



REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission MARCH 2003

The Regional Growth Management Plan represents a significant attempt to address the problems associated with changing economic, social, and physical attributes of the Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry County region. The Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP) will serve as a guide for coordinating planning among the 103 municipalities, three counties and the Regional Planning Commission in this Tri-County area. The plan is a working document and will serve as the foundation for future county comprehensive plans, regional transportation plans and other updates. Regional Planning, as envisioned by the Commission, is not a substitute for, but rather a supplement to local, county, and federal planning activities. Upon completion, its effectiveness will be measured by the degree of implementation at the municipal level, where land use planning is performed in Pennsylvania.

Public Participation Opportunities

Through many opportunities, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) public involvement process has yielded a significant amount of public opinion. While the opinions vary, there is consensus amongst the surveyed municipal officials and other regional partners that better planning with useful actions and telling implementation should occur. Opinions ranged from the need for creative development to changes in State law, from preservation and conservation to higher densities and mixed uses. No one county was exempt from these opinions and when non-municipal regional partners were considered, the need for better planning achieved higher public consideration. At key times during the process, such as the development of the future population estimates and the goals and objectives, the Commission measured the validity of the public information by requesting municipal concurrence. The responses from the local governments indicated significant support for the procedures and results we obtained.

Local Ordinance Issues

The difficulties in implementing better planning lies in the fact Pennsylvania as a State, as well as the Tri-County Region is splintered with a variety of municipal ordinances. This does not make the task of regional planning impossible, but it does take a

significant amount of coordination to accomplish land use goals. The inconsistencies between ordinances in different municipalities often make it difficult for developers to plan and build exciting new communities. Often



the municipal ordinances will only allow for what has become known as a "cookie-cutter" development.

The tools available for use in the ordinances will not only allow the developers the ability to construct the type of units appropriate for each planning area, but would allow the municipalities to meet goals of developing in a logical manner with room for future growth. Additional information needs to be presented to municipalities prior to the implementation of municipal ordinances. The benefits to the municipalities include the ability to manage traffic and public infrastructure at a more effective level.

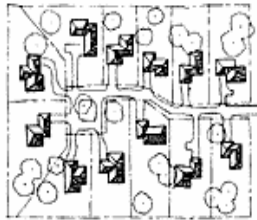
Maximize the Efficiency of Existing Public Infrastructure

If the residents of the Tri-County Region are concerned about maintaining a "quality of life", there is a cost. Generally, the users pay the cost. In this case the cost is found in the network of infrastructure built by developers and maintained by local municipalities. It only makes prudent sense for the local officials to watch over the public tax dollars and make sure the efficiency of

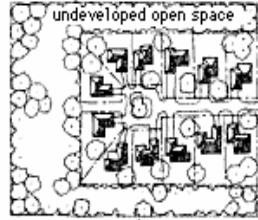
A heavy reliance on property taxes to fund schools and other services frequently leads to a competitive climate for proposed development, and as a result, local decisions sometimes override

the municipal infrastructure is maximized. As taxpayers, this should be demanded. The capacity of our regions highways, transit system,

water and sewer facilities, police and emergency equipment should all be used to the most efficient degree possible before using tax dollars to expand similar service. Competition among municipalities



2 dwelling units/acre gross density
2 dwelling units/acre net density
12 dwelling units on 6 acres



2 dwelling units/acre gross density
4 dwelling units/acre net density
12 dwelling units on 3 acres



often leads to a competitive climate for development. Municipal officials need to consider regional impacts, before adjusting local ordinances to attract

development. Often the efficiency of a municipality suffers when dispersed development occurs, primarily due to expanding costs of providing public services.

Land Needs Concept

Pennsylvania as a State is growing at a very slow rate. The 2000 Census indicates the State was 48th in percent population gain, lagging significantly behind the nation overall. Locally, the population is expected to increase 17.6 percent by

Only Texas, Georgia, Florida and California rank higher for change in the amount of land developed
DCED Annual Report on Land Use, January 2003

2020. This equates to a modest 0.9 percent per year over the twenty years. Despite this slow growth, the State was ranked fifth in the nation in percent change of land developed. This indicates development is occurring in a very dispersed manner. The Region has experienced population growth of 7.3% in the past 10 years, while dwelling units have increased by 10.25% over that same time period. Much of this can be attributed to the municipal practice of zoning. Very few municipalities prepare their zoning ordinances based on any future projections of population or housing needs. Rather land is zoned based on physical changes in the boundaries. Municipalities should consider what they would look like if their municipalities were to be built out to the degree allowed in their ordinances. Zoning land based on future needs can save significant open space and reserve building space for future residents and businesses.

Tools for Developers and Municipalities

In order to achieve the best efficiency for our region consideration must be given to allowing developers to build in ways different than the standard practice. Other tools must be made available. Opportunities for conservation subdivision, density bonuses, and Transferable Development Rights must be facilitated to achieve these efficiencies and maintain open space. Smaller setbacks and roadway widths create a more pleasing neighborhood. Mixed uses allow for short trips to be made without getting into our cars. There are a host of design opportunities that could be used, if only allowed in municipal ordinances.

Municipalities can benefit from adopting these tools by allowing development that would meet goals and objectives of their comprehensive plans. Preservation of agricultural land and open space, affordable housing opportunities and less costly services reflect some of the benefits a municipality can receive through adopting additional development tools

The financial risk of homebuilding requires successful developers to be conservative in providing new products, usually building traditionally successful homes rather than offering new concepts. In addition developers may feel that homes on larger lots may have a higher market value than homes on smaller lots. Therefore, strong incentives, such as significant density bonuses, are needed to preserve open space. A municipality should be willing to accept a modest increase in the number of units in return for substantial open space preservation.¹

Links to Transportation

As part of the federal requirements enacted with the surface transportation legislation in 1991 and continued in subsequent legislation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, such as the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study (HATS) are required to address issues resulting from land use and transportation associations. The efficiencies found through managing growth can also lead to more efficient transportation prospects.

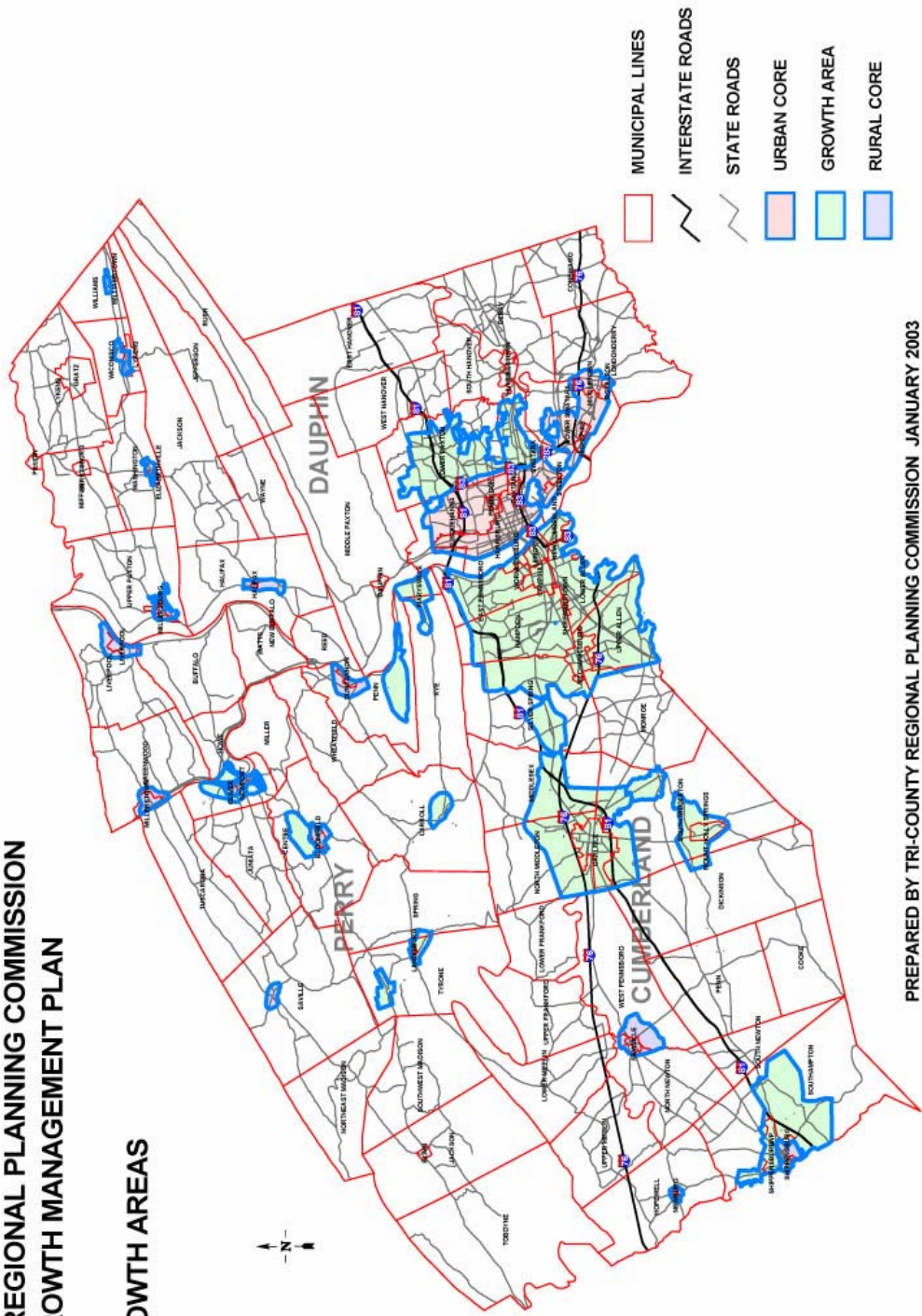
The clustering of homes for the maintenance of

The map on the following page indicates areas within the region where growth could be accommodated to 2020 at varying densities utilizing current or planned infrastructure. It is realized, due to local consideration, these areas will change in each of the counties.

¹Urban Research and Development Corporation, Lower Dauphin Regional Comprehensive Plan, November 2002.

TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

PLANNED GROWTH AREAS



PREPARED BY TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION JANUARY 2003
SOURCE: CENSUS 2000, PENNDOT AND TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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open space or the increased density brought about through transferable development rights can create a more effective land use pattern for mass transportation. The mixed uses and pedestrian friendly development can reduce the amount of vehicle trips needed to accomplish our everyday tasks. By increasing opportunities for alternative transportation modes, congestion can be reduced allowing for safer and easier travel on our highways.

Through the use of these land development design tools many of the goals in the recent and current transportation legislation can be accomplished. By continuing to build in the same manner as has been done for the past fifty years, we are doomed to repeat the cycle of ineffective and inefficient networks to provide our transportation.

Summary

The issues in planning are truly regional in scope and transcend any county, township or borough boundary. With continued public involvement and a recommitment from local municipalities to plan for future needs, the Regional Growth Management Plan will encourage the intermunicipal cooperation needed to revise the region's physical growth policies to the year 2020. Each county in the Tri-County area is currently updating its comprehensive plan. Included in these plans, with concurrence from the Counties, growth areas will be considered as part of the future land use element. Through a variety of opportunities, involving governments, regional partners, and the public, input will be collected to formulate more specific land use recommendations at the county and municipal levels.

Public Review and Comment Timeline

- ◆ **March** —RGMP presented to Dauphin and Perry County Planning Commissions
- ◆ **March** —RGMP distributed to Regional Partners
- ◆ **March—June**—RGMP presented at Cumberland County Outreach Meetings
- ◆ **April—June**—RGMP presented to public by planning districts
- ◆ **May**—RGMP presented to Home Builders Association
- ◆ **July**—Final document presented to TCRPC Full Commission

Continued public participation will be essential to the implementation of this plan at the local level. Continued support, comments, concerns and questions are welcomed and vital to the furthering of this plan. We look forward to hearing from you!