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Regional Relationships & Consistency

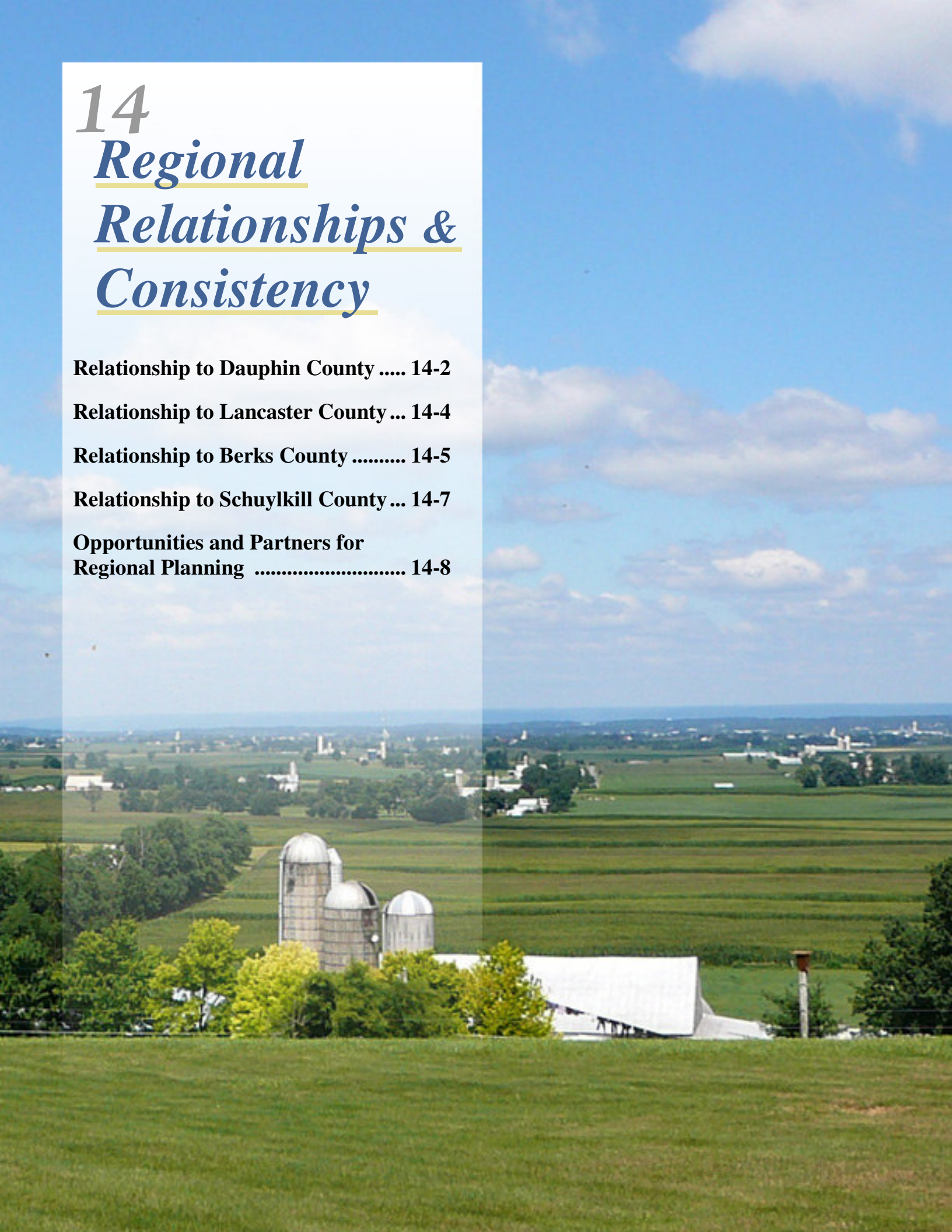
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Sound comprehensive planning fully recognizes that municipal boundaries are not physical, social, economic or environmental constraints to the impacts of development and conservation. As mandated by Section 301(a)(5) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), comprehensive plans must discuss the relationship of the existing and proposed development of the county to the existing and proposed plans in contiguous municipalities. The intent of this requirement is to support planning consistency and coordination along municipal boundaries. This chapter addresses the consistency of the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan with the comprehensive plans of the surrounding counties.

MPC Requirement: *A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan.*

MPC Article III, Section 301(a)(5)

Relationship to Dauphin County

Lebanon County's northern and western borders adjoin Dauphin County. The northern border parallels Second Mountain north of Blue Mountain and Stony Valley. Vast expanses of forested mountain land are the only shared features across the northern border.

The western border crosses the Great Valley from the forested South Mountain to Blue Mountain as well as several common man-made features. US Routes 22, 322 and 422 and Interstates 76 and 81, as well as the Norfolk-Southern rail line, travel along the valley through both counties. The 17,000 acre Fort Indiantown Gap Military Reservation spans the border north of Interstate 81. The PA American Water system also traverses this border. While located only in Dauphin County, the Penn State Hershey Medical Center, Hershey Chocolate Company, Hershey attractions, and Milton Hershey School are tremendous generators of traffic from Lebanon County and beyond. Intensive development of various types is generally concentrated between the Route 322 and 422 corridors.

The current Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1992; a new comprehensive plan was prepared in recent years and is awaiting the Commissioners final approval and adoption. The 2007 draft plan aims to retain the unique character of its city, boroughs, villages and townships by:

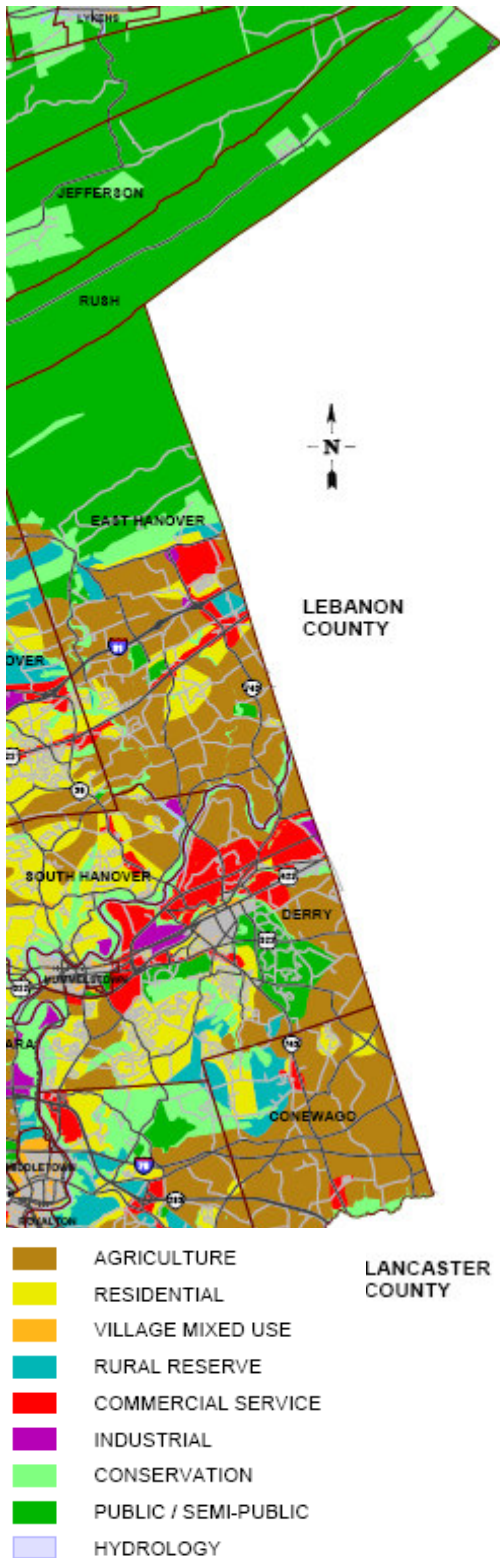


Figure 14-1 Excerpt from Dauphin County's Future Land Use Map

- Preserving the character and human scale of traditional neighborhoods and central business districts that makes them livable, vital places to live and work.
- Protecting natural resources before allowing these resources to be considered for or impacted by development.
- Targeting economic development to areas where public investments have already been made in the infrastructure and encouraging intergovernmental cooperation and coordination to facilitate business development, retention and expansion in the county and throughout the region.
- Focusing future development in and around Community Service Areas (CSAs) where services such as water, sewer, transit, highway access and community facilities (parks, libraries, fire/police service) exist.
- Providing a variety of types of housing for all age groups and income levels, primarily within the Community Service Areas in an attempt to not overbuild the housing stock.
- Maintaining and augmenting, when necessary, the existing transportation infrastructure.

Based on these goals and a broad theme of balancing development and conservation, Dauphin and Lebanon Counties share a similar philosophy for growth management.

Dauphin County's Generalized Future Land Use map illustrates these goals through the designation of:

- Public and semi-public, conservation and rural reserve lands along the northern mountain range,
- Commercial service and residential lands along the Route 22 corridor,
- Industrial and village mixed use and conservation lands along Route 422, and
- Agricultural and conservation lands along the remaining border.

These future uses are generally compatible with future uses designated in Lebanon County north of Swatara Creek and along South Mountain with two exceptions. The first occurs on the lands between Ridge Road and the Swatara Creek in Lebanon County. These lands designated as Suburban Neighborhood contain extensive topographic and other natural constraints as well as plans for continued use of on-lot water and septic systems that will limit the intensity of development in this area. Nonetheless, careful attention should be paid to prevent or mitigate regional impacts in this area, if development is proposed. The second occurs along the Route 322 corridor where Lebanon County lands are designated Suburban Business and adjoined by lands designated as Suburban Neighborhood. In recent years, development has occurred on both sides of the county border: the Milton Hershey School has constructed new homes for its students and residential and commercial development has extended west from Campbelltown in Lebanon County. Special attention should also be given to ensure that development in this area does not negatively impact the agricultural and institutional operations in Dauphin County and that transportation and infrastructure investments are coordinated, if and when needed. In addition, conservation of riparian and major greenways, namely the Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge and the Highlands across South Mountain should be coordinated.

Relationship to Lancaster County

Lebanon County's southern border is shared with Lancaster County. Like the southern region of Dauphin County, this border parallels South Mountain and the Highlands Greenway of the mid-Atlantic region. The border crosses Routes 72, 241, 322 and 501, as well as the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Interstate 76. Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area is the largest connecting feature that spans the border.

South Mountain is largely forested and interspersed with agricultural lands. A few low density residential parcels and subdivisions, as well as an occasional commercial operation, are scattered throughout this region on both sides, but there are no substantial water or sewer systems that encourage intensive development. These current uses are by and large compatible with the rural landscape character.

Balance, the Growth Management Element of Lancaster County's Comprehensive Plan, and *ReVisions*, its policy document, outline six key focus areas for Lancaster County's future:

1. Protecting and preserving our natural and cultural heritage
2. Revitalizing our urban communities
3. Developing livable communities
4. Creating a sustainable economy
5. Celebrating, investing in, and mobilizing the talents of our human resources
6. Promoting strong leadership, awareness, responsibility, and involvement in community issues

These focus areas are extrapolated into urban and rural designations and associated strategies for managing land use and development. Only rural areas are designated along the shared border with Lebanon County. Agricultural with Natural Areas, lands to be managed to preserve productive farmland, promote a healthy agricultural industry, maintain scenic and historic rural landscapes, and protect natural resources, are shown for

the far western end of the border. The majority of the border is shown as Natural Areas, lands to be managed for the protection of natural, recreational and scenic resources. A few Villages and Crossroads Communities are scattered along the southern edge of South Mountain; these contain only small if any water or sewer systems and are not planned for extensive expansion.

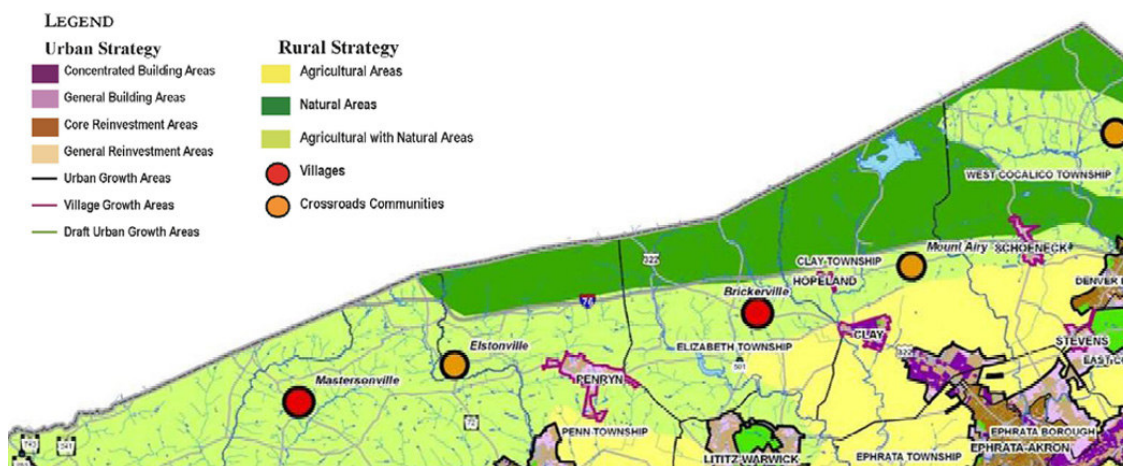


Figure 14-2 Excerpt from Lancaster County's Growth Management Framework Map

While these policies suggest a very resource-focused conservation approach to land use management along the border, it should be noted that the interchange area of the Pennsylvania Turnpike has seen increased development in recent years. Local implementation of these policies in this area will be key to resource and landscape character conservation. Special attention, such as best practices and design guidance, may help to minimize the impact of any further development that is permitted.

These future land use designations and purposes are quite similar and no special buffering or mitigation measures are needed, assuming these policies are implemented.

Relationship to Berks County

Lebanon County shares the larger portion of its eastern border with Berks County. This border ranges from the Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge in the north across the Great Valley (Cumberland/Lebanon/Schuylkill Valley) to the South Mountain/ Highlands region in the south. Major connecting features include PA Routes 419, 501, 645, 897, US Route 422, Interstate 78, and the Tulpehocken Creek. This region contains well-established Amish and Mennonite farming communities in both counties.

Berks County's Comprehensive Plan, *Berks Vision 2020*, Land Use Plan Map illustrates seven future land use categories along the county's border. Environmental Hazard is used to designate wetlands, floodplains, watercourses, and their associated riparian buffers. Permanent Open Space/Recreation is used to designate state, county, and municipal parkland, recreation facilities, open space areas, as well as municipal water supply watersheds for which a countywide greenway and open space network is advocated. Rural Conservation Areas are used to promote managed production of forest and conservation

of other natural resources. Agricultural Preservation lands are intended to promote effective land use management in support of the agricultural industry. Existing development is shown for farmsteads and occasional residential and commercial parcels and is concentrated only along the Route 422 corridor. Future Growth Areas are shown where development, supported by infrastructure, may take place in the future.

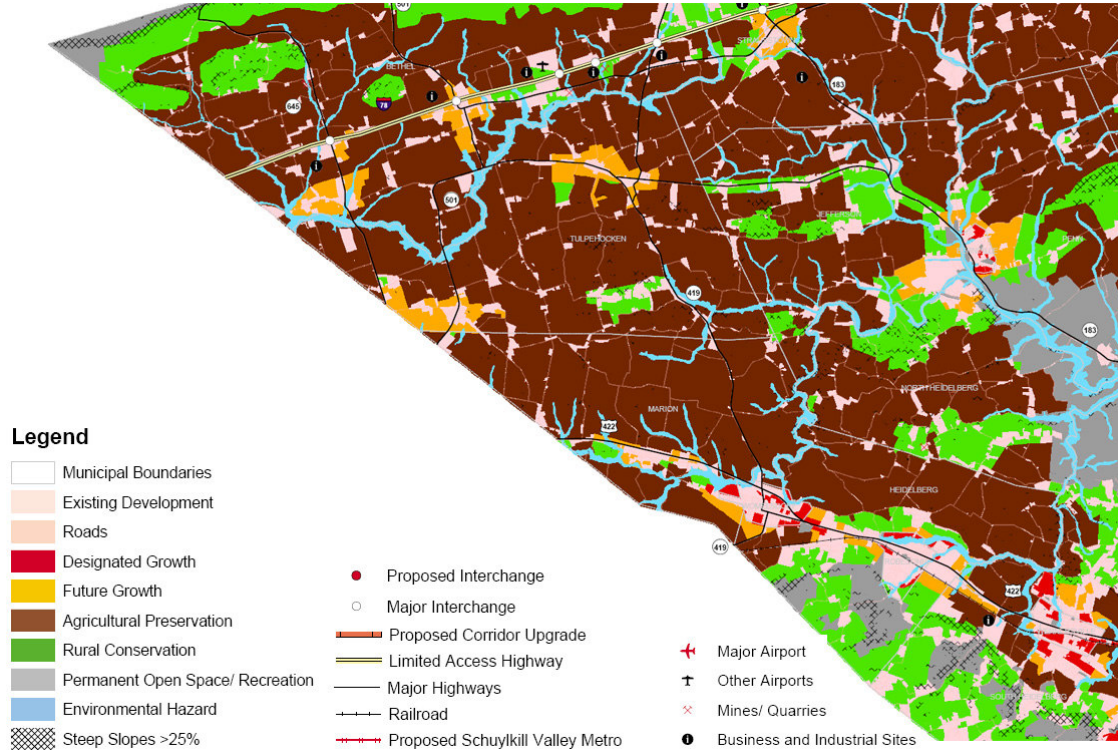


Figure 14-3 Excerpt from Berks County's Vision 2020 Land Use Plan Map

With a focus on managing land use to sustain the agricultural industry, supporting managed production of forest resources, and protecting sensitive natural areas from development, the land use planning approaches of Lebanon and Berks County are generally consistent in most areas. Two areas may need some additional review and coordination with municipal planning. The first area is the Richland/Newmanstown/Womelsdorf area where planned expansion of infrastructure and development in Lebanon County reaches the county border while in Berks County a narrow strip of Agricultural Preservation land is shown. In conjunction with local municipal planning, the counties should clarify and coordinate intentions for this area. The second area is the Interstate 78 corridor, where Lebanon County anticipates extension of Suburban Business and Suburban Neighborhood to the county line to take advantage of the I-78/ US Route 22 interchange at Fredericksburg, while Berks County designates Agricultural Preservation. This configuration may indeed be effective, if the impacts of development can also be limited, buffered or mitigated in Lebanon County.

Relationship to Schuylkill County

The northernmost portion of Lebanon County's eastern border is shared with Schuylkill County. Swatara State Park, State Game Lands 80 and 211 and Route 443 and Interstate 81 span this border. The Siegrist Reservoir for the City of Lebanon Authority's water supply is located just across the border along Fishing Creek. Intensive development in the region of both counties is quite limited and generally compatible with a rural, forested landscape.

Schuylkill County's Comprehensive Plan was renewed and adopted in 2006. Its growth management plan aims to direct growth "to locations and in a manner that allows the phasing-in of transportation and water and sewer service systems improvements" to manage the public and private investment and costs. It utilizes the growth area approach to designate planned, incremental expansion of developed areas served by infrastructure and public services concurrent with resource conservation and creation of a countywide open space and greenway network.

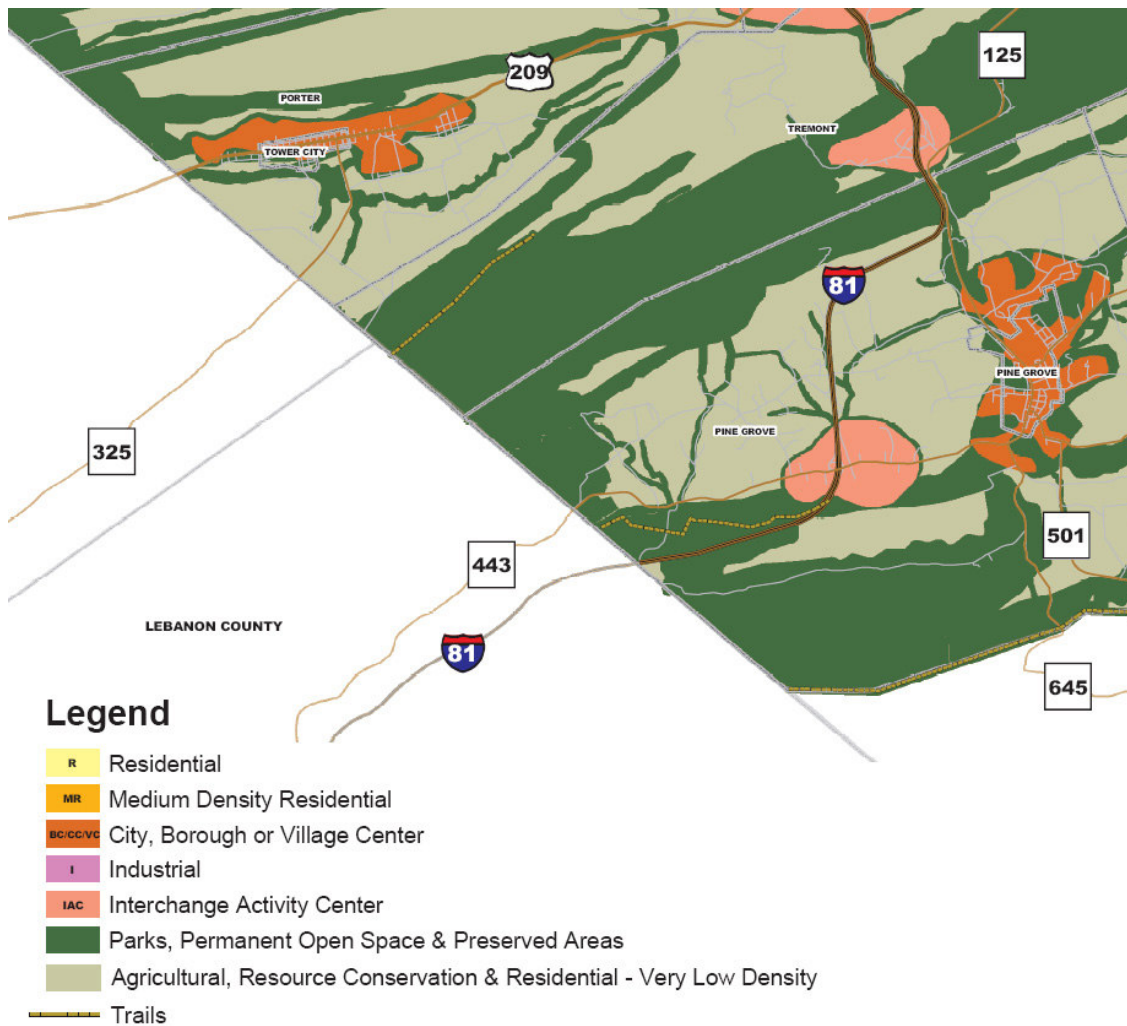


Figure 14-4 Excerpt from Schuylkill County's Land Use Plan Map

The Land Use Plan implies a general discouragement of development within agricultural and wooded areas, coupled with incentives to develop within designated growth areas. Growth areas are shown for Pine Grove, adjoining corridors and the I-81 interchange; however, development in these areas is not likely to impact Lebanon County due to the distance and topography between these locations and the border. Schuylkill County's Land Use Plan map designates the majority of border lands as Park, Permanent Open Space and Preserved Areas, as much of this forested and resource-rich land is owned and managed by the Commonwealth. A small pocket of land along the Interstate 81 corridor is shown as Agricultural, Resource Conservation and Residential – Very Low Density. This combination of uses is very similar to the Rural Resource designation used across the border on Lebanon County's Land Use Policy Map, therefore no special buffering or mitigation measures are needed.

Opportunities and Partners for Regional Planning

Throughout the comprehensive plan, the various planning elements have identified the many common resources, related economies, and interconnected elements of infrastructure that connect Lebanon County to its neighboring counties and the rest of the south central Pennsylvania region. Like Lebanon County, the adjoining counties have identified these systems as integral to their identity and future quality of life and have established policy to sustain or manage them for the greatest benefit to their citizens.

Sound comprehensive planning fully recognizes that these systems are not bounded or controlled by political boundaries. Waters and wildlife travel without concern for land ownership. Businesses take their goods and services to customers in town, across town and out of town. Even man-made infrastructure spans municipal lines to make efficient use of travel corridors and natural water courses. Therefore, planning should look beyond these man-made boundaries in making management and investment decisions.

County and local governments make policy and investment decisions about maintenance and management of these systems, as well other public services and community needs. These decisions are made from each government's perspective and the information each has gathered and analyzed in order to reach such decisions. Regional planning among local municipalities is recommended throughout several elements of the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan to provide decision-makers with additional and contextual information. Regional planning among counties can likewise promote a shared understanding of community needs, development impacts, and successful practices and incentives for managing regional resources and systems. Again like the local recommendation, cooperative regional planning efforts can range from informal discussions of common trends and issues to envisioning regional change to shared responsibility for action and investment.

Both Pennsylvania and the federal government support regional planning through various agency grant programs. Planning studies, land acquisition, and other capital investments that engage partners across geographic and governmental borders typically compete more effectively for grants than those that address a single municipality.

One organization that grew out of the federal government's regional planning approach is the South Central Assembly for Effective Governance (SCAFEG). Under the Johnson Administration, multi-county planning regions were established in the

Appalachian Mountain region to address changes in the agriculture, steel, rail freight and coal industries. Region 6 included the south central Pennsylvania counties. SCAFEG was transformed in 1998 to a membership-based planning agency facilitating a long term view at community development issues in the region.

Another is the Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership (SRTP), a joint effort of the seven metropolitan and rural transportation planning organizations, transit agencies, and chambers of commerce in the region to increase the awareness of transit and ridesharing in south central Pennsylvania. Commuter Services of South Central PA is funded by SRTP and provides help free of charge to commuters and employers looking for better ways, beyond the single occupancy vehicle, to get to and from work. Lebanon County is an active member of this non-profit corporation.

The South Central Caucus of County Commissioners is the forum whereby county commissioners of the eight county south central Pennsylvania region can directly share knowledge and experience with one another. As an affiliate of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the caucus meets at CCAP annual conferences and periodically throughout the year. In response to a state initiative for greater coordination of land use, transportation and economic development efforts within and among counties, the caucus will develop a regional action plan in 2008. The regional action plan will explore alternative approaches to shared issues and opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration among as few as two or as many as all eight counties. This process will lead to the identification of projects of regional significance – projects that would yield regional benefits, e.g. job creation, transportation efficiency, and agricultural sustainability. In addition to fostering regional dialogue and working relationships among the counties, the regional action plan is intended to give the state confidence in funding projects prioritized by regional partners.

As Lebanon County pursues its action plans for land use and growth management, economic development, resource protection and the like, particularly those that will apply for state funds, the county should consider adjacent and south central Pennsylvania counties, individually, collectively or through SCAFEG, as potential partners in regional planning. Many other regional organizations exist to draw regional attention to specific issues and have been identified as potential lead or support partners for Lebanon County's action plans. The lists of recommended partners clearly demonstrate that there are other government bodies and private sector organizations that share an interest in the county's vision and goals for its future.

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