Franklin Forward: 2025 Comprehensive Plan for Franklin County, PA

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We would like to thank and acknowledge everyone who gave their time, talent and energy to the community to facilitate the preparation of this comprehensive plan especially all municipal leaders, officials and representatives who worked hard to ensure that the final plan would be both substantial and meaningful. We would also like to thank those citizens who took time from their busy schedules to attend meetings, review drafts and speak with us. Hearing citizens’ ideas firsthand was a crucial part of the plan’s development and we sincerely appreciate the time that so many people gave to the process.

Photographs included in this plan of Franklin County’s natural areas, modern assets and rural heart are courtesy of Environmental Planning and Design, LLC as well as the Franklin County Planning Department.
OTHER RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS:
1999 Comprehensive Plan
2002 Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan
2007 Greenway and Open Space Plan
2009 Environmental Conservation Initiative
2009 Recycling Initiative
2009 Government Facilities Master Plan
2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
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www.greencastlepa.gov

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world.mercersburg.org

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Southampton Township
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Fax: 717-532-7234
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Franklin County’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan: Who, What, Where, When and Why

Who: The Franklin County Commissioners authorized an update to the comprehensive plan in 2010. The previous plan was adopted in 1999.

What: The overall strategies for growth over the coming decade are defined in this update to the comprehensive plan.

Where: A broad range of county-wide pursuits as well as a series of region-specific concepts will be identified in this plan.

When: Implementation of the plan’s recommendations will occur throughout the next 10+ years. Some concepts will be able to be realized relatively quickly while others may become building blocks for longer-term initiatives.

Why: The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code recommends that comprehensive plans be updated every 10 years. During that period of time, a significant amount of change can and often does occur. As a result, this plan update seeks to:

- Evaluate the physical and policy influences of growth over the past decade;
- Build opportunities for continued and increased collaboration; and
- Outline a realistic series of actions that are both desirable and achievable for the coming decade.
The Franklin County 2025 Comprehensive Plan presents a series of recommended strategies and policies aimed at ensuring that the county’s legacy continues to be known for quality of life, well-being and success. Growth, prosperity, conservation, connection and nurturing support are the foundation that ensures that the county’s residents and businesses will experience a productive future. The three parts of the Franklin County 2025 Comprehensive Plan outline these important attributes and how they remain integral to the county’s future:

1. **Gaining Perspective** identifies the wide variety of influences and ideas emerging as part of the plan’s update.

2. **Picture It** presents the framework and recommendations for future growth, conservation and collaboration that will enable the county to continue fostering a positive outlook and course of action as initiatives go forward.

3. **Taking Stock** details the critical components of inventory and assessments considered throughout the planning process.

While each of these planning aspects can be targeted as separate discussions, they are connected. So, as decisions and actions move forward for one recommendation, other recommendations may be affected.
Gaining Perspective: Understanding our Decade of Significant Change

The following pages highlight the primary influences shaping this comprehensive plan. These include the county’s assets, emerging trends and input gathered. An inventory of assets and trends identify how patterns within the environment, among the population and within the economy impact the county’s capacity to accommodate change. Analyses of these assets and trends, along with input received, lay the background to developing the plan’s physical and policy recommendations. These components were important discussion points throughout the planning process and significant influences in the comprehensive plan’s evolution.
Assets:

What We Value

A number of characteristics are valued and integral to resident and business life in Franklin County. These assets include accessibility, economic stability, agricultural and woodland landscapes, natural features and history, as well as the county’s planning tools. Those who live in and visit Franklin County appreciate its natural beauty, productive agricultural landscape and well maintained built environment. Those assets combined with access to technology and employment help to maintain a high quality of life in the county.

Accessibility

Franklin County possesses an intricate network of roadways, railroad and intermodal facilities. The convergence of highways throughout its 22 municipalities and access to rail lines has allowed the county to become a center of new development activity.

Further, its location in south-central Pennsylvania provides easy accessibility to many larger metropolitan areas in the state, particularly via I-81 and the PA Turnpike as well as Washington DC and Maryland via I-70.
Franklin County is easily accessible to numerous markets and metropolitan areas. Radius circles indicate distances from the center of the county.
Economic Stability

The county is predominantly agricultural and maintains a healthy economy as one of the most productive agricultural counties in the state. Franklin County ranks 2nd only to Lancaster in the production of many commodities including milk. Overall cash receipts rank the county 4th in the state. In addition to agriculture’s economic and cultural importance, manufacturing, industry and service-based businesses continue to expand.

Median household income in Franklin County increased by 31% between 2000 and 2010, while median household income in Pennsylvania increased by 24% over the same time period. From 2000 to 2010, households earning more than $75,000 per year increased by 94% in Franklin County. This increase is 1.7 times more than the increase in the same upper income households in Pennsylvania. Households in Franklin County earning over $75,000 per year are projected to increase from approximately 30.8% of total households in 2010 to between 39.5% and 42.6% of total households in 2025.

With ongoing population growth and a diversifying economy, the residents of Franklin County enjoy the advantages of both urban and rural opportunities.
Agricultural and Woodland Landscapes

Agriculture and woodlands shape the physical character of Franklin County. Pasture and grassland make up nearly 30% of the land in the county. Row crops account for an additional 14% of county land. Nearly half of the land is forest. The remaining 13% of county land is devoted to residential, commercial and transportation related uses.

Further, more than 30% of the county’s nearly half million acres is classified as prime agricultural soil. Prime agricultural soils include a combination of slight slope and deep well-drained soils that allow for good crop production. Agricultural fields are most prominent in the central valley where the land and soil is ideal for farming. Row crops predominate east of I-81 while small grains, hay and other crops are concentrated west of the interstate.

The eastern and western edges of the county are forested. In addition to the memorable views and habitats these woodland environments provide, these areas contribute to the delivery of a quality water supply and the natural resource-based economy.

### Land Use Coverage, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Intensity Residential</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med. Intensity Residential</td>
<td>3.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Intensity Non-Residential</td>
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<td>Med. Intensity Non-Residential</td>
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<td>High Intensity Non-Residential</td>
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<td>Active Strip Mining</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Row Crops</td>
<td>14.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture/Grassland</td>
<td>29.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golf Course</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>43.37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barren Land</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfact Water</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Franklin County Land Coverage Map, 2010
History

Franklin County has a rich and varied history that has shaped its landscape and will continue to influence the future of the county. The county has historically been an agricultural community with development concentrated in Chambersburg, Greencastle, Mercersburg, Shippensburg and Waynesboro. The county has maintained its agricultural economy and landscape as well as many of its historic structures. There are 61 landmarks listed on the federal National Register of Historic Places for Franklin County including bridges, farms, homes and historic districts.

Residents of Franklin County value their built history and have worked to preserve their historic treasures even in times of strong economic growth and population expansion starting in 1970 with the listing of the old Franklin County Jail in downtown Chambersburg. The most recent addition to the National Register was the Robert Kennedy Memorial Presbyterian Church in Montgomery Township, which was listed in 2009. Franklin County’s strong legacy of historic preservation has contributed to the rural landscape and small town character that defines it for residents and visitors alike.

Planning Tools

The Franklin County Planning Department is dedicated to improving the planning tools that are available to residents, municipalities, businesses
and other departments within the county. The department manages a multitude of resources that are used for planning and called upon for economic development activities.

The county is currently updating the technology of its Geographic Information Systems database to enhance the quantity and quality of information available to municipalities, residents, businesses and other departments within the county. This investment will increase the planning department’s ability to share detailed information about assets throughout the county as well as provide more integrated planning services and assistance to local municipalities and economic development efforts.

**Trends: What We are Doing**

A number of trends are significant in planning for Franklin County’s future. These trends are related to population, economics, agriculture and the built environment.

**Population**

- Franklin County has experienced steady population growth over the last several decades. The county’s population grew 15.7% between 2000 and 2010. Based upon socio-economic and development patterns, growth could increase by 8% to 16% between 2010 and 2025.
Concurrently, the number of households in Franklin County is projected to increase by between 13,000 and 19,000 households, mirroring population growth.

Between 2010 and 2025, the share of traditional working age residents (20 to 64 years) in Franklin County is projected to remain relatively constant.

Franklin County Age Groups as Percent of Household Population, 2000 and 2010

Franklin County Household Population Projections Through 2025
Economics

The majority of workers in Franklin County also live within Franklin County (64.5%). Only three of the top ten places of worker residence are found outside of Franklin County.

Assuming Franklin County industries follow national growth industry trends, total employment in the top ten industries is projected to grow by 9% over the 2008-2018 time period; an increase of nearly 5,000 jobs.

Based upon existing non-residential land use, known planned projects, projected employment by industry through 2018 and projected population/household trends through 2030, Franklin County could anticipate:

- Combined retail and office demand that totals approximately 1.5 million square feet of development (about 135 acres) through 2018.
- Modest growth in manufacturing, warehousing and transportation sectors through 2018.
**Agriculture**

Farmland throughout the US and in Franklin County is slowly being lost due to a number of factors. Franklin County has participated with Pennsylvania since 1990 in the permanent protection of agricultural land through the purchase of agricultural easements. Farmland preservation in Franklin County has been successful. The county is ranked 11\(^{th}\) in Pennsylvania in the number of individual farms under easement and 7\(^{th}\) in the total number of acres under easement.

Under the Agricultural Easement program, the landowner submits an application to the county. Farms are then compared to determine the highest priority areas for preservation. Once the county purchases the easement, the land remains privately owned, and can be sold, provided it is not converted to a use other than agriculture. There are two criteria that must be met before a farm can apply to the program: (1) the farm must be at least 35 acres and part of an Agricultural Security Area established by the township where it is located, and (2) the farm must have an active conservation plan in place.

The Agricultural Easement program is primarily funded with state dollars with some supporting local share dollars. The annual dollars dedicated to this program have varied. In 1989, the county’s annual funding share was $19,000. Years later, the number increased to approximately $2,000,000. In 2011, the share totaled $135,000. As of 2011,
119 farms were under easement, totaling 15,911 acres. Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) are another important tool for protecting farmland in Franklin County. As of 2011, there were 16 ASA’s totaling approximately 106,000 acres in Franklin County. There were 88,167 acres designated as ASA’s in 1998.

Agricultural Easements and Security Areas Map, 2010
Gaining Perspective

Built Environment

In light of the county’s population growth and land use patterns, a proactive effort has been made as part of this comprehensive plan to understand the implications of continued long term population growth and the county’s land capacity by completing a build-out analysis. This is a useful tool for understanding relationships between population growth, land use policies, potentially developable areas and economic impacts at the county and local level.

The analysis considered potentially developable area – that land that excludes existing urbanized land and sensitive natural resources. Potentially developable land was evaluated in the context of infrastructure expansion. The analysis’s last step considered the patterns of existing land use, zoning and potential market activity.

In light of the distinctive character of the county’s various regions and municipalities, a build-out analysis was also performed on two municipalities: Southampton Township and Waynesboro Borough. These two communities were identified as being representative of urbanized (Waynesboro Borough) and suburban (Southampton Township) municipalities within Franklin County and, therefore, useful examples for similar jurisdictions within Franklin County.

There was no timeframe for the attached build-out analysis to the potential growth calculations. Based upon the general county-wide build-out...
analysis, if it is to fully develop to the land’s capacity, the population could double to approximately 300,000 residents. An example of this at the municipal level illustrates that within Southampton the local population could increase by more than 3,500 households.

The analyses demonstrate that in the complexion of future growth, the intensity and types of land uses, the character of development as well as the locations of infrastructure and services need to be thoughtfully considered in order for the current vitality levels to continue both county-wide and at the local level.


Input

Hundreds of people participated in the preparation of Franklin County’s 2025 comprehensive plan and provided a number of key considerations during the process.

Public input was gained through focus groups, informal interviews, public meetings/open houses, regional workshops and advisory committee meetings.

The planning team hosted 10 focus group meetings with representation from a mixture of interests including agriculture industry leaders, commercial/industrial sector leaders, residents, municipal government, conservation groups and historic groups. Informal interviews were conducted throughout the planning process with people who expressed interest in the comprehensive plan—primarily elected officials, business community representatives and residents.

As part of evaluating the acceptance and feedback of proposed planning concepts, the planning team conducted two public meeting/open house events to review and obtain feedback on the plan’s recommendations. Feedback was incorporated into the final comprehensive plan.

Regional workshops hosted by the planning team assembled residents and community leaders in the three region-focused meetings around the county. Focused on understanding cultural, economic and

Comprehensive Plan Promotes Dialogue

Outside of the formal meetings led by the planning team, some municipalities took initiative to meet and discuss issues and patterns that they saw emerging during the comprehensive planning process. The Franklin County Planning Department and County Commissioners met with representatives from the Borough of Waynesboro, Mont Alto, Quincy and Washington Townships as well as the Waynesboro Area School District to discuss the developing comprehensive plan.

This engagement was seen as beneficial for the local municipalities as well as the overall county. Those in attendance felt that the open discussion about economic and land development, transportation and communication will foster a brighter future for Franklin County and a stronger sense of common community goals.
social issues in the county’s different regions, these meetings offered important ideas, viewpoints and considerations for the county’s comprehensive plan. One of the regional workshops’ greatest values was in outlining the relationship of emerging ideas and the ways in which such ideas could be implemented in the short- and long-term.

Finally, the planning team met bi-monthly with the Planning Advisory Committee to ensure continuity between planning objectives and the final comprehensive plan. The advisory committee was made up of representatives from government, business and private residents with a balance of public and private sector input. These meetings were especially important to ensure consensus regarding proposed planning concepts and recommendations.

A compilation of the feedback gained throughout the planning process is contained within the comprehensive plan appendix.

Just as there were many participants, there were an equal number of varying ideas. The primary significant concepts that emerged as part of this plan update included:

- Strengthened dialogue between municipalities regarding regional-scale issues and potential solutions;
- Recognition of the various ways in which quality of life is a direct result of natural resources;
Gaining Perspective

- A broader understanding of the “capacity” of the land, which could accommodate future county population and employment growth;
- Continued support for and the desire to enhance agriculture preservation;
- The wide variety of housing options and community character that are available to residents;
- Distinction, yet inter-dependence, of local-and regional-scale economic development; and
- Opportunities that exist to elevate the county’s competitive advantage based upon its strategic position in the Mid-Atlantic region’s marketplace.

**Consideration 1: What makes living and/or working in Franklin County desirable?**

An entire book could be written on this one consideration alone. From the sense of place to low unemployment rates, people enjoy Franklin County for both what they want and what they need. Land values are reasonable for both agriculture and development.

Overall, agricultural and rural landscapes are the most valued and representative aspects of the county. People want them to remain the predominant character of the place they call home. New development is most appreciated, both in character and cost, when it is located in proximity to existing developed areas.

**One Home, Two Views**

The diverse experiences, landscapes and outlooks that exist in Franklin County are embodied in the perspectives of this brother and sister...

There was a family into which a twin son and daughter were born. When the children were five years old, they all moved to Franklin County as the parents desired for their family to have a good quality of life and many memorable experiences as they all grew through the years. The move proved to be a wise decision. The parents took to the land as their way of life for both its beauty and its productivity.

The twins were part of a community that cared about their education and their overall well-being. When the children finished high school, the daughter went on to college and the son took to the land with equal devotion as his mother and father. For years and years, he worked the fertile soil sending crops to markets near and far and making the farm and home a staple of the rural landscape. At the end of his day, he enjoyed sitting quietly on the porch with his wife and young son looking out over acres of fields to see the sun sink behind the forested mountain in the distance and the sky reveal an endless sea of stars.

The daughter returned to Franklin County a number of years following graduation. This time she chose a place where she and her husband and their little girl could reside in a sizeable community with shops both large and small as well as services and employment in world class industry that was literally a few minutes from their front door. The daughter, appreciative
of her new hometown, found life to be fulfilling with anything she could imagine being easily accessible to her and her family. She found that the people around her were caring, so much so, that they often gathered at the end of the street early in the evenings to talk about what event was coming next to nearby downtown. There always seemed to be something different and exciting to see and do.

The twin brother and sister talked together one day about how their respective families had such different, satisfying experiences in their daily lives. The twins both recognized that a number of things had changed, and likely would continue to do so; more homes and new people, different businesses and different job opportunities would emerge.

Over the years, their parents had instilled in them a sense of civic duty. They became actively engaged in their communities and appreciated the responsible decisions made by their local leaders.

Before the brother and sister got back to their busy lives, they reflected one more time about this place where time, depending on your perspective and desire, could either stand still or keep pace with and sometimes help set the pace for the world around them. They talked about how lives, locally as well as those hundreds of miles away, would be moving forward based on the contributions that they, their friends and their neighbors made. From agriculture, construction, education, manufacturing or something in between, they knew lives would be moving forward based on what happened in the place they call home, the place called Franklin County.

While, employers note the quality of a well educated/experienced labor force that exists in the county, one on-going challenge that has emerged with the advent of a growing manufacturing presence is a limited labor supply available to fill highly skilled positions.

Communities are attractive for their “small town” way of life, their affordability and their easy and relatively quick access to employment opportunities, culture and major metropolitan centers both within Pennsylvania and in neighboring Maryland.

**Consideration 2: If you were to describe Franklin County in three words or characteristics what would they be?**

Over the course of several meetings, people listed hundreds of words to illustrate how they felt about the place they call home. Franklin County has a wealth of natural, civic, built and human resources. It retains its rural mindset while valuing its town centers and looking to utilize the newest technology and attract new industries to keep the economy moving forward. In sum, Franklin County is most often noted for its:

- Pastoral beauty and many opportunities for people to enjoy its rural landscapes;
- Good people who are invested in their homes and region; and
Gaining Perspective

- Infrastructure and natural resources that support a wide range of economic activities.

By supporting and valuing these important characteristics, Franklin County is poised to continue its legacy of economic success set in a thriving rural landscape.

**Consideration 3: What resources are most important to protect?**

Dozens of resources have been identified throughout this planning dialogue, but three predominant themes of preservation continually emerge: agricultural (farmland) preservation, vibrancy of the county’s core communities, and watershed protection and access to quality water. The way in which development is designed and executed is a common denominator for all of these. Future land use and housing decisions will be at the forefront of how these resources and others can remain treasures in the county as they are today.

The preservation of prime soils for agricultural use was at the forefront of discussions. The preservation of agricultural land serves a dual purpose in providing areas critical to replenishing the water table. To date, farmland preservation in the county has been very successful. The county has an abundance of quality soils and people would like to see that land preserved and the success of the farmland preservation program continue.
Access to clean, plentiful water supplies and aquifer recharge are of great importance to people throughout the county, regardless of whether it is from a source within the county or within a neighboring one. A resource once at the center of every thriving community is a vibrant downtown. As regional scale development continues to occur, the importance of downtowns and investment in the county’s core communities becomes front and center. In turn, opportunity exists for the public and private sector to join forces in expanding and adopting techniques and effective policies for infill and redevelopment. These types of relationships are at the root of what has brought success to Franklin County – moving forward collaboratively so that great ideas can be generated and success can be realized by many.
Picture It:

Franklin County
Going Forward

Picture It outlines a series of recommendations that will enable the county to enhance connections and collaboration among its physical, social and fiscal resources. Recommendations are identified within the context of several elements including:

- Forward Thinking: Outreach and Cooperation
- Looking Forward: Land Use and Housing
- Foster Forward: Resource Management
- Fast Forward: Economic Development
- Moving Forward: Infrastructure, Transportation and Energy

When viewed collectively, these elements form the comprehensive plan.

In setting the course for its future, Franklin County looks to promote continued prosperity, stability and quality of life for its residents; preserve the county’s heritage of small towns, rural areas and memorable views; and encourage a collaborative approach to planning initiatives.
The Essentials

The Essentials are identified actions that have the greatest potential for producing the most significant impacts on the county’s future vitality and character. These actions, much like a person’s need for essential vitamins, function as catalysts to promote community, health and vibrancy. The Essentials are identified as key actions for implementation that trigger or lead to the implementation of other actions.

In essence, these Essentials are the actions that produce significant “bang for the buck.” The Essentials produce visible indications of change—being the actions that the public sees—and where suitable, aim to stimulate the private-sector to make their own investments within the communities. Thematically, the Essentials embodied in the section relate to and are framed out to be a realistic action that can be initiated within the next decade in order to spark subsequent actions.
Forward Thinking:
Outreach and Cooperation

Going forward, we need to continue strengthening partnerships and cooperation.

This comprehensive plan update reinforces the most important aspect of the county’s future planning efforts: its role as facilitator. Continuing dialogue and sharing ideas is essential to both county and municipal success. In its role as facilitator, the county is poised to be a driver in conducting outreach and fostering a cooperative environment that addresses solutions for regional scale problems.

As facilitator, the county can guide municipalities and groups in a problem-solving process to help bring out all points of view represented within the county.

As a facilitator, the county can strive for an open process. It can ensure that municipalities and other groups are fully aware of the most pressing issues at hand. The county can ensure that education on technical issues takes place as needed.

By acting as a facilitator, the county conveys its commitment to achieving goals that support all municipalities, residents, businesses and organizations in the county. Additionally, as a facilitator, the county can address small-scale issues or more broad topics that may lead to public policies, proposals or simply consensus on an action to be taken.
Outreach and Cooperation Goal: Engage in outreach, education, communication and cooperation within the county

Strategy: Promote the Franklin County Planning Department’s role as a facilitator and orchestrator of municipal cooperation and as a clearinghouse of information, knowledge and contacts.

The county has an opportunity to act as an enhanced repository of planning information for local municipalities. Maintaining an organized and updated library of planning-related information will provide a needed resource that is not currently available.

The county can complement its current resources with information and services that are at the forefront of planning technology like a Geographic Information Systems database and online ordinances.

To work towards improved efficiency, and effectiveness of land use and infrastructure development for the areas’s various landscapes, the county should work with municipalities to develop a Municipal Planning Toolbox. The county should work with other organizations and municipalities to develop model, issue-specific ordinances. For example, model watershed protection overlay provisions created in conjunction with the Franklin County Conservation District could be developed.

Focusing on basic development parameters for various landscapes will enable municipalities to

Essential Action: Launch the County Planning Department’s Resource Center

Pilot Project: Establish a Resource Center to provide access to the county’s GIS mapping, planning reference/data, model ordinances and up-to-date, pertinent information.

Aim to Achieve: As the county enhances its outreach role as a facilitator for local, regional and/or county planning initiatives, its ability to provide easy access to relevant, helpful information will be paramount to its effectiveness.

How to Get There: Outline the products, the media and the protocol needed for the creation and up-keep of a Resource Center. Create a platform for electronic access that represents the technological innovation found throughout the county.

Partners to Put in Motion: Franklin County Planning Department, Institutions of higher education (computer science, geography, etc.) and municipalities.
weigh the wide variety of benefits and challenges prior to implementation.

**Strategy:** Proactively encourage municipalities to work with the county together to find solutions for regional-scale issues; strengthen the dialogue between local, county and state governments while reinforcing the successes of county planning, municipal and private-sector partnerships.

The Franklin County Planning Commission’s role in coordinating with municipalities on broader, regional impacts of local development projects should be reinforced. The county can facilitate many planning actions and endeavors by continuing to bring municipalities together and including the private sector into discussions at key points in time. Expanding the Franklin County Planning Commission’s role and function to foster increased collaboration for regional-scale land use and economic planning will help the county meet its goals.

A portion of the county’s regularly recurring meetings should highlight region-specific opportunities and initiatives. Residents and municipal leaders as well as agricultural and non-agricultural businesses should be recognized for notable or innovative pursuits – especially coordinated, collaborative planning projects. Municipalities and other entities participating in implementation of the comprehensive plan’s recommendations should be recognized as priority participants in future allocations of available county funding.
**Strategy:** Determine how the county may further its partnerships with neighboring counties.

The county should remain abreast of opportunities that exist on a regional level. By continuing to work in concert with adjacent counties, Franklin County can help to maintain its important landscape into the future.

**Strategy:** Provide sufficient levels of staffing within the county Planning Department to assist in facilitating education and outreach efforts as well as assisting in the implementation of multi-municipal initiatives as needed.

The Franklin County Planning Commission’s role and function could be expanded while maintaining sufficient staffing levels to engage in education and outreach efforts and to provide technical assistance as needed.

**Strategy:** Coordinate with public and private sector entities to promote the benefits of coordinated planning and public health.

Planning and health used to be two separate and distinct topics. As our nation and individual communities continue to encounter growing health problems, we have realized that planners can influence public health. Franklin County realizes that promoting public health is an important task and one that they cannot succeed at alone. Aside from direct county health services, Franklin County can join forces with health care specialists and providers in encouraging residents to lead healthy, active lives. Safe places for people to walk and bicycle encourages residents and visitors to stay active. Strengthening the county’s core communities and ensuring that sidewalks and
neighborhoods are complete and roadways and intersections are safe will promote walking and biking. Large tracts of public open space in the currently available. At the county level, these can be enhanced by working with groups and property owners to incorporate existing open spaces into larger greenway and recreation corridors and systems that include active and passive recreational facilities.

**Strategy:** Evaluate the applicability and potential impacts of creating Official Maps.

An Official Map is a planning tool granted to municipalities by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to allow for the designation of future public facilities on a map. This designation allows a county and/or municipality the ability to further shape the relationship of public improvements within the landscape. An Official Map can be a useful planning tool for both urban and rural areas in the development of assets such as public streets, watercourses and public open spaces including parks, pedestrian facilities, easements, transit rights-of-way, flood control infrastructure and storm water management systems.

**Going forward, we need to continue coordinating land use and housing patterns**

**Looking Forward:**

**Land Use and Housing**

A comprehensive plan is commonly rooted in land use and housing strategies. The 1999 comprehensive plan established a series of principles that will remain important into the next decade. A number of goals that were identified in
the 1999 plan were able to be achieved. The Recreation Plan, Greenway and Open Space Plan and the Natural Areas Inventory were all identified as necessary projects in meeting the goal of preserving open space and natural resources and all have been accomplished. There are several other initiatives that are currently in the process of being completed.

As part of this planning update, a study was conducted to evaluate the potential impacts of growth that could occur in the county. From these analyses and resulting dialogue, this Comprehensive Plan Update seeks to outline goals and recommendations that are most pertinent to the coming decade. This time period will present many opportunities for collaboration among county and local municipalities to further coordinate desirable and effective land use and housing strategies.

**Land Use and Housing**

**Goal:** Foster the continued livability and success of urban communities and of communities embedded within the rural landscape.

**Strategy:** Champion for local land use controls that promote balanced growth and conservation.

Land use in Franklin County has been shaped by natural features and by agricultural and small town heritage. The county should continue to encourage municipalities to preserve this

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**Essential Action:** Advocate for responsive, compatible land use decisions

**Pilot Project:** Champion for locally implemented land use strategies that promote balanced growth and conservation.

**Aim to Achieve:** Promote conservation of quality farmland, prime agricultural soils and the livability of communities embedded in rural landscapes. Emphasize agriculture and its supporting industries as identifying characteristics and stability of the county’s future.

**How to Get There:** Continue to encourage multi-municipal planning and facilitate workshops of the Franklin County Planning Department, the Franklin County Area Development Corporation, the Franklin County Agriculture Land Preservation Board, the Franklin County Redevelopment Authority, school districts and municipalities.

**Partners to Put in Motion:** Municipalities, County Planning Department, Franklin County Area Development Corporation, and school districts.
character with a thoughtful approach to land use and zoning. Particularly relating to:

1) encouraging infill and redevelopment within existing denser urban settings; and
2) supporting densities in the township areas that complement established development patterns in adjoining boroughs and villages.

**Strategy:** Promote conservation of quality farmland and prime agricultural soils.

In order to maintain important agricultural land uses, the county should continue to promote conservation-oriented/cluster residential development patterns in new developments. The county shall enhance the efforts of the county Agricultural Land Preservation Program to preserve the most productive soils in the county.

**Strategy:** Support revitalization of core communities.

Villages, farmland, small towns and forests have characterized the Franklin County landscape for generations. The county should continue to encourage the Franklin County Redevelopment Authority to partner with the private sector to pursue a pilot project in each core community. The correct balance between a focus on the core communities’ historical significance and the opportunities that exist to move forward is important in promoting their revitalization.

**Strategy:** Work with landowners to ensure prompt and sufficient reforestation of woodlands that have been timbered.
Maintaining the county’s wooded lands protects an economic and natural resource as well as preserves the character of the county.

**Strategy: Encourage home-ownership.**

Home-ownership, which has historically led to orderly growth and balance, should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible especially in the downtowns and boroughs. The county planning department is encouraged to work with the housing authority and other agencies and organizations to administer and create programs supporting and encouraging home-ownership.

The county should remain abreast of the evolution of available programs geared toward improving residential, along with non-residential, opportunities in downtowns and boroughs. The county should be proactive in understanding the impacts of successful programs or customized strategies other counties and/or municipalities have implemented.

**Land Uses Patterns**

Franklin County is unique in Pennsylvania. For a population that has grown at one of the highest percentages in the Commonwealth over the past decade, there is little evidence of sprawl. There are a number of different landscapes throughout the county: core communities, suburban non-residential, suburban residential, agricultural areas, managed woodlands and a series of corridors of county-wide planning significance.
Overall, future land use patterns should be guided to maintain the county’s existing character. Potential negative impacts of sprawl should be mitigated and avoided. Farmland should be valued for its contribution to both the economy and character of the county. Additional manufacturing and industry along major transportation corridors should strategically planned to balance market activity, community character, infrastructure demands and quality of life.

**Core Communities**

The county’s core communities are established along major crossroads. The county’s core communities are essentially “built-out” meaning that there is little undeveloped land upon which new development could occur. Within each core community, a key recommendation is to build capacity for revitalization of their downtowns. As part of this effort, the county should encourage the Franklin County Redevelopment Authority to partner with the private sector to pursue a pilot project in each core community. Other key actions are to focus on the historical significance of core communities as one of the many components of the county’s overall historical and cultural resource network as well as to create a public-private program specifically for rehabilitation. A variety of housing types and densities are found and should be encouraged within the core communities. By investing in these spaces and making them attractive for people, the county is
encouraging land use patterns that encourage pedestrian mobility.

**Suburban Non-Residential**
Predominant land uses within the county’s suburban non-residential areas are larger-scale commercial, industrial and technology developments. For prosperity to continue in these areas, it is recommended that the county and local municipalities continue to promote coordinated access management as well as provisions for land use compatibility between employment centers and surrounding land uses.

**Suburban Residential**
In the past decade, a majority of the county’s population growth has occurred around its core communities and village centers. In large part, these developments have formed a series of extended “neighborhoods” surrounding these communities. While some suburbanization has occurred, it is the exception rather than the rule. Suburban residential development should only occur in areas aligned with existing transportation and infrastructure investment. A number of municipalities have provisions in place to guide the strategic locations of suburban development and should serve as examples for others that encounter pressures for this type of growth.
**Rural Residential**

While the county’s population will continue to grow, a large portion of the landscape is envisioned to remain rural. To the greatest extent possible, communities are encouraged to continue retention of rural residential development as they have been doing. Promotion of conservation-oriented development in the rural landscape should be a high priority.

Conservation development, commonly known as conservation-by-design, should continue to be supported and maintained as a technique for promoting continuity between development and the presence of sensitive natural resources.

**Agricultural Areas**

While population and businesses continue to grow, agriculture continues to be the foundation of Franklin County’s economy and quality of life. Land uses within agriculture areas are predominantly production-oriented and very low intensity residential. To promote on-going stability and success in the agriculture economy, retention and conservation of quality agriculture soils is essential. If and when residential growth occurs within an agricultural area, the county and municipalities are encouraged to work together to promote conservation-oriented development patterns in these areas.
Woodland Resources
Woodlands are second to agriculture in terms of the county’s overall acreage. Managed woodlands include opportunities for recreation, conservation and the forest industry. Care and reforestation of these areas is important for several reasons: character, habitat, continued economic return and stormwater management.

Letterkenny
Encompassing land in the north-central portion of the county, a signature landscape in the county is commonly referred to as Letterkenny. For decades to come, it is envisioned that this area will continue to serve as a hub of activity including a blend of public military employment, private business ventures, research opportunities and natural resource management. Cooperation with the US Army and the Cumberland Valley Business Park should continue in order to ensure adequate access, infrastructure and land development demands are addressed to serve all activities.

Corridors
Between mixed use villages and urban core communities, there are varying patterns of development. Based upon existing and future desired character, two distinctive types of corridors are critical to shaping the character of surrounding conservation and development areas:

- Agricultural Corridors
- Woodland Corridors
These corridors also incorporate smaller village centers that have historically served as concentrations of both residential and non-residential development. These mixed-use areas serve as important places for supporting everyday needs in predominantly rural landscapes.

The county and municipalities are encouraged to work together to develop distinguishing criteria associated with densities, parking, signage, and access management along these corridors. Provisions should respect and complement the corridors’ attributes and ensure the existing character of each one is preserved.

**The Coming Decade and Beyond**

In order to facilitate long term planning, two future land use maps were created. One illustrates land uses anticipated in 2025. The other map shows desired land use patterns at the county’s build-out.

Build-out helps to convey an understanding of long-term growth and the county’s capacity for development. Armed with an understanding of what build-out is, the county, municipalities and state planning entities, such as the Department of Transportation, the Department of Community and Economic Development or the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources can make informed decisions about a project’s long-term impact and effectiveness.
In Franklin County, the landscape’s varying existing characteristics and patterns influence the amount of potentially developable area. In considering the relationships between urbanized land and sensitive natural resources, potentially developable land was also evaluated in context of anticipated infrastructure patterns. Patterns of existing land use, zoning and potential market activity were further considered in creating the vision for growth and conservation at the county’s build-out.
Future Land Use and Housing Plan: 2025
Future Land Use and Housing Plan: Build-out
Foster Forward:
Resource Management

Many studies document that Franklin County is rich in resources that will continue to shape its future as a haven for those interested in conservation, recreation, and history. Sustaining and enhancing natural, scenic, and historic resources will benefit current and future generations.

Agricultural resources are important to the county. Agriculture is the economic base, the visual character and one of the driving cultural forces in Franklin County. Generations of farmers have sustained a diverse agricultural economy that helps define Franklin County’s character. Preserving resources for agriculture helps to ensure that the agricultural rhythm of the county will remain an important force well into the future.

Going forward, we need to advance conservation and continue funding agriculture preservation initiatives.
**Resource Management Goal:**
Facilitate the protection and promotion of the county’s rich natural resources, recreation opportunities and history.

**Strategy:** Continue funding of agriculture preservation initiatives.

A primary aim of these initiatives should be raising and allocating funds for agriculture preservation. The county should expand its collaborative relationships with the Farmland Preservation Program, Central PA Conservancy, Franklin County Conservation District, and others to collectively promote the continued support of agriculture preservation.

**Strategy:** Support preservation of sensitive natural resources.

Greenways or open space corridors are critical to sustaining the integrity of natural systems. Franklin County has a strong legacy of planning to maintain and strengthen its green infrastructure resources.

An essential component of a healthy, natural resource system is the protection and conservation of water quality and supply. High-quality water resources are vital to ensuring a healthy community, sustainable economy and continued existence of plant and animal species. As the agricultural landscape is likely a critical component of this effort, it is recommended that the stakeholders collaborating on agriculture preservation also be at the table to promote preservation of other sensitive natural resources.

**Essential Action:**
Celebrate why the county’s unique assets are essential to its long-term vitality

**Pilot Project:** Establish an annual campaign that highlights the value of identified natural resources, recreation resources and historical features and how the assets contribute to future successes in the county.

**Aim to Achieve:** More than just a simple recognition, this Celebrated Features campaign is aimed to encourage dialogue and collaboration among groups and individuals throughout the county that lasts all year long. The initiative seeks to tie how conservation, improvement and/or enhancement of identified assets are essential to furthering economic wellbeing, cultural appreciation and healthy communities. The initiative also seeks to bring awareness (planning and otherwise) of these commonly shared resources to residents of all ages and businesses throughout the county.
How to Get There: Determine a featured unique asset each year that encompasses one or more of the resources in the county: natural, recreation and/or history. Example for the coming year could be “Year of the Civil War Trails Network” (Natural, Recreation and History). Rally related stakeholders around the cause and determine how each of the partners can be part of sharing the message. Engage artists and school-age children in developing print, electronic and spoken media to convey how features throughout the county fit within the identified asset(s). Integrate outcomes into county outreach and encourage the business community to participate in the celebration.

Partners to Put in Motion: Franklin County Planning Department, Tourism Bureau, Franklin County Historical Society, community groups, County Conservation District, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, artists, school districts, and other related stakeholders/interest groups.

**Strategy:** Encourage strategies and/or policies that emphasize conservation of existing county character: small towns, rural areas and positive, memorable views

The county should bolster its work within its own departments, with municipalities and forging relationships with the private sector to highlight the significance of environmental resource conservation, history and recreation as related to economics and tourism. The on-going creation of economic and tourism-related opportunities will continue to strengthen the value to both the county’s natural and built landscapes.
Agricultural Resources

Legend
- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Major Highway
- Prime Farmland
- Land under Agricultural Security
- Land under Agricultural Easements
- Unique Farmland

[Map of agricultural resources with various symbols and counties labeled]
Natural Resources
Fast Forward: Economic Development

Going forward, we need to embrace and provide economic development opportunities.

The county’s agricultural history and its position within south-central Pennsylvania enable its residents and businesses to continue growing with positive success. Franklin County is strategically located along a major transportation corridor and features a high quality of life and a beautiful setting for employees. The county should continue to work with the Franklin County Area Development Corporation (FCADC) to promote local and regional-scale economic development opportunities. As the county’s population and employment base are anticipated to increase, there will be a need for office space, housing for employees, and amenities to attract them to the area. The county can serve a pivotal role in encouraging and/or facilitating discussions among municipalities, the FCADC, prospective businesses, school districts and others to promote coordinated planning and policy decisions. Conservation and the appropriate use of the county’s natural and agricultural assets are central to its economic success. Important agricultural soils and woodlands support key sectors of the county’s economy.
**Economic Development Goal:**
Promote economic opportunities while retaining agriculture and community character.

**Strategy:** Continue cooperation with the Franklin County Area Development Corporation in implementing a comprehensive county-wide economic development strategy and continue to encourage multi-municipal planning.

Municipalities with zoning in the county have provided for a significant amount of land suitable for future non-residential development. In working with FCADC and the communities, the county can encourage coordinated decision making that thoughtfully reflects the overall goals and capacities of land use, transportation, infrastructure and natural resources. The county should work to ensure that there is an inventory of appropriately located land available for economic development.

**Strategy:** Continue to emphasize agriculture and its supporting industries as identifying characteristics and the stability of the county’s future.

Agricultural soils and woodlands support key sectors of the county’s economy. Maintaining these assets will allow this important economic sector to remain strong into the future.

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**Essential Action:**
Expand and reinforce how the county’s technical planning tools contribute to economic development efforts

**Pilot Project:** Integrate measurable quality of life indicators and other data into the mapping/information that the County provides in order to further assist others as they recruit, maintain and nurture employment opportunities throughout the County.

**Aim to Achieve:** Illustrate up-to-date patterns and trends that are relevant to different industries from manufacturing to agriculture.

**How to Get There:** Outline the types of issues and concerns that would impact potential developments (e.g. commuter patterns for industrial development; stream quality for agricultural development, etc.). Determine how this information can be presented visually and through text to clearly communicate the County’s assets and strengths to potential investors. Seek feedback from and collaboration with other departments to refine and strengthen the quality of the information and its presentation.

**Partners to Put in Motion:** Franklin County Planning Department, Franklin County Area Development Corporation, Chambers of Commerce and Downtown organizations.
**Strategy:** Work to facilitate and encourage business, industry and manufacturing in the county.

Cooperatively evaluate ordinances and land use controls regarding industrial, manufacturing and commercial locations. Ensure land use policies are amenable to a full range of manufacturing and logistics-related industries.

Encourage education within current industries to meet ongoing technologic employment needs within the county. Work with educational institutions to ensure that local students are ready to enter the local workforce.

Promote redevelopment and enhance business growth in the business parks throughout the county.

**Strategy:** Foster a quality of life attractive to a plentiful, skilled workforce.

Recommendations throughout the comprehensive plan are geared to fostering a desirable quality of life. In addition to policies, the county should work with institutions in the public sector and private sector (including school districts) to encourage training within current industries to meet ongoing technologic employment needs within the county.

**Strategy:** Continue to develop and implement fiscally responsible budgets that balance needed public services with available funding levels.

By keeping costs down, Franklin County can remain competitive in attracting businesses that...
are a good match for the area. The county should continue to work with public service agencies and municipalities to evaluate the efficiency and needs of services.

**Strategy:** Encourage tourism-oriented initiatives.

Hospitality and tourism are industries that are based on local assets. Continued promotion of local tourism and associated business activity tied to the county’s natural and cultural assets is critical to future growth and success. This will also serve to showcase the county’s assets for potential new businesses.

Civil War-based, history-oriented as well as agricultural-focused tourism are important elements of Franklin County’s cultural fabric. Continuation of these kinds of tourism activities should be encouraged and supported.
Moving Forward: Transportation and Infrastructure

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, recurring discussion focused on how future development patterns can be supported in a sustainable system of infrastructure.

Long Range Transportation Plan
The Franklin County Rural Planning Organization (RPO) was established in May of 2009 to guide decision-making for transportation planning and programming activities in the county. The RPO is responsible for developing a unified planning work program, preparing a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and managing the transportation improvement program (TIP). The LRTP is the county’s guiding document for making transportation decisions that will influence and impact the region’s future.

The RPO and the county utilize the LRTP to enhance the transportation system to provide for an efficient movement of people and goods, and to analyze the potential impacts to our community, economy, and the environment. The LRTP serves two purposes. The LRTP serves as the guiding document for decision making for the Franklin County RPO. Additionally, it serves as the transportation element of the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan. The LRTP addresses all modes of transportation including highway, rail,
aviation, and non-motorized modes and the eight federal planning factors that were established by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the federal transportation authorization passed in 2005.

As the transportation element of the county’s Comprehensive Plan, the LRTP also addresses the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code (MPC). Article III of the MPC states that the comprehensive plan shall include, “a plan for the movement of people and goods, which may include expressways, highways, local street systems, parking facilities, pedestrian and bikeway systems, public transit routes, terminals, airfields, port facilities, railroad facilities and other similar facilities or uses.”

The Franklin County LRTP is developed with the following eight planning factors in mind.

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation and improved quality of life.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

**Transportation and Infrastructure Goal:** Use a balanced approach in the development of transportation, infrastructure, and energy systems.

**Strategy:** Encourage future development and growth to align with existing development and in areas where transportation and infrastructure expansion are invested.

Infrastructure providers have encountered numerous financial, physical and policy challenges in recent years in response to mandated system improvements. Because all three of these “costs” have revolved around required upgrades, there has understandably been limited focus on expansion of sewer and water needs to accommodate future growth. As opportunities continue to move forward and consensus is built, the county can be a resource for municipalities and municipal authorities in the pursuit of larger-scale infrastructure coordination.
**Strategy:** Enhance pedestrian-bicycle connectivity.

Other planning efforts completed over the past 10 years identify that further emphasis on pedestrian and recreation trails within this system are both desirable and achievable. Based on these previously laid out plans, the county should delineate priority routes of a county-wide pedestrian/greenway network; work with municipalities and interest groups should continue to link projects that are already in place with identified priorities.

In order to further emphasize pedestrian safety, pursue funding and implement improved access management to the pedestrian network; the RPO Planning Department, local municipalities and interest groups should join in cooperative efforts.

**Strategy:** Support efforts for renewable energy projects or encourage use of renewable energy.

Public health and safety investments can be promoted through infrastructure planning. The county should work with public and private organizations to evaluate and confirm the feasibility and desirability of future renewable energy systems.

While land in the county reaches significant elevation, the demands and viability will need to be balanced with desires for viewshed protection if wind energy is to be considered. Viewsheds also need to be considered in the development of commercial scale solar energy operations.
Residential and small scale solar energy installations can have positive impacts for homeowners and local governments. There are many funding opportunities available for small scale solar installations and organizations promoting solar power, like the US Department of Energy’s SunShot Initiative. Currently, a model ordinance is being developed for the installation of small scale solar photovoltaic panels for municipalities in Pennsylvania. When this model ordinance is completed, it will be a tool that can be used by Franklin County and adopted by local municipalities to decrease barriers for small scale solar installations.
Taking Stock:
Identifying today’s resources

The planning goals and strategies outlined as part of the comprehensive plan are borne from the resources that exist in the county today. A series of characteristics and impacts were evaluated in the initial stages of planning to determine the applicability of policy and project recommendations.

Taking Stock serves to identify the specific patterns of these characteristics and their consideration during the planning process. Additional mapping and analyses were prepared examining physical patterns, socio-economic trends and the capacity for growth in the county.
The Physical Environment

The Physical Environment focuses on understanding the complexion of the county’s existing general land use activities, population and infrastructure/transportation systems.

Land Coverage and Land Use

Land coverage data, derived from 2005 satellite imagery, is the most comprehensive digital inventory of land use currently available in the county. As discussed in Part 1 of this Comprehensive Plan, agricultural uses and forests are the primary land coverage type.

To supplement this 2005 data, a catalog of proposed construction permits and subdivision approvals has been developed in the county planning department. The county reviewed applications that proposed plans for more than 15,000 residential lots, of which many have not yet been built. Within the same period, more than 5,000 building permits were presented for application. With the advent of the county’s upcoming GIS (Geographic Information Systems) database, this information along with specific parcel land use will be available for future decades of planning.
Franklin County 2005 Residential New Construction Building Permits and Residential Subdivision Lots Approved

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The Natural Environment

The Natural Environment focuses on understanding the complexion of the county’s existing natural resources.

Open Space/Forestland

Complementing the agricultural landscape, a large amount of forested land is present in Franklin County. The forests, which were once dominated by Chestnut trees, are characterized as Appalachian Oak Forest. Oak, Black Birch, Red Maple, Black Gum, Hickory, American Beech and Tuliptree are the major species of this forest.

The understory of Appalachian Oak Forests typically consists of Mountain Laurel, Low Sweet Blueberry, Lowbush Blueberry, Black Huckleberry, Witch-Hazel and other species.

Watershed

Floodplains and wetlands cover 26,549 acres, or 5.4%, of the county. Franklin County contributes to the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The northeastern portion of Franklin County lies within the Susquehanna River basin, while the remaining majority of the county is encompassed by the Potomac River basin. The three major watersheds in Franklin County are the Conodoguinet Creek, the Conococheague Creek and the Antietam Creek.

Franklin County is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the Franklin County Conservation
District has been active in the Chesapeake Bay Program since 1989. The program changed significantly in 2004 and Franklin County Conservation District developed a new Bay Tributary Strategy in 2005 including identifying several best management practices for the area including conservation planning, conservation tillage, cover crops, nutrient management, an animal waste system, rotational grazing and erosion and sedimentation controls. Protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed continues to impact development patterns and shape Franklin County’s landscape.

There are five watershed groups in the county: the Franklin County Watershed Association, the Antietam Watershed Association, the Conococheague Watershed Alliance, the Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association, and the Middle Spring Watershed Association. Watershed groups monitor water quality, hold stream cleanups, and educate fellow community members about the importance of caring for the watershed.

Higher quality streams in the county tend to be in eastern and western halves of the county, in the more mountainous and less developed areas. The impaired streams and warm water streams are in the central valley portion of the county where most development is located. There is a total of 1,696 miles of streams in Franklin County. Approximately 307 miles are considered impaired. Many of these impaired waterways are small unnamed tributaries.

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<th>Main cause of pollution</th>
<th>Miles of stream in County</th>
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<td>Urban Runoff</td>
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<td>Point source</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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Franklin County Watersheds, 2010
Within identified impaired waterways, water pollution is a result of several sources. Common water pollution issues facing waterways in the county are nutrient overloads (primarily nitrogen and phosphorus), turbidity/sedimentation, organic compounds causing low oxygen levels and contaminant spills (such as gasoline and oil leaks).

Forested buffers often help to stop the overland flow of pollutants in runoff from point and non-point sources. 20,440 acres of land, or 4.1% of the county, is either a stream or land within 50 feet of a stream. DEP requires a permit be issued before any development can occur within 50 feet of a waterway.

The Franklin County Conservation District runs a watershed program to implement projects that improve water quality and assist local watershed groups, private citizens and municipalities. Local watershed groups include the Franklin County Watershed Association, Antietam Watershed Association, Conococheague Watershed Alliance, Middle Spring Watershed Association and Mercersburg Area Watershed Association.

Participation in programs like the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land also contributes to watershed and waterway protection.
Steep Slopes

A total of 65,972 acres, or 13% of the county, is steep slopes (over 25% slope). These areas, for the most part, fall on the eastern and western edges of the county, in the range of North Mountain in the west and South Mountain in the east. There is little area of steep slopes in the central valley portion of the county. The boroughs also have little constraint from slopes.

Karst Topography

Limestone is the principal bedrock underlying the Cumberland Valley. This dissolving bedrock results in sinkholes and caves. This type of geography, known karst features, and a 100-foot buffer around them compos 7,330 acres or 1.5% of the county. Hamilton, Letterkenny, Lurgan, and Fannett Townships have the fewest sinkholes. Southampton, Greene, Guilford, and Peters all have a substantial number of sinkholes within their boundaries. There is also karst topography in all of the boroughs, most significantly Shippensburg.
Franklin County Slope Analysis, 2010
Franklin County Karst Topography, 2010
Species of Concern

Hemlock Wooly Adelgid and the Emeral Ash Borer are two of the most destructive insect species and they are destroying large numbers of trees in the region. This is evident in every forest in the county. A complete list of plant and animal species of concern can be found in the comprehensive plan’s appendix.

Specific natural areas of importance for each municipality in the county can be found in the Franklin County Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) report completed in 2004 by the Nature Conservancy.

Fulfilling a recommendation of the 1999 comprehensive plan, the county completed a comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan in 2002 to help conserve natural resources, provide recreation opportunities, attract residents and businesses and stimulate economic activities. In 2007 the county developed a greenway and open space plan that includes recommendations for the preservation and betterment of natural and recreational open space areas in the county. These efforts have contributed to Franklin County’s high quality of life.
Socio-Economic Patterns: 2000-2010

Socio-economic changes were analyzed for Franklin County, the surrounding region (Franklin Region), and Pennsylvania. The surrounding region in this assessment consisted of adjacent Pennsylvania counties (Fulton, Huntington, Juniata, Perry, Cumberland and Adams) as well as Washington and Frederick Counties in Maryland. Spanning the years 2000, 2010 and 2015 (projected), demographic trends and projections were performed using U.S. Census data and demographic analysis software (ScanUS).

An industry and labor trends analysis was also performed for Franklin County and the surrounding region, using the US Census Bureau’s Quarterly Workforce Indicators, and On The Map program (both of which utilize Pennsylvania Labor Department data) as well as data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A work area analysis and labor shed analysis was performed for the most recently available years (2004, 2006, and 2008).

Socio-economic changes in Franklin County have been similar to those in the surrounding region. That is, the number of housing units has increased although the population is aging. Household formation, employment and household incomes are projected to increase through 2020 and beyond in spite of the current economic conditions.
Household Population

Franklin County’s total household population increased from 129,313 in year 2000 to a 149,618 persons in year 2010. This 15.7% increase was slightly greater than the increase in the region (11.1%) and much greater than the increase in the State (2.8%) over the same time period. Quincy and Shippensburg were the only municipalities to lose population.

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<td>Washington Township</td>
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<td><strong>Franklin County</strong></td>
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</table>
Household Formation
New household formation in Franklin County grew slightly more than 30% faster than household formation in the greater Region and more than four times the household formation rate for the state. While family households in Franklin County grew at a relatively modest pace over the past ten years (an average on 1% per year), non-family households grew at a much faster pace (3.4% per year).
Housing

Both Franklin County and the Franklin Region saw relatively strong increases in total housing units from 2000 to 2010 (15.3% for Franklin County and 13.5% for the Franklin region) as compared to relatively flat housing unit growth (5.4%) in Pennsylvania during that period. The percentage of vacant housing units in the county declined (5.9% to 4.4%), while there was an increase in vacant housing units in both the Franklin region and the State during the same period.

Change in Total Housing Units, 2000-2010

![Change in Total Housing Units, 2000-2010](chart1.png)

Percentage of Vacant Housing Units in 2000 and 2010

![Percentage of Vacant Housing Units in 2000 and 2010](chart2.png)
Over the past ten years, Franklin County has seen a relatively modest decline in the percentage of its population younger than 54 years old (the exception being pre-school age children whose population increased by more than 17%). During this time, the number of Franklin County residents between the ages of 55 and 74 increased relatively sharply (16.4%). These trends are consistent with age patterns observed at the regional and state level.

**Household Income**
Nearly 16 out of every 100 Franklin County households in 2000 earned more than $75,000 per year. Approximately 10 households per 100 in the state fell into the same category. The Franklin Region had 21 per 100 households earning more than $75,000 per year. While the county has a lower percentage than the surrounding region of households earning $75,000, households in Franklin County earning greater than $75,000 per year increased by 94% over the past 10 years. Median household income in Franklin County has also increased at a greater rate (31%) over the past 10 years than in the region (28%) and state (24%).
Educational Attainment
A significantly smaller share of adults in Franklin County (14.8 %) held bachelors’ degrees or higher in 2000 as compared to the Franklin Region (20.3%) and the State (22.3 %). While in the past decade all three geographies realized relatively healthy growth in the percentage of adults possessing bachelors’ degrees (or higher), Franklin County’s percentage of college educated adults (17.7 %) trailed that of Franklin region and State (24.4% and 26.8% respectively).

Household Population
After experiencing significant growth from 2000 to 2010, growth in household population in Franklin County is projected to moderate. Total household population is projected to grow between a low of 17,000 and a high of 29,000 persons from 2010 to 2025.

Percentage of Adults 25+ With Bachelor’s Degrees or Higher

Source: US Census Bureau; ScanUS; 4ward Planning 2010
Socio-Economic Projections: 2010 to 2025

Household Formation
Based on local and regional trends, the number of households in the county is projected to increase between 22% and 32% by year 2025.

Household Formation Projections
Household Income

Upper Income Household Projections

57%
The increase in the number of jobs, between 2004 and 2008, paying $40,000 or more per year

Jobs by Earnings Paid

- $1,250 per month or less
- $1,251 to $3,333 per month
- More than $3,333 per month
Employment Projections – 2008 to 2018

The comprehensive plan team employed projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to estimate growth in Franklin County’s top ten industries, by employment, through 2018. The figures generated in 2008 (as shown in the chart below and scheduled for update next year) are anticipated to have reversed where as a slight rise in manufacturing is anticipated.

Top Ten Places of Worker Residence- 2009

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<td>Greencastle Borough, PA</td>
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<td>Fayetteville CDP, PA</td>
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<td>727</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagerstown City, MD</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilford CDP, PA</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercersburg Borough, PA</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne Heights CDP, PA</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia City, PA</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7,000
Increase in total employment in Franklin County between 2004 and 2008

Employment Projections, Top 5 Industries

Source: Bureau Of Labor Statistics Employment Projections Program; US Census Bureau, QWI Online; 4ward Planning LLC, 2010
Build-Out Analysis

The intent for performing a build-out and fiscal impact analysis, as part of the Franklin County Comprehensive Planning process, was to provide county planning and administrative officials with a useful tool for understanding the links between county land-use policies (current and prospective) and fiscal impacts (e.g., revenues, fees, operating costs and debt service payments).
Capacity at Build-out

To understand the picture of long-term growth, an analysis of Franklin County’s actual capacity for development was completed. This type of calculation is most often referred to as “build-out” capacity. In understanding what build-out is, the county, municipalities and state planning entities, such as the Department of Transportation, the Department of Community and Economic Development or the Department of Conservation and Natural Resource can make more informed decisions about any project’s long-term impact and effectiveness.

In Franklin County, the landscape’s varying characteristics and patterns influence the amount of potentially developable area. Components that determine this area include existing urbanized land and sensitive natural resources. To analyze build-out, potentially developable land is then evaluated in context of infrastructure – specifically sewer and septic soil capacity. The analysis’ last step considers the patterns of existing land use, zoning and potential market activity to determine what types of development could occur on developable land. In addition to projected population growth, build-out data can be used by both the county and local municipalities to understand other implications such as traffic impacts, tax revenues, public investments for roads, public services and schools.
The build-out analysis process included three stages. Stage I established developable area by looking at urbanized areas and sensitive natural resources. Stage II looked at infrastructure availability to determine build-out capacity. Stage III modeled future land uses by looking at build-out capacity, market and zoning to determine future land use scenarios.
Stage I: Sensitive Natural Resources

The following sensitive resources were factored into the Franklin County Build-Out Capacity calculation:

- **1,026 acres**
  - Total area of lakes and ponds in Franklin County (about the size of Greencastle Borough)
  - *Lakes and Ponds*

- **26,549 acres**
  - Total area of floodplains and wetlands in Franklin County (roughly the size of Washington Township)
  - *Floodplain and Wetland Areas*

- **60,981 acres**
  - Total area of parks and open space in Franklin County (12% of the county area)
  - *Parks and Open Space*
20,440 acres
Total area of stream buffer area in Franklin County (about the size of Warren Township)

65,972 acres
Total area of steep slopes in Franklin County (13% of total County area)

18,000 acres
Total area of Letterkenny Army Depot (about half the size of Peters Township)
7,330 acres
Total area of karst features/sink holes buffer area in Franklin County (about twice the size of Chambersburg Borough)

785 acres
Total area of active quarries (almost twice the size of Mont Alto Borough)

Karst Features/Sink Holes (100 ft buffer)  Active Quarries
Conservation Greenways

50,568 acres

Total area of conservation greenways in Franklin County (about twice the size of Southampton Township)
Unconstrained Land (in gray)

210,150 acres

Total area of unconstrained land in Franklin County (about 42% of the county)
Unconstrained land does not have sensitive natural resources that could constrain development.
Stage II: Sanitary Sewer Service

Stage II looked at infrastructure availability to determine build-out capacity of the unconstrained land. Existing infrastructure increases the capacity for development.

Stage III: Existing Zoning Designations

Stage III modeled future land uses by looking at build-out capacity, market and zoning to determine future land use scenarios.

Communities with Zoning (in grey)
Sanitary Sewer Service
Potential Residential Growth Analysis

When considering potential residential growth, many factors should be considered including: housing supply, housing demand and existing conditions must be considered. Housing supply includes existing housing stock, planned residential development and vacant and obsolete housing units.

### Housing Demand and Available Acreage, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Net Unit Demand, 2030</th>
<th>Estimated Possible Units</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>2,226</td>
<td>11,426</td>
<td>9,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambersburg</td>
<td>2,398</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>-1,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fannett</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>4,643</td>
<td>4,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greencastle</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>4,527</td>
<td>14,061</td>
<td>8,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilford</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>4,603</td>
<td>3,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>2,932</td>
<td>2,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1,566</td>
<td>1,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lurigan</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>1,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercersburg</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>2,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mont Alto</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>3,943</td>
<td>3,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrstown</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peters</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>2,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>2,775</td>
<td>2,223</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Thomas</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>2,786</td>
<td>2,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shippensburg</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>3,777</td>
<td>2,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2,442</td>
<td>6,883</td>
<td>4,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waynesboro</td>
<td>1,949</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-1,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,753</strong></td>
<td><strong>69,179</strong></td>
<td><strong>49,426</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing demand is a factor of population growth, household formation and pent-up worker demand. Existing conditions are influenced by housing tenure rates, housing stock characteristics and household income. Potential residential growth and projected populations are calculated based on a number of factors. Areas of existing development is subtracted from those areas identified as
unconstrained land. Remaining land was considered developable and was used in calculating growth areas based on zoning and land use patterns.

In assessing the general zoning and land use patterns (for those communities that do not have zoning) for the resulting land, the number of residential dwellings and associated population (using US Census average persons per household) were calculated. If all of the unconstrained and undeveloped land were developed in accordance with existing zoning or existing land use patterns, the county’s population could be approximately double what was reported in the 2010 US Census.

**Projected Net Housing Unit Demand: 2020 and 2030**

Figures A and B exhibit the estimated net housing unit demand for 2020 and 2030 within Franklin County. Net housing unit demand assumes that previous years’ demand has not been met i.e., 2020 net demand equals total demand from 2011 to 2020.

### Housing Units and Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Housing Units</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>51,000 +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>62,000 +</td>
<td>129,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>74,000 +</td>
<td>149,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>82,000 +</td>
<td>175,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build-out*</td>
<td>130,000 +</td>
<td>300,000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, SmartUS, Award Planning, 2010
Retail, Office and Industrial Build-Out

Based upon existing non-residential land use, planned projects, projected employment through 2018 and projected population/household trends through 2030, Franklin County could anticipate:

- Combined retail and office demand that totals approximately 1.5 million square feet of development (about 135 acres) through 2018.
- Modest growth in manufacturing/warehousing/transportation sectors through 2018.

Potential Demand in 2030 of Residential Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximately 5%</th>
<th>Approximately 10-15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fannett</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lurgan</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Peters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximately 20-25%</th>
<th>Approximately 30-35%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>Greene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>Guilford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximately 10-15%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fannett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lurgan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Approximately 20-25%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximately 30-35%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greene</td>
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<td>Guilford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Build-Out Analysis Detailed Study

While a build-out and fiscal impact analysis is important to Franklin County officials, the analysis is more useful if performed on local municipalities, particularly because local municipalities oversee land-use policies such as zoning.

This assessment is intended to serve as a prototypical tool for local decision makers when considering land-use policies and/or long-term investment policies.

A detailed build-out analysis study was performed on two municipalities in Franklin County: Southampton Township and Waynesboro Borough. These two communities were identified by Franklin County officials as examples of urbanized (Waynesboro Borough) and suburban (Southampton Township) municipalities that other communities could use as a tool to understand the implications of growth.

The objective of the analysis was to estimate:

- Local government spending and revenue caused by potential development.
- General school district costs and revenue caused by potential development.
- The number of school-aged children that new development could bring to the municipalities.
- Employment that could be generated by new development.
Although the concept of build-out is typically not associated with a specific timeframe, a hypothetical build-out timeframe was assigned to the two communities for the purposes of this analysis and to assist in assigning a cost to the potential impacts of build-out. However, the financial impacts were calculated in 2011 dollar amounts so the analysis is useful when looking at a build-out scenario with any timeframe in mind.

If the communities reached build-out over a hypothetical 20-year study period (2012-2031), both Southampton and Waynesboro would generate financial gain for the county. However build-out would generate financial loss (increased expenses) for each local municipal budget.

**Southampton**

The rural community of Southampton contains a more significant amount of potentially developable land than Waynesboro. The potential population growth and financial impacts of full build-out would be much higher in Southampton.

Southampton possesses significant land zoned for residential and commercial uses; if this land were to be fully developed the way it is currently zoned, there would be considerable government costs associated with new residents, public school age children and non-resident workers.

Full build-out in Southampton could require additional government spending, including the construction of an additional fire station and at

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### Fiscal Impacts

#### County Impacts
Over the study period, both Southampton and Waynesboro would generate positive net fiscal impacts for Franklin County. Southampton would generate an estimated $282,271,822 in revenues, while Waynesboro’s build-out would generate an estimated $2,137,009 for Franklin County.

Full build-out in Southampton would increase the local population by approximately 10,172 persons in 3,777 housing units, including 1,436 public school-age children (PSAC). In Waynesboro, an additional 16 housing units would increase the municipal population by 40 total persons, 11 of whom would be PSAC.

Non-residential development would generate 12,982 commercial and light industrial full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in Southampton, and 22 commercial FTE jobs in Waynesboro.

#### Local (Municipal) Impacts
Conversely, both Southampton and Waynesboro are projected to generate negative local net fiscal impacts from full build-out. Over 20 years, net fiscal impacts in Southampton and Waynesboro are estimated at −$39,089,219 and −$67,098, respectively.
least one new elementary school. Consideration for establishing a local police department to replace current reliance on state police could also be a future factor in determining expenses.

If Southampton were to develop and reach build-out similar to what has been analyzed here, township officials likely would need to examine new revenue sources to offset the additional expenses.

**Waynesboro**

Significant additional government investments are not likely to be needed to support full build-out in Waynesboro because it is already urbanized and supports a higher population density. Waynesboro has a much smaller amount of available zoned land for commercial and residential uses.

Given the fact that additional costs to the government of Waynesboro are estimated to be small (less than $3,500 annually) and few additional capital expenditures are expected, Waynesboro could build-out on its remaining land with little effect on municipal income.

**Build-Out Impacts**

The fiscal impact analyses for full build-out of Southampton and Waynesboro show that at the county level, increased income is likely to exceed additional expenses caused by the additional population and development. However the impact of build-out would create additional costs or financial loss for each individual community.
Future Forward:

Comprehensive Plan Summary

A comprehensive plan shows that a people are invested in managing its future and moving forward in a positive way. Hundreds of people participated in the preparation of Franklin County’s 2025 comprehensive plan by sharing their vision for the future of their county. Franklin County residents and business owners are passionate and care about their community. Their aspirations are translated into a series of goals and recommendations that will help the county build on its assets and strengths. It is a long-term roadmap for growth—a guide for decisions and actions by local government officials in shaping the future of their community.

A number of characteristics are valued and integral to resident and business life in Franklin County. These assets include accessibility, economic stability, agricultural and woodland landscapes, natural features and history, as well as the county’s planning tools.

This comprehensive plan outlines a series of recommendations that will protect those valued assets and enable the county to enhance connections and collaboration among its physical, social and fiscal resources.

Essential Actions

The Essentials are identified actions that have the greatest potential for producing the most significant impacts on the county’s future vitality and character. These actions function as catalysts to promote community, health and vibrancy. The Essentials are identified as key actions for implementation that trigger or lead to the implementation of other actions.

The Essentials produce visible indications of change—being the actions that the public sees—and where appropriate, aim to stimulate the private-sector to make their own investments within the communities. Thematically, the Essentials embodied in each section relate to and are framed out to be a realistic action that can be initiated within the next decade in order to spark subsequent actions.
Forward Thinking: Outreach and Cooperation

This comprehensive plan update reinforces the most important aspect of the county’s future planning efforts: its role as facilitator. Continuing dialogue and sharing ideas is essential to both county and municipal success. In its role as facilitator, the county is poised to be a driver in conducting outreach and fostering a cooperative environment that addresses solutions for regional scale problems.

Outreach and Cooperation Goal: Engage in outreach, education, communication and cooperation within the county

Strategies outlined to help meet this goal include:

- Promote the Franklin County Planning Department’s role as a facilitator and orchestrator of municipal cooperation and as a clearinghouse of information, knowledge and contacts.
- Proactively encourage municipalities to work with the county to find solutions for regional-scale issues; strengthen the dialogue between local, county and state governments while reinforcing the successes of county planning, municipal and private-sector partnerships.
- Determine how the county may further its partnerships with neighboring counties.
- Provide sufficient levels of staffing within the county Planning Department to assist in facilitating education and outreach efforts as well as assisting in the implementation of multi-municipal initiatives as needed.
- Coordinate with public and private sector entities to promote the benefits of coordinated planning and public health.
- Evaluate the applicability and potential impacts of creating Official Maps.
Looking Forward: Land Use and Housing

A comprehensive plan is commonly rooted in land use and housing strategies. The 1999 comprehensive plan established a series of principles that will remain important into the next decade. A number of goals that were identified in the 1999 plan were able to be achieved. The Recreation Plan, Greenway and Open Space Plan and the Natural Areas Inventory were identified as necessary projects in meeting the goal of preserving open space and natural resources and all have been accomplished. There are several other initiatives that are currently in the process of being completed.

Land Use and Housing Goal: Foster the continued livability and success of urban communities and of communities embedded within the rural landscape.

Strategies outlined to help meet this goal include:

- Champion for local land use controls that promote balanced growth and conservation.
- Promote conservation of quality farmland and prime agricultural soils.
- Support revitalization of core communities.
- Work with landowners to ensure prompt and sufficient reforestation of woodlands that have been timbered.
- Encourage home-ownership.

Essential Action: Advocate for responsive, compatible land use decisions.
**Foster Forward: Resource Management**

Many studies document that Franklin County is rich in resources that will continue to shape its future as a haven for those interested in conservation, recreation, and history. Sustaining and enhancing natural, scenic, and historic resources will benefit current and future generations.

Agricultural resources are important to the county. Agriculture is the economic base, the visual character and one of the driving cultural forces in Franklin County. Generations of farmers have sustained a diverse agricultural economy that helps define Franklin County’s character.

**Resource Management Goal:** Facilitate the protection and promotion of the county’s rich natural resources, recreation opportunities and history.

Strategies outlined to help meet this goal include:

- *Continue funding of agriculture preservation initiatives.*
- *Support preservation of sensitive natural resources.*
- *Encourage strategies and/or policies that emphasize conservation of existing county character: small towns, rural areas and positive, memorable views.*

*Essential Action:* Celebrate why the county’s unique assets are essential to its long-term vitality
Fast Forward: Economic Development

The county’s agricultural history and its position within south-central Pennsylvania enable its residents and businesses to continue growing with positive success. Franklin County is strategically located along a major transportation corridor and features a high quality of life and a beautiful setting for employees. The county should continue to work with the Franklin County Area Development Corporation (FCADC) to promote local and regional-scale economic development opportunities. As the county’s population and employment base are anticipated to increase, there will be a need for office space, housing for employees, and amenities to attract them to the area.

The county can serve a pivotal role in encouraging and/or facilitating discussions among municipalities, the FCADC, prospective businesses, school districts and others to promote coordinated planning and policy decisions.

Conservation and the appropriate use of the county’s natural and agricultural assets are central to its economic success. Important agricultural soils and woodlands support key sectors of the county’s economy.

Economic Development Goal: Promote economic opportunities while retaining agriculture and community character.

Strategies outlined to help meet this goal include:

- Continue cooperation with the Franklin County Area Development Corporation in implementing a comprehensive county-wide economic development strategy and continue to encourage multi-municipal planning.
- Continue to emphasize agriculture and its supporting industries as identifying characteristics and the stability of the county’s future.
- Work to facilitate and encourage business, industry and manufacturing in the county.
- Foster a quality of life attractive to a plentiful, skilled workforce.
- Continue to develop and implement fiscally responsible budgets that balance needed public services with available funding levels.
- Encourage tourism-oriented initiatives.

Essential Action: Expand and reinforce how the county’s technical planning tools contribute to economic development efforts
Moving Forward: Transportation and Infrastructure

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, recurring discussion focused on how future development patterns can be supported in a sustainable system of infrastructure.

Transportation and Infrastructure Goal: Use a balanced approach in the development of transportation, infrastructure, and energy systems.

Strategies outlined to help meet this goal include:

- Encourage future development and growth to align with existing development and in areas where transportation and infrastructure expansion are invested.
- Enhance pedestrian-bicycle connectivity.
- Support efforts for renewable energy projects or encourage use of renewable energy.

Next Steps

From the sense of place to high employment rates, people love Franklin County for its ability to provide what they want as well as what they need. By choosing to plan carefully for and guide future development, Franklin County will grow by choice—not by chance—improving its ability to retain the assets that people value and implementing improvements in areas that need to be strengthened.

Everyone involved in this plan—from residents who participated in public meetings to elected officials who spent time guiding the process—are contributing to moving Franklin forward.
Postscript: Future Considerations

Throughout the development of the Franklin County 2025 Comprehensive Plan, there was clear consensus and understanding on the county’s overarching and immediate planning issues as related to current and future development impacts. All participants recognized that these issues will impact the county as a whole and its residents’ quality of life. While many dialogues and decisions occurred, efforts and clear policies were established to guide the near horizon of growth and change. A lot of discussion occurred as part of this planning process that focused on long term implications that most likely will transcend the timeframe of this comprehensive plan, although no clear policies emerged. This brief summary is intended to memorialize issues where consensus did not always transpire as part of today’s planning process as related to longer-term issues.

When stakeholders and decision makers get into discussions about projects and/or policies that may exist within a short-term horizon but may have implications well beyond the timing of this comprehensive plan (long-term), it may be appropriate to revisit this summary. Its topics will likely remain key components of discussion as the economy continues to shift and the future pace of development evolves in response to internal and external factors. Franklin County planners and leaders may also then need to consider how such decisions fit or do not fit within the county’s overall framework for growth and for conservation.

It is the county’s desire to maintain a high quality of life for its residents and a high quality standard for future development by supporting projects that uphold high quality planning and best management practices. Moreover, the topics outlined below should be considered when public investment is requested and/or proposed. For the county, municipalities and overall population, there are benefits to many of the concepts presented. The county should be prepared to work with communities to realize the strengths and minimize drawbacks of significant planning decisions.
Infrastructure Expansion

Importantly, the comprehensive plan’s outlined infrastructure considerations focus on solutions aimed at development and conservation goals of the coming decade. One alternative discussed at length as part of the planning process but not folded into the comprehensive plan’s recommendations was the concept of an infrastructure service boundary. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code enables municipalities and counties to define specific, preferred areas for future infrastructure expansion. Section 301 (7) (d) states that, “the municipal, multi-municipal or county comprehensive plan may identify those areas where growth and development will occur so that a full range of public infrastructure services, including sewer, water, highways, police and fire protection, public schools, parks, open space and other services can be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate growth.”

Establishing such areas is a way in which communities, service providers and/or the county can work together to marry sound land use decision making with realizing significant efficiencies in short- and long-term investments. Additional discussions about the benefits and challenges of this approach are encouraged to continue occurring. Nonetheless, throughout the period of this comprehensive plan, the county should be cognizant and support those efforts which uphold the concept and realization of physically and fiscally balanced land use and infrastructure demands.

Long-term Ownership/Management of Potable Water and Sewer Systems

In various portions of the county, a number of individual water and sewer authorities operate independently within proximity to one another. In some cases, authorities are challenged on a daily basis to balance the physical, fiscal and regulatory needs that the facilities demand. As part of the comprehensive plan, dialogue explored the various benefits and challenges of creating opportunities for joint ownership and/or management of such facilities. Policies established as part of the comprehensive plan are based upon operations remaining individualized in the short-term. In the long-term, creating joint relationships between or consolidation of various authorities could be one
step in realizing greater efficiencies in long-term capital improvements and maintenance costs. If local governments and the authorities are open to moving in that direction, the county could facilitate a dialogue exploring advantages and disadvantages of this approach to the ownership and/or management of these systems. Furthermore, many expressed as part of the Comprehensive Plan process that as development continues, the challenges of sewage package plants outweigh the long-term benefits, and with that, future construction of such plants within the County should not occur.

**Density of Development**

The character of Franklin County’s landscape is distinctive. One of its greatest distinctions is the general absence of suburban “sprawl.” Over the past century, those introducing and creating development have been conscientious of historically established patterns and densities. Without specific ordinance provisions, there is the potential for these patterns to erode. In context of infrastructure, transportation and land use decisions, many, but not all, comprehensive plan participants expressed their desire to formalize policies that retain future development densities and continue the same level of respect for established development patterns.

Significant growth that occurs beyond existing areas of development is generally inconsistent with Franklin County’s historic residential and non-residential patterns. It is to the county’s and municipalities’ greatest interest, capital investments and long-term vitality that proposed development areas with similar intensity to existing development occur alongside one another. Therefore, while no formal infrastructure service areas were defined at this stage of the county’s history, policies and projects the county supports with its resources should be rooted in avoiding “hopscotch” development and sprawl.

**Zoning**

Not all communities within the county have zoning. Many comprehensive plan participants, both in the public sector and those in the agriculture industry, expressed a basic set of parameters to guide development in agricultural landscapes can be of value in Franklin County. Benefits and drawbacks of county-wide zoning were discussed
during the duration of the comprehensive plan, although no formal recommendation for such policy emerged with consensus. Consequently, as part of this comprehensive plan’s strategies, the county is positioned to be the central resource for providing model ordinance language and other planning ideas to communities so that development and conservation goals can be encouraged to be upheld. All provisions the county shares should be aimed to create long-term opportunities for greater compatibility between protecting lands most applicable for agricultural use and minimizing conflicts that can arise between agriculture and residential developments. Another alternative to providing well-thought ordinance example language to municipalities would be for the county to implement county-wide zoning which would be applicable to those communities who do not have their own adopted provisions. As discussion as well as the possibilities of formal zoning throughout the county evolves, the Franklin County Planning Department and county leadership are poised to assist municipalities and encourage the long-term benefits of policy decisions.

**Conclusion**

These concepts were evaluated at different grains of discussion and resolve as part of the comprehensive plan process. Each has a potential for expanded discussion and pursuit as part of future, longer-term strategies in the county. Particularly, as local municipal policies evolve and county planning and financial support is provided, the county should remained poised to facilitate dialogue, assist and discuss the benefits and challenges that each strategy would entail if undertaken.