document the potential for malfunctions.
- ☞ Long-term maintenance of on-lot sewage systems is critical.
- ☞ A significant proportion of the Township is comprised of prime agricultural soils which should be preserved for agriculture.
- ☞ Problems associated with soil erosion and sedimentation are exacerbated by development of steep slopes and removal of vegetative cover.
- ☞ Much of Franklin Township remains forested, primarily those areas which were not suitable for agriculture, such as hilltops, stony areas, and steep slopes.
- ☞ The predominate forest type in the Township is mixed oak, with areas of the hemlock-white pine and beech-birch-maple forest types.
- ☞ Wetlands are an integral part of the environment and provide such benefits as groundwater recharge, stormwater control, surface water quality improvement and habitat for unique plant and animal species
- ☞ The Township contains relatively limited areas of wetlands.
- ☞ State and federal regulations protect wetlands but do not require a buffer around wetlands. Local municipalities can include wetland protection in zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to augment federal wetland regulations.
- ☞ Franklin Township lies in the Middle Susquehanna section of the Susquehanna River Basin which drains to the Chesapeake Bay which has long been a focus of restoration. Locally, the Township is comprised of seven small watersheds: Abrahams Creek, Cider Run, Dymond Creek, Leonard Creek, Sutton Creek and Whitelock Creek.



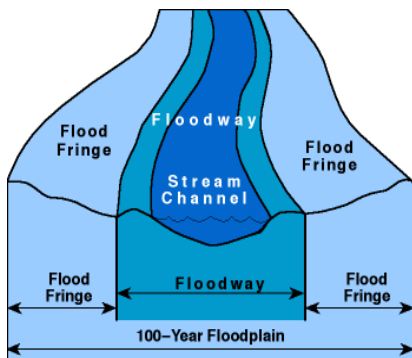
Franklin Township Wetland

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The Chesapeake Bay Program partners include the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; the Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; and participating citizen advisory groups. (www.chesapeakebay.net)

- ☞ The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection classifies all of the streams in the Township as cold water fisheries, except the headwaters of Lake Catalpa which are classified as high quality, cold water fisheries.
- ☞ Surface water quality in Franklin Township remains generally good, but can be affected by point and non-point pollution. Non-point pollutant sources include soil erosion resulting in stream sedimentation and on-lot sewage disposal systems, and point sources include direct stream discharges of sewage effluent and stormwater.

☞ Maintaining good water quality is critical to the quality of life in the Township and region and beyond to Chesapeake Bay. Good quality streams and well-conserved watersheds are a good measure of overall environmental quality.

☞ Continued updating and enforcement of on-lot sewage disposal, stormwater and soil erosion control and other water quality regulations is critical.



Floodplain Cross Section

☞ The 100-year floodplain identified by FEMA in the Township is minimal and is largely confined to narrow corridors along Sutton Creek and its tributaries.

☞ Development in floodplain in the Township is also very minimal when compared to many communities, and damage from floods has been infrequent.

☞ Franklin Township floodplain regulations comply with the state and federal minimum by allowing elevated dwellings and floodproofed nonresidential structures.

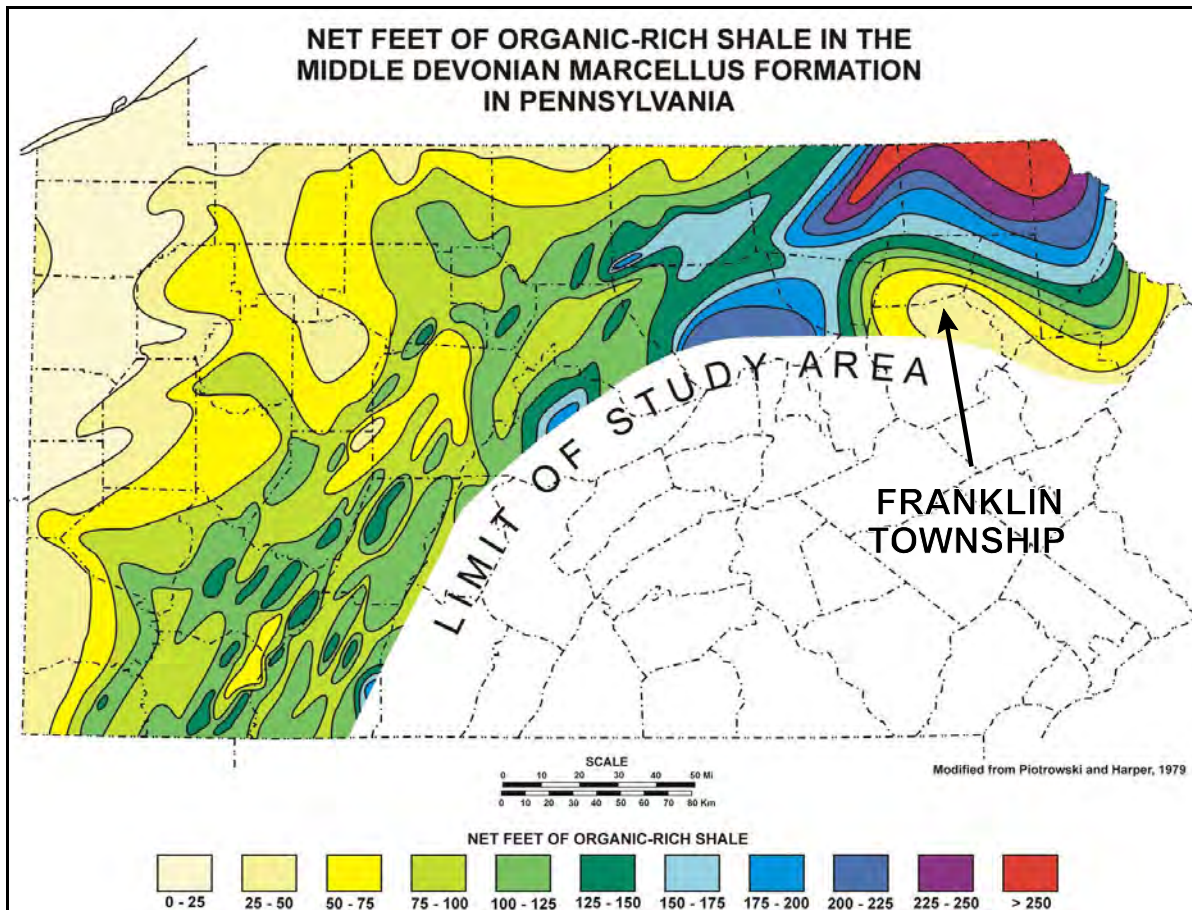
☞ The 2006 *Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory*, identified two areas in Franklin Township – about half of Perrin’s Marsh and the upper extreme of Abrahams Creek Wetlands.

☞ The Township recognizes the historical and continuing importance of forestry enterprises to the local economy and quality of life, and encourages forestry activities throughout the Township provided such operations are conducted in accord with sound forest management practices and environmental regulations.

☞ A number of natural gas companies have leased thousands of acres in the Back Mountain Area. If exploratory wells are successful, natural gas extraction may become a part of the landscape.

☞ The thickness of the shale and its productivity varies throughout the deposit and Franklin Township is at the lower end of the spectrum.

☞ The Township recognizes the need to provide for *the reasonable development of minerals* in the Township while at the same time ensuring that such operations are conducted in appropriate locations and in accord with sound mining practices and environmental regulations.



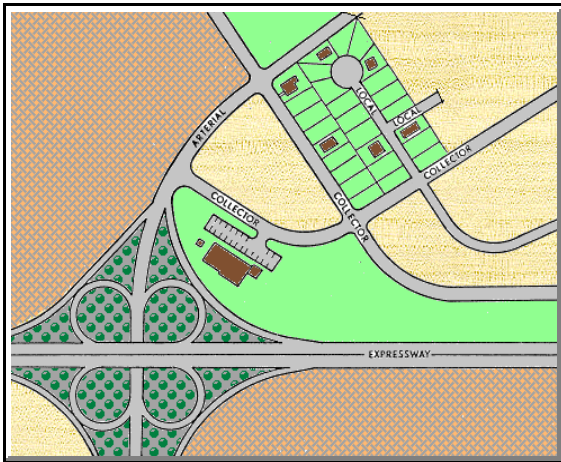
NATURAL RESOURCES SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
1	<u>Steep Slopes</u> - Review steep slope standards and consider standards to limit development of very steep slopes.	Planning Commission Supervisors Zoning Officer	1 year part of zoning
2	<u>Soils</u> - Consider standards to limit soil removal, limit building on wet soils and exclude wet soil areas from lot area calculations.		
3	<u>Forest and Vegetation</u> - Apply standards to limit clearing prior to development application approval and promote open space preservation.		
4	<u>Wetlands</u> - Require wetland identification prior to development and apply wetland preservation standards including buffers.		
5	<u>Forestry</u> - Allow forestry as a principal permitted use in all zoning districts and provide ample opportunity for the location and development of <i>value added</i> enterprises that use the plentiful forest resources available in the Township.		

NATURAL RESOURCES SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
6	<u>Mineral Extraction</u> - To the extent possible under the terms of the Municipalities Planning Code, direct mineral extraction operations to suitable areas where impacts will be minimized. Adopt standards to ensure that mineral extraction is controlled to the greatest extent possible within the limitations of the Planning Code and evolving case law.	Planning Commission Supervisors Zoning Officer	1 year part of zoning
7	<u>Dark Skies</u> - Consider comprehensive lighting standards and updates as needed.		
8	<u>Stormwater Management</u> - Update Township stormwater requirements in the SALDO to be consistent with the County Stormwater Management Plan and DEP requirements	Planning Commission Supervisors	1 year
9	<u>Groundwater Protection Program</u> - Consider the appointment of a groundwater protection committee and update performance standards related to groundwater conservation and protection: zoning, sewage, stormwater, and well construction.	Planning Commission Supervisors Committee	2 to 3 years
10	<u>Well Ordinance</u> - Consider the adoption of a well ordinance because there is no state regulation for the construction of private wells.	Planning Commission Supervisors	2 years
11	<u>Surface Waters</u> - Apply surface water quality protection standards and direct development to areas with adequate sewage disposal facilities.	Planning Commission Supervisors	ongoing
12	<u>Floodplain</u> - Continue to apply floodplain regulations.	Planning Commission Supervisors Zoning Officer	ongoing

TRANSPORTATION

Findings and Planning Implications

A sound transportation system includes adequate and well-maintained roads, available public transportation, safe and convenient pedestrian access, and bicycle routes. However, few small, less populated communities with limited budgets are able to achieve this ideal level of service.



Highway Functional Classification

- ☞ Local municipalities must evaluate transportation needs, set priorities, and garner all available resources to make improvements.
- ☞ While the Township has no direct access to I-81, the development pattern of Luzerne County and all of Northeastern Pennsylvania has evolved in large part to the access provided by this expressway that connects to other interstate highways and the entire Nation.
- ☞ Arterial highways provide connection between commercial and population centers in the region and roads from the Township connect to several of arterials in nearby communities, all state highways – Route 309, Route 92 and Route 11.

PUBLIC ROAD MILEAGE		
Franklin Township Roads		
Name	T - #	Miles
Coon Road	669	1.19
Lewis Road	670	1.63
Valley Road	689	0.86
Ridge Road	693	0.63
Race Road	697	0.65
Cummings Road	699	1.17
Mill Hill Road	709	0.02
Jake Moore Road	768	0.93
Sickler Road	778	0.33
Municipal Road	782	0.99
Flat Rock Road	784	0.85
Brace Road	802	1.42
Village Road	810	0.79
Lockville Road	823	1.46
Cider Run Road	824	0.62
Maria	825	0.09
Abbey Lane	827	0.14
Farm View Drive	828	0.20
Hill Drive	829	0.28
Crown Drive	830	0.35
Pine Drive	831	0.46
Natures Way		0.70
Switzer Road		0.10
Gresh Road		0.10
Township Total		15.96
Penn DOT Total		11.18
Luzerne County Total		6.96
Public Road Total		34.10

- ☞ Collector roads carry traffic from local streets to arterials and in Franklin Township include Eighth Avenue, Orange Road, Village Road, Louise Road, Mount Olivet Road, Bodle Road and Demunds Road.
- ☞ All other public roads in the Township not classified as collectors are considered local roads which provide connection of residential properties and communities and less populated areas to collectors.
- ☞ Traffic volume is not an issue in the Township in terms of congestion and level-of-service. Level-of-service, a measure of a traffic flow, is satisfactory for current volumes of traffic and is expected to remain satisfactory for many years.
- ☞ Franklin Township owns and maintains 15.96 miles of roads, PennDOT owns 11.18 miles, and Luzerne County owns 6.96 miles.
- ☞ Land use management tools must consider the capacity of roads, directing commercial and higher density development to areas served by roads capable of carrying increased traffic and the trucks necessary to serve commercial establishments.
- ☞ The Township Supervisors have identified routine maintenance, re-paving as necessary, improving shoulders and drainage as important on Township roads, with no plans for widening or reducing steep grades.
- ☞ The paving of gravel roads is also not planned because of the cost. In addition to the surface cost, sub-base preparation, drainage facilities, shoulders and bituminous base course requirements drive the cost well above affordability.

- ☞ The primary concerns on state roads include correction of dangerous intersections, surface restoration, increasing volumes of traffic, speed limit enforcement, adequate maintenance, and improved signs for hazards and traffic control.
- ☞ Franklin Township own no bridges. The bridges on public roads in Franklin Township are owned either by Luzerne County or PennDOT, with the County owning all six bridges on Township Roads. All are in relatively good condition and are adequate for the amount and types of traffic carried, including bridges with posted weight limits.
- ☞ The Township’s Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance includes standards to ensure adequate roads and other facilities for new development.
- ☞ The Franklin Township policy is to not accept any new development road unless the road clearly serves a general public purpose other than providing access to homes in the residential subdivision.
- ☞ Area residents rely on regional airports in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey for major commercial carrier service.
- ☞ Given the regional nature of airport and railroad development and required support, no specific action is planned by the Township with regard to air and rail service.
- ☞ The Luzerne County Transportation Authority provides public bus service in the County but no routes serve the Township. The closest connection is in Wyoming Borough.

TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
LOCAL ROADS			
1	Maintenance - Focus on the maintenance and improvement of existing local municipal roads with no plans for paving gravel roads, major realignment or widening projects.	Supervisors Staff	ongoing
2	Innovation - Monitor the effectiveness of new materials and practices and use such innovations to best advantage.		
3	Equipment Inventory - Maintain an up-to-date inventory of road maintenance equipment as a means of planning for replacement and inclusion the capital improvements program.	Supervisors Staff	immediate
4	Road Inventory - Complete and update annually a detailed Township road inventory and evaluation to identify needs and develop an improvements schedule and to identify potential capital projects.		
5	Weight Limits - Begin the process required to study, post weight limits and bond Township roads.	Supervisors Staff Engineer	1 year

TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY OF ACTIONS			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
LOCAL ORDINANCES			
6	Road Standards - Maintain an up-to-date road ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) setting standards for construction of roads and establishing procedures for dedication to the public.	Planning Commission Supervisors Engineer	1 year
7	Dedication - Consider public dedication would only if the road provides connection between existing public roads and therefore clearly serves the general public.	Supervisors	ongoing
8	Occupancy Permits - Maintain an up-to-date road occupancy ordinance setting standards for driveway access to Township roads and for stormwater and utility improvements within the road right-of-way and require the issuance of a highway occupancy permit by the Township for any access or drainage work along Township roads.	Supervisors Engineer	1 year
9	Subdivision Roads - Review road construction standards to ensure adequacy for public safety and eliminate excessive requirements to minimize the consumption of resources for construction and long term maintenance.	Planning Commission Supervisors Engineer	1 year
10	Parking and Loading - Review and update zoning standards for parking and loading areas to ensure safe and adequate parking facilities.	Planning Commission Supervisors	1 year
OFFICIAL MAP			
11	Official Map - Consider an Official Map to identify and reserve land needed for road and intersection improvements and connections.	Planning Commission Supervisors Engineer	2 years
STATE AND COUNTY ROADS			
12	Advisory Board - Participate in the PennDOT Customer Advisory Board to communicate concerns to PennDOT.	Supervisors	ongoing
13	Planning - Continue to work with the Lackawanna/Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the County Public Works Department and PennDOT officials to discuss highway improvement needs and prioritize and promote specific improvement projects.		
14	Improvements - Work with local legislators, the MPO, the County Public Works Department and PennDOT to schedule studies to identify improvements to correct identified road and intersection deficiencies		
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION			
15	Park and Ride - Encourage the establishment of a ride-share (car pool) system and provide for park and ride areas in certain zoning districts to facilitate commuting to work outside the Township.	Planning Commission Supervisors	1 year
16	Planning - Recognize the potential future need for public transportation and plan accordingly (e.g., locate residential development along main roads where transit stops are most likely to be located).		

FINDINGS: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Benefits of Historic Preservation

Since the 1970s, mounting evidence has shown that historic preservation can be a powerful community and economic development strategy. Evidence includes statistics compiled from annual surveys conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and statewide Main Street programs, state-level tourism and economic impact studies, and studies that have analyzed the impact of specific actions such as historic designation, tax credits, and revolving loan funds. Among the findings:

- *Creation of local historic districts stabilizes, and often increases residential and commercial property values.*
- *Increases in property values in historic districts are typically greater than increases in the community at large.*
- *Historic building rehabilitation, which is more labor intensive and requires greater specialization and higher skill levels, creates more jobs and results in more local business than does new construction.*
- *Heritage tourism provides substantial economic benefits. Tourists drawn by a community's (or region's) historic character typically stay longer and spend more during their visit than other tourists.*
- *Historic rehabilitation encourages additional neighborhood investment and produces a high return for municipal dollars spent.*
- *Use of a city or town's existing, historic building stock can support growth management policies by increasing the supply of centrally located housing.*

Source: Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 4.

- ☞ The historic resources in Franklin Township are key components of the rural-working landscape and the character of the community.
- ☞ According to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), no individual structures in the Township are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Three bridges have been nominated but were determined to be ineligible.
- ☞ Many of the older homes and buildings and historic sites in Franklin Township, along with the landscape itself, add to the historic fabric. Some of these buildings and structures may also be eligible for listing on the National Register.
- ☞ The lack of nationally designated historic resources in Franklin Township does not mean that it does not have a rich history.
- ☞ Historic resources of local significance are those that have not been nominated for the National Register, but are still meaningful and important to the community's heritage.
- ☞ A local historic register would be an important first step in securing the resources for the future.
- ☞ Although site and sign design guidelines would not be mandatory outside of a historic district listed on the National Register they can encourage commercial establishments and signs to be consistent with the community's heritage.

Planning Policies for Historic Resources - The following policies are intended to preserve and promote this important and unique past which can also serve as an invaluable asset for the local tourism economy:

- Continue the identification of historic sites (nationally and locally significant) and pursue National Register listing.
- Promote public education to raise awareness of local history and historic resources.
- Promote preservation of historic buildings and structures during the land development process.
- Preserve historic buildings by incorporation in commercial areas as commercial uses.
- Preserve historic sites by promotion as recreational or tourist destinations.
- Pursue technical assistance and funding for historic resource identification and preservation.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS: HISTORIC PRESERVATION			
#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
1	Historical Society - Encourage and support the organization of a local historical society to promote the benefits of historic preservation and document and preserve local history and historical artifacts.	Planning Commission Supervisors Residents	ongoing
2	Outreach - Conduct a public outreach program, perhaps through a newsletter and the Township's web site, to provide educational materials on the Township's history and historic resources.	Historical Society	when formed
3	Data Maintenance - Create a system for efficient storage, mapping, and retrieval of historic resource data and maintain a historic resources database.	Historical Society	3 years
4	Local Register - Develop a local historic register program aimed at identifying properties eligible for state and national recognition, and encourage and support efforts to list and preserve such properties on the National Register.		
5	Technical Assistance - Seek technical assistance from historic preservation organizations, such as the PHMC and Preservation Pennsylvania for inventorying and documenting resources and nominating resources for the National Register.		
6	Funding - Seek funding from organizations such as the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, PHMC, and DCNR, and from programs such as the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.		
7	Design Guidelines - Prepare and adopt design guidelines for commercial, industrial, and institutional development to encourage the most efficient use of commercial land and development consistent with historic character.	Planning Commission Historical Society Business Committee	2 years
8	<p>Ordinances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adopting a historic resource protection ordinance to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit demolition by neglect. • Facilitate the adaptive re-use of historic resources. • Provide incentives for rehabilitation of historic resources • Require review of demolition, alteration, erection, reconstruction, and restoration of historic resources. • Allow home occupations in all zoning districts as a means of encouraging productive use of historic structures which tend to be larger and more difficult to maintain. • Incorporate the preservation of historic resources in conservation design for residential and commercial development. 	Planning Commission Supervisors	2 years ongoing 1 year
9	NPS Certified Program - Consider participation in the Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Program of the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Historic Preservation.	Historical Society	3 years

**PLANNING PROCESS, INTERRELATIONSHIP AMONG PLAN ELEMENTS
AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

**Framework
for the Future**

This *Comprehensive Plan* provides a framework for the growth and development of Franklin Township. Although the *Plan* is comprised of a number of separate elements, each element, and, in fact, each planning and development action taken by a public body or private individual, is inextricably interrelated with other plan elements and planning and development actions. For example, the development of housing implementation strategies cannot be accomplished without taking into account land use controls and economic development trends. Economic development strategies cannot be formulated without considering land use controls and transportation needs. Community facilities and services planning requires an assessment of future development, transportation needs, and housing affordability. In most cases, these types of interrelationships and implementation strategies are discussed in the various comprehensive plan elements.

Planning Process

A theme consistent throughout all elements of this *Comprehensive Plan* is the concept of *process*. The published comprehensive plan document represents only the first step of what should evolve into an on-going planning process. If this *process* frame of mind is not firmly established, local officials, businessmen, land developers, and citizens, all players in the community growth and development arena, will have little chance of achieving the sustainable growth vital to the social, economic and environmental future of the Township. This process will also allow the recognition of the shifting interrelationships of community growth and development decisions vital to the success of long-term planning efforts.

**Conservation of
Community Character**

Another key theme of this *Plan* is the conservation of the Township’s rural working landscape and residential character. All public and private actions must be assessed in terms of its effect on the community’s character. For example, residential development standards in the normal pattern of large lots will fragment remaining open land. The alternative, conservation design or planned residential development, provides the opportunity to conserve open land. The conundrum of central sewage disposal provides another good example of planning interrelationships. This community facility is often the only means of correcting sewage disposal problems yet can stimulate development of more land at higher population densities. Increases in population would trigger the need for improved or new community facilities and services such as schools and police protection. In short, without careful analysis, one *implementation action* taken by a municipality can have unexpected and often undesirable effects.

Key Recommendations

To achieve growth and development goals and to establish the community's planning process for the future, this *Plan* makes the following overall recommendations:

- Evaluate all public and private actions with the goal of preserving open land as a viable part of community character.
- Direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas and conserve large blocks of open land.

- Identify areas for growth within and adjacent to existing developed areas.
- Require adequate community facilities for new development.
- Carefully consider any sewer extensions to assess effects on stimulating development.
- Promote the idea of growth management - an effort to manage the location, type, and timing of future growth.
- Encourage increased local, intermunicipal, and regional cooperation for comprehensive planning and land use control implementation; and overall local municipal administration and management.
- Encourage a mix of business and commercial development in appropriate locations in the Township.
- Encourage a variety of housing types.

Community Vision and Community Effort

This *Comprehensive Plan* outlines a vision for the future of Franklin Township and recommends a course of action to achieve growth and development goals. However, the effective implementation of the *Plan* is necessary to make the planning program a success. Many of the resources, programs and techniques available for implementing a comprehensive plan are not within the direct control of local government. For example, although zoning and subdivision ordinances, the chief tools for land use control and land use plan implementation, are the purview of local governments, the funding, construction and maintenance of major roads and improvements have historically been the responsibility of the state and federal governments. Demand for housing in the Township is generated in large part by external market forces, that is, residents of the larger region who choose to relocate to the Township. The implementation of the *Plan* and the creation of an on-going planning process, must be a community-wide effort fostered by local municipal officials.

Community Involvement

It is obvious that the implementation of the *Comprehensive Plan* will require broad-based community involvement and coordination and cooperation among various federal, state, and local agencies. Plan implementation will require both a commitment of financial resources and human resources. The human resources can include both volunteer and paid staff and professional assistance. Many of the recommendations identified in the *Plan* could require increased staff support and demand for volunteer services.

Implementation Strategies

A variety of implementation strategies have been recommended in this *Plan* and are oriented to developing long-term policies for growth management, strengthening land use management programs, anticipating capital improvement needs and facilitating inter-governmental cooperation to accomplish local and regional goals. The key implementation strategies in this *Plan* include:

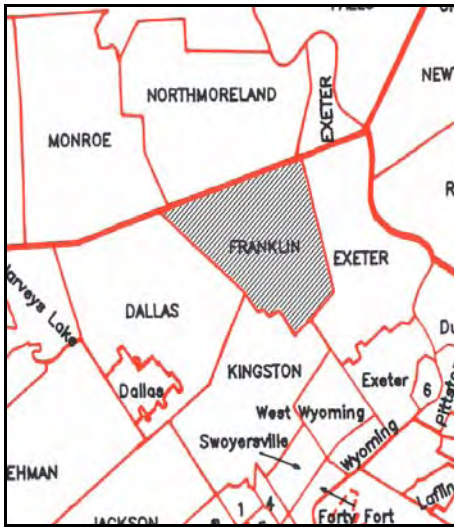
- A minimum of an annual review of this *Plan* to evaluate new development and regional issues which warrant plan changes.
- Development of short-term and long-term capital improvements program to prioritize needed improvements and allocate funds to those improvements; with

annual progress evaluations and adjustments in capital project timing and capital equipment purchases.

- Continuing education for local officials via seminars and workshops.
- Diligent updating of land use management ordinances to effect the land use plan, provide environmental protection, preserve open land, maintain rural and historic character, and achieve community facilities and services and housing objectives.
- Focusing limited municipal resources on those community facilities and services which are most critical to meet resident needs.
- Monitoring community facilities and services provided by the county, state, and federal government to ensure such services are adequate and the Township is obtaining its *fair share*.
- Participation in all county, state and federal entitlement and grant funding programs, not solely for the sake of participation, but only if such programs can be sensibly used to achieve valid community development objectives.
- Making a specific finding as to the relationship to this *Plan* for all subdivision and land development proposals and all zoning actions and changes.

By focusing the available resources on implementation of the this *Plan*, and the continuance of the *planning process* with an eye to preserving open land and rural character, the Township can achieve sustainable growth and development into the future and maintain the quality of life in the community.

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



Franklin Twp/Contiguous Municipalities

Planning Code

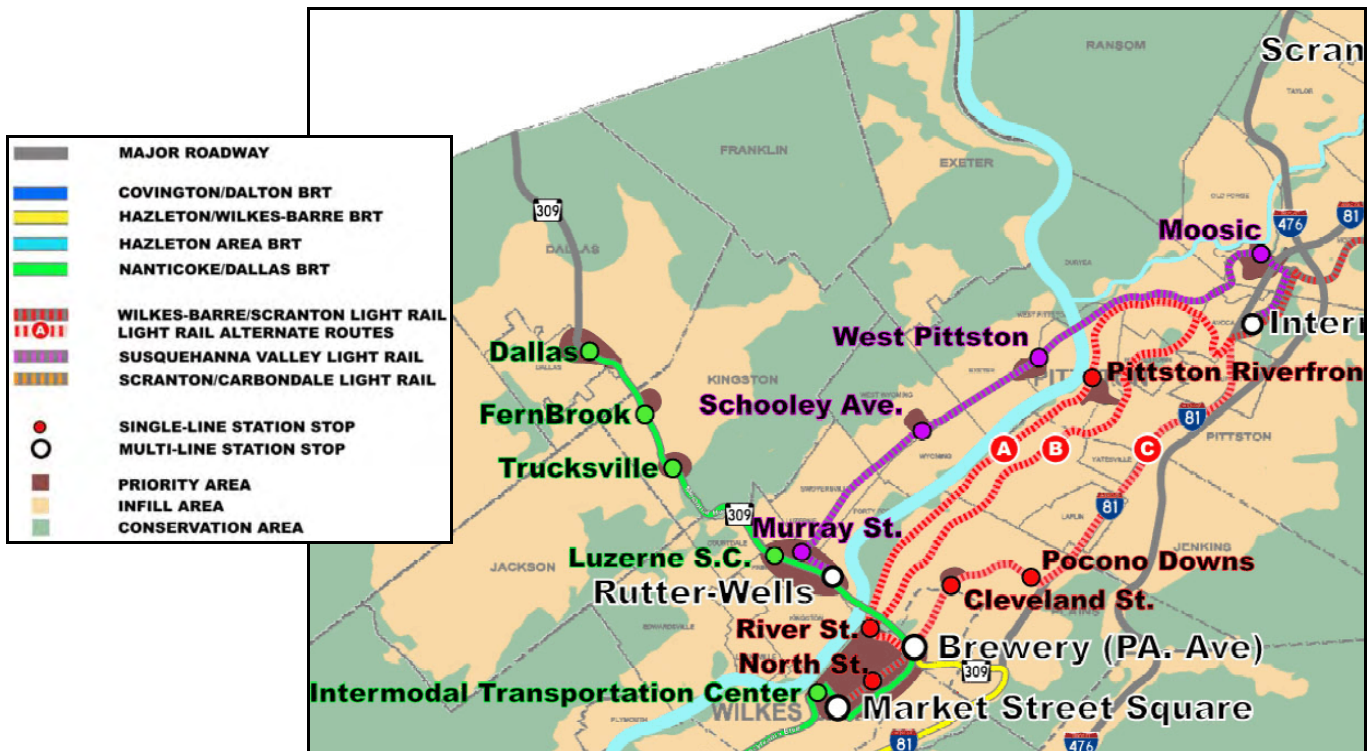
In 1988 the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code was amended to require all counties in the Commonwealth to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan within three years. The MPC dictates, and common sense suggests, that planning and development in contiguous municipalities, the county and the region 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.

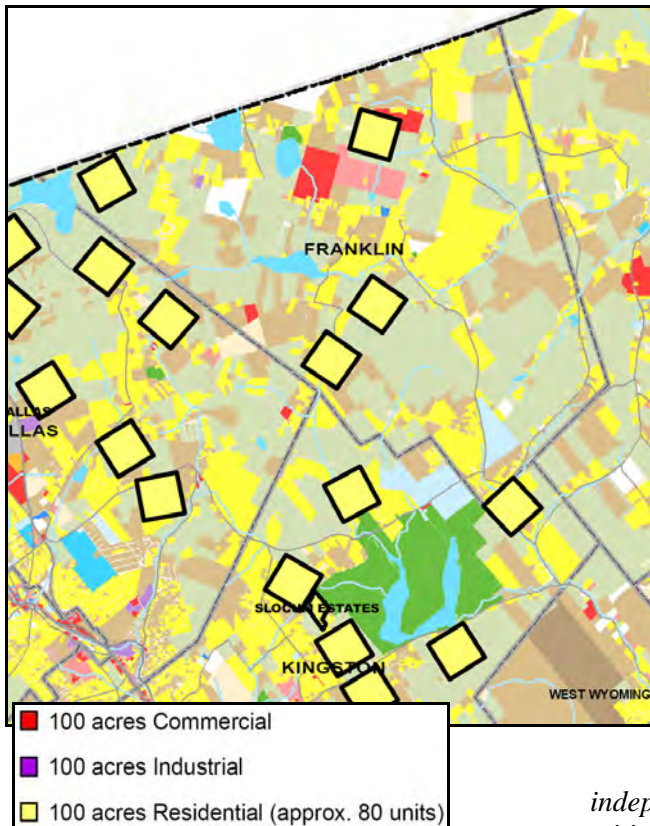
Luzerne County

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.*

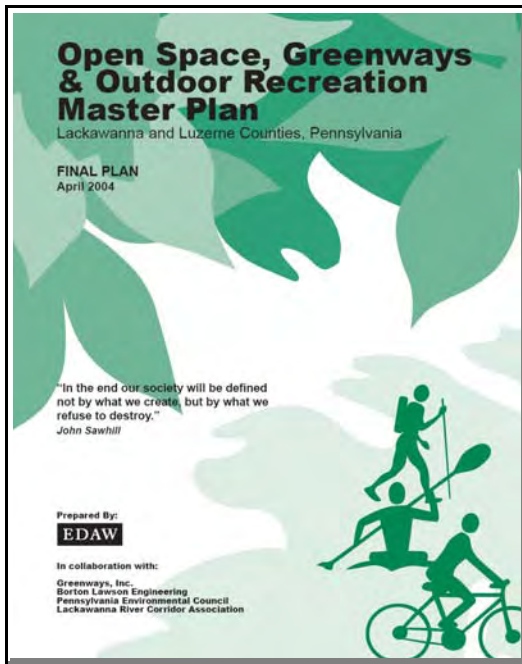
independent plans for future transportation needs and hazard mitigation matters.

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.

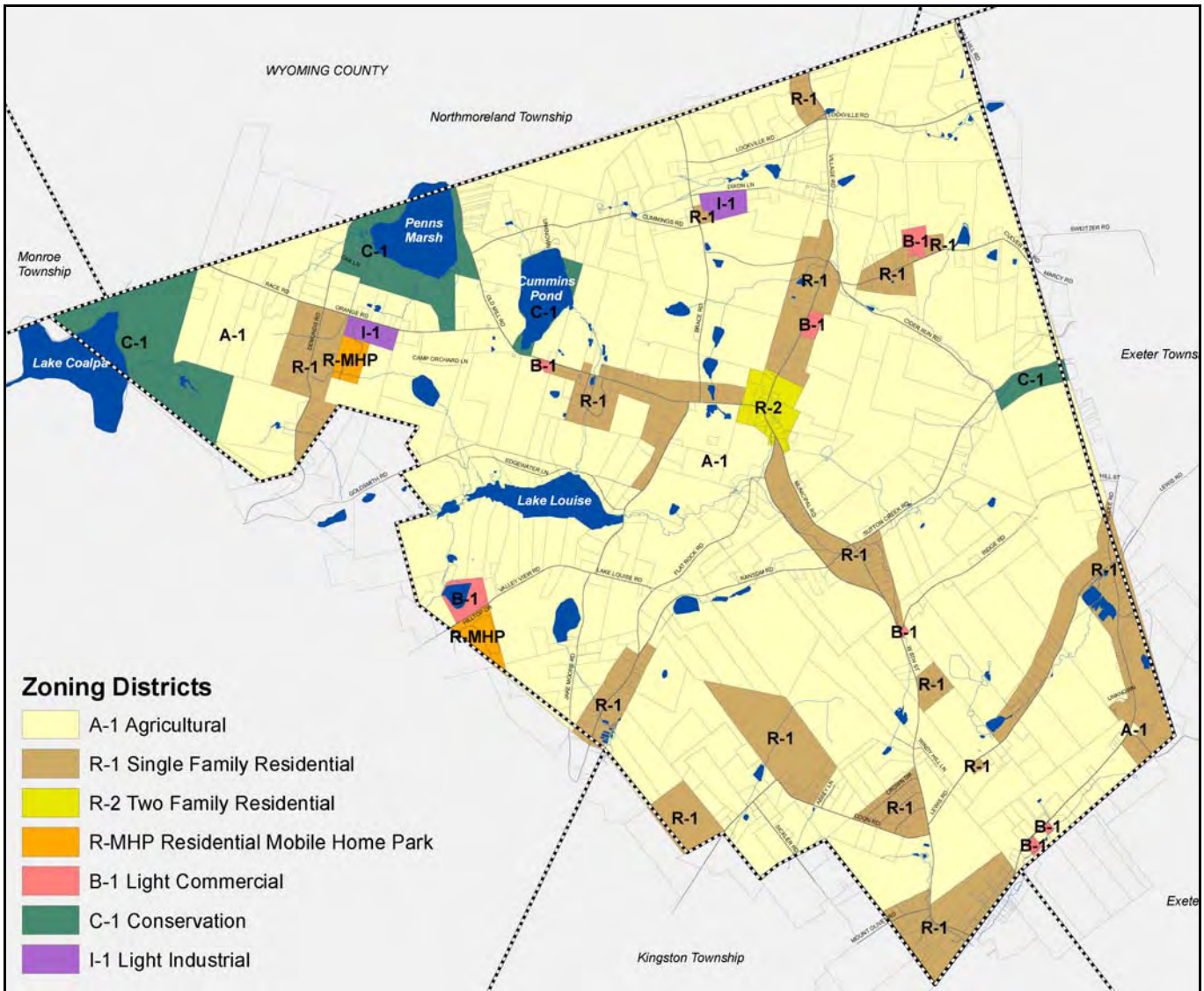
**Zoning in
Contiguous Municipalities**

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

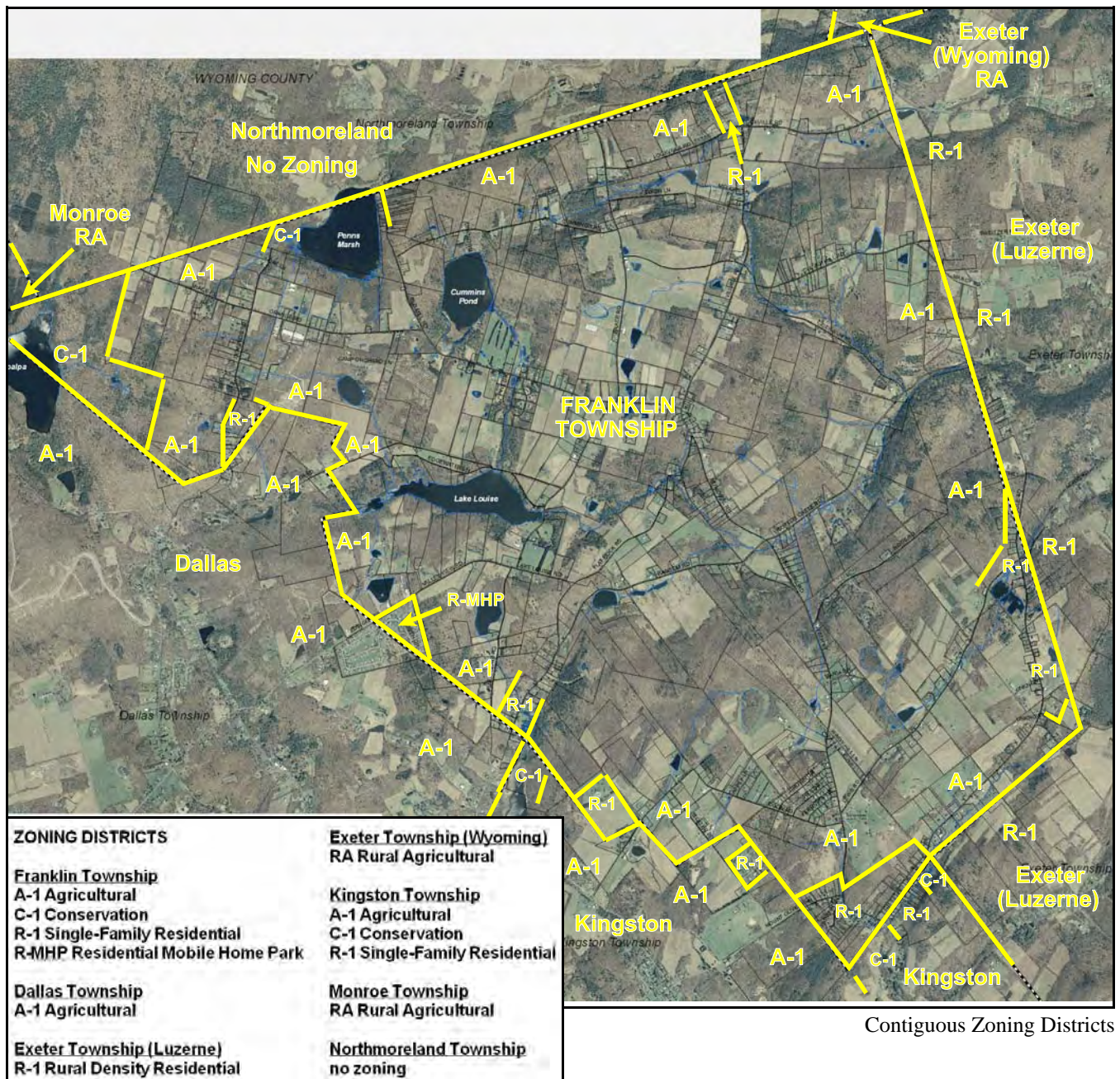
Contiguous Zoning Districts

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.

LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Growth and Development

A community's growth and development is affected by a broad range of interrelated factors including such things as regional location, the transportation system, natural resources, land suitability for agriculture and development, available community facilities such as sewage disposal, condition of the general economy, local land values and real estate taxes. A change in one factor will in all likelihood result in a change in another factor, and the overall character of the community. In short, how a community's character has developed and how it will change into the future are the result of a complex interaction of sometimes opposing forces ranging from no growth land use controls to unbridled development. Land use patterns in a community are the result of this complex interaction played out over the community's history.

Franklin Township's environmental quality, scenic quality and rural character, together with its proximity to the Scranton-Wilkes Barre, New York and New Jersey metropolitan areas, make it a very desirable place to live. The challenge for Franklin Township as it moves into the future is to strike a balance between growth and preservation. That is, the Township must provide for essential economic growth and development while concurrently preserving the natural and scenic features and rural character that give residents their superior quality of life. Without continued careful planning and management of growth, the Township's landscape and community character will be forever altered by sprawling and haphazard development.

This Land Use Plan examines the development pattern in Franklin Township and provides recommendations aimed at achieving balanced and coordinated growth and development based on the community's goals.

LAND USE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1:

Protect and enhance the Township's quality lifestyle by maintaining open space, and recognize agricultural land, forest land and other open land as important elements of the local economy, character, and scenic setting.

Franklin Township's physical environment, regional location and past development practices have shaped and maintained its character. The key element is currently the Township's rural-agricultural landscape located so close to the City of Wilkes-Barre, Kingston Borough and other Wyoming Valley Boroughs. Without careful planning, vigilant land use management, and continued community conservation, the quality lifestyle sought by so many from nearby metropolitan areas can succumb to the cumulative effects of the demands

Note About Open Space

The preservation of open space is a common thread of this Comprehensive Plan. Open space is land which has not been developed for a constructive or productive use and is intended for environmental and natural resource protection, scenic, or recreational purposes. Open space may include, for example, woodland, wetlands, watercourses, reverting farmland, and floodplain. In the case of a development project, open space may include passive recreation areas such as ballfields, lawns and buffer areas. Agricultural land is certainly open land, but not truly open space because it is in fact highly developed for crop and livestock production.

of an increasing population.

Franklin Township is perceived as an attractive community offering a high quality of life within an easy commute to the metropolitan area. While agriculture once dominated the landscape, more and more families have located in the Township. In recent years, large lot subdivisions with very large homes have been the norm. Future development must be and managed with an overriding concern to sustain the area's community character based on open space while meeting the needs and expectations of residents for employment, shopping, services and community facilities.

Without careful planning and management, the use of the natural resources and sensitive environmental areas in the Township can lead to the decline of community character and the quality lifestyle it affords, with eventual direct threats to the environment and public health and safety. Of special concern are lakes, streams, ground water, agricultural, forest and soil resources. If the quality of the area's natural resources is diminished, the quality of life and the local economy will suffer.

OBJECTIVES:

**Open Land and Rural/
Agricultural Character**

Conserve agricultural land, forest land, open space, significant natural features, and sensitive land areas to maintain rural-agricultural character.

- Important Areas - Identify and prioritize areas important for conservation.
- Identification Identify sensitive natural areas such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, steep slopes, poor soils and flood plains, and adopt regulations to protect such areas by requiring resource sensitive development.
- Critical Resource Areas - Promote the conservation of open space within the Township and the County and actively promote the long-term preservation and maintenance of valuable natural resource areas through public negotiated acquisition, private dedication of easements, and other cooperative efforts.
- Connections - Maintain a connected network of open space to facilitate natural resource and habitat protection and passive recreational opportunities (e.g., trail networks).
- Land Use Ordinances - Evaluate and develop land use ordinances in terms of effects on natural resources with the goal of maintaining open space to the greatest extent possible while allowing a reasonable density of development.
- Innovative Conservation Methods - Evaluate more progressive means of open land conservation including, conservation subdivision design, purchase of conservation easements and transferable development rights, especially in cooperation with conservancy and land trust organizations.

The purpose of conservation: The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time.
- Gifford Pinchot

I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use our natural resources, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.
- Theodore Roosevelt

If we learn, finally, that what we need to "manage" is not the land so much as ourselves in the land, we will have turned the history of American land-use on its head.
- Gaylord Nelson, Founder of Earth Day

- Conservation Design - Use optional *conservation subdivision design* to cluster residential development away from important natural, historic, scenic and cultural features, and preserve the resulting open space.
- Transferrable Development Rights - Use optional transferrable development rights to direct development to locations with adequate infrastructure and enable conservation-minded landowners to preserve their properties.
- Development Incentives - Implement adopted municipal policies to conserve a variety of irreplaceable and environmentally sensitive resource lands, including provisions for reasonable incentives to create a greenway and trail system for the benefit of present and future residents.
- Area Wide Cooperation - Coordinate environmental preservation efforts with neighboring jurisdictions, and establish an action plan targeting environmental concerns that require a regional approach.
- Economic Development - Encourage local economic development groups to make natural resource protection an integral part of all promotion efforts.

Agriculture and Forestry Preserve agriculture and forestry as important elements of the local economy.

- Economic Value - Recognize agriculture and forestry as a significant economic industry in the community and encourage economic opportunities in this industry.
- Right to Farm - Protect and promote the abilities and rights of farmers to engage in all sound agricultural management practices by recognizing the Right to Farm Law as an important element of farmer protection from nuisance complaints related to normal agricultural practices.
- Land Base - Preserve a large contiguous land base to assure that agriculture and forestry remain viable, permanent land uses.
- Conservation Design - Provide farmers and other owners of large parcels flexibility in the use of their property and allow them to benefit from area growth without developing all of their land by offering the option of *conservation subdivision design*.
- Programs - Encourage landowners to participate in the *Agricultural Security Program*, and the *Agricultural Preservation Program* for purchase of easements by Luzerne County.
- Tax Incentives - Encourage the use of *Act 319 Clean and Green* and other tax incentive programs as a means of forestalling development.
- Agricultural Advisory Committee - Consider creating a Township Agricultural Advisory Committee to promote agricultural preservation activities and other open space preservation activities in the Township in cooperation with the County and State agencies.

- Commercial Uses** **Ensure consistency of commercial uses with existing community character.**
- Performance Standards - Apply zoning performance standards to address noise, lighting, outdoor storage, and other potential effects as well as ensuring appropriate landscaping and signage.
 - Commercial Design - Develop guidelines for commercial building design, landscaping and parking that will ensure high aesthetic quality and while meeting basic development needs.
 - Community Scale - Encourage community-scaled businesses with innovative design as opposed to strip commercial development.
- Nuisances** **Control common law nuisances and threats to public health and safety due to, among others, noise, lack of property maintenance, poor building practices, junk accumulation, and odors.**
- Water Supply/Quality & Surface Water Quality** **Protect the supply and quality of drinking water and protect surface water quality.**
- E & S Control - Reduce erosion and sedimentation by requiring compliance with DEP regulations
 - Stormwater - Adopt an up to date stormwater ordinance to control runoff through the use of BMPs.
 - Water Quality - Consider the impacts of residential and nonresidential development on water quantity and quality and encourage the use of best management practices.
 - Sewage Disposal - Monitor the effectiveness of on-lot sewage disposal systems and evaluate central sewage disposal as a means of correcting any widespread problems.
 - Well Ordinance - Apply well construction standards with a well ordinance in areas not served by community water supply.
 - Community Water Supplies - Apply well head protection standards to maintain good drinking water quality.
- Wildlife Habitat** **Protect critical wildlife habitat areas.**
- Natural Areas Inventory - Protect sites of rare, threatened, and endangered species as identified in the Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory.
 - Forest - Conserve large forested areas that provide habitat.
 - Corridors - Protect wildlife corridors, consisting of networked open space.
- Ridge Lines & Scenic Viewsheds** **Conserve ridge lines and scenic viewsheds.**
- Development Standards - Consider measures that will preserve the characteristics of important ridge lines and scenic view sheds by limiting the amount and type of clearing associated with development

GOAL 2:

Develop a land use plan for Franklin Township that integrates all aspects of growth and development including residential, commercial, industrial and open space.

Land use management is a complex process that depends on the interrelationship of a number of factors including the historic development pattern, regional location, demographics, the regional economy, the transportation network, and soils and land capability. Most of these factors are beyond the control of local municipalities.

In the case of Franklin Township, the landscape remains largely undeveloped while neighboring municipalities in Luzerne County have been experiencing increased development pressure. While large parcels owned by long term resident families may seem secure from development, increasing property values may shift the balance to residential development. Conversely, the potential for natural gas development and the value of gas leases and royalties may temper the residential development trend. In any case, this *Comprehensive Plan* gives the Township the foundation to manage the growth and development of the community using innovative land use management ordinances, careful programming of public facilities, and active participation of residents.

Rampant land conversion is a first consequence of the way Pennsylvania is growing. Quite literally, development-as-usual is consuming the Commonwealth's traditional rural landscape of farmland, forests, wetlands, and open spaces. Overall, Pennsylvania developed some 1.14 million acres, or 1,800 square miles, of fields, open space, and natural land between 1982 and 1997 – the sixth-largest such conversion after Texas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and California.

This also means that fully one-third of all the land that the Commonwealth has ever urbanized since its founding was developed in just 15 recent years. Put another way, over those 15 years the state consumed land at a rate equivalent to 209 acres a day, or 9 acres an hour, every hour.

Source: Back To Prosperity, A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania, p. 47

OBJECTIVES:

Incompatible Uses Provide adequate separation between incompatible land uses.

- District Location - Evaluate the location of zoning districts relative to one another.
- Commercial - Evaluate the allowed uses in commercial zoning districts and encourage retail, office, and service uses.
- Industrial - Create a separate zoning district for industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and similar high impact uses.
- Setback/Buffers - Provide appropriate setbacks and buffers between land uses.
- Landscaping - Provide landscaping along road frontages in commercial and industrial areas.

Residential Encourage the development of livable communities and preserve existing neighborhoods.

- Open Space Access - Create neighborhoods with direct visual access to open land, with amenities in the form of neighborhood open space, and with a strong

neighborhood identity.

- Diversity - Provide for a diversity of lot sizes, building densities, and housing choices to accommodate a variety of age and income groups and residential preferences, so that the community's population diversity may be maintained.
- Landowner Development Options - Provide multiple development options for landowners in order to minimize impacts on environmental resources (sensitive lands such as stream corridors, wetlands, flood plain, and steep slopes) and disturbance of natural or cultural features (such as mature woodlands, hedgerows and tree lines, critical wildlife habitats, historic buildings, and fieldstone walls)..
- Design - Provide greater design flexibility and efficiency in the siting of services and infrastructure, including the opportunity to reduce length of roads, utility runs, and the amount of paving required for residential development.

Commercial

Promote innovative forms of commercial development that are in harmony with the rural-agricultural character of the community.

- Scale - Provide opportunities for innovative and community-scaled retail commercial use as opposed to strip commercial development.
- Services - Facilitate community service uses such as a convenience store and medical center.

Economics

Expand the Township's existing economic base by exploring economic development opportunities consistent with and building on the existing rural-agricultural character in order to strengthen the existing economy, create employment opportunities and generate tax revenue

- Location - Welcome new commercial and industrial development to areas of existing similar development and where community facilities are adequate so that the development is compatible with existing land use and community character.
- Home Occupations - Encourage local economic viability by allowing home occupations consistent with residential districts.
- Economic Development - Recognize the importance of the regional economy and cooperate with local business development organizations to promote commercial development which builds on community assets and which will not compromise the quality of life.
- Government Efficiency - Continue to maintain an efficient government and keep taxes low as an incentive for economic development.
- Existing Business - Support the continued development and possible expansion of existing businesses providing local employment and contributing to the tax base.

EXISTING LAND USE

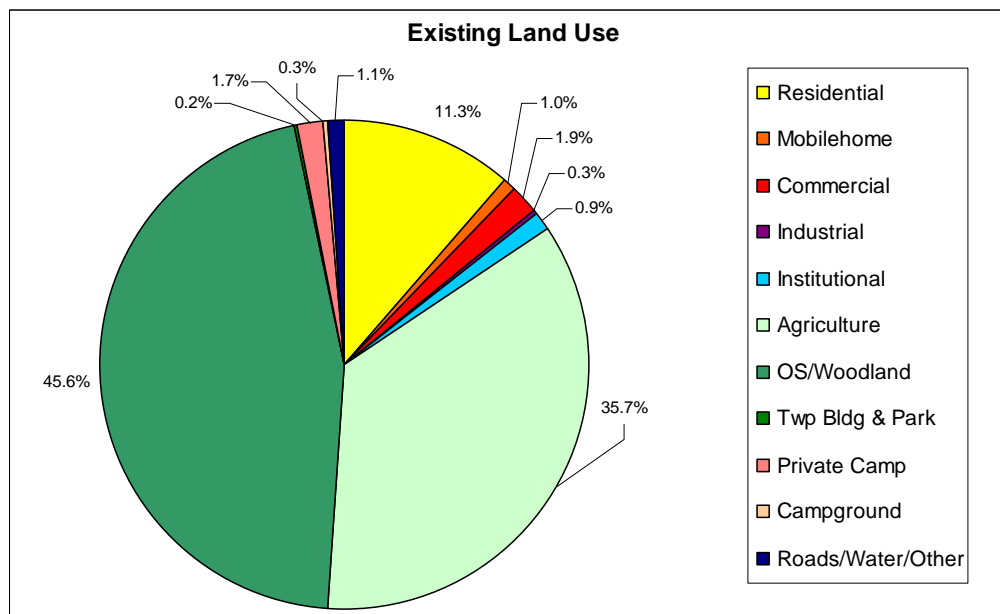
Land Use Pattern Franklin Township encompasses approximately 8,115 acres, or 12.68 square miles of land area. This land has remained largely in forest/woodland and agricultural use and has changed little throughout the Township’s history. Today, the Township’s land use pattern is one dominated by agriculture and woodland with residential use primarily spread along the Township’s main roads. (See Existing Land Use Map.) Most residential lots are relatively small, averaging approximately 1.5 acres. However, large residential lots have begun to appear in recent years signaling a trend toward a more consumptive residential land use pattern that could quickly consume the Township’s open spaces.

The Existing Land Use table and figure quantify the land uses shown on the Existing Land Use map. The data show that the Township is dominated by Open Space/Woodland and Agricultural land uses

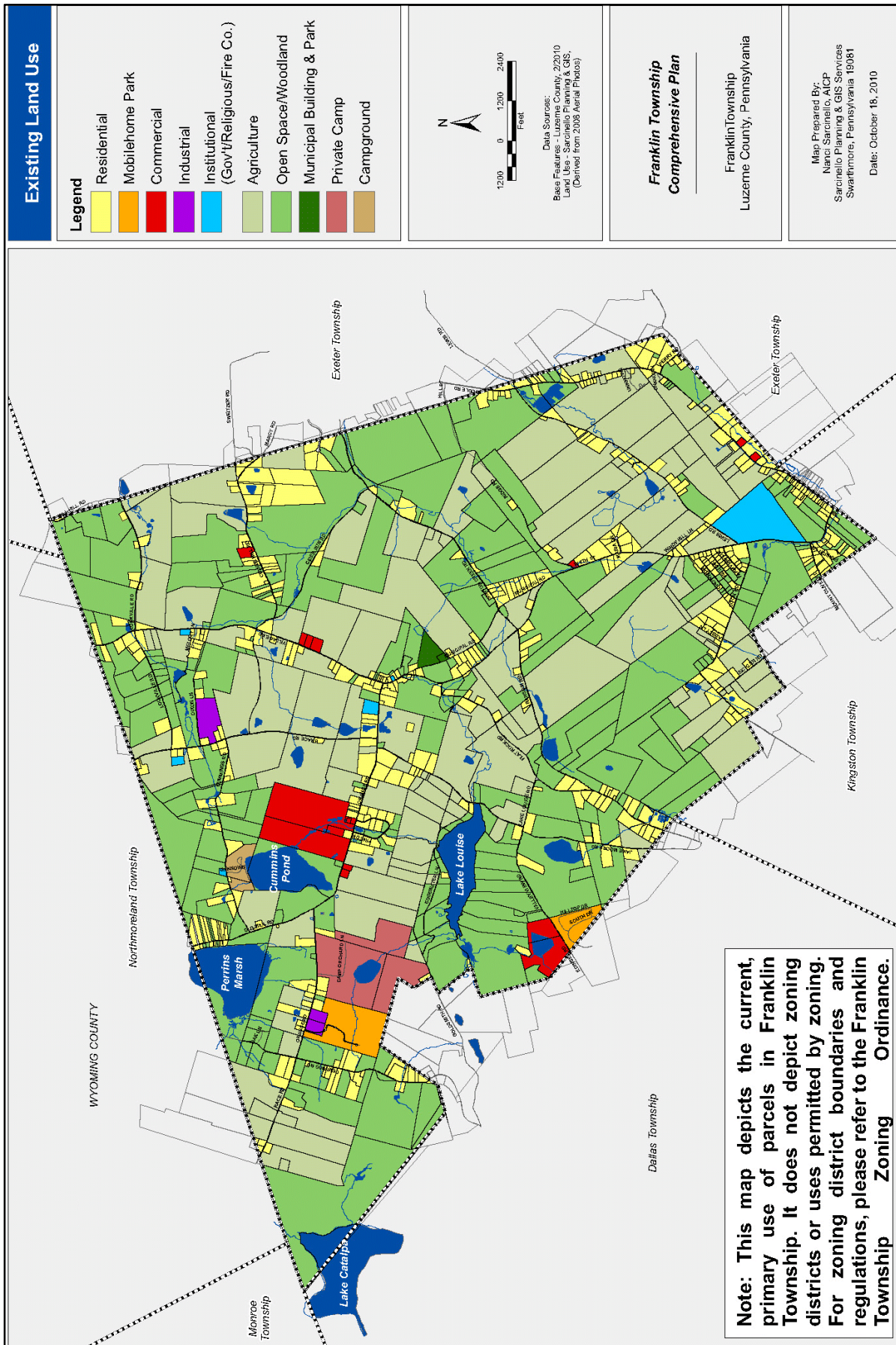
Existing Land Use		
Land Use	Acres	% of Total
Residential	919.51	11.3%
Mobilehome	82.15	1.0%
Commercial	155.62	1.9%
Industrial	25.94	0.3%
Institutional	72.23	0.9%
Agriculture	2895.35	35.7%
OS/Woodland	3701.40	45.6%
Twp Bldg & Park	12.61	0.2%
Private Camp	138.87	1.7%
Campground	20.89	0.3%
Roads/Water/Other	89.46	1.1%
Total	8114.04	100.0%

Open Space/Woodland - Open Space/Woodland is the principal land use type in the Township occupying 3,701 acres (46% of the Township’s land area). This land use category includes undeveloped land that is forested and non-forested. None of the land in this category is protected - it is all in private ownership and as such, has the potential to be developed at anytime.

Agriculture – Agriculture is the second largest land use type in the Township at 2,895 acres (36% of the Township’s land area). Historically, dairy farms and orchards were the mainstay of the Township’s agriculture industry. Today, two working farms are in operation – Brace’s Orchard and Dymond’s Farm –as wells as a honey bee operation. The remaining agricultural land primarily field corn and hay. Like Open Space/ Woodland, this land is also in private ownership and could be developed at anytime.



Residential – Residential land use comes in a distant third place at 920 acres (11% of the Township’s land area). Residential land use is mostly in the form of 1.5 acre lots spread along the Township’s main roads. Smaller lots are found in the Village of Orange, consistent with a historical village development patterns. In more recent years most development has been on larger lots throughout the



Township's Agricultural Zoning District. If this trend continues it could result in the rapid consumption of the Township's agricultural, open space and forested lands. The Township can consider implementing land conservation strategies such as Conservation Subdivision Development, natural resource protection ordinances, voluntary conservation easements, and transferable development rights in order to preserve its defining natural features while permitting various forms of development.

Mobilehome Park – The Township contains 82 acres devoted to two mobilehome parks. Reese Mobile Home Park on Country Village Lane (off of Orange Road) encompasses approximately 55 acres and currently contains 35 homes. Valley View Mobile Home Park lies in both Franklin and Dallas Townships. Approximately 23 acres are in Franklin Township and approximately 33 acres are in Dallas Township.

Commercial – Franklin Township has a relatively small amount of commercial activity within its borders. Commercial land use occupies 156 acres (1.9% of the Township's land area). Most of this commercial land is devoted to the Twin Oaks Golf Course on Orange Road. The remaining commercial uses are small private businesses. Residents travel to Dallas Township and other neighboring communities for retail goods and services.

Industrial – Industrial development accounts for approximately 26 acres (0.3% of the Township's land area). This includes two businesses currently in operation.

Institutional – Institutional land comprises 72 acres (1% of the township's land area). It includes government and religious uses and the Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Company property. It does not include the Franklin Township municipal office as this is included in its own category (see Municipal Building and Park below).

Municipal Building and Park - The Franklin Township Municipal Building and Park occupy approximately 13 acres in the center of the Township along Municipal Road. The complex contains the Township office and garage and a community park with a baseball field. A park master plan, completed in August 2010, recommends improvements to the ball field and parking areas.

Private Camp - The Private Camp land use designation contains 139 acres (nearly 2% of the Township's land area). It is entirely comprised of Camp Orchard Hill, a summer camp located off Orange Road.

Campground – The Campground land use designation comprises 21 acres. It is a privately run campground adjacent to Cummings Pond.

BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS

Overview

A build-out analysis was conducted to examine the effect of land use policies and implementation strategies. It compares the potential build-out of the Planning Area based on current land use policies and zoning regulations with the build-out scenario that could result from updated policies and regulations that promote conservation design development and preservation of open space.

The estimated number of future housing units is calculated based on residential zoning densities as they apply to currently undeveloped properties. An inefficiency factor was

built in to the calculation to account for the fact that some land is not buildable due to environmental limitations and that some is set aside for roads. However, the analysis does not consider properties that are not buildable due to soil limitations for septic systems.

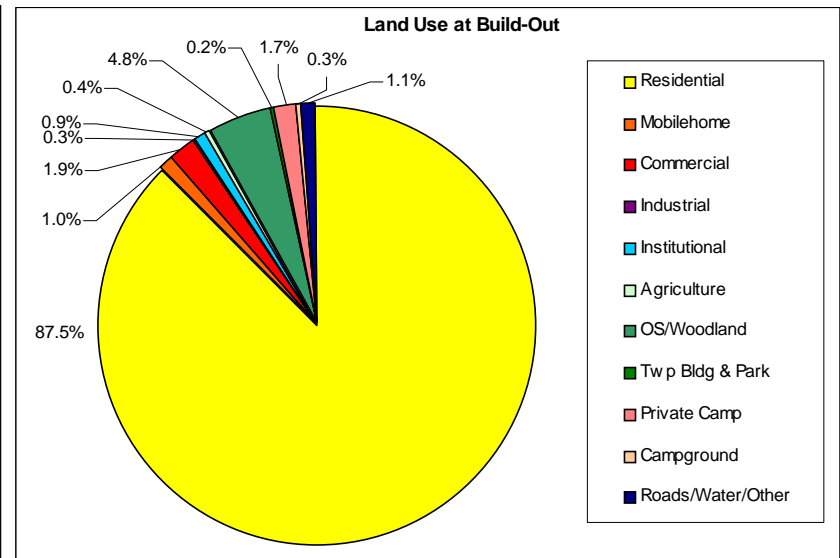
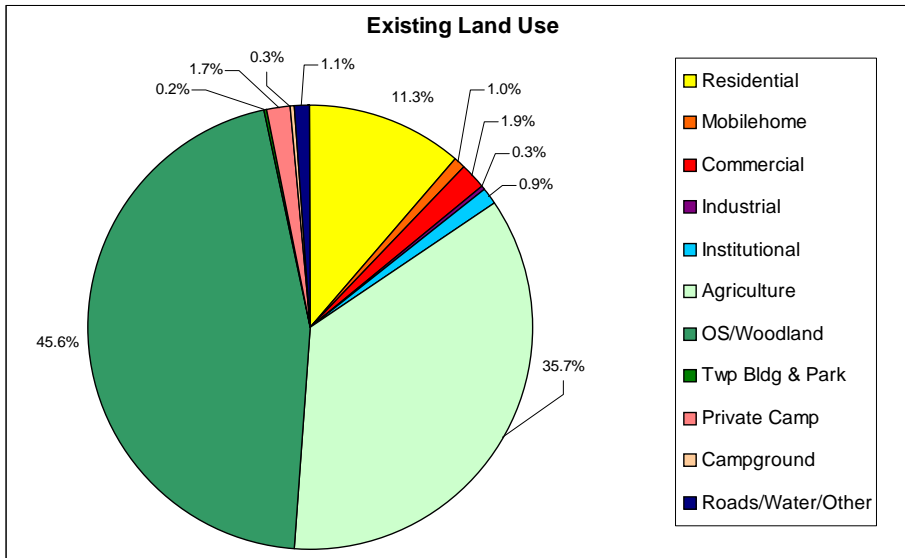
The Build-Out by Current Zoning table shows the estimated number of dwelling units that could potentially built in each of the residential zoning districts. It reveals that if current zoning regulations remain in place, the Township could see a total of 2,052 additional homes.

Build-Out by Current Zoning	
Zoning District	# of Dwelling Units
A-1	1707
B-1	N/A
C-1	61
I-1	N/A
R-1	265
R-2	19
R-MHP	N/A
Total	2052

The Build-Out Analysis Figure on the following page illustrates the impact on land use should the Township build-out according to current zoning. The pie chart on the left shows existing land use, while the pie chart on the right shows land use at build-out. Most notable is the enormous increase in residential land and the corresponding decrease in agricultural, forest and open land. At build-out, residential land will increase from 11% to 88% of the Township’s total land area. Agriculture will decrease from 36% to less than 1% of the total land area – a decline of 2,866 acres. Open Space/Woodland will decrease from 46% to 5% of the total land area – a decline of

3,315 acres.

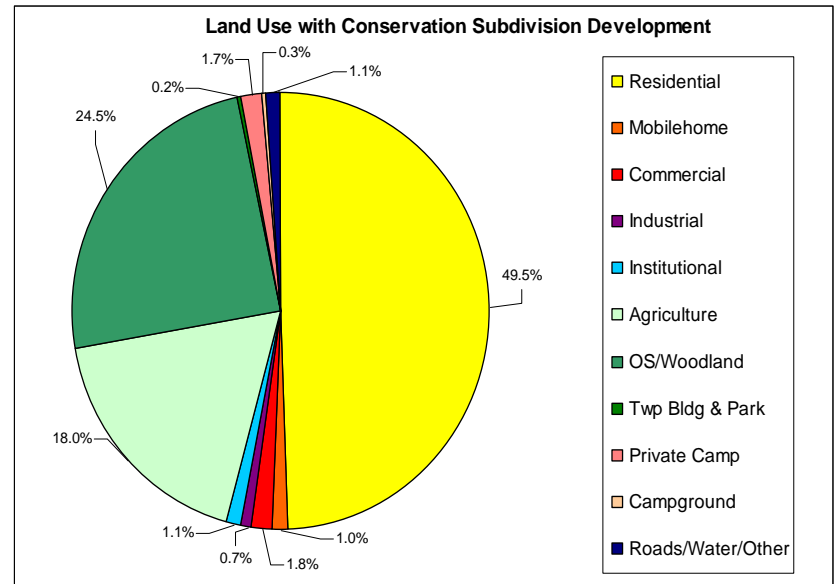
The Land Use with Conservation Subdivision Development figure shows that with the use of Conservation Subdivision Development the Township could accommodate future residential growth and simultaneously preserve a large portion of its agricultural and forest land. Conservation subdivision design would require 50% open space in residential developments but would permit at least the some number of dwelling units as the current zoning. In this way, the Township can preserve open space *and* protect or even increase property values. Even more land can be protected through methods such as transferable development rights, and by encouraging landowners to enter into voluntary conservation easements and agricultural easements.



Build-Out Analysis

The build-out analysis compares the impact of the Township’s current zoning provisions with the effect that the use of Conservation Subdivision Development would have on the landscape.

- Currently, 78% of the Township’s land is agriculture and woodland (chart at top left).
- Under current zoning, the Township would see an additional 2,052 residential units and would lose nearly all of its agriculture and woodlands (chart at top right).
- Implementing Conservation Subdivision Design would allow the Township to accommodate *at least* 2,052 dwelling units, protecting and even increasing property values while simultaneously preserving much of its agricultural land and woodland.



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Overview

Franklin Township is faced with both challenges and opportunities in its current land use configuration and careful and continued planning is essential.

- Given its location near the greater Wilkes-Barre metropolitan area and its small town character, clean environment, quality of life, and open land, Franklin Township holds great potential for growth and development. The challenge is to balance the need for essential economic growth and development of the Township while concurrently conserving its scenic, historic and natural environment and the remaining open land.
- Many large privately owned tracts of land exist throughout the Township. As is typical with most rural communities, new development will occur on new lots subdivided from these large agricultural and forested lands. As land values rise, the likelihood of development of these properties increases. Local officials must begin an outreach effort and partner with landowners and local conservation organizations to preserve these properties. Open space can also be preserved while simultaneously protecting property rights through innovative development techniques and land conservation tools.
- The build-out analysis demonstrates that under current zoning, which contains no provisions for open space set asides and natural resources protection, the Township could reach a residential build-out of an additional 2,052 homes and comprising 88% of the total land area. This would come at the expense of the Township's agricultural and forest lands, which together would decline by approximately 6,181 acres. Conservation Subdivision Design offers a means to accommodate future growth and protect property rights while preserving agricultural land, woodlands, and open space.
- Franklin Township has very little commercial and industrial development. However, more residential development in the Township and surrounding municipalities will spawn more pressure for retail/service commercial development. Providing for small scale commercial uses within the Township could serve to meet some of the retail and service needs of residents and could offset some of the costs associated with residential development.
- More residential development will result in increased demand for municipal facilities and services and increased traffic on the Township's roads. Directing growth to appropriate areas will not only preserve open space, but will also enable the Township to manage its facilities, services and roads in a more cost effective and efficient manner. It will also limit the spread of traffic onto roads in the Township's interior.
- The Village of Orange and the nearby Franklin Township Volunteer Company are the focal point of the community.

Current Land Use & Environmental Controls

As authorized by the Municipalities Planning Code, Franklin Township has an adopted subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) and a zoning ordinance. The subdivision and land development ordinance provides standards for dividing land and for ensuring the provision of adequate community facilities such as roads, water supply,

sewage disposal, utilities, highway access, and storm water control. The SALDO must be updated to ensure it reflects the latest practices and regulations.

The zoning ordinance regulates the use of land by dividing the Township into districts to separate land use activities (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.); sets standards for lot size, setbacks and building height; and includes specific standards for a broad range of land uses including for example: parking, signs, junkyards, cell towers and multi-family dwellings.

Aside from its floodplain management provisions, the zoning ordinance does not contain specific protection measures for the Township's natural resources. The ordinance also lacks any provisions for open space preservation. In order to accomplish the community's natural resource and open space preservation goals, the zoning ordinance should be amended to include such provisions.

The Township's zoning ordinance regulates development as follows:

- In addition to agricultural uses, the A-1 Agricultural zoning district permits single family detached dwellings at a density of one unit per 2 ½ acres. It does not include any requirement for open space within residential developments. Because the Agricultural zoning district encompasses the vast majority of the Township, this zoning scheme could result in the complete consumption of the Township's open lands. In fact, with a 2 ½ minimum lot size, the Agricultural zoning district would yield approximately 1,692 additional residential units and no open space.
- The R-1 Single Family Residential Zoning District stretches along some of the Townships primary roads and contains smaller parcels scattered throughout the Township. It permits residential development at a density of one unit per 1 ½ acres. Like the Agricultural zoning district, there is no requirement to set aside open space. According to the Build-Out Analysis, the district could potentially accommodate approximately 265 additional dwelling units and no open space.
- The R-2 zoning district encompasses the Village of Orange. Single family Detached and Two-Family Dwellings are permitted at a density of one unit per acre. Although largely built-out, there appears to be some remaining land in this district with a potential for the development of approximately 19 additional single family units. Future development in the Village should be regulated by design guidelines that would ensure its compatibility with the existing character of the Village.
- Mobile homes are permitted in the R-MHP Residential Mobile Home Park district. Two such districts exist in the Township. The Reese Mobile Home Park off Orange Road is not yet built out and can accommodate additional homes in the future (???). Recreational facilities should be required in any future mobile home park developments.
- The B-1 Light Business district encompasses several parcels scattered throughout the Township. It permits various retail and service establishments, as well as single family dwellings, two family dwellings and dwellings over or attached to a business. Each use requires a two acre minimum lot area. There are approximately 45 gross acres of undeveloped land remaining in the B-1 district. The SALDO contains some rather

weak buffering/screening standards. Because the district abuts residential districts this presents the potential for conflict between residential and commercial uses.

- Industrial development is permitted in the I-1 Light Industrial District with a two acre minimum lot size. There are approximately 33 gross acres of undeveloped land remaining in the I-1 district. The SALDO contains some rather weak buffering/screening standards. Because the district abuts residential districts this presents the potential for conflict between residential and industrial uses.
- The C-1 Conservation district surrounds Lake Catalpa, Perrins Marsh (a Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory site), and Cummings Pond, and also stretches along a lower portion of Sutton Creek at the Exeter Township border. The district is intended to protect these important hydrological features. However, some of the uses permitted in this district are rather intensive and are contrary to the goal of protecting these features. The uses should be limited to low impact types of uses. These properties should also be considered high priority for conservation efforts such as voluntary easements and transferable development rights. In terms of residential use, the district permits single family dwellings on a minimum lot size of 3 ½ acres. This could potentially yield approximately 61 dwelling units in the district.
- The zoning ordinance is currently lacking provisions for some of the uses required by the MPC, including some forms of residential development, mineral extraction, forestry, and no impact home based business. The ordinance should be amended to include these uses.

CONTEMPORARY PLANNING TOOLS

Overview

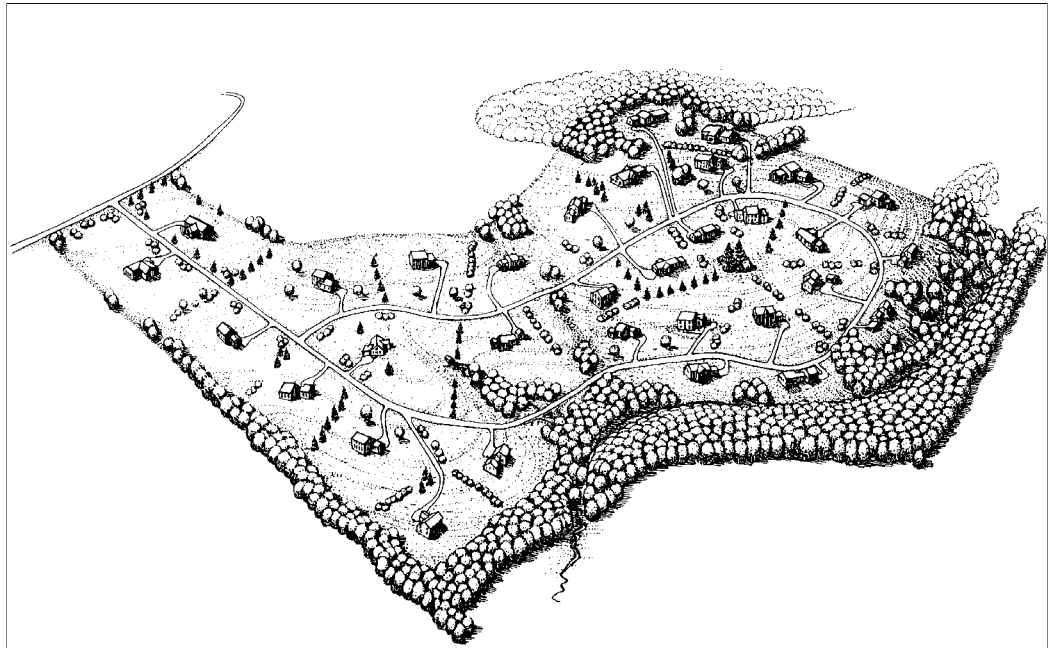
There is no one best method to accomplish the objective of conserving open land. The intent of the following discussion is to point out innovative approaches that are currently used by many municipalities in Pennsylvania. In the end, the elected officials of Franklin Township must determine which approach and standards are best suited to the community.

Conservation Subdivision Design

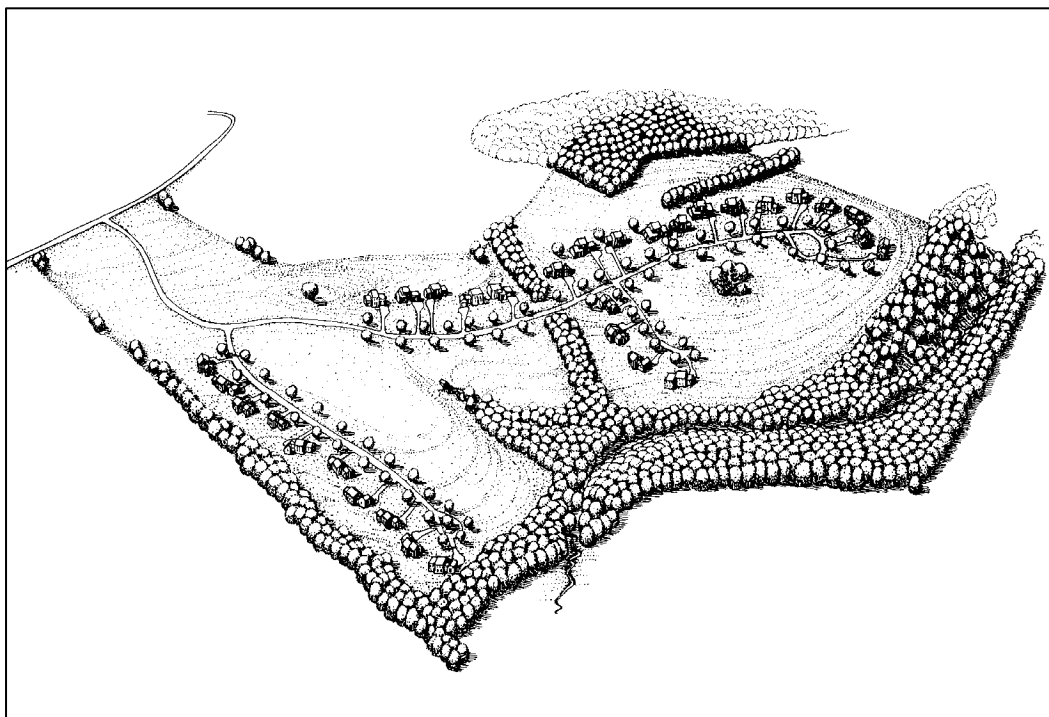
I want my piece of the pie, or I want room to spread out are common desires voiced among new residents. The problem is that as this pattern continues, the sprawl that the emigrating urbanites left behind, or escaped, is beginning in Luzerne County and will ultimately change the very character which is so attractive to new residents. Conservation Subdivision Design is a land use tool that enables municipalities to accommodate growth while simultaneously protecting the open space and natural features that often define community character.

Based on the density set in a municipal zoning ordinance, conservation design permits the same number of units on a parcel as a typical subdivision, but with a requirement to set aside a portion of the tract as protected open space. In order to achieve this, the minimum lot size is reduced. For example, a tract of 100 net acres with a two acre density would yield 50 dwelling units. Given a 50% open space requirement, 50 acres would be protected as open space and 50 acres would be developed. Thus, to accommodate 50 dwelling units on 50 acres would require lot sizes of one acre or less. Open land and natural areas are protected by shifting development to more appropriate areas of the site.

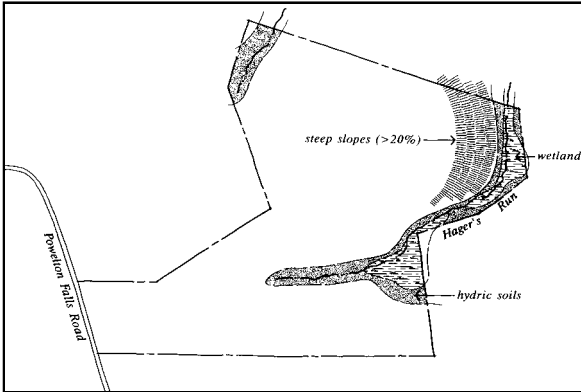
In short, the development is designed around the natural features on the tract. In addition to maintaining open land, conservation design maintains property values (by maintaining the development yield), reduces development costs and commitment of resources given shortened road, water line and sewer line length, minimizes long term maintenance costs of such improvements, and limits environmental affects such as soil disturbance and storm water. The same design process can be applied to multi-family and commercial development.



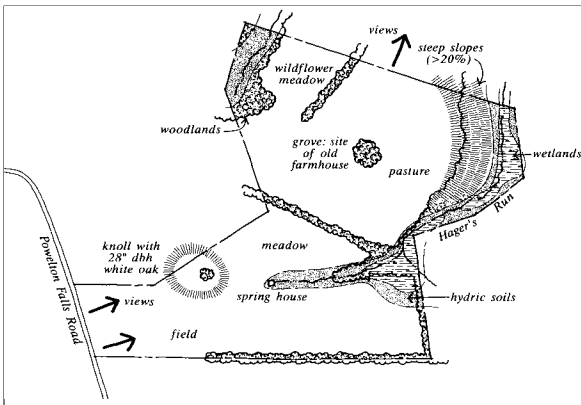
Conventional Development does not include protected open space



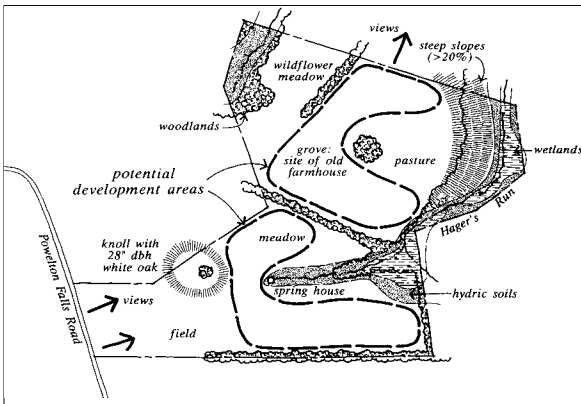
Conservation Subdivision Design includes protected open space and achieves full yield.



Identify Primary Conservation Areas



Identify Secondary Conservation Areas



Identify Potential Development Areas

A key concept associated with conservation design is to focus on residential density instead of minimum lot size. In a standard subdivision the land is simply cut into as many lots as possible while meeting the minimum lot size requirement. Under conservation design, which is based on unit density instead of minimum lot size, the size of individual building lots is reduced, while the total number of lots does not exceed the density which is based on the underlying minimum lot size. In addition, constrained land areas (e.g., wetlands, floodplain and steep slopes) are deducted prior to calculating the number of units permitted. The important question is - *Does minimum lot size matter, provided the number of units does not exceed the established density?* In conservation design, the maximum lot size is the critical element, as it really defines the minimum open space that must be conserved. Individual building lots can be quite small if community water and sewage disposal are provided.

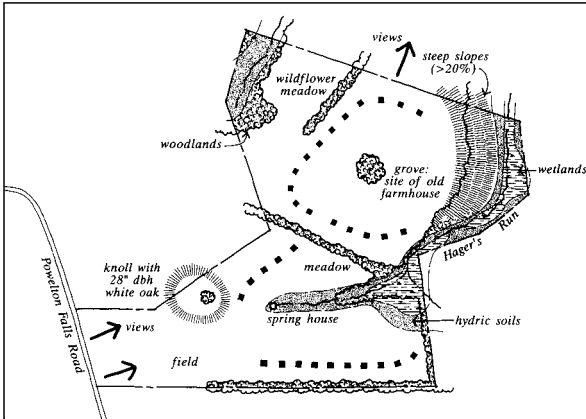
The Natural Lands Trust, a nationally known land conservation organization located in Media, Pennsylvania (Delaware County), suggests that the conservation design concept can be implemented by providing incentives (or disincentives) to encourage its use. Incentives could include allowing higher density for open space design; a disincentive would be the reduction in density for conventional subdivision.

Conservation Subdivision Design is practiced throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and is also being embraced by many municipalities in the northeast where the influx of new residents from nearby metropolitan areas is driving the demand for new housing and subdivisions. In fact, some communities have mandated the use of this technique for all development or in certain zoning districts.

Conservation Design Process

The design process involves the following steps: (See the Figures from the Natural land Trust's *Designing Open Space Subdivisions, A Practical Step-by-Step Approach.*)

1. Yield Plan - the number of units which could be developed on the site using the traditional subdivision approach.
2. Identification of all potential open space areas



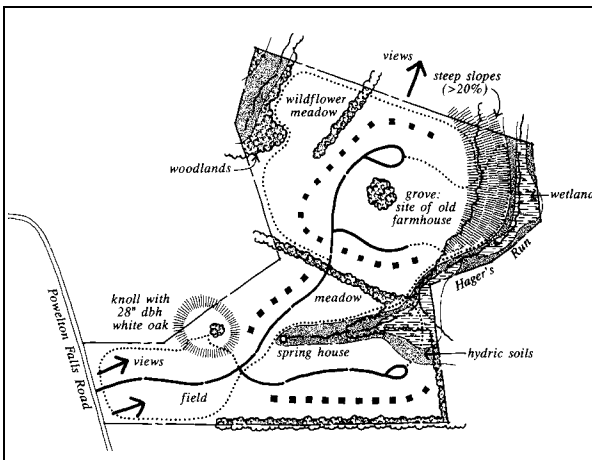
Locate Potential House Sites

including primary conservation areas such as...

- Soils suitable for on site sewage systems,
- Waterbodies,
- Floodplain,
- Wetlands
- Steep slopes

...and secondary conservation areas such as . . .

- Mature woodlands
- Prime farmland
- Significant wildlife habitats
- Historic, archeological, and cultural feature
- Views into and out from the site
- Aquifers and recharge areas



Design Roads and Trail Links

3. Identification of potential development areas:

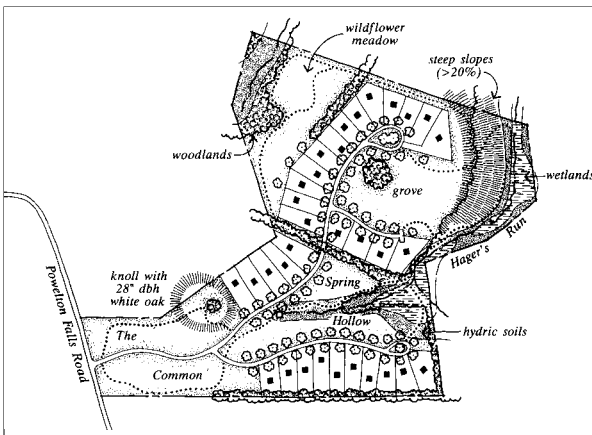
- Where should the houses be logically located on the site?

4. Location of potential house sites:

- Where should individual units be located within the development area?

5. Design of road alignments and trails:

- How is access best provided with the least impact on conservation areas?



Draw the Lot Lines

6. Drawing in the lot lines at the reduced lot size results in the conservation of the designated open land.

The open land set aside in the conservation design subdivision would be coordinated with the *Natural Resources Map* which is included as part of this *Plan*. This is intended to create an interconnected network of preserved open land.

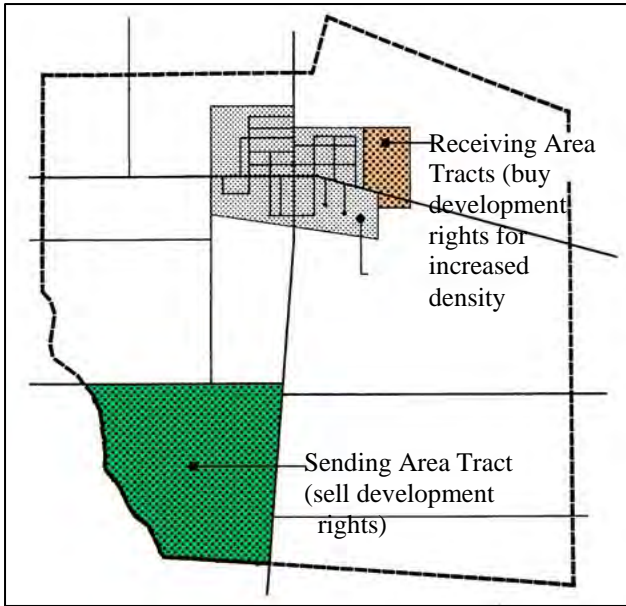
Conservation Subdivision Design gives Franklin Township the opportunity to accommodate future development and preserve the community's character.

Purposes for Conservation Design:

- To conserve open land, including those areas containing unique and sensitive natural features such as woodlands, steep slopes, streams, flood plains and wetlands, by setting them aside from development.
- To provide greater design flexibility and efficiency in the siting of services and infrastructure, including the opportunity to reduce length of roads, utility runs, and the amount of paving required for residential development.
- To reduce erosion and sedimentation by the retention of existing vegetation, and the minimization of development on steep slopes.
- To provide for a diversity of lot sizes, building densities, and housing choices to accommodate a variety of age and income groups, and residential preferences, so that the community's population diversity may be maintained.
- To implement adopted municipal policies to conserve a variety of irreplaceable and environmentally sensitive resource lands.
- To implement adopted land use, transportation, and community policies.
- To protect areas with productive agricultural soils for continued or future agricultural use, by conserving blocks of land large enough to allow for efficient farm operations.
- To create neighborhoods with direct visual access to open land, with amenities in the form of neighborhood open space, and with a strong neighborhood identity.
- To provide for the conservation and maintenance of open land to achieve the above-mentioned goals and for active or passive recreational use by residents.
- To provide an option for landowners in order to minimize impacts on environmental resources (sensitive lands such as wetlands, flood plain, and steep slopes) and disturbance of natural or cultural features (such as mature woodlands, hedgerows and tree lines, critical wildlife habitats, historic buildings, and fieldstone walls).
- To provide standards reflecting the varying circumstances and interests of individual landowners, and the individual characteristics of their properties.
- To conserve scenic views and elements of the rural working landscape, and to minimize perceived density, by minimizing views of new development from existing roads.

Transferable Development Rights

Transferable Development Rights (TDR) is a free market tool authorized via zoning for preserving forest land, open space, and natural resources. The traditional approach to preservation has been twofold: 1) public purchase of threatened property, either in fee or by purchase of conservation easements, and 2) placement of zoning restrictions on development. TDR programs offer a third option by allowing the owner of open land to sell the development rights to another property owner through the private real estate market. (See the *TDR – Sending Property / Receiving Property Figure*.)



TDR Sending & Receiving Areas
 Source: Chester County Planning Commission, 1997

TDR Potential Benefits:

- TDR redirects development from areas where development is not appropriate to areas where development makes the most sense.
- TDR preserves open space at little or no public expense.
- TDR ensures that landowners suffer no serious property value reductions that may accompany other zoning approaches (such as down-zoning used to protect open space).
- TDR allows large groups of parcels (e.g., entire agricultural areas, sensitive watersheds, scenic vistas, historic districts) to be conserved in contrast to parcel-by-parcel clustering techniques.

Source: *Transfer of Development Rights, Brandywine Conservancy, 2003, p. 5*

Under TDR, which must be included in a zoning ordinance, the development rights are voluntarily severed from a sending property (the property containing land to be preserved) and are sold on the open market to a developer who uses the rights to increase density on a receiving property. The zoning ordinance establishes the parameters for the TDR program. A density bonus can be provided as an incentive and the number of development rights is determined after deducting the area of constrained land. Once the development rights are severed, the sending property is protected from development by a conservation easement; however the property owner may still use that land.

The conservation design approach, combined with the optional transfer of development rights, gives a municipality a very progressive tool to conserve large areas of open land by shifting development to locations with adequate infrastructure and enable conservation-minded landowners to preserve their properties. In fact, an entire sending property could be preserved with the density transferred to the receiving property where individual lot sizes could be reduced and important conservation areas would also be conserved.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

In years before interstate highways and urban sprawl, small villages and towns served as the centers for community activities and commerce. The Village of Orange is a good example. Traditional neighborhood development (TND) is another tool authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code for inclusion in a zoning ordinance. TND enables the development of compact communities with a variety of housing types, community facilities and services, and neighborhood commercial establishments.

A key element of the TND is a pedestrian friendly design that allows residents to walk to centrally located community facilities, parks and stores. The residential density would be based on a maximum density set by

the zoning ordinance, yet individual lots could be very small to allow a substantial proportion of the development to be preserved as open space. The open space, accessible to residents, adds to the appeal of the TND and conserves important natural resources. Similar to Conservation Subdivision Design and Transferable Development Rights, TND should be considered for inclusion in any zoning ordinance where larger parcels are available for development.

Considerations for Conservation Design, TDR & TND

Based on the *Natural Resources* map included in this *Plan* and the overall community goals and objectives, Franklin Township officials should consider the following when

evaluating the use and location of any Conservation Subdivision Design, Transferrable Development Rights or Traditional Neighborhood Development provisions proposed for inclusion in Township ordinances:

- Ability of the Township to work cooperatively on zoning to enable intermunicipal transfer of development rights.
- Availability of, or potential to provide, adequate infrastructure - roads, water supply, sewage disposal.
- Identification of areas of open space critical to preserving community character.
- Landowners interested in preserving open space.
- Need to preserve and/or the effect on environmentally sensitive areas.
- Effect on neighboring properties.
- Inclusion of adequate standards to minimize on-site and spillover effects of more compact development.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a legal agreement that is voluntarily entered into between a landowner and a land trust or government agency. The easement may be sold or donated by the property owner and places permanent restrictions on the use or development of land in order to protect its conservation values. In addition to government agencies, community based non-profit organizations are also acting to preserve land and rural character by accepting donations or acquiring conservation easements. Such organizations range in size from the Nature Conservancy, a nationwide organization, to small organizations with Board members from the local community.

Advantages Offered by Conservation Easements:

Private Ownership: The property remains in private ownership and continues to contribute to the local tax base. The landowner may choose to live on the land, sell it, or pass it on to heirs.

Owners Satisfaction: Gives the landowner the satisfaction that the land will remain unchanged.

Flexibility: Easements are flexible and can be written to meet a particular land-owner's needs while protecting the property's resources.

Permanency: Most easements are permanent, remaining in force when the land changes hands. The easement holder ensures that the restrictions are maintained.

Tax Reduction: There are significant tax advantages if easements are donated rather than sold.

Charitable Taxes: The donation of a conservation easement to a land trust is treated as a charitable gift of the development rights. The donation creates a charitable tax deduction, equal to the value of the conservation easement, on the landowner's Federal and State income tax returns.

Estate Taxes: Estate taxes are significantly lower, sometimes making the difference between heirs holding onto the family land or selling it to pay inheritance taxes.

Property Taxes: Conservation easements will sometimes lower property taxes, a result of reduced valuation on property subject to the conservation easement.

Minimizes Effect of Development: Minimizes other impacts of residential development such as increased population, traffic, and demand for community facilities and services.

Farmland Preservation Program

In 1989, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established a farm preservation program in an effort to reduce the number of farmland acres being taken out of production. According to the Bureau for Farmland Preservation, agriculture is the leading industry in Pennsylvania which contributes approximately \$6 billion to the economy every year. One in every seven jobs (14%) in the Commonwealth is related to agriculture. In Luzerne County, agriculture has always been vital to the local economy and supports an infrastructure of related agribusinesses in Luzerne and surrounding counties

In 2000, the Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program was established. The purpose of the Program is to preserve farms forever through the purchase of conservation easements, or development rights, which prevent the farm from ever being developed or used for any purpose other than agriculture and agricultural related activities. Since 1999, 21 farms totaling 2,130 acres have been preserved, but none in Franklin Township. In order to apply to the Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program, a farm must meet the following requirements:

- Membership in a 500-acre Agricultural Security Area (*see below*);
- Farm must consist of at least 50 acres;
- 50% of acres submitted for easement purchase must consist of cropland, pasture, or grazing;
- 50% of the soils on the farm must belong to Capability Classes I-IV.

Agricultural Security Areas

Agricultural security areas, authorized by the Agricultural Area Security Law, PA Act 1981-43 (Act 43), are another means of preserving agriculture and are initiated by landowners whose combined parcels total at least 250 acres (if the farmer wants to apply to the Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program, the ASA must consist of 500

acres). The parcels must be viable agricultural land or woodland and the agricultural security area (ASA) may be comprised of non-contiguous tracts at least ten acres in size. Almost 1,555 acres in the Township are included in an ASA.

ASA's provide protection from nuisance ordinances and local ordinances that restrict farming practices and farm structures, unless the local municipality can clearly demonstrate a direct public purpose for the protection of the public health and safety. The ASA also restricts land condemnation procedures by state, county and local governments without approval by the State Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board. The ASA program is voluntary and not permanent, with each ASA reviewed every seven years. Individual landowners are free to sell their property and it can be developed at any time. In other words, the ASA Program affords protection

to agriculture, but is no real guarantee that the land will be preserved. Nevertheless, landowner participation in the ASA Program demonstrates an interest in continuing agricultural use of the land, and the Township will promote ASA's. (See the *Agricultural Securities Areas Sidebar*.)

Agricultural Security Area Criteria

- Noncontiguous farm parcels must be at least 10 acres in size. The farm tracts needed to create a new 250 acre or larger agricultural security area do not have to be under the same ownership or even be located in the same municipality. The Agricultural Security Area Law (Act 43 of 1981) allows for the creation of joint municipality agricultural security areas.
- The property should be viable agricultural land. Cropland, pasture, and woodland can all be included in an agricultural security area.
- At least 50% of the land should be in Soil Capability Classes I-IV, as defined by the county soil survey.
- The property must be zoned to permit agricultural uses.

Source: www.agriculture.state.pa.us

**Tax Incentives
Clean & Green**

Differential assessment laws enable counties to assess agricultural land and forest land at its agricultural and forest use value instead of its fair market value. The Act 319 *Clean and Green* Program (*The Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act of 1974*) is the most widely used in the Commonwealth with hundreds of thousands of acres enrolled statewide. The legislative intent of Act 319 is to protect open land from development and insulate landowners from tax increases from rising property values. The amount of tax revenues lost from the land enrolled in the program must be shifted to the other taxpayers in the municipality to place the tax burden on those developed properties which generate the greatest demand for services.

Act 319 *Clean and Green* Program

- A ten-acre minimum parcel size or \$2,000 annual agricultural product sales is required.
- Development is precluded without penalty.
- If the landowner develops the property, the tax savings over the prior seven years must be paid in addition to a penalty of six percent.
- Three categories of land are eligible -
Agricultural Use - actively used for producing an agricultural commodity.
Agricultural Reserve - noncommercial open space land open to the public free of charge for recreational opportunities.
Forest Reserve - must contain trees capable of producing timber or wood products.
- Act 156 of 1998 amended Act 319 to allow a base acre, which may include a residence, farm building or other accessory building, to also qualify for the preferential assessment.

Clean and Green is most effective and finds more participation in areas that have been recently reassessed, whereby the fair market value greatly exceeds the agricultural use value of the land. The program is voluntary and generally requires a minimum of ten acres that will remain in the designated use (agricultural use, agricultural reserve, forest reserve), or \$2,000 in annual agricultural product sales. Land taken out of the designated use becomes subject to a roll-back tax, imposed for up to seven years plus six percent simple interest. Act 319 is administered by the County Assessment Office.

**Agricultural
Protection
Zoning**

The purpose of Agricultural Protection Zoning is to minimize land use conflicts in agricultural areas and to protect farmland and prime agricultural soils from development. To accomplish this, Agricultural Protection Zoning prohibits uses that are incompatible with agriculture and places strict limits on the amount of development permitted on land included in the agricultural protection zoning district. Thus, Agricultural Protection Zoning should promote uses that are compatible with agriculture, prevent division of farms into small parcels that are unsuited to farming, discourage development that consumes prime agricultural soil, minimize conflicts and adverse impacts on adjoining residential properties, and provide notice of the nuisances caused by farming in the area. At this time, Franklin Township does not wish to place special limits on the amount of development within its Agricultural zoning district. Rather, the Township wishes to use land use tools such as Conservation Subdivision Design and Transferable Development Rights as means to achieve agricultural land preservation while simultaneously protecting land value.

FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES

**Future Land
Use Plan**

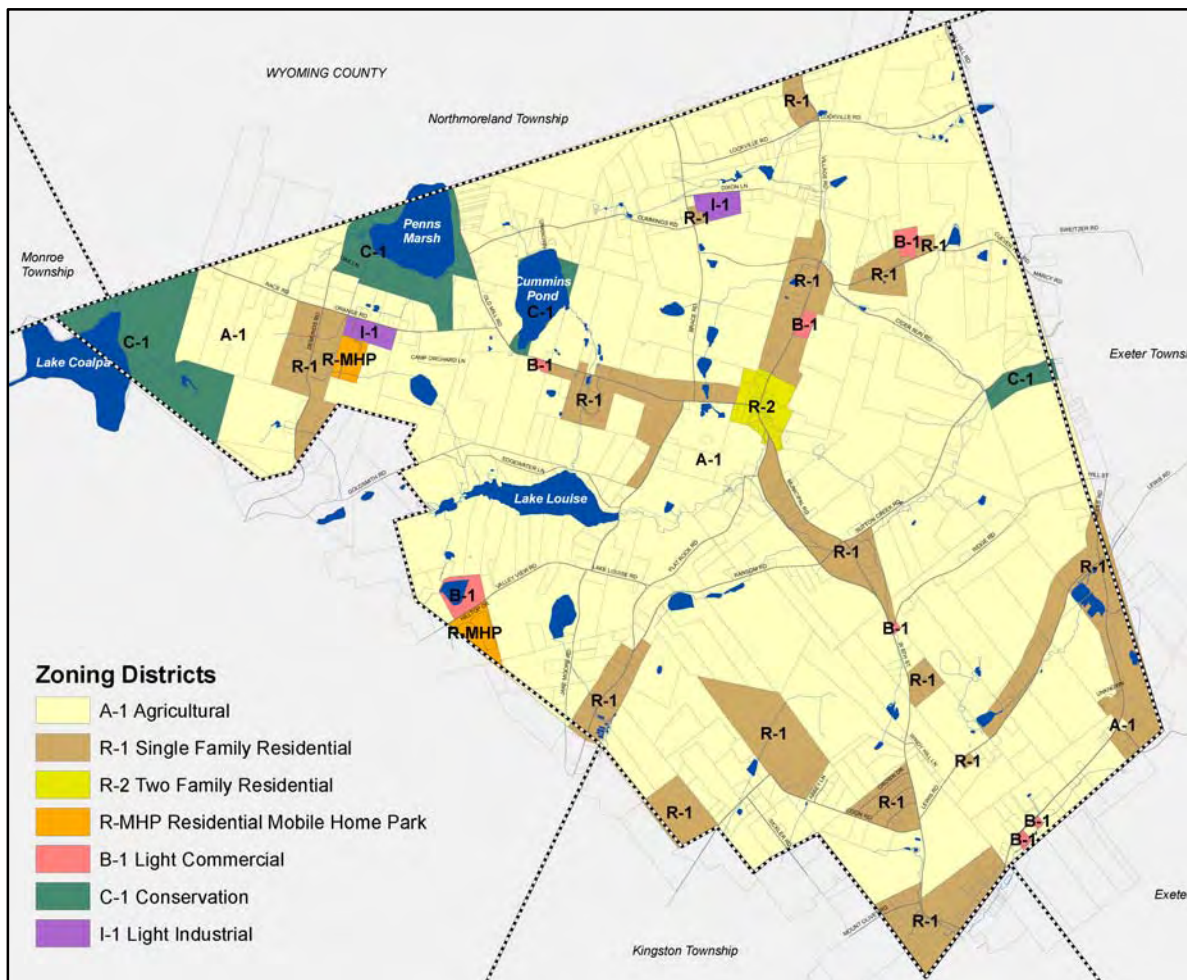
This Comprehensive Plan is intended to accommodate anticipated growth and provide for needed community facilities and services while preserving the Township’s rural character, open space and natural resources. It addresses land conservation, sustainable residential development, opportunities for commercial and office development, and opportunities for recreation. The plan is also attentive to state law, which requires

municipalities to accommodate all categories of land use. It also provides for protection measures in critical natural resource areas and directs development away from these areas.

Based on this approach and all of the elements of this Comprehensive Plan, the Township Supervisors and Planning Commissioners recognize that the continued enforcement of the zoning ordinances and the subdivision and land development ordinances, continued planning by consulting, reviewing and updating this Comprehensive Plan, and periodically updating the ordinance to realize Plan goals and objectives and to address changing conditions, are the most critical actions required to manage the growth and development which is inevitable for the Township.

The existing zoning districts in the Township as delineated by the current zoning map are affirmed as the foundation for the future land use plan for the Township. The zoning districts include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| A-1 Agriculture | B-1 Light Commercial |
| R-1 Single Family Residential | C-1 Conservation |
| R-2 Two Family Residential | I-1 Light Industrial |
| R-MHP Residential Mobile Home Park | |



Residential Development

The MPC requires that the Township provide opportunities for all forms of housing, including single family detached, single family attached, two-family, multi-family, and mobile homes. The Township currently provides for single family detached and mobile homes, but it needs to make accommodations for single family attached, two-family, and multi-family residential development. It is policy of Franklin to provide for these forms of residential development in accordance with the MPC, and to use contemporary planning techniques such as conservation subdivision design, transferable development rights, and village design guidelines to achieve its growth management and preservation goals. Furthermore, the Township will permit no-impact home based business in all residential zoning districts in accord with the MPC.

Conservation Subdivision Design would be encouraged as a permitted use in the R-1 Zoning District with a residential density of one dwelling unit per two acres of net tract area and a 50% open space requirement. The open space can include natural, agricultural, historical, and scenic resources. Conventional residential development would remain either remain as it currently is, at a density of one unit per 2½ acres, or would be decreased. This provides a strong incentive for developers to use Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD) versus conventional development since they would secure a density bonus through CSD. It also protects the original landowner's property value and contributes to the Township's goal of protecting community character and valuable resources.

Two-family and multi-family residential development would also be permitted at appropriate densities with the appropriate wastewater treatment systems.

Agriculture-related businesses, such as farm stands and local produce markets, would also be permitted in the R-1 District as a means to sustain local farms.

Non-Residential Development

This *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes that commercial, manufacturing, and institutional uses are important to maintaining the economic and social health of Franklin Township. Given the anticipated demand for such uses over the short term, the Township will continue to provide for such uses with additional opportunities for small scale retail and office uses in the existing B-1 and I-1 Zoning Districts. Income generating opportunities for Township residents will also be provided by permitting no-impact home based businesses in all residential zoning districts, and home occupations as appropriate.

The Township will regularly assess the demand for additional non-residential uses as the population grows and will make accommodations as needed. Setbacks, screening and buffers standards should also be applied to non-residential uses to avoid potential conflicts with adjacent residential properties. Furthermore, any future expansion of areas devoted to non-residential development should consider road capacity, access, and availability of utilities.

Small scale commercial development in the form of cottage industry would be permitted in the A-1 Zoning District. Increased setbacks, limitations on the size of structures and number of employees, and other performance standards would be used to limit the scale and effects on neighboring properties.

Agriculture

Agricultural land accounts for 36% of the Township's land area and is a defining feature of the Township's character and scenic landscape. Protection of agricultural land is one of the Township's primary goals. In support of this goal, the Township encourages the

protection of farmland and prime agricultural soils through innovative zoning tools and voluntary action by landowners.

Most of the Township's agricultural land lies within the A-1 Zoning District where the use of innovative zoning tools such as Conservation Subdivision Design and Transferable Development Rights is recommended. These zoning tools can be used to protect agricultural lands by setting aside agricultural land in protected open space areas, and by transferring development rights from agricultural land to preclude development of the property or a portion of the property. Both techniques provide a financial incentive to the landowner. The A-1 Zoning District would also permit agriculture-related businesses, such as farm stands and local produce markets, in an effort provide an income source for farms.

Voluntary actions on the part of the landowner include enrollment in an Agricultural Security Area (ASA), placing land in a conservation easement or agricultural easement, and enrollment in Pennsylvania's Clean and Green Program. While the ASA and Clean and Green programs do not permanently protect land, participation in these programs signifies the landowner's commitment to the continuing agricultural use of the land and the benefits provided by these programs promote at least temporary protection of the land.

Forestry

This *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the historical and continuing importance of forestry enterprises in the region. Landowners manage their forests for a variety of reasons including income from timber sales, wildlife habitat, recreation, water quality protection, bio-diversity, and timber for long-term investment. Improper harvesting and management practices often raise concerns among local residents and officials of adverse environmental impacts. It is critical for public acceptance of forestry, for environmental quality, and for the long-term viability of the industry and forest resources that logging professionals and individual landowners use best management practices when harvesting.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), at §603(c)(7), states that *zoning ordinances may not unreasonably restrict forestry activities* and goes on to require that in the Commonwealth, *forestry activities . . . shall be a permitted use by right in all zoning districts in every municipality*. Therefore, forestry activities will be permitted throughout Franklin Township provided such operations are conducted in accordance with sound forest management practices and environmental regulations.

Mineral Extraction (Including Natural Gas)

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code defines minerals as: *Any aggregate or mass of mineral matter, whether or not coherent. The term includes, but is not limited to, limestone and dolomite, sand and gravel, rock and stone, earth, fill, slag, iron ore, zinc ore, vermiculite and clay, anthracite and bituminous coal, coal refuse, peat and crude oil and natural gas*. The MPC clearly recognizes mineral extraction as a lawful use, but severely limits the range of development and operational standards which can be applied to mineral extraction by local municipalities, with location standards the primary tool available to the Township. MPC §603(I) states that *zoning ordinances shall provide for the reasonable development of minerals in each municipality*, while MPC §603(b) allows zoning ordinances to regulate mineral extraction, but only to the extent that such uses are not regulated by the state Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act, the Noncoal Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act, and the Oil and Gas Act. These Acts regulate such things as setbacks, dust, noise, blasting, water supply effects,

and reclamation. In other words, municipal regulations are pre-empted by these state regulations.

This *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the need to provide for *the reasonable development of minerals* and encourages such operations in appropriate locations in accordance with the MPC and state laws. Given the industrial nature and potential for adverse environmental impacts arising from mineral extracting operations, and consistent with its duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents, Franklin Township discourages the placement of mineral extraction operations in residential areas and in populated areas. Any mineral extraction activities that occur in the Township will be regulated by the Township to the extent possible as determined by state law and case law.

Open Space

Why is the preservation of open land important for a community? The value of open lands extends beyond monetary worth. Residents know that these open lands, whether agriculture, forest land, hillside, ridge line or park, affect community livelihood, property values, and recreational opportunities. While the value may be difficult to quantify, we know open lands:

- *Provide agricultural (and forestry) jobs and sales.*
- *Boost property values for surrounding developed areas.*
- *Offer a scenic backdrop for a tourist economy.*
- *Form a link to a historic past.*
- *Offer recreation opportunities.*
- *Provide habitat for native plants and wild animals.*
- *Replenish groundwater and act as a filter to improve water quality.*
- *Enhance the quality of life of area residents.¹*

Open land and natural areas are key ingredients of the region's rural recreational landscape, and local and county officials must encourage the conservation of open land if this character is to be maintained. The Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences Cooperative Extension, in *Extension Circular 410 - Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses, The Pennsylvania Experience*, reports on a study conducted in three rural townships in Adams County, Lebanon County, and Perry County. (See the following *Cost of Community Services by Land Use Table*.) The study found that:

- *Land uses affect the size of the local government, the types of services it offers, the types of equipment it must purchase, and the taxes it must levy.*

¹ Santa Barbara County 2030: The Open Lands, p.2,
http://www.countyofsb.org/plandev/pdf/comp/programs/Newsletters/open_lands_newltr/value_all.pdf

- *Land use also affects the number of students in the local school district, the sizes and number of school buildings, the number of teachers, and the taxes and tax rates the school levies.*
- *The overall fiscal impact of a land use depends on both its (tax) revenue and its (municipal) expenditure impacts.*

Cost of Community Services by Land Use				
Township In:	\$ revenue collected : \$ spent on services			
	Resid	Comm	Indus	Open
South Central Townships				
Bethel Lebanon Co.	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.07	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.06
Carroll Perry Co.	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.06	—	1 : 0.02
Maiden Creek Berks Co.	1 : 1.28	1 : 0.11	1 : 0.06	1 : 0.04
Richmond Berks Co.	1 : 1.24	1 : 0.11	1 : 0.06	1 : 0.04
Straban Adams Co.	1 : 1.10	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.05	1 : 0.06
Philadelphia Area Townships				
Bedminster Bucks Co.	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.006	1 : 0.04	1 : 0.04
Buckingham Berks Co.	1 : 1.04	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.12	1 : 0.08
North Central Townships				
Bingham Potter Co.	1 : 1.56	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.15
Stewardson Potter Co.	1 : 2.11	1 : 0.37	--	1 : 0.15
Sweden Potter Co.	1 : 1.38	1 : 0.07	--	1 : 0.08
Western Township				
Allegheny Westmoreland Co.	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.14	1 : 0.13
Source: <i>Calculating a Cost of Community Services Ratio for Your Pennsylvania Community</i> , Pennsylvania State University, 1998				

- *Residential land, on average contributed less to the local municipality and school district than it required back in expenditures.*
- *Commercial, industrial, and farm- and open land contributed more to the local municipality and school district than they took, thus helping to subsidize the (service) needs of residential land.*
- *If growth must occur, commercial and industrial development has a potentially beneficial impact on the tax base as long as it does not dramatically raise the demand for services.*
- *When farmland is converted for residential purposes . . . the land will be converted from a net contributor to the municipality and school district into a net drain.*
- *Even with preferential assessments, farmland ends up subsidizing the educational costs of residential land and plays a positive economic role in the community.*

The Penn State data represents a cross section of communities in terms of level of development, from very rural townships in Potter County to highly developed townships in the Philadelphia area. The conclusion in all reported townships was consistent: ***The cost of services to residential development exceeds the amount of tax revenue generated.***

Some communities in southeastern Pennsylvania have found that the purchase of conservation easements to limit residential development is a more economical approach than providing facilities and services to new residents. The cost of schools is the most important factor when the amount of tax revenue generated from a single-family dwelling is compared to the cost of educating one student. Nevertheless, residential development has always been, and will continue to be,

and integral part of the character of Franklin Township. The important point of the Penn State study is not that residential development must be discouraged, but that there must be a balance between open land, residential development, and commercial development.

Franklin Township encourages the preservation of valuable open space resources through voluntary use of conservation easements, protection of agricultural and forest lands, and use of land use planning tools such as Conservation Subdivision Design and Transferable Development Rights.

Natural Resources

Development and environmental protection, as well as conserving open land and natural resources, need not be mutually exclusive. While a clean environment, abundant open land, and natural resources are key elements of the quality of life in Franklin Township, one must recognize that growth is inevitable and can contribute positively to a healthy community. The goal is to strike a balance between development and preserving the Township's natural resources. Development practices which recognize the importance of the local built and natural environment will ensure the continuation of the quality of life that residents enjoy and which is so attractive to new residents. Concurrently, land owners and developers will be able to provide the home sites and businesses that a growing population demands. The intent is to ensure *environmentally sensitive* development within the context of the existing zoning districts. Franklin Township supports the protection of its critical natural resources, achieved through open space preservation tools and through limits on the disturbance of these resources, including wetlands, surface and groundwater, floodplains, steep slopes, and hydric soils.

THE OFFICIAL MAP FOR OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code grants the authority to municipalities to adopt an official which map shows the location of areas which the municipality has identified as necessary for Intersection improvements, future public streets, recreation areas, and other public grounds, or for open space. By showing the area on the official map, the municipality puts the property owner on notice that the property has been identified for future acquisition for a public facility or purpose or for open space. The municipality may refuse to issue a permit for any building or development on the designated parcel; however, the municipality has up to one year to purchase the property, or an easement in the case of open space, upon notice by the owner of intended development.

This little used land use management tool can be invaluable for minimizing the cost of public facilities and open space acquisition. The Township should consider the adoption of an official map as part of its long term planning for community facilities and open space preservation. By setting aside funds for the eventual fee purchase or easement acquisition of priority open land areas, municipal resources can be used to the best long term advantage, ensuring that open land preservation is a coordinated effort rather than uncoordinated reactions to unanticipated needs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Zoning Ordinance Actions

- Amend the A-1 zoning district to include Conservation Subdivision Design as a permitted use at a density of one dwelling unit per two net acres with a 50% open

space requirement. Conventional development should remain at its current density or be reduced in order to provide an incentive for use of CSD. Also permit farm related businesses such as farm stands and markets.

- Amend the R-1 zoning district to permit single family attached, two-family, and multi-family residential development at appropriate densities, as well as small scale retail uses.
- Amend the R-2 zoning district to permit single family attached, two-family, and multi-family residential development at appropriate densities, as well as small scale retail and office uses. Include design guidelines to promote development that is compatible with the historic village character.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a Transferable Developments Rights article that designates properties in the A-1 Zoning District as Sending Areas, and properties in the R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts as Receiving Areas. Provide appropriate density incentives for both Sending and Receiving Area landowners in order to encourage use of TDR.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include forestry as a permitted use in all districts and include language to encourage the use of best management practices for forestry operations.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to include no-impact home businesses as a permitted use in all residential zoning districts, home occupations as a conditional use in all districts, and cottage industries as a conditional use in the A-1 District.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include mineral extraction as a conditional use in the A-1 zoning district with restrictions as permitted by state law and case law.
- Include a Lot Area definition in the Zoning Ordinance that deducts a proportion of land occupied by critical natural features, such as steep slopes, wetlands, hydric soils, floodplains, and riparian buffers.

SALDO Actions

- Amend the SALDO to include the design process for Conservation Subdivision Design.

Voluntary Actions

- Conduct an outreach program to contact owners of potential open space preservation lands and educate them on the various preservation tools and the benefits (financial and resource protection benefits) of employing those tools.
- Contact the various land trusts and conservation organizations in the region to get assistance with outreach and education efforts. If a landowner wishes, facilitate communications between the landowner and land trust.
- Encourage landowner participation in the *Clean and Green* program, Agricultural Security Areas, and the Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program.

HOUSING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Plan examines the characteristics of Franklin Township existing housing stock and provides strategies to address future housing issues. It is intended to meet the housing needs of current residents and to accommodate anticipated growth while maintaining community character. In addition, the Housing Plan seeks to ensure that the Township provides for housing of various types and in various arrangements.

Families and individuals of all income levels reside in Franklin Township and need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. Similar to commercial development, the Township can employ zoning to direct housing types and densities to the most appropriate locations.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires *a plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.*

Zoning must provide for housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements, mobile homes and mobile home parks.

HOUSING GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: Provide for secure and sound housing in a variety of types and densities.

Families and individuals of all income levels live and work in the Township with homes ranging from very modest mobile homes to more recently constructed *McMansions*. Families with low to moderate incomes need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. Similar to commercial development, the Township can employ zoning to direct housing types and densities to the most appropriate locations. Conservation subdivision design with a density bonus and allowing multi-family dwellings as part of conservation design in all zoning districts are examples.

OBJECTIVES:

Current Residents Meet the housing needs of current Township residents.

- Sound Housing - Encourage preservation of presently sound housing.
- Rehabilitation - Promote rehabilitation of houses in decline.

- Housing Programs - Encourage participation in all county, state and federal housing rehabilitation and assistance programs to ensure residents receive full benefit from such programs.
- Maintenance - Consider adopting standards which require the maintenance of dwellings to prevent dilapidation.

Housing Growth

Accommodate anticipated housing growth in appropriate locations, at appropriate densities, and with suitable amenities.

- Location - Coordinate the location of new housing with pending road improvements
- Density - Provide for varying densities suited to the Townships’ character and landscape.
- Multi-Family - Allow multi-family dwellings in conservation design in appropriate zoning districts at the same density as single-family dwellings.
- Amenities - Provide for recreation and open space amenities within residential developments

Types and Affordability

Provide a diversity of housing types and affordability levels.

- Senior Housing - Encourage the development of nursing homes, adult care centers, assisted living facilities and other housing types which provide amenities that are attractive to retirees.
- Type and Density - Allow residential development of various types in suitable areas at a density sufficiently high to moderate the land cost of the increasing cost of housing, while requiring adequate off street parking, water supply, sewage disposal, and recreational amenities.
- Fair Share - Ensure that the Township provides for its required *fair share* of housing in any land use management ordinances.
- Innovative Design - Advocate conservation design, village style or traditional neighborhood development.
- Incentives - Consider density and design incentives to encourage the development of age-restricted and affordable housing.

HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS

Municipalities Planning Code Requirements

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) addresses housing from the perspective of ensuring affordable housing for families of all income levels. In terms of planning, MPC §301 requires comprehensive plans to include an element *to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently*

sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.

In terms of land use management as effected by zoning, MPC §604 requires zoning ordinances to *provide for the use of land within the municipality for residential housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements, mobile homes and mobile home parks, provided, however, that no zoning ordinance shall be deemed invalid for the failure to provide for any other specific dwelling type.*

Court decisions have upheld this zoning provision of the MPC establishing a *fair share* rule which considers the percentages of land available for a given type of housing, current population growth and pressures within the municipality and surrounding region, and the amount of undeveloped land in a community. The Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development publication titled, *Reducing Land Use Barriers to Affordable Housing, Fourth Edition, August 2001*, lists a number of barriers to affordable housing associated with land use regulations, including among others:

- insufficient amount of land zoned for medium and high density residential development
- excessive lot frontage and setback requirements which dictate greater lot sizes
- excessive street widths and construction standards unrelated to expected traffic volumes
- lack of provisions for cluster design and planned residential development
- limitations on the use of mobile homes and manufactured homes
- plan review and administrative delays

Housing Affordability

Municipalities throughout the country have been addressing housing issues for many years. *Pennsylvania Housing*, a 1988 study conducted by the Pennsylvania Housing Financing Agency, defined *affordable* as requiring less than thirty percent of gross monthly income for rent or less than twenty-eight percent for a mortgage and other related housing costs. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines continue to define *affordable housing* as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income. (See also the *Affordable Housing Study Sidebar* on the following page.)

Affordability in a Growing Community

Real estate values in the Township and much of the rural area to the north of the Wilkes-Barre metropolitan region have increased over the years given the appeal of the quality lifestyle so close to urban areas. The Township's rural residential appeal and natural setting are key factors leading to the more recent construction of many large homes in the Township. As the current downturn in the housing market recovers and the longer term demand for land and housing continues, the cost of real estate will obviously also continue to increase. Balancing this demand-driven housing

cost increase with the need for affordable housing is difficult, particularly when coupled with the problem of providing adequate sewage disposal and water supply for higher density housing in an area such as Franklin Township with many marginal soils, high quality streams, and the economic importance of good water quality of area lakes.

Affordable Housing Study

The Summer 2000 *Affordable Housing Study* for Jacksonville, Florida provides a good description of how affordable housing is assessed. *The American Dream has long been associated with the possibility of owning one's home. National housing-market surveys report that the home ownership rate reached a peak in the late 1990s—almost sixty-seven percent in 1999—due mainly to a robust economy with record levels of low unemployment and low interest rates. However, while this unprecedented economic expansion enabled many Americans to purchase their own homes, it has pushed housing prices and rental rates higher, preventing many other households, with insufficient incomes, from either becoming homeowners or finding affordable, safe, and decent rental housing. Housing affordability is a relative concept—both rich and poor can experience difficulty in affording housing, depending on how much they spend toward housing costs. Housing in one community with a relatively high median income can be quite expensive but affordable compared to housing in another community with a relatively low median income.*

Federal governmental guidelines, primarily those established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), define affordable housing as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income—referred to here as the 30 percent rule. The income counted is derived from all wages earned by people fifteen and older in the household. For homeowners, affordability is generally defined as owning a house with a value equal to slightly more than twice the household's annual income. The homeowner costs counted typically include a mortgage payment (principal, interest, taxes, and insurance) and utilities. For renters, the costs usually include contract rent and utilities. The 30 percent rule leaves seventy percent for food, clothing, health care, child care, transportation to work, and other basic expenses. Because of increasing housing costs, many lower income Americans are forced to make tradeoffs and go without necessities. Tenants experiencing unexpected emergencies typically fall behind in their rent and face eviction. If not assisted, they may become homeless.

EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS

Overview

The Township's history as an agricultural community resulted in a development pattern of scattered farm houses with the highest density of development centered around the Village of Orange and along Eighth Street near the border of Kingston Township. Over the past 30 years, much of housing constructed was built for families whose breadwinners commute to the Wilkes-Barre area for employment. Many of the homes constructed over the past 10 years are very large, reflecting the higher incomes of families moving to the Township.

2010 Census

Although the 2010 census was conducted in the Spring of 2010, the data will not be available until early 2012.

Housing Trends

2010 Census
Although the 2010 Census was conducted in the Spring of 2010, the data will not be available until early 2012.

The *Housing Units Table* shows the changes in the number of housing units in the Township and other comparative jurisdictions between 1980 and 2000 and the *Dwelling Unit Permits Table* shows the number of permits issued for new dwellings in the Township through 2009. Key considerations and changes in Franklin Township include:

- Housing unit construction in the Township increased significantly between 1990 and 2000 with the addition of almost 140 units, compared to the 30 units added between 1980 and 1990.

- Although Franklin Township housing units increased at a rate higher than Dallas Township and Kingston Township, the number of new units in those two Townships were significantly higher, reflecting the sprawl from the City of Wilkes-Barre and Kingston Borough.
- During the same period, the number of units in Wilkes-Barre decreased by 440.
- An additional 58 permits were issued for homes in Franklin Township between 2000 and 2009, taking the total to some 737 units.
- Although much of the agricultural and woodland in the Township appears to be stable in terms of long-term ownership, if tax, family or market conditions change, this land holds great potential for development.
- Given the attractive landscape and proximity to the Wyoming Valley, the number of housing units in the Township will certainly continue to increase, and there is no reason to expect that the pace of housing development will decrease.

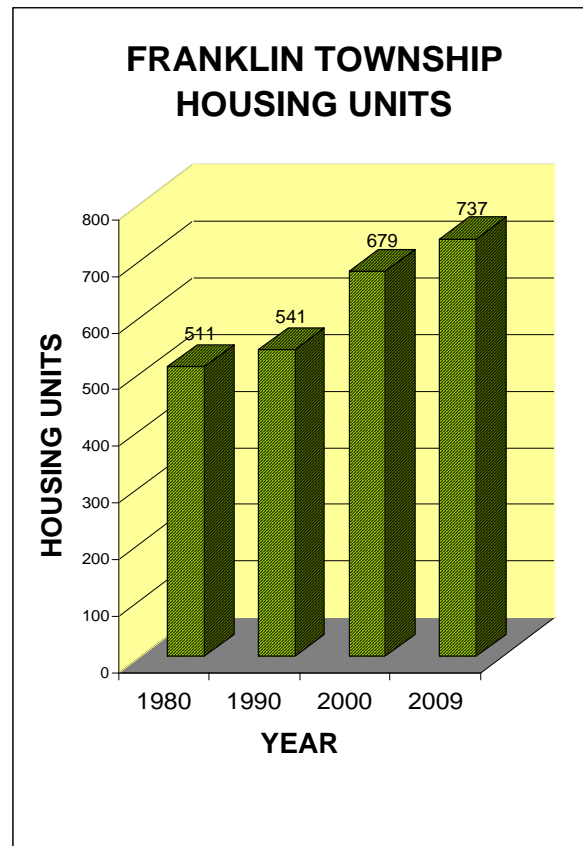
HOUSING UNITS U.S. CENSUS							
	1980 Total Units	# 80-90	% 80-90	1990 Total Units	# 90-00	% 90-00	2000 Total Units
Franklin Township	511	30	5.9%	541	138	25.5%	679
Dallas Township	2,415	398	16.5%	2,813	312	11.1%	3,125
Kingston Township	2,265	308	13.6%	2,573	350	13.6%	2,923
Wilkes-Barre City	21,389	-655	-3.1%	20,734	-440	-2.1%	20,294
Luzerne County	136,201	2,523	1.9%	138,724	5,962	4.3%	144,686
PA (1,000s)	4,596	342	7.4%	4,938	312	6.3%	5,250

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP DWELLING UNIT PERMITS	
Year	#
2000	7
2001	9
2002	7
2003	6
2004	8
2005	5
2006	4
2007	6
2008	3
2009	3
total	58



Village Homes

RATE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT U.S. CENSUS		
# Units	# Units Township	
2009 estimate	737	
2000	679	
1990	541	
1980	511	
YEAR BUILT	#	%
2000-2009 est.	58	7.9%
1999-03/2000	4	0.5%
1995-1998	48	6.5%
1990-1994	65	8.8%
1980-1989	113	15.3%
1970-1979	126	17.1%
1960-1969	62	8.4%
1950-1959	51	6.9%
1940-1949	59	8.0%
1939 or earlier	151	20.5%
Total	737	100.0%



Age of Housing

The data in the *Rate of Housing Development Table* provides a good measure of the age and potential condition of housing in the Township.

- The greatest number of units in Franklin Township was reported as constructed prior to 1939.
- The pace of housing construction increased beginning in 1970 and continued through 2000, and as noted earlier, some 58 building permits were issued for housing over the past 10 years.
- Many of the homes in the Township were constructed prior to 1970, the approximate date when state on-site sewage regulations were instituted. This is important in terms of the age of on-lot disposal systems, compliance with DEP standards, and effect on water quality.
- Generally, the age of the housing stock does not appear to be the sole factor in housing condition with most of the older homes in good condition.
- A number of dwellings, including a number of mobile homes and a number of single-family dwellings, are dilapidated or in less than optimum condition and

current economic conditions may add to the problem.

Housing Demand

The demand for housing in Franklin Township and all of the north central area of Luzerne County, Pocono region, although recently dampened by the economic downturn, will certainly rebound in the long term. The Township will experience the results of new development in terms of increased community activity and associated traffic, and demand for retail and service establishments and community facilities and services. The income of many of the new residents will be linked to the regional economy or to substantial retirement assets which may increase housing values beyond the means of locally rooted incomes, only to exacerbate the housing affordability issue.

Home Ownership

The *Home Ownership Table*, shows the 1990 and 2000 Census home ownership rates for Franklin Township, Luzerne County and the Commonwealth.

- In 2000, the home ownership rate in the Township continued to be higher than Luzerne County and the Commonwealth, as it was in 1990, due largely to the predominance of single-family dwellings.
- There was an insignificant change in home ownership in the Township between 1990 and 2000, with the County and Commonwealth also showing little change.

HOME OWNERSHIP U.S. CENSUS			
Occupied Units (does not include second homes)	Franklin Township	Luzerne County	PA
Home Ownership Rate (Owner-Occupied), 1990	90.7%	69.4%	70.7%
Home Ownership Rate (Owner-Occupied), 2000	90.1%	70.3%	71.3%
Renters (Renter-Occupied Units), 1990	9.3%	30.6%	29.3%
Renters (Renter-Occupied Units), 2000	9.9%	29.7%	28.7%

Housing Value

Housing values compared to household income provide a measure of housing affordability. While high values are positive in terms of housing condition and real estate tax revenue, it may indicate the need to evaluate the affordability of housing for younger couples and older residents. Owner-occupied homes do not include the few seasonal dwellings in the Township because the Census only counts the homes of permanent residents. (See the *Owner Occupied Housing Value Table* and the *Median Housing Values Table* .)

- According to the 2000 Census, Franklin Township had a higher proportion of homes of value between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000 than the County and the Commonwealth, and this is reflected in the median value data.
- Home values in the Township varied widely with the highest number of homes in the \$50,000 - \$99,000 range, but with an almost equal number in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 range.

- Median value of owner-occupied homes in Franklin Township, at \$119,600, was higher than the Luzerne County and State values. Generally newer housing on larger lots most likely accounting for the value being higher.

OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE				
U.S. CENSUS 2000				
	Franklin Township		Luzerne County	PA
	#	%	%	%
total	389	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
less than \$50,000	5	1.3%	15.0%	15.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	137	35.2%	50.2%	37.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	135	34.7%	21.9%	24.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	49	12.6%	7.7%	11.9%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	44	11.3%	3.6%	7.4%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	11	2.8%	1.2%	2.9%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	8	2.1%	0.3%	0.8%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
median value	\$119,600	--	\$84,800	\$97,000

- The recent construction of very large and high value homes on large lots suggests that median home value in the Township has increased since the 2000 Census.
- Equally important is the change in median value between 1990 and 2000 which provides a crude measure of demand for housing compared to the regional market. (See the *Median Housing Values Table*.)
- After adjustment for inflation, which between 1990 and 2000 was a factor of 1.318, median housing value in the Township increased significantly in the ten years between the Census counts.
- This suggests that the housing values are keeping pace with the cost of living, or that more recent housing construction has been of higher value.



Homes in a More Recent Development

MEDIAN HOUSING VALUES U.S. CENSUS			
Housing Data	Franklin Township	Luzerne County	PA
Median Value Owner-Occupied, 2000	\$119,600	\$84,800	\$97,000
Median Value Owner-Occupied, 1990	\$75,600	\$56,000	\$69,700
Median Value Owner-Occupied, 1990, inflation adjusted to 2000	\$99,641	\$73,808	\$91,865
% Change 1990 - 2000 inflation adjusted	20.0%	14.9%	5.6%

Housing Structural and Vacancy Characteristics

The *Housing Structural and Vacancy Characteristics Table* provides data for the Year 2000 on the types of housing units in the Township and the occupancy of the units.

- The Township’s housing stock is dominated by single-family detached dwellings.
- Multi-family housing units account for less than 1.0 % of the total housing stock in the Township which was significantly lower than in the County and Commonwealth where urban units comprise much of the total. This may be due in large part to the high demand for single-family housing, higher land values, and problem of providing adequate sewage disposal. Multi-family dwellings often provide a more affordable type of housing.
- In 2000, mobile homes, often more affordable, accounted for almost 15% of all occupied units in Franklin Township, significantly higher than in the State. Most of the mobile homes are located in the two mobile home parks in the Township - Country Village and Valley View.
- Occupied housing units in Franklin Township totaled 629 with 567 (90.1%) owner occupied and 62 (9.9%) renter occupied.
- The number of dwellings for seasonal or recreation use, that is, second homes, in Franklin Township is very low when compared to many municipalities in the County associated with the Pocono Mountains or other recreation attractions. (See the *Second Homes Table*.)



Modest Homes

HOUSING STRUCTURAL AND VACANCY CHARACTERISTICS						
U. S. CENSUS						
	Franklin Township		Luzerne County		PA (1,000s)	
1990 total housing units	541		138,724		4,938	
1990 occupied housing units	514		128,483		4,496	
2000 total housing units	679		144,686		5,250	
2000 occupied housing units	629		130,687		4,777	
2000 Housing Units in Structure	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 unit detached	548	80.7%	88,403	61.1%	2,935	55.9%
1 unit attached	6	0.9%	17,468	12.1%	940	17.9%
2 units	19	2.8%	11,396	7.9%	274	5.2%
multi-family	5	0.7%	21,495	14.9%	837	15.9%
mobile homes	101	14.9%	5,855	4.0%	259	4.9%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%	69	0.048%	5	0.1%
Average Household Size (persons)						
1990	2.75		2.47		2.57	
2000	2.55		2.34		2.48	
Average Family Size (persons)						
1990	3.11		3.06		3.10	
2000	2.94		2.95		3.04	
2000 Housing Tenure	#	%	#	%	#	%
total housing units	679	100.0%	144,686	100.0%	5,250	100.0%
occupied housing units	629	92.6%	130,687	90.3%	4,777	91.0%
total vacant units	50	7.4%	13,999	9.7%	473	9.0%
seasonal/recreation use	13	1.9%	2,517	1.7%	148	2.8%
other vacant units	37	5.4%	11,482	7.9%	325	6.2%
2000 Occupied Housing Units	#	%	#	%	#	%
total occupied units	629	100.0%	130,687	100.0%	4,777	100.0%
owner occupied units	567	90.1%	91,914	70.3%	3,406	71.3%
renter occupied units	62	9.9%	38,773	29.7%	1,371	28.7%



New Home Construction

SECOND HOMES U.S. CENSUS	1990	2000	2000 % of Units	% change '90-'00
Franklin Township	3	13	1.9%	333.3
Foster Township	315	259	15.6%	-17.8%
Harveys Lake Borough	555	391	22.5%	-29.6%
Luzerne County	2,776	2,517	1.7%	-9.3%
PA (1,000s)	144,700	148,443	2.8%	2.6%

Housing Affordability in the Township

Housing affordability is a complex issue related to the unique mix of the housing types, real estate demand, housing values, and household incomes in the community. In Franklin Township, the number of residents commuting to work in nearby metropolitan areas also adds to the housing affordability mix. These commuters, who have often recently moved to the community, are employed in more lucrative jobs than residents who are employed locally. This higher income, coupled with the high value of larger, more recently constructed homes, add to the cost of real estate. These families can afford to pay more for housing and the demand they drive can increase housing values beyond the level of affordability for many Township residents relying on the local job market.

The *Housing Affordability Data Table* includes 2000 Census information to provide an indication of the affordability of housing in Franklin Township.



Mobile Home Park

- In the Township, a significant proportion of home owning households (21.1%) and renting households (20.8%) had Year 2000 housing costs which exceed the *thirty percent rule* for household income and housing expense indicating housing affordability issues. (See the previous *Affordable Housing Study Sidebar*.)
- It is also important to remember that the data does not account for any increases in real estate values since 2000 which likely have added to the affordability equation.
- In addition, the recent enactment of the State Uniform Construction Code has, while aimed at ensuring the safety and durability of construction, added to the overall cost of home construction.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY DATA									
U. S. CENSUS 2000									
	% Single-family	% Duplex	% Multi-family	% Mobile Homes RVs	Median Housing Value	Median Gross Rent	Median Hsehold Income	% Owner Hsehlds home exp >30% of Income	% Hsehlds with rent >30% of Income
Franklin	80.7%	0.9%	3.5%	14.9%	\$119,600	\$475	\$45,150	21.1%	20.8%
Wilkes-Barre	46.3%	12.7%	40.9%	0.1%	\$64,700	\$411	\$26,711	21.7%	37.0%
Luzerne Co.	61.1%	12.1%	22.8%	4.0%	\$84,800	\$434	\$33,771	20.9%	32.6%
PA	55.9%	17.9%	21.1%	5.0%	\$97,000	\$531	\$40,106	22.8%	35.5%

HOUSING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Luzerne County Housing Authority

Public housing and subsidized rent program.
570-287-9661

The Luzerne County Housing Partnership

Works to revitalize the Luzerne County housing market and to establish a fair and predictable building environment for the builder, residents and neighborhoods of Luzerne County. The Partnership is comprised of local, public and private agencies; financial and educational institutions; private corporations and County agencies.

570-830-4361 or 570-287-3008 www.luzernehousing.org

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Service

Rental housing, home purchase/repair loans, and other housing programs.

570-8365-111 ext.4 www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa/

Housing Coalition

Housing and service providers organized to resolve local housing issues, including housing for people with disabilities.

Luzerne/Wyoming MH/MR
570-825-9441

Regional Housing Coordinator

Works with state agencies, service providers and housing professionals to improve access to housing for people with disabilities.

570-961-1592 x109 www.sdhp.org

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency provides a good listing of agencies and organizations at www.phfa.org/forms/housing_services/resources/hs_luzerne.pdf

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

**Affordability –
A Regional Issue**

The percentage of cost burdened homeowners and renters in the Township is relatively high. However, the type and price of housing available in any municipality is largely market driven and beyond a municipality’s direct control. Local municipalities must recognize that housing needs cannot be addressed entirely at the local level. In fact, with the exception of ensuring that land use and building regulations are reasonable in terms of affecting costs, small municipalities can do little to manage housing affordability which is so dependent on regional economic real estate market factors. Nevertheless, municipalities can take steps to encourage innovative forms of housing that meet the community’s needs and satisfy the market; age restricted housing is a good example.

Housing Condition

The occupied housing stock in the Township generally appears to be healthy in terms of condition. Nevertheless, a number of single-family dwellings and mobile homes are in less than optimal condition, and the recent economic downturn may have contributed to the problem.

Housing Programs

The Township must look to the Luzerne County Housing Authority and its contacts with private affordable housing organizations to meet the specific housing needs of lower income residents. The Luzerne County Housing Authority and other agencies and organizations can assist with resident access to publically funded housing development and rent assistance and housing loan and repair and rehabilitation grants and loans. (See the *Housing Agencies and Organizations Sidebar*.)

PUBLIC HOUSING ASSISTANCE

What is Public Housing? Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, from scattered single family houses to high rise apartments for elderly families. There are approximately 1.2 million households living in public housing units, managed by some 3,300 Housing Authorities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers Federal aid to local housing agencies (HAs) that manage the housing for low-income residents at rents they can afford. HUD furnishes technical and professional assistance in planning, developing and managing these developments.

Who Is Eligible? Public housing is limited to low-income families and individuals. A Housing Authority determines your eligibility based on: 1) annual gross income; 2) whether you qualify as elderly, a person with a disability, or as a family; and 3) U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. If you are eligible, the Housing Authority will check your references to make sure you and your family will be good tenants. using Authorities will deny admission to any applicant whose habits and practices may be expected to have a detrimental effect on other tenants or on the project's environment.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Public and Indian Housing web site:
<http://www.nls.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/index.cfm>

FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES

Overview

Future planning and policy recommendations pertaining to housing are intended to ensure that the Township accommodates projected housing unit growth while maintaining adequate open land, provide for a diverse and affordable mix of housing types, and maintain a sound housing stock.

Policies

- Promote mixed-use development that would accommodate various dwelling types in proximity to commercial and civic services.
- Provide for a variety of housing types, including single-family attached and multi-family dwellings, in order to accommodate individuals and families of various income levels.
- Review land use controls in terms of standards not directly linked to public health and safety which increase housing costs.
- Provide for age-restricted housing in proximity to services to accommodate seniors.
- Investigate ways to bring relief to cost burdened households (owners and renters).

- Permit a mix of lot sizes within residential developments to encourage diversity of housing structures and styles.
- Encourage rehabilitation of substandard housing.
- Cooperate with area municipalities and the Counties to plan for housing needs regionally and as housing needs are identified consider the development of joint housing plans with neighboring municipalities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Overview	Implementation of the housing plan proposes actions aimed at supporting existing residents, accommodating future housing needs, and providing a variety of housing types and affordability levels. Housing goals can be accomplished through the following initiatives:
Zoning Ordinance and SALDO	<p>Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance provisions intended to implement the policies and recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of conservation design and development incentives such as density bonuses as a means of providing more affordable housing. • Consider providing some incentives (density or design) for developers who provide age restricted and/or affordable housing. • Allow multi-family housing where compatible with surrounding land uses, with access to transportation corridors, and in keeping with the logical extension of utilities and public services. • Consider the use of transferrable development rights to enable the shift of density from more remote parcels to zoning districts allowing higher residential density. • Make road width and other construction standards in the SALDO reasonable in terms of meeting safety and durability requirements without adding unnecessary costs to housing.
Housing Programs	Support the housing recommendations of the County Housing Authority and other agencies relative to subsidized housing programs for low and moderate income families and ensure area residents receive fair consideration for available programs.
Property Maintenance	Consider the adoption of a property maintenance code with reasonable public health, safety and welfare standards to ensure the structural integrity of dwellings, prevent dilapidation and preclude negative effects on the community.
Dangerous Structures	Consider the adoption of a dangerous structures ordinance to require the repair or demolition of structures which have become dilapidated to the point of becoming a safety hazard and a public nuisance.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN

OVERVIEW

Community facilities and services, as provided by local, county and state government, and by quasi-public institutions such as volunteer fire departments, hospitals and libraries, are most often considered in terms of government or institutional response to meet the needs and demands of the community's residents. As the individual municipal and regional population continues to change, the demand for facilities and services will also change. For example, an increasing population may require more classroom space, increased or new police protection, expanded social services, and additional recreation facilities. On the other hand, a stable or declining population, while not requiring additional services, may present a difficulty of paying for existing facilities and services with shrinking tax revenues. This is particularly pertinent to roads which require maintenance regardless of the municipal population. In addition, a change in the composition of the population could require different facilities and services. For example, if the population is aging as a whole, less recreation facilities and more social services may be required.

Community facilities and utilities should be considered resources with limited capacities that are to be provided in appropriate places to support and implement a multi-municipal comprehensive plan. The location of certain key facilities, including water, sewer, schools, and roads, are often essential to providing the necessary services to accommodate more intensive residential and nonresidential development. Conversely, these services will facilitate unintended development in areas, such as important farming areas or areas with limiting natural resources, where growth may not be appropriate. The location of other services, facilities, and utilities should be considered in relation to their ability to support or conflict with the land use planning for the multi-municipal area. The land use planning should facilitate the efficient and economic provision of public, quasi-public, and privately provided community services wherever possible.

Source: *Planning Beyond Boundaries*, p. 3-18.

Residents rely on community and public facilities and services to meet their transportation, educational, water supply, sewage disposal, police protection, emergency response, recreation and other daily living need. Municipalities do not, and cannot, provide all the facilities and services demanded by residents, many such services being provided by other levels of government or volunteer organizations. Nevertheless, without diligent and ongoing attention to the operation and maintenance of existing facilities and services, and planning for new facilities and services, a municipality can fall short in adequately serving its residents.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Ensure that community facilities and services are provided to meet the needs of the Township.

Objectives:

Public Facilities and Services

Maintain existing public facilities and services and plan carefully for new public facilities and services.

- Maintenance - Provide necessary maintenance of existing municipal buildings, equipment and other community facilities to extend the useful life and forestall unnecessary capital expenditures.

- Efficiency - Manage all municipal facilities and services efficiently and effectively.
- Capital Improvements Program - Systematically identify the need for local municipal community facilities and services, including useful life replacement of existing facilities, and develop a capital budget to meet the needs.
- Water and Sewer Extensions - Evaluate the development of any central water supply or central sewage disposal service in terms of stimulating unwanted development.
- Cooperation - Encourage and participate in any area intergovernmental cooperation efforts for community facilities planning and economies of scale for joint purchasing, recreation and other facilities and services.
- Cable/Internet Access - Work with Comcast via a Township franchise ordinance to ensure universal access to cable television service high-speed (256 KBPS or higher) internet service.
- Cellular Telephone - As a matter of public safety, work with cellular communications providers to ensure the entire Township is adequately served with 3G service, including the federally mandated locating abilities for mobile phone users within the bounds of the zoning ordinance relative to tower location and antenna collocation.
- Child Care / Elder Care - Monitor the need for additional child care and elder care facilities and work with community organizations to meet any identified needs.
- Urgent Care Service - Encourage the County and regional health care providers to develop urgent care facilities to bridge the gap between doctors and emergency rooms to better use health care resources.

Emergency Services

Protect the Township with effective emergency services.

- Expanded Service - Identify isolated and under served areas and assess the need for expanded or additional fire and ambulance stations.
- Volunteer Organizations - Acknowledging the critical importance of such groups to the community, encourage and continue to support volunteer fire, ambulance and other public service organizations.
- Police Protection - Continue to rely on the State Police, but monitor the need for local police protection.
- Communications - Enhance public safety by ensuring local emergency management officials have access to television and radio broadcasts over-the-air and via cable and satellite providers.

Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

Ensure adequate water supplies and sewage disposal facilities.

- Well Ordinance - Apply well construction standards with a well ordinance in areas not served by community water supply.

- Community Water Supplies - Apply well head protection standards to maintain good drinking water quality.
- On-Site Sewage Systems - Ensure that on-site sewage systems are maintained, and that failing systems are repaired, and new systems are installed in accord with DEP standards.
- Sewage Disposal - Monitor the effectiveness of on-lot sewage disposal systems and evaluate soil-based central sewage disposal as a means of correcting any widespread problems.

Storm Water

Improve Stormwater Management.

- Existing Problems - Evaluate storm water management facilities and develop a plan to address existing problems.
- Improvements - Include require stormwater management improvements in the capital improvements program.
- Innovative Controls - Incorporate innovative stormwater management techniques into new development projects consistent with Department of Environmental Protection and any adopted stormwater management plan.
- Education - Address existing problems with stormwater runoff through outreach and education of landowners.

New Development

Ensure that an adequate and safe water supply system, a proper sewage disposal system, well designed and constructed roads, stormwater management and other facilities are provided by developers as part of any residential or commercial development.

- SALDO - Periodically update the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to include standards to ensure most current and sound development practices.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ACTIONS

Growth and Development

Community facilities and services can serve as a tool, or as an unexpected trigger, to guide or stimulate community growth and development. Provision of a public water supply or sewage disposal system can be used to foster business development, but unexpected (and perhaps undesired) associated commercial and residential development can result in the area where such facilities are provided. The construction or improvement of highways, often to solve traffic congestion, can have similar effect resulting in even more traffic and a change in community character.

Planning and Cooperation

The planning and provision of community facilities and services must be undertaken in the overall context of the *Comprehensive Plan* and the community's long-term growth and development goals and objectives. More importantly, Franklin Township should not act as an island when considering facilities or services, but should cooperate with other local municipal jurisdictions, the school district, and the County to provide and improve facilities and services which are best provided regionally.

TYPICAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDERS (not specific to Franklin Township or Luzerne County)					
Service	Local	School	County	State	Quasi-Public
Aging Services			D	S, D	
Domestic Relations			D	S, D	
Children & Youth			D	S, D	
Welfare, etc.				D	
Education		D		S	
Parks & Recreation	S, D	D	S, D	S, D	D
Judicial			D	S, D	
Criminal Justice			D	S, D	
Police Protection	D		D	D	
Emergency Mngt	D		S, D	S, D	D
Roads/Highways	D		S, D	S, D	
Tax Assessment			D		
Elections	D		D	S, D	
Land records			D		
Libraries, museums	S, D	D	S, D	S	D
Fire & Rescue	S, D		S	S	D
Health Care			D	S, D	D
Utilities	D		D		D
Land Use Control	D		D	S, D	
Environ Protection	D		D	S, D	
Solid Waste Disposal	D		S, D		
S - provides financial support to other jurisdiction or quasi-public entity D - provides directly to public					

Plan Focus

This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* focuses on those facilities and services which are provided by the Township and the quasi-public institutions, such as fire and ambulance companies, serving the area. Given population increases, the demand for services and facilities provided directly by local municipalities has been continually increasing. For many years in the early history of townships, the main responsibility of the elected officials was maintaining roads, hence the title *Road Supervisor*. Boroughs often served as centers for commerce and community activities. In more recent years, state and federal mandates such as sewage disposal regulations, floodplain development requirements, and stormwater management planning, along with the desire to manage development, local municipalities have undertaken land use planning and environmental protection programs.

Facility and Service Providers

Public community facilities and services to serve Township residents are provided on several levels, and the provision of these facilities and services is dependent on tax dollars, whether in the form of federal and state aid, county supported programs, or

locally funded facilities and services. Both public and private funds support institutional facilities and services. Certainly, the facilities and services provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Luzerne County and the Dallas School District are vital to Township residents, but are somewhat beyond the scope of this *Plan*. Should community residents find that state or county facilities or services are inadequate, local municipal officials can serve as a conduit for communication with responsible state and county officials to effect facility and service improvements. In order to provide an overview of the range of facilities and services available in a community, *Facilities and Services Providers Table*, includes a matrix of typical facilities and services which can be provided by various jurisdictions.

Intermunicipal Cooperation

In recent years, more and more municipalities in the Commonwealth have begun working together on a number of issues and programs. The provision of community facilities and services offers myriad opportunities for cooperation which can result in efficiency of program operation and service delivery, and economies of scale in purchasing of supplies and materials. A council of governments (COG) is the most common type of cooperative local municipal organization in the Commonwealth and can, by formal municipal agreement, be used to provide virtually any service or facility normally provided by an individual municipality.

The Back Mountain Community Partnership, which includes Dallas Borough and Dallas, Franklin, Jackson, Kingston and Lehman Townships, has been focusing on regional land use issues. For example the Partnership agreed to explore a study of the area's ground water supply done before natural gas drilling becomes extensive. The Partnership will likely progress to joint purchasing and service provision.

Examples of other effective COGs in the region are the Lackawanna County COG and the Susquehanna COG. The county-wide Lackawanna County COG has been effective in terms of realizing savings on purchases of materials such as road salt. The Susquehanna County COG, with some fourteen member municipalities, administers the sewage enforcement program and the statewide building code for member municipalities. Township officials should fully explore and take advantage of any opportunities to improve facilities and services offered by intermunicipal cooperation.

Schools

Although local municipalities have no direct control over school district facilities and activities, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) recognizes the

importance of school buildings and land to the community. Public schools account for the largest expenditure of local tax dollars. The public school system not only provides education for a community's children, but also provides adult and community education, library facilities, cultural and social activities, and recreational and sport facilities for the surrounding communities. The MPC requires school districts to submit certain proposed actions related to land and buildings to the municipality for review if a comprehensive plan has been adopted. Most school districts are not aware of this provision and local municipalities must monitor school district activities and notify school administrators about the requirement.

In addition to Franklin Township, the Dallas School District includes Dallas Borough, Dallas Township and Kingston Township. The District operates a high school, a middle school

School Districts and the Municipalities Planning Code

Section 305. The Legal Status of Comprehensive Plans Within School Districts. Following the adoption of a comprehensive plan . . . , any proposed action of the governing body of any public school district located within the municipality or county relating to the location, demolition, removal, sale or lease of any school district structure or land shall be submitted to the municipal and county planning agencies for their recommendations at least 45 days prior to the execution of such proposed action by the governing body of the school district.



Dallas School Campus (www.dallassd.com)

and two elementary schools all located on a 101-acre campus in Dallas Township. The District is currently constructing a 1,400-student high school with completion planned for the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. Current plans call for the razing of the old high school with the site used for parking.

Enrollment in the Dallas School District stood at 2,390 students in 2000 with the District recording 2,774 students in June 2010. The District projects enrollment to increase to 3,173 by 2015 taking into account normal population increases and new residential development in the District.

Township Government

Franklin Township is incorporated under state law as a *Township of the Second Class* (a far better moniker than *second class township*). Based on a population density of 300 persons per square mile, township voters can opt for reclassification to a *Township of the First Class*, and four townships in Luzerne County have reached this population density - Hanover, Newport, Plains and Wilkes-Barre Townships. Franklin Township is governed by a three-member Board of Supervisors. State statute provides the option of a five-member board under the home rule system following a ballot referendum supported by a majority of voters; however, relatively few townships have opted for this system. The Board of Supervisors appoints township residents to the Township Planning Commission which serves a land use management advisory role to the Supervisors, the Zoning Hearing Board, and the Recreation Board which is charged with the planning and operation of the Township Park. Other volunteer boards may include an environmental advisory council and a shade tree commission.

Facilities and Services

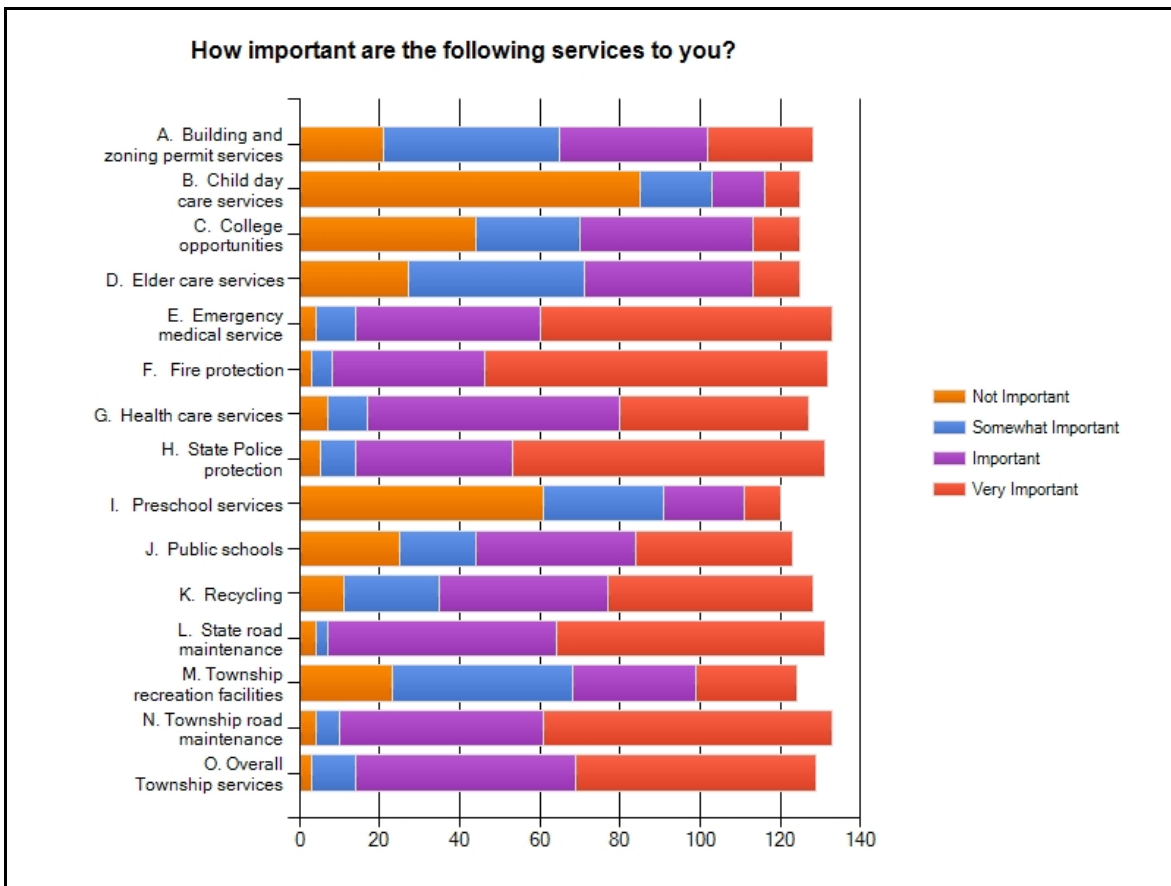
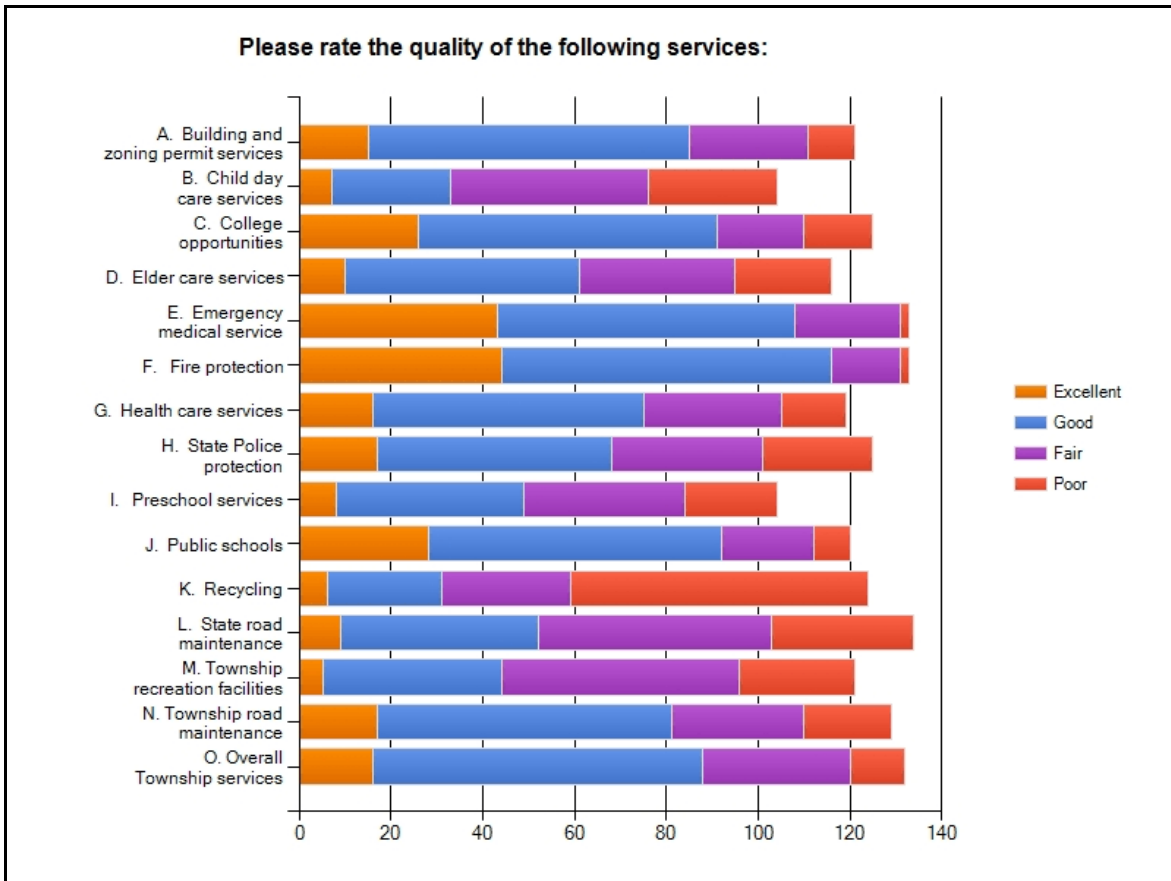
Local municipalities in Pennsylvania are responsible for a variety of public facilities and services. As noted earlier, one of the primary functions of township supervisors was the construction, improvement and maintenance of roads. However, local governments have evolved over the years to the point of managing a large variety of facilities, services and programs, which in some cases are mandated by state and federal regulations. These include, among others, land use controls; environmental protection; stormwater and floodplain management; police protection; water and sewer facilities; parks and recreation, and solid waste disposal. The level of service is dictated by the density and demographic character of the municipal population, and its tax base.

Local Priorities

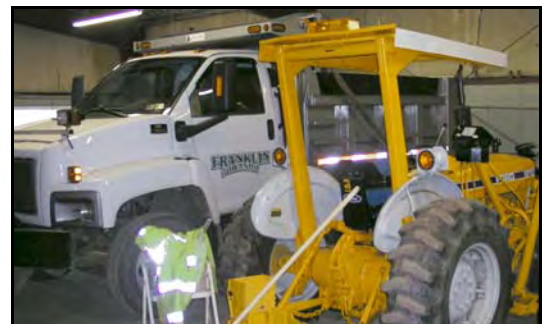
Emergency services, police protection and road maintenance were ranked as most important by the respondents to the Township community survey, which is typical of rural communities. Recycling facilities and health care facilities ranked somewhat lower, but higher than other facilities and services. In terms of quality of service, fire protection and emergency medical service were ranked primarily good to excellent, while road maintenance and State Police service were ranked fair to good. (See the charts on the following page.)

Township Facilities

The *Franklin Township Facilities and Staff Table* details the buildings, land, equipment and staff of the Township. Staffing at the Township is adequate because the Supervisors have added personnel as new programs and increased work loads have dictated. Office and meeting space are currently adequate, and there are no immediate plans for expansion.



FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP FACILITIES AND STAFF			
Township Building	- 13 acres along Municipal Road, excellent condition, small office and maintenance		
Maintenance Buildings	- located on Township Building parcel - equipment garage part of Township Building, excellent condition - salt / anti-skid storage shed, excellent condition		
Other Property	- none		
Meetings	- Franklin Township Fire Company		
Employees	- Secretary/Treasurer, part-time - Road Foreman, full-time - Equipment Operator, full time - Zoning Officer, part-time - Township Solicitor, part-time	- Planning Commission Secretary, part-time - Planning Commission Solicitor, part-time - Sewage Enforcement Officer, part-time - Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor, part-time - Building Inspector, part-time (contract)	
Volunteer Boards	- Planning Commission - Zoning Hearing Board - Recreation Board		
Vehicles & Major Equipment	- 2010 Ford dump truck, plow, spreader - 2008 Chevy dump truck, plow, spreader - 2006 F250 pickup truck	- 2008 Case backhoe/loader - 1991 John Deere grader - John Deere tractor	
Recreation Facilities	- Park on Township Building parcel		
Anticipated Capital Expenditures	Essential as Needed -replace trucks and equipment -road paving	Desirable -implement park master plan	Deferrable -improve/enlarge Twp office



Local Road Maintenance

Franklin Township employs a road crew that provides all normal winter and summer maintenance. However, the Township contracts for larger scale road maintenance and improvement projects, primarily major improvement projects such as paving and shoulder reconstruction. This approach has served well and, in terms of cost efficiency, is the most prudent means given the expense of owning and maintaining road construction equipment. The Township's equipment is maintained in good condition and is replaced or upgraded as necessary.

Road Maintenance Cooperation

Road maintenance could also be coordinated with other nearby municipalities via the Back Mountain Community Partnership. Taken as a whole, the individual participants in the Partnership employ a considerable labor force, and own and maintain a variety of vehicles and equipment. As a means of using local municipal funds and resources most efficiently, the Partnership could:

- Update and keep current the list of vehicles and equipment owned by all Partnership municipalities.
- Serve as a clearinghouse and notify all Partnership participants when a municipality is selling or purchasing equipment which may meet the needs of another municipality.
- Investigate the possibilities for increased sharing labor and equipment.
- Investigate the possibilities for increased contracting with or swapping with adjoining municipalities for winter road maintenance where travel savings may be realized.
- Coordinate joint purchasing of supplies and materials whenever possible to reduce unit costs.

Other vehicle and equipment actions:

- Maintain an accurate inventory of all vehicles and equipment.
- Liquidate obsolete vehicles and equipment.
- Include planned purchases of vehicles and equipment on a capital budget to plan for large expenditures.

Recreation Facilities

Individuals, families, community groups, and organized leagues use recreation facilities and facility planning should address the needs of all of these groups. Current facility usage and community trends in recreation and leisure activities provide the basis for developing new facilities. Township recreation planning and facilities and programs should complement those already available from other municipalities, the School District and other organizations.

Recreation facilities and programs in Franklin Township are provided by, the Dallas School District, sports league organizations, the Franklin Township Fire Company, and the Township. In addition, the state land, lakes and streams in the area provide ample opportunity for boating, fishing, hiking and hunting. Camp Orchard Hill, located in the Township, opens their gym facilities at certain times to individuals and families. Facilities include basketball courts, a volleyball court, room for other

exercises and activities, and a game room including ping pong, pool, foosball, and air hockey.



Cooperation

Providing recreation facilities and programs is another opportunity for municipalities to work cooperatively and the Back Mountain Community Partnership could provide the perfect vehicle for such cooperation. In addition, local sports and civic organizations have historically played a key role in recreation and this must be encouraged. Recreation planning and facility construction are eligible for funding under the Keystone Recreation Grant Program which should be considered for any future recreation improvements.

Community Survey

Respondents to the Township community survey had varying opinions about the importance, quality and need for Township spending on recreation as shown the following results for recreation-related questions. Less than 40 percent of the respondents favor increased Township tax revenue spending on recreation facilities.

11. How important are the following in your choice to be in Franklin Township?					
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Response Count
N. Recreational opportunities	18.6% (22)	28.0% (33)	33.1% (39)	20.3% (24)	118
12. Please rate Franklin Township AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY for each of the following:					
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Response Count
I. Recreational opportunities	12.9% (16)	54.8% (68)	24.2% (30)	8.1% (10)	124
13. Please rate the quality of the following services:					
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Response Count
M. Township recreation facilities	3.4% (4)	32.5% (38)	42.7% (50)	21.4% (25)	117
14. How important are the following services to you?					
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Response Count
M. Township recreation facilities	19.2% (23)	36.7% (44)	23.3% (28)	20.8% (25)	120
23. To what extent would you favor spending your Township tax money for each of the following services and facilities?					
	Decrease	Continue As Is	Add or Increase	Response Count	
G. Recreation facilities	9.9% (12)	52.9% (64)	37.2% (45)	121	



Existing Municipal and Park Facilities, Franklin Township (www.ftwp.com)



Franklin Township Ballfield (www.ftwp.com)

Park Master Site Plan

The Township recently adopted a Master Site Plan for the park on the 13-acre Township parcel and the master Site Plan is incorporated in this Comprehensive Plan by reference. The plan was funded by a grant from the the Luzerne County Office of Community Development and the Township was assisted by Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, and Toole Recreation.

The community survey included two questions specific to the Township Park and the results are included below and on the following page. Along with other direction from the Township Recreation Board, key person interviews, and public meeting comments, the results were considered in the preparation of the Master Site Plan. The Plan poses two alternatives - the full development of the current Township Park and the continuation of the current park facilities with an additional park developed at another location. The critical elements in the final determination are the ability to fund long term maintenance and the cooperation of area youth sports leagues.

21. Would you or household members use the Franklin Township Park for the following?						
	Won't Use	Not Likely	Maybe	Likely	Very Likely	Response Count
A. Socialize with family and friends	20.3% (26)	25.0% (32)	32.0% (41)	18.0% (23)	4.7% (6)	128
B. Exercise and get fit	19.2% (24)	24.8% (31)	29.6% (37)	18.4% (23)	8.0% (10)	125
C. Play organized sports	23.0% (28)	30.3% (37)	19.7% (24)	14.8% (18)	12.3% (15)	122
D. Play pick-up sports	25.4% (31)	34.4% (42)	18.9% (23)	13.1% (16)	8.2% (10)	122
E. Enjoy nature	17.2% (22)	14.8% (19)	23.4% (30)	26.6% (34)	18.0% (23)	128
F. Picnic	19.8% (25)	21.4% (27)	29.4% (37)	15.9% (20)	13.5% (17)	126
G. Play on playground	22.1% (27)	25.4% (31)	18.9% (23)	15.6% (19)	18.0% (22)	122
	Other (please specify)					16
	answered question					130
	skipped question					1

22. How important are the following facilities and activities to you and household members?					
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Response Count
A. Trails and pathways	26.2% (33)	21.4% (27)	34.9% (44)	17.5% (22)	126
B. Playground	36.9% (45)	20.5% (25)	26.2% (32)	16.4% (20)	122
C. Picnic areas	32.2% (39)	34.7% (42)	21.5% (26)	11.6% (14)	121
D. Baseball / softball field	36.1% (44)	25.4% (31)	24.6% (30)	13.9% (17)	122
E. Field for soccer, lacrosse, etc	39.2% (47)	29.2% (35)	20.0% (24)	11.7% (14)	120
F. Basketball courts	40.0% (48)	28.3% (34)	20.8% (25)	10.8% (13)	120
G. Tennis courts	40.5% (49)	30.6% (37)	23.1% (28)	5.8% (7)	121
H. Landscaping and beautification	8.1% (10)	21.0% (26)	46.0% (57)	25.0% (31)	124
I. Natural undeveloped areas	7.9% (10)	12.7% (16)	33.3% (42)	46.0% (58)	126
J. Organized programs for children	26.2% (32)	27.9% (34)	32.0% (39)	13.9% (17)	122
K. Organized programs for adults	34.7% (42)	36.4% (44)	22.3% (27)	6.6% (8)	121
L. Community events: movies, concerts, fairs	36.6% (45)	26.8% (33)	25.2% (31)	11.4% (14)	123
M. Bicycle routes	31.1% (38)	20.5% (25)	29.5% (36)	18.9% (23)	122
N. Pool	53.7% (65)	22.3% (27)	13.2% (16)	10.7% (13)	121
O. Skateboard / skating areas	63.6% (75)	19.5% (23)	11.0% (13)	5.9% (7)	118
			Other (please specify)		8
			answered question		128
			skipped question		3

Recreation and the Planning Code

Under the authority granted by §503(1.1) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, local municipalities can require the dedication of land for public use, and upon agreement of the developer, the construction of recreation facilities or the payment of fees in lieu thereof by developers for the construction and maintenance of recreation facilities accessible to the residents of the proposed residential development and the public. Franklin Township has included such a requirement in the subdivision and land development ordinance. Fees are assessed on a per lot basis for subdivisions and on a per unit basis for any mobile home park or multi-family dwelling.

Specific Actions Related to Recreation

In the near term, Franklin Township will continue to maintain the Township Park and look to the larger area and the facilities and services provided by other entities to meet the recreation needs of residents. However, the Township Recreation Board will take the lead in working with the other Township officials to continue the planning initiated with the Park Master Site Plan.

The Township will:

- Work cooperatively with adjoining municipalities, the Fire Company, the School District and community organizations to . . .
 - plan for recreation and open space from an area wide perspective.
 - coordinate individual municipal efforts.
 - maximize use of resources.
 - improve standing for state grants.

Once the specific needs for Township recreation facilities have been identified:

- Update the Park Master Site Plan as necessary.
- If determined necessary, identify potential sites for recreation facilities.
- Show planned recreation facilities on a Township Official Map to ensure that the land can be acquired.
- Ensure facilities are constructed in accord with an overall plan and all facilities are maintained.
- Develop a funding plan to include:
 - use of fees assessed for residential development under the subdivision and land development ordinance.
 - solicitation of private contributions.
 - grants.
 - direct municipal contributions.
 - a special fund for land acquisition and capital improvements.
- Obtain technical assistance from County and State agencies.

Police Protection

Franklin Township, along with other upper Luzerne County municipalities and all of Bradford, Sullivan and Wyoming Counties are served by Troop P of the Pennsylvania State Police from their barracks located in Wyoming Borough and satellite stations in Laporte, Shickshinny, Towanda and Tunkhannock.



Troop P, Wyoming, PA
(www.psp.state.pa.us)

Police protection is important to community survey respondents and almost half of the respondents support spending Township tax revenues for police protection. However, local police protection provided by the Township is not planned at this time given its cost. A local police force can be one of the most costly services provided by local government, not only in terms of the number of employees and equipment requirements, but also continuing benefits and pensions, as well as liability insurance. The regionalization of police protection or contracting with a nearby municipal police force can be a means of providing service at reduced cost. Savings in manpower, administration, space and equipment costs can be realized by such intermunicipal cooperation. The Pocono Mountain Regional Police Department, which serves four municipalities, is an area example.

The Board of Supervisors will monitor the need for police protection, the cost involved, and any changes to the State Police system including proposed charges to local municipalities; and assess its feasibility in terms of the financial resources available and other necessary facilities and services. If local service is provided by Franklin Township, regionalization and contracting with an existing police department will be considered.

**Fire Protection and
Emergency Medical
Service**

Adequate emergency service will continue to be an important element of maintaining the existing quality of life in the Township. The issues should be addressed as a long term goal of the Township and area wide municipalities. As noted earlier, emergency response is typically one of the most important services to residents of small communities, and it ranked very high with respondents to the Franklin community survey

In the case of Franklin Township, fire protection and basic life support service is provided by two volunteer companies, the Franklin Township Fire Department and the Franklin-Northmoreland Township Ambulance Association serve the entire Township. Service areas are defined by inter-company agreements among the volunteer companies in the region and all companies are dispatched via the 911 System, and the companies are organized in a regional mutual aid system. The state-required mutual aid agreements are good examples of intermunicipal collaboration to improve both the efficiency and quality of service.

**Franklin Township
Fire Department**

The Franklin Township Fire Department is committed to providing good service with adequate fire response and life support transit times to the entire community it serves. Similar to other rural areas throughout the Country, finding and retaining volunteers is a critical issue. The Department currently has 12 active firefighters that respond to some 60 calls each year. The mutual aid system with has enabled area companies to work together to serve the larger area. For example, the Luzerne County Tanker Task Force is organized to ensure an adequate water supply is available for rural fires by mobilizing mutual aid companies to respond to fires with other companies providing backup to responding companies.



Franklin Township Fire Department

The fire company operates four trucks - a 1995 KME engine/pumper, a 2002 KME tanker/pumper, a 1986 Chevrolet brush truck and a 1980's mini-pumper. No acquisition of additional or new vehicles is planned. Funding depends on an annual fund drive letter, events, hall rental and Township support.

Franklin-Northmoreland Ambulance Association

The Ambulance Association website notes: *The Franklin - Northmoreland Township Ambulance Association is a group of dedicated individuals who work hard to provide quick and efficient care to the residents of Franklin Township, Northmoreland Township and surrounding municipalities. Ambulance 535 is stationed at the Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Company on Orange Road in Franklin Township. Ambulance 535 covers all of Franklin Township, Luzerne County, Northmoreland Township, Wyoming County, as well as providing mutual aid to surrounding municipalities in Northeast Pennsylvania.*

Ambulance 535 (<http://fntaa.synthasite.com/>)

The Association was formed in 1969 with the first ambulance purchased for \$4,000. The Association is now staffed by some 20 volunteers including 11 Emergency Medical Technicians who provide basic life support. Advanced life support service in Franklin Township is provided by Trans-Med Ambulance, Inc., under contract with the Ambulance Association. The Association now operates with Ambulance 535, a 2002 Freightliner, and an incident command trailer which is used for rehabilitation at fires and as an office for the company. The Association recently put a new ambulance into service at a cost of \$235,000. While the new ambulance will serve for many years, ongoing expenses will include the upgrade of necessary emergency equipment.

The Association operates on funds from memberships, municipalities, donations, grants and billing. Individuals, families and businesses who are members are not required to pay for any charges not covered by insurance. Given the cost of equipment and increasing difficulty of maintaining an adequate number of volunteers, paid ambulance staff appears to be inevitable at some point.

Volunteers

Rural emergency service providers are finding it more and more difficult to find volunteers given the increased demands for training and qualifications. Unfortunately, this is affecting the Franklin Fire Company and other local volunteer companies, and this situation must be monitored along with the need for paid staff. The situation is

a problem in Tafton for firefighters, but is becoming critical for life support services.

- The volunteer organizations are finding it more and more difficult to recruit and retain volunteers.
- Large time commitment required not only for answering calls but for training.
- Individual liability does not appear to be an issue; the *Good Samaritan Law* applies.
- Husband and wife both work in most families which limits volunteer time.
- More and more residents work at jobs out of the area which limits availability for day time response.
- Many young recruits go away to college and do not return.
- Fewer and fewer residents have a direct feeling of connection to the community.
- Generally changing attitudes about volunteering -- more people expect to be paid.
- What to do about volunteers and staffing?
 - Work with the State Office of Fire Prevention and Control to set standards for volunteer firefighter and ambulance personnel which are reasonable for rural areas and which do not discourage volunteer participation.
 - Consider paid staff for emergency services.
 - Regionalize services with a number of paid staff supplemented by volunteers.
 - An adequate pay scale would be critical.
 - Volunteer marketing plan linked to service organizations, schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, etc.
 - Offering EMT and paramedic training in high school.

911 Addressing

The 911 emergency response addressing has been completed in the Township in coordination with Luzerne County.

Emergency Response Actions

Township officials and emergency service organizations have historically maintained good working relationships and the Township has annually provided funding to support emergency services. In addition, the Township receives funding from the state Foreign Fire Insurance Program which is passed through to emergency services providers. Given the increasing demand for services, the high expense of acquiring and maintaining equipment, and the exacting training required for volunteers, the Township Supervisors recognize that providing effective emergency services is an important issue. Ongoing actions include:

- Continue to provide financial support to volunteer emergency services organizations.
- Support efforts to petition the State Office of Fire Prevention and Control to set

Municipal Assistance for Emergency Service Providers

A recent *Pennsylvania Township News* article suggested the following ways in which EMS (and other emergency service providers) can be assisted by municipalities:

- **Find out what they need** - Meet with your EMS provider on a regular basis to find out what the group needs and how the township can help.
- **Put out the call for volunteers** - Advertise for EMS volunteers in your newsletter and on your Web site. Find out if the EMS provider needs administrative volunteers, in addition to medical ones, and try to connect the group with local business people, a CPA, or a bank manager.
- **Offer volunteer incentives** - If the township sponsors recreation programs, special events, or even has a township pool, offer free tickets or a free membership to anyone who volunteers for EMS duty.
- **Help EMS providers with grant searches and grant writing** - Use your own experience securing grants for the township to show EMS providers where to look, such as the state Department of Community and Economic Development and other state and federal agencies. If they're new at grant writing, offer some pointers.
- **Check out purchasing options using state contracts** - Emergency medical equipment is available for purchase through statewide contract. Tell the EMS provider how the system works and also alert them to the availability of state and federal government surplus programs.
- **Consider funding options** - Townships can use the new emergency and municipal services tax to help fund emergency medical services. They can also dedicate up to half a mill of township taxes to such services. Some townships make annual donations to their EMS provider a regular part of the budget, and others participate in special fund raising campaigns.

Source: Pike County Comprehensive Plan, Ch. 18, p. 18.

reasonable standards for volunteer firefighter and ambulance personnel in rural areas.

- Work with the Franklin Township Fire Department and the Franklin-Northmoreland Ambulance Association to maintain adequate staff/volunteers and building and other support equipment and facilities.

Emergency Management

Emergency management planning at the local level is coordinated by the Luzerne County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). County emergency management agencies throughout the Commonwealth receive direction from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Township works with the County EMA, and has appointed an Emergency Management Coordinator who is in the process of updating the Township Emergency Management Plan. Luzerne County is working with Lackawanna County on a joint Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Lackawanna-Luzerne Hazard Mitigation Plan - This plan will evaluate the potential for natural or technological hazards that could affect Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties and determine an approach to manage those hazards. Hazard Mitigation Planning is a process for states and communities to identify policies, activities and tools to implement hazard mitigation actions. Mitigation is any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from a hazard event. This process has four steps: 1. organizing resources; 2. assessing risks; 3. developing a mitigation plan; and 4. implementing the plan and monitoring progress. Actions, as outlined by the Hazard Mitigation Plan, can be structural or nonstructural in nature and can include construction of levees, storm drainage improvements, property acquisition, flood-proofing, natural resource protection, zoning ordinance amendments, land use planning, public awareness and improved emergency service measures, among others. Local governments are required to have approved natural hazard mitigation plans to be eligible for federal hazard mitigation funding. (Source: www.lackawanna-luzerneplans.com/Plans.aspx.)

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling

Planning for solid waste disposal and recycling is a county responsibility as mandated by the State Solid Waste Management Act, and local municipalities are authorized to regulate solid waste disposal by ordinance. In Franklin Township, homeowners and business owners contract with private haulers for the collection and disposal of solid waste, and this has been adequate to meet current needs. Given the adequacy of the current system, the Township has not adopted any regulatory ordinance and no action is planned.

Recycling ranked very high in importance to Franklin Township community survey respondents, but the quality of recycling facilities was rated very low. Recycling drop-off facilities in neighboring municipalities are available to Franklin Township residents, but there may be interest in a facility in the Township. One approach would be for the Board of Supervisors to ask the Township Planning Commission, or an ad hoc committee of interested residents, to work with the Luzerne County Department of Solid Waste Management to evaluate options for recycling in the Township.

Utilities

Electricity in the Township is supplied by UGI Utilities, Inc., telephone service by Frontier Communications Corporation, and cable television, internet and voice connection by Comcast. The Township has adopted a cable franchise ordinance to ensure adequate service in the Township. No other action is proposed.

Water Supply

Groundwater is the source for all potable water in the Township with all homes served by individual wells and the two mobile home parks served by a common water supply and distribution system. No publically-owned water supplies serve any part of the Township and the Township has no plans to provide public water supply facilities.

Respondents to the community survey reported five cases of bacterial contamination of wells which were likely related to isolated conditions such as an unsecured well cap, inadequate well grouting or failing on-site sewage disposal system. In any case, Township officials and the Township Sewage Enforcement Officer are not aware of any continuing groundwater supply or quality problems. Almost 96% of survey respondents support Township action to prevent groundwater contamination and encourage water conservation. (See the discussion about groundwater in the Natural resources Section of this Plan for details about groundwater protection.)

Sewage Disposal

The disposal of wastewater must be addressed by all communities, but especially by a community that relies on groundwater for its potable supply. The volume of wastewater generated is directly related to a community's population and the extent and nature of commercial and residential development. In Franklin Township, wastewater is comprised of sewage, that is, human wastes associated with residential, institutional and retail/service types of commercial development. Given the lack of industrial development in the Township, industrial wastewater disposal is not an issue.

Sewage disposal is one of the most critical factors affecting the future growth and development and quality of life of the Township. Department of Environmental Protection regulations allow for two basic types of sewage treatment and effluent disposal - soil based disposal of effluent including individual, subsurface disposal and spray irrigation; and the discharge of treated effluent to surface waters (i.e. lakes and streams). Solids, following treatment, are either applied to agricultural lands or are disposed of in an approved solid waste landfill.

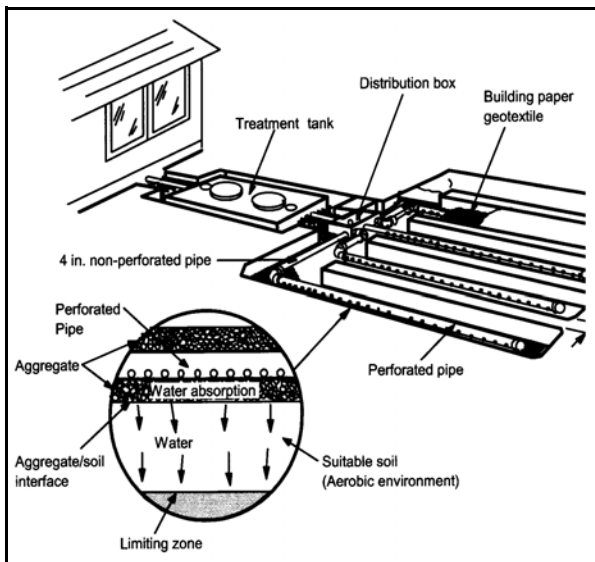
Many soils in the Township have severe limitations for extensive use for land based

sewage effluent disposal. At the same time, surface water quality in the Township is excellent, and its protection is paramount to maintaining the area's rural character and quality of life. Finding a sensible solution within the bounds of current Department of Environmental Protection regulations and the reluctance to rely on a proliferation of treatment plants with stream discharges is a perplexing problem. It is clear that cost-effective and environmentally sound alternatives for sewage disposal must be identified by the scientific community and then must be legitimized by the Department of Environmental Protection via their regulatory process.

On-Lot Sewage Disposal

The primary means of sewage disposal in Franklin Township is the use of a septic tank and subsurface soil disposal of the effluent, which includes both in-ground seepage beds and elevated sand mounds. The Country Village Mobile Home Park is served by a community subsurface disposal system, while the Valley View Mobile Home Park uses a central sewage treatment plant with a stream discharge.

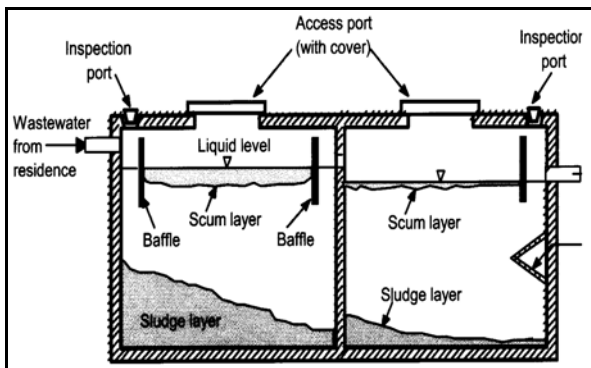
The Township Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) reports that all new systems in the Township have been elevated due to inadequate soil depth for in-ground systems. It is also important to remember that many of the housing units in the Township were constructed prior to the 1970 state enactment of sewage regulations. Nevertheless, the SEO is not aware of any widespread malfunctions and notes that immediate action is taken to correct any reported problems. In addition to the importance of compliance of new systems and correction of malfunctioning systems, is the need to improve existing or develop new institutional arrangements for the monitoring and possible operation of sewage disposal systems. Some communities have initiated municipally-operated on-site sewage disposal management programs, sewage treatment plant inspection and monitoring, and in some cases, municipal acquisition and operation of private sewage treatment plants. County and local municipal efforts should include imploring the Department of Environmental Protection to actively investigate the use of alternative sewage disposal methods to meet the needs of rural municipalities and other unique areas of the state.



On-Lot Sewage System



Sand Mound Under Construction



Typical 2-Compartment Septic Tank



Sewage Disposal Actions

- Continue to monitor the functioning of existing on-lot sewage disposal systems and order corrections when malfunctions occur.
- Continue to ensure that all new on-lot systems meet DEP regulations.
- Consider an on-lot sewage system management program, particularly in areas where malfunctions are occurring or are likely to occur (e.g., poor soils, concentrated numbers of small residential lots).
- Encourage DEP to actively investigate the use of alternative sewage disposal methods to meet the needs of municipalities in high quality and exceptional value watersheds.



(www.backmountainlibrary.org)

Public Libraries

Libraries play an important role in the community by making information available to all residents. Libraries supplement school libraries for students, provide life-long learning opportunities for adults, and offer special services such as interlibrary loan, books by mail and children's reading programs, and in more recent years, Internet access. The Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code authorizes townships to contribute to public libraries, and Franklin Township makes an annual contribution to the Back Mountain Memorial Library in Dallas Borough.

Community Facilities for New Development

A critical concern for any community is the provision of adequate facilities for new development. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code establishes the authority for local governments to require developers to provide adequate community facilities for their particular project. Via the subdivision and land development ordinance, roads, central water supply, central sewage disposal, storm water control and other facilities, must either be installed or be financially guaranteed prior to the sale of any lots in the development.

It is critical that the Township carefully enforce the subdivision and land development ordinance, and continue to update it to ensure that roads, drainage and other community facilities are installed to standards which will result in quality, durable facilities.

Community Facility and Service Priorities

A common theme in this *Comprehensive Plan* is the need for local municipalities to set priorities for the use of resources in meeting community needs and resident expectations. Concurrently, immediate community needs and resident expectations must be balanced with local officials' long term view of the future of the community and the costs of action or non-action in providing or postponing facilities and services. Based on this tenet, the Township will focus local municipal resources on those facilities and services traditionally provided by small municipalities and those important to residents. When asked about spending Township tax receipts to improve or initiate specific facilities and services typically provided by township government, road improvements and recycling were the only two with a majority of respondents favoring increased spending. (See the *Township Tax Money Spending Table*.)

Township Roads - Road maintenance now accounts for much of the municipal budget and this will continue to be a primary role of the Township.

Emergency Services - The Township will work with the volunteer organizations to maintain and improve emergency services.

Police Protection - Regional solutions or contracting for police service will be explored when the need dictates and financial resources permit.

Recycling - Recycling will be explored in cooperation with the Luzerne County department of Solid Waste Management.

(See the Land Use Section for open space conservation and the Natural Resource Protection Section for water quality.)

23. To what extent would you favor spending your Township tax money for each of the following services and facilities? Create Chart Download				
	Decrease	Continue As Is	Add or Increase	Response Count
A. Acquire land/conservation easements for open space	9.2% (11)	55.8% (67)	35.0% (42)	120
B. Building and zoning permit services	10.8% (13)	82.5% (99)	6.7% (8)	120
C. Emergency medical service	3.1% (4)	52.3% (67)	44.5% (57)	128
D. Fire protection	2.3% (3)	51.9% (67)	45.7% (59)	129
E. Improve water quality of lakes and streams	2.4% (3)	52.8% (65)	44.7% (55)	123
F. Police protection	2.4% (3)	49.2% (62)	48.4% (61)	126
G. Recreation facilities	9.7% (12)	54.0% (67)	36.3% (45)	124
H. Recycling	1.6% (2)	45.3% (58)	53.1% (68)	128
I. Township road improvements	1.6% (2)	45.1% (55)	53.3% (65)	122
			answered question	131
			skipped question	4

Township Tax Money Spending

Intermunicipal Cooperation

The Township will also explore ways to cooperate with Luzerne County and other municipalities, and particularly the Back Mountain Community Partnership, to manage growth and development in the area as the best means for minimizing community impacts, using municipal resources for facilities and services, and maintaining a quality lifestyle.

Taxing Authority

The Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code establishes the maximum rate for real estate taxes which may be levied, setting the maximum annual rate at fourteen mills. One levied mill equals one dollar of property tax on one thousand dollars of assessed value. Upon approval of the County Court of Common Pleas, a township may increase the millage as much as five mills for general purposes to meet the needs of an approved budget. The Code also permits townships to assess additional real estate tax millage for special purposes such as fire protection, municipal building construction, road maintenance equipment, recreation and street lighting. Municipalities in Pennsylvania are also authorized, under the Local Tax Enabling Act (Act 511) to levy a number of other taxes including income, per capita, mercantile license, business privilege, amusement, local services, occupation, and mechanical devices. (See *Taxes Authorized for Second Class Townships Sidebar*.)

Other Revenue Sources

In addition to the funds generated by local taxes, municipalities receive a variety of funds from the state, including for example, various grants such as the Dirt and Gravel Road Program, payments in-lieu of taxes on state forest and game lands, Public Utility Realty Tax Act funds, alcoholic beverage license receipts, certain fines collected by the State Police, and State Liquid Fuels Highway Aid Fund allocations. The Liquid Fuels allocation, based on the local municipal population and road miles, is generally the largest annual amount of state funds received by a municipality. The funds must be used for road maintenance and construction, and must be maintained in an account separate from the municipality’s general funds.

Franklin Township Revenue/Expenditure

Franklin Township operates on an annual general fund budget of approximately \$320,000 with most revenue raised by taxes. The balance of annual revenues is from a variety of sources such as the cable television franchise, cell tower royalty, state Foreign Fire Insurance receipts, grants and charges for services.

- real estate: \$ 70,000
 - per capita: \$ 5,000
 - real estate transfer: \$ 7,000
 - earned income: \$ 100,000
 - local services: \$ 1,500
- Total: \$ 183,500

Roads comprise the greatest proportion of expenditures in the Township. The higher level of spending on roads is not uncommon in less populated townships where road maintenance and improvement have historically been a principal governmental responsibility. General government expenses, such as the costs of administration and associated salaries and building maintenance, and insurance account for most of the other expenditures. Other expenditures include such items as pass through funds such as the Foreign Fire Insure which is passed on to the Fire department and grants which are paid for special projects, along with general fund contributions to the Fire Department and Ambulance Association, and code enforcement expenses.

- road maintenance: \$ 112,000
 - admin/general govt: \$ 55,000
 - insurance: \$ 45,000
- Total: \$ 212,000

Second Class Townships

Potential Tax Sources	Legal Limit ¹	Citation
General Purpose Tax Levies		
Real Estate	14 mills ²	53 P.S. 68205
Act 511 Taxes		53 P.S. 6901
Per Capita	\$10 ³	
Occupation (Flat Rate) ⁴	\$10 ³	
Occupation (Millage) ⁴	no limit	
Occupational Privilege	\$10 ³	
Earned Income	1 percent ³	
Realty Transfer	1 percent ³	
Mechanical Devices	10 percent ³	
Amusement ⁵	10 percent ³	
Business Gross Receipts ⁶	1 mill wholesale ³ 1½ mills retail ³ no limit other businesses	
Act 24 Earned Income ⁴	set by referendum	53 P.S. 6927.1
Special Purpose Taxes		
Municipal Building	½ general rate	53 P.S. 68205
Firehouses and Equipment	3 mills ⁷	53 P.S. 68205
Recreation	no limit	53 P.S. 68205
Debt Service	no limit	53 P.S. 68205
Permanent Improvement Fund	5 mills	53 P.S. 68205
Road Machinery Fund	2 mills	53 P.S. 68205
Library	no limit	24 P.S. 4401
Ambulance and Rescue Squads	½ mill ⁷	53 P.S. 68205
Fire Hydrants for Township	2 mills	53 P.S. 68205
Street Lights for Township	5 mills	53 P.S. 68205
Debt Payment ⁸	no limit	53 P.S. 68205
Open Space (real estate or earned income) ⁹	set by voters	32 P.S. 5007.1
Community Colleges	(10)	24 P.S. 19-1909-A
Distressed Pension System Recovery Program	no limit	53 P.S. 895.607(f)
Municipalities Financial Recovery Program ⁸	no limit	53 P.S. 11701.123(c)

- Home rule townships may set rates higher than the limits provided in state law for property taxes and for personal taxes levied on residents. They may not create new subjects of taxation
- Five additional mills available with court approval.
- Maximum rate subject to sharing with school district.
- If a municipality raises the rate of the earned income tax through a referendum authorized by Act 24 of 2001, it can not levy an occupation tax.
- For taxes first levied after December 31, 1997, maximum rate is 5 percent.
- Only if enacted before December 1, 1988.
- Higher rate may be approved by voters in referendum.
- Levied only on court order.
- Requires approval of voters in referendum.
- Local sponsors may levy any tax permitted by law to support a community college. Revenues from the tax cannot exceed 5 mills of the market value of real estate.

Taxes Authorized for Second Class Townships (Source: *Taxation Manual*, 8th Edition, October 2002, PA DCED.)

(Note: The Occupational Privilege tax is now the Local Services Tax, \$52 limit.)

Demand for Facilities and Services

Increased spending for additional facilities and services must be assessed in terms of the total local tax burden (township, county, and school district) and the real need and demand. The demand for increased levels of normal facilities and services is often associated with a dramatic increase in residential development. Concurrently, the assessed valuation would be increasing, which could partially offset the need for an increase in millage. However, studies have shown that residential development generates the need for more public expenditures than it does tax receipts to cover such costs. The School District's perspective is the most obvious example; an increase in population and number of school children would directly result in increased costs.

Revenue Potential

The greatest potential for raising increased revenue is with the real estate tax. The recent property reassessment conducted by Luzerne County resulted in a tax rate adjustment in the Township to 0.55 mills as required by state law to keep real estate tax revenue in line with prior years. In the long term, the millage could be raised to the maximum of 14 mills. Based on the current taxable assessed valuation of some \$130,700,000 one mill of assessment would raise \$130,700.

Future Spending

Given the overall tax burden on Township residents and the current national economy, the Board of Supervisors intend to limit any tax increases to those required to maintain the existing level of facilities and services unless resident demand for such service is clear or additional funds are required to maintain the service, paid staff for emergency services for example. The Supervisors will also use grants to the extent available.

Continued careful financial management, setting spending priorities, and planning for necessary capital expenditures are critical. A capital budget with earmarked reserve funds is an invaluable tool for anticipating and funding large expenditures such as equipment, buildings and parks, and the Township should develop a budget for any such expenditures. This Comprehensive Plan will serve to identify and prioritize community facility and service needs which can be incorporated into financial planning and budgeting. The Plan can also strengthen grant applications for specific facilities. Finally, the Township must continue to work with other municipalities on providing facilities and services to use area wide resources most efficiently.

Capital Improvements Program

Along with land use control ordinances, a formal capital improvements program (CIP) is a primary tool for the implementation of a comprehensive plan. Although not legally binding, the CIP includes and establishes a time frame for the long-term capital expenditures planned by a municipality. A capital expenditure may be defined as an outlay of municipal funds to purchase, improve or construct a piece of equipment or a facility that is expected to provide service over a long period of time. Typically, a capital expenditure is relatively large when compared to normal operating expenditures included in the budget. Examples include the construction of, or major improvements, to buildings, land acquisition, recreation facilities, highway improvements, and vehicle purchases. In short, the CIP is a budgeting device to guide the allocation of non-operating funds, and to avoid the unexpected mid-year expenditure of large sums.

Informal v. Formal

Many local officials think in terms of a capital improvements program in the more informal terms of simply setting aside funds for anticipated large expenditures. Township Supervisors know what they need, how much it costs, and if the municipality can afford it. While this is certainly one technique in planning for community facilities and services, a more formal approach with an adopted, written CIP has certain advantages. *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, published

by the International City Management Association, identifies the following benefits of an effective CIP:

- Ensures that plans for community facilities are accomplished.
- Provides an adopted plan that continues even if local officials change.
- Allows improvement proposals to be evaluated against established policies and the comprehensive plan.
- Enables the scheduling of improvements requiring more than one year to construct.
- Provides the opportunity for the purchase of needed land before costs increase.
- Encourages long range financial planning and management.
- Provides for sensible scheduling of improvements.
- Offers the opportunity for public participation in decision making.
- Leads to improved overall municipal management.

<u>SAMPLE</u> FUND PROJECTION AND CAPITAL BUDGET						
GENERAL FUND PROJECTION	YEAR					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Projected general fund revenue	\$200,000	\$210,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$260,000	\$275,000
Projected general fund expenditures	\$160,000	\$168,000	\$175,000	\$205,000	\$215,000	\$250,000
Projected Net Funds Available	\$40,000	\$42,000	\$50,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$25,000
CAPITAL BUDGET						
Township Park - land acquisition, engineering, construction, and debt service. \$300,000 over 20 years beginning in 2006	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Road Improvement - right-of-way acquisition, engineering, construction, and debt service. \$200,000 over 10 years beginning in 2008.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Total New Capital Expenditures	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Net New Financing Required* Equals Total New Capital Expenditures <u>Minus</u> Projected Net Funds Available	(\$40,000)	(\$27,000)	(\$35,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	\$10,000
* Parentheses indicate available funds exceed new capital expenditures.						

Prioritization of Municipal Needs

In developing a CIP a municipality must prioritize its capital needs based on planning findings, and the CIP establishes commitment for public investment in accord with the specific goals and objectives included in the comprehensive plan. *The Practice of Local Government Planning* suggests one method is for a community to divide its needs into three categories: essential, desirable and deferrable. In prioritizing needs, municipal officials must also consider the revenue side of the equation. Needed capital expenditure can only be made by identifying anticipated revenues in terms of

other operating expenditures. In other words, the costs of scheduled capital expenditures must be evaluated in terms of acquiring the necessary revenue to fund the improvements. In any case, the CIP is, by necessity, an on-going process which must be reevaluated annually, with a planning period of six years being typical.

A variety of CIP techniques are available and the process can be very complex in larger municipalities. A more simplified approach is certainly more appropriate for Franklin Township where capital needs are more manageable. A sample is provided in the *Sample Fund Projection and Capital Budget* on the previous page. In any case, the costs of operation and maintenance of new facilities and equipment must also be considered for inclusion in annual budgets. The principal anticipated direct capital expenditures for the Township identified by this *Plan* are outlined below in terms of essential, desirable, and deferrable to provide the foundation for formal capital improvements programming.

**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP NEEDS
EQUIPMENT, BUILDINGS AND
OTHER FACILITIES**

Essential

- replace trucks and equipment as needed
- road paving

Desirable

- implement park master plan

Deferrable

- improve/enlarge township office

NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Franklin Township’s natural landscape is comprised of agricultural land, orchards and forest land interspersed with increasing numbers of residences and limited small commercial establishments. This landscape gives the Township its distinctive character and has been an integral part of its unique history attracting its early farming settlers and later residents who work primarily in nearby urban areas. The Township has long been blessed with an abundance of natural resources - agricultural soils, clean water, forests, and wildlife - providing a high quality of life for many years.

Although the farm land and forest land is extensive, the natural resources and environmental quality of the Township are very fragile. Clean plentiful water, pure air, open space, vegetation and wildlife can be irreparably damaged by development undertaken without concern for the natural environment and careful planning and land use control. As the area continues to grow, it is incumbent upon the Township to work to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of its residents, as well as the identity and heritage of the community. Natural resource protection is a necessary step in accomplishing this task.

The Plan

Protection of natural resources is an important issue as expressed by Township residents. The *Natural Resource Protection Plan* addresses concerns related to land and water resources. It is intended to introduce contemporary conservation and management practices to derive the maximum benefit for the health and safety of Township residents and visitors.

NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Natural Resources Goal:

Conserve natural resources and open space and use the resources in a way to sustain the area’s economy, including maintaining agriculture and forestry as an integral part of the local landscape and economy.

Without careful planning and management, the use of the natural resources and sensitive environmental areas in the Township can lead to the decline of community character and the quality lifestyle it affords, with eventual direct threats to the environment and public health and safety. Of special concern are lakes, streams, ground water, forest and soil resources. If the quality of the area’s natural resources are diminished, the quality of life and the local economy will suffer.

The purpose of conservation: *The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time.*
- Gifford Pinchot

I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use our natural resources, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.
- Theodore Roosevelt

If we learn, finally, that what we need to “manage” is not the land so much as ourselves in the land, we will have turned the history of American land-use on its head.
- Gaylord Nelson, Founder of Earth Day

OBJECTIVES:

- Agriculture and Forestry** **Promote the long term sustainability of agriculture and forestry.**
- Include soil erosion and sedimentation and stormwater control provisions in the Township zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance.
 - Encourage landowners to use agricultural best management practices and use the technical service available from the Luzerne County Conservation District, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
 - Encourage landowners to participate in the *Agricultural Security Program*, and the *Agricultural Preservation Program* for purchase of easements being developed by Luzerne County.
 - Encourage the use of *Act 319 Clean and Green* and other tax incentive programs as a means of forestalling development.
 - Do not overly restrict agriculture and forestry enterprises with unnecessary zoning and other regulations.
 - Evaluate more progressive means of open land preservation aimed at agricultural land preservation including agriculture protection zoning, conservation subdivision design, purchase of easements, and transfer of development rights, especially in cooperation with conservancy and land trust organizations.
 - Economic Development - Encourage local economic development groups to make the use of local agriculture and forest products an integral part of all promotion efforts.
- Conservation and Sensitive Natural Areas** **Conserve open land, including those areas containing unique and sensitive natural features such as woodlands, steep slopes, streams, flood plains and wetlands, by setting them aside from development.**
- Identification Identify sensitive natural areas such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, steep slopes, poor soils and flood plains, and adopt regulations to protect such areas by requiring resource sensitive development.
 - Critical Resource Areas - Promote the conservation of open space within the Township and the County and actively promote the long-term preservation and maintenance of valuable natural resource areas through public negotiated acquisition, private dedication of easements, and other cooperative efforts.
 - Land Use Ordinances - Evaluate and develop land use ordinances in terms of effects on natural resources with the goal of maintaining open space to the greatest extent possible while allowing a reasonable density of development.
 - Development Incentives - Implement adopted municipal policies to conserve a variety of irreplaceable and environmentally sensitive resource lands, including provisions for reasonable incentives to create a greenway and trail system for the benefit of present and future residents.

- Conservation Design - Use *conservation subdivision design* to cluster residential development away from important natural, historic, scenic and cultural features, and preserve the resulting open space.
- Transferrable Development Rights - Use transferrable development rights to direct development to locations with adequate infrastructure and enable conservation-minded landowners to preserve their properties.
- Area Wide Cooperation - Coordinate environmental preservation efforts with neighboring jurisdictions, and establish an action plan targeting environmental concerns that require a regional approach.

**Water Supply/Quality;
Surface Water Quality**

Protect the supply and quality of drinking water and protect surface water quality.

- E & S Control - Reduce erosion and sedimentation by requiring compliance with DEP regulations
- Stormwater - Adopt an up to date stormwater ordinance to control runoff through the use of best management practices.
- Water Quality - Consider the impacts of residential and nonresidential development on water quantity and quality and encourage the use of best management practices.
- Sewage Disposal - Monitor the effectiveness of on-lot sewage disposal systems and evaluate central sewage disposal as a means of correcting any widespread problems.
- Buffers - Establish setbacks/buffers for streams, lakes and wetlands.
- Well Ordinance - Apply well construction standards with a well ordinance in areas not served by community water supply.
- Community Water Supplies - Apply well head protection standards to maintain good drinking water quality.

Wildlife Habitat

Protect critical wildlife habitat areas.

- Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory - Protect sites of rare, threatened, and endangered species as identified in the Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Forest - Conserve large forested areas that provide habitat.
- Corridors - Protect wildlife corridors, consisting of networked open space areas and stream corridors.

Ridge Lines/Scenic View

Conserve ridge lines and scenic view sheds.

- Development Standards - Consider measures that will preserve the characteristics of important ridge lines and scenic view sheds by limiting the amount and type of clearing associated with development and controlling the location of buildings.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

The discussion of existing conditions provides an inventory of the Township's natural features, issues related to their current state, and protections afforded by the Township and other regulatory agencies. The inventory includes physiography, topography, and geology; soils; forest and vegetative cover; watersheds, streams and lakes; wetlands; floodplain; and critical habitat. The assessment of existing conditions forms the basis of future planning policy recommendations and implementation strategies. The various elements of the natural environment must be conserved because the environment has a finite, limited capacity for development. And, given the interrelationship of all elements of the environment, a change in one element will result in an often unexpected effect on another element.

Physiography and Topography

The natural features of Franklin Township are a direct result of its geological past. Bedrock geology and glacial geology are key factors affecting the natural environment and development pattern of Franklin Township by providing the base for the formation of soils. Franklin Township lies in the Appalachian Plateaus Province, one of the major physiographic divisions of the Commonwealth. See the *Physiographic Provinces of Pennsylvania Figure* on the following page.¹ More specifically, Franklin Township is part of the Glaciated Low Plateau Section which *includes an area of diversified topography in northeastern Pennsylvania. The topography consists of rounded hills and broad to narrow valleys all of which have been modified by glacial erosion and deposition. Swamps and peat bogs are common in the eastern part of the Section. The Section reflects the interplay between bedrock of various types, mainly sandstones and siltstones, and glacial erosion and deposition. The more erosion-resistant rocks form the hills, while the less erosion-resistant rocks occur in the valleys. Glacial deposits, mainly glacial till or sand and gravel, may occur anywhere, but are found mainly in the valley bottoms and margins.*²

Franklin Township's topography can be characterized as rolling with significant elevation changes from the tops of ridges to the stream valleys. Elevations in the Township range from 1,500 feet on the hilltops at the western tip and in the southern section of the Township, up to 1,000 feet on other hilltops, down to 850 feet where Sutton Creek flows into Exeter Township (Luzerne County).

Planning Implications: Steep Slopes

Most of the Township falls below the steep slope threshold, so steep slopes are not significant in terms of limiting overall development. Nevertheless, disturbance of steep slopes and vegetation alters topography and drainage, contributes to slope instability and erosion, and the increased stormwater runoff diminishes groundwater recharge and exacerbates flooding, so development on steep slopes should be regulated. Although development on steep slopes is technically feasible, development costs increase dramatically as the slope increases, and the environmental concerns also escalate. For example, soil erosion control and stormwater management are more difficult on steep slopes because rainfall run-off volume and velocity increase. Measures are needed to maintain slope stability, prevent erosion, and ensure a safe and adequate groundwater supply

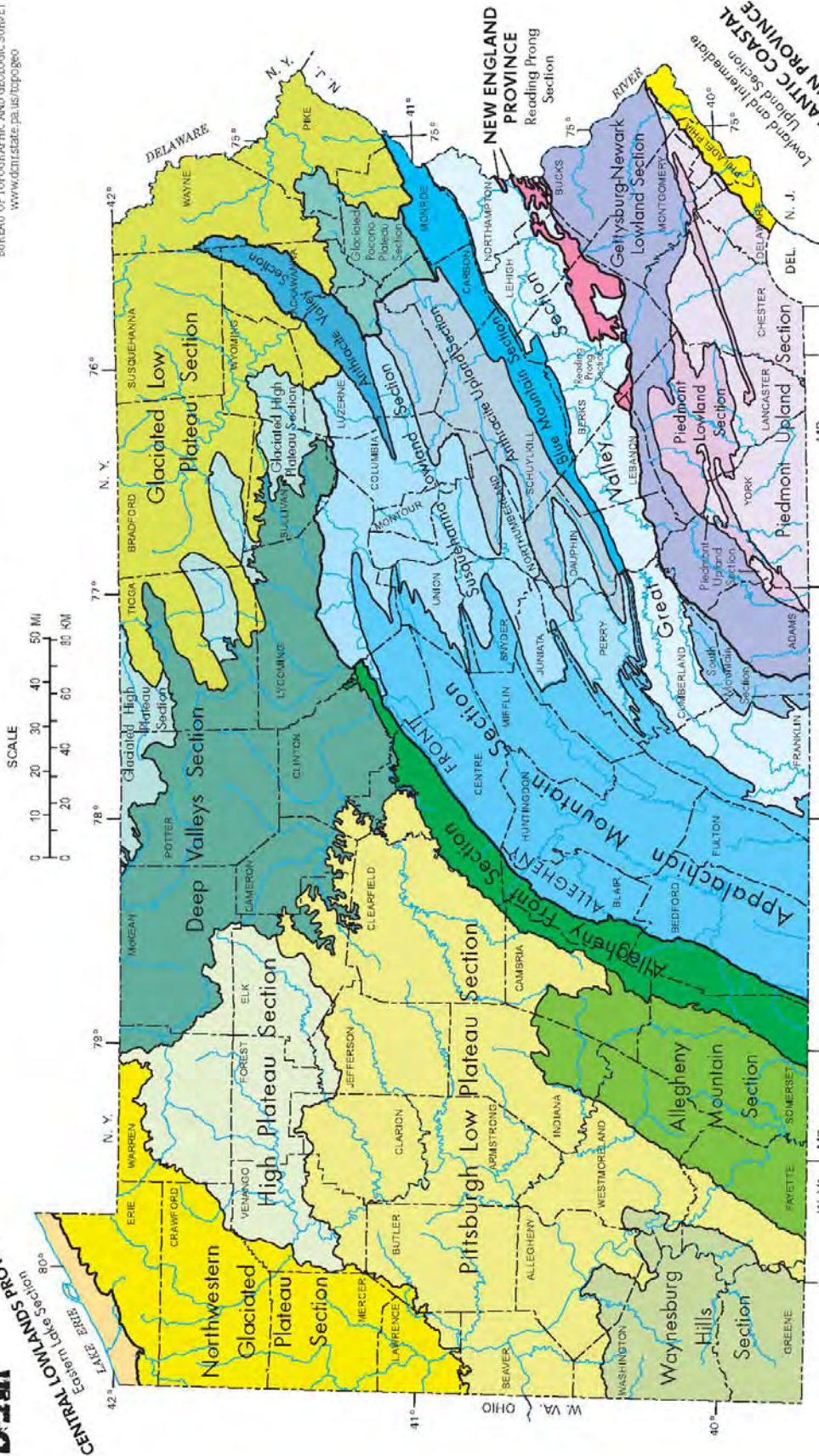
¹www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo/maps/map13f.pdf.

²www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo/map13/13glps.aspx.

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES OF PENNSYLVANIA

MAP 13

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
BUREAU OF TOPOGRAPHIC AND GEOLOGIC SURVEY
www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo



SYMBOLS

Approximate boundary between physiographic provinces

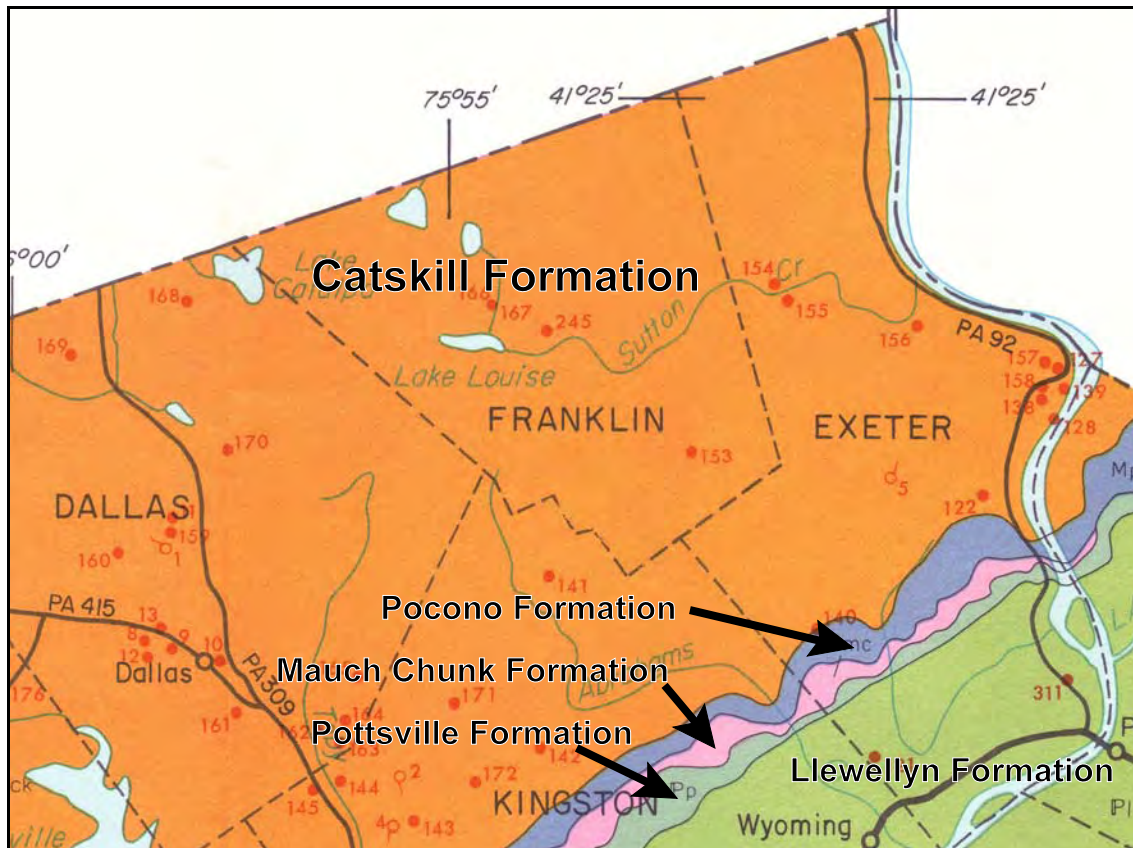
Approximate boundary between physiographic provinces

EXPLANATION

Province	Section	Color
CENTRAL LOWLANDS PROVINCE	Eastern Glaciated Plateau Section	Light Yellow
	Northwestern Glaciated Plateau Section	Yellow
	High Plateau Section	Light Green
	Low Plateau Section	Light Yellow-Green
APPALACHIAN PLATEAUS PROVINCE	High Plateau Section	Light Green
	Deep Valleys Section	Green
	Allegheny Mountain Section	Dark Green
	Allegheny Front Section	Light Green
RIDGE AND VALLEY PROVINCE	Appalachian Mountain Section	Light Blue
	Susquehanna Upland Section	Blue
	Antietam Valley Section	Light Blue
	Blue Mountain Section	Blue
PIEDMONT PROVINCE	Gaithersburg-Newark Upland Section	Light Purple
	Piedmont Lowland Section	Light Purple
	Piedmont Upland Section	Light Purple
	Reading Prong Section	Light Purple
ATLANTIC COASTAL PLAIN PROVINCE	Lowland and Intermediate Upland Section	Yellow
	Lowland Section	Yellow
	Intermediate Upland Section	Yellow
	Upland Section	Yellow

Compiled by W. D. Sevon, Fourth Edition, 2000.

In terms of the use of on-site sewage disposal systems, many areas are relatively flat and present no slope limitations. Nevertheless, steep slopes throughout the Township present a problem for the installation of conventional on-site sewage disposal systems, and in the case of steeper slopes, preclude even the use of elevated sand mounds. In accord with DEP regulations, on-site, subsurface sewage disposal systems require special engineering design on slopes over eight percent and are entirely prohibited if the slope exceeds twelve percent. The undulating topography, along with the often shallow bedrock, will also be a cost consideration in any areas proposed for the use of sewage collection and treatment systems, requiring the use of pump stations in lieu of gravity for collection and conveyance of sewage.



Geology Map (Water Resources Report 44, Groundwater Resources of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.)

NOTE: Much of the information on geology and groundwater contained in this Plan was taken from the Pennsylvania Geological Survey Water Resources Report 44, Groundwater Resources of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, published in 1977 which should be consulted for more details.

Geology and Hydrology

Geology is a fundamental natural feature because it shapes all other features including topography, soils, vegetation, and hydrology. The physical characteristics and geographic patterns exhibited by these features are in large part a result of underlying geologic formations and processes along with the more recent glaciation. The specific characteristics of the underlying bedrock and other geologic strata determine the quality and quantity of the ground water.

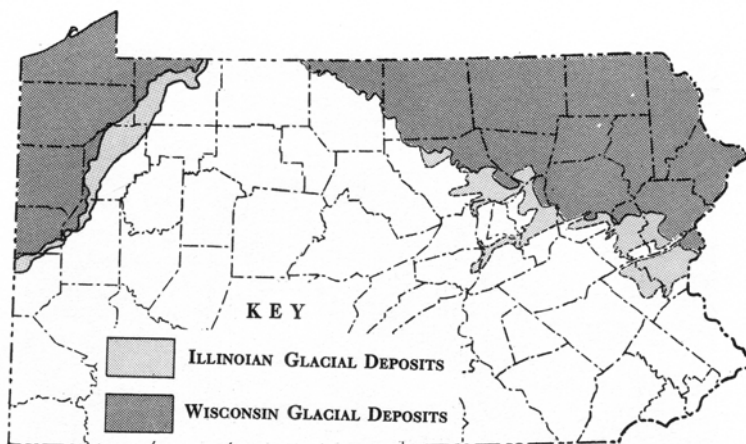
The geology of the Township and the region is characterized as follows:

- Franklin Township is underlain primarily by bedrock of the Devonian System which are some 350 to 400 million years old, including bedrock comprised of the the Catskill Formation.
- The Catskill Formation is some 1,800 feet thick and is comprised of shale, claystone, siltstone, sandstone and conglomerate – finer grain rock predominates in the lower half.
- Surficial deposits, that is, those materials lying on top of the bedrock, have accumulated by a number of natural processes including weathering by water, temperature fluctuation, plant and animal activity and wind, hydraulic activity of flowing streams, downward movement of materials on steep slopes, glaciation, and the accumulation of organic materials in ponds and lakes which eventually formed peat and muck.
- Surface deposits from the glaciers cover substantial areas of the Township and depending on thickness, can yield adequate supplies of water.
- Water in the Catskill Formation is typically abundant in supply with an average yield of 20 gallons per minute and the water is soft and of good quality, but may be locally salty.

Glaciers in Luzerne County

The glaciation in Luzerne County has had considerable effect on the soils and groundwater water supply by depositing varying depths of overburden on the underlying rock formations.

The effect of the glaciers cannot be overemphasized. *Because of their great thickness, the pressure at the base of the ice sheets was very great. As the ice moved along with pieces of rock it had picked up, it scraped the soil off the bedrock, scoured and scratched the exposed rock, and pressed itself down into valleys, cutting them sometimes to great depths. The material picked up and carried or pushed along by the ice, later to be deposited as till or outwash, was moved in some cases for hundreds of miles. Rocks picked up in Canada were mixed with rocks picked up in New York State and these in turn were mixed with rocks picked up in Pennsylvania. In deposits of glacial material in Pennsylvania, you will find many different kinds of rock and many types which do not occur in Pennsylvania. Igneous rocks, such as granite, that have come great distances, may be found. Pieces of copper ore, nickel ore, and even diamonds have been found in glacial deposits and none of these occur in the bedrock near where they were found in the glacial deposits. The ice, in moving south, overrode forests in some places and it is not unusual to find fossil wood mixed with the base of the till.*³



Glacial Deposits in Pennsylvania (Source: *Pennsylvania and the Ice Age*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1962.)

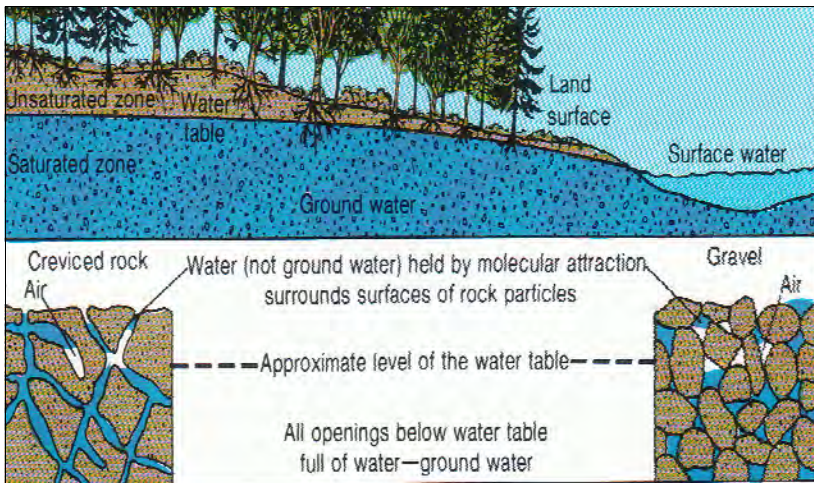
³*Pennsylvania and the Ice Age*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1962, p. 16.

Glacial Deposits

Much of Franklin Township is covered by material deposited by the Wisconsin Glacier. While these deposits typically yield groundwater of good quality and more than adequate supply, the rapid percolation rates can result in groundwater contamination. Olean Till, the most common surface deposit, is found primarily on lower slopes and stream valleys with depths of 6 to 200 feet. This unsorted and non-stratified mixture of clay, silt, sand, pebbles, cobbles and boulders is reported as a good aquifer with a median yield of 28/gal/min for domestic wells.

Groundwater

Groundwater is that subsurface water in the saturated zone - the zone in which all the spaces or interstices in the rocks, ideally, are filled with water under pressure equal to or greater than atmospheric pressure. Rocks that are capable of yielding usable supplies of water to wells or springs are called aquifers. Ground water occurs in joints, bedding planes, fault and other fractures in the rock. The extent to which the rock is fractured, its density and size will all contribute to its ability to store and move water. In unconsolidated rock, water is stored and moves through the openings in these deposits. In consolidated rock aquifers, water moves primarily through fractures, joints and along bedding planes.



Water Bearing Geology

Franklin Township residents rely entirely on groundwater for domestic water supply, with most of the supply pumped from deep wells. The Township is served by wells sited on individual lots or by community or private water companies. Based on available studies and with long term consumption primarily residential and commercial, and large areas of undeveloped land for recharge, it appears that the overall supply of groundwater in the Township and all of Luzerne County should be adequate to sustain development and meet the needs of the foreseeable future.

Groundwater Recharge

Franklin Township and Pike County lie in the same Glaciated Low Plateau Section of the Appalachian Plateaus Province and share the Catskill Formation geology. *Water Resources Report 65, Groundwater Resources of Pike County, Pennsylvania* concludes that the average groundwater recharge rate in Pike County is 915,000gallons per day per square mile.⁴ While the report is specific to Pike County, the data, along with that in the *Groundwater Recharge Rates Sidebar* provides a measure for the Township.

Most groundwater in the Township moves from upland and hillside recharge areas down gradient with discharge to streams. Alluvial and glacial deposits are also good recharge areas. Comparison of this recharge rate to the volumes of groundwater extracted for residential and commercial use, the only significant water uses in the Township, suggests adequate groundwater supply, although cones of depression can extend a few thousand feet from heavily pumped wells during the summer.

⁴Water Resources Report 65, *Groundwater Resources of Pike County, Pennsylvania*, Pennsylvania Topographic and Geologic Survey, D. K. Davis, 1989, p. 10.

**Recharge
in the Planning Area**

Given the total land area of 12.9 square miles, average groundwater recharge in the Township, using a conservative factor of 70% undeveloped land, is estimated to range from 6,800,000 to 9,000,000 gallons per day. Engineers typically use an estimate of 250 gallons per day per dwelling unit when designing water systems and, applying this factor to the number of dwelling units in the Township, almost 750, yields an estimated 187,500 gallons per day in residential water use. Commercial and agricultural water use would add additional amounts, but the total is well below the estimated recharge rate.

Groundwater Recharge Rates

In 1989, the Pennsylvania Topographic and Geologic Survey estimates in *Water Resources Report 65, Groundwater Resources of Pike County, Pennsylvania*, that in Pike County the average groundwater discharge is estimated to be about 635 (gal/min)/mi², twice the amount estimated for most areas of Pennsylvania. Based on this, groundwater recharge in Pike County is about 900,000 gallons per day per square mile of land area.

In 1964, the U.S. Geological Survey reported that a conservative estimate for recharge in the Highlands of the Delaware River Basin was 750,000 gpd/sq mi. (*Water Resources of the Delaware River Basin*, Geological Survey Professional Paper 381, U.S. Department of the Interior, Parker, Garald G, et. al., 1964, p. 91.)

In 1982, a Delaware River Basin study of the Upper Delaware Basin reported:

- a recharge rate of about 1,000,000 gpd/sq mi for the Upper Pocono Plateau. (*Special Groundwater Study of the Upper Delaware River Basin Study Area III, Volume I*, Delaware River Basin Commission, Wright Associates, R.E., 1982, p. 3-10.)
- normal year recharge rates in the Upper and Lower Pocono Plateaus range from 900,000 to 1,000,000 gpd/sq mi and during a normal year, recharge to the Catskill formation, which underlies Pike County, is about 930,000 gpd/sq mi. (*Special Groundwater Study of the Upper Delaware River Basin Study Area III, Volume II*, Delaware River Basin Commission, Wright Associates, R.E., 1982, p. 8-3.)

Withdrawal Regulation

Municipalities in Pennsylvania cannot regulate the quantity of water use, but can require developers to assess effects on groundwater supplies and require developers to address the effects. The PA Safe Drinking Water Act enables state review of withdrawal impacts and the PA Water Resources Planning Act requires the registration of withdrawals of 10,000 gallons per day. Consumptive uses of 20,000 gallons per day and withdrawals of 10,000 gallons per day must be approved by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission.

**Planning Implications:
Need for Conservation**

An adequate overall supply is no reason for residents and local officials to ignore the important issues of localized groundwater supplies and groundwater conservation. This is particularly important as development occurs. Wells near large water uses can be drawn down resulting in inadequate supply. Increases in impervious areas such as buildings, driveways and roads inevitably leads to more stormwater runoff and less groundwater recharge. In addition, given the characteristics of aquifers, development in the region can also effect local groundwater availability and result in greater potential for contamination. Simply stated, groundwater availability is a regional issue and adequate supply is not a valid reason for postponing or avoiding action to ensure continued adequate supply.

Land Use and Water Quality and Quantity

Surface water and groundwater quality and quantity can be affected by land use in the following ways:

- Large amounts of sediment can enter streams from farms and construction sites, and pollutants can wash off lawns, parking lots, and industrial properties.
- Removing vegetation adjacent to streams (riparian buffers) can increase stream bank erosion, raise water temperature, and allow non-point source pollutants to enter the stream.
- Channelizing streams during development can result in stream bank erosion and increase flooding and siltation problems downstream.
- Solvents and other liquids associated with non-residential development can leak or be spilled onto the ground, and eventually reach the groundwater.
- Homeowners who dispose of toxic household cleaners, pesticides, oil and other similar products can cause surface water and groundwater contamination as well.
- Failing on-lot sewage disposal systems can allow partially treated sewage to reach surface or ground water.
- Groundwater recharge can be hindered as impervious surfaces increase with development.
- Stormwater systems that remove stormwater quickly from a site and direct it into nearby streams reduce the amount of precipitation that infiltrates the ground (and eventually the underlying aquifers) and increases stream bank erosion and downstream flooding.

Source: *Upper Hanover Township Comprehensive Plan*, 1994, Montgomery County Planning Commission.

Planning Implications: Groundwater Quality

No less important is the issue of water quality. No significant groundwater contamination problems have been reported in the Township. However, the potential for groundwater contamination is always present. Bacterial contamination can occur from malfunctioning on-lot sewage systems or poor livestock husbandry, hydrocarbons can eventually reach groundwater from oil spills or leaking storage tanks, and nitrates and chloride can infiltrate as run-off from roads and parking lots, sewage systems, and farm fields. Similar to supply conservation, quality protection is important.

Given the reliance on groundwater for domestic purposes, in combination with the extensive use of on-site disposal systems, it is vital that groundwater quality be carefully monitored throughout the Township and region. Proper siting, design, installation and maintenance of on-site disposal systems and water supply wells, and groundwater quality, should continue to be a municipal concern and proper land use controls should be applied to protect groundwater recharge areas.

Soils

The land's suitability for development largely determines the character of a community's land use, and the most basic component of the land is its soil. Beyond the basic function of the production of food and fiber, soils may either limit or foster community growth depending upon specific soil characteristics. Soils influence local vegetative cover, hydrology, and land use patterns and activities. The *Natural Resources Map* accompanying this *Plan* shows steep slopes, wetlands, hydric soils and floodplain, all of which affect soil suitability for development.

Variables in the formation of soils include climate (precipitation and temperature affecting weathering), biological activity in the forming soil, the parent material (e.g., bedrock vs. glacial material), topography (e.g., steep slopes vs. flood plain), and time. Given this complexity, it is understandable that a number of soil series (i.e., groups of soils formed from a particular parent material and exhibiting similar soil horizons) and many different soil types are found in the Township.

The soils have been evaluated for planning purposes by the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) for suitability for such uses as agriculture, community development, recreation, and sewage disposal.

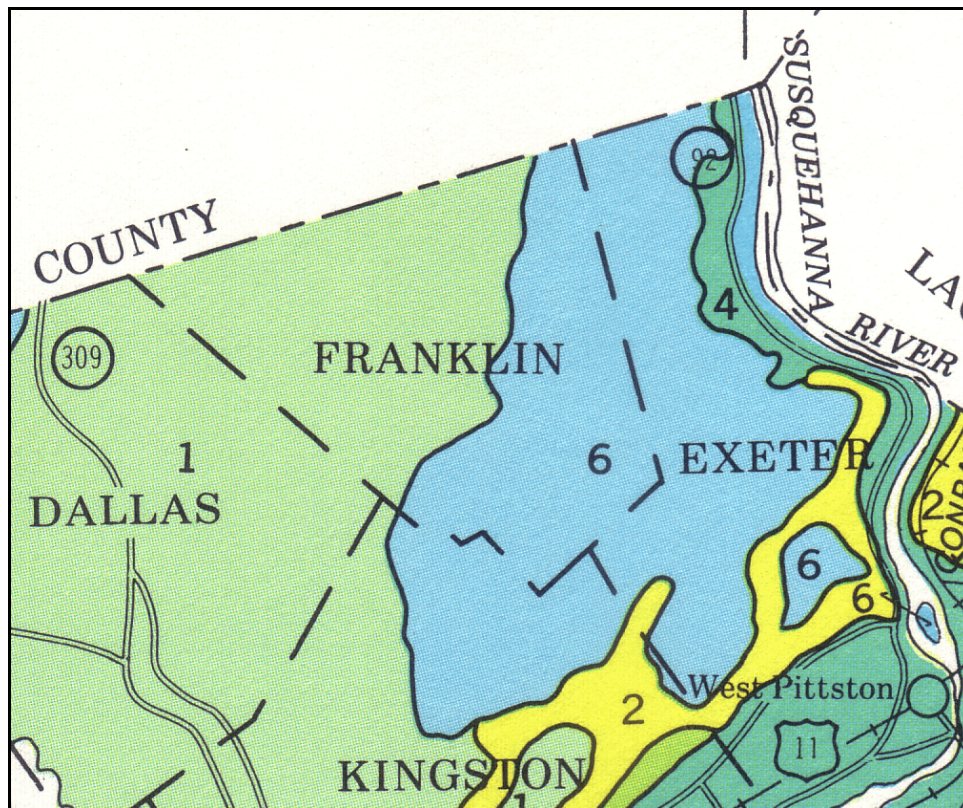
Fragipan: A loamy, brittle subsurface horizon low in porosity and content of organic matter and low or moderate in clay but high in silt or very fine sand. A fragipan appears cemented and restricts roots. When dry, it is hard or very hard and has a higher bulk density than the horizon or horizons above. When moist, it tends to rupture suddenly under pressure rather than to deform slowly.

Hardpan: A hardened or cemented soil horizon, or layer. The soil material is sandy, loamy, or clayey and is cemented by iron oxide, silica, calcium carbonate, or other substance.

This detailed information is reported in the *Soil Survey of Luzerne County Pennsylvania*, which must be consulted for site specific information. Two of the seven major soil associations, each comprised of several soil types, identified in Luzerne County are found in Franklin Township. The associations are shown on the *Soil Associations Figures*, and are described in the *Soil Associations Table*.

The origin of formation of soils in the Township resulted in the soil characteristics effecting sewage disposal alternatives -- permeability, depth to bedrock, high water table due to fragipan and stoniness. Most of the parent material of the soils in the Township was glacial till and outwash sand and gravel, resulting in stoniness in many areas and the occurrence of fragipan that inhibits the downward movement

of water. It is important to remember that each of the broad associations is comprised of a variety of soil types of varying characteristics. The soil series is the most specific and consists of soils with similar horizons in terms of color, texture, structure, reaction, consistence, mineral and chemical composition, and arrangement in profile.

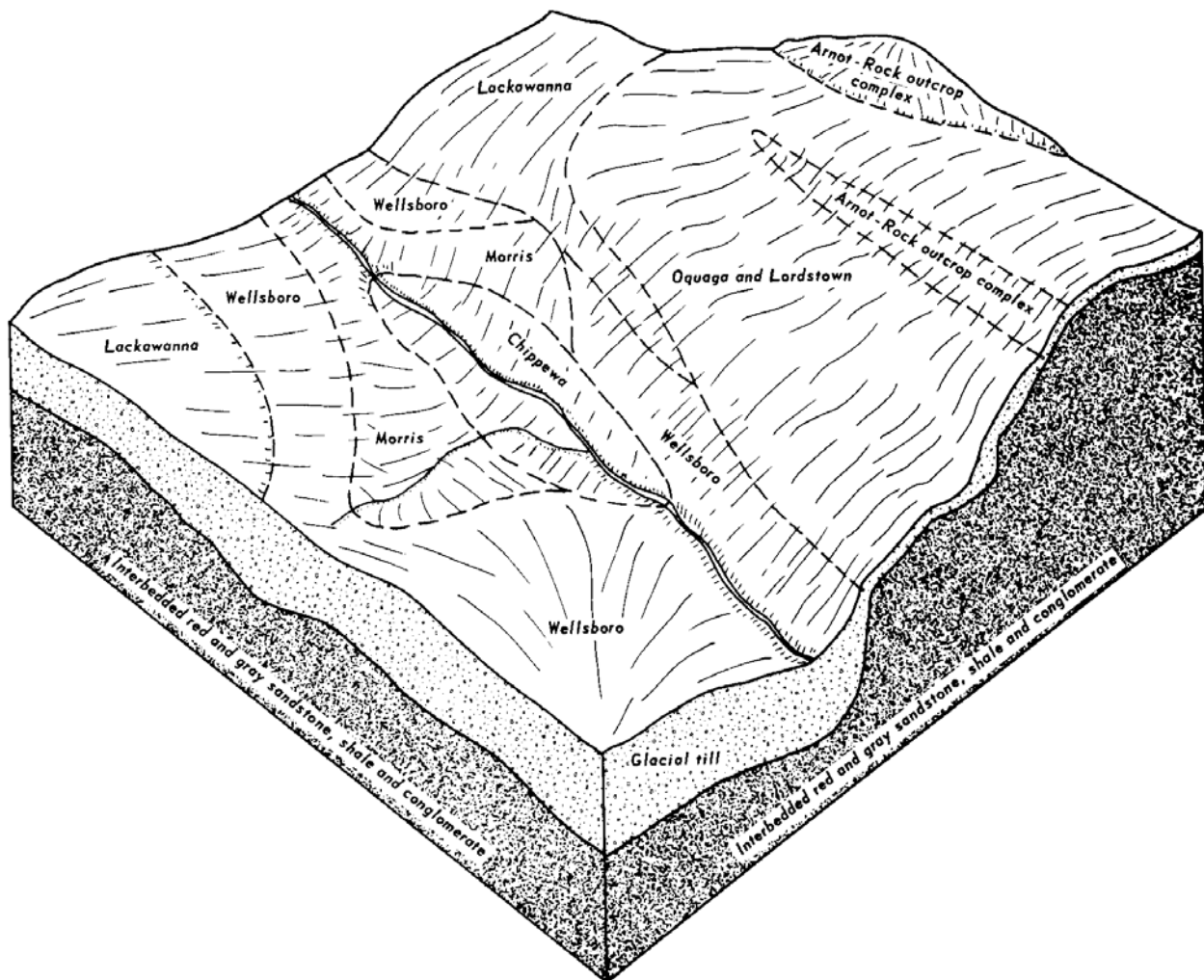


Soil Associations (Soil Survey of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania)

- 1** Oquaga-Wellsboro-Lackawanna association: Gently sloping to very steep, moderately deep and deep, well drained and moderately well drained soils on dissected plateaus

- 6** Lordstown-Mardin-Volusia association: Gently sloping to very steep, deep and moderately deep, well drained to somewhat poorly drained soils on dissected plateaus

SOIL ASSOCIATIONS
<p><u>Association 1 -- Oquaga-Wellsboro-Lackawanna Association</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ formed in glacial till, derived from red sandstone and shale ▶ gently sloping to very steep ▶ Oquaga - moderately deep and well drained, on higher ridges, knolls and steep stream valleys ▶ Wellsboro - deep moderately well drained, with fragipan, on plateaus and inter-mountain basins ▶ Lackawanna - deep, well drained, with fragipan, on plateaus and inter-mountain basins ▶ dairying and truck farms ▶ minor in Association are Morris, Chippewa, Lordstown, Arnot ▶ major limitations - depth to bedrock, restricted permeability, seasonal high water table, stoniness
<p><u>Association 6 - Lordstown-Mardin-Volusia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ gently sloping to very steep ▶ formed in glacial till, derived from red and gray sandstone, shale, conglomerate ▶ Lordstown - mapped only with Oquaga, moderately deep, well drained, on higher ridges and knolls ▶ Mardin - deep, moderately well drained, with fragipan, on lower areas adjacent to Lordstown ▶ Volusia - deep, somewhat poorly drained, with fragipan (not identified in Nescopeck Twp) ▶ minor in Association are Arnot and Oquaga ▶ dairying, much left wooded due to stoniness and poor drainage ▶ major limitations - restricted permeability, seasonal high water table, stoniness

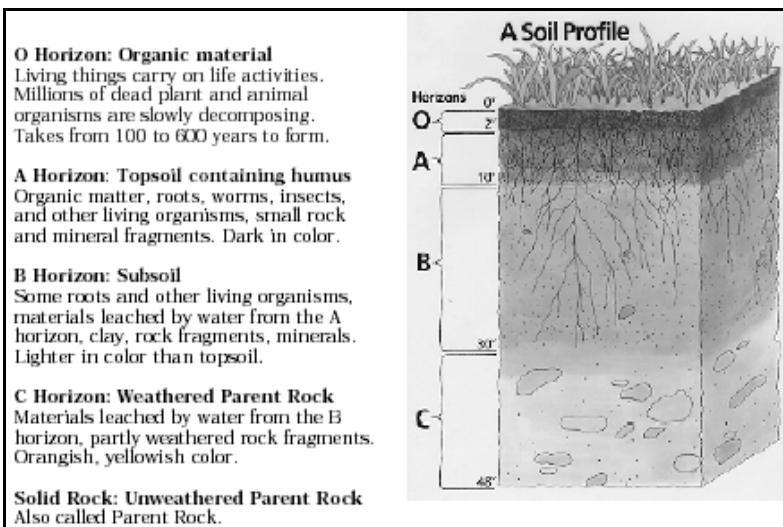


Association 1

Typical pattern of soils and underlying material. (Soil Survey of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.)

Soils: Findings

- A significant proportion of the Township is comprised of prime agricultural soils which should be preserved for agriculture.
- Soil conditions, along with slope and underlying geology, pose severe limitations to septic absorption throughout the Township. Poorly renovated effluent from existing sewage systems on poor soils poses a threat to the quality of surface waters and groundwater supplies. This is of particular concern for sewage systems installed prior to DEP sewage regulations adopted in the early 1970's.
- Soils with limiting zones at depths of 20 inches or more may be suitable for a sand mound, as determined by field investigations. This is evidenced by the number of dwellings constructed since 1970. As more research is conducted on on-lot sewage disposal and new types of systems are permitted by DEP, more areas may become suitable for on-lot sewage which relies on soils.
- Few areas of the Township are suitable for in-ground systems.
- Poor soil conditions in much of the Township uplands present a major challenge to the traditional development type consisting of single-family dwellings with on-lot septic. Site-specific investigations are required to identify suitable areas.
- Hydric and seasonal high water table soils are found throughout the Township in low-lying areas, along watercourses, and where a *perched* water table lies above bedrock or a fragipan. Hydric soils are formed under persistent conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. These soils are often indicative of a wetland.
- Hydric and seasonal high water table soils are unsuitable for development due to the risk of damage to structures caused by seepage of water and generally wet conditions. The poor stability of these soils results in inadequate support for structures. These soils also serve as important groundwater recharge areas and should be left undisturbed.
- A number of areas with slopes in excess of twenty-five percent are scattered throughout the Township, often associated with lakeside and stream side land, and which have extreme limitations for subsurface sewage disposal.



Source: <http://home.earthlink.net/~pdf2krech/SoilProfile.pdf>

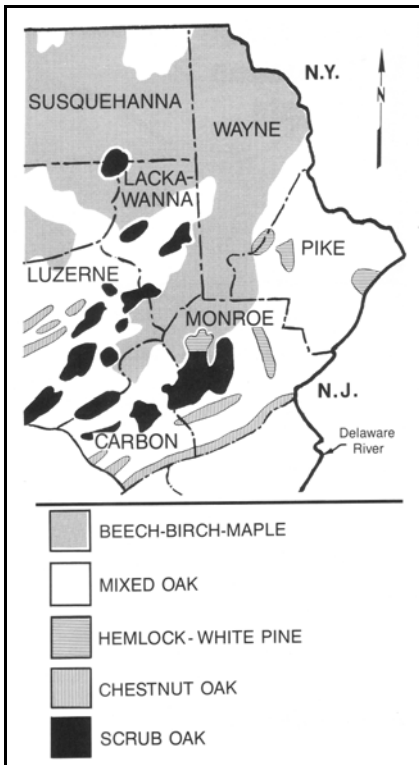
- In areas where slope is not a limitation, shallow bedrock and low permeability limit subsurface sewage disposal.
- Shallow bedrock and low permeability may contribute to shallow groundwater which carries nutrients from on-lot systems to lakes and streams.
- The proportion of flood plain soils in the Township with potential for development is relatively low.

**Planning Implications:
Soils**

- Problems associated with soil erosion and sedimentation are exacerbated by development of steep slopes and removal of vegetative cover.
- Limitations for septic absorption, aging and unmaintained on-lot sewage systems on poor soils, and the lack of sufficient ground for on-lot septic replacement threaten to contaminate soil and groundwater and lakes and streams.
- Local subdivision and land development ordinances and zoning ordinances can include standards to conserve prime agricultural, hydric and seasonal high water table soils.
- Local standards for erosion and sedimentation control must be linked to County Conservation District and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection requirements.
- Long-term maintenance of on-lot sewage systems is critical.

**Forest and
Vegetative Cover**

Forest and other natural vegetative cover are important for many reasons and large contiguous, undisturbed tracts are desirable to provide habitat for interior forest species and establish migration corridors for wildlife.



- *Large contiguous forested tracts . . . play an extremely important role in the protection of the current high quality and exceptional value watersheds and water resources.*
- *Forest canopy along stream and river corridors provides shade to minimize the warming of stream temperatures and reduce impacts to fish and other aquatic species.*
- *Forested riparian corridors help sustain stream and lake water quality by acting as nutrient filters and stabilizing soil against erosion.*
- *Large forested tracts with proper forest management and good timber operations support the local forest products industry.*
- *Undeveloped, forested landscapes allow for relatively high rates of infiltration or groundwater recharge and decrease stormwater runoff.⁶*

Much of Franklin Township remains forested, primarily those areas which were not suitable for agriculture, such as hilltops, stony areas, and steep slopes. The analysis of forest and vegetative cover indicates that:

- The predominate forest type in the Township is mixed oak, with areas of the hemlock-white pine and beech-birch-maple forest types.
- *With the loss of the once magnificent chestnut the common element of this . . . forest is the blend of three oak species: black, red, and white. Frequently, white pine trees mingle among these three dominant oaks, as do scarlet and chestnut oaks.*

Five Major Forest Types (*The Poconos, An Illustrated Natural History Guide*, Oplinger, C. S. And Halma, R., Rutgers, 1988, p. 44)

⁶Pike County Comprehensive Plan, p. 6-5.

- *The (other) common trees of the mixed oak forest include red maple, tulip-tree, American beech, white ash, basswood and shagbark hickory. Other large trees that occur with some regularity include sugar maple, black cherry, black gum, pitch pine, and hemlock. In places where the forest has been clear-cut or farmed recently, some of the sunloving trees, such as gray birch, the aspens, and red cedar, persist.*
- *There are relatively few sub-canopy tree species. Growing among the replacement saplings, one might find hornbeam, hop hornbeam, sassafras, dogwood, and shadbush (juneberry).*⁷
- A variety of shrubs are found in the Township including among many others, blueberry, huckleberry, mountain laurel, sheep laurel, rhododendron, sweet fern and witch hazel.
- Herbaceous plants include a variety of wildflowers and ferns.
- In many areas, the over-population of white-tailed deer has resulted in poor forest regeneration and the loss of many understory herbaceous species and the expansion of invasive species.

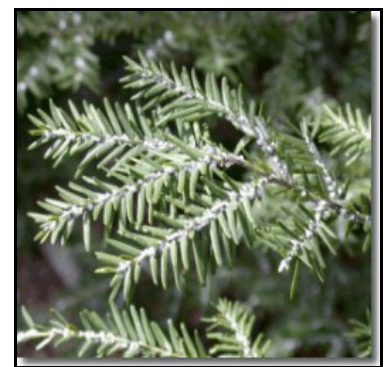
Forest Pests

Long-term forest pest management is a concern in the eastern United States, including Franklin Township. Two pests of particular concern are the gypsy moth and the wooly adelgid. Severe infestations of the gypsy moth caterpillar have occurred in the region in recent years, damaging thousands of acres of forest. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), 333,335 acres were damaged throughout the state in 2005, mostly in the northeast. DCNR has instituted an aerial suppression program. The gypsy moth was first discovered in Pennsylvania in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties near Pittston in 1932. During the 1930s and 1940s it continued to spread to Pike, Lackawanna, Wayne, Monroe, and Carbon Counties. By 1969, it had spread west of the Susquehanna River, and by 1980, 38 Pennsylvania counties were infested. The Luzerne County Environmental Special Projects Department coordinates the local DCNR gypsy moth suppression program.



Gypsy Moth Caterpillar

Infestations of the hemlock wooly adelgid are also problematic, especially in hemlock forested stream corridors. Destruction to hemlock stands over the long term could negatively impact stream systems and water quality. The DCNR has increased efforts to control the hemlock wooly adelgid by improving surveying techniques (the General Hemlock Survey provides data at the township level), expanding its biological control program, and instituting a chemical suppression program to protect select, high-value trees in state and federal lands.



Wooly Adelgid on Hemlock

In addition, the National Park Service (NPS) is conducting extensive research in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The Township can look to the NPS, the PA DCNR Division of Forest Pest Management, the Pennsylvania Cooperative

⁷The Poconos, An Illustrated Natural History Guide, Oplinger, C. S. And Halma, R., Rutgers, 1988, p. 53 - 54.

Suppression Program, Luzerne County, and the USDA Forest Service for information and assistance on forest pest management.

Invasive Species

"Invasive plant" is a name for a species that has become a weed pest, a plant which grows aggressively, spreads, and displaces other plants. Invasive plants tend to appear on disturbed ground, and the most aggressive can actually invade existing ecosystems. Invasive plants are generally undesirable because they are difficult to control, can escape from cultivation, and can dominate whole areas. In short, invasive plant infestations can be extremely expensive to control, as well as environmentally destructive. A small number of invasives are "native," meaning they occurred in Pennsylvania before settlement by Europeans but became aggressive after the landscape was altered. However, most invasive plants arrived from other continents and are often referred to as "exotic," "alien," introduced," or "nonnative" invasives. An aggressive plant freed from its environmental, pest, and disease limits, can become an invader of other ecosystems. Invasive plants are noted for their ability to grow and spread aggressively. Invasive plants can be trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, or flowers, and they can reproduce rapidly by roots, seeds, shoots, or all three. Invasive plants tend to:



Purple Loosestrife
(Linda Wilson, Univ. of Idaho, www.forestryimages.org.)

- *not be native to North America;*
- *spread, reproducing by roots or shoots;*
- *mature quickly;*
- *if spread by seed, produce numerous seeds that disperse and sprout easily;*
- *be generalists that can grow in many different conditions;*
- *and be exploiters and colonizers of disturbed ground.*



Japanese Knotweed

The best insurance against future problems is to avoid the use of known invasive plants and educate others about the problems of invasives.

- *Avoid using known invasive plants.*
- *Minimize landscape disturbance.*
- *Protect healthy native plant communities.*
- *Use fertilizers wisely.*
- *Have a land management plan for maintenance over time.*
- *Scout regularly.*
- *Remove invasive plants when they are present in low numbers or when they are confined to a small area before they become a problem.*
- *Dispose of removed invasive plants wisely.*
- *Replace invasive plants with native or noninvasive species.*
- *Clean equipment that has been used in an area having invasive plants.*⁸



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, Univ. of Connecticut, <http://invasives.eeb.uconn.edu/ipane>

The most commonly known invasive species in the Township include Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife and Japanese barberry. Many other flowers, grasses, shrubs, trees and vines are also classified as invasive by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

⁸ www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/wildplant/invasive.aspx

**Planning Implications:
Forest Land**

Despite infestations of the gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid and other forest pests and past development, the Township has a healthy, diverse and expansive forest ecosystem. However, there is no guarantee that land in private ownership will remain forested. Nevertheless, the opportunity to preserve large tracts of forest and vegetative cover remains and Township and County officials should continue to take action to preserve its large forest expanses while opportunities still exist.

- *Development of forested lands can fragment habitat for plant and animal species unique to (the Township and) Pennsylvania.*
- *Removal of forested riparian corridors has implications on water quality and clarity.*
- *Loss of these resources could have implications on quality of life and tourism.*
- *Poor forest management and timber harvest operations can have lasting impacts on the long range sustainability of . . . forests.*
- *Improper development and management of forest resources can allow invasive species to proliferate.⁹*



Typical Emergent Wetland



Typical Forested Wetland

Wetlands

Wetlands have in past times been considered wastelands, and, as a result, it is estimated that over half of all wetlands in the nation have been lost to development. Wetlands are an integral part of the environment and provide such benefits as groundwater recharge, stormwater control, surface water quality improvement and habitat for unique plant and animal species. The environmental value of wetlands in the Township is significant and the development which does occur must provide for the conservation of wetlands.

A wetland, as defined by the *Federal Manual For Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands* is any area which supports hydrophytic plants (adapted to growth in saturated soil), contains hydric soils (wet soils) or where water is present at or near the surface of the soil at some time during the growing season. Site specific investigations must be conducted by trained individuals to accurately delineate wetlands. Given the national interest in wetland conservation, and the overlapping jurisdiction of federal and state agencies (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the PA Department of Environmental Protection) wetland delineation and protection has evolved into a complex regulatory process.

In recent years the identification and protection of wetlands have surfaced as key elements of environmental protection. Three types of wetlands have been identified in Pennsylvania according to vegetation type and standing water, or even saturated soil, need not be present to qualify an area as a wetland.

⁹*Pike County Comprehensive Plan*, p. 6-5.



Franklin Township Wetland

- Emergent - vegetation includes freestanding, non-woody plants such as cattails, reed canary grass, and rushes.
- Scrub-shrub - characterized by woody plants less than twenty feet in height.
- Forested - presence of trees such as red maple, hemlock, yellow and river birch, pin oak and ash over twenty feet tall.

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Maps, published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are the best tools for the preliminary identification of wetlands. Wetlands are superimposed over USGS 1:24,000 scale topographic maps and are identified and classified based on vegetation, visible hydrology, and geography. The accuracy of the maps is described as being at the ninety-five percent confidence level, but local experience indicates that the maps are not accurate for detailed site planning and site specific investigations are necessary for a final wetlands determination. (A composite of the NWI maps is included on the *Natural Resources Map* included with this *Plan*.) In addition to the NWI maps, hydric soils descriptions found in the County Soil Survey and as shown on the *Natural Resources Map* provide a good indication of wetland locations.

The NWI Maps identify relatively few wetlands in Franklin Township. However, as shown on the *Natural Features Map* accompanying this Plan, many of soils in the Township are very wet and are classified as hydric or partially hydric. A wetland delineation in an area with such soils will likely identify wetlands which are not shown on the NWI Maps.

Wetland Regulation

Wetlands are protected by the federal Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge of dredged and fill material into *waters of the United States*, including wetlands. Activities that are regulated include fill for development, water resource projects (such as dams and levees), infrastructure development (such as highways and airports), and conversion of wetlands to uplands for farming and forestry. Any proposed activity within a wetland must receive a permit from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

The basic premise of the federal wetlands protection program is that no discharge or dredged or fill material can be permitted if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment, or if the waters would be significantly degraded. A permit applicant must demonstrate that steps have been taken to avoid wetland impacts where practicable. Impacts must be minimized and compensation may be required for any remaining unavoidable impacts via the restoration or creation of wetlands.

**Planning Implications:
Wetlands**

- The presence of wetlands will temper, but not significantly limit, the overall development of the Township.
- State and federal regulations protect wetlands but do not require a buffer around wetlands. Local municipalities can include wetland protection in zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to augment federal wetland regulations.
- *Potential encroachment into, filling in or draining of wetlands during development inhibits the continued important values and functions of wetlands.*

- *Disturbance of wetlands and surrounding areas by development increases the potential for introduction of non-native Invasive plant species that crowd out beneficial native wetland plants.*
- *Development adjacent to wetlands can release pollutants that impact the water quality and the groundwater recharge capacity of wetlands.*
- *Groundwater withdrawals can impact water levels that would otherwise sustain wetlands, particularly during dry periods.⁹*

Watersheds and Surface Waters

A watershed (or drainage basin) is an area of land that contributes overland flow and groundwater to a common stream or water body. It includes surface of the land, the streams that drain the land, and the underlying soils, geology and groundwater. Groundwater stored in an aquifer eventually reaches the surface again through a seep or spring or direct discharge to a stream. Each is critical to ensuring the proper function of the watershed and the hydrologic cycle. Watersheds are defined by drainage divides (ridge lines), which direct surface and groundwater down the valley and into the stream channel or water body. Ridge lines separate adjacent watersheds.

Franklin Township lies in the Middle Susquehanna section of the Susquehanna River Basin which drains to the Chesapeake Bay which has long been a focus of restoration. Locally, the Township is comprised of seven small watersheds: Abrahams Creek, Cider Run, Dymond Creek, Leonard Creek, Sutton Creek and Whitelock Creek. (See the *Watersheds and Water Quality Map* on the following page.)

Stream size, flow and water quality are directly related to the watershed’s natural features (soils, vegetation, etc.) and land use and quality of development. These factors influence the flow and accumulation of stormwater runoff and sediments, as well as infiltration, groundwater storage and seepage, and filtration of pollutants. The protection of headwater and smaller streams is important to the health of the entire watershed.



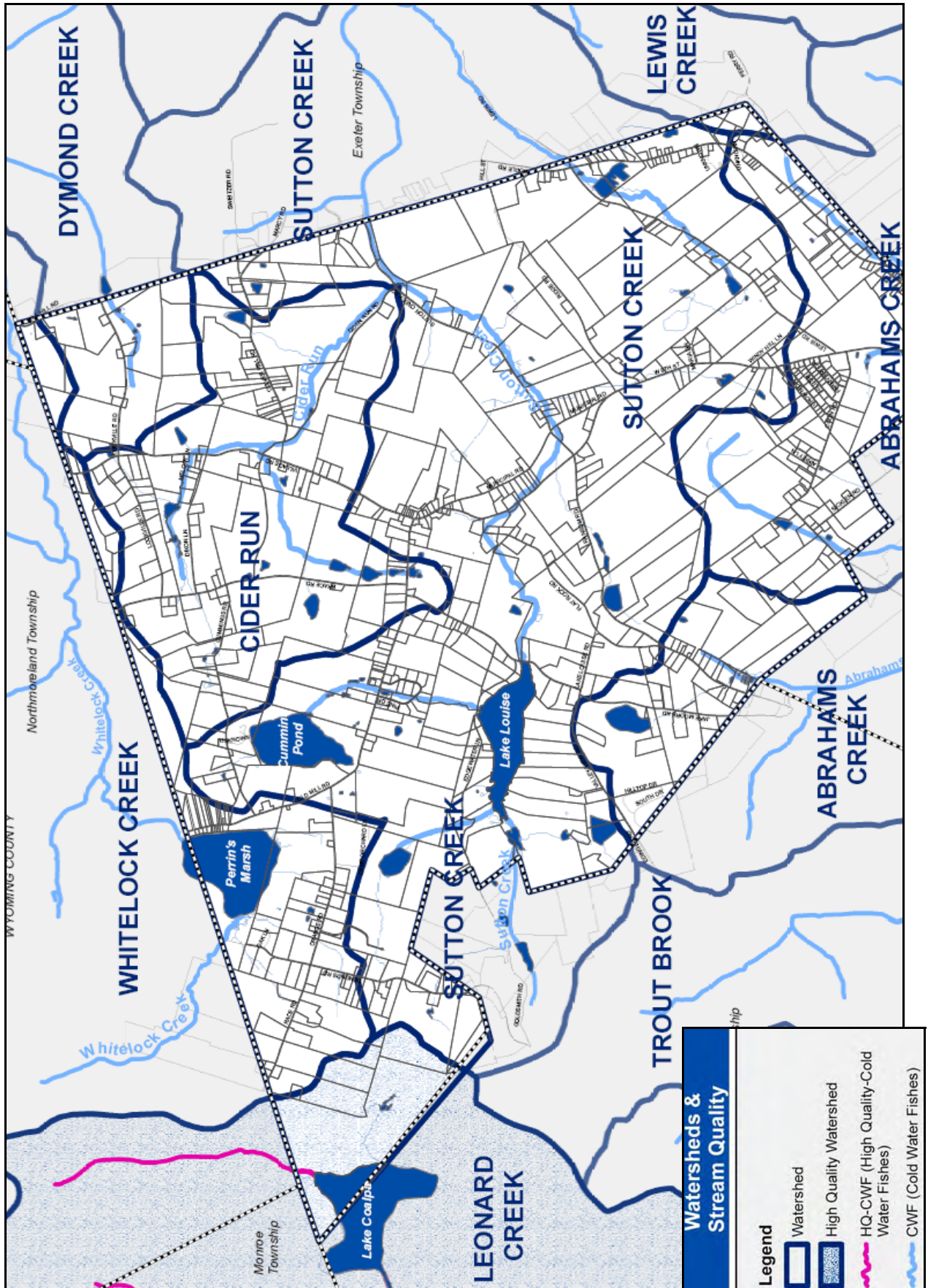
Susquehanna River Basin (www.srbc.net)



Middle Susquehanna (www.srbc.net)

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The Chesapeake Bay Program partners include the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; the Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; and participating citizen advisory groups. (www.chesapeakebay.net)

⁹Pike County Comprehensive Plan, p. 6-14.



Water Quality Regulation and Stream Classification

The Department of Environmental Protection has developed antidegradation water quality standards for all surface waters in the Commonwealth. These standards, which are designed to safeguard the streams, rivers, and lakes throughout Pennsylvania, include water quality designations and associated water quality regulations necessary to protect the existing quality and ecology of the streams and water bodies and their use for water supplies and recreation.

Ponds and Lakes
 Many private ponds and lakes of various sizes are found in Franklin Township including:

- Cummings Pond
- Lake Catalpa
- Lake Louise

All of the streams in the Township are classified as cold water fisheries, except the headwaters of Lake Catalpa which are classified as high quality, cold water fisheries. Special protection beyond basic standards is provided for streams designated as high quality waters. High quality streams are those that have excellent quality waters and environmental or other features that require special protection. Wastewater treatment plant effluent and any other discharges to streams classified as high quality are only permitted by DEP if the discharge is the result of necessary social and economic development, water quality standards are maintained, and all existing uses of the stream are protected. This has the effect of requiring all wastewater treatment plants to provide tertiary treatment to meet discharge criteria. In addition, DEP allows stream discharge only if soil based disposal alternatives are not feasible.

Surface Water Quality

Surface water quality in the Township remains generally good but can be affected by point and non-point pollution. Non-point sources include runoff from development and agriculture and on-lot sewage disposal systems, and point sources include direct stream discharges of sewage effluent and stormwater.

Planning Implications: Watersheds and Surface Waters

- Maintaining good water quality is critical to the quality of life in the Township and region and beyond to Chesapeake Bay. Good quality streams and well-conserved watersheds are a good measure of overall environmental quality.



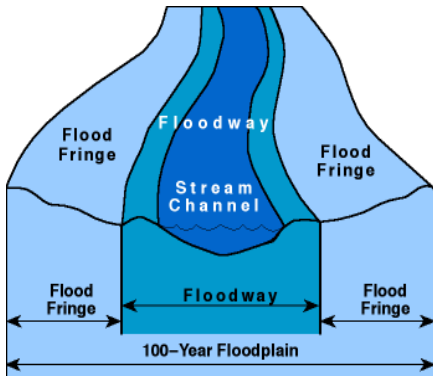
Lake Louise



- In order to protect the good water quality development should be carefully managed. The balance between good water quality and future growth and development will require meticulous consideration to weigh the impact on water quality against the need for economic growth, and the added expense for water quality protection technology against the need to protect water quality.
- State and federal regulations go a long way to protect water quality, but local municipalities often adopt additional standards such as buffers and conservation subdivision design to afford additional protection.
- The clearing of vegetation on steep slopes and along streams during the development process and for agriculture increases the potential for surface run-off, erosion and siltation, and downstream flooding.
- Excessive stormwater runoff introduces pollutants into the stream system, increases peak flows, damages stream banks and increases downstream flooding.
- Continued updating and enforcement of on-lot sewage disposal, stormwater and soil erosion control and other water quality regulations is critical.

Floodplain

During the period of early settlement and later development of most regions, waterways played a key role as transportation routes and later as a source of power for operating grain mills, sawmills, and other industries. In addition, the land located along streams and rivers was conducive to development - soils are generally fertile for agriculture and the terrain relatively level, facilitating the construction of roads and buildings. Those stream-side areas often developed into settlements and then expanded as the population grew. However, an often unanticipated problem with river/stream valley settlement is flooding. As development continued and natural drainage patterns were altered, increases in stormwater run-off heightened the potential for flooding and property damage.



Floodplain Cross Section

Floodplain Regulations

Both the state and federal government now administer programs for flood control and flood plain development and provide certain regulatory standards which local municipalities must adopt in order for property owners to be eligible for flood insurance. Minimum state and federal requirements allow dwellings in the floodplain if the lowest floor is elevated at least 1.5 feet above the 100-year flood elevation and nonresidential structures if flood-proofed or elevated. The Pennsylvania Flood Plain Management Act (Act 166 of 1978) requires local municipal participation in the flood plain management program, or state funding allocations such as Liquid Fuel Funds can be withheld.

Franklin Township floodplain regulations, which were recently updated, comply with the state and federal minimum by requiring elevated dwellings and floodproofed nonresidential structures.

Floodplain Maps

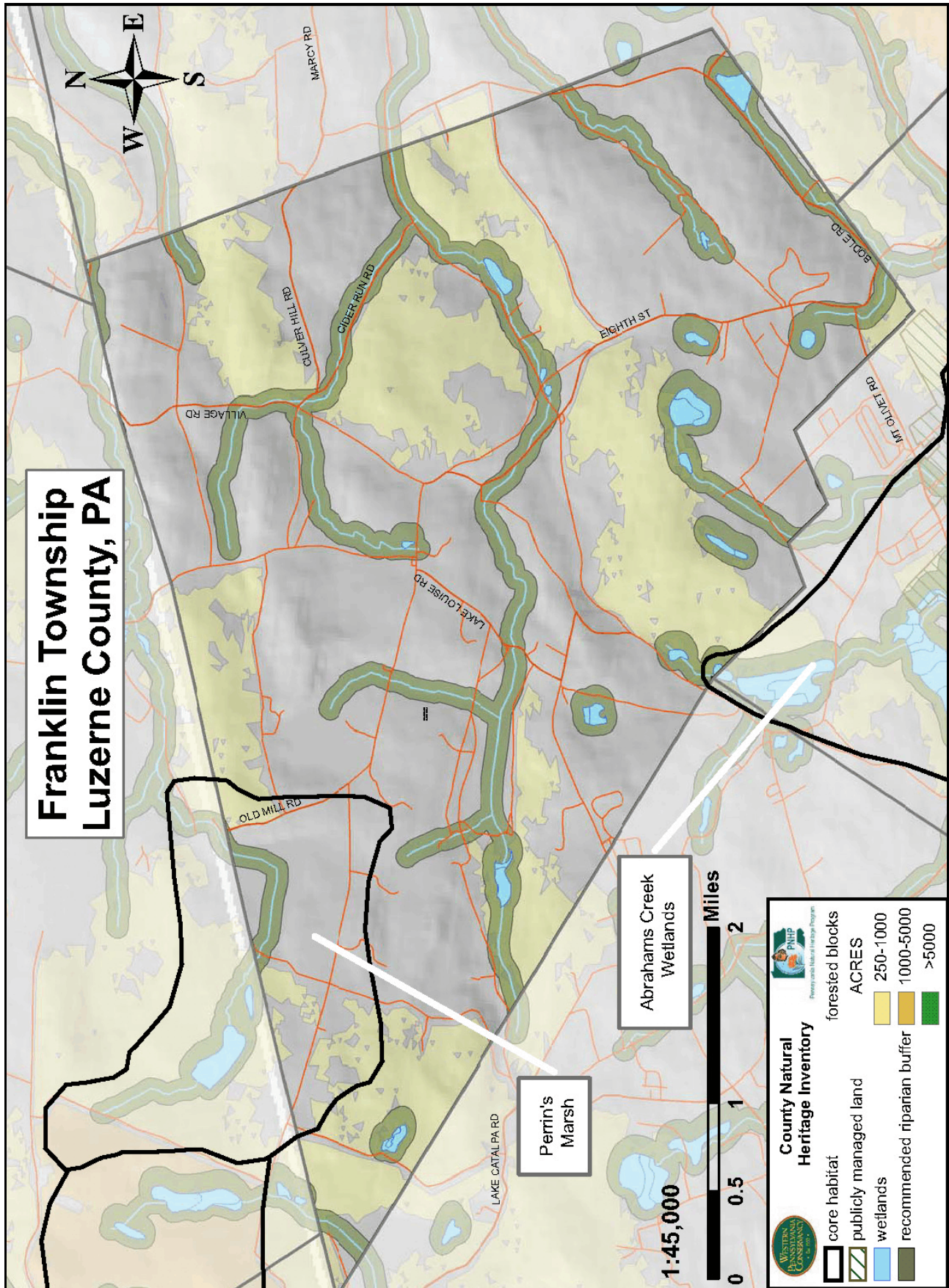
The National Flood Insurance Program is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which also has prepared and issued the maps which identify flood prone areas throughout the Country. (See the *Natural Resources Map*.) Flood hazard areas are identified for the *100-year flood* which is a flood event of a magnitude which is expected to be equaled or exceeded once on the average during any 100-year period. This is a long term average period between such floods and such floods can occur at shorter intervals or conceivably in the same year. Areas of 500-year floods and 100-year floods of less than 1-foot depth are also shown.

Township Flood Zones

The 100-year floodplain identified by FEMA in the Township is minimal and is largely confined to narrow corridors along Sutton Creek and its tributaries. (See the *Natural Resources Map* which accompany this Plan.) Development in floodplain in the Township is also very minimal when compared to many communities, and damage from floods has been infrequent.

Natural Areas

The Township’s expanses of forest cover, prevalence of wetlands, and surface water features provide diverse habitat for an abundance of plant and animal species. The 2006 *Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory*, identified two areas in Franklin Township – about half of Perrin’s Marsh and the upper extreme of Abrahams creek Wetlands. (See the following map and narrative from the *Inventory*.) The *Inventory* was compiled by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, documents the significant natural areas in the County and the location of known animal and plant species of special concern (endangered, threatened, or rare). The inventory also identifies areas that represent good examples of habitat types that are relatively rare or that provide exceptional wildlife habitat. The purpose of the inventory is to guide planning and conservation efforts and to assist in prioritizing areas to be protected.



ABRAHAM’S CREEK WETLANDS (Dallas, Franklin & Kingston Twps.) -UPDATE- SA504, SA505A, & SA505B - The site consists of creek-side wetlands impacted by flooding from the damming of the creek downstream in Francis Slocum State Park. Two animal species of concern (SA505A & SA505B) occupy a herbaceous wetland where the creek enters the reservoir, and another species of concern (SA504) breeds in a flooded forested wetland to the north. More habitat data is needed on this site, but the species of concern have been recorded using the site for several years. The preservation of large trees is important to SA504. Maintaining the water quality of Abraham’s Creek and stable water levels during the growing season will benefit the species of concern. A good population of a plant species of concern, Soft-leaved Sedge (*Carex disperma*) was located at this site in 2003. Associated species include *Carex pensylvanica*, *Maianthemum canadense*, *Mitchella repens*, *Carex digitalis*, *Uvularia perfoliata*, *Lycopodium obscurum*, and *Viburnum acerifolium*.

PERRIN’S MARSH (Northmoreland Twp. in Wyoming County and Franklin Twp. in Luzerne County) –UPDATE- SP503A & SA503B - Perrins Marsh is a shallow (1-2 meters deep) man-made pond located on private property on the Wyoming/Luzerne County border. The pond has been dammed for over 50 years. A good-quality population of a PA-Rare plant (SP503A) species was first identified at the site in 1993. The site was revisited in 1999 and SP503A is still present. A new good-quality PA Endangered, S1 plant (SP503B) population was identified at the site during the 1999 visit. This thriving population is the first known occurrence of the plant species in Eastern Pennsylvania. The dominant plant species at this site include spatterdock (*Nuphar variegatum*), hornwort (*Ceratophyllum carolinianum*), watershield (*Brasenia schreberi*), water lily (*Nyphaea odorata*), and pondweed (*Potamogeton sp.*). Perrins Marsh also provides habitat for a diverse population of dragonflies and damselflies. A 1994 survey of the site identified twelve species of dragonflies and two species of damselflies. Eleven of the species were observed for the first time in Luzerne county. Disturbances include a high Canada goose population, but the geese do not appear to be impacting the plant species of concern. The site should continue to be monitored and surrounding locations (e.g., Cummings Pond) should be visited to search for additional populations of these plants of concern and wading bird species of concern. The use of an aquatic herbicide or dramatically changing the water level are the greatest potential threats to the marsh. The plant species SP503B, *Potamogeton robbinsii* (Flat-leaved Pondweed), has been removed from the species of concern list.

**Planning Implications:
Natural Areas**

The Township’s woodland habitat is relatively healthy, as large and diverse areas of vegetation remain. However, steps should be taken to ensure that large contiguous forest communities remain in tact with proper forest management. Wetland and aquatic habitats, and in particular habitats identified by the Natural Areas Inventory, are most at risk from direct development or watershed disturbance. This includes degradation due to encroaching development, agriculture, logging and forestry operations, and contamination from wastewater and stormwater runoff. Protection of habitat and Natural Areas Inventory sites requires a combination of local municipal environmental regulations and state and federal resource management and use regulations. The Township will continue to apply ordinance standards related to environmental resource protection and promote open space protection among landowners via voluntary easements on parcels with Natural Areas Inventory sites.

Forestry

This *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the historical and continuing importance of forestry enterprises to the local economy and quality of life, and encourages forestry activities throughout the Township provided such operations are conducted in accord with sound forest management practices and environmental regulations. Landowners manage their forests for a variety of reasons including income from timber sales, wildlife habitat, recreation, water quality protection, bio-diversity, and timber for long-term investment. Improper harvesting and management practices often raise stream water quality and other environmental concerns with local residents and local officials. It is critical for public acceptance of forestry, environmental quality and the long-term viability of the industry and forest resources that logging professionals and individual landowners use best management practices when harvesting and for long-term forest maintenance.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), at §603(c)(7), states that *zoning ordinances may not unreasonably restrict forestry activities* and goes on to

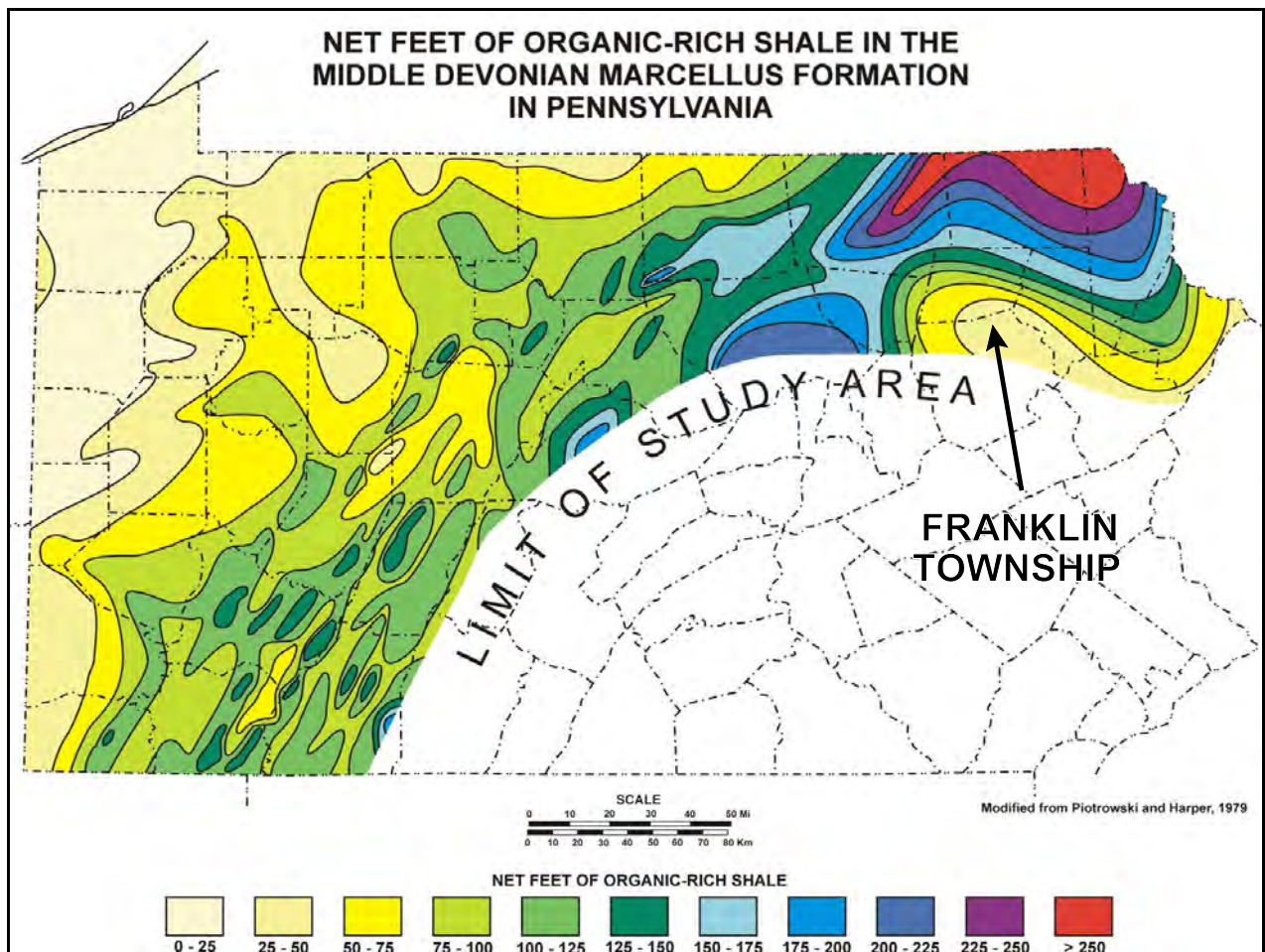


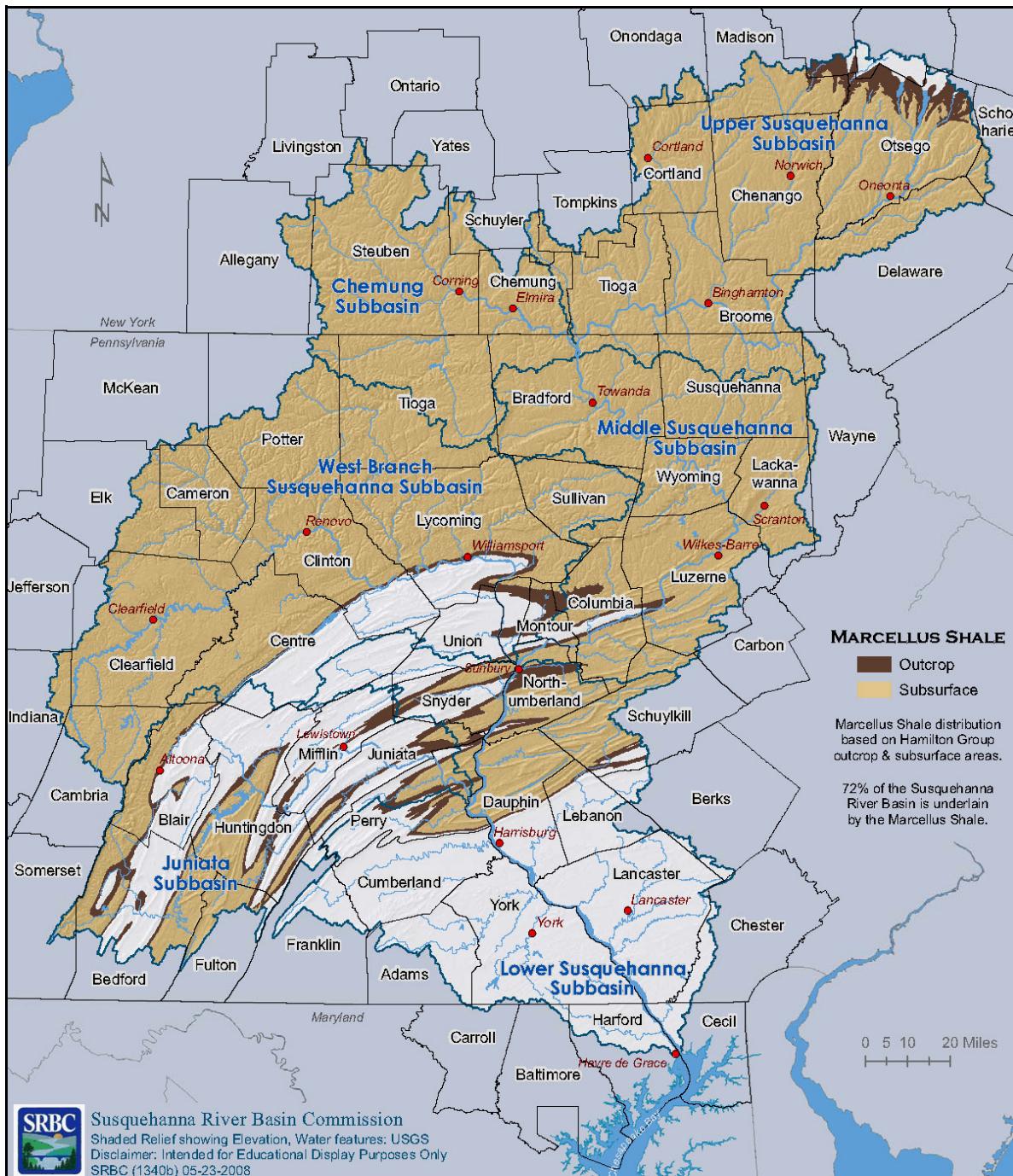
Forestry-Related Business

require that in the Commonwealth, *forestry activities . . . shall be a permitted use by right in all zoning districts in every municipality.* The Code defines *forestry* as *the management of forests and timberlands when practiced in accord with accepted silvicultural principles, through developing, cultivating, harvesting, transporting and selling trees for commercial purposes, which does not involve any land development* (buildings such as sawmills and wood products manufacturing are treated as separate uses). Any zoning provisions will be consistent with the MPC by classifying forestry as a principal permitted use in all zoning districts.

Minerals

This *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the economic value of the minerals industry while understanding the necessity that the industry operate within the bounds of environmental regulations. The primary minerals of commercial importance extant in the Township are sand stone, which can be mined as quarry stone and dimensional stone, shale, and sand and gravel, and potentially, natural gas. There are no active commercial quarries in the Township. A number of natural gas companies have leased thousands of acres in the Back Mountain Area. If exploratory wells are successful, natural gas extraction may become a part of the landscape. The thickness of the shale and its productivity varies throughout the deposit.





Marcellus Shale in the Susquehanna River Basin

Minerals and the MPC

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) clearly recognizes mineral extraction as a lawful use. Along with other community effects, such uses can have impacts on water supply sources and are governed by state statutes that specify replacement and restoration of affected water supplies. In addition, the Planning Code now severely limits the range of development and operational standards which can be applied to mineral extraction by local municipalities, with location standards the primary tool available to the municipalities. Planning Code §603(I) states that *zoning ordinances shall provide for the reasonable development of minerals in each municipality*. The Code definition of minerals is: *Any aggregate or mass of mineral*

matter, whether or not coherent. The term includes, but is not limited to, limestone and dolomite, sand and gravel, rock and stone, earth, fill, slag, iron ore, zinc ore, vermiculite and clay, anthracite and bituminous coal, coal refuse, peat and crude oil and natural gas. The Code, at §603(b) allows zoning ordinances to regulate mineral extraction, but only to the extent that such uses are not regulated by the state Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act, the Noncoal Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act, and the Oil and Gas Act. These acts regulate such things as setbacks, dust, noise, blasting, water supply effects, and reclamation.

The mineral extraction language in the MPC, coupled with recent court decisions, has severely limited local municipal authority to regulate natural gas extraction. However, the Commonwealth Court has ruled that the Oil and Gas Act regulations do not preclude local municipalities from restricting gas wells to certain zoning districts. The Township must adjust local regulations to evolving court decisions.

This *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the need to provide for *the reasonable development of minerals* in the Township while at the same time ensuring that such operations are conducted in appropriate locations and in accord with sound mining practices and environmental regulations.

FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Overview

The following future planning policies and recommendations are measures intended to achieve Franklin Township’s natural resource protection goals. These policy recommendations will guide future decisions and actions related to natural resource protection.

Environmental Protection

Development and environmental protection, as well as conserving open land and natural resources, need not be mutually exclusive. While a clean environment, abundant open land, and natural resources are key elements of the quality of life in the Township, one must recognize that growth is inevitable and can contribute positively to a healthy community.

The goal is to strike a balance between development and preserving the essential character of the Township. Development practices which recognize the importance of the local environment will ensure the continuation of the quality of life that residents enjoy and which is so attractive to new residents. Concurrently, land owners and developers will be able to provide the home sites and businesses that a growing population demands.

The intent is to ensure *environmentally friendly* development within the context of the existing zoning districts. State and federal regulations address many aspects of resource conservation and environmental protection, and these regulations should be the foundation - the base from which local municipal regulations should be built. Local standards must be coordinated with state and federal requirements. In some cases, the zoning ordinance can simply reference the other applicable standards.

Local Authority for Regulation

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) authorizes land use planning and management tools for the Commonwealth’s municipalities. Compliance with the MPC, along with case law, dictates the legality of local regulations. For this reason, it is very important to remember that all land use management tools must be prepared and administered within the bounds of the MPC and current case law. In addition, the

Second Class Township Code provides authorization for special purpose ordinances aimed at protecting public health, safety and welfare. Other state laws, such as the Floodplain Management Act and Stormwater Management Act, mandate local regulation of resources. In all cases, the municipal solicitor should be involved in reviewing any changes to municipal plans and ordinances.

Integrated Approach

Given the range of authorizing state statutes, municipal open land, natural resource and environmental regulations are typically found throughout a number of ordinances. While this may appear problematic at first glance, the integration of such standards in various ordinances is important because a certain ordinance may govern one type of development while another governs a different type. For example, the subdivision and land development ordinance governs how land is divided and improved while the zoning ordinance governs the specific uses on the land. In some cases a special purpose ordinance may be more effective than including standards in the zoning ordinance. The important point is consistency of standards in all ordinances.

Township ordinances include a broad range of environmental standards. Each Township will periodically review and update its environmental standards to ensure the most effective protection. The possible range includes:

- Environmental impact analysis requirements for large scale and environmentally problematic uses.
- Retention of existing vegetation on development sites and soil stabilization and landscaping.
- Stream, lake and wetland buffers.
- Stormwater best management practices including quality treatment and infiltration.
- Floodplain management.
- Hydrogeologic studies for proposed uses with large groundwater consumption.
- On-site sewage disposal system management.
- Limitations and special standards for development on steep slopes.

Topography and Geology

Preservation of topographic and geologic features is important for maintaining natural drainage patterns, slope stability, erosion control, and surface and groundwater quality. The following policy recommendations are intended to promote the protection of these features:

- The preferred approach is conservation design which sets steep slopes aside as conservation areas.
- Strictly limit site disturbance of steep and very steep slopes – tree and vegetation removal, soil removal, grading.
- Exclude a percentage of steep slope areas from lot area determination.
- Limit the use of very steep slopes to open space and passive recreation.

- Prohibit buildings or structures on very steep slopes.
- Establish design and performance criteria for buildings or structures on steep slopes including submission of detailed site, grading and drainage plans.
- Set a maximum building envelope size.
- Limit final slopes of cuts and fills to 50%.
- Preserve rock outcrops and unique geologic features.

Improving Stormwater Management

Development projects are subject to a number of state and federal water quality standards that relate to stormwater management. Significant changes have recently been instituted in state requirements. Any inconsistency between local and state requirements and county planning may result in project delays as applicants face conflicting design standards. In order to ensure that local stormwater management standards are consistent with State water quality antidegradation requirements, Act 167 (Stormwater Management Act) and Federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements for stormwater discharges associated with construction activities stand-alone stormwater ordinances should be adopted.

Preserve Existing Hydrologic Conditions

The key is to promote development practices to minimize post-development runoff rates and volumes and the need for artificial conveyance and storage facilities.

- Preserve natural drainage features such as vegetated drainage swales, channels, valleys, or depressions where water normally ponds.
- Minimize earth disturbance and preserve natural vegetation to the greatest extent possible by conforming plans to existing topography.
- Minimize impervious surfaces to the maximum extent possible.
- Disconnect impervious areas by directing runoff to areas where it may either infiltrate into the soil or be filtered through vegetation.

Maintain Groundwater Recharge

Simple provisions are critically important in areas where groundwater use is increasing dramatically and stormwater is too often simply considered a problem.

- Require the use of infiltration to provide groundwater recharge whenever possible in recognition of stormwater as an important resource to maintain groundwater supplies.
- Ensure that any infiltration does not pose a threat to groundwater quality.

Maintain Water Quality

Measures to prevent degradation of surface water quality from pollutants carried in stormwater discharges, such as vegetative filter strips, infiltration basins, bioretention areas and wet detention ponds, are important.

Reduce Erosion and Stream Scouring

As storm flows increase, the velocities in streams increase. Both the volume and rate

of stormwater discharges should be managed to prevent physical degradation of receiving waters, such as stream bank erosion and channel scour.

Control Flooding

Flooding and stormwater problems are caused by excess stormwater quantity. While some over-bank (typically 2-year to 10-year storm events) and extreme (25, 50, and 100-year) flooding events are inevitable, the goal of stormwater management standards is to control the frequency of occurrences so that damages to existing infrastructure are not exacerbated by upstream development.

Inspection and Maintenance

Without regular inspections during construction and proper and long term maintenance, stormwater infiltration devices, detention basins, pollution control and other facilities will not function properly, often with problematic or even disastrous downstream effects. Even the addition of homes within a residential subdivision can have serious effects on neighbors if facilities are inadequately constructed and maintained.

- Include standards to address inspection during construction, long term ownership, maintenance agreements for privately owned stormwater facilities and specific maintenance schedules.
- Make the failure to maintain any facility an ordinance violation and to provide the authority for enforcement and correction.

Groundwater Conservation and Protection

Methods available for local municipalities to conserve the groundwater supply and protect quality are well documented, and have been successful in many areas of the Commonwealth. Details of available methods, the authority for action, and sources of assistance are detailed in *Groundwater Protection and Management in Pennsylvania*.¹ The Report recommends the following five-step process to develop and put into place an effective groundwater protection program:

- Involve the community by organizing a committee of interested individuals from the community, and neighboring communities, if appropriate.
- Determine sources and uses of the community's water supply and define the proposed groundwater protection areas.
- Identify possible contamination sources-past, present, and future-in the groundwater protection areas.
- Establish goals and priorities based on an evaluation of the groundwater threats.
- Implement appropriate management measures, including plans for future needs.²
- Sponsor an annual well water testing program and compile and map the results.

¹*Groundwater Protection and Management in Pennsylvania, An Introductory Guide for Citizens and Local Officials*, League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund and Water Resources Education Network Project, R. Merideth, J. R. Drohan, C. W. Abdalla, J. R. Jessen, E. D. Stevens, 2001, Third Edition.

²*Ibid.*, p. 13.

In addition to evaluating the applicability of the five-step formal planning process, other local municipal actions may include:

Zoning

- Link dwelling unit densities to the quality of the land by identifying environmentally sensitive areas as part of the development process.
- Include standards for identification and protection of environmentally sensitive areas – recharge areas, floodplain, steep slopes, wetlands, riparian buffers, etc. – and update as necessary.
- Provide incentives for conservation subdivision design where full development density is permitted, individual lot sizes are reduced, a certain percentage of open space is set aside, and sensitive natural areas are preserved.
- Allow conservation design development and transfer of development rights as a way to shift development away from sensitive environmental areas.
- Require a hydrogeologic study for any proposed use which will withdraw large quantities of groundwater.
- Require detailed water quality protection plans for any commercial or manufacturing use which have the potential for groundwater contamination.
- Adopt well head protection standards that limit potential contaminating activities in zones around community wells.

Sewage Enforcement

- Continue the strict enforcement of the on-lot sewage disposal program.
- Consider establishing an on-lot sewage system management program.

Stormwater Management

- Require stormwater infiltration as the option of choice to maximize groundwater recharge.
- Address stormwater quality (nutrient and pollutant removal) along with quantity.

Well Construction and Protection

The Township should consider the adoption of a well ordinance because there is no state regulation for the construction of private wells. The ordinance would require permits for drilling and making major repairs to water wells. One of the most critical provisions would be to establish a 100-foot isolation distance from sewage disposal fields and a 50-foot setback from septic tanks because state law, while requiring sewage fields to maintain the 100-foot isolation distance from wells, sets no converse minimum. The well ordinance should also:

- Require isolation distances from other potential contamination sources such as buildings, driveways, sewer lines and underground petroleum storage tanks.

- Specify casing size, material, length and height above grade.
- Require a well cap and casing grouting.
- Set minimum water quantity and quality standards and require testing.
- Require bacterial testing for all new wells with a report submitted to the municipality and disinfection prior to use.
- Require all water users located within the service area of a central water supply system to connect to such system except where the applicant provides documentation that the central system cannot provide an adequate and safe supply.
- As a means of building a data base, requiring well drillers to submit copies of the State Water Well Completion Report which includes details about new wells – depth, depth to water bearing zones, static level, yield, and type of aquifer.

Soils

Soils play an important role in the hydrological cycle, allowing infiltration of stormwater and recharge of groundwater sources, and are important determinants of vegetation type and cover. Soils can also inhibit development due to wet conditions (hydric and seasonal high water table soils are not suitable for development) or due to unsuitability for on-lot sewage disposal. Policy recommendations aimed at preserving soils and promoting sound development are as follows:

- Strictly limit soil removal, especially on steep and very steep slopes.
- Limit building on hydric soils and seasonal high water table soils.
- Continue enforcement of on-lot sewage regulations to ensure proper location and installation of on-lot sewage systems.

Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control

Pennsylvania DEP Chapter 102 and other regulations administered through the County Conservation Districts govern soil erosion and sedimentation control. A plan is required for any earth disturbance in Special Protection Watersheds regardless of size.

- There is no need to include detailed design standards for specific soil erosion controls in either the SALDO or the zoning ordinance.
- The key is to require an approved soil erosion and sediment control plan in the SALDO as a condition of preliminary plan approval for all major subdivisions and all land developments, and in a zoning ordinance for any use involving earth disturbance.

Forest and Vegetation

Maintaining natural vegetation not only preserves rural character, but also has numerous environmental benefits, not the least of which are reducing stormwater, preserving surface water quality and air quality, and maintaining groundwater recharge. The best approach is to set specific standards for maintaining natural vegetation and require the developer to show why the existing vegetation within prescribed setback or buffer areas, and the entire parcel for that matter, cannot be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

- Include specific standards in the SALDO to govern preservation and replacement of vegetation during the development process.

- Also include standards in the zoning ordinance to manage development activities which are not governed by the SALDO; clearing for a parking lot for example.
- Prohibit clearing of vegetation until a land development plan is approved. In the zoning ordinance the section should be written to limit timber harvesting in the buffer to selective cut only in accord with a forestry management plan so as not to preclude reasonable forestry enterprise on the balance of the tract.
- Protect dense and mature forested areas especially on steep and very steep slopes, along stream courses, and in headwater (first order) drainage areas.
- Protect the diversity of vegetative cover and native plant communities.
- Promote the establishment of large contiguous areas of permanently protected forests.
- Encourage the use of native species and prohibit the use of invasive plants.
- Participate in County and State forest pest suppression programs.
- Permit forestry in all zoning districts and encourage the use of best management practices as a means of sustaining forest land

Wetlands

Wetlands provide unique habitat and serve as important groundwater recharge areas, filtering water before it enters an aquifer. Wetland buffer areas are necessary to ensure proper filtration of runoff prior to its entry into the wetland system. Buffers also diminish the opportunity for degradation of the wetland itself, and provide edge habitat for transitional wetland species.

- Prohibit disturbance of wetlands and within an established wetland buffer area.
- As part of all development applications, obtain detailed wetland data that identifies wetlands that are not captured by the NWI.

Watersheds and Surface Waters

Protection of watersheds is imperative for ensuring a safe and sufficient water supply and maintaining water quality. Healthy stream ecology relies upon certain water quality levels and stream flows and streams should be protected from pollutants, high sediment loads, stormwater runoff, and excessively low base flows.

Local policies that protect individual natural features, including steep slopes, soils, forests and vegetation, wetlands, and floodplain, also advance the health of watersheds and streams, and more specifically, support the State’s anti-degradation policies. In addition to policy recommendations related to the protection of these individual features, the following apply:

- Prohibit disturbance within an established riparian buffer surrounding streams and other surface water bodies.
- Limit the extent of impervious cover and promote the use of pervious materials.
- Require comprehensive stormwater management that incorporates alternative systems and methods, including Best Management Practices (BMPs), stormwater recharge techniques, and control of non-point source pollution.

- Integrate utilities and development planning: Water supply and wastewater systems are an important part of watershed planning, affecting water balances and overall watershed health. A coordinated growth pattern, where development is directed to areas that have existing sewer and water infrastructure, or are programmed to have such infrastructure, will help to safeguard water supply and quality.

Floodplain

Floodplain is important for its natural functions of flood flow conveyance, stream channel formation and water filtration. Building within floodplain areas upsets flood conveyance and increases risks to human life and property.

- The Township will continue to apply its floodplain regulations.
- The Township will ensure that improvements to existing buildings and structures will not increase the 100-year flood elevation.

Habitat and Natural Areas

Protection of habitat is accomplished by maintaining and promoting the health and diversity of natural areas as follows:

- Protect critical habitat areas through protection of topography and geology, soils, forest and vegetative cover, wetlands, floodplain, watersheds and streams.
- Protect as open space those properties that contain sites identified in the Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Establish a networked system of large contiguous areas of open space.

Forestry Actions

Specific actions related to forestry enterprises:

- Provide ample opportunity for the location and development of *value added* enterprises that use the plentiful forest resources available in the Township.
- Encourage the local economic development organizations to work with the forest industry to promote and grow forestry related enterprises, particularly in the realm of *value added* products.

Mineral Actions

Specific actions related to mineral extraction:

- Confirm that mineral extraction operations comply with state and federal regulations.
- Zoning is the most effective means of managing the effects of mineral extraction on the local community.
 - To the extent possible under the terms of the Municipalities Planning Code, direct mineral extraction operations to suitable areas where impacts will be minimized.
 - Adopt standards to ensure that mineral extraction is controlled to the greatest extent possible within the limitations of the Planning Code and evolving case law.
- Include provisions to require coordination with the plan information and

standards applied by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission.

- Encourage the Pennsylvania Utility Commission to regulate natural gas gathering lines.
- Adopt posting and bonding requirements for Township roads to ensure road damage is minimized and corrected by drilling operations.
- Encourage the local economic development organizations to work with the Bluestone Association to promote and grow the bluestone industry, particularly in the realm of *value added* products.

Dark Skies

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA, Inc.) notes: *Today, people who live in or near cities have lost much of their view of the universe. This view is often substantially diminished even for people who live in smaller towns and rural areas. The spectacular view of the sky that our ancestors had on clear dark nights no longer exists. The great increase in the number of people living in urban areas has resulted in a rapid increase in urban sky glow due to outdoor lighting, brightening the heavens to such an extent that the only view most people have of the Milky Way or most stars is when they are well away from cities. This excess light in the sky has an adverse impact on the environment and seriously threatens to remove forever one of humanity's natural wonders - our view of the universe.*

This sky glow that adversely affects the environment and compromises astronomical research is called light pollution, for it is wasted light that does nothing to increase nighttime safety, utility, or security. Such wasted light only serves to produce glare, clutter, light trespass and light pollution and wastes energy, money, and natural resources in the process.

Some solutions that minimize light pollution without compromising in any way nighttime safety, security, or utility:

- *Use night lighting only when necessary. Turn off lights when they are not needed. Timers can be very effective. Use the correct amount of light for the need, more is not better.*
- *Direct the light downward, where it is needed. The use and effective placement of well designed fixtures will achieve excellent lighting control. When possible, retrofit or replace all existing fixtures of poor quality. In all cases, the goal is to use fixtures that control the light well, minimizing glare, light trespass, light pollution, and energy usage.*
- *Use low pressure sodium (LIPS) light sources whenever possible. This is the best possible light source to minimize adverse effects on astronomical activities. LIPS lamps are also the most energy-efficient light sources that exist. Areas where LIPS is especially good include street lighting, parking lot lighting, security lighting, and any application where color rendering is not critical.*



Artist's rendering of city glow effect and a dark sky site. (IDA, Inc.)



- *Avoid development near existing observatories, and apply rigid controls on outdoor lighting when development is unavoidable. Such controls do not compromise safety, security, or utility. Outdoor lighting ordinances and codes have been enacted by many communities to enforce quality and effective nighttime lighting.*³

**Zoning Standards
for Lighting and Glare**

The Township will update Zoning Ordinance standards for the control of lighting and glare associated with nonresidential and residential development. The Township will enforce the standards and consider updates as needed.

³International Dark Sky Association, Inc., *Information Sheet #1*.

TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

Transportation System

A sound transportation system includes adequate and well-maintained roads, available public transportation, safe and convenient pedestrian access, and bicycle routes. However, few communities are able to achieve this ideal level of service. This is particularly true in small, less populated communities with limited budgets. In other words, local municipalities must evaluate transportation needs, set priorities, and garner all available resources to make improvements. It is also important to remember that there is a direct correlation between land use and transportation needs. As residential and commercial 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. In response, roads are improved to address the traffic congestion, the adjoining land becomes easier and more lucrative to develop, and more traffic is generated.

Access - Mobility

Each highway, road or street in a community plays a specific role for the movement of traffic and it is useful for planning purposes to classify roads according to the particular function each serves. In general terms, the functional classification of a road is based largely on two factors -- access and mobility -- and typically, as access declines mobility increases. For example, Interstate Route 81 clearly serves a different function than does a street in a residential subdivision. Although the I-81 and private street example compares streets at the opposite ends of the road classification hierarchy, it clearly depicts the relationship between access and mobility. Traffic on Interstate 81, a limited access highway, travels over long distances at high rates of speed. On the other hand, traffic using a residential street with unlimited access from individual properties moves at minimum speeds to reach roads that connect the residential community with other areas in both municipalities and the region at large.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Transportation Goal: Establish and maintain an adequate circulation system to safely and efficiently move people and goods.

Safe and well maintained roads are vital to all communities, serving not only as the means of travel within the community, but as the direct link to the region and beyond. No major state routes cross Franklin Township, with Eighth Street (State Route 1021) serving as the primary route between the Village of Orange in the center of the Township to West Wyoming Borough and the greater Wilkes-Barre area. Local officials must plan carefully to ensure adequate funding for the improvement and maintenance of locally-owned roads. Franklin Township owns and maintains 15.96 miles of roads, PennDOT owns 11.18 miles, and Luzerne County owns 6.96 miles. Land use management tools must consider the capacity of roads, directing commercial and higher density development to areas served by roads capable of carrying increased traffic and the trucks necessary to serve commercial establishments.

C*irculation* - Planners typically talk about "circulation" rather than transportation because circulation (getting around) is the goal of the citizens they serve, whereas transportation is just a method of achieving that goal. A good circulation plan includes more than streets and roads – it includes means of pedestrian and bicycle circulation and, in many communities, some form of mass transportation.

Although good circulation plans involve more than roads, the starting point for an existing conditions analysis of circulation is a map of streets and highways in the community.

Source: Community Planning, an Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan, p. 80.

OBJECTIVES:

Classification

Inventory and classify according to function all public roads and bridges, and assess maintenance and safety concerns and the improvements needed.

- Road Task Force - Consider organizing a local Road Task Force with nearby municipalities to address regional traffic impacts and highway improvement needs.
- Planning - Actively participate in all County and PennDOT highway planning programs.
- Improvements Program - Develop a local road and intersection maintenance and capital improvements program.

Local Actions

Develop a coordinated Township program to maintain an adequate capacity of the road network.

- Development Location - Limit higher density and higher traffic impact development to areas with adequate highway capacity.
- Parking and Access - Require adequate off-street parking and loading, limit curb cuts, and require well designed access points.
- New Development - Maintain up-to-date standards for construction of new subdivision roads.
- Road Linkages - Include the consideration of through road connections as part of the development review process.
- Road Dedication - Continue the policy of not accepting development roads for public dedication unless the road serves a clear benefit that accrues to the public as a whole and not only residents of the development.
- Official Map - Using an official map, establish and reserve public street alignments and adequate rights-of-way for planned street improvements.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in all transportation planning.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ACTIONS

Highway Classification Factors

As previously noted, access, how traffic enters the traffic stream, and mobility, the physical capability of the road to carry traffic, are the key determinants of a road's functional classification. However, several other road and network characteristics also affect the functional classification of a road. Traffic volume in relationship to the physical design of the road, including lane and shoulder width, right-of-way alignment and surface treatment, is important to its classification. Generally, as a community develops, roads are improved to meet the increased traffic demands, with specific routes moving higher in the functional classification as they are improved.

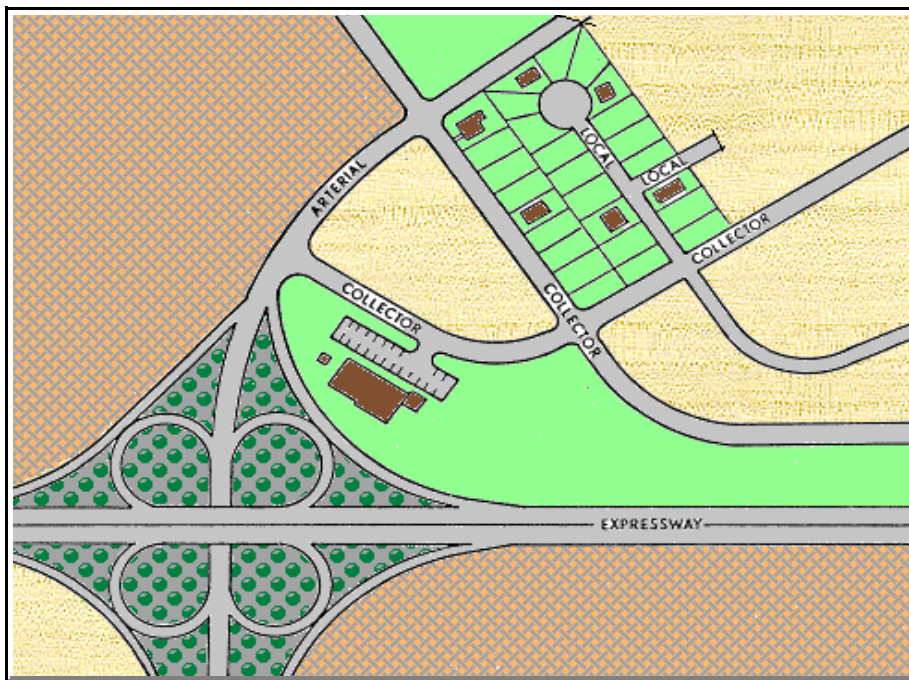
However, in areas of rapid growth and associated traffic increases, the amount of traffic carried by specific roads may increase to the point of exceeding the road's capacity. The road, in terms of traffic, may be serving as an arterial route, but may not have been physically upgraded from a minor collector or local road. In urban areas, mass transit and non-capital approaches such as ride sharing and staggered work hours are promoted as a means of reducing traffic congestion as an alternative to upgrading roads.

A road's location and relationship to other roads in the intra-community and inter-regional highway network may also help define the road's classification. Those roads which provide direct and convenient connection to arterial routes and expressways typically develop into roads which carry increasing amounts of traffic. Conversely, interchanges for expressways are normally located to provide connection with those roads in a community which historically have developed into arterials and collectors. Traffic flow problems and declines in level-of-service on routes connecting areas of the municipalities and routes providing access to the region are directly related to the capacity of collector and arterial roads. As traffic increases on the collectors and arterials, where access to abutting properties has historically not been limited to any significant degree, increasing traffic congestion can be expected. Also resulting from such access by adjoining residential and commercial properties and intersecting streets are the safety problems associated with increased congestion.

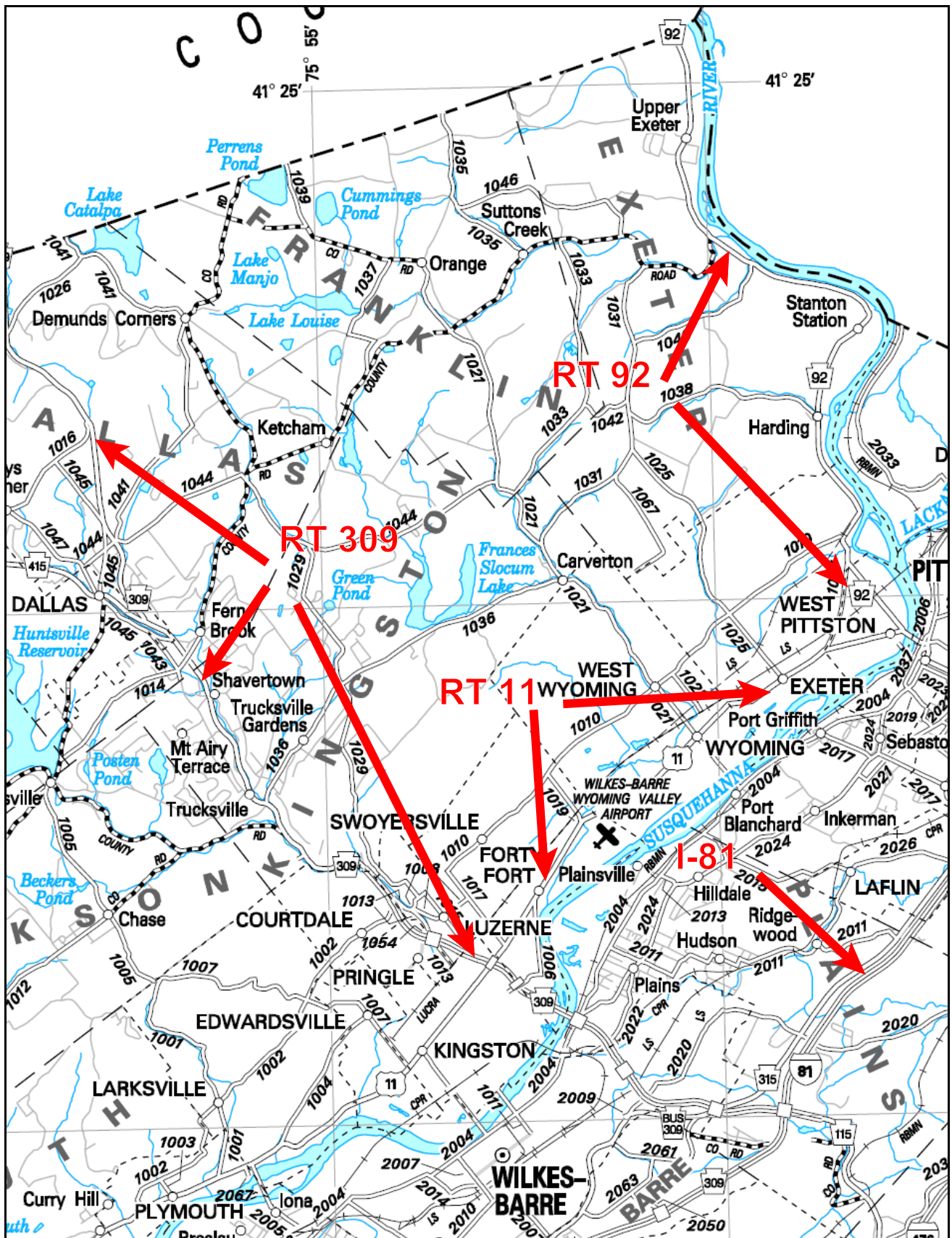
Highway Functional Classification

The nomenclature used for a *Highway Functional Classification* also differs from one jurisdiction to another throughout the Commonwealth and the United States. Road classification in metropolitan and suburban areas is often very complex, with the various categories of roads being divided into subcategories based on land use type served and the designation of specific traffic volumes. The nomenclature for classification being used for Franklin Township is based on the type and density of the land uses served by the road and the volume of traffic on the road. The small-scale

commercial development interwoven with the residential development pattern in the rural - agricultural setting warrants a more simplified highway classification system for the Township. While simplified, this classification will meet the needs for identification of problem areas and needed improvements, and for long-range planning. The designation of the Highway Functional Classification for roads serving the Township includes *expressway*, *arterial highway*, *collector road* and *local road*. A description of each classification follows and, the *Highway Functional Classification Figure*, provides an illustration, and the *Highway Classification and Annual Average Daily Traffic Figures* provide an overview of the road system.



Highway Functional Classification



I-81 and Arterial Routes

Expressways

- Provide interregional and interstate connections
- Designed for unrestricted, high speed (55+ mph) mobility of traffic
- Limited access only – no direct access from private property
- Provide highest level of mobility
- Intersect with selected arterial or collector routes by means of interchanges
- Carry highest volumes of automobile and truck traffic with longer trip lengths

Interstate 81, running north and south through Luzerne County some ten miles east of the Township, is the closest expressway to the Township. While the Township has no direct access to I-81, the development pattern of Luzerne County and all of Northeastern Pennsylvania has evolved in large part to the access provided by this expressway that connects to other interstate highways and the entire Nation.

Arterial Highways

- Provide connection between commercial and population centers in the region
- Provide connection between the municipalities and adjoining communities, counties and states
- Carry larger volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds (45-55 mph)
- Serve a mix of local and through traffic
- Carry low volumes of through truck traffic
- Provide moderate to high levels of mobility
- Access limited only by PennDOT highway occupancy permits and local zoning and subdivision ordinances

No arterial highways cross Franklin Township. Roads from the Township connect to several of arterials in nearby communities, all state highways. Route 309 just west of Franklin Township connects the Dallas area south to Wilkes-Barre and north to Tunkhannock via Route 29. Route 92, paralleling the Susquehanna River, connects Tunkhannock north of Franklin Township to West Pittston and Route 11 to the south. Route 11, although congested with reduced speeds, carries traffic between the boroughs and cities along the Wyoming Valley.

Collector Road

- Collect traffic from local streets for connection of residential areas to commercial and activity centers and arterials
- Serve moderate levels of traffic at reduced speeds (35-45 mph)
- Serve more locally oriented traffic and few through trips
- Carry primarily only “local delivery” truck traffic
- Access from smaller and more numerous properties
- Access limited only by local municipal and PennDOT highway occupancy permits and local zoning and subdivision ordinances
- Provide reduced levels of mobility

Collector roads in the Township include:

Eighth Street (SR1021)

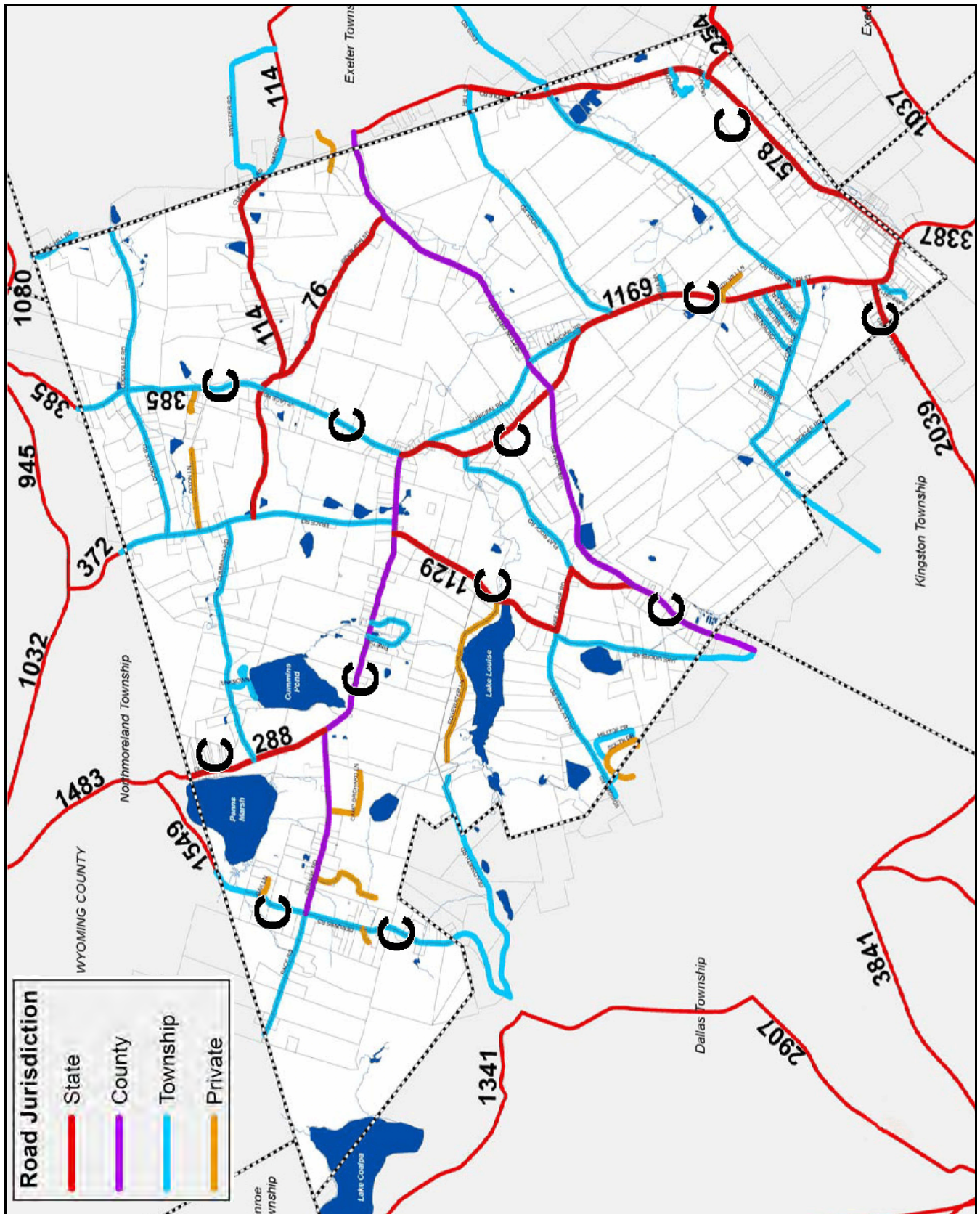
Connects the Village of Orange with Wyoming and Route 11 to the south.

Orange Road (County Road) /Old Mill Road (SR 1039)

Connects the Village of Orange with Wyoming County to the north.

Village Road (T 810 - SR 1035)

Connects the Village of Orange with Wyoming County to the north.



Collector Roads (C) and Annual Average Daily Traffic

Lake Louise Road (SR 1037) / Ransom Road (County Road)

Carries traffic from the Township to Dallas and Route 309.

Mount Olivet Road (SR 1044)

Connects Eighth Street from the southern section of the Township to Trucksville, Dallas and Route 309.

Bodle Road (SR 1033)

Runs along the southern border of the Township connecting Exeter Township with Eighth Street south to West Wyoming.

Demunds Road (County)

Carries traffic from Wyoming County through the Township to Dallas.

Local Roads

All other public roads in the Township not classified as collectors are considered local roads.

- Provides connection of residential properties and communities and less populated areas to collectors
- Serves lowest levels of traffic at slowest speeds (less than 35 mph)
- Provides high level of access from smaller residential parcels or areas with little development
- Carries local trips only with no through trips
- Carries minimal truck traffic for local deliveries

Public Roads in Franklin Township

The total length of public roads in the Township is 34.10 miles, with 15.96 miles of Township roads, 11.18 miles of PennDOT-owned routes, and 6.96 miles of County roads. (See the *Public Road Mileage Table*.) The Township-owned roads are part of the State Liquid Fuels Programs which provides state payments to the municipalities for road maintenance and reconstruction based on population and miles of roads meeting PennDOT specifications. However, the Liquid Fuels Funds comprise only a small part of the Township road maintenance budget and do not nearly cover the cost of long term maintenance and replacement.

Traffic Volume

It is obvious that traffic on the roads in the Township and all of Luzerne County have been increasing in association with population growth in non-urban areas and shifts of population from urban areas to suburban and rural municipalities. Additional suburban and rural residents traveling to work and shopping and services increases traffic.

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes provide an overview of the traffic flow in the Township for planning purposes. PennDOT conducts traffic counts on state roads and the counts provide a means of assessing the overall traffic conditions. Traffic counts for 2008 for all state roads in the Township, reported as annual average daily traffic (AADT), are shown on the *Collector Roads and Annual Average Daily Traffic Figure*. An important point to remember is that AADT does not reflect daily and seasonal traffic volumes which can far exceed AADT. The proportionate increase in daily and seasonal counts can be significant, exacerbating any congestion far beyond what is found on the average day.

Traffic volumes on Township and County roads are not available, but in some cases connections to state roads provide a measure of traffic volume (e.g., Demund Road).

Given the limited development served by most Township roads, traffic volumes are not excessive. In fact, traffic volume on most Township roads is relatively low.

As would be expected, the collector roads in the Township carry the highest traffic volume, with Eighth Street, Mount Olivet Road and Demunds Road registering AADT of 3,387, 2,039 and 1,549, respectively. Traffic volumes on arterials in the larger area range from 9,300 AADT on Route 92 in West Pittston to 17,000 on Route 11 in Wyoming up to 27,000 on Route 309 in Dallas.

**Road Network
Level-of-Service**

The traffic carrying capacity of a community's road network, and the intersections associated with the network, to handle the existing and future traffic volumes generated by development is the key element for providing safe and efficient traffic flow. Those land uses which generate larger volumes of traffic should logically be located in the areas of a community served by roads with greater carrying capacity. For example, commercial establishments generate more traffic than a single family residence and should be located on routes which have sufficient capacity to serve the use.

The capacity of a highway or road typically decreases as the service area of the route declines. For example, the capacity of I-81 is obviously significantly greater than any arterial highway, which in turn have a greater capacity than collector roads, with the lowest capacity associated with local roads. The capacity of a rural, two lane highway is dependent on a number of design variables such as lane and shoulder widths, volume of trucks and terrain. Level-of -service is calculated using peak hour traffic volume. The peak hour is that time when traffic volume is heaviest and this most often occurs on weekends in a rural/recreation area. The peak flow of vehicles during the busiest quarter-hour of the day is compared with the adjusted flow rate standard for each level-of-service.

Local roads, because of the limited service and low traffic volumes, are not considered in terms of capacity. The quality of traffic service is discussed in terms of level-of-service (LOS). There are six levels of service ranging from LOS A through LOS F, with LOS A representing free flowing traffic and LOS F representing a total breakdown in the traffic flow or *bumper to bumper* traffic.

**Level-of-Service
in the Township**

The roads in the Township continue to adequately carry even peak volumes of traffic without serious delays and declines in LOS, with no significant change expected in the near term. Travelers on roads and intersections in the Township typically do not experience any significant delays. Such delays would indicate that a road is approaching its capacity and reaching an unacceptable level of service. This does not mean, however, that all roads in the Township are in optimum condition, and that particular problem areas and safety concerns need not be addressed. Problem intersections and road segments are discussed in a later section.

**Land Use Planning
Considerations**

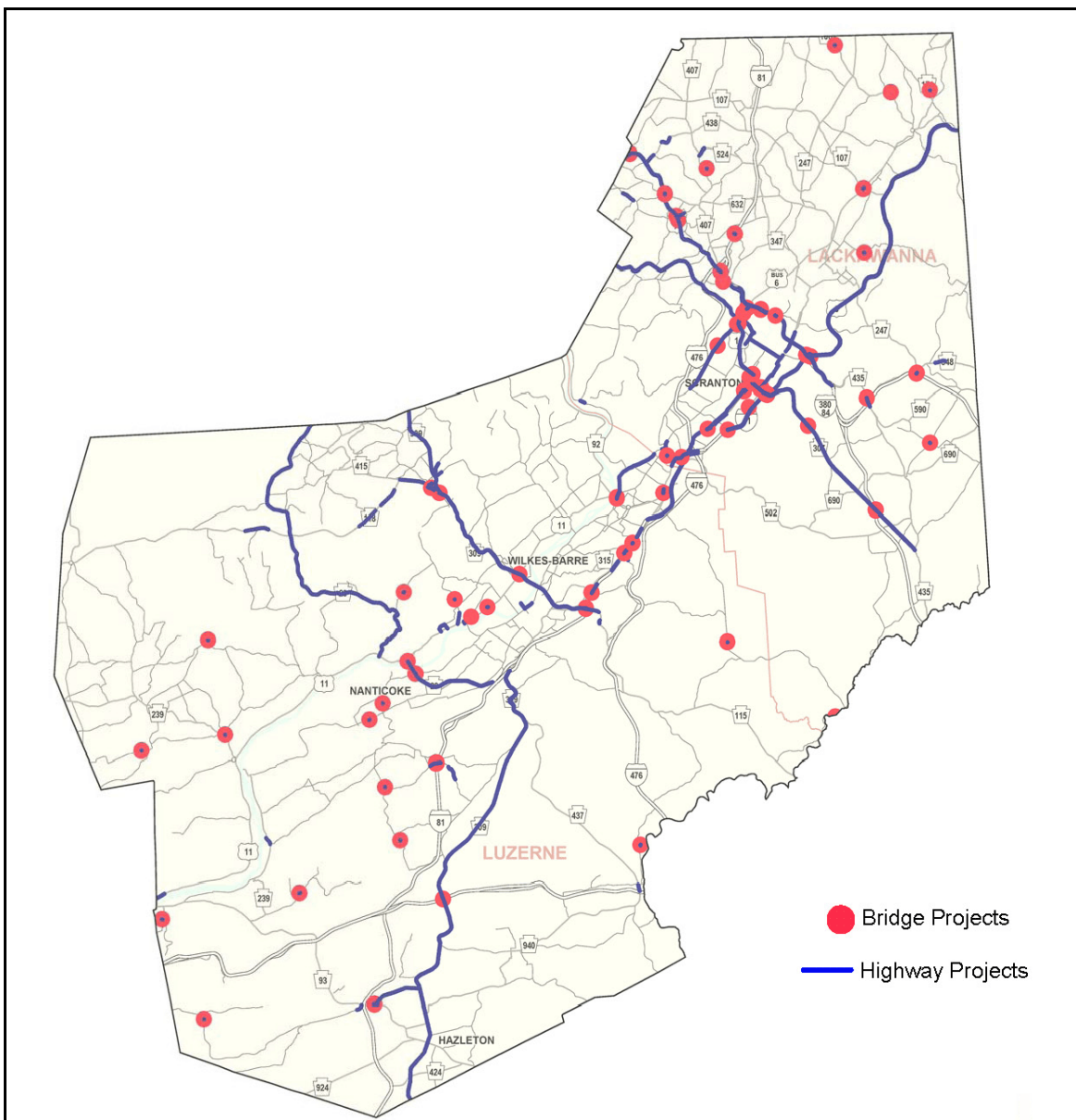
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Lackawanna / Luzerne MPO

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was established as a result of the 1973 Federal Highway Act. The MPO is a body that determines how all federal and state highway/bridge funds are allocated. The Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO encompasses all areas of the two counties.

The Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO consists of three committees: the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), the Technical Committee, and the Coordinating Committee. The TAC consists of about 22 people who represent a wide variety of interests including environment, business & industry, automotive and trucking, rail freight, and para-transit, among others. It acts as an advisory body to the Technical Committee, and meets about 4 times per year.

The Technical Committee consists of people who represent PennDOT, both counties, the Cities of Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, and Hazleton, and all modes of transportation. The Technical Committee prepares all plans and documents required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and PennDOT, and presents them to the Coordinating Committee which reviews the material and takes the appropriate action. The Coordinating Committee has a similar make-up as the Technical Committee (all the committee listings are available under “MPO Committees”).



2011 Draft TIP - Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MPO (Source: PennDOT)

Need for Regional Transportation Planning

Traffic is an issue that transcends municipal and state boundaries and effects all of the municipalities in Luzerne County and the County Planning Office has taken the lead role in coordinating and promoting the idea of regional transportation planning. The two Counties are developing a joint Long Range Transportation Plan with the draft plan anticipated for August 2010. The Plan is expected to focus on expressway, arterial and public transportation improvements. No specific road upgrades or public transportation service in Franklin Township is anticipated because of its rural character, minimal traffic, and limited resources available for such improvements.

The Lackawanna/Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization determines the priority of PennDOT road and bridge projects under the Transportation Improvements program. (See the following *Lackawanna/LuzerneMPO Sidebar* and *2011 Draft TIP Diagram*.) No improvements are scheduled in Franklin Township.

PUBLIC ROAD MILEAGE		
Franklin Township Roads		
Name	T - #	Miles
Coon Road	669	1.19
Lewis Road	670	1.63
Valley Road	689	0.86
Ridge Road	693	0.63
Race Road	697	0.65
Cummings Road	699	1.17
Mill Hill Road	709	0.02
Jake Moore Road	768	0.93
Sickler Road	778	0.33
Municipal Road	782	0.99
Flat Rock Road	784	0.85
Brace Road	802	1.42
Village Road	810	0.79
Lockville Road	823	1.46
Cider Run Road	824	0.62
Maria	825	0.09
Abbey Lane	827	0.14
Farm View Drive	828	0.20
Hill Drive	829	0.28
Crown Drive	830	0.35
Pine Drive	831	0.46
Natures Way		0.70
Switzer Road		0.10
Gresh Road		0.10
Township Total		15.96
Penn DOT Total		11.18
Luzerne County Total		6.96
Public Road Total		34.10

Township Roads -- Condition and Future Plans

The community survey asked several questions related to road maintenance as shown in the *Community Survey Table*. Along with emergency services and recycling, road maintenance ranked among the highest as important community services. Survey respondents are more satisfied with Township road maintenance than State road maintenance, but the responses suggest some room for improvement on Township roads. When asked about spending Township tax receipts for facilities and services, increase road maintenance ranked just below recycling in the number of positive responses.

Community Survey Questions				
Importance of Maintenance				
	not imp	smwht	imprt	very
Township Roads	3.0%	4.5%	38.4%	54.1%
State Roads	3.1%	2.3%	43.5%	51.2%
Quality of Maintenance				
	excellent	good	fair	poor
Township Roads	13.2%	49.6%	22.5%	14.7%
State Roads	6.7%	32.1%	38.1%	23.1%

All of the roads owned and maintained by Franklin Township are in overall good condition but require continued maintenance. About ten miles of the 16-mile total are paved with the balance gravel. The Board of Supervisors identified routine maintenance, re-paving as necessary, improving shoulders and drainage as important, with no particular concerns about widening or reducing steep grades. The Township will focus resources on the maintenance and improvement of existing local municipal roads and plans no major realignment or widening projects. Paving is becoming more and more expensive with recent resurfacing projects costing about \$130,000 per mile for a 1.5-inch top course. The paving of gravel roads is also not planned because of the cost. In addition to the surface cost, sub-base preparation, drainage facilities, shoulders and bituminous base course requirements drive the cost well above affordability. The Township will monitor the effectiveness of

new materials and practices and use such innovations to best advantage. Good examples are plastic culverts and plastic head walls.

Funding for road maintenance is taken from the general fund and the Liquid Fuels Fund, and no shortfalls are anticipated to meet the maintenance needs. The Township receives about \$52,000 per year from the State Liquid Fuels Fund based on a formula accounting for population and Township road miles. General fund expenditures on road maintenance, including personnel, snow removal, materials and resurfacing contracts, amounted to almost \$120,000 in 2009 and almost \$112,000 was budgeted in 2010. The funding available for resurfacing is limited when compared to the cost per mile and resurfacing must be done on a long term rotation.

Township Road Posting and Bonding

Townships in Pennsylvania have the authority to establish weight limits on local roads to prevent damage and to require bonding to ensure any damage can be repaired. A number of landowners in the Township and many more in the region have signed leases for the extraction of natural gas, landowners continue to harvest timber, and other some construction activities require heavy trucks. The Township should begin the process required to study, post weight limits and bond Township roads. (See the *Dealing with Potential Damage to Local Roads Sidebar* on the following page.)

New Road Construction and Public Dedication

Franklin Township is not likely to undertake any new road construction. Roads and intersections and associated drainage facilities serving new residential developments will be constructed by developers in accord with the applicable Township and State standards. If determined beneficial to the overall public good, these roads can be, but are not required to be, accepted for public dedication by the Township. If the roads meet PennDOT standards, the State Liquid Fuels Fund allocation would increase. As noted earlier, the annual payment from the state is based on the municipal population and the amount of road miles maintained.

The Franklin Township policy is to not accept any new development road unless the road clearly serves a general public purpose other than providing access to homes in the residential subdivision. Public dedication would only be considered if the road provides connection between existing public roads and therefore clearly serves the general public. The long term cost of the maintenance of public roads falls far short of the funds received from the Commonwealth liquid fuel program and the taxes typically collected from residential development. Local officials must carefully weigh the long term maintenance costs against the local tax revenues generated by development and increased state funding before accepting private roads for dedication.

Condition of State and County Roads

Continued maintenance, improved drainage, resurfacing and identified intersections are the primary concerns on State and County roads. Although the Township has no direct control over State and County roads (the roads that carry the most traffic at higher speeds and present the most critical safety issues) this *Plan* identifies a number of concerns which must be monitored:

- Correction of dangerous intersections
- Surface restoration
- Increasing volumes of traffic
- Speed limit enforcement
- Adequate maintenance
- Improved signs for hazards and traffic control

DEALING WITH POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO LOCAL ROADS

The potential impact of logging truck traffic on local roads concerns many officials. Some of the roads and bridges in forest areas may not be designed to support heavy loads, and the prospect of costly repairs has prompted some local governments to enact road bonding ordinances. In addition, the Pennsylvania legislature has mandated legal standards for all overweight hauling in Title 75PCS, Chapter 49. Under this system, local road posting and bonding must comply with state procedures and standards required by law as specified in Road Bonding Regulations: Hauling in Excess of Posted Weight Limit on Highways (67 Pa. Code, Chapter 189). Information about these laws and regulations can be found in PennDot publication 221: Posting and Bonding Procedures for Municipal highways, which may be obtained from the Local Technical Assistance Program. (See the Appendix for the address and telephone number.) The section below describes some of the key procedures and standards for posting and bonding of roads and for bridges located on posted roads. Similar requirements apply to bridges posted independently of roads.

Posting. *A road must be posted with a weight limit before a bond can be required of a hauler. The steps taken to establish a weight limit include (1) completing an engineering and traffic study that supports the need for a weight restriction; (2) passing an ordinance identifying the road segment and setting the weight restriction; (3) advertising the posting two times in a general circulation newspaper at least five days prior to actual posting; (4) contacting known heavy haulers who are using the road about executing a maintenance agreement; and (5) erecting standard signs showing the weight limit.*

Excess maintenance agreement. *After posting a road, the local government enters into an excess maintenance agreement with each hauler who will be operating overweight vehicles on that road. This agreement allows the local government to shift responsibility for repairing road damages on a pro rata basis to the haulers who damage the road. Note that haulers are only responsible for damage they cause in excess of normal wear and tear on the road.*

Permits. *Driving an overweight vehicle on posted roads generally requires a permit. The type of permit depends on the number of vehicles, the number of posted roads used, and the amount of use. Permits are issued only after an excess maintenance agreement has been signed.*

Inspections and monitoring. *Before overweight hauling begins, the local government inspects the road to determine its condition. The hauler, who pays for this service, has the right to be present. After hauling begins, the local government is responsible for monitoring the condition of the road and notifying the hauler of any necessary repairs. If the local government is responsible for making the repairs under the excess maintenance agreement, the local government bills the hauler for the costs.*

Security (bonding). *Haulers generally must provide security to ensure payment for any road repairs for which they are responsible under the agreement. This security is usually a performance bond, a standby letter of credit, or a certified bank check. The regulations specify the amount of security that may be required for unpaved roads (\$6,000 per linear mile) and paved roads (\$12,500 per linear mile) in cases wherein the hauler agrees not to downgrade the road. When the local government and the hauler agree that the road type can be downgraded during hauling and restored after hauling ceases, the amount of security required is \$50,000 per linear mile. If the hauler uses several roads for only a short time or makes relatively few trips, the rates per mile may be replaced with a flat rate of \$10,000. By following these rules, local officials can assure taxpayers that they will not have to pay for road repairs caused by overweight vehicles, including logging trucks. In addition, landowners and loggers know what to expect when uniform statewide procedures are followed.*

Source: *Timber Harvesting in Pennsylvania*, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, School of Forest Resources.

Should the condition of these routes deteriorate due to lack of maintenance, or if PennDOT and Luzerne County do not make improvements in anticipation of traffic volume increases over the long term, the capacity and level-of-service could degenerate. The Township should work with Luzerne County, PennDOT and the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO to identify the most critical improvement needs in Franklin Township and work to have the improvements programmed by the County and PennDOT.

Specific Areas of Concern Specific areas of concern include:

- 8th Street and Flat Rock Road - sight distance limitations due to curve in 8th Street.
- 8th Street and Sutton Creek Road - sight distance limitations due to steep approach on 8th Street.

Bridges

Franklin Township owns and maintains no bridges. The six bridges on Township roads, which are primarily large culverts, are owned and maintained by Luzerne County. Bridges on state roads are owned and maintained by PennDOT. All are in relatively good condition and are adequate for the amount and types of traffic carried, including bridges with posted weight limits.

Subdivision Roads

New road construction in the Township is associated with residential development. The subdivision and land development ordinance sets standards for road layout, design, and construction. Roads in subdivisions in Franklin Township are owned and maintained by private communities.

Specific actions for new subdivision roads include:

- Maintain up to date standards in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance for new development roads.
- Review road construction standards to ensure adequacy for public safety and eliminate excessive requirements to minimize the consumption of resources for construction and long term maintenance.
- Undertake the process to study, post weight limits and bond Township roads.

Airports, Railroads and Public Transportation

Given the regional nature of airport and railroad development and required support, this *Comprehensive Plan* calls for no specific action to be taken by the Township with regard to air and rail service. Direct local municipal provision of public transportation is not feasible and no action is anticipated other than participation in regional transportation planning efforts.

- Area residents rely on regional airports in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey for major commercial carrier service. The Wilkes-barre/Scranton International Airport in nearby Avoca is the closest to the Township.
- The Canadian Pacific Railway parallels Route 11 through the Wyoming Valley with connections to area shortline and regional railroads providing freight service north to Binghamton and south to Sunbury. The Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad provides connection to Towanda and north and Carbon County and south.

- The Luzerne County Transportation Authority provides public bus service in the County but no routes serve the Township. The closest connection is in Wyoming Borough.

Public transportation in rural communities is generally limited by low population density, the cost of providing the service, and uncertainty of public acceptance and use. In short, the cost is too high in relation to the potential revenue from the users of the system, and without public subsidy, it is simply not feasible. In addition, even in areas where the public subsidy has been provided, use of public transport is low given long trips and limited schedules, and the historic reliance on automobiles in rural areas. The Area Agency on Aging continues to provide van service for senior citizens and handicapped residents.

Bicycle Routes

Bicycle PA is the name for a network of cross-state bicycle routes that guide the bicycle tourist across the Commonwealth. The routes generally use existing highways that have been identified as desirable roads for bicycling. In some cases, the route uses improved rail trails to bypass difficult sections. No *Bicycle PA* routes cross Franklin Township. *Bicycle PA Route L* crosses southeastern Luzerne County and *Bicycle PA Route V* crosses the southern section of the County.

PLANNING POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Overview

Future planning and policy recommendations are intended to address the identified transportation issues and achieve the goals established by the Township.

Local Roads

- Continue regular maintenance of local municipal roads.
- Improve drainage problems of local roads.
- Maintain an up-to-date inventory of road maintenance equipment as a means of planning for replacement and inclusion the capital improvements program.
- Complete and update annually a detailed Township road inventory and evaluation to identify needs and develop an improvements schedule within normal budgetary process, and to identify potential capital projects.
- Begin the process required to study, post weight limits and bond Township roads.

Local Ordinances

- Maintain an up-to-date road ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) setting standards for construction of roads and establishing procedures for dedication to the public.
- Consider public dedication would only if the road provides connection between existing public roads and therefore clearly serves the general public.
- Maintain an up-to-date road occupancy ordinance setting standards for driveway access to Township roads and for stormwater and utility improvements within the road right-of-way and require the issuance of a highway occupancy permit by the Township for any access or drainage work along Township roads.
- Review road construction standards to ensure adequacy for public safety and eliminate excessive requirements to minimize the consumption of resources for

construction and long term maintenance.

- Review and update zoning standards for parking and loading areas to ensure safe and adequate parking facilities.
- Amend the SALDO to provide rights-of-way for emergency access and road connections through dedication of land and easements.

Official Map

- Consider an Official Map to identify and reserve land needed for road and intersection improvements and connections.

State and County Roads

- Participate in the PennDOT Customer Advisory Board to communicate concerns to PennDOT.
- Continue to work with the Lackawanna/Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the County Public Works Department and PennDOT officials to discuss highway improvement needs and prioritize and promote specific improvement projects.
- Work with local legislators, the MPO, the County Public Works Department and PennDOT to schedule studies to identify improvements to correct identified road and intersection deficiencies

Public Transportation

- Encourage the establishment of a ride-share (car pool) system and provide for park and ride areas in certain zoning districts to facilitate commuting to work outside the Township.
- Recognize the potential future need for public transportation and plan accordingly (e.g., locate residential development along main roads where transit stops are most likely to be located).

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Historic resources provide a sense of place and heritage that fosters a connection to the community and has important economic, social, and education benefits. The aim of historic resource protection, therefore, is to retain the heritage and identity of a community or region as reflected in its natural and built environment and to ensure that the community’s history and unique character, and the benefits they afford, are preserved for future generations.

Franklin Township contains a number of significant historic buildings, structures and landscapes. However, as development pressure increases, historic resources become more susceptible to alteration and to demolition to make way for new development. The Township’s historic resources are an integral part of the community’s and the region’s identity and character and their protection is important, especially in the face of increasing development in the region.

Historic resource preservation begins with an inventory and documentation of the resources. At present Franklin Township has no such inventory or documentation, nor does it have any program for the protection of historic resources. This *Comprehensive Plan*, therefore, focuses on encouraging the Township to create an inventory of significant historic resources in order to begin the preservation effort. Once inventoried, appropriate protection measures can be identified.

Pennsylvania has more than 100,000 historic resources identified by the National Register of Historic Places. Thousands more could be identified across the state, in cities, towns and villages, and rural areas. This rich heritage is under threat—from abandonment and demolition of decaying urban building stock, destruction of rural landscapes and prime farmland for housing and business, and highway construction to accommodate the tidal wave of trucking and passenger traffic. As with our natural resources, we must strengthen our values and develop strategies to maintain our historic resources. Historic resources are worth saving. Without these resources, communities would lose their integrity, identity, and their attractiveness to newcomers. The goal is to strike a balance between development and saving what’s important to the community’s past.
 Source: *Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania*, p. 83.

HISTORIC RESOURCES GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Historic Preservation Goal:

Protect historic resources as an important part of the character of the Township.

A number of historic resources are found in Franklin Township, ranging from residences, farms and orchards, and outbuildings, to churches, to a former Grange Hall. Buildings were erected as part of a growing community, and although many of the early structures are now gone, the many which remain add tremendously to the character of the community and the region. In addition to buildings, stone walls and fences are significant historic features throughout the Township. Originally an integral part of early agricultural practices, stone walls and fences are now being incorporated into home design and as the prime feature in landscaping. The preservation of historic buildings, structures and landscapes and encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing historic character are critical to the future of Franklin Township.

Objectives:

Historical Society	<p>Work with the Luzerne County Historical Society to promote historic preservation in the Township.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Local Historical Society</u> – Consider the creation of a local historical society charged with identification and documentation of historic resources in the Township.
Identify & Evaluate	<p>Develop an inventory of historic resources and evaluate the resources for inclusion on a local register or the National Register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Inventory</u> –Inventory and document all historic resources in the Township based on a set of qualifying criteria. • <u>Historic Register</u> – Create a local historic register and, based on the inventory of historic resources, consider nomination of qualifying resources to the National Register of Historic Places.
Adaptive Reuse	<p>Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Adaptive Reuse</u> - Allow adaptive reuse of older homes and structures to enable owners to adequately maintain them.
Design Guidelines	<p>Develop guidelines for residential and commercial development to encourage historically sensitive design.</p>
Education	<p>Educate property owners on the significance and value of historic resources and the opportunities for their preservation.</p>
Funding	<p>Take advantage of funding sources for historic resource preservation.</p>

BRIEF HISTORY

The Franklin Township region contains evidence of a rich and unique past. Early Native Americans subsisted in the region for many hundreds of years. The Iroquois, Delaware and Lenni-Lenape tribes established settlements along the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Lehigh Rivers, and hunting and scouting parties frequently traversed the region. By the mid to late 1700s, European settlers forced the last of the Native Americans to leave.

European settlement of the region arose from the Yankee-Pennamite Wars, which resulted from conflicts over the Penn land grants and Connecticut’s claim to northern Pennsylvania. In a compromise reached in 1786 to end the second Yankee-Pennamite War, Luzerne County was established. In the 1790s, settlement occurred throughout the region with the “Connecticut Yankees settling in their favorite townships and the Pennsylvania Germans settling in the southern parts of the county.”¹ Franklin Township was established in 1843 and expanded to its present day boundaries in 1848. Early settlers in the Township included Gideon Bebee, the Pease family, Ezra Olds, Michael Munson, Elisha Brace, William Brace, Benjamin Chandler and Joseph Cone.

¹ “History of Luzerne County”. http://www.luzernecounty.org/living/history_of_luzerne_county

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Overview

Before protection of the Township's historic resources can begin, the resources must first be inventoried and documented. This can be accomplished via the creation of a township historical commission or local historical society charged with preparing the inventory and accompanying documentation. Resources should be identified and inventoried according to a set of criteria that determine whether they should be considered significant. They can be further evaluated to determine whether they are locally or nationally significant. The Township can seek technical assistance for this effort from organizations such as the Luzerne County Historical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and Preservation Pennsylvania.

Historic Preservation Planning

A well-conceived preservation planning process serves to:

- *Establish a basis of public policy about historic resources;*
- *Educate and inform residents and others about their community's heritage and its value;*
- *Identify opportunities for economic growth based on the community's historic and architectural character.*
- *Ensure consistency among various local government policies that affect the community's historic resources;*
- *Lay the groundwork for adopting a local historic preservation ordinance or strengthening an existing one;*
- *Eliminate uncertainty or confusion about the purpose, meaning, and content of a community's preservation ordinance;*
- *Inform existing and potential property owners, investors, and developers about what historic resources the community wants to protect as it grows;*
- *Create an agenda for future preservation activities; and*
- *Facilitate compliance with federal and state historic preservation and environmental quality laws.*

Preservation plans serve several purposes:

- *educating elected and appointed officials, municipal staff, property owners, investors, and others about the status of historic resources within the community and the economic benefits of preservation;*
- *formally documenting existing conditions, issues, opportunities, and challenges;*
- *providing information on tax and other incentives for preservation;*
- *offering discussion and analysis regarding preservation of historic resources, and establishing a roadmap for future efforts;*
- *setting out the roles and responsibilities of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with regard to the preservation of historic resources.*

Source: Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 6.

Locally Significant Resources

Locally significant historic resources can be defined as resources that are important to the history and culture of Franklin Township, the region, the Commonwealth, or the nation, but that are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They can be districts, historical and archaeological sites, buildings, structures, objects, or landscapes. According to the general standard, a resource must have been in place for at least 50 years to be considered historic. In addition to the longevity requirement, possible criteria for eligibility for listing as a locally significant historic resource are (the resource must exhibit at least one of the criteria):

- Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or

cultural characteristics of the Township, region, Commonwealth or nation; or

- Is associated with the life of a significant person in the past; or,
- Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the Township, region, Commonwealth or nation; or,
- Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the Township, region, Commonwealth or nation; or,
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant innovation; or,
- Is part of or related to a distinctive area which should be preserved according to a historic, cultural or architectural motif; or
- Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community; or,
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or,
- Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Potential candidates for recognition as a locally significant historic resource are the Grange property, the Village of Orange, cemeteries, and other sites, buildings, structures, objects, or landscapes throughout the Township. A Township historical commission, local historical society, or the Township Planning Commission should identify these resources.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In Pennsylvania, the program is managed by the Bureau for Historic Preservation (BHP), a department within the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. The program is designed to assist state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological resources worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions. Properties listed on the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. To be eligible for listing on the National Register, a property must meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. These Criteria require that a property be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and that it still look much the same way as it was in the past. In addition, the property must meet one of the following criteria²:

² Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, *National Register of Historic Places Fact Sheet*.

- Be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a building type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- Have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

A committee of BHP staff review information submitted to the BHP to determine whether a resource is eligible for the National Register (using the criteria above). If found eligible, the resource is given a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) and the nomination process can begin. The State Historic Preservation Board reviews all nominations to the National Register. Upon determination of its level of significance and that the resource meets the Criteria for Evaluation, the nomination is sent to the National Park Service (NPS), which either approves or denies the nomination. If approved by the NPS, the resource is entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

Listing on the National Register does the following:³

- Honors a historic property by recognizing its importance to its local community, state or the nation;
- *Encourages* the preservation of historic properties by documenting their significance;
- Facilitates the review of federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects to determine their effects on historic properties;
- Provides an opportunity to consult with government agencies to mitigate projects that will adversely affect historic properties;
- Provides information about historic resources for planning purposes;
- Offers federal tax benefits to owners of income producing (depreciable) historic properties if they rehabilitate their properties according to preservation standards.

Listing on the National Register does not:⁴

- Restrict the rights of property owners;
- Require that properties be maintained, repaired, or restored;
- Prevent destruction of a resource by federal, state, local, or private development;
- Guarantee that grant funds will be available for projects;

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

- Require property owners to follow preservation standards on their properties (unless they wish to apply for tax benefits)

There are currently no historic resources in Franklin Township listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Nominations for three bridges have been submitted, but each was determined to be ineligible. However, if any resource that may be eligible for the National Register is identified, the Township should support its nomination.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Once inventoried the Township’s historic resources can receive formal protection through measures enabled by the PA Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961) and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. This adds a level of protection to identified historic resources by providing a means to review activities that could lead to the alternation or destruction of resources.

Local Historic District Act

Pennsylvania’s Local Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961) *authorizes counties, cities, boroughs, incorporated towns and townships to create historic districts within their boundaries providing for the appointment of Boards of Historical Architectural Review; empowering governing bodies to protect the distinctive historical character of these districts and to regulate the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings within the historic districts.* Historic districts established by local ordinance under the Local Historic District Act must be “certified” by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Certification means that the district has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and authorization has been given to protect the character of the district through regulatory means. The Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB) must contain at least five members comprised of a registered architect, licensed real estate broker, the municipal building inspector and at least two others with interest or knowledge of local history or historic preservation. The HARB advises the governing body whether to issue permits for work proposed on buildings within the district.

Benefits of Historic Preservation

Since the 1970s, mounting evidence has shown that historic preservation can be a powerful community and economic development strategy. Evidence includes statistics compiled from annual surveys conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and statewide Main Street programs, state-level tourism and economic impact studies, and studies that have analyzed the impact of specific actions such as historic designation, tax credits, and revolving loan funds. Among the findings:

- Creation of local historic districts stabilizes, and often increases residential and commercial property values.
- Increases in property values in historic districts are typically greater than increases in the community at large.
- Historic building rehabilitation, which is more labor intensive and requires greater specialization and higher skill levels, creates more jobs and results in more local business than does new construction.
- Heritage tourism provides substantial economic benefits. Tourists drawn by a community’s (or region’s) historic character typically stay longer and spend more during their visit than other tourists.
- Historic rehabilitation encourages additional neighborhood investment and produces a high return for municipal dollars spent.
- Use of a city or town’s existing, historic building stock can support growth management policies by increasing the supply of centrally located housing.

Source: *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 4.

Designation as an Act 167 Certified Historic District might be an option for the village of Orange if it holds historical significance (i.e. if it can be determined eligible for the National Register) and if property owners support the certification and are willing to adhere to the district’s regulations. If certification as a historic district is not supported or feasible, the Township can still recognize the Village as a locally significant resource.

Municipalities Planning Code

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code enables municipalities to plan for and act to preserve and protect historic resources. It states that *preservation or protection, when used in connection with . . . historic resources, shall include means to conserve and safeguard these resources from wasteful or destructive use.* The MPC also states “*where zoning districts are created, all provisions shall be uniform for each class of uses or structures, within each district, except that additional classifications may be made within any district for places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value.* Although not having the force of provisions under the Local Historic District Act of regulating with specific design standards, a municipally organized historical commission could act in a support capacity by conducting research, providing data on historic resources and making recommendations for historically sensitive development. The zoning ordinance could formalize the review process for historic resources and include incentives such as increased lot coverage or reduced building setbacks to support such sensitive development. Franklin Township currently have no zoning provisions for historic resource protection under the MPC; therefore, historic resources are left virtually unprotected.

FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES

Overview

Future planning policies are intended to promote the Township’s historic resource protection goals by guiding future decisions and actions related to historic resource protection.

Policies

The following policies are intended to preserve the Township’s historic resources, which contribute to the community’s identity and character:

- Inventory and document the Township’s historic and archaeological resources and pursue National Register listing where appropriate.
- Pursue technical and financial assistance for historic resource identification and preservation.
- Promote public education to raise awareness of Franklin Township’s history and historic resources.
- Establish protection measures enabled by the Municipalities Planning Code and the Local Historic District Act.
- Promote preservation of historic buildings and structures during the land development process.
- Preserve historic buildings by incorporation in commercial areas as commercial uses.
- Preserve historic resources by promotion as recreational or tourist destinations.
- Preserve farms and orchards, physical features and landscapes that represent the Township’s history.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Overview** Implementation strategies are the specific means by which the Township can achieve its historic preservation goals. The strategies take the form of regulatory provisions included in the zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance, and other ordinances, as well as non-regulatory initiatives.

- Historic Resource Inventory**
 - Organize a Township Historical Commission or Historical Society charged with the task of creating a historic resource inventory.
 - Maintain a map and database (e.g., Geographic Information Systems) of historic resources along with documentation on each resource.
 - Seek assistance from historic preservation organizations, including the Luzerne County Historical Society, the PHMC and Preservation Pennsylvania for inventorying and documenting resources and nominating resources for the National Register.
 - Seek funding from organizations such as the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, PHMC, and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and from programs such as the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.

- Education and Outreach**
 - Conduct a public outreach program, perhaps through a newsletter and the Township’s web site, to provide educational materials on the Township’s history and historic resources.

- Recreation**
 - Incorporate historic resources into recreation, trail and open space planning.

- Ordinances**
 - Once historic resources are inventoried, amend the zoning ordinance to include historic resource protection provision that will:
 - Prohibit demolition by neglect.
 - Facilitate the adaptive re-use of historic resources.
 - Provide incentives for rehabilitation of historic resources.
 - Require a historic resources impact assessment for development in proximity to a historic resource.
 - Require review of demolition, alteration, erection, reconstruction, and restoration of historic resources.
 - Allow home occupations in all zoning districts as a means of encouraging productive use of historic structures which tend to be larger and more difficult to maintain.
 - Incorporate the preservation of historic resources in conservation design for residential and commercial development.

- Site and Sign Design Guidelines**
 - Prepare and adopt design guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development to encourage the most efficient use of land and development consistent with historic character.

- Certified Local Government**
 - Apply to become a Certified Local Government (see sidebar on next page).

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Certified Local Government Program is a preservation partnership between local, state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in each state, with each local community working through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). CLGs then become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program and the opportunities it provides.

Why become a CLG? The key reason is the access certification provides to the expert technical advice of the State Offices as well as the NPS. Partnerships with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, Preserve America, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Main Street Center are also networks that CLGs have an opportunity to tap into. Of course, access to Federal funding is another benefit, making certified communities able to access the portion of Federal funds set aside by each SHPO for just CLGs annually. Being a CLG also shows your community's commitment to keeping what is significant from the past for future generations. As a certified town, city, or county seeking other opportunities, it becomes easy to demonstrate a readiness to take on a preservation project and be successful.

What is a CLG required to do?

A community must show both the state and NPS that they are committed to historic preservation. They can do this by addressing the following minimum goals.

- * Establish a Preservation Commission*
- * Establish an ordinance*
- * Maintain an active survey of local historic resources*
- * Participate in the National Register process*

(Source: www.nps.gov/history/hps/clg)

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

The demographic composition of a community's population is affected by the geographic, physical and economic character of the community. At the same time, the demographic composition is largely responsible for the manner in which a community develops and grows (or declines). Thus, the understanding of demographics is important to planning for the growth and development of a community in terms of the impacts of a changing population on community character and the demand for land, housing, community facilities and services, and infrastructure.

The demographic profile contains data from the U.S. Census Bureau on population, income, and employment. Population projections through the year 2020 are also included. To gain a broader perspective and a measure of comparison, data for adjoining municipalities, Luzerne County, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are included where appropriate.

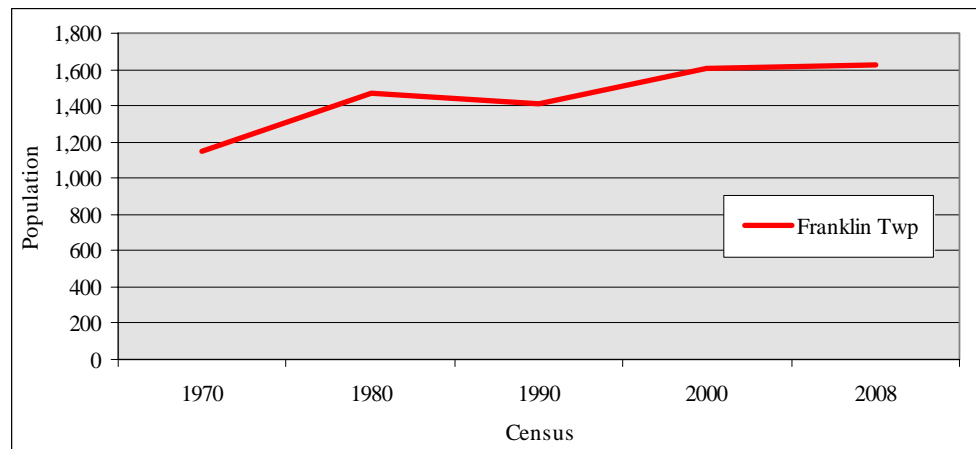
POPULATION TRENDS

Population 1970-2008

To assess population trends, U.S. Census data from 1970 to 2000 are examined along with 2008 estimates. Although the 2010 Census was conducted in the spring of 2010, the data will not be available until early 2012. Specific findings are as follows:

- The data show a trend of rising and falling population in Franklin Township (Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1). The Township experienced significant population growth in the 1970s (28.65%), followed by a decline (-4.01%) in the 1980s. Population growth picked up again in the 1990s, increasing by 13.22%, but has recently plateaued, growing by only 1.25% since 2000. This recent stagnation of the population is possibly due to the nation's current economic downturn.

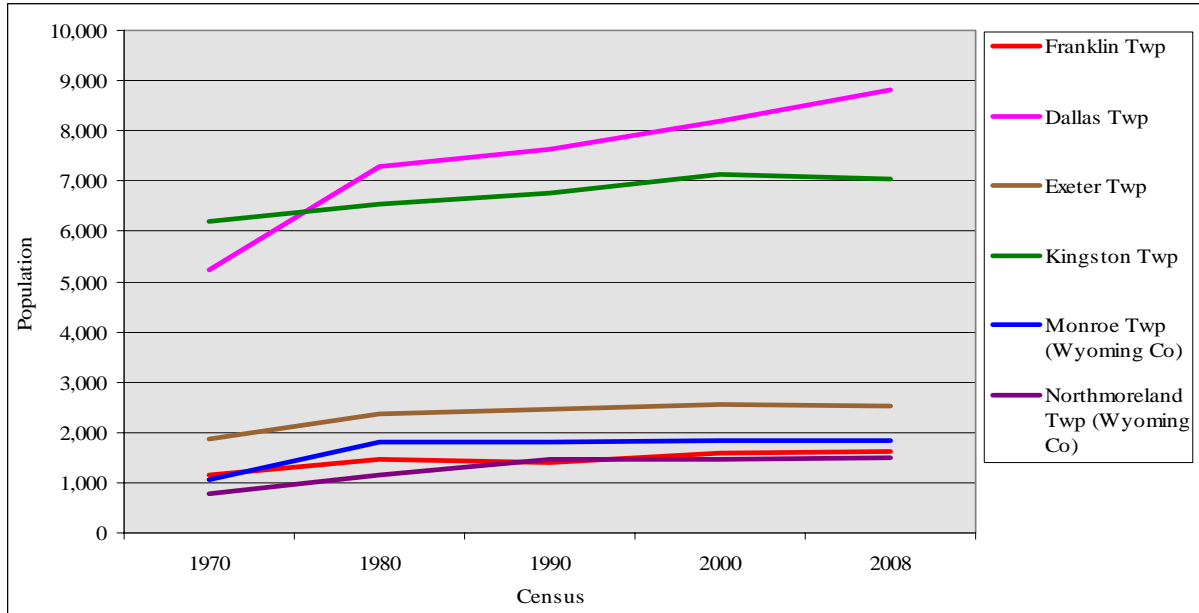
Figure 2.1 – Franklin Township Population Trend 1970-2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

- Among neighboring municipalities, Franklin Township has the second smallest 2008 population figure (1,621) next to Northmoreland Township (1,483). Dallas and Kingston Townships have the highest population counts at 8,831 and 7,048, respectively (Figure 2.2 and Table 2.1).

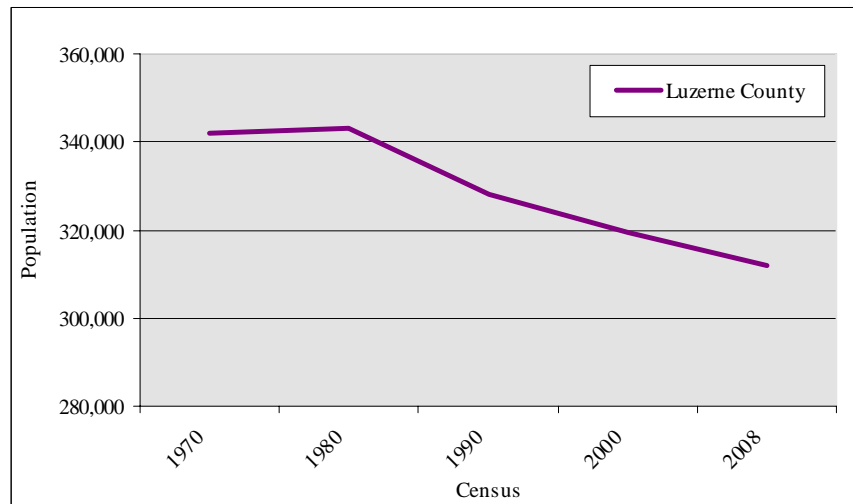
Figure 2.2 – Population Trends of Neighboring Municipalities 1970-2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

- With the exception of Dallas Township, the population of each of the neighboring municipalities remained essentially unchanged between 2000 and 2008. However, Dallas Township continued its steady growth trend, increasing by 7.97% during this time (Table 2.1). Luzerne County has experienced a steady population decline since 1980 (Figure 2.3 and Table 2.1).

Figure 2.3: Population Trend Luzerne County 1970-2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 2.1. Population: 1970 - 2008

Municipality	1970	1980	% Change	1990	% Change	2000	# Change	% Change	2008	# Change	% Change
	Census	Census	1970-1980	Census	1980-1990	Census	1990-2000	1990-2000	Estimate	2000-2008	2000-2008
Franklin Twp	1,145	1,473	28.65%	1,414	-4.01%	1,601	187	13.22%	1,621	20	1.25%
Dallas Twp	5,232	7,287	39.28%	7,625	4.64%	8,179	554	7.27%	8,831	652	7.97%
Exeter Twp	1,869	2,355	26.00%	2,457	4.33%	2,557	100	4.07%	2,523	-34	-1.33%
Kingston Twp	6,196	6,535	5.47%	6,763	3.49%	7,145	382	5.65%	7,048	-97	-1.36%
Monroe Twp (Wyoming Co)	1,045	1,803	72.54%	1,802	-0.06%	1,836	34	1.89%	1,834	-2	-0.11%
Northmoreland Twp (Wyoming Co)	767	1,162	51.50%	1,462	25.82%	1,463	1	0.07%	1,483	20	1.37%
Luzerne County	341,956	343,079	0.33%	328,149	-4.35%	319,250	-8,899	-2.71%	311,983	-7,267	-2.28%
Pennsylvania	11,800,766	11,864,751	0.54%	11,881,643	0.14%	12,281,054	399,411	3.36%	12,448,279	167,225	1.36%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Trends by Age

The age of a community's population is important in terms of the types of community facilities and services which must be provided. Many of the services which are age dependant are provided by public entities other than the Township. For example, the number of children determines the size and type of educational facilities and services provided by the school district, while an aging population will require more social services from county and state agencies. However, facilities such as parks, playgrounds, passive recreation areas, and senior centers, and programs and activities for youth, families and seniors are commonly provided by local municipalities. Therefore, the Township must continue to assess the range of facilities and services required to meet the needs of its changing population.

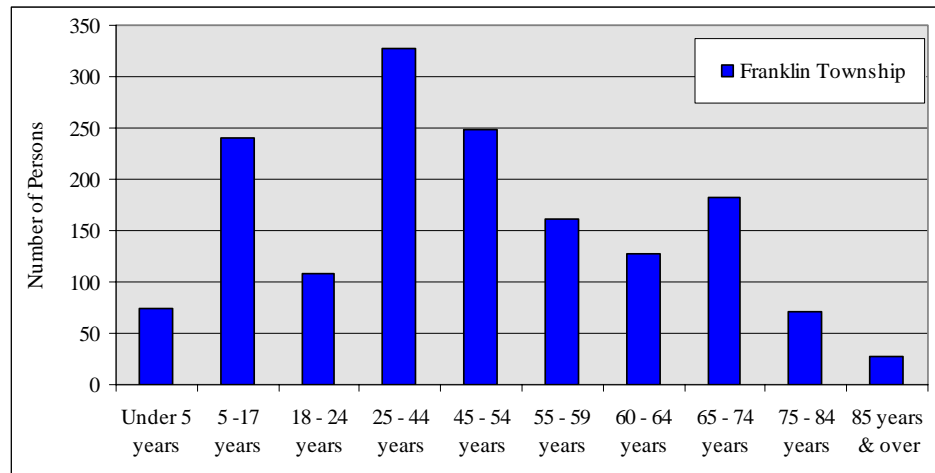
Table 2.2 and Figure 2.4, Population Composition by Age, show the current distribution of age groups in the Township, while Table 2.3 and Figure 2.5, Population Trends by Age, examine changes within age groups between 1990 and 2014. These analyses provide insight into which populations in the Township, with respect to age, account for recent population change and which groups are growing or declining. Based on trends of growth and decline among age groups, the Township can begin to consider planning for future services and activities for specific population segments such as children and seniors.

Table 2.2 – Population Composition by Age

	2014 Projection	% of Total
Under 5 years	74	4.72%
5 -17 years	241	15.37%
18 - 24 years	108	6.89%
25 - 44 years	327	20.85%
45 - 54 years	249	15.88%
55 - 59 years	161	10.27%
60 - 64 years	128	8.16%
65 - 74 years	182	11.61%
75 - 84 years	71	4.53%
85 years & over	27	1.72%

Source: US Census Bureau

Figure 2-4: Population Composition by Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Findings are as follows

- The largest age groups in Franklin Township are those aged 25-44, 45-54, and 5-17 years of age. This suggests that the Township is largely made up families with children. However, this appears to be changing. The data suggest that Franklin Township is an aging community, experiencing significant gains in the population aged 55 years and over and significant declines in population below 44 years of age. This might be due to a process of aging in place, where residents remain in the Township and age out of the younger cohort groups while the young population is not replaced. It might also be a result of the younger population moving out of the Township.
- The 5-17 year age segment (school-aged children) is among the largest in the Township, but has been in decline and is expected to steadily decline through 2014.

Table 2.3 - Population Trends by Age – 1990 to 2014

Age Range	1990 Census	2000 Census	# Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000	2009 Estimate	# Change 2000-2009	% Change 2000-2009	2014 Projection	# Change 2009-2014	% Change 2009-2014
Under 5 years	89	88	-1	-1.12%	79	-9	-10.23%	74	-5	-6.33%
5 -17 years	281	284	3	1.07%	252	-32	-11.27%	241	-11	-4.37%
18 - 24 years	119	91	-28	-23.53%	103	12	13.19%	108	5	4.85%
25 - 44 years	450	480	30	6.67%	357	-123	-25.63%	327	-30	-8.40%
45 - 54 years	160	276	116	72.50%	302	26	9.42%	249	-53	-17.55%
55 - 59 years	71	102	31	43.66%	135	33	32.35%	161	26	19.26%
60 - 64 years	70	75	5	7.14%	120	45	60.00%	128	8	6.67%
65 - 74 years	113	111	-2	-1.77%	137	26	23.42%	182	45	32.85%
75 - 84 years	52	76	24	46.15%	68	-8	-10.53%	71	3	4.41%
85 years & over	9	18	9	100.00%	27	9	50.00%	27	0	0.00%

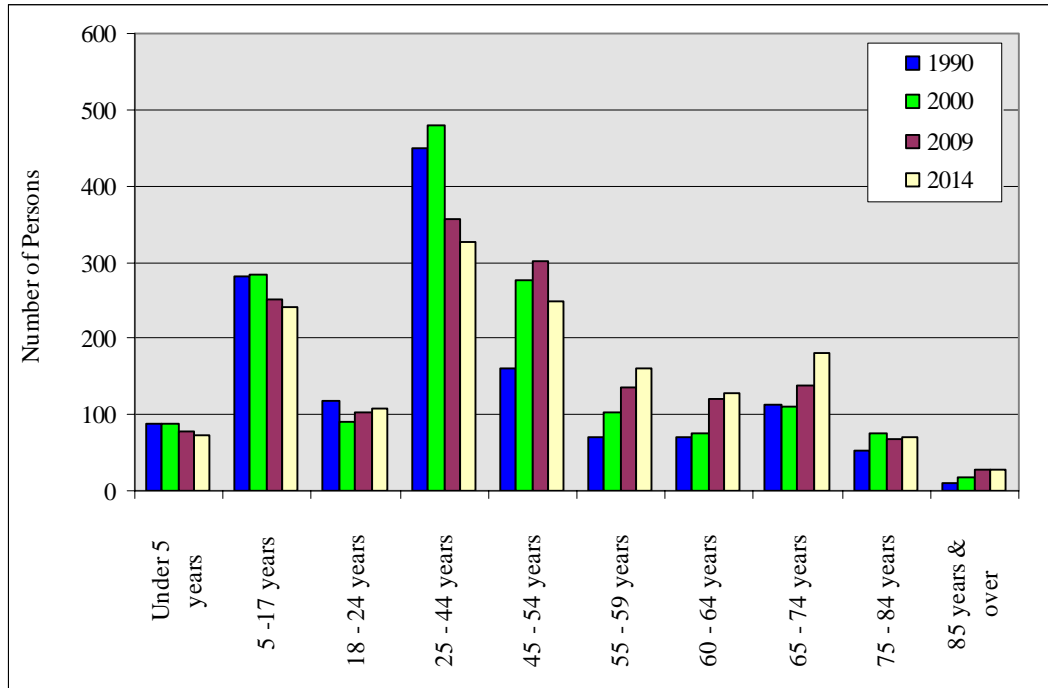
Source: US Census Bureau

- The number of young adults aged 18-24 (just entering college and the work force) declined by approximately 24% between 1990 and 2000, but is estimated to have increased from 2000 to 2009, and is expected to increase again from 2009 to 2014. By 2014, this age group will total 6.89% of the Township’s population. Increases in the 18-24 year age group are likely the result of the younger cohort group aging into this cohort. It might also suggest that college students are moving back home after graduating.
- After an increase between 1990 and 2000, the number of persons aged 25-44 years is estimated to have sharply declined between 2000 and 2009 and is expected to continue declining through 2014. This suggests that young workers and perhaps young families are moving out of the Township, perhaps due to a lack of economic opportunity. Aging into the upper cohort groups likely accounts for some this decline as well. Despite this trend, this age group is the largest in the Township and will account for 20.85% of the Township’s population by 2014.
- The combined age group representing the population age 55 and over is expected to continue its growth trend into 2014. By 2014, this group will

represent 36% of the Township’s population, and will likely represent an even larger portion of the population if the younger cohorts remain in the Township.

- By 2014, the Township’s median age is expected to be 46.5 years, up from 40.8 years as of the 2000 census. This is a dramatic increase in the median age and, if the projections are accurate, confirms the assertion that the Township’s population is aging.

Figure 2.5 - Population Trends by Age – 1990 to 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Population Projections

Population projections represent anticipated future growth or decline for which the Township must be prepared to plan. Estimating a municipality’s future population is a good way to anticipate changing demand for community facilities and services and to assess the demand for land and the effect on such community characteristics such as open space and housing affordability. However, the reliability of population projections at the small scale of a municipality is suspect since projections may change drastically as the result of economic conditions, a large development project, and other unforeseen factors. Furthermore, different projection methods may yield very different results at this scale. Population projections at the municipal level are therefore intended to serve as a general measure of expected growth or decline.

Two sets of population projections for Franklin Township are presented for comparison in Table 2.4. The first is calculated based on the average annual rate of growth of US Census data from 2000 to 2008. This projection is carried out to the year 2020 and assumes that the current slow down in housing due to

economic conditions will continue for some time. The second is based on a linear regression using historical Census data from 1970.

Table 2.4 Population Projections

	2000 Census	2010 Estimate	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	Abs. Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020
By Avg Annual Growth	1,601	1,626	1,639	1,652	26	1.60%
By Linear Regression	1,601	1,735	1,802	1,866	131	7.55%

Source: Consultant’s Analysis

Projections based on an annual average growth rate of 0.16% show a slight increase of population reaching 1,639 persons by 2015 and 1,652 by 2020. Again, this method assumes that the current recession will continue for some time. The regression model results in a population increase that is slightly higher, reaching 1,802 persons by 2015 and 1,866 persons by 2020. In either case, the projections indicate a moderate rate of population growth in the near future and it appears that Franklin Township will remain a rural community well into the future. Nevertheless, the Township must monitor population change on a regular basis to ensure that it is planning for facilities and services accordingly.

Countywide population projections through 2020 prepared by the Pennsylvania State Data Center show declining population in Luzerne County, and neighboring Lackawanna, Wyoming, and Schuylkill Counties. Population increases are projected for neighboring Carbon and Columbia Counties. The population of Pennsylvania as a whole is also projected to increase.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is surveyed from among the population aged 25 years and over. It represents the highest level of education reached by individuals of that age group and has implications related to employment and income levels within the Township. Data from the 2000 Census are presented for Franklin Township, Luzerne County, and Pennsylvania (Table 2.5 and Figure 2.6).

Table 2.5 - Educational Attainment

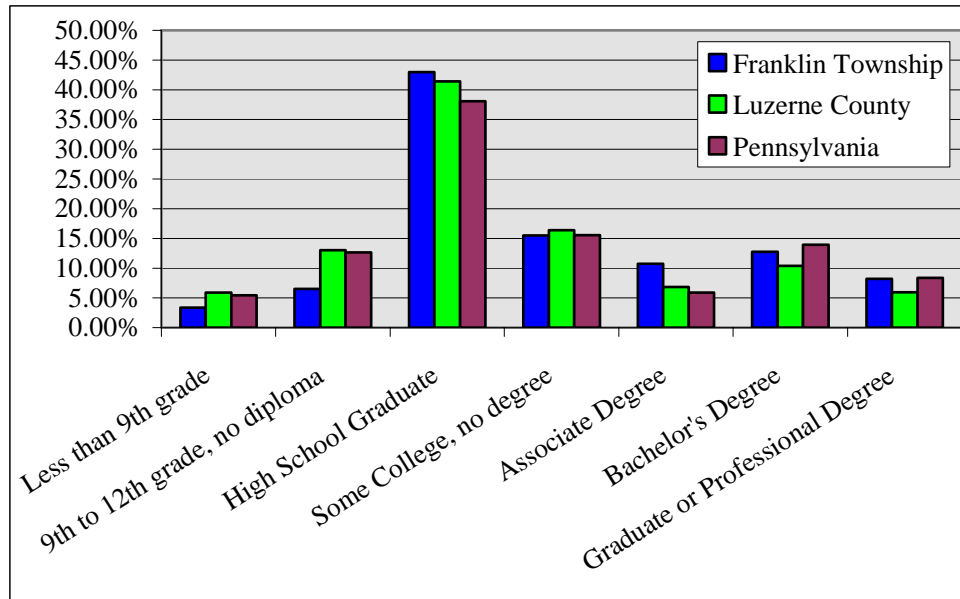
Educational Attainment	Franklin Township		Luzerne County		Pennsylvania	
	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total
Population 25 years and over	1,136	100%	226,374	100%	8,266,284	100%
Less than 9th grade	38	3.35%	13,336	5.89%	452,069	5.47%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	74	6.51%	29,554	13.06%	1,044,036	12.63%
High School Graduate	488	42.96%	93,749	41.41%	3,150,013	38.11%
Some College, no degree	176	15.49%	37,158	16.41%	1,284,731	15.54%
Associate Degree	122	10.74%	15,541	6.87%	487,804	5.90%
Bachelor's Degree	145	12.76%	23,520	10.39%	1,153,383	13.95%
Graduate or Professional Degree	93	8.19%	13,516	5.97%	694,248	8.40%
% High School or Less		52.82%		60.36%		56.21%
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher		20.95%		16.36%		22.35%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Specific findings are as follows:

- The majority (53%) of Franklin Township residents have a high school education or less than a high school education; 21% have a Bachelor’s Degree or higher.
- The educational level of Franklin Township residents is higher than Luzerne County and the Commonwealth.

Figure 2.6 - Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Income

Table 2.6 and Figure 2.7 contain a detailed break down of household income showing the number of households within each income bracket. Household income is used because it is a more inclusive measure than family income since it includes single persons living alone and unrelated persons living together. This provides a more accurate description of the community’s economic well-being. Standard measures of income are also presented, including median household income, median family income, and per capita income. Data on poverty are also included. Specific findings are as follows:

- Using a measure of \$25,000 to \$42,000 to define “lower-middle income” and \$42,000 to \$65,000 to define “middle income” one can conclude that Franklin Township is a lower-middle to middle income community with a high percentage of households’ earnings falling within these ranges.
- Income levels in Franklin Township exceed the County and the Commonwealth as evidenced by its higher median household income, median family income, and per capita income, and its lower percentage of families and individuals in poverty.

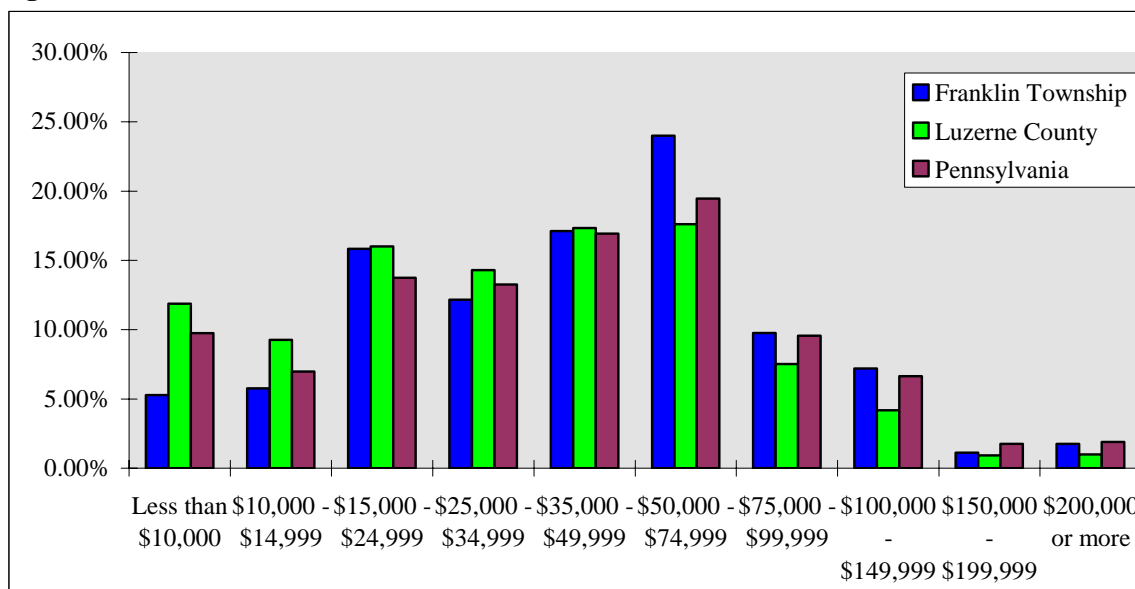
- An increasing percentage of Franklin Township families and individuals are in poverty compared to 1990. The percentage of families in poverty has increased from 5.1% in 1990 to 5.6% in 2000, and the percentage of individuals in poverty has increased from 6.6% in 1990 to 7.1% in 2000. These percentages might be even higher at this time as result of the recent economic downturn.

Table 2.6 – Household Income

Median Household Income	Franklin Township		Luzerne County		Pennsylvania	
	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total
# of Households	625	100%	130,703	100.00%	4,779,186	100.00%
Less than \$10,000	33	5.28%	15,516	11.87%	465,860	9.75%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	36	5.76%	12,112	9.27%	333,381	6.98%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	99	15.84%	20,934	16.02%	657,266	13.75%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	76	12.16%	18,678	14.29%	633,953	13.26%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	107	17.12%	22,649	17.33%	809,165	16.93%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	150	24.00%	23,024	17.62%	929,863	19.46%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	61	9.76%	9,828	7.52%	457,480	9.57%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	45	7.20%	5,457	4.18%	317,171	6.64%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	7	1.12%	1,220	0.93%	84,173	1.76%
\$200,000 or more	11	1.76%	1,285	0.98%	90,874	1.90%
Median Household Income	\$45,150		\$33,771		\$40,106	
Median Family Income	\$51,310		\$43,335		\$49,184	
Per Capita Income	\$21,014		\$18,228		\$20,880	
Families Below Poverty Level	27	5.60%	6,827	8.1%	250,296	7.8%
Individual Below Poverty Level	113	7.10%	34,136	11.1%	1,304,117	11.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Figure 2.7 - Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Employment Status

Data on employment status are taken from the 2000 US Census and updated with current unemployment statistics. The Census data are derived from the population aged 16 years and over (Table 2.7). Individuals of this age are legally eligible to work. Those that are in the labor force are classified as either being in the armed forces or in the civilian labor force. Those not in the labor force include students, retired workers, seasonal workers that were surveyed during the off-season, institutionalized people, stay-at-home-parents, and people working less than 15 hours doing incidental, unpaid family work.

- As of the 2000 Census, 68% of Franklin Township residents were in the labor force and all were in the civilian labor force. This percentage is higher than both the County and the Commonwealth. At 3.08%, the Township’s unemployment rate was nearly the same as the County and slightly lower than the Commonwealth. The Township’s employment status was therefore healthier, with a higher percentage of residents in the labor force and a lower unemployment rate.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, recent unemployment figures as of April 2010 were at 10.2% for Luzerne County, 9.8% for the Scranton--Wilkes-Barre Metropolitan Area, and 9.0% for Pennsylvania. As of June 2010, the national unemployment rate was 9.7%. Unemployment statistics are not available at the municipal level. One can only surmise that Franklin Township’s current unemployment rate has climbed along with the regional unemployment figures, though the exact percentage might be different.

Table 2.7 - Employment Status

Employment Status	Franklin Township		Luzerne County		Pennsylvania	
	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total
Population 16 years and over	1,266	100%	260,412	100.00%	9,693,040	100.00%
Not in labor force	411	32.46%	108,543	41.68%	3,692,528	38.09%
In labor force	855	67.54%	151,869	58.32%	6,000,512	61.91%
Armed forces	0	0.00%	121	0.05%	7,626	0.08%
Civilian labor force	855	67.54%	151,748	58.27%	5,992,886	61.83%
Employed	816	64.45%	143,492	55.10%	5,653,500	58.33%
Unemployed	39	3.08%	8,256	3.17%	339,386	3.50%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Occupation & Industry

Occupation and industry of employment are surveyed from among the population 16 years and over in the civilian labor force. Occupation describes the kind of work the person does on the job. Industry refers to the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization. These data inform the Township of the skill level and training of its labor force and are related to educational attainment and income levels.

- Franklin Township’s two leading occupations are “management, professional and related” occupations, and “sales and office,” each employing an equal number of workers (Table 2.8 and Figure 2.8). The next most common occupation is “production, transportation, and material moving,” followed by “construction, extraction and maintenance,” and “service.” The occupation employing the smallest number of residents is ‘farming, fishing, and

forestry” with less than 2% of the local labor force. In comparison to the County, the Townships’ higher education level likely contributes to its higher percentage of workers management, professional, sales and office occupations, and its lower percentage of workers in service occupations. This in turn accounts for the Township’s comparatively higher incomes. The Commonwealth, however, has a higher percentage of workers in management and professional occupations, which is likely due to its higher number of bachelor’s and professional degrees.

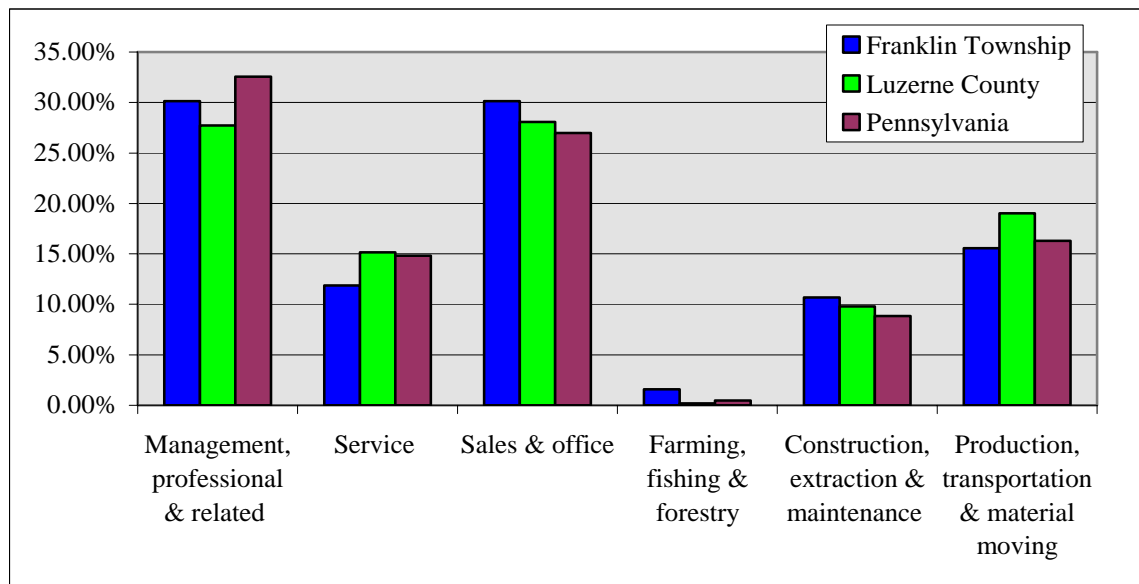
- The leading industries are “education, health, and social services” (17.65%); “manufacturing” (15.20%) and “retail trade” (11.52%) (Table 2.9 and Figure 2.9). With the exception of retail trade, these industries, along with construction, information, professional/scientific/management, and finance/insurance/real estate tend to be higher wage industries.

Table 2.8 - Occupation

Occupation	Franklin Township		Luzerne County		Pennsylvania	
	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	816	100%	143,492	100.00%	5,653,500	100.00%
Management, professional & related	246	30.15%	39,817	27.75%	1,841,175	32.57%
Service	97	11.89%	21,777	15.18%	838,137	14.83%
Sales & office	246	30.15%	40,282	28.07%	1,525,131	26.98%
Farming, fishing & forestry	13	1.59%	283	0.20%	26,722	0.47%
Construction, extraction & maintenance	87	10.66%	14,052	9.79%	500,898	8.86%
Production, transportation & material moving	127	15.56%	27,281	19.01%	921,437	16.30%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Figure 2.7 - Occupation



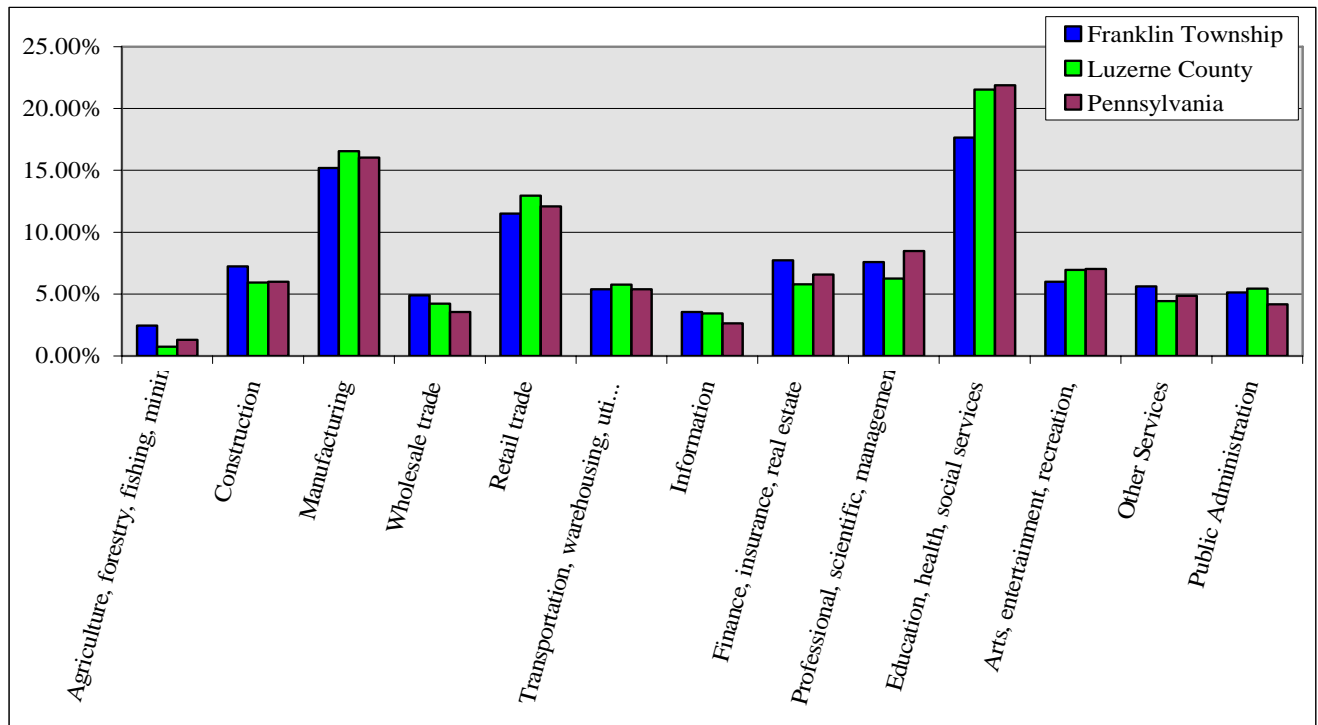
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 2.9 – Employment by Industry

Industry	Franklin Township		Luzerne County		Pennsylvania	
	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total	2000 Census	% of Total
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	816	100%	143,492	100.00%	5,653,500	100.00%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining	20	2.45%	1,057	0.74%	73,459	1.30%
Construction	59	7.23%	8,515	5.93%	339,363	6.00%
Manufacturing	124	15.20%	23,754	16.55%	906,398	16.03%
Wholesale trade	40	4.90%	6,075	4.23%	201,084	3.56%
Retail trade	94	11.52%	18,595	12.96%	684,179	12.10%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	44	5.39%	8,260	5.76%	304,335	5.38%
Information	29	3.55%	4,916	3.43%	148,841	2.63%
Finance, insurance, real estate	63	7.72%	8,322	5.80%	372,148	6.58%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management	62	7.60%	8,963	6.25%	478,937	8.47%
Education, health, social services	144	17.65%	30,882	21.52%	1,237,090	21.88%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	49	6.00%	9,988	6.96%	397,871	7.04%
Other Services	46	5.64%	6,369	4.44%	274,028	4.85%
Public Administration	42	5.15%	7,796	5.43%	235,767	4.17%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Figure 2.9 – Employment by Industry



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Commute to Work

US Census 2000 Commute to Work data indicate that most jobs held by Franklin Township workers are located outside of the Township. The largest percentage of workers (17.24%) commute to the City of Wilkes-Barre. The next largest percentage (10.92%) work in Dallas Township, followed by Dallas Borough

(10.39%), then Plains Township (6.32%). The fifth largest percentage (5.53%) live and work in Franklin Township. The City of Scranton ranks seventh, with 3.68% of Franklin Township residents commuting there for work.

In total, 92% of Franklin Township workers work within Luzerne County, 7.5% work in Lackawanna County, 0.26% work in Columbia County (in Berwick Borough), and 0.26% work in Lehigh County (in Hanover Township).

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

According to the demographic analysis, Franklin Township is an aging lower-middle to middle income community with education levels that are slightly above average. Although the data suggest that the population of Luzerne and neighboring counties has been declining and will continue to decline, Franklin Township's population is expected to increase slightly. In terms of age, young and middle aged persons, presumably families with children under 18, represent the largest portion of the Township's population. However, younger age groups have been declining and are expected to continue declining in number while the population over age 55 has been, and is expected to continue increasing in the future.

The demographic data support the notion that Franklin Township is a bedroom community, providing residence for individuals that commute to work in surrounding communities. As of the 2000 Census, the Township's labor force and employment status were stable; however, in the current economic climate the labor and employment situation is uncertain.

Planning for changing demographics involves all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan, including land use, housing, natural and historic resources protection, community facilities and utilities, transportation, and recreation. Although population growth is expected to be modest, the Township must identify areas that are most suitable for new development in order to provide housing and related uses, and areas that are most suitable for conservation in order to ensure that water supply, wildlife habitat, and natural resources remain productive and sustainable.

The Township must also plan for providing necessary utilities and transportation infrastructure. Planning for community facilities and services, such as recreational facilities, social centers, and emergency services must be appropriate for the Township's current large number of middle-aged and young persons, but must also consider the trend toward an aging population. Nationwide, the senior population is expected to increase drastically as the Baby Boomers age. This will put enormous strain on services and resources for seniors and the elderly. The Township must closely monitor this trend over the next decade and beyond.