

## **Chapter 7                    LAND USE PLAN**

### **Planning Requirements**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that a comprehensive plan provide a plan for land use. Section 301.2 of the MPC states that the plan for land use may include provisions for the amount, intensity, character and timing of land uses, and for the preservation of prime agricultural lands, floodplains and other special hazard areas and similar uses.

The comprehensive plan is expected to meet the housing needs of present and future residents. This can be accomplished by conserving presently sound housing, rehabilitating housing in declining neighborhoods and accommodating new housing of different types and densities.

The Municipalities Planning Code also requires that the municipal comprehensive plan be consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan.

### **“Landscapes,” The Comprehensive Plan for Chester County**

On July 12, 1996, the Chester County Commissioners adopted “Landscapes, Managing change in Chester County, 1996-2020, Comprehensive Plan Policy Element.” “Landscapers” analyzed development of the County over several decades.

In the last twenty-five years, more development has occurred in Chester County than in the previous three hundred years. For this reason, more land has been consumed in Chester County for each new house and each new job than in any other county in the Delaware Valley Region. This type of development pattern has become known as “sprawl.” Sprawl is the spreading of low density, totally automobile dependent developments, shopping centers and corporate/industrial parks and is deemed wasteful and short sighted. In adopting “Landscapes,” the County has selected a course of action to change the pattern of development. By avoiding sprawl, we can:

- Conserve historic and natural resources
- Protect open areas (woodlands and farms)
- Revitalize towns and communities
- Reduce congestion on roadways
- Save tax dollars and utility cost
- Retain and attract business and jobs

## **Chester County Livable Landscapes: 2020**

The Chester County Comprehensive Plan Policy Element, adopted by the County in 1996, is entitled “Landscapes.” This document advocates that creation of “livable landscapes” as an alternative to suburban sprawl. The concept is fundamental to the growth management strategies of the Chester County Comprehensive Plan. Four types of landscapes – urban, suburban, natural and rural – are identified in the plan as well as the creation of growth boundaries to protect and enhance the four landscapes. The urban and suburban landscapes are delineated as the areas best capable of accommodating new growth and development because of available infrastructure. The rural and natural landscapes will require protection measures because of their value as open space, environmental, scenic and agricultural resources. The concept of “livable landscapes” also includes a recognition of and the delineation of concentrations of development, such as centers, villages and developed corridors. Both centers and villages may exist in the rural and suburban landscapes, serving local shopping and community needs, and can serve as the focus of future growth. Developed corridors, of more recent vintage, are identified generally as areas requiring special land use controls in order to improve their function and aesthetics.

In “Landscapes,” Chester County has delineated the distribution of landscape types and growth boundaries from a global perspective. Recognizing that each municipality may view its own particular planning needs from a perspective much closer to its own set of conditions, the Vision Partnership program has been established to allow municipalities the option to modify, if demonstrated appropriate, the delineation of the landscape types and the growth boundaries. It is in the intent of this Comprehensive Plan to modify the growth boundaries set forth in “Landscapes,” by recognizing the existing pattern of development and the need to focus future growth so as to preserve areas of rural character.

### **Existing Land Use Map**

The Existing Land Use Map, Figure 7.1, is illustrative of the current character of East Pikeland Township, at least as expressed by the existing land use pattern. The Township can very generally be divided into three sectors of development patterns. The southwest sector is characterized by very low density residential and constrained lands near Pickering Creek. This sector is emblematic of the rural character of the historic Township, with rolling topography, fields in various agricultural uses and scattered house sites. The central sector has been extensively developed with primarily single family houses and support commercial. Significant to the central sector is the French Creek which passes through the Township creating a riparian corridor. Kimberton Village is found at

the crossroads of Coldstream, Hares Hill, and Kimberton Roads. The northeast sector is less densely developed with residential uses. Agricultural uses are found throughout, and a PECO electric plant and the Conrail Railroad are located in an area adjacent to the Schuylkill River. Also found in the entire Township are various institutional uses, such as schools and churches, public and private open space, and natural features like woodlots, floodplains and wetlands.

### **Future Land Use Map**

With an understanding of the existing resources, land use, facilities, transportation conditions, growth dynamics, and comprehensive planning goals of the Township, the Future Land Use Map has been prepared to illustrate the growth management policy of East Pikeland Township. Within the general concepts of “Landscapes,” the Future Land Use Map, Figure 7.2, reflects the four landscape types and provides sufficient land of a type and intensity to accommodate the future housing and non-residential needs of the Township.

The Future Lands Use Map, Figure 7.2, utilizes land use districts to not only recognize differing patterns of land use but also to project where growth should be encouraged and where open space should be preserved. Those areas as shown on the Future Lands Use Map are:

- Rural
- Industrial
- Commercial
- High Density
- Village Center
- Suburban Residential
- Mixed Use Development

Rural designates two areas of the Township, primarily the southwestern third and a smaller area at the northeast end of the Township, adjacent to the Schuylkill River. These two areas have experienced limited development to date and that pattern should remain, with even more limited development in the future. The area is characterized by agricultural lands and low density residential. Agricultural lands found in these areas have been shifting away from the working farm category in recent times, toward a more “gentleman farmer” form of agriculture. The Rural designation of these lands is indicative of the agrarian character to be found. Any limited future growth should preserve significant amounts of this open space and utilize clustering techniques. Any such development should occur only near the edges adjacent to the suburban Residential areas and should be seen as a transitional element. The southwest

Area is highly influenced by Pickering Creek which flows through it, creating many significant natural areas. This area should be protected from development and be used for limited passive opportunities.

Industrial designates an area along the Schuylkill River and adjacent to Phoenixville Borough which contains several existing industrial uses, as well as land available for expansion. The area is served by the Conrail rail line which parallels the river. This district is suitable for both heavy and light industrial uses, warehousing and concentrated office use. The area offers growth potential for similar uses.

Commercial areas have been located generally along Routes 23 and 113, where these two areas are adjacent to Phoenixville. Existing retail and service commercial uses predominate in the areas and similar future uses should be encouraged, as opposed to scattered commercial development. The concentration of such uses provides for opportunities to combine trips and reduce traffic congestion. The two commercial designations locate commercial needs in areas that are the most densely populated, both in East Pikeland and in Phoenixville.

High Density reflects areas that surround the proposed commercial concentrations along Routes 23 and 113. This pattern recognizes that the existing development is of high density residential, partially served by public facilities such as sewer, water, and public transportation, and that a similar pattern exists in adjacent areas of Phoenixville. Projected high density development should include townhouses, garden apartments, and, should future conditions ever warrant it, very limited mid-rise apartments. Most forms of attached housing should be channeled to this area, acknowledging the urban fringe expansion of Phoenixville.

Village Center has been applied to the area known as the village of Kimberton and adjacent land which has the potential to allow for the expansion of the village. Kimberton currently offers a concentration of commercial services, retail, and institutional uses which combine as the unique character of this village. It functions as a gathering place for local residents and is the product of a crossroads location which has historically provided a variety of land uses in a concentrated area. Elements which make it unique and different than contemporary development are a strong emphasis on both vehicular and pedestrian access, reduced street setbacks, and an historic architectural character. This plan proposes that the area around Kimberton be allowed to develop in a similar fashion, but with development controls which reflect the qualities of the existing village.

Suburban Residential is a large area occupying approximately the central third of the Township, between the rural extremities, and surrounding the designated areas for higher density and non-residential uses. The Suburban Residential area is extensively developed currently with small to medium size single family residential lots. Areas do exist, however, within the greater area for the infill of similar housing types. As this infill occurs in the future, it is important to enforce gradual transitions of patterns of development and avoid incompatible uses. It is also important that any future development that utilizes public sewer be required to have public water.

Mixed Use Development has been proposed for an area along Route 23 in the north central portion of the Township. The area is adjacent to both a designated commercial area and the two high density areas. Mixed Use Development implies the combination of uses, such as medium and high density residential, commercial centers, as well as employment centers in offices. Aspects of mixed developments of this type are the ability of the uses to benefit from each other and for the combination of uses to be reasonably self-sufficient. They offer the ability to have residential, services and employment opportunities in close proximity, often allowing for pedestrian connections.

The Future Land Use Map depicts seven (7) proposed land use types. The area of each has been calculated as follows:

• Rural	2264 ac.
• Industrial	344 ac.
• Commercial	90 ac.
• High Density Residential	160 ac.
• Village Center	143 ac.
• Suburban Residential	2500 ac.
• Mixed Use Development	144 ac.
	5645 ac. Township area or 8.82 square miles

The above land use areas are projected to accommodate not only the retention of most existing uses but also the increases of population and non-residential uses that are anticipated in the future decades. With the exception of the Rural area, the areas are extensively developed at present. Approximations of land area undeveloped and potentially available for future growth have been determined. No calculation for the Rural area has been made because of the abundance of that area and the intent to maintain as much of the existing agricultural uses as possible. Other lands are as follows:

- Rural N/A
- Industrial 45 ac.
- Commercial 4 ac.
- High Density Residential 10 ac.
- Village Center 10 ac.
- Suburban Residential 410 ac.
- Mixed Use Development 27 ac.

Population projections were developed for the Township in Chapter 3 of this Plan, Population. In that chapter, the methodology leading to the projection was discussed and a figure of 2537 person was determined to be a reasonable growth factor between the years 2000 and 2020. This figure takes into account the recent populations trends, the Township’s accessibility, and its growth management goals. The rate of growth for the period is projected to be 1.5% per year over the period.

Comparing the above table with the Future Land Use Map, reveals that the majority of the land available to accommodate the future residential growth is found in the central portion of the Township. See Figure 7.3, Growth Areas. Small tracts of land as small as four (4) acres can act as infill areas in the Suburban Residential area. Several other areas are as large as 70 acres and offer opportunities for planned communities. The areas found undeveloped in the Suburban Residential total 410 acres approximately. The areas for future High Density Residential total 10 acres and are made up of two (2) small five (5) acre tracts.

Population projections discussed in Chapter 3 utilized a factor of 2.89 persons per households. This factor considers the past trends in the Township, as well as forecasts for the region and County. The following table indicates the various types of housing, density, available land for growth, dwelling units projected, and population accommodated.

Housing Type	Density	Area	Units	Population
Mixed Use Residential	3.5 du/ac.	27 ac.	95	275
High Density Residential	4.5 du/ac.	10 ac.	45	130
Village Center	3.0 du/ac.	10 ac.	30	87
Suburban Residential	1.0 du/ac.	410 ac.	410	1185
Suburban Residential (Infill)	.7 du/ac.	25 ac.	18	51

Dwelling Units Total: 589

Population Total: 2220

The projected population growth for the Township between 2000 and 2020 is 2,537 persons and the distribution of that growth can be substantially

Accommodated by the above means. The Rural area designated both at the northeast and southwest ends of the Township may absorb small amounts of the projected growth. It is intended that such growth be minor and that the preservation of the Rural area be foremost. Additionally, non-residential land use sectors will expand to serve the community and provide employment. These can be accommodated in the Mixed Use area, the Village Center, Commercial areas and the Industrial area. These areas and the acreage calculated as being available for each are depicted in the following table:

<u>Land Use Type</u>	<u>Area</u>
Commercial	4 ac.
Industrial	45 ac.
Village Center	10 ac.
Mixed Use	27 ac.

The above areas have been designated to accommodate the expansion of non-residential uses, commensurate with the projected population growth. Several of the areas allow for a variety of uses, specifically Mixed Use and Village Center. These two areas have been shown as being available for expansion of both residential and non-residential uses. The intent is to provide multiple uses either on the same site or, in some cases, in the same building. The Commercial areas are small, infill areas within an existing pattern of established commercial uses. In the case of Industrial, an area of approximately 45 acres is located adjacent to the PECP plant near the Schuylkill River.

The future Land Use Map is a visual representation of East Pikeland Township’s strategy for managing future growth and development. It defines and delineates the Urban, Suburban, Rural and Natural Landscapes as a mechanism for guiding growth to the most appropriate areas in the Township in order to control sprawl and at the same time preserve the Township’s valuable resources. It embodies the goals and objectives established in the Comprehensive Plan, and provides the framework for the recommended measures to be undertaken from the Plan’s implementation.

**Relationship to County and Regional Plans**

As stated earlier in this Comprehensive Plan, it is important for East Pikeland Township to consider its planning policies and growth management strategy within the context of the municipalities that surround it and also within the context of Chester County as a whole. East Pikeland Township is part of a region upon which the residents of the Township depend for much of their social, cultural and economic life and, likewise, are influenced by the planning

Policies and practices of the municipalities in the immediate region and of Chester County. It is for these reasons that the Township has undertaken participation in planning for the Federation of Northern Chester county Communities and in conducting this update of the Township's Comprehensive Plan.

East Pikeland Township is a member of the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, the regional planning organization for the area generally west of the Township. That organization, recognizing that each member municipality has differing land use characteristics and growth strategies, has outlined goals and objectives that meet the needs of the region and satisfy common interests. Those goals are as follows:

- Preserve the rural character of the Federation
- Protect scenic resources that help define the rural character of the Federation
- Ensure the quality and livability of existing residential housing and neighborhoods.
- Limit industry, office development, and commercial centers to areas where adequate infrastructure exists to serve such uses.
- Preserve existing commercial and employment centers.
- Encourage village and neighborhood commercial uses.
- Maintain the integrity of the circulation system, especially along regional corridors and highways.

A comparison of the Township Future Land Use Map and the corresponding Map of the Federation indicates a close consistency between the two. Common to each is an emphasis on Suburban development in the central region of the Township. Rural Community and Conservation areas at the southwest and northeast ends of the Township, and an emphasis on Urban development near the border with Phoenixville. The Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan Provides more detail than the Federation Map and indicates growth areas for industry. Additionally, the Township Map projects concentrations of commercial retail and services along developing corridors, especially nearest Phoenixville.