Phoenixville Region Comprehensive Plan

June 2007

DRAFT
For Review Only

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1. Introduction

The Phoenixville Region is at risk. Rapid growth over the last twenty-five years has strained the Region's tremendous natural, historic and community resources and threatened the very qualities that have made it a desirable place to live. The primary impetus for this comprehensive plan is the desire to end the existing pattern of growth that is consuming the area's natural resources and straining the transportation network. Instead, the Region's citizens and policy makers seek to preserve remaining natural and agricultural resources while investing in the Region's traditional downtown, villages and commercial centers to enhance community character and maximize the use of existing infrastructure while augmenting the local economy and tax base.

The resources this plan seeks to protect include rural areas with an overlapping mix of prime agricultural soils, wooded areas, wetlands, and riparian corridors that provide a diverse and healthy ecosystem with farms, open spaces, wildlife habitat corridors, and pristine water resources. The plan also seeks to enhance the Region's villages, commercial districts and downtown Phoenixville, all of which provide the opportunity to nurture and support local businesses and provide strong centers for community and cultural events.

Today, though, many of the Region's natural resources are unprotected from development and considerable growth is happening in critical resource areas, with large-lot subdivisions in rural areas the primary pattern of growth. At the same time, the existing commercial districts, such as Phoenixville Borough, the 724 Corridor through East Pikeland and East Vincent, and the business areas of Schuylkill Township, have experienced comparatively little investment.

Local municipal zoning and development codes are the Region's most important tools to limit and direct growth. Existing ordinances have not been effective in addressing development pressures. The first step in this planning process was to understand the amount of development that is allowed under existing development codes and to identify tools that could reduce that amount to more realistically reflect the actual functional carrying capacity of the land and infrastructure.

To accomplish this task, the planning team generated a *trend build out analysis* to estimate the number of housing units and commercial square footage that could be built in vacant and agricultural parcels under current zoning and development codes. The analysis clearly demonstrated that the allowable development was much more than the Region's infrastructure and natural resources could actually sustain.

Next, the planning team examined tools available to reduce the development capacity in the Region's municipalities' development codes. The primary tools available under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code are environmental and agricultural protections. These and other limits described in the following land use plan were added to better understand a more realistic level of development that could be supported by the Region. As a final step, future potential development was targeted away from rural areas and into the Region's centers and suburban areas to support regional economic needs.

Successful implementation of this plan will require significant revisions to local zoning and development ordinances. These ordinances will protect natural and agricultural resources, preserve functioning of the Region's transportation system and encourage future development in

the Region's designated centers and commercial areas to support the local economy and tax base and enhance the appearance and character of the Region's municipalities. These recommended changes and supporting recommendations are further described in the following chapters:

Chapter 2: Land Use Plan provides the overarching framework for the Region's land use pattern. It explains the build out analysis process and results as well as provides a future land use policy map that shows where the various types of development should occur.

In *Chapter 3: Environmental and Natural Resources Plan* describes how to preserve the natural resources in the Region and provide open space.

Chapter 4: Housing Plan describes how to improve the area's housing stock and provide for a variety of housing types.

Chapter 5: Economic Plan emphasizes strengthening the Region's villages and the Borough's commercial areas, providing neighborhood-serving retail, and locating desired new development in locations with transportation access.

Chapter 6: Community Facilities Plan: Wastewater, Drinking and Stormwater provides recommendations to maximize the existing capacity of the infrastructure by coordinating with all the municipalities and limiting extensions to the infrastructure.

Chapter 6: Community Facilities Plan: Recreation and Community Services shows how the Region can coordinate their existing community services and provide a range of valuable facilities and services to the community.

Chapter 7: Transportation and Circulation System discusses ways to improve the aesthetics and functionality of the existing multi-modal transportation network to better serve the Region.

Chapter 8: Cultural Resources Plan provides recommendations for preserving the Region's valuable historic resources through historic preservation ordinances and design guidelines.

Chapter 9: Implementation Plan contains an action plan to carry out the recommendations from each of the Comprehensive Plan sections. The plan prioritizes the recommendations into timeframes, lists the most likely responsible party for implementing the recommendations, and provides a brief understanding of how the recommendation will be implemented.

Community Profile

This section summarizes data on population and the environment of the Phoenixville Region. Where appropriate, comparisons are made to the surrounding community, Chester County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and national trends. The data for this analysis has been derived from a number of sources, most notably the United States Census. Additional background information on specific topics, including land use, housing, infrastructure, etc. is presented at the beginning of each chapter of the plan.

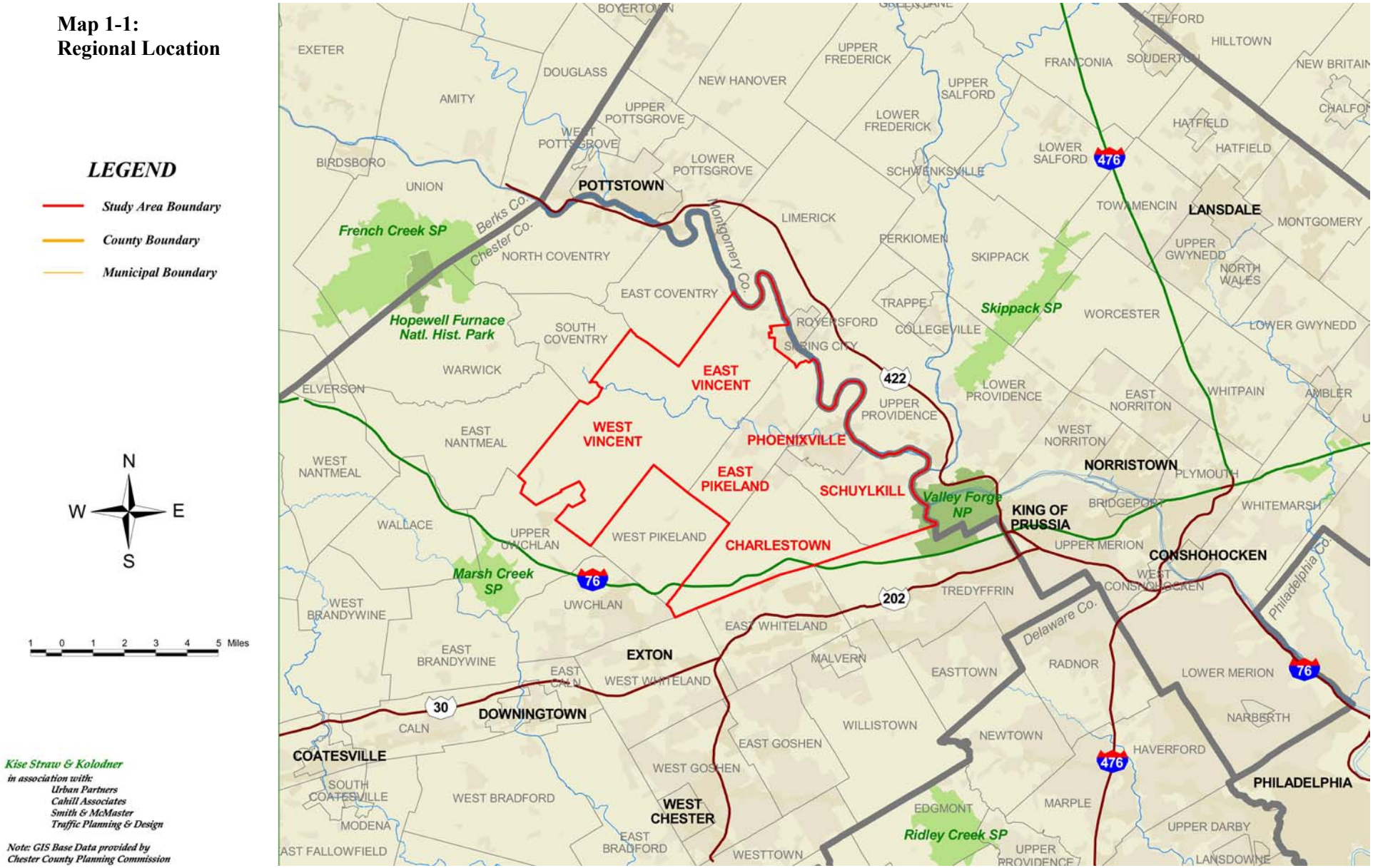
Regional Location

The six municipalities that comprise the Phoenixville Region are Phoenixville Borough and Schuylkill, East Vincent, West Vincent, Charlestown, and East Pikeland Townships. They are attractively located with good access to a multitude of destinations in the broader Philadelphia Region. Philadelphia, King of Prussia, and Wilmington, DE are all in close proximity and easily reachable by using various regional highways including 476, 76, 202, and 422 (**Map 1-1**).

The Schuylkill River flows along the northeastern border of the Region and is the area's most prominent natural feature. It forms the border between the Region and Montgomery County. Along with this important asset, plentiful parks and open spaces create a rural scenic aesthetic and charm. The Valley Forge National Park, Marsh Creek State Park, French Creek State Park, Hopewell Furnace National Historic Park, and Skippack State Park are all important amenities.

Downtown Phoenixville serves as the Region's urban center. The downtown is characterized by a traditional American "main street" design originally envisioned to serve the local community's daily needs. Ongoing investment to include a larger range of retail, dining, and nightlife amenities will expand local shopping and employment opportunities and make the downtown more attractive to local residents and visitors.

Map 1-1:
Regional Location



Population Trends

Population
The population in the six-municipality Phoenixville Region grew by 20% between 1980 and 2000, from 34,069 to 41,013 (see **Table 1-1**). Growth was slower in the 1980s, with population increasing by 4.5%, and almost all of the growth occurring in East Pikeland, which added more than 1,500 new residents.

Growth accelerated between 1990 and 2000, and the Region's population grew by more than 15% from 35,616 to 41,013. The Region's growth rate was higher than that of the Philadelphia area, Pennsylvania, and the national average during this time period, but comparable to the surrounding municipalities' rate of 21%. Particularly, Charlestown Township and East and West Vincent Townships saw substantial population increases between 1990 and 2000 (47%, 32%, and 40%, respectively). Conversely, Phoenixville's population decreased slightly (-2% between 1990 and 2000).

Table 1-1: Population Size for Select Areas, 1980-2000

Location/Census Tracts	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-1990	% Change 1990-2000
Phoenixville	14,165	15,066	14,788	6.4%	-1.8%
Charlestown	2,770	2,754	4,051	-0.6%	47.1%
East Vincent	4,739	4,161	5,493	-12.2%	32.0%
East Pikeland	4,410	5,825	6,551	32.1%	12.5%
Schuylkill	5,993	5,538	6,960	-7.6%	25.7%
West Vincent	1,992	2,272	3,170	14.1%	39.5%
Total Region	34,069	35,616	41,013	4.5%	15.2%
Surrounding Municipalities*	127,200	145,464	175,855	14.4%	20.9%
Chester County	316,660	376,396	433,501	18.9%	15.2%
Philadelphia Area**	4,716,818	5,899,345	6,188,463	25.1%	4.9%
Pennsylvania	11,863,895	11,881,643	12,281,054	0.1%	3.4%
United States	226,545,805	248,709,873	281,421,906	9.8%	13.2%

*Surrounding municipalities include Spring City, East Coventry, South Coventry, East Nantmeal, Upper Uwchlan, West Pikeland, Uwchlan, West Whiteland, East Whiteland, and Tredyffrin in Chester County and Upper Merion, Lower Providence, Upper Providence, Royersford, and Limerick in Montgomery County.
**The Philadelphia area is the Philadelphia Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) which is defined by federal agencies; the Philadelphia CMSA boundaries have changed between 1980 and 1990 and 1990 and 2000.
Sources: US Census

Household Size
Consistent with national, State, and Chester County trends, the average household size in most of the Region's municipalities declined steadily between 1980 and 1990 and essentially leveled off between 1990 and 2000 (see **Table 1-2**). While the average size of a household has decreased, the population in most municipalities in the Region is increasing or projected to increase in the future. These two opposing trends will almost certainly result in an increased demand for housing units. More specifically, with fewer persons per household, the housing demand may be in the form of smaller units, such as town homes or other higher-density units.

Table 1-2: Average Household Size for Select Areas, 1980, 1990, and 2000

Location/Census Tract	1980	1990	2000
Phoenixville	2.59	2.37	2.27
Charlestown	3.00	2.77	2.73
East Vincent	2.90	2.71	2.75
East Pikeland	3.12	2.94	2.58
Schuylkill	3.05	2.75	2.62
West Vincent	2.90	2.82	2.84
Total Region	2.83	2.54	2.59
Surrounding Municipalities	2.83	2.55	2.53
Philadelphia Area	2.58	2.66	2.81
Chester County	2.90	2.73	2.65
Pennsylvania	2.74	2.57	2.48
United States	2.75	2.63	2.59

Source: US Census

Age

Similar to the national and State trends, the percent of the population under 18 decreased slightly overall in the Region between 1980 and 2000 (**Table 1-3**), though Charlestown and East Vincent experienced growth in the under 18 population, reflecting an increase in family households in these communities.

As in surrounding municipalities, Chester County, and the State, the proportion of the population 65 and over in the Region steadily increased between 1980 and 2000 (**Table 1-3**). The Region's percentage of persons 65 and over is higher than that of Chester County, the Philadelphia area, and the national percentages. The increase in the elderly population will create demand for new services and facilities to meet the needs of this population as it increases in size.

Table 1-3: Percent of Population Under 18 and Over 65 in 1980 and 2000

	Population Under 18		Population 65 and Over	
Location/Census Tract	1980	2000	1980	2000
Phoenixville	25%	23%	14%	14%
Charlestown	24%	26%	7%	10%
East Vincent	24%	29%	9%	15%
East Pikeland	29%	26%	7%	12%
Schuylkill	30%	23%	8%	12%
West Vincent	28%	28%	9%	10%
Total Region	26%	25%	10%	13%
Chester County	29%	26%	9%	12%
Philadelphia Area	27%	25%	12%	13%
Pennsylvania	26%	24%	13%	16%
United States	28%	26%	11%	12%

Source: US Census

Environment

The Phoenixville Region is characterized by gently rolling hills, fertile narrow valleys and well-drained soils, providing flat good-quality agricultural land combined with steep slopes, wooded areas and healthy general riparian areas. These critical primary natural resource features support a large multitude of important ecological inputs (**Table 1-4**). Many of the development trends occurring in Northern Chester County are negatively impacting the Region's high quality streams and riparian corridors. Particularly, a substantial increase in stormwater runoff from increased development has resulted in a number of harmful effects to the Region's hydrological environment.

In terms of land coverage Wooded areas encompass about 37% of the Region's land area and steep slopes (15% or more) cover 3,740 acres or 9% of its land area. The Region includes 22,000 acres of prime agricultural soils, though many of those have already been lost to development. Currently, the Phoenixville Region permanently protects almost 4,400 acres of natural resource and agricultural land through land trusts, municipal recreation facilities, national historic parks, county parks, agricultural easements, and homeowner conservation easements.

Table 1-4: Total Area of Environmental Features by Municipality

Municipality	Total Area, Acres	Forested / Wooded, Total Area	Percent of Total Area Wooded	Prime Agricultural Soils	Percent of Total Area Prime Agricultural Soils
Charlestown	8,015	4,150	52%	4,146	52%
East Pikeland	5,692	1,577	28%	2,361	41%
East Vincent	8,672	1,800	21%	5,643	65%
Phoenixville	2,332	473	20%	466	20%
Schuylkill	5,703	2,111	37%	3,179	56%
West Vincent	11,412	5,327	47%	6,427	56%
Total Region	41,826	15,437	37%	22,221	53%

2. Land Use Plan

Goal & Objectives

Preserve and enhance the Region's valuable community, economic, natural, and agricultural resources by limiting the extent of future development through the protection of these resources and by targeting development investments to traditional and newly-designated economic centers to create complete communities that support and enhance community character, the local economy and tax base.

- Encourage the revitalization efforts of the Borough of Phoenixville, especially the redevelopment of the French Creek Center site, to ensure its place as the urban hub of the Phoenixville Region

- Adopt appropriate land use plans and zoning regulations to encourage new mixed use village-style development that is walkable and two to three stories in scale in appropriate village, mixed use, and commercial areas that have existing infrastructure or are carefully planned for supporting infrastructure such as Devault, East Vincent Business Park, the 724 corridor, and Ludwigs Corner

- Manage adaptive reuse, sensitive infill development, and village extensions in the existing villages of the Phoenixville Region, such as Kimberton, Wilmer, and Valley Forge to enhance community character and support the local economy

- Encourage transfer-of-development rights across municipal boundaries, purchase-of-development rights, conservation easements, historic districts, and agricultural conservation easements with the intent of meeting passive open space requirements in targeted agricultural and natural resource areas around developed areas to create greenbelts and a network of open spaces

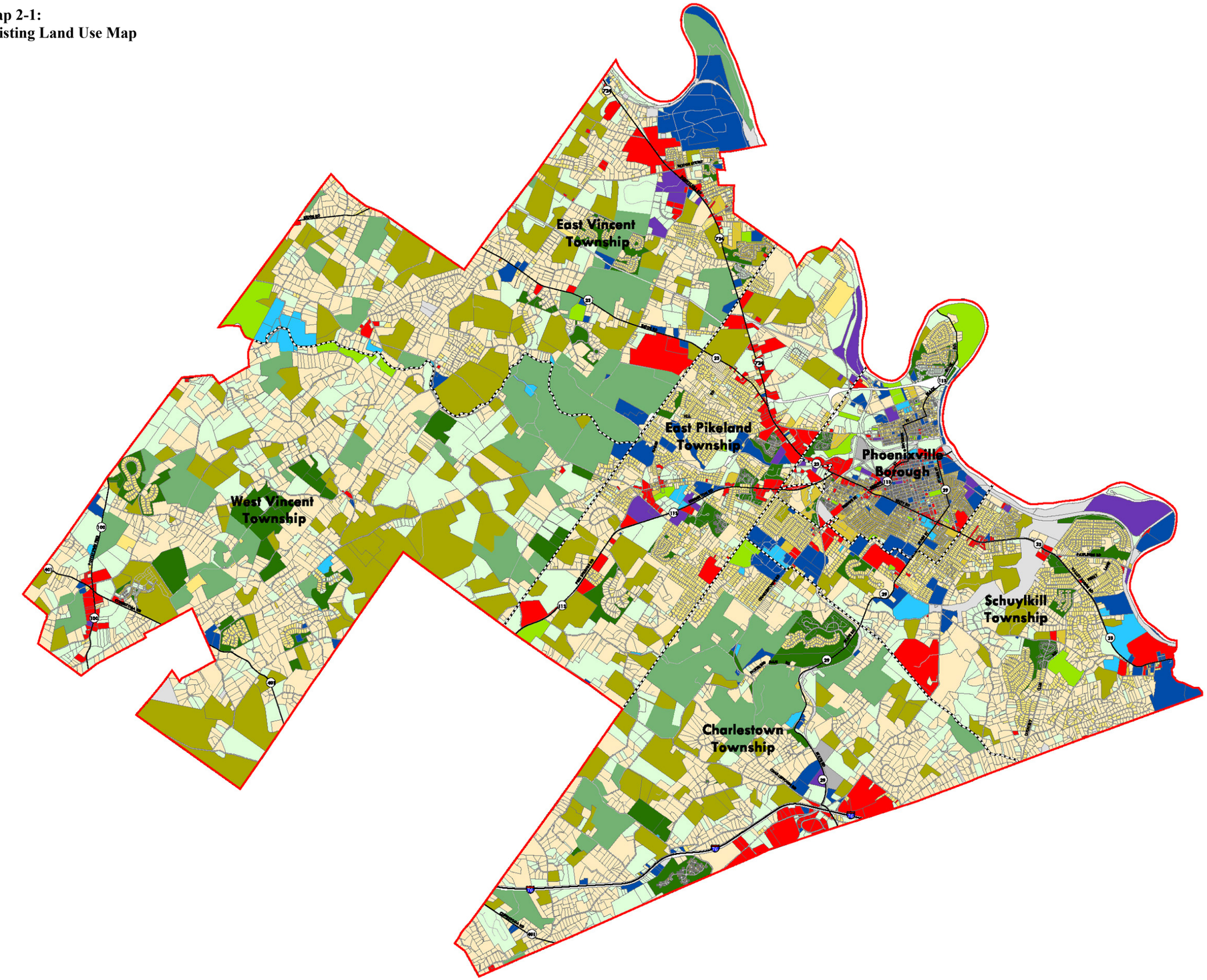
Background

The existing land uses in the Phoenixville Region are shown in **Map 2-1**. This map was created using the most recent tax parcel data from the Chester County Bureau of Land Records, which were visually verified and corrected by the individual municipalities for this analysis. The predominant land uses in the Phoenixville Region are low-density residential (30%), vacant land with no associated use or structure (16%), and non-preserved and preserved agricultural land (15% and 11%, respectively). These land uses are described in more detail in the following paragraphs and **Table 2-1**.

LEGEND

- *Study Area Boundary*
- *Municipal Boundaries*
- *State Highway*
- *Commercial*
- *Low - Density Residential (>1 acre lot)*
- *Medium - Density Residential (0.25 - 1 acre lot)*
- *High - Density Residential (< 0.25 acre lot)*
- *Non - Preserved Agriculture*
- *Preserved Agriculture*
- *Open Space (homeowner associations, etc.)*
- *Recreation (public and private parks, golf courses, etc.)*
- *Community Services (hospitals, nursing homes, etc.)*
- *Institutional (schools, churches, etc.)*
- *Industrial*
- *Mining*
- *Utility and Transportation*
- *Vacant*

Map 2-1:
Existing Land Use Map



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W E
S

0 3,000 6,000 12,000 Feet

Kise Straw and Kolodner
in association with:
Urban Partners
Cahill Associates
Smith & McMaster
Traffic Planning & Design

Note : GIS Land Use Data provided by Chester County Bureau of Land Records

Table 2-1: Existing Land Use

Land Use Distribution for the Phoenixville Region

Land Use Category	# of Parcels	% of Total Parcels	Acres	% of Total Acres
Commercial	605	3.62%	1585.55	4.03%
Low - Density Residential (> 1 acre lot)	3714	22.21%	11960.11	30.43%
Medium - Density Residential (0.25 - 1 acre lot)	5056	30.24%	2934.13	7.47%
High - Density Residential (< 0.25 acre lot)	4864	29.09%	811.11	2.06%
Agriculture & Farming	199	1.19%	6042.46	15.37%
Open Space (protected farms, homeowner associations, etc.)	340	2.03%	5586.65	14.22%
Recreation (parks, golf courses, facilities, etc.)	26	.16%	244.18	.62%
Community Services (hospitals, nursing homes,etc.)	84	.50%	542.51	1.38%
Institutional (schools, churches, etc.)	259	1.55%	1901.22	4.84%
Industrial	40	.24%	502	1.28%
Mining	26	.01%	64.32	.16%
Utility and Transportation	93	.56%	670.44	1.71%
Vacant	1438	8.60%	6456.17	16.43%

Note : GIS Land Use Data provided by Chester County Planning Commission

The largest land use category in the Phoenixville Region is low-density residential, with approximately 12,000 acres or 30% of the Region's acreage. The low-density residential category includes all residential lots greater than one acre. Although it is the Region's largest land use, a distinction needs to be made between two types of low-density residential: suburban subdivisions and large lot rural development.

The biggest threat facing the Region today is exploding suburban growth. The direct and cumulative impacts of increasing suburban subdivisions, typically referred to as "suburban sprawl" are threatening quality of life and the ongoing function of key transportation and ecological systems in the Region. Some of the most acute direct impacts from recent development patterns are the erosion of rural character, the loss of wildlife habitat and open space, and traffic impacts due to the necessity of a car for travel. Some of the most critical cumulative impacts include increased stormwater runoff that causes flooding, wastewater and aquifer recharge impacts, and air quality impacts from vehicle emissions.

The second largest land use in the Region is vacant property with no associated use or structure. This category encompasses about 6,300 acres or 16% of the Region. The highest percentages of vacant land are located in West Vincent and East Pikeland with 21% of the townships' acreage, followed by Phoenixville (16%), Charlestown (15%), East Vincent (11%), and Schuylkill (10%). This land use category signifies the potential for additional growth, whether it is desired or not, and this plan seeks to recommend tools to minimize consumption of additional land for development.

In Phoenixville, a large portion of vacant land is within the old Phoenix Steel site (130 acres) that has been master planned for mixed-use redevelopment. On the other hand, the rural townships face the prospect of additional residential subdivisions, which could further deteriorate the

Region's rural character if this land is not appropriately protected. The rural townships may prevent this scenario by intensifying development in existing commercial and mixed use areas such as Phoenixville and by maximizing efforts for transfer-of-development rights (TDR), purchase-of-development rights (PDR), and innovative zoning for farmland and large lot rural property.

The third largest land use category in the Phoenixville Region is non-preserved and preserved agriculture with 6,100 acres (15%) and with 4,500 acres (11%), respectively. The majority of agricultural acreage is located in West Vincent, East Vincent and Charlestown. Although these townships have progressive zoning codes and various types of transfer-of-development rights (TDR) programs, current development pressures and a diminishing farm support network threaten the agricultural land uses.

Commercial uses encompass approximately 1,800 acres or 5% of total acreage in the Phoenixville Region. Commercial uses include the following: banks, restaurants, retail, shopping centers, offices, entertainment, hotels, car dealers, gas stations, warehouses, and airports. The majority of commercial uses are located in urban centers, in suburban corridors, and in rural centers, as follows:

- Downtown Phoenixville and the Route 23/113 intersection;
- Along Routes 23, 113, and 724 in East Pikeland;
- Along Route 724 in East Vincent; and,
- Along Route 100 in West Vincent.

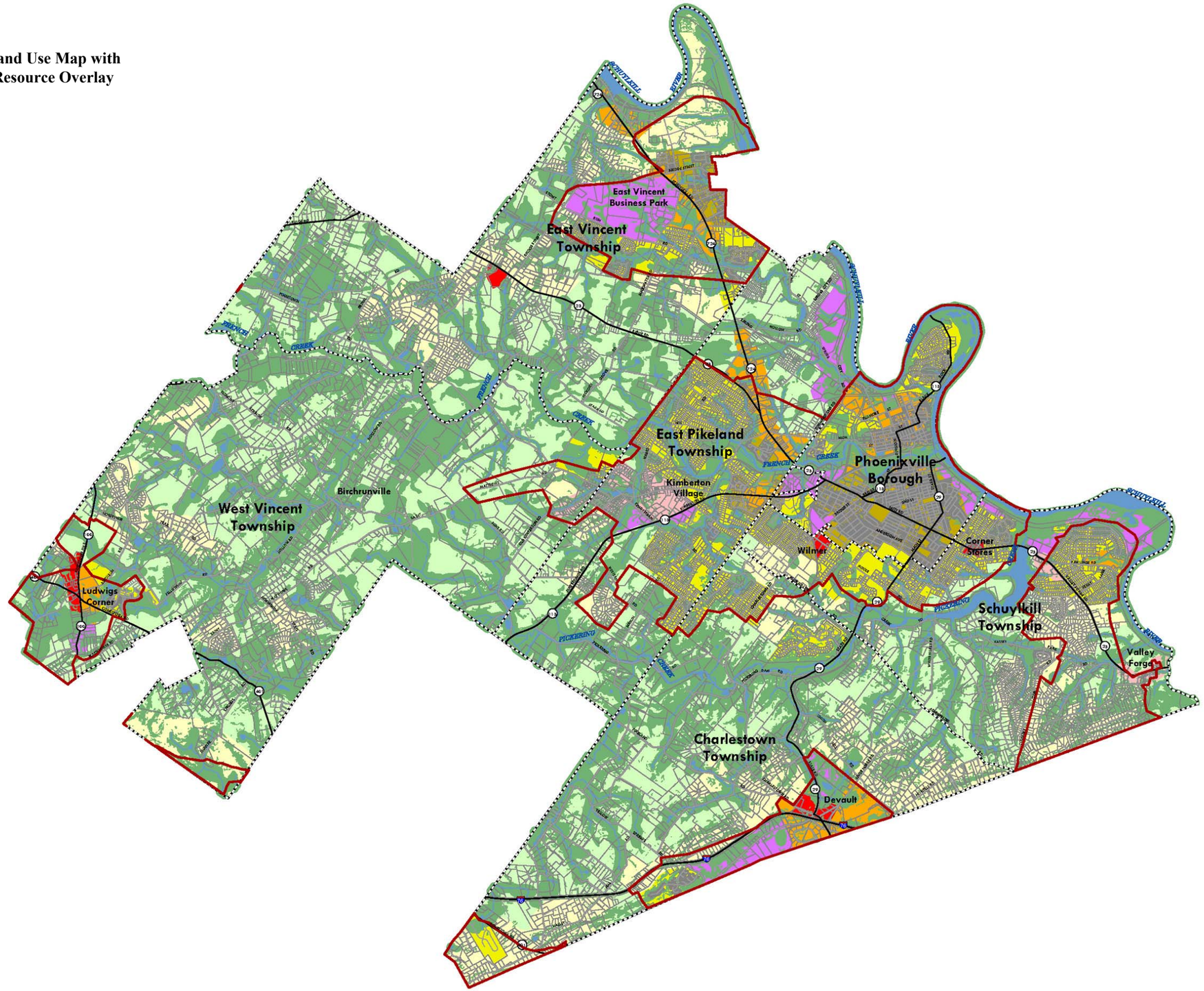
Future Land Use Map

The Region's future land use map (**Map 2-2**) is a policy map which is designed to implement the land use goals and objectives by conserving the remaining natural resources of the Region and strategically guiding where future development investments will occur and at what level of intensity throughout the Region. It provides the basis for the Region to coordinate each municipal zoning ordinance with each other as well as coordinating with the municipalities adjacent to the Region. The land use categories are generalized by type and a range of intensity, but further specifications of the exact design and density of development within each area will be decided by the individual municipalities. In order to see the underlying land use plan, **Map 2-3** is provided to show only the future land use and does not provide the natural resource protection overlay. Designated growth areas are also included in the future land use map to limit non-rural zoning intensities outside of these boundaries and to ensure that water and wastewater infrastructure extensions are limited to areas designated for the appropriate intensity of development.

The future land use map was created using a variety of resources. First generalized land use categories were developed using the overarching policy goals and objectives developed by the Regional Committee along with a summary of existing zoning districts. The process of drawing the future land use map with these categories entailed overlaying the following:

- the existing municipal zoning districts
- the County's future land use map
- primary natural resources
- developable land
- an aerial photograph (2000)

Map 2-2:
Future Land Use Map with Natural Resource Overlay



LEGEND

Municipal Boundaries

Parcels

Future Land Use

- *Commercial (30% site coverage)*
- *Mixed Use (7-12 DU/AC; 20% site coverage)*
- *Village (3-5 DU/AC; 20% site coverage)*
- *High Density Residential (4-15 DU/AC)*
- *Medium Density Residential (1-4 DU/AC)*
- *Low Density Residential (0.33 - 1 DU/AC)*
- *Rural (less than 0.33 DU/AC)*
- *Industrial (15% site coverage)*

Natural Resource Conservation Areas

Growth Area

(based on compiling Chester County's Landscape Plan Growth Areas and Watershed Plan Sewer and Water Extension Areas)

State Highway

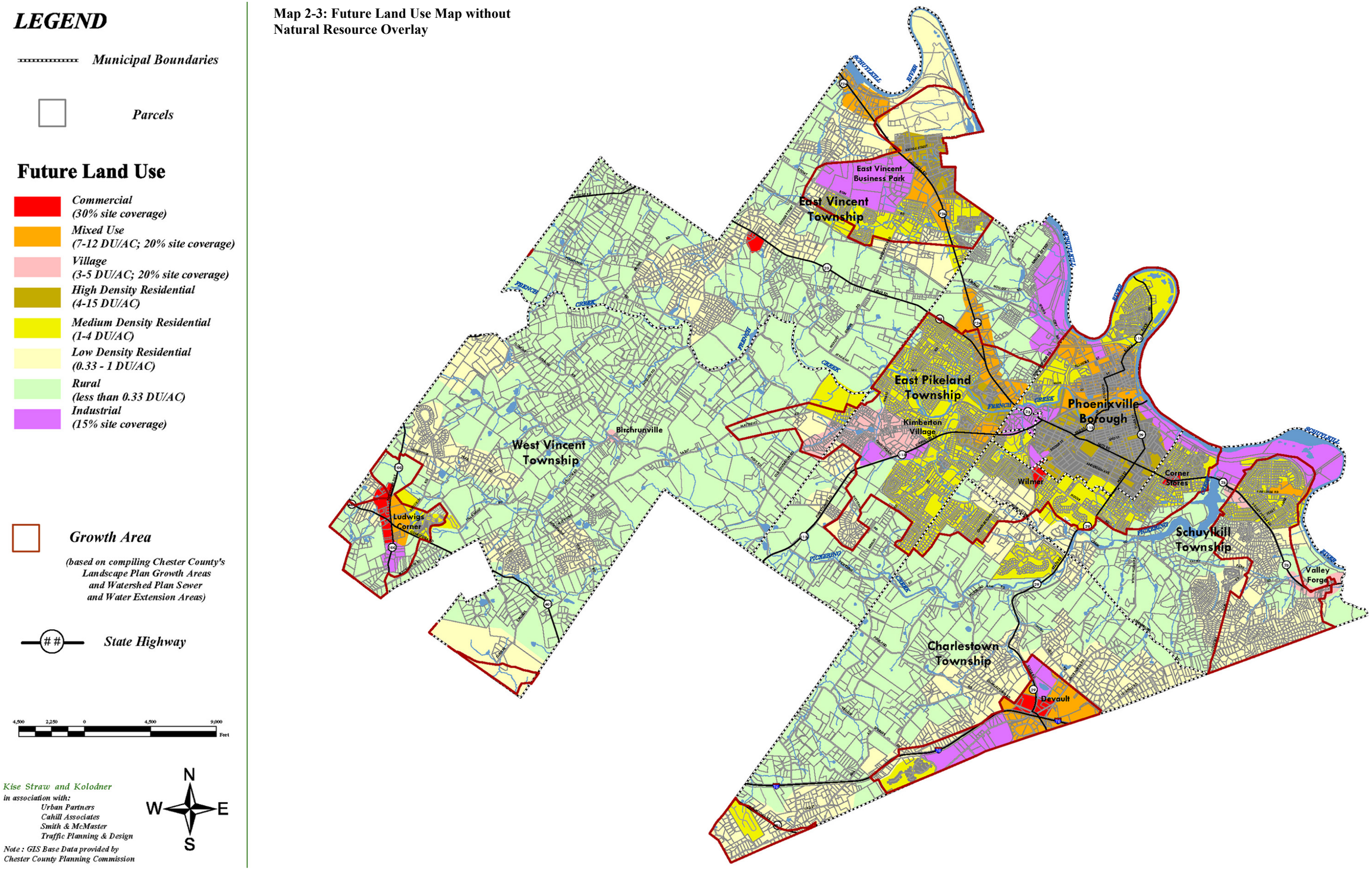
4,500 2,250 0 4,500 9,000 Feet

N W E S

Kise Straw and Kolodner
in association with:
Urban Partners
Cahill Associates
Smith & McMaster
Traffic Planning & Design

Note : GIS Base Data provided by Chester County Planning Commission

Map 2-3: Future Land Use Map without Natural Resource Overlay



The resulting map was analyzed to identify where there are correlations and inconsistencies in the existing land use planning. After reconciling some of the differences, using the guidance of the Region's goals and objectives, the land use categories were drawn onto the map. Rural areas were drawn where there are defined natural resources such as prime agricultural soils, wooded areas, wetlands, and steep slopes, along with existing agricultural uses and open spaces. Mixed use and village areas were located based on the location of established commercial districts, comments from the public meetings and the Regional Planning Commission and the capacity of existing transportation, wastewater, and water infrastructure.

Redevelopment and infill is an important part of the plan's development strategy. The buildout analysis assumed that the Phoenixville Steel site, which had a preliminary development plan approved at the time of the analysis, would be built out to the densities described in the approved plan. The location of the site in the floodplain (a primary environmental feature) was not considered. Only primary environmental features were excluded from development assumptions in other potential redevelopment and infill areas and designated mixed use and village areas, and the total land area of all secondary features was included in the total developable land.

The future land use pattern for Region is based on preserving the rural areas and improving the quality of the built environment in the areas with existing development and infrastructure. The Borough of Phoenixville is the Region's economic and residential hub. The Borough has only a small amount of land that is currently vacant, but investments in the existing infrastructure and redevelopment parcels will strengthen the Borough and regional economy to provide opportunities for more desirable infill development. Other key locations for commercial and mixed use development and redevelopment include East Vincent's Business Park, the 724 corridor in East Pikeland and East Vincent, Ludwigs Corner in West Vincent, and Devault in Charlestown.

All these growth areas with the exception of Devault, currently serve as local or even regional commercial hubs. Devault, though now largely undeveloped will be the location of a new Pennsylvania Turnpike exit, will have considerable development pressures and opportunities. All of these areas that are targeted for reinvestment and growth are well served by transportation, wastewater, and water infrastructure. Smaller village style areas exist in Kimberton, Wilmer, Corner Stores, and Valley Forge. These village areas offer opportunities for investment primarily in small-scale redevelopment efforts.

Beyond the aforementioned areas, the future land use pattern strives to conserve the rural character and natural resources of the Region such as existing woodlands, open spaces, and agricultural soils. It is the goal of this plan to shift the existing pattern of growth away from the rural areas and into traditional economic centers such as Phoenixville and the supporting villages and commercial centers.

Future Land Use Categories

Rural

53.2% of the Region, 22,307 Acres, (5,915 Acres of developable land)
0.33 or less dwelling units per acre
This land use category includes areas of the Region in which existing land uses are primarily agricultural, woodlands, low density residential, and open space. The existing lot sizes are mostly larger than five acres. In the future land use plan, this category is intended to conserve the rural character of the Region. Comprising over half of the land in the Region, it provides an open space buffer for natural resources such as wetlands, riparian habitat, and agricultural uses. Areas of this land use category should be given a high priority for acquisition of passive open space preservation and considered for a reduction in residential density. To the extent it was possible, each municipality except Phoenixville Borough, has key locations devoted to the rural category. The rural land use category follows Pickering and French Creeks and includes much of Charlestown and West Vincent. It also includes a swath of land in the northeastern portion of East Pikeland identified by the community as a high priority area for conservation of passive open space and rural land uses. By preserving this area the residential and mixed use land use categories adjacent to it along the 724 corridor will have the open space as an amenity.

Low Density Residential

20.2% of the Region, 8,483 Acres (1,001 Acres of developable land)
0.33 to 1 dwelling unit per acre
Existing areas of low density residential as well as planned suburban style development are included in this land use category. This category is primarily located on the periphery of medium density or urban areas. In some cases, such as in West Vincent, pockets of low density residential already exist, surrounded by rural land uses. It is recommended that this land use category contain standards that support clustered subdivisions to preserve natural resources and reduce impervious surfaces. New development or redevelopment in these areas should be encouraged to provide small, maintained community parks and recreational facilities (active open spaces) to enhance the quality of life and maintain existing open spaces.

Medium Density Residential

12.6% of the Region, 5,284 Acres (296 Acres of developable land)
1 to 4 dwelling units per acre
The medium density residential category is intended to provide traditional residential neighborhood development, typically arranged in a grid street pattern to support pedestrian oriented communities with neighborhood serving retail. This category encompasses most of the suburban residential development that exists in East Pikeland and on the periphery of Phoenixville in Schuylkill Township. Future locations for medium density residential are in Ludwigs Corner and East Vincent Township surrounding the planned commercial areas. This land use category should contain standards that support clustered subdivisions to preserve natural resources and reduce impervious surfaces. Active parks and open space should be integrated into new development designs in these areas.

High Density Residential

3.0% of the Region, 1,251 Acres (45 Acres of developable land)
4 to 15 dwelling units per acre
The high density residential category encompasses compact single family residential development and accommodates apartment buildings, condominiums, and other types of multi-family housing types. Phoenixville Borough and the area of East Vincent adjacent to Spring City have high density residential.

Village

1.4% of the Region, 598 Acres (44 Acres of developable land)
3 to 5 dwelling units per acre; 20% site coverage for commercial buildings
Village areas are a mix of neighborhood serving retail and businesses along with residential uses above commercial and single family homes. Development in these areas should be carefully considered to conserve the community character and provide retail that generates community activity. Because these areas are compact, and usually historic in nature, each development proposal significantly impacts the community. Design guidelines and/or official maps should be developed to ensure that growth is consistent with the pattern of the village and planned to support and revitalize the community.

Kimberton Village has some opportunities for new development, both retail and housing. Birchrunville in West Vincent is an historic district with no significant opportunities for development due to the community character and the constraints of the natural resources in the area. It should work to maintain its buildings and the rural context that surrounds it. Valley Forge along Route 23 in Schuylkill Township has some opportunities for small scale development.

Mixed Use

4.1% of the Region, 1,715 Acres (203 Acres of developable land)
10 to 12 dwelling units per acre; 20% site coverage for commercial buildings

Mixed use areas provide a combination of residential and commercial land uses. The primary intent of this land use category is to provide pedestrian oriented community centers with a variety of housing types and neighborhood serving retail. To ensure that the urban form is walkable, the municipalities should develop design guidelines, master plans, and/or official maps for these areas. Devault, Ludwigs Corner, the 724 Corridor in East Vincent and East Pikeland, as well as a good portion of Phoenixville are designated for mixed use development. These areas are or could be the receiving areas for transfer of development rights ordinances, which East Pikeland, East Vincent, and West Vincent already have in place.

Commercial

0.5% of the Region, 229 Acres (34 Acres of developable land)
30% site coverage for commercial buildings

The commercial land use category includes areas targeted solely for commercial development. In most locations these areas will include auto-oriented businesses and benefit from good transportation access. Sites exist in East Vincent north of 23 and Bridge Street, Ludwigs Corner, Schuylkill Township at Corner Stores and in Devault.

Industrial

4.9% of the Region, 2,063 Acres (414 Acres of developable land)
15% site coverage for commercial buildings
Few changes were made to the location of industrial land uses in the Region. The existing locations are primarily along the Schuylkill River (and the freight railroad line), East Vincent Business Park and on the western portion of Phoenixville and Schuylkill Township. The East Vincent Business Park and Devault provide the most available land for growth in the industrial land use category. The industrial land use category can include office, manufacturing, research, or distribution uses.

Natural Resource Conservation Overlay Areas

45.0% of the Region, 18,874 Acres

The natural resource conservation areas are provided as an overlay on the future land use map (see Future Land Use Map with Natural Resources). While this is not a specific land use category, these areas should be protected in municipal ordinances as described in the Natural Resource section of this plan. The natural resource conservation area is a combination of steep slopes, wetlands, hydric soils, flood plains, and riparian buffer zones.

Analysis of Future Land Use Categories

Table 2-2 Existing and Future Acres of Land Use and Percent Change summarizes how much land is in each land use category. In keeping with the goals and objectives, over half of the Region is categorized as rural and slightly less than half falls within the Natural Resource Conservation Areas where development is limited or prohibited.

Table 2-3 Future Land Use Build-out Analysis estimates how much development would occur if the future land use map were implemented with its natural resource conservation areas and modification to land use intensities in the zoning ordinances. It approximates how many acres of developable land are in each municipality and how those developable acres might be developed according to which land use area they are located within. Developable land is defined as vacant or agricultural land according to the County Tax Assessor, and is only meant for the purpose of estimating. The table calculates approximately how many square feet of commercial space and how many dwelling units could be built, if all the developable land were built to the maximum allowable capacity.

Table 2-4 Comparison of Trend and Alternative Build-out Analyses compares how much development would occur if the Region were to keep its existing ordinances (Trend Analysis) to the amount of development that would occur if the future land use map alternative were implemented (described in Table 2.2). It establishes a clear reduction in the amount of allowable development that is more realistic in light of the existing infrastructure capacity and the necessary natural resource protections.

Table 2-2: Existing and Future Acres of Land Use and Percent Change

Land Use Category	Existing Acres	Percent of Region	Future Acres	Percent of Region	Change
Industrial	1,922	4.6%	2,063	4.9%	0.3%
Commercial	1,061	2.5%	229	0.5%	-2.0%
Mixed Use	605	1.4%	1,716	4.1%	2.6%
Village	252	0.6%	599	1.4%	0.8%
High Density Residential	1,745	4.2%	1,251	3.0%	-1.2%
Medium Density Residential	5,033	12.0%	5,284	12.6%	0.6%
Low Density Residential	17,733	42.3%	8,483	20.2%	-22.1%
Rural	13,583	32.4%	22,306	53.2%	20.8%
Region Total	41,932	100.0%	41,932	100.0%	

Table 2-3: Future Land Use Build-out Analysis: *Summarized by Municipality and Future Land Use Category*

	Future Land Use Category	*Estimated Dwelling Units per Acre*	*Percent of Site Developable as Commercial*	*Acres of Developable Land*	*25% and 50% of Prime Ag. Soils and Wooded Acres are Developable*	*Potential Developable Commercial Area (SF)*	*Potential Developable Dwelling Units*
Phoenixville	High Density Residential	15.0	0%	18.3	1.4		218
	Industrial	0.0	15%	1.7		11,186	
	Medium Density Residential	4.0	0%	16.5	4.5		41
	Commercial	0.0	30%	1.1	1.1	14,401	
	Mixed Use	10.0	20%	31.3		273,112	313
	French Creek Center			120.0		1,000,000	642
	Phoenixville Subtotal			***189.0***	***7.0***	***1,298,700***	***1,215***
East Vincent	High Density Residential	15.0	0%	26.7	4.3		220
	Industrial	0.0	15%	256.9	30.5	1,101,575	
	Low Density Residential	1.0	0%	170.8	32.2		76
	Medium Density Residential	4.0	0%	51.5	20.7		80
	Commercial	0.0	30%	0.8		10,010	
	Rural	0.3	0%	1,178.8	237.3		164
	Mixed Use	10.0	20%	55.6	55.6	484,152	556
	East Vincent Subtotal			***1,740.3***	***380.4***	***1,595,737***	***1,096***
West Vincent	Industrial	0.0	15%	1.4	0.2	7,655	
	Low Density Residential	1.0	0%	389.8	84.6		174
	Medium Density Residential	4.0	0%	66.2	13.6		109
	Rural	0.3	0%	2,275.0	524.5		267
	Commercial	0.0	30%	0.1	0.1	653	
	Mixed Use	10.0	20%	31.6	31.6	275,465	316
	Village	5.0	20%	2.9	2.9	25,178	14
	West Vincent Subtotal			***2,766.9***	***657.5***	***308,950***	***881***
East Pikeland	High Density Residential	15.0	0%	0.4	0.1		3
	Industrial	0.0	15%	77.1	24.3	255,282	
	Low Density Residential	1.0	0%	42.0	11.8		21
	Medium Density Residential	4.0	0%	65.0	10.0		160
	Rural	0.3	0%	731.4	136.3		119
	Mixed Use	10.0	20%	53.9	58.8	469,577	539
	Village	5.0	20%	40.9	33.7	356,321	205
	East Pikeland Subtotal			***1,010.6***	***275.0***	***1,081,179***	***1,046***
Schuylkill	Industrial	0.0	15%	23.9	4.6	85,840	
	Low Density Residential	1.0	0%	42.0	12.9		14
	Medium Density Residential	4.0	0%	28.9	5.6		56
	Rural	0.3	0%	535.4	134.0		44
	Commercial	0.0	30%	1.4	1.4	18,543	
	Mixed Use	10.0	20%	17.7	17.7	154,202	177
	Village	5.0	20%	0.4	0.4	3,450	2
	Schuylkill Subtotal			***649.7***	***176.7***	***262,036***	***294***
Charlestown	Industrial	0.0	15%	53.7	14.1	199,266	
	Low Density Residential	1.0	0%	356.5	87.4		146
	Medium Density Residential	4.0	0%	68.5	16.0		102
	Rural	0.3	0%	1,195.4	240.0		188
	Mixed Use	10.0	20%	18.6		162,043	186
	Commercial	0.0	30%	31.5		412,256	
	Charlestown Subtotal			***1,724.2***	***357.4***	***773,565***	***622***
			Region Total	***8,080.6***	***1,854.0***	***5,320,168***	***5,154***

Table 2.4 Comparison of Build-Out Scenarios

	Square Feet Commercial		Dwelling Units	
	Trend	*Future Land Use Plan*	*Trend*	*Future Land Use Plan*
Phoenixville	2,161,723	1,298,700	1,417	1,215
East Vincent	1,850,167	1,595,737	2,722	1,096
West Vincent	1,629,057	308,950	4,628	881
East Pikeland	1,686,970	1,081,179	2,915	1,046
Schuylkill*	265,672	262,036	589	294
Charlestown	920,880	773,565	1,301	622
Region	*8,514,469*	*5,320,168*	*13,572*	*5,154*

** increase 154,202 sf and 177 units due to potential SVM transit stop*

Recommendations

The following recommendations describe how to implement the Future Land Use policy map and reach the land use goal of preserving open space and investing in the existing communities.

2.1. Modify existing zoning ordinances to reflect residential densities and the location of residential land uses in the Future Land Use plan

The residential densities reflected in this plan are based in the existing zoning code, however, the goal of this plan is to reduce residential densities in rural areas and increase it where the appropriate infrastructure is available. Phoenixville could increase the allowable density in the NCR-1 district. East Vincent could further reduce the allowable densities in the AP and RC districts.

The mixed use areas in the future land use plan provide for much of the residential growth in the Region. Most of the municipalities allow residential in the existing commercial districts, however there are some barriers to developing in a mixed use pattern. For example the commercial district in Schuylkill Township allows residential above retail, as a conditional use; but requires that two parking spaces be provided per unit. This parking requirement is excessive for smaller units. The municipalities should review their zoning ordinances that fall under the mixed use land use category and amend them to clearly encourage developers to build residential development in conjunction with commercial.

2.2. Modify existing zoning ordinances to establish Kimberton and Valley Forge as village locations

East Pikeland is embarking on a community process to revise the existing review-based zoning district for Kimberton Village. The zoning district could include design guidelines and specific allowable densities for housing. It might be beneficial to conduct a community meeting with a range of photos of housing types, mixed use development and development styles. The community can rank their preference for each development type and style. Similarly Schuylkill Township could undertake a similar exercise around the Valley Forge village area and the potential Schuylkill Valley Metro station area.

2.3. Modify existing zoning ordinances to provide for mixed use and commercial growth in Devault based on the outcome of the master plan process

The planned Pennsylvania Turnpike interchange will dramatically increase transportation access to the Devault area, making this a logical area for Charlestown to target future commercial and residential development in exchange for reducing densities in the rural areas of Charlestown. While some of the area around the planned interchange and to the south of the interchange will certainly be primarily commercial and light industrial, the areas to the north could be developed with residential and neighborhood oriented retail with complementary residential land uses. The existing zoning districts in Charlestown Township around Devault do not allow for residential development in combination with commercial development. To begin the rezoning process, Charlestown should use previous visioning exercises it has conducted for Devault as a starting point for a master plan process. As mentioned in recommendation 2.9, the master plan will ultimately make specific recommendations for zoning changes pertaining to use, design, mass, and scale.

2.4. Establish enabling legislation for regional transfer and purchase of development rights that are applicable across municipal boundaries

The municipalities in the Region should work towards creating a regional transfer of development rights (TDR) ordinance to assist in focusing development in growth areas. This program would provide an incentive for developers to redevelop and revitalize existing and future urban areas and conserve designated rural areas in the process. It is important to note that the use of a TDR program is not intended to result in the increase in the maximum density permitted in any area ultimately selected as a "receiving area". The goal of a TDR program is to provide the incentives necessary to further limit development to appropriate areas and further preserve other areas where development is not appropriate.

The Region might start with the smallest TDR program that seems technically and economically feasible and expand it as seems appropriate after implementation. Initially, the ordinance could designate any area outside the growth area in each partner municipality as a sending area. It may also include specific agricultural or rural conservation areas within the growth area. Potential receiving areas could include Phoenixville Borough, the Devault area, Ludwigs Corner, and the 724 Corridor. Since many of these areas allow commercial as well as residential uses, the ordinance should consider how to transfer residential or commercial rights to commercial and mixed use development.

Given the inherent complexity of a regional TDR program, this plan recommends initiating the process with an educational workshop for elected officials and planning commissioners in the region. The workshop would describe the technical and administrative issues associated with a TDR program. It would also present some of the critical benefits and challenges the region and each implementing municipality would need to face in developing a program. The workshop could use the successful West Vincent TDR program as a case study to illustrate some of the critical issues to resolve before moving forward.

Questions to answer before proceeding with a TDR Program include:

- Where are the receiving and sending areas?
- How does the Region address widely varying land costs, particularly within the receiving area?
- By how much will the base density need to be lowered in the receiving areas to make TDRs economically attractive for developers?

- How will the TDR program process be simple and easy to understand for the implementing municipalities? There will need to be a process for public and private acquisition and sale of TDRs.
- How will the receiving areas incorporate performance and design standards to ensure development is attractive and supports the surrounding community?
- Could the Region use "floating" TDR receiving areas for specific uses that may be desirable in areas broader than those listed above – senior housing may fall into this category?

2.5. Establish a regional financial and administrative entity to facilitate the purchase and sale of development rights

In tandem with the previous recommendation (2.4), West Vincent, Phoenixville, East Vincent, and Charlestown should work together to create a mechanism to administer the regional transfer of development rights program. Initially, this mechanism would likely be incorporated into the County or an existing land trust or conservation group. This administrator would assist land owners and developers interested in trading development rights. Land owners would be able to apply to the organization to learn if their properties qualify for the program and the number of TDRs that could be severed from their properties for future sale. The TDR administrator would act as a clearinghouse for TDR, maintaining lists of potential buyers and sellers and processing TDR transactions. The administrator could also purchase, hold and sell TDRs, perhaps using the existing banked development rights from West Vincent's TDR program (though rights already purchased by West Vincent cannot be used within that Township). This bank could be expanded with new revenues from grant sources or a bond issue.

2.6. Review, or create where necessary, zoning ordinances and design guidelines to support village style and mixed use style development where designated

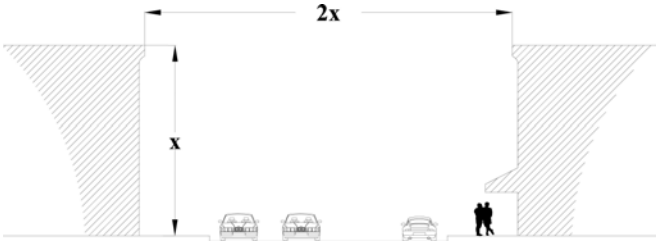
Design guidelines correlated with zoning ordinances can ensure that new development in mixed use and village land use areas is consistent with a municipality's vision for community character. Phoenixville Borough's Main Street, Schuylkill Township's village areas, the 724 Corridor in East Vincent and Pikeland, Kimberton, and Devault could all benefit from historically sensitive design guidelines.

Design guidelines also present a clear picture to developers of the type of development that the area desires. Existing building owners can also refer to the design guidelines for ideas when they renovate their property. The process of creating the design guidelines can educate and provide the community with a design vocabulary to influence zoning decisions and land development review.

Depending on the municipality and the specific district, design guidelines can include site plan dimension requirements, such as requiring buildings to be built to the street or guidelines can be as specific as to include color and material palettes. Design guidelines that set standards for the urban form of a community create the foundation of a mixed use district. There are two fundamental regulations to define as urban form standards. The first is the 'street width to building height' ratio (see Figure 2-1). Pedestrians feel more comfortable when there is a sense of enclosure - by locating buildings and trees along sidewalks, it creates a sense of enclosure for pedestrians. By providing a basic urban form proportion of approximately 2 to 1, 2 being the width of the street and 1 being the height of the building, it ensures a sense of enclosure and light. The second fundamental principle of

urban design in mixed use growth areas is defining a maximum setback line or a build to line. Developing buildings along the sidewalk with parking located to the side of the lot, or better yet behind the building, forms a street wall that adds interest and enclosure to the pedestrian environment. The maximum setback should allow for a generous pedestrian sidewalk and street tree verge, and parking should be located on-street, beside or behind the building, but not in the front yard.

Figure 2-1: Standard Pedestrian-scale Building to Street Width Ratio



2.7. Municipalities should consider establishing an Official Map that shows future desired locations of public facilities, including parks, trails, municipal structures, and roadways – official maps are especially encouraged for the designated growth areas.

One of the more straightforward ways to ensure that development conforms to the vision of mixed use and village land use areas is to map the pattern of future roadways and public facilities. Trails, parks, and other public facilities should be noted on the map. It is important to define the size of blocks in these areas which can be a key indicator of the scale of development and walkability of the community. Most of the mixed use areas should conform to the grid street pattern – the ideal walkable block length is perhaps 250 feet but lengths of up to approximately 400 feet can be successful as well. In village areas the typical block length will be irregular and usually longer due to the linear nature of villages – it is important, however, to attempt to locate new roads, alleys, and/or pedestrian walkways that provide additional circulation opportunities and add depth to the village transportation network and development pattern.

2.8. Authorize the regional planning commission to review developments of regional impact.

Large developments can impact adjacent municipalities in the form of traffic, runoff, economic development opportunities, and many more unforeseen ways. It is important that when a development with regional impacts is proposed in one community, the other municipalities are given the opportunity to comment upon it and determine whether the proposal is consistent with the objectives of this Plan.

The existing Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission, which formed to create this plan, should agree in the Implementation Agreement to be the regional planning commission with the authority to review and comment on developments of regional impacts. The criteria to identify a development of regional impact are defined in Chapter 9: Implementation. If a development of that size is proposed in the Region the municipality will be responsible for sending the plan documents to the regional commission. The regional commission would have a designated amount of time to review the proposal and submit comments to the municipality with the proposed development. The final decision to approve or reject the development proposal resides in the municipality where it is proposed.

2.9. Devault and the 724 Corridor areas should develop master plans and adopt them as an amendment to this Plan

Devault and the 724 Corridor provide large opportunities for the Region to grow and revitalize. These areas can provide a variety of land uses, such as retail and other neighborhood services for the surrounding suburban development. They also can provide diversity in housing stock with apartments above retail or townhomes in certain locations. A master plan will develop a community vision and balance the transportation needs with the land use and community needs for each area. In the 724 Corridor, East Vincent and East Pikeland could consider conducting a joint master plan to be adopted by both municipalities. Devault's master plan could be solely Charlestown; however, a joint plan that is coordinated with East Whiteland and possibly Tredyffrin could provide a more holistic perspective. The plan will need to make specific recommendations as to land use changes in the zoning code; scale and massing guidelines (as discussed in recommendation 2.6); strategic transportation improvements and guidelines for development; integrated new open space and community facilities; and innovative environmental technologies such as LEED certification.

2.10. Consider regulating the location and size of large buildings that generate a significant amount of traffic

East Vincent and other municipalities in the Region currently regulate the size of commercial buildings and their location through various zoning tools. Other municipalities in the Region should consider providing similar regulations in areas where the community is targeting smaller scale development to satisfy a local market as opposed to allowing a regional destination with significant transportation impacts.

3. Environmental and Natural Resources Plan

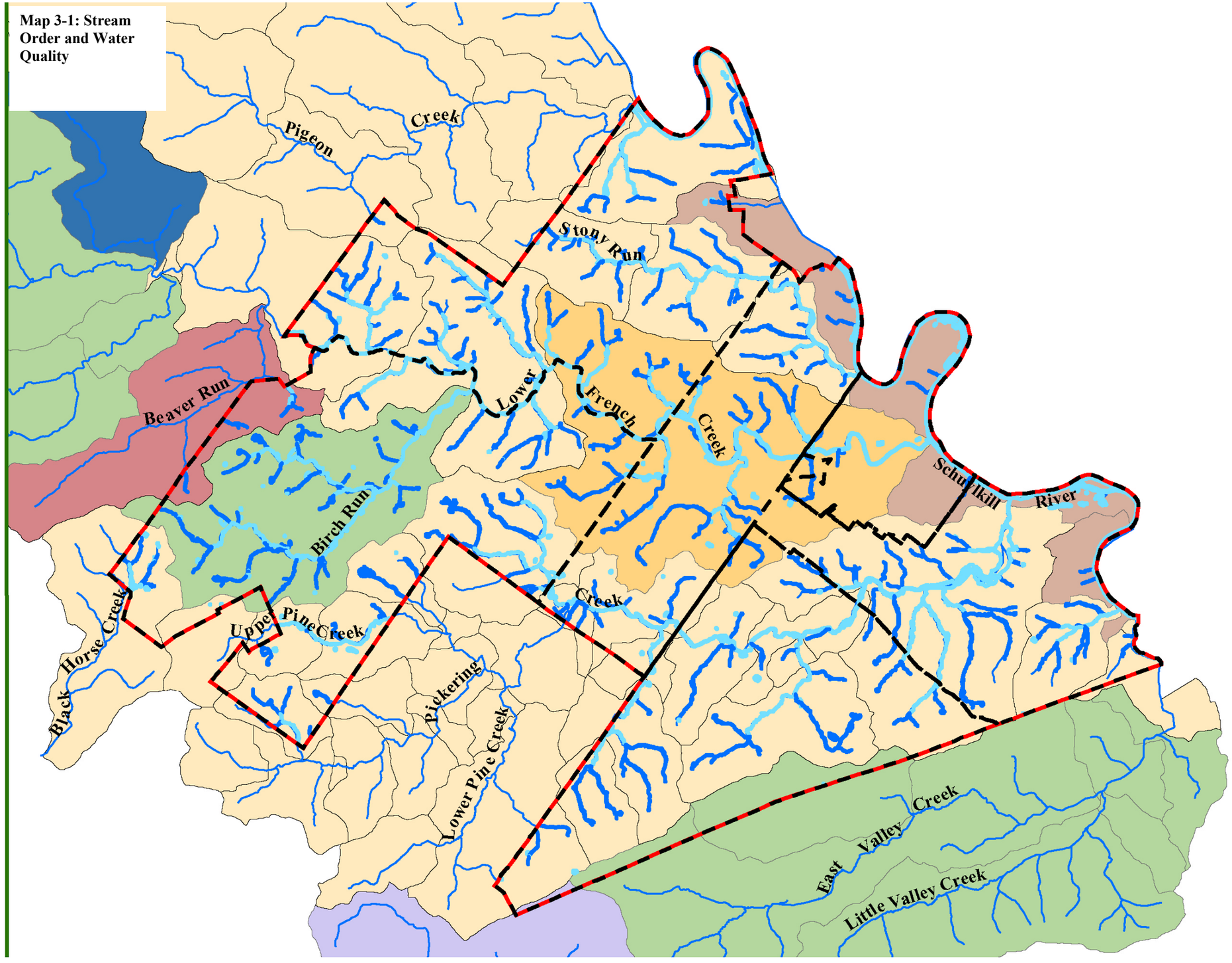
Goal

Protect the Region's vital natural resources and open spaces, including but not limited to water resources, wetlands, floodplains, prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, riparian buffers, headwaters, woodlands and important habitat areas.

Background

The natural resources of the Phoenixville Region play a critical role in how land uses have evolved to the patterns seen today. These natural resources also provide the framework for which future preservation activities should be focused. One clear message heard during the public input period is the need to preserve open space and natural resources in the Region. The Phoenixville Region strongly desires to maintain the existing natural resources – water resources, wetlands, floodplains, prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, riparian buffers, headwaters, woodlands and important habitat areas – which are unquestionably vulnerable (**Maps 3-1 and 3-2**).

A detailed review of existing municipal zoning ordinances illustrated the harsh reality of natural resource protection in the Phoenixville Region. As expected, individual municipalities have varying degrees of natural resources protection. In addition to protection inconsistency, municipal ordinances permit varying degrees of disturbance of some natural resources, such as floodplains. In order to achieve the goals and objectives for natural resource protection municipalities in the Phoenixville Region should strive for consistent resource protection standards, including the restriction of disturbance of important natural resources. Other recommended actions set forth in this plan will further support and sustain the natural resources of the Region.



LEGEND

STREAM ORDER

- First
- Second and Above
- Study Area Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries

WATER QUALITY DESIGNATION

- Exceptional Value
- Exceptional Value - Pending
- High Quality - CWF
- High Quality - Trout Stocking
- Trout Stocking Fishery
- Warm Water Fishery

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W E
S

0 2,500 5,000 10,000 15,000 Feet

Kise Straw and Kolodner
in association with:
Urban Partners
Cahill Associates
Smith & McMaster
Traffic Planning & Design

Note : GIS Base Data provided by Chester County Planning Commission

Map 3-2:
Steep Slopes and Prime Agricultural Soils

LEGEND

Study Area Boundary

Municipal Boundaries

Value

Precautionary (15 - 25%)

Prohibitive (>25%)

PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS

Class I

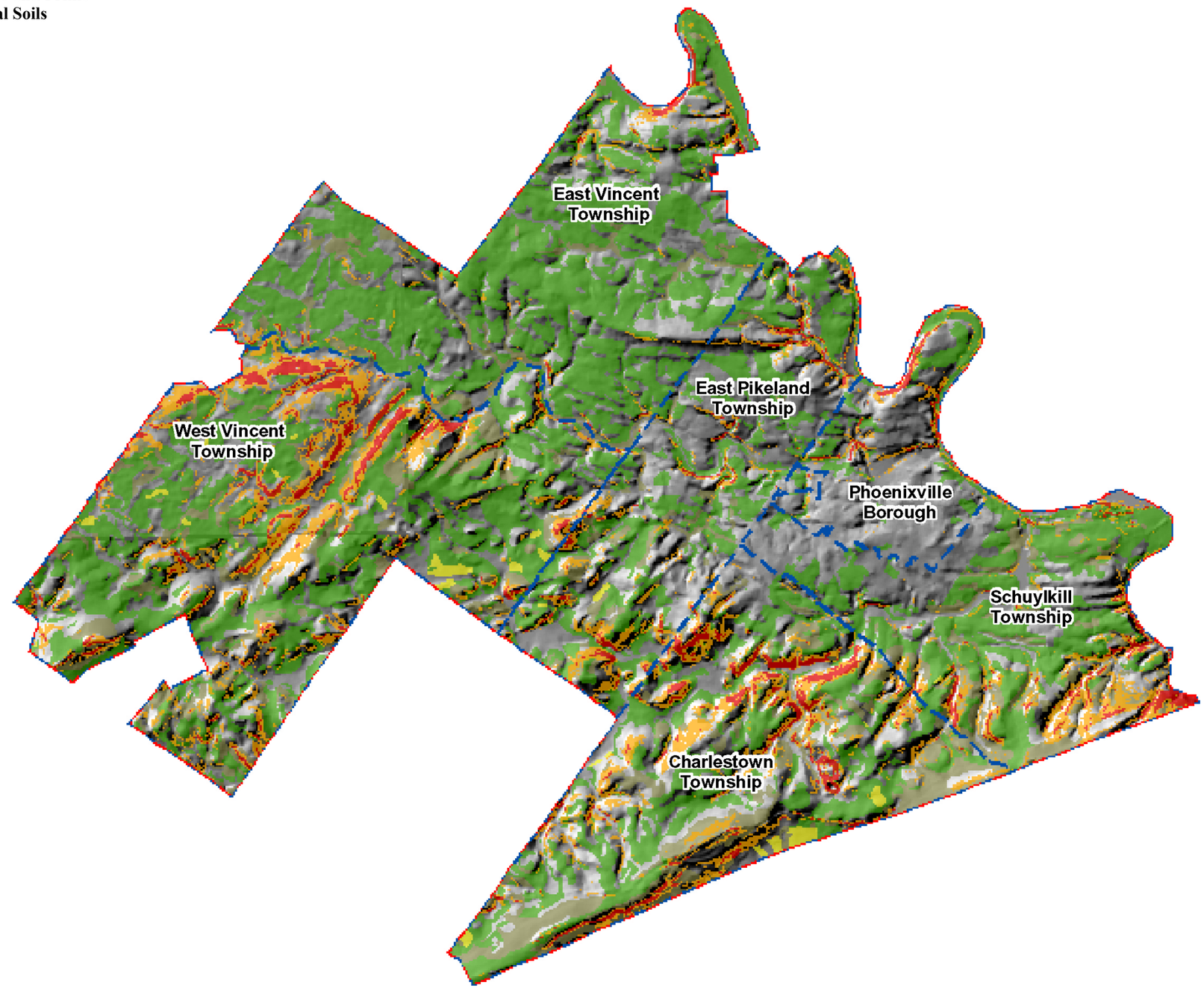
Class II

Class III

Total Prime Agricultural Land = 22,229 AC (53%)

Precautionary Slopes = 2,483 AC (5.9%)

Prohibitive Slopes = 1,262 AC (3.0%)



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Traffic Planning & Design

Note : GIS Base Data provided by Chester County Planning Commission. DEM provided by US Geological Survey. Steep Slopes created from contours (CCPC) and DEM (USGS

Recommendations

3.1. Implement consistent natural resource protection standards (for example slopes, floodplains, etc.) in municipal ordinances throughout the Region.

During the inventory phase, consultants undertook a detailed review of every zoning ordinance in order to identify the status of resource protection within each municipality. Each municipality regulates each natural resource differently, and the inconsistencies and contradictions within each natural resources protection category sometimes varied tremendously even between neighboring municipalities. Table 1 provides a matrix showing municipal protection of each natural resource category, classified into one of two protection categories, "P" or "S". Defined solely for this study, P, Primary Protected Resource, indicates that the natural resource is protected through a specific action, generally an ordinance or regulation, that stipulates how reasonably protected the feature is throughout the municipality. Wetlands and waterways generally fall into this category. Often, a resource is protected along with a buffer of that resource; that width is shown in parenthesis. S, defined solely for this plan as Secondary Protected Resource, identifies features that are protected through a less stringent or less rigorous manner, such that the municipality may allow some portion of the feature to be disturbed, usually in conjunction with clustering or other incentivizing provisions. Prime agricultural soils and woodland features tend to fall into this protection category.

As indicated by an asterisk in **Table 3-1**, many zoning ordinances allow some disturbance of a protected resource – soil disturbance, vegetation removal, and other disrupting earthwork. While the ordinances in the Region do a relatively fine job in restricting specific uses within a natural resource area, oftentimes the ordinances do a poor job in restricting the disturbance of that resource. The end result is that significant amount of disturbance is allowed, even under the "P" category.

In order to achieve the goals and objectives for natural resource protection municipalities should strive for consistent resource protection standards, including the restriction of disturbance of important natural resources. It is strongly recommended that all municipalities undertake the necessary steps to coordinate natural resource protection measures in each individual zoning ordinance and enact the most protective of the ordinances found in the Region today as shown in **Table 3-2**. Each municipality's zoning ordinance should be reviewed and modified to include specific limits of disturbance on all natural resource features listed, given that regulating disturbance is the most effective means of resource protection.

Given the importance of redevelopment and infill to the region's success in preserving agricultural and natural resource land, each municipality should consider whether or how to apply these criteria to already developed areas and designated mixed use and village areas. As described in the Land Use Plan, the buildout analysis assumed no environmental constraints for the Phoenixville Steel site in Phoenixville Borough and excluded only primary environmental features from development in other infill areas and designated mixed use and village areas.

Table 3-1. Municipal protection of natural resources through zoning ordinance

Natural Resource Feature	Charlestown Township	East Pikeland Township	East Vincent Township	Phoenixville Borough	Schuylkill Township	West Vincent Township
Slopes 15-25%	S	S	S	*S	n/a	S
Slopes > 25%	P	*P	P	*S	P	P
Prime Agricultural Soils	S	S	S	n/a	S (+use)	n/a
Stream, Lake, Riparian Area	P (100')	*P (100')	P (75')	P	P (50')	P (50')
FEMA Floodplain	P	P (50')	P	P	P	P
Wetlands	P (50')	*P (200')	P (25')	P	P (50')	P (50')
SHWT / Hydric Soils	P	P (50')	P	P	P	P
Chapter 93 - Water Quality Standards	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wooded, Forests	S	*P	P	*P	S	S

Notes:

Required buffer in feet is shown in parenthesis

All municipalities utilize a Net Tract Area calculation or Developable Area calculation, with the exception of Phoenixville Borough.

***P**, Primary Protected Features, protected through a specific regulation, Natural Features Conservation Ordinance, etc.*

***S**, Secondary Protected Features, are protected through Open Space Design Options, Clustering, or other incentivizing provisions*

** Indicates that the zoning ordinance specifies an allowable percent disturbance of this feature.*

Documents Consulted: Charlestown Township Zoning Ordinance 2004; East Pikeland Township Zoning Ordinance, May 2002; East Vincent Township Zoning Ordinance, June 2002; Phoenixville Borough Zoning Ordinance, September, 1989; Schuylkill Township Zoning Ordinance, March 1997; West Vincent Township Zoning Ordinance, June 2003.

Table 3-2: Plan Recommendations for Protection of Natural Resources

NATURAL RESOURCE FEATURES	Charlestown Township	East Pikeland Township	East Vincent Township	Phoenixville Borough	Schuylkill Township	West Vincent Township*
Floodplains + 50' Buffer	P	P	P	P	P	P
Surface Water + 100' Buffer	P	P	P	P	P	P
Wetlands + 200' Buffer	P	P	P	P	P	P
SHWT / Hydric Soils + 50' Buffer	P	P	P	P	P	P
Slopes > 25%	P	P	P	P	P	P
Slopes 15-25%	P	P	P	P	P	P
Forested / Wooded (50%)	S	S	S	S	S	S
Prime Agricultural Soils (25%)	S	S	S	S	S	S

Assumptions

P, Primary environmental feature, including buffer; 100% preservation
S, Secondary environmental feature; % allowable disturbance
* Due to the different way in which the West Vincent Township zoning ordinance is written, these recommendations will be implemented differently than the other municipalities.

3.2. Protect natural resources through programs which maximize open space in two ways: 1) on a parcel basis when subdivisions are developed using conservation design and smart growth tools, and 2) through programs which maximize open space across the entire Region by concentrating planned development in and around existing development in maximally compact forms.

In addition to direct municipal regulation of natural resources, the preservation and conservation goal for natural resources will be achieved through local level conservation-oriented design as well as through regional open space preservation strategies. First, in areas where new development is planned to occur, this development should be undertaken in a "conservation subdivision design" method so that maximum zones of open space and natural resource areas on the lot remain fully intact and undisturbed, even as significant development densities are accommodated. Typically, conservation oriented design, also called open space design, is detailed through a specific Article or Section in the Zoning Ordinance (possibly the SLDO) where location conditions, related use regulations, performance and design standards, ownership, and

maintenance requirements criteria are outlined. This regulatory method provides clear direction for preservation of priority natural resources through the land development process.

Secondly, the preservation and conservation goal for natural resources can be achieved through maximizing overall preservation and conservation of regional open space. This strategy seeks to preserve natural resources through regional growth management techniques such as transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights, and others. The Future Land Use Map (**Map 2-2**) identifies areas in the Region that can absorb added development most successfully and with the least impact, while highlighting those areas in the Region that should remain rural. Any non-rural zoned category could function as the receiving zone for transfer of development rights.

Regional conservation, as well as lot-based conservation design, will achieve the goal of preservation of natural resources by making sure that as development occurs, it does so in the most concentrated and compact forms with minimal impact to natural resources.

3.3. In accordance with Phase II NPDES program requirements, implement consistent stormwater standards, especially comprehensive stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) that provide volume control of rainfall and stormwater runoff through infiltration-oriented management strategies, especially as detailed and described in the 2005 PADEP Stormwater BMP Manual.

Similar to Recommendation 3.1, municipalities should strive for regional consistency in stormwater management criteria and standards, especially in municipal subdivision and land development ordinances. It is recommended that volume-oriented BMPs be implemented in all future land developments. To achieve this, municipalities should undertake a detailed SLDO review, highlighting the discrepancies and inconsistencies, and detailing the means to achieve consistency in management methods. In addition to satisfying the goal in this section, this recommendation would achieve goals and objectives identified in the Community Facilities section.

Furthermore, implementation of maximum stormwater infiltration will protect the hydrologic balance within the watersheds of the Region and is a watershed-wide planning principle that is recommended in both the County *Watersheds* plan as well as the Green Valley Association's *Sustainable Watershed Management* plan. In fact, in this Region where both public water and sewer are essentially taken from the Schuylkill and replaced into the Schuylkill, there are a relatively modest number of issues from a sustainable watershed management perspective. Implementation of this recommendation, along with recommendations included in Chapter 6: Community Facilities is the single most critical component to sustainable watershed management.

3.4. Implement minimum disturbance and minimum maintenance techniques, and other preventive methods, for land development activities in the Region.

Minimum disturbance/Minimum maintenance and other non-structural BMPs described in the 2005 PADEP Stormwater BMP Manual, should be required for all future land developments in Special Protection watersheds where water quality maintenance is required (although volume-oriented BMPs can provide excellent water quality renovation for particulate-form non-point

source pollutants such as total suspended solids and phosphorous and metals, only non-structural techniques such as minimum disturbance / minimum maintenance provide preventive water quality benefits for soluble pollutants such as nitrogen forms and pesticides and herbicides). Implementation of preventive, non-structural, comprehensive stormwater management techniques early on, even during the design phase of a project, will protect water quality in the Region long after the project is constructed. All municipalities should strive for consistency and it is recommended that the Region use the 2005 PADEP Manual as a primary resource for developing and implementing preventative stormwater management techniques.

3.5. Map and identify all FEMA-identified floodways, including the 100-year, 500-year and 1000-year floodplain.

It is not uncommon to see new development occur in the floodplain, translating into adverse floodplain impacts through removal of existing vegetation and disturbance of the soil mantle, be it the 100-year or 500-year floodplain. As discussed in the Inventory of Existing Resources Section, development and construction in the floodplain can seriously impact downstream property owners. Floodplains are regulated differently throughout the Region. Some municipalities specifically regulate activity with stringent language - "thou shall not denude vegetation, disturb soils in the floodplain…" Other municipalities provide regulations that simply conform to the minimum requirements specified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), allowing for substantial floodplain disturbance provided that certain floodproofing and flood protection requirements are maintained. Regardless, flooding is an expensive, dangerous, and unnecessary result of land development activity. Municipalities in the Region should work to impose uniformly rigorous floodplain management standards in all ordinances, prohibiting disturbance of floodplain areas.

Secondly, given the documented worsening of flooding in so many areas, possibly linked to intensification of precipitation as well as to the alteration and continuing development of contributing watershed areas, extension of floodplain management to adjacent "buffer" areas, defined hydraulically and hydrologically, also should be considered. These areas may well be flooded in the future.

Thirdly, it is recommended that the Region create a map of known flooding areas and locations throughout the Region. Once areas of known flooding are identified, municipal officials will be able to better shape development patterns in their respective municipality. The Region can collectively consider methods to reduce flooding damages by analyzing all upstream drainage activity though a detailed land use and infrastructure field assessment. Volume-control stormwater management techniques should be required when possible in locations of new development upstream of the mapped flooding areas.

3.6. The Region should actively participate in Chester County Conservation District plan review function.

The Chester County Conservation District is heavily involved in local stormwater management issues, and reviews land development projects for appropriate Erosion and Sediment Control measures. It is recommended that the Region invite a representative from CCCD to present and discuss CCCD services. In particular, the Region should research working with CCCD officials in their incentive project that offers a review fee reduction for land development projects that

incorporate "preferred BMPs." CCCD should summarize for the Region the E&S control requirements for land development applications that occur in Special Protection Waters. It is recommended that this interaction serve to educate all municipal officials (supervisors and/ or commissioners, zoning hearing board members, planning commissioners, managers, etc.) on the water quality benefits of proper erosion and sediment control methods.

3.7. Implement a regional water conservation and re-use program in order to educate the public on the need for groundwater dependency.

In particular, promote volume-control BMPs that utilize stormwater and treated wastewater effluent or greywater (where appropriate), for irrigation and other non-potable water uses. Cisterns and/or rain barrels are common methods to capture and re-use stormwater runoff and rainwater for irrigation. Work in conjunction with a regional educational program (such as the Chester County Conservation District) or seek separate funding through EPA or PADEP.

3.8. Establish 100' native riparian forest buffer networks, at minimum, in first order streams. Municipal owned land may be the first target phase for implementation, but the Region should ultimately establish a partnership with private property owners.

Using the scientifically based three zone concept described in the *Chesapeake Bay Riparian Handbook: A Guide for Establishing and Maintaining Riparian Forest Buffers*, municipalities should establish a minimum of 100' native riparian buffers along riparian corridors, wetlands, and open flow channels, particularly on municipal-owned parks and public land. Zone 1 should begin at the top of the streambank measuring out to a width of fifteen feet. Zone 2 should be measured from the edge of Zone 1 and should include an additional 60 feet at minimum. Zone 3 should begin at the outer edge of Zone 2 and measure a minimum width of 25 feet. Total riparian zone width should be at least 100 feet for effective water quality and water quantity benefits. Ordinance requirements must be made to be flexible in dense and already developed urbanized areas where parcel limitations on these specified widths might exist.

Numerous programs exist which encourages partnerships at the local level to restore and conserve streamside buffers that improve water quality (e.g., DEP's Stream Re-Leaf Program, Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, and DCNR's Greenways program). All programs provide opportunities to municipalities who protect riparian buffers and greenways for critical aquatic and terrestrial habitats protection, as well as water quality protection.

3.9. Engage and outsource non-profit groups to provide educational opportunities for property owners adjacent to riparian areas, including residential, agricultural, or other uses.

In order to effectively decrease the negative impacts to water quality and quantity as well as biologic diversity, it is recommended that an active educational component targeting private property owners be undertaken. Provide public education and training via seminars or presentations. Advertise this training through a mass-mailing or targeted outreach program

coordinated with local advocacy groups such as the Green Valleys Association, the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, and others.

3.10. Protect the maximum amount of open space and greenways, consistent with individual municipal goals, Region goals, and Chester County *Linking Landscapes* program.

Preserve as much open space as feasible, with special consideration given to linking open space networks, while giving appropriate consideration to each municipality's own open space programs. Many municipalities have had tremendous effort with open space preservation programs, through individual bond issues as well as through the Chester County subsidized open space program. Continue implementation of existing municipal open space preservation programs, and consider undertaking more detailed open space planning to prioritize specific parcels and areas that should be targeted for preservation and conservation. Consider combining this planning enterprise with an active recreational and cultural planning program.

3.11. In addition to an active open space preservation program, establish an active reforestation program, possibly in partnership with local school districts, Audubon Society, Green Valleys Association, TreeVitalize, Natural Lands Trust, the National Arbor Day Foundation, and others.

Contiguous large wooded tracts are critical to healthy, diverse, and biologically rich, ecosystem functions and are just as important for healthy watershed functions. Forested areas improve air and water quality, reduce stormwater runoff, increase stormwater recharge, provide active and passive recreation opportunities, and protect public health. Of special concern is the Region's proximity to the Hopewell Big Woods, an area of unbroken woodlands located in northern Chester County and Berks County that is considered one of the most significant natural communities in the Philadelphia Region (see Appendix, Inventory of Natural Resources for additional information). Therefore, it is recommended that an active campaign to reforest land in the Region be undertaken. When feasible and the land is not actively farmed or otherwise, reforestation should be undertaken on municipal-owned lands, though consideration should be given with respect to local priorities, established programs, and technical feasibilities. Initial priorities may include expanding, or buffering, existing wooded tracts on all existing preserved lands, riparian areas, or municipally owned parcels.

Reforestation in urban and agricultural areas may be less practical than in other open space areas. It is recommended that the Region actively link riparian forest buffers to existing wooded islands, local and regional trails, and open spaces throughout the Region through a coordinated regional effort. Scientifically based resources such as the Center for Watershed Protection's *Urban Watershed Forestry Manual* and PA DCNR's *Creating Connections* provide important methods and techniques that should be consulted during the initial planning stages. Investigate partnership with the Audubon Society, Green Valleys Association, TreeVitalize, or the National Arbor Day Foundation, as well as local land trust organizations, private homeowners, school districts, and community members.

3.12. Each member municipality should identify existing pilot projects, and implement future demonstration projects, that could serve as visible examples that fulfill the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Allow public access and provide clear signage that explains the project's context in both local issues and regional issues. For example, a riparian-forested buffer restoration project could serve to educate the local community while providing environmental benefits. Consider adding this information to the regional website to further educate the local community. Demonstration projects can be funded through public grant sources, including PADCNR's Growing Greener program, as well as private funders. Each individual municipality should appoint a representative who will determine potential pilot project locations and inventory existing projects. Implement this recommendation in conjunction with Phase II NPDES permit requirements for public education and involvement.

4. Housing Plan

The Housing Trends section in the Existing Conditions chapter of the Plan provides an analysis of the Region's current residential composition including data and information on housing stock, tenure, sales prices, and type of unit built in the Region. The following Housing Plan details the actions needed to implement the Region's outlined housing goals and objectives while taking into consideration the Region's existing residential market conditions, affordability issues, and future population growth.

Goals & Objectives

Provide housing opportunities in appropriate areas to meet the needs of all Phoenixville Area residents, regardless of household size, age and/or income.

- Manage new housing through a balanced pattern of development that preserves and enhances existing communities and the natural and scenic landscapes of the Region.
- Encourage village-style mixed-use development and discourage sprawling development patterns that consume existing open space.
- Provide a diversity of housing options for residents throughout the Region.
- Maintain, preserve, and revitalize Phoenixville's existing neighborhoods, particularly its older housing stock, and create new residential opportunities that make it a community of choice for homeowners and renters.
- Stabilize existing residential areas in older communities and neighborhoods through effective code enforcement and the preservation of the housing stock.

Background

The number of housing units in each municipality in the Region has increased dramatically since 1980. As a whole, the six-municipality Region has seen a 16% increase in number of housing units between 1980 and 1990 and an 18% increase between 1990 and 2000. East Pikeland and West Vincent townships, in particular, have had significant housing unit growth in both the 1980s and 1990s. Since 2000, the pace of new residential development has accelerated (projection analysis below will detail the amount of new development). Even with significant residential development in the Region, the vacancy rate remained relatively constant between 1980 and 2000, reflecting that new housing supply has found adequate demand. The 2000 vacancy rate of 4.2% is indicative of a healthy housing market.

All municipalities, other than Phoenixville, show very high and, in most cases, growing proportions of homeownership. Homeownership rates in these municipalities range from 79% to 92%. On the other hand, homeownership rates in Phoenixville are comparatively low (56%) and have declined steadily since the 1980's 60% homeownership rate. The housing stock in the Region is primarily single-family detached units. Most owner-occupied units are single-family,

and the majority of the Region's stock was built prior to 1980. The age of housing units varies dramatically between the Region's municipalities. Charlestown and West Vincent Townships are facing significant growth pressures and a high portion of homes (42% and 33%, respectively) were built between 1990 and early 2000. Conversely, Phoenixville faces issues of aging housing stock with 70% of owner-occupied housing stock being built prior to 1960.

Rental housing represented 25% of the housing market in the total Region in 2000. Over two-thirds of all the rental units in the Region were located in Phoenixville. With the exception of East Vincent, the median gross rent in the each of the Region's municipalities has substantially increased, after adjusting for inflation. The majority of the rental market in the Region is in low-density (2 to 9 units) and medium-density (10 to 50 units) buildings.

Recommendations

In order to achieve these goals and objectives while taking into consideration the constraints and pressures on the Region, the following recommendations have been developed.

1. Target new residential development to existing residential and designated mixed-use areas with sound environmental protection and infrastructure utilization practices.

2. Encourage innovation in site design and promote residential development diversity in lot sizes, lot widths, and building types within the same development.

3. Modify zoning regulations to ensure a diversity of housing types.

4. Preserve the quality of existing housing stock through code enforcement and programs like Phoenixville's Abatable Structure Program.

The sections below expand on these recommendations to describe the Region's housing policies.

- Population Projections
- Areas Targeted for Residential Development
- Housing Affordability
- Fair Share Housing Analysis
- Housing Rehabilitation and Maintenance

Population Projections

The explosive growth in the Phoenixville Region over the last five years overwhelmed even Chester County's population and housing forecasts. In order to effectively estimate the Region's population at the time of plan preparation, Urban Partners estimated residential growth between 2000 and 2004 on the basis of 2000 Census data and the number of housing units that have been permitted or built since 2000. In 2000, there were 16,527 housing units in the Region (**Table 4-1**). Between 2000 and 2004, 3,126 units have been built or approved for development in the Region, bringing the total number of units in the Region in 2004 to 19,653.

Table 4-1: Total Number of Housing Units in Region

	2000 Actual	2000-2004 Built or Approved	Total Number of Units
Charlestown	1,397	241	1,638
East Pikeland	2,604	136	2,740
East Vincent	1,960	407	2,367
Phoenixville	6,793	731	7,524
Schuylkill	2,652	604	3,256
West Vincent	1,121	1,007	2,128
Total Study Area	16,527	3,126	19,653

Sources: US Census, Municipal Officials, Urban Partners

The accelerated pace of housing development in the 2000-2005 period has consumed a significant portion of the land within these six municipalities. Environmental and land use constraints as detailed in the Land Use Plan will further limit the number of units that can be added to the Region. The Land Use Plan estimates the total buildout for the Region, including the number of housing units that could be built based on the Plan's zoning and environmental recommendations. Based on the Land Use Plan, the total residential buildout for the Phoenixville Region is estimated at 5,154 units beyond those approved as of the end of 2004 and summarized in **Table 4-2** below. It should be noted that the buildout assumes the highest density within the range for each type of land use. Therefore, the actual number of units that are built will be less than the number of units below and not more.

Table 4-2: Potential Development at Buildout

	Total Potential Additional Units
Phoenixville	1,215
East Vincent	1,096
West Vincent	881
East Pikeland	1,046
Schuylkill	294
Charlestown	622
Phoenixville Region	5,154

Sources: Kise Straw & Kolodner Inc., Urban Partners

Based on the current market conditions, market demand, and past trends, Urban Partners predicts that the majority of residential development potentially possible under the Land Use Plan will be built in the next five years, between 2005 and 2010. This makes it critical that municipalities in the Region quickly implement the zoning changes and environmental protections needed to limit and target development to existing centers.

Based on direct information provided by individual municipalities on pending residential applications and extrapolation from recent trends, Urban Partners estimates that 3,120 units will be built in the Region between 2005 and 2010 (**Table 4-3**). This continued rapid rate of development means that the Region will be nearly built out by 2010. Of the remaining 2,034 units that can be built in the Region, Urban Partners assumes that two-thirds of this additional development would be added between 2010-2020 and one-third of this development would occur

between 2020-2030. After 2030, residential development will likely be limited to redevelopment sites.

Table 4-3: Allocation of Buildout for Phoenixville Region, 2005-2030

	2005-2010	2010-2020	2020-2030	TOTAL
Phoenixville	1,002	142	71	1,215
East Pikeland	377	446	223	1,046
East Vincent	779	211	106	1,096
West Vincent	634	165	82	881
Schuylkill	128	111	55	294
Charlestown	200	281	141	622
Phoenixville Region	3,120	1,357	677	5,154

Sources: Kise Straw & Kolodner Inc., Urban Partners, CCPC, East Vincent, East Pikeland, Phoenixville, Schuylkill and West Vincent Municipalities

Table 4-4 uses the housing projections in **Table 4-3** and a regional average of 2.5 persons per dwelling unit to estimate the future population in the Region. The Region is forecasted to increase by 7,800 people between 2005 and 2010, 3,400 between 2010 and 2020, and 1,700 between 2020 and 2030. After 2030, the population will remain relatively stable.

Table 4-4: Projected Population Increase for Phoenixville Region, 2005-2030

	2005-2010	2010-2020	2020-2030	TOTAL
Phoenixville	2,515	357	178	3,050
East Pikeland	946	1,120	559	2,625
East Vincent	1,955	531	265	2,751
West Vincent	1,591	414	206	2,211
Schuylkill	321	278	139	738
Charlestown	502	706	353	1,561
Phoenixville Region*	7,800	3,400	1,700	12,900

*Municipalities do not add up to Region total due to rounding.

Sources: Kise Straw & Kolodner Inc., Urban Partners, CCPC, East Vincent, East Pikeland, Phoenixville, Schuylkill and West Vincent Municipalities

Areas Targeted for Residential Investment

The Land Use Plan recognizes that recent rapid growth has jeopardized the future quality of life in the Region. The Region is reaching buildout and while some new development will continue to occur, it must be carefully planned and targeted to strengthen existing commercial, mixed-use and residential area and protect the Region's considerable environmental and agricultural resources. This housing plan focuses on how to locate new residential development to reinforce existing and designated centers, maximize infrastructure efficiency and enhance the Region's overall sense of place.

Future residential development should occur in designated economic development areas in the Region (as outlined in the Economic Development Plan). **Table 4-5** shows the maximum number of housing units that could potentially be built in each municipality under the plan's land use policies and the number and percent of these units that can be located in the existing centers. The total number of units includes those that could be built from 2005 to full buildout. The majority of new housing units, or 76% of all new housing units in the Region, is expected to be located in

existing centers. In Phoenixville, all potential new units will be located in an existing center because the entire Borough is designated as an area for concentrated residential development. Additionally, at least three-fourths of new units in East Vincent, East Pikeland, and Schuylkill will be located in existing centers including, Kimberton, the Route 724 Corridor, the neighborhoods around Phoenixville Borough, and the smaller villages in Schuylkill.

Table 4-5: Number and Percent of Units Located in Established Centers

	Total Number of Units	Number of Units Located in Targeted Growth Areas	Percent of Units Located in Targeted Growth Areas
Phoenixville	1,215	1,215	100%
East Vincent	1,096	856	78%
West Vincent	881	440	50%
East Pikeland	1,046	907	87%
Schuylkill	294	235	80%
Charlestown	622	288	46%
Phoenixville Region	5,154	3,941	76%

Sources: Kise Straw & Kolodner Inc., Urban Partners

Areas Targeted for Residential Development

The following section identifies areas in the Region that are targeted for residential development in light of the above housing unit projections and the Land Use Plan. New residential development should be targeted in areas where community infrastructure, such as roads, sewer, and water, are available or will be made available in the future. Later, in the Fair Share Housing Analysis section, the residential development areas that are intended to provide housing for more modest-income families and households through higher density zoning will be discussed and detailed.

The Land Use Plan recommends that most new housing units in the Region be concentrated in targeted growth areas in order to preserve open space. These growth areas are primarily located around designated economic development areas in the Region (as outlined in the Economic Development Plan). **Table 4-5** shows the total number of new units that can be added in each municipality in the Region at full buildout and the number and percent of new units that can be located in the targeted growth areas. The total number of units added is based on the Land Use Plan and includes units built from 2005 to full buildout. The majority of new housing units, or 76% of all new housing units in the Region, is expected to be located in targeted growth areas. In Phoenixville, all potential new units will be located in the targeted growth area since the entire Borough is designated as an area for concentrated residential development. Additionally, at least three-fourths of new units in East Vincent, East Pikeland, and Schuylkill will be located in growth areas including, Kimberton, the Route 724 Corridor, the neighborhoods around Phoenixville Borough, and the smaller villages in Schuylkill.

Housing Affordability

As detailed in the Housing Trends section of this document, the National Association of Realtors' affordability index is used to measure whether the Region and individual municipalities are considered affordable. From **Table 4-6**, Phoenixville Region's affordability index is approximately 104.07—this indicates that the housing market in the Region is relatively affordable for Chester County residents. However, three municipalities within the Region have

affordability indexes below 100, indicating that these housing markets are comparatively unaffordable for Chester County residents (**Table 4-6**). West Vincent has the lowest affordability index of 68.75, which indicates that this Township is the least affordable in the Region.

Table 4-6: Affordability Index for Select Municipalities, 1999

	Affordability Index* County Residents
Phoenixville	138.25
Charlestown	85.45
East Vincent	99.90
East Pikeland	112.52
Schuylkill	86.42
West Vincent	68.75
Phoenixville Region	104.07

*The affordability Index was developed by the National Association of Realtors. Affordable housing is defined as housing with total costs less than or equal to 28% of the median household income for the municipality. An index of 100 or higher is considered affordable; an index below 100 is considered unaffordable.

Source: US Census

The Housing Trends section also detailed residential sales trends in the Region over the last ten years. In all of the municipalities, median sales prices have increased significantly since 1993. However, median sales prices are the highest and price increases are the largest in municipalities that also have affordability issues. Schuylkill and West Vincent had the highest median residential sales prices in 2003-04 ($395,000 and $400,000) and the greatest percentage change between 1993-94 and 2003-04 (60% and 56%) after adjusting for inflation. While Charlestown realized only a 7% increase in price during these two time periods, the 2003-04 median sales price in Charlestown is $295,000, which is considerably higher than the median sales price for the entire Phoenixville Region ($237,000).

Furthermore, West Vincent and Charlestown also have the highest median rents in the Region in 2000. The 2000 median rents in West Vincent and Charlestown were $1,097 and $867. Housing affordability will continue to be an issue for several municipalities in the Region, particularly, West Vincent, Schuylkill, and Charlestown.

Types and Forms of Housing

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires Comprehensive Plans to include a plan to meet the housing needs of both present residents and those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the region. In addition the MPC requires that Zoning Ordinances that implement a comprehensive plan provide for residential housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing. As shown by the following tables (Tables 4-7 through 4-13) the Future Land Use Plan establishes areas within the region where all types of dwelling units are permitted in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the current and future residents.

Table 4-7: Change in Units between 1980 and 1990 by Type of Unit

	Total	1 Unit, Detached and Attached	2 Units	3 or More Units	Other
Charlestown	77	124	-8	-47	8
East Pikeland	549	637	-70	-49	31
East Vincent	190	174	-77	14	79
Phoenixville	913	661	-12	227	37
Schuylkill	100	129	-44	-42	57
West Vincent	169	192	-21	-20	18
Phoenixville Region	1,998	1,917	-232	83	230

Note: Other includes mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc.

Source: US Census

Table 4-8: Change in Units between 1990 and 2000 by Type of Unit

	Total	1 Unit, Detached	1 Unit, Attached	2 Units	3 or More Units	Other
Charlestown	514	267	251	-24	18	2
East Pikeland	590	110	318	-23	139	46
East Vincent	410	441	22	-4	44	-93
Phoenixville	147	-32	14	118	101	-54
Schuylkill	537	410	140	8	23	-44
West Vincent	275	319	-18	-8	6	-24
Phoenixville Region	2,473	1,515	727	67	331	-167

Note: Other includes mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc.

Source: US Census

Table 4-9: Percent of Occupied Single-Family and Multi-Family Units, 1990 and 2000

	1990			**2000**		
	Percent of Single-Family Units	Percent of Two-Family Units	Percent of Multi-Family Units	Percent of Single-Family Units	Percent of Two-Family Units	Percent of Multi-Family Units
Chester County	77.4%	2.3%	20.3%	79.5%	2.0%	18.5%
Phoenixville Region	78.2%	2.4%	19.4%	80.4%	2.2%	17.4%

Source: US Census

Table 4-10: Number and Percent of Occupied Units Added Between 1990 and 2000

	Single-Family Units		**Two-Family Units**		**Multi-Family Units**	
	Number of Added Units	Percent of Units Added	Number of Added Units	Percent of Units Added	Number of Added Units	Percent of Units Added
Chester County	22,332	90.6%	118	less than 1%	2,198	8.9%
Phoenixville Region	2,227	92.6%	36	1.5%	142	5.9%

Source: US Census

Table 4-11: Total Number of Units and Multi-Family Units Under Future Land Use Plan

	Total Number of Units	Total Number of Possible Multi-Family Units	Percent of Possible Multi-Family Units
Phoenixville	1,215	1,174	96.6%
East Vincent	1,096	776	70.8%
West Vincent	881	316	35.9%
East Pikeland	1,046	542	51.8%
Schuylkill	294	177	60.2%
Charlestown	622	186	29.9%
Phoenixville Region	5,154	3,171	61.5%

*Number of multi-family units that could be built based on Future Land Use Zoning.
Source: Kise Straw Kolodner, Inc., Urban Partners

Table 4-12: Total Number of Developable Acres for Multi-Family Units Based on Future Land Use Plan

	Number of Developable Acres for Multi-Family Units*	Number of Developable Acres for Multi-Family Units as a Percent of Total Developable Acres
Phoenixville	170	89.77%
East Vincent	82	4.72%
West Vincent	32	1.14%
East Pikeland	54	5.37%
Schuylkill	18	2.72%
Charlestown	19	1.08%
Phoenixville Region	374	4.63%

*Number of developable acres that could accommodate multi-family units based on Future Land Use Zoning.
Source: Kise Straw Kolodner, Inc., Urban Partners

Table 4-13: Total Number of Developed and Developable Acres for Multifamily Units Based on Future Land Use Plan

	Number of Acres for Multi-Family Units*	Number of Acres for Multi-Family Units as a Percent of Total Acres
Phoenixville	1,422	59.80%
East Vincent	559	6.40%
West Vincent	80	0.71%
East Pikeland	539	9.46%
Schuylkill	83	1.46%
Charlestown	284	3.54%
Phoenixville Region	2,967	7.08%

*Number of acres that could accommodate multi-family units based on Future Land Use Zoning.
Source: Kise Straw Kolodner, Inc., Urban Partners

Housing Rehabilitation and Maintenance

Phoenixville is the primary area in the Region that faces aging housing stock issues. As compared to the Regional median of 1972, the median year built for owner-occupied housing in Phoenixville is 1948 according to the 2000 Census. While older homes are not necessarily substandard units, these homes may be more susceptible to deterioration and abandonment issues.

To ameliorate these issues, the Borough of Phoenixville established an Abatable Structure Program to target dangerous vacant residential structures for demolition and resale. When the program was established, 12 properties were targeted for consideration. The Borough eventually demolished only one structure; however, due to the strength of the residential real estate market, all the problems associated with the others were remediated by the private market. No additional properties have reached the level of deterioration to merit targeting by the Borough since that time.

Another program and potential grant funding source that the Borough could investigate to improve the housing stock adjacent to the Main Street area is the Elm Street Program. It was created by the State Department of Community and Economic Development to reinvest in the residential areas that are near to and support Main Street businesses. The program is run similarly to the Main Street Program which has been so successful in Phoenixville.

Despite these positive indicators, the Borough must remain vigilant in code enforcement to assure the continued maintenance of its existing housing stock. Phoenixville's residential real estate performance has not kept pace with that of adjacent communities during the last decade. At present, this can be considered a positive—Phoenixville is relatively affordable compared to other nearby residential areas. However, if this situation does not improve, would-be investors—including homebuyers—will forgo Phoenixville housing in favor of other, more lucrative long-term real estate investment options. Maintenance of Phoenixville's housing stock may deteriorate if property owners fear being unable to recoup the costs of such efforts. Should this occur, the Borough must be prepared to intervene—through continuation of the Abatable Structures approach and/or the provision of affordable homeowner rehabilitation and maintenance financing.

5. Economic Development Plan

The Economic Characteristics section in the Existing Conditions chapter of the Plan provides an analysis of the Region's current economic condition including data and information on education, unemployment, income, and industry and occupation of Region residents. The following Economic Development Plan details the actions needed to implement the Region's outlined economic development goals and objectives while taking into consideration the Region's existing economic conditions and future population growth.

Goals & Objectives

Goals:

- Recognize Phoenixville Borough as the economic center of the Region; support the Borough's revitalization efforts.
- Concentrate other commercial, office, and industrial activity in designated areas of the Region.
- Maintain the economic viability of existing commercial districts.

Objectives:

- Continue revitalization of Phoenixville's downtown as the cultural, entertainment, and retail hub for residents of the Region.
- Promote cultural tourism within the Region.
- Develop the French Creek Center as a mixed-use economic hub.
- Encourage expanded shopping enclaves and commercial services in mixed-use village settings.
- Provide a diversity of housing types to assure the availability of an adequate workforce for area employers.

Background

Over the last two decades, the Phoenixville Region has realized significant increases in income. After adjusting for inflation, the median family income in the Region grew from approximately $66,000 in 1980 to $84,000 in 2000, implying that higher-income households have moved into the area during this time period. Charlestown, Schuylkill, and West Vincent Townships have the highest per capita, median family, and median household incomes. This suggests that these communities attract higher-income families, households, and even individuals than the other municipalities in the Region. Conversely, Phoenixville has significantly lower per capita, median family, and median household incomes than the other municipalities in the Region.

High home prices and high incomes suggest that the population in the Region is highly educated. The Region overall has a larger percent of its population who are 25 and older with at least a Bachelor's Degree than the populations in the Philadelphia area, Pennsylvania, and the nation.

With the exception of Phoenixville, the municipalities in the Region are primarily 'bedroom communities', meaning that the majority of residents work outside of the community and the businesses within mainly serve the essential needs of residents. However, there are several proposed mixed-use developments within the six-municipality Region. While these mixed-use developments employ some residents in the area, most Region workers are employed outside the Phoenixville regional area. As projected by the DVRPC, the number of new jobs created in the Region is forecast to only modestly increase by 1,300 jobs between 2000 and 2025. Only East Pikeland and Schuylkill Townships are forecasted to lose jobs during this time period.

Of those businesses in the Region, 43% of them are in the service industry and 20% are in the retail industry. About half of all service industry businesses are in business, health, membership organizations, and personal services. Almost two-thirds of all businesses are located in Phoenixville and East Pikeland (39% and 22%, respectively).

Office space absorption in the commercial centers near the Phoenixville area has averaged 81,000 square feet in the past eight years. However, the total office space supply is 17 million square feet, with a current vacancy of more than 4.5 million square feet. Under these overall depressed office market conditions, new office space in the Phoenixville area may encounter slow development. While total absorption of office space may be slow, available space in the Phoenixville Region, particularly the French Creek Center, may attract certain office users due to specific assets such as distance to major highways, price-sensitive space, the Phoenixville location, and its adjacency to an active downtown.

To achieve the above goals and objectives while taking into account the current economic and market trends briefly outlined above, the Phoenixville regional community must balance a series of economic pressures, constraints, and opportunities. This Economic Development Plan details the initiatives and policies intended to shape these pressures to meet the communities' objectives.

The chief economic pressures, constraints, and opportunities facing the Phoenixville Region include:

1. Although annual demand will vary depending on fluctuations in the economic cycle, over the next thirty years, the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area will see significant increases in demand for office and industrial property. This demand will be captured by multiple locations within this corridor in Montgomery and Chester Counties, with the Phoenixville Region being one of those competing locations. The goals of this plan suggest that, in competing within this larger corridor, the Phoenixville Region should emphasize (1) sites within Phoenixville Borough and (2) other specifically designated locations within the Region. The locations likely to be most competitive for office and industrial activity will be those with the greatest access to the regional transportation network, especially to exits along high-speed limited access highways such as the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Route 202, and Route 422.

   This Economic Development Plan designates sufficient priority areas within the Phoenixville Region for capturing a portion of this office and industrial growth in a compact manner, without providing for an excessive amount of commercial/industrial zoned property that will encourage haphazard development patterns. These priority areas benefit from regional

transportation access, minimize through-traffic disruption to the Phoenixville Region community, and promote environmentally-sensitive development.

2. The increase in demand for retail goods from the total buildout of the Region (as constrained by environmental and use constraints as identified in the Land Use Plan) will result in pressures from large format retailers to locate facilities accessible to potential customers. Similarly, any Phoenixville Region locations with exceptional access to the regional transportation network – the proposed slip ramp off the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Charlestown, for instance – will face pressures for development of these large format retailing facilities to service a customer market broader than the Phoenixville Region itself. The goals of this plan suggest that these facilities be limited to specifically designated locations.

   This Economic Development Plan designates priority areas within the Phoenixville Region for responding to a portion of these large format retailing demands in a compact manner, without providing excessive zoned property that will encourage haphazard development patterns. These priority areas expand on existing retail development patterns, benefit from regional transportation access, minimize through-traffic disruption to the Phoenixville Region community, and promote environmentally-sensitive development.

3. There will also be an increase in demand for community-serving retail goods and services. Convenient provision of these retail services is important to maintain and enhance the quality of life for area residents. The goals of this plan suggest that priorities for location of these community-serving goods and services should be:

   - First, priority economic development sites and existing commercial locations such as downtown Phoenixville, French Creek Center, other Phoenixville Borough economic development sites, Kimberton Village, Ludwigs Corner, and other existing commercial districts;

   - Second, new designated mixed-use village settings;

   - Third, other compact designated areas for commercial development.

Recommendations

In order to achieve these goals and objectives while taking into consideration the constraints and pressures on the Region, the following recommendations have been developed. They will be referred to (by number) throughout the rest of the Chapter.

5.1. Steer appropriate commercial and industrial development to French Creek Center and other Phoenixville Borough locations, which complement and add to the Borough's revitalization efforts.

5.2. Continue the revitalization of downtown Phoenixville using various strategies, such as infill development and adaptive reuse.

5.3. Target Devault and the East Vincent Business Park as areas for commercial and light industrial development.

5.4. Target Devault in Charlestown and the Route 724 corridor in East Pikeland and East Vincent as areas for retail and commercial development.

5.5. Reinforce Kimberton, Ludwigs Corner, Valley Forge, Corner Stores, and Wilmer as retail villages that provide goods and services to nearby residents and improve the quality of life of these residents.

5.6. Create a new village at the location of the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro station in Schuylkill Township that provides goods and services to nearby residents and supplies commuters with convenience-type goods and services.

5.7. Any retail development in existing villages should be compatible with a pedestrian-oriented retail environment and be supportive of the overall village atmosphere.

To further expand on the recommendations above and begin to respond to the expected demands due to population growth in the Region, the following sections will be discussed.

- Expansion and Revitalization of Phoenixville
- Other Locations for Concentrated Commercial and Industrial Activity
- Reinforcing Existing Villages and Creating New Villages within the Region
- Tax Base Impact

Future Market Conditions

The acceleration of housing development in the last five years has resulted in an increase in demand for commercial and industrial development in the Region. Most of this demand has yet to be met. In addition, the projected population increase between 2005 and 2030, while limited by environmental constraints as outlined in the Land Use Plan, will still generate further demand for commercial and industrial development. Much of this new commercial and industrial development will be community-servicing goods and services; however, some other development will be aimed at maintaining and strengthening a balanced tax base within certain communities.

The Region's new residents will demand some growth in retail goods and services to meet their needs. We estimate that the population that moved into the Region between 2000 and 2005 will support 523,000 square feet of retail space (**Table 5-1**). As evidenced by the lack of new retail development in the Region, most of this demand has yet to be met. Additionally, the projected increase in population between 2005 and 2010 will support another 523,000 square feet of retail space. Similarly, the increase in population between 2010 and 2020 and 2020 and 2030 will add 235,000 and 117,000 square feet of supported retail in each decade, respectively.

For some retail categories, nearby facilities in King of Prussia and Exton may be sufficient to meet the needs of new residents. However, adequate provisions of community servicing goods and services are most important in making the Region a desirable place to live. Therefore, at a minimum, the Region should plan for 457,000 square feet of new community servicing goods and services by the year 2030. Most of this demand will need to be met by 2010.

Supported commercial and industrial development can be estimated based on population projections and overall market trends. Over the last seven years, demand for office space in the

total office market Region[1] has fluctuated substantially. During the late 1990s' office boom, total demand for new office space averaged nearly 600,000 square feet per year. Market decline after 2000, however, greatly balanced this earlier boom period so that the average demand for the past seven years has been 100,000 square feet per year. Based on these market conditions, the Phoenixville Region could capture a percentage of this growth, especially during future boom periods.

In the next sections the report will describe where and at what scale these commercial and industrial land uses should be met to support the goals and objectives of this plan.

[1] Total office market Region includes Valley Forge/Norristown, King of Prussia/Wayne, and Exton/Whitelands.

Table 1: Estimated Supportable Retail Store Space
By Additional Phoenixville Area Residents -- 2000-2030

	Residents Added 2000-05	2005-10 Additional Residents	2010-20 Additional Residents	2020-30 Additional Residents
ADDITIONAL POPULATION	7,800	7,800	3,400	1,700
ADDITIONAL INCOME ($000)	$289,965	$289,965	$126,395	$63,198
ADDITIONAL RETAIL PURCHASES ($000)	$152,175	$152,175	$66,333	$33,166
TOTAL (SF)	523,000	523,000	235,000	117,000
COMMUNITY SERVING GOODS & SERVICES (SF)	171,000	170,000	77,000	39,000
Supermarkets, Grocery Stores	25,000	24,000	11,000	5,000
Convenience Stores	5,000	4,000	2,000	1,000
Speciality Foods	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Liquor & Beer Distributors	2,000	2,000	1,000	
Drug Stores/Pharmacies	22,000	22,000	9,000	5,000
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, & Perfume	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Health Food Supplements	2,000	2,000	1,000	
Full-Service Restaurants	33,000	33,000	14,000	7,000
Limited-Service Restaurants	19,000	19,000	9,000	5,000
Bars and Lounges	6,000	6,000	3,000	2,000
Dollar Stores & Other General Merchandise Stores	11,000	11,000	5,000	3,000
Jewelry Stores	9,000	9,000	4,000	2,000
Optical Stores	4,000	4,000	2,000	1,000
Newsstands		1,000		
Video Stores		1,000		
Gift, Novelty, Souvenir Stores	10,000	9,000	4,000	2,000
Hardware Stores	10,000	10,000	4,000	2,000
Florists	4,000	4,000	2,000	1,000
Hair Salons	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Laundries; Dry Cleaning	2,000	2,000	1,000	1,000
DEPARTMENT STORES (SF)	77,000	77,000	33,000	16,000
APPAREL (SF)	64,000	65,000	29,000	14,000
Men's Clothing	5,000	5,000	2,000	1,000
Women's Clothing	15,000	16,000	7,000	4,000
Children's Clothing	3,000	2,000	1,000	
Family Clothing	25,000	25,000	11,000	5,000
Clothing Accesories	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Other Clothing	4,000	4,000	2,000	1,000
Shoe Stores	11,000	12,000	5,000	3,000
HOME FURNISHINGS & IMPROVEMENT (SF)	111,000	111,000	49,000	25,000
Furniture	24,000	24,000	10,000	5,000
Floor Coverings	6,000	7,000	3,000	2,000
Window Treatments	1,000			
Other Home Furnishings	4,000	4,000	2,000	1,000
Household Appliances	3,000	2,000	1,000	
Radio/TV/Electronics	7,000	8,000	3,000	2,000
Home Centers	22,000	21,000	9,000	5,000
Paint & Wallpaper Stores	5,000	5,000	3,000	1,000
Retail Lumber Yards	34,000	35,000	15,000	8,000
Nursery & Garden Centers	3,000	4,000	2,000	1,000
Antique Stores	2,000	1,000	1,000	
OTHER SPECIALTY GOODS (SF)	61,000	60,000	28,000	14,000
Luggage & Leatherwork	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Computer & Software Stores	7,000	8,000	3,000	2,000
Camera, Photo Supply	1,000			
General-Line Sporting Goods	6,000	5,000	3,000	1,000
Specialty Sporting Goods	7,000	7,000	3,000	1,000
Toys & Hobbies	8,000	8,000	3,000	2,000
Sewing, Needlework	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Music Stores	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Book Stores	8,000	8,000	3,000	2,000
Record/CD/Tape Stores	4,000	4,000	2,000	1,000
Office Supply/Stationers	10,000	9,000	4,000	2,000
Art Dealers	2,000	3,000	1,000	1,000
Collectors' Items & Supplies	1,000	1,000	1,000	
OTHER RETAIL STORES (SF)	39,000	40,000	19,000	9,000
Auto Parts & Accessories Stores	19,000	20,000	8,000	4,000
Pet Supply Stores	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Tobacco Stores	1,000	2,000	1,000	
Other Health & Personal Care	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Other Used Merchandise	8,000	7,000	3,000	2,000
Other Miscellaneous Retail Stores	5,000	5,000	3,000	1,000

Urban Partners 1/2005

Expansion and Revitalization of Phoenixville

In order to revitalize Phoenixville's pedestrian-oriented downtown commercial district while recognizing Phoenixville as the economic center for the Region, several economic development efforts are targeted for Phoenixville Borough. With the increase in demand for commercial and retail development in the Region in the future, these economic development efforts will be important in using the need for increased commercial development to further Phoenixville's redevelopment goals. The key issues and initiatives in the following section are intended to support ***Recommendations 5.1,5. 2, and 5.7***.

Economic Development Actions Taken or Underway

The Main Street Program

The Phoenixville Main Street Program was formally implemented in early 2000 when the Main Street Program Board of Directors was formed. Soon after, Phoenixville received an initial $80,000 matching grant from the Community Health Foundation that was followed by a five-year commitment from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. This commitment, and the Borough support it requires, enabled the program to hire a full-time director in 2002.

The focus of the Phoenixville Main Street Program is the revitalization of the 100-300 block of Bridge Street through the coordination of promotional activities, the organization of business and property owners around issues of common concern, and the marketing of the area to prospective new businesses and investors. Additionally, the Main Street Program has received an $80,000 grant with which it will provide matching grants to businesses for storefront and signage improvements.

The Main Street Program seeks to expand the supply and diversity of restaurants and specialty shops in downtown Phoenixville as a way to attract area residents to a quaint and pedestrian-friendly retail district. Its focus is oriented toward the capture of the retail expenditures of a largely local market and in addition to further increase the capture of local residents' and visitors' purchases.

While expanding the business mix in the downtown, the Main Street Program also uses several economic development strategies to support revitalization efforts. These development strategies should continue to be used in redevelopment and revitalization efforts. First, the commercial corridor of Phoenixville has benefited from the adaptive reuse of older buildings. Phoenixville has the largest nationally-registered historic district in Chester County, listing more than 1,200 structures. By utilizing infrastructure already in place and encouraging historic preservation of these structures, downtown Phoenixville can take advantage of its historical assets and transform the downtown environment by renovating deteriorating buildings. For example, the redevelopment and reuse of the Phoenixville Foundry is a key component in the revitalization and preservation of the historic character of the downtown. Second, the downtown of Phoenixville also benefits from infill development, or the improvement of vacant or underused parcels within areas that are otherwise largely developed. Downtown Phoenixville has a significant amount of vacant and underutilized retail space in the main commercial district which could be ameliorated by infill development. Particularly, encouraging mixed-use infill development can contribute to revitalization efforts. For example, the proposed French Creek Center (described in further detail below) plans for residential, commercial, and retail development. Incorporating residential

development into the commercial and retail areas of the downtown will increase foot traffic, while providing a customer base for existing and future businesses.

Recently, the Main Street Program, renamed the Main Street Community Development Corporation, has expanded its revitalization strategy to include increasing the availability of affordable housing in downtown Phoenixville by rehabilitating the existing housing stock and committing to beautifying Phoenixville through the use of art activities, such as building murals. The Main Street Community Development Corporation has and will continue to work towards increasing foot traffic and making the downtown a viable place for residents and employees of Phoenixville.

The Main Street Program and Phoenixville Borough should continue to coordinate in identifying financing as needed to allow new retail and service businesses to locate to Downtown Phoenixville. Since the Main Street Program includes all of the area identified as Downtown Phoenixville, no new areas should be added to the Program at this time.

French Creek Center

The French Creek Corridor and downtown Phoenixville have a strong interrelationship. In order for the successful revitalization of downtown Phoenixville, efforts have also been made to redevelop the vacant property in the French Creek Corridor. The Phoenixville Property Group (PPG) has begun redevelopment of part of the Corridor. The PPG is developing the French Creek Center which is made up of one million square feet of Class A office space, 85,000 SF of village retailing, and 642 units of housing in a variety of housing types. This development will transform the 120-acre site of the former Phoenixville Steel Plant into a waterfront commercial development.

While this project will be developed in phases, part of the project, including the 35,000 square foot Gateway building, was approved in September 2004. In addition, the PPG plans for a 253-unit development of townhomes, condominiums, and apartments on the old Steel Plant site. The PPG hopes to begin construction of this development by the summer of 2005.

The French Creek Center should be viewed as an important long-term component of Phoenixville's revitalization. Fully developed, one million square feet of offices will significantly impact Phoenixville's tax base and add 4,000 new office workers. These daytime workers will support expanded retailing in downtown and stimulate the owner-occupied and rental housing markets.

Schuylkill River Heritage Center at Phoenixville

As a component of the Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area, the former Phoenixville Foundry is being rehabilitated as a visitor and interpretative center focusing on the Borough's industrial past (as well as other uses). The primary visitor market for the Schuylkill River Valley is expected to be residents in the Philadelphia area. On average, heritage park visitors spend slightly more than $100/day including approximately $30 for food and $30 in other retail purchases. The remaining expenditures are predominately travel and accommodation purchases by those visitors from beyond this primary market.

The Schuylkill River Valley attractions and Heritage Center work in conjunction with the revitalization of downtown Phoenixville. As the Main Street Program seeks to expand retail in

the downtown, the Schuylkill River Valley Heritage Center at Phoenixville will provide a large daytime population of visitors which will reinforce the demand for restaurants and some convenience goods in the immediate area.

Other Economic Development Issues

Phoenixville Hospital and the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation

As of August 2004, the Phoenixville Hospital, which was previously owned by the University of Pennsylvania Health System, was sold to the for-profit company, Community Health Systems Inc (CHS). Under the terms of the purchase, CHS will spend $82 to $117 million in renovating and rebuilding the Hospital over the next eight years. These renovations may result in possible job growth in the Hospital. If the Hospital expands its job base, this may create an increase in demand for housing in and around downtown Phoenixville.

The Phoenixville Community Health Foundation was established as a public charity in 1997. As a result of the change in ownership in 2004, the Foundation is now a private foundation with no organizational ties to the Phoenixville Hospital. However, the mission of the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation has not changed—to improve the health and quality of life in the community it serves. The Foundation has given grants to Phoenixville Region for economic and revitalization purposes. For example, the Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation received $35,000 to support the revitalization of the Phoenixville area.

Suitable Locations for New Business Development

Based on zoning ordinances and the goal of establishing a vibrant and walkable downtown, appropriate locations for new business development within Phoenixville include:

- *Downtown Phoenixville:* Downtown Phoenixville includes zoning for retail and commercial uses. In addition to the targeted restaurant and specialty shops, retail stores in downtown Phoenixville could also include community-serving goods and services to enhance the quality of life for nearby residents. In the short-term, approximately 30,000 square feet could be absorbed in new retail and commercial development.

- *French Creek Center:* The French Creek Center is included in the mixed-use zoned land along the Schuylkill River in downtown Phoenixville. The developer has planned for one million square feet of office space and 85,000 square feet of retail space.

- *Mixed-Use Zoned Areas of Phoenixville's Northside:* Capacity analysis indicates that approximately 273,000 square feet of commercial space is available for development in Phoenixville's Northside. Most of this development could be in the form of infill development. Additionally, commercial development in this area would most probably occupy ground floors of mixed-use buildings with residential on the other floors. However, due to residential development pressures in the Region, it is unlikely that 273,000 square feet of commercial space will be developed. Instead, some of this space may be developed for residential uses.

Other Locations for Concentrated Commercial and Industrial Activity

While Phoenixville is the focus of most commercial activity in the Region, there are other potential locations in the Region that could benefit from limited commercial and industrial investments. These locations include Devault in Charlestown, the East Vincent Business Park, and the Route 724 Corridor. As outlined in ***Recommendation 5.3***, Devault in Charlestown and the East Vincent Business Park are considered appropriate for limited commercial and industrial development. As summarized in ***Recommendation 5.4***, Devault in Charlestown and the Route 724 Corridor in East Pikeland and East Vincent are appropriate areas to target commercial and limited retail development and redevelopment along the Corridor. These locations were chosen due to their location to other regional urban centers, transportation access, satisfactory environmental conditions, community facilities availability, and appropriate zoning codes.

- *Charlestown: Devault.* Currently, the development located around Devault is primarily light industrial. The planned Pennsylvania Turnpike slip-ramp at the intersection of Route 29 and Charlestown Road will add increased development pressures for industrial and office development (and probably for retail development) on the area. The E-Zpass only slip-ramp will provide convenient access to regional urban centers as well as local commercial parks, such as Great Valley Corporate Center. Due to its close proximity to the slip-ramp, Devault is a suitable location within the Region to place appropriate commercial and industrial development. Capacity analysis of currently zoned industrial and commercial property in the Devault area indicates the potential for 661,000 square feet of new commercial and industrial space. In addition, in order to improve the quality of life for local residents, Devault could also be a location for some retail development. This amount of space available is included in the potential space for new commercial and industrial development.

- *East Vincent: East Vincent Business Park.* The East Vincent Business Park is zoned commercial and contains approximately 257 acres. The current development at the site is light industrial and flex buildings. This area will attract other light industrial development due to its access to the regional transportation network and the availability of truck routes to major regional highways. For example, the Business Park is approximately three miles from Route 422, or a seven-minute drive along Bridge Street in Royersford. It should be noted that Royersford and Spring City may need to make road improvements and pedestrian safety adjustments to Bridge Street if this artery becomes a frequented truck route. If the entire area is developed, capacity analysis indicates the potential for up to 1.1 million square feet of commercial and industrial space.

- *East Vincent and East Pikeland: Route 724 Corridor.* The Route 724 Corridor, located in East Vincent and East Pikeland Townships, is zoned for mixed-use development. The current development along Route 724 is predominately commercial and retail uses, some of which are vacant properties. In addition, there is residential development scattered throughout the Corridor. Since Route 724 is heavily traveled by area residents and is accessible to the Region's transportation network, additional retail and commercial development should be targeted to this area along the highway. Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized storefronts should be undertaken. If the entire area is developed, capacity analysis indicates the potential for almost one million square feet of commercial and retail space.

Together with the French Creek Center in Phoenixville, these designated areas zoned for commercial and industrial development (with the exception of the Route 724 Corridor since most of this development will be retail) will provide approximately 2.8 million square feet of space. The demand in the office market has fluctuated in the last seven years. During the peak period between 1997 and 2000, the total office market Region absorbed 590,000 square feet of office space per year. Over the larger business cycle involving periods of contraction, the market has seen less than 100,000 square feet of office space absorbed per year. Even in a peak period of growth, if the Phoenixville Region were to capture 10% of the submarket growth, then the Region would absorb approximately 60,000 square feet of office space per year. In addition, the Phoenixville Region could also capture a significant amount of industrial growth, adding to the absorption rate of commercial space per year. Therefore, the three designated areas in the Phoenixville Region, the French Creek Center and other areas in Phoenixville, the East Vincent Business Park, and Devault, will most likely supply enough office and industrial space for the Region for at least the next fifteen to twenty years of development.

Reinforcing Existing Villages and Creating New Villages within the Region

Many community-serving retailers and other commercial services should be appropriately located near the residents they serve. As identified in ***Recommendation 5.5***, appropriate sites for these services are existing villages in the Region that could benefit from additional retail space that complements and remains consistent with each location's unique environment and culture. As stated in the Land Use Plan, village areas are a mix of community-serving retailers and businesses along with residential uses. Because these areas are compact, and usually historic in nature, each development proposal significantly impacts the community. As stated in ***Recommendation 5.7***, any new development in these sites should follow design guidelines that encourage a village-like retail environment.

- *East Pikeland: Village of Kimberton.* The Village of Kimberton is centrally located in East Pikeland Township. The current makeup in the Village is residential with some retail outlets. Further investment in the Village can accommodate approximately 30,000 square feet of village-style retail. The retail development in the Village should include community-service goods and services for Village and Region residents.

- *West Vincent: Ludwigs Corner.* Ludwigs Corner, located at the intersection of Routes 100 and 401, is a 36-acre area that is zoned for commercial and mixed-use development. The current development in this area is a residential development and some retail stores that primarily provide goods and services to the local residents. Further investment in the area can accommodate an estimated 150,000 square feet of retail and office space. Future retail space and any improvements to the transportation network should encourage a compact, walkable, mixed use village center, as is described in the Ludwigs Corner Vision and Community Design Plan.

- *Schuylkill: Valley Forge.* Valley Forge is located in the southeast corner of Schuylkill Township along Route 23 close to the historical Valley Forge Park. This area can accommodate up to 30,000 square feet of retail space. Since Valley Forge is fully developed, however, any commercial development will need to be redevelopment, infill development, or the conversion of any existing buildings into retail space. Types of retail space users should include community-serving goods and services that cater to the immediate neighborhood.

- *Schuylkill: Corner Stores.* Corner Stores is a historical site located at the corners of Route 23 and White Horse Road. This area is currently zoned commercial and has limited occupied retail space at the corners of the intersection. Redevelopment of existing spaces and further new retail investment of up to 15,000 square feet should be accommodated for and could be supported by local residents. Again, the types of retail should include convenience type goods and services for nearby neighborhoods.

- *Schuylkill: Wilmer.* Wilmer is located near the intersection of Charlestown and Pot House Roads. This area is currently zoned commercial and has opportunities for new development and redevelopment. Development will need to be designed so that it reinforces a village atmosphere in Wilmer. New retail development and redevelopment of up to 15,000 square feet could be supported by area residents. Any new retail should include convenience type goods and services to enhance the quality of life for nearby residents.

Together with downtown Phoenixville and the French Creek Center, these existing villages zoned for retail development could accommodate a maximum of 355,000 square feet of space. The Region should place emphasis on obtaining retail space users that provide community servicing goods and services in each of these villages in order to make the Region a desirable place to live. Between 2000 and 2010, existing and future population in the Region will support 341,000 square feet of supported community servicing goods and services retail space. Therefore, these targeted retail development areas could support the demands made by existing and future residents moving into the Region in this decade. As outlined in ***Recommendation 5.6***, the following is a potential site for a new village:

- *Schuylkill: Schuylkill Valley Metro Station.* The Schuylkill Valley Metro is a proposed light rail transportation project extending 62 miles between Philadelphia and Reading. If the project is constructed, there is a potential station stop in Schuylkill Township at near the intersection of Pawlings Road and Ferry Lane. Assuming the Schuylkill Valley Metro and Schuylkill station stop are approved and constructed, the area around the station stop could become a small-scale, transit-oriented development. This area should be zoned mixed-use and could include retail space and residential investment. Any retail space users should be convenience type goods and services that cater to commuters and nearby residents. In addition, parking lots should be included in the design for commuters and occasional riders. The parking lots would be distributed throughout the development. New retail development of up to 15,000 square feet could be accommodated for.

Adding the retail space provided by the downtown Phoenixville, the French Creek Center, existing villages throughout the Region, and the Schuylkill Valley Metro Station, these areas zoned for retail development will provide 370,000 square feet of space, which is still less than the total retail space supported (457,000 square feet) by the 2030 population. As mentioned in ***Recommendation 5.4***, the remaining 87,000 square feet of community-serving retail space supported can be placed in the Route 724 Corridor in East Vincent and Pikeland, Devault in Charlestown, and Phoenixville's Northside. This retail space should be community-serving goods and services that are in convenient locations in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life for area residents. Additional retailers, other than community-serving types, could be located in these areas, such as apparel stores, home furnishing and improvement stores, and other specialty and retail outlets.

Tax Base Impacts

There are two specific issues that affect the tax base of certain municipalities in the Region. First, in the Municipal Finances section above, one item of concern was presented—Phoenixville's real estate tax of 27.6 mils is relatively high as compared to the other municipalities in the Region. Second, the development patterns in the past two decades and more so in 2000-2005 have resulted in population growth and may cause fiscal stress on municipalities' budgets.

To ameliorate the real estate tax issue in Phoenixville, this Comprehensive Plan has presented several strategies and policies that target economic growth in Phoenixville. These strategies include the revitalization of Bridge Street, the development of the French Creek Center, the introduction of new and rehabilitated residential development throughout the Borough and the mixed-use development targeted for the Borough's Northside.

Recent rapid growth in residential development has not yet been counter-balanced by commercial growth, creating a tax revenue imbalance. Most residential development generates a demand for community services and infrastructure that is not completely offset by property tax revenues paid. Without the supporting commercial development and tax revenues, municipalities experience fiscal stress. The Future Land Use Plan identifies locations in each of the municipalities in the Region for at least one targeted business development zone. This will help to balance municipal budgets, continue to steer commercial development to designated centers, and provide residents with commercial support facilities. A continued unbalanced pattern of heavy residential development with little or no commercial development would likely cause excessive reliance on the residential tax base and possible fiscal stress on municipal budgets.

6. Community Facilities Plan

Wastewater Treatment, Drinking Water Systems, and Stormwater Management

Goal

Work to provide adequate water and sewer systems in ways which support and encourage overall land use goals and objectives, generally concentrating development in and around existing centers where infrastructure is already provided, consistent with each municipality's Act 537 Sewage Plan.

Background

Historically, provision of infrastructure, from highways and expressways to centralized water and sewer, has had a major impact in directing growth and development. Infrastructure elements are typically cited as "growth shapers." Development of new and/or expanded water and sewer lines usually means more development and more rapid development, often occurring at higher densities. When such infrastructure is poorly managed and not properly coordinated, impacts from infrastructure can be negative. When properly planned and coordinated – which is an essential premise behind the concept of designated growth areas, impacts on infrastructure can be positive from an overall growth management perspective.

In sum, the important planning objective here is to make sure that zones for future growth and development are developed through full-bodied and comprehensive planning analysis, weighing all importance planning variables, where sewer and water lines are one of many different "independent variable" factors to be used in growth shaping. Once growth areas are thusly designated, then make sure water and sewer are used to make the development happen there and only there – at least to the extent possible.

Recommendations

1. Limit public water and wastewater service areas and the expansion of these service areas to Infrastructure Extension Boundary Areas as shown on the Land Use Map.

Although both water and public wastewater treatment services in the Region have been, are being, and will continue to be provided by a variety of private utilities and public authorities, some of which operate competitively, public water and sewer have evolved to serve the existing towns and villages and areas of greater concentrations of development with some degree of coordination and rational management. Although neither the Landscapes Plan nor the accompanying Watersheds Plan are regulatory in nature and neither are necessarily constraining in terms of this Comprehensive Plan, indicate where Planned Growth Areas have been identified in the Region; these Landscapes designations, which have resulted from considerable planning analysis undertaken during the Landscapes planning process, are largely consistent with the infrastructure extension boundary designations occurring in this Comprehensive Plan, which have resulted from even more detailed Region-specific analysis. The *Watersheds Plan* recommends "…the areas within the designated *Landscapes* planned growth areas be used as areas designated for water and wastewater utility expansion." (p. 115, Watersheds Plan).

Some additional municipality-specific comments are in order. In West Vincent, the Ludwigs Corner area in the southwestern portion of the Township is receiving carefully contained water service and wastewater treatment service, which is actually consistent with the carefully contained growth area designated in *Landscapes* for Ludwigs Corner and West Vincent's Ludwigs Corner Vision Plan. In East Vincent, *Landscapes*-designated growth areas in the Pigeon and Stony Creeks watersheds would call for extensions of water and sewer lines as well (especially the area between PA 724 and Stony Run Road). In East Pikeland, some modest extension and infilling of water and sewer lines can be anticipated in the central portion of the Township. However this infrastructure should not be extended into the southwest portion of East Pikeland (the Pickering Creek Watershed); to the north and east, some extensions of lines may be warranted for growth planned for the PA 724 corridor, again consistent with both the *Landscapes* and *Watersheds* Plans. Charlestown is also an excellent example of a municipality that has limited centralized infrastructure in an effort to minimize development, with higher density development and infrastructure to support this development on the periphery/outlying corners of the Township; with the significant addition of development in Devault, additional water and sewer lines might need to be planned for this carefully contained development area.

2. Integrate/coordinate public water supply services areas and public wastewater treatment service areas, paying special attention to any areas with public wastewater service and lacking public water service.

Maximizing water balance throughout Region watersheds and sub-watersheds has been set forth as an important planning objective. In areas with centralized water and wastewater treatment, this balance is generally promoted as the result of the bulk of the raw water supply being diverted from surface water intakes in the Schuylkill River, and then the return of the treated wastewater effluent back into the Schuylkill River (with a few exceptions as noted in preceding discussions). In a few Region zones, however, centralized wastewater treatment is being provided where water is not centralized and is being sourced from individual on-site wells. Given the "exporting" of the treated wastewater to downstream/downgradient wastewater treatment facilities, this particular combination of water supply and wastewater treatment has the most negative impact on water balance. Under no circumstance should future land developments fall victim to this adverse blend of infrastructure; where this imbalance already exists, municipalities should work to extend centralized water supply to those properties utilizing on-site wells.

3. Each municipality should modify its 537 wastewater facilities plan accordingly, consistent with this multi-municipal comprehensive plan, focusing on both wastewater and water supply elements.

Because Pennsylvania Act 537 plans are so critical for wastewater treatment planning in all municipalities (these plans have been reviewed and summarized in preceding sections of this Plan), clearly the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan need to be integrated into the respective 537 plan for each Region municipality. PADEP provides grants for 537 plan updating. These 537 plans not only should be consistent with this Plan in terms of wastewater treatment, but should also provide centralized water service in a manner consistent with this Plan, as is required by PADEP regulations.

4. Each municipality should strike agreements with those PUC-regulated utilities operating within its jurisdiction, regardless of existing franchise areas already in place, establishing a process for coordinating and approving any extension of service of any type, in order to guarantee that service extensions are in close agreement with this Plan as well as *Watersheds* and *Landscapes*; these agreements

should then be filed with the PUC. Similar agreements should be struck with any municipal department or authority which operates water, sewer, and other infrastructure. Local precedents for such agreements include individual agreements between Charlestown, Wallace, and Pocopson Townships with Aqua Pennsylvania and Sadsbury and West Caln with Pennsylvania-American.

In several cases (e.g., East Vincent and East Pikeland), PUC-designated franchise areas have been issued throughout the entirety of the municipality, allowing these private utilities to extend infrastructure with greater ease. A common municipal complaint has been that such utilities run roughshod over municipal planning, once such franchise areas have been established. In these cases, municipalities can and should enter into agreements, as offered here, so that utilities are required to consult with municipalities prior to line extensions, regardless of franchise area designations. Because some municipal authorities themselves have acted without proper consultation with municipal legislators and planners, these same agreements should be struck with authorities.

5. Use community water supply and wastewater treatment systems for isolated non-publicly watered and sewered cluster development and or other development concentrations (where existing groundwater quality is already unsafe, where well yields are not adequate for proposed uses and/or threaten existing users, where onsite septic systems are precluded due to density) and other problem areas (existing septic and other discharges have already impaired groundwater quality, where local conditions have resulted in septic failures, where percolation tests are inadequate, etc.); in the case of community wastewater treatment systems, use technologies which land-apply wastewater effluents and otherwise maximize water balance and minimize pollutant discharges.

6. Where extensions of water and sewer lines are determined to be needed and the most cost effective alternative approach to providing infrastructure, measures should be established and implemented by the municipality to prohibit customer connections in any areas not planned for public water and sewer service.

In the rare event where water and sewer line extension through Rural and/or Low Density Development is planned which does not warrant centralized water and sewer service, these extensions of service should be approved only when provider of this service has proven that the line extension is being physically planned/sized only to serve the proposed development at hand and a legally binding agreement has been struck with the line owner/operator which prohibits connections to these new lines in areas which are not designated within the infrastructure extension boundaries.

7. Allow individual sewage systems and/or replacement areas in designated open space if superior subdivision design can be achieved.

In order to promote more compact and environmentally sensitive forms of development oftentimes on smaller lots, the general PADEP/County Health Department requirement that all on-site wastewater treatment systems as well as replacement effluent disposal fields for these systems be located on each lot should be made to be flexible (i.e. offered as an option where adequate demonstration can be made by the applicant). In some cases, reduced lot size does not allow for such provisions. In some cases, certainly replacement fields and even the primary systems themselves can be creatively located in permanently protected open space, maximizing

this open space and conservation of other environmental values. Of course, ongoing maintenance responsibilities must be defined and accommodated in any case.

8. Implement management programs for onsite septic and other individual wastewater treatment systems (including septage pumping) on the municipal level to ensure that they are properly inspected and maintained in order to protect groundwater quality and guarantee the life of each individual system.

Large portions of many of the Region's municipalities are not planned for centralized sewer and will continue to rely on on-site wastewater treatment to the extent that any wastewater treatment is required (hopefully minimally). Properly designed and installed on-site systems, including conventional septic tanks/drainage fields, are an environmentally acceptable wastewater treatment solution, *assuming that owners/operators provide proper maintenance*. Such maintenance programs should be developed and required by each Region municipality. Any number of sources from PADEP down to the Chester County Health Department can provide guidance which describes how a municipality goes about establishing an effective program for on-site wastewater system maintenance (there are a variety of elements to these programs, although the single most important element typically is a program of regular pumpage of the septage solids from the septic tank). These programs are important environmentally to prevent malfunction and release of pollutants, but are also simply in the best interest of each system owner because they extend the economic life of the wastewater treatment system and reduce owner costs in the long run.

9. Each municipality should adopt stormwater management regulations and implement stormwater management programs which are consistent with (i.e., contained the same basic requirements as) the model ordinance and program established by Green Valley's Association's Sustainable Watershed Management program; such a stormwater program must include both non-structural and structural Best Management Practices which provide for comprehensive management of stormwater volumes, peak rates, water quality, and temperature. As such, such programs will also be consistent with, though in some cases may go beyond, the model ordinance recently developed by the CCWRA.

Stormwater has been, is now, and will continue to be a critical concern environmentally, as well as important in terms of property damage and economic losses. The Region is notable in that a major environmental organization, the Green Valleys Association, has developed the Sustainable Watershed Management program some years ago, a major component of which is a comprehensive and thoroughgoing stormwater management program which addresses control of stormwater total volume, control of peak rates, control of water quality and temperature for the full range of small-to-large storms. This program, it should be noted, is consistent with the new draft PADEP stormwater Best Management Practices manual which has just recently been released, together with other relevant stormwater requirements, such as the EPA-administered NPDES Phase II program for Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer Systems, or MS4s). Some, though not all of the Region's municipalities have updated and modified their respective municipal regulations to be consistent with the GVA stormwater program, including the model ordinance which GVA and its consultants have prepared. All municipalities in the Region should make sure that their regulations have been properly updated and modified.

It should be noted here that this GVA model ordinance is compatible with the recently released model stormwater ordinance prepared by the CCWRA. In some specific cases, the GVA model ordinance is more stringent than the CCWRA model. The net result of this stormwater program

will be to make sure that runoff volumes and cumulative downstream flooding will be minimize for the large storm events, that highly erosive and stream-damaging bankfull or near bankfull flows will not be created as the result of smaller storm events, that infiltration and effective groundwater recharge will be kept more in balance to support the water table and stream baseflow and all those related values that rely on the water table and stream baseflow, and that water quality degradation and impacts on stream temperature will be minimized.

Recreation and Community Services

Goals & Objectives

Coordinate the recreation facilities and programs to provide a complementary and broad range of recreation facilities and programs that enhance the quality of life in the Region.

Provide appropriate community services and facilities that are regionally coordinated to reduce unnecessary tax burden on residents within reasonable municipal fiscal limits. Provide reasonable protection for the health and safety of residents throughout the Region. Recognize that schools should be integrated physically and socially into residential communities.

- Provide convenient and equitable access for residents throughout the Region to recreation facilities and programs.
- Balance active and passive open space and recreation facility opportunities.
- Provide cost effective emergency management systems
- Preserve and connect open spaces throughout the Region
- Expand programs, such as the Community Supported Agriculture program, to enhance the economic viability of farming while educating the public on the important role of agriculture in the community and preserving farmland throughout the Region.

Background

Like most other areas its size, the Phoenixville Region provides emergency services, recreational facilities, public schools, and libraries. These services are provided through five police departments, a volunteer based fire department system, three school districts, and various recreation or public works departments (see **Map 6-1**).

Parks and Recreation
The Phoenixville Region has a total of 162 recreation and parks facility acres. Three major greenways exist in the Region and are targeted for trail improvements, the Pickering-Upper Uwchlan Corridor, Sow Belly-French Creek Corridor, and Horse-Shoe Corridor. The Region is fortunate to have the French Pickering Creek Conservation Consortium working to improve these trails and connect parks and points of interest along their routes through the Region. In addition to these acres and trails the Region is also in close proximity to Valley Forge National Historic Park and a larger trail network along the Schuylkill. The Valley Forge National Park provides nearly 3,500 acres of passive park space along with trails for active recreation. Two separate segments of the Schuylkill River Trail pass through the Region at its northern and southern boundaries: the 22 mile long section from Valley Forge National Historic Park to Philadelphia and the 13 mile long Thun Trail from Pottstown to Reading.

While the Region has access to facilities in surrounding areas and provides several parks of its own, the Chester County's Linking Landscapes report recommended an additional 146 acres of park space be provided based on the 2000 Census population density data. Most of the recommended acreage is for smaller neighborhood and mini parks. The Linking Landscapes report also indicated that a park in Charlestown could be expanded to provide park space for Schuylkill Township. As the Region continues to plan together, is should encourage municipal partnerships to provide regional parks and maintenance. It is also important for new development to contribute to or provide open space and recreation facilities.

LEGEND

Municipal Boundaries

Parcels

Municipal Parks, State Parks, and Game Lands

Recreation (parks, golf courses, facilities, etc.)

Open Space (protected open space, community associations, etc.)

State Highway

Libraries

1. *Henrietta Hankin Library*
2. *Phoenixville Public Library*

Police Stations

1. *West Vincent Township Police Department*
2. *East Vincent Township Police Department*
3. *East Pikeland Township Police Department*
4. *Phoenixville Borough Police Department*
5. *Schuylkill Township Police Department*

Phoenixville Hospital
(Univ. of PA Health System)

Fire Company Coverage

Fire Stations

1. *Ludwigs Corner Fire Company*
2. *Kimberton Fire Company*
3. *West End Fire Company*
4. *Phoenix HH&L*
5. *Friendship Fire Company*
6. *Valley Forge Fire Company*

Universities and Colleges

1. *Valley Forge Christian College*
2. *Center for the Arts and Technology (Pickering Campus)*

Private Schools

1. *Camphill Special School*
2. *Kimberton-Waldorf School*
3. *St. Basil*
4. *Valley Forge Christian College*
5. *Liberty Forge Special Education*

School Districts

Public Schools

1. *Vincent Elementary School*
2. *Spring City Elementary School*
3. *East Pikeland Elementary School*
4. *Kindergarden Center*
5. *Second Avenue Elementary School*
6. *Berkley School*
7. *Phoenixville Area Senior High School*
8. *Phoenixville Area Junior High School*
9. *Schuylkill Elementary School*
10. *Charlestown Elementary School*

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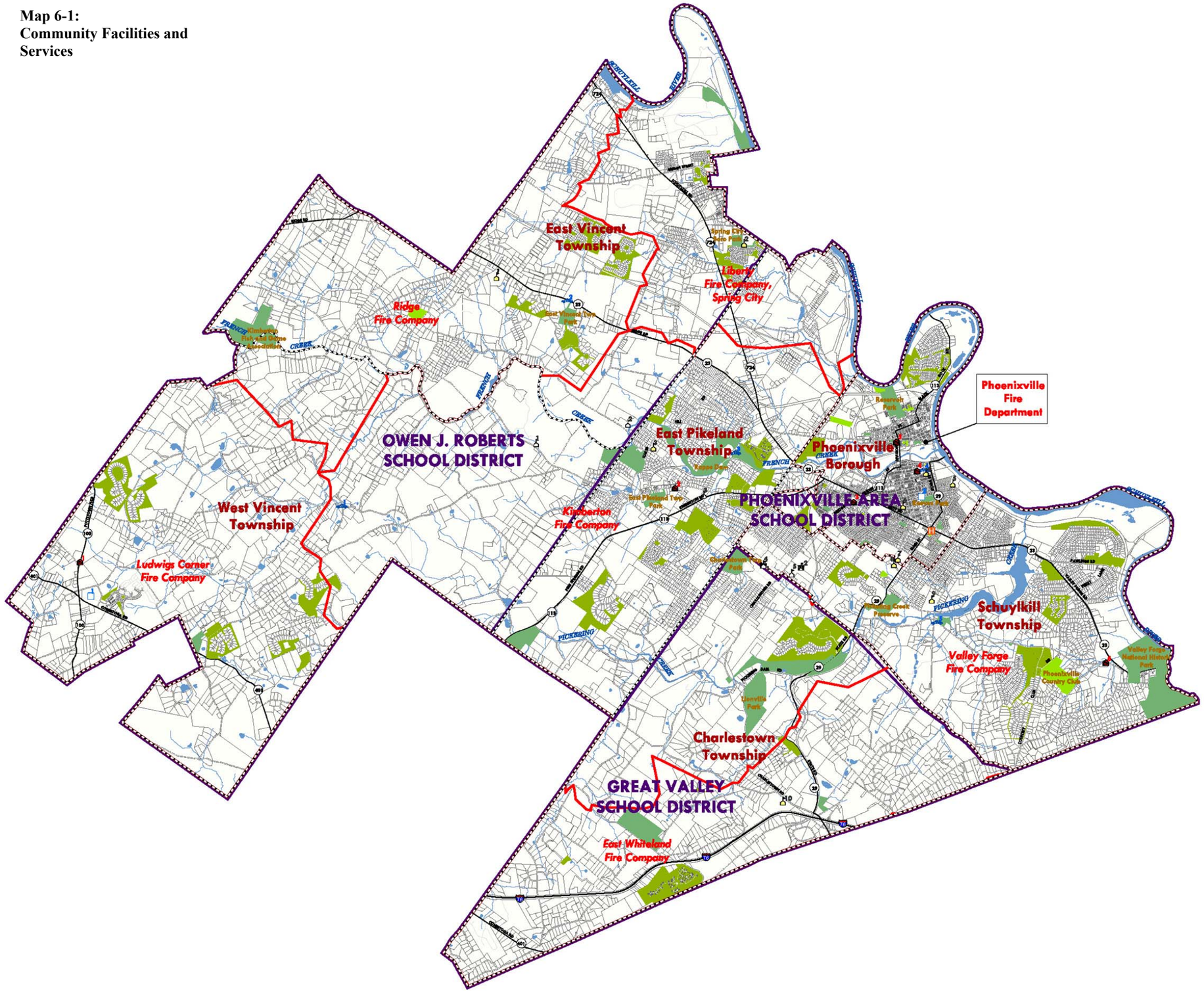
Kise Straw and Kolodner
in association with:
Urban Partners
Cahill Associates
Smith & McMaster
Traffic Planning & Design

Note : GIS Base Data provided by
Chester County Planning Commission

Map 6-1:
Community Facilities and Services



Emergency Services
Emergency services are provided in the Region through a myriad of fire departments, ambulance providers, police departments, and state police. All of the municipalities except Charlestown have local police departments. Charlestown uses the state police. Fire protection is provided through eight volunteer fire departments.

Public Schools
Two of the three school districts that exist in the Phoenixville Region are expecting significant growth in the next ten years, Great Valley and Owen J. Roberts (OJR). After much consideration and coordination between the Township and the school district, a new OJR elementary school will be integrated into the Ludwigs Corner village area in West Vincent Township. It will provide a walkable environment for pupils from new adjacent neighborhoods, retail areas, and the new Hankin Library. This should be a model for locating a new school and effective coordination between a municipality and a school district.

Recommendations

10. **Develop an inventory of all existing public, private and quasi-public recreation programs and facilities within the Region. Include a broad variety of programs and facilities in the inventory, such as arts and crafts programs; team and individual sports programs; library recreation programs and facilities; senior programs and facilities; and public school facilities. Evaluate the inventory to determine where there is redundancy and where there are deficiencies.**

11. **Coordinate the implementation of recreation programs and facilities through a regional recreation coalition to address deficiencies.**

    By developing a Regional recreation coalition, and in turn creating an inventory of available programs and facilities, the coalition will be able to identify areas for improvement and partnerships. The YMCA provides a large recreational facility and might be interested in providing satellite facilities. As the Region grows it is important to seek funding and build additional recreation programs and facilities.

12. **Promote agricultural and horticultural recreation programs and facilities especially in new facilities for example senior programs and community supported agriculture**

    The prime agricultural soils in southeastern and central Pennsylvania have provided for a heritage rich in farming. As discussed in many portions of this Plan, it is important to conserve farms and prime agricultural soils for generations to come. Conserving the farms is not merely a question of acquiring the land - it is rooted in the viability of the farming industry. Can anyone make a living as a farmer? Who knows how to farm these days?

    Community supported agriculture programs (CSA), such as Farm to City which serves parts of southeastern Pennsylvania, can alleviate some of the volatility of farmer's income. For example, each member in a CSA pays in advance for a share of the farm's produce for a season. The buyer receives weekly, bi-weekly, or other timely deliveries from the farm. If the season has perfect weather and the crops burgeon, then the buyer receives a full share, and if the season has bouts of bad weather or pests, then the buyer receives less. Regardless of the pests, weather, and other volatilities in farming, the

farmer receives income throughout the season. In general terms, the buyer learns about farming through the program and may visit the farm in some cases.

The Region should look for opportunities to educate the community about agriculture, whether it is through a new recreation activity such as a 'visit the farm day' or providing a community garden.

13. Continue coordination between police departments, park rangers, fire companies, and other emergency services throughout the Region

Coordination between police departments, fire companies and other community service providers is important not only on safety issues but it can provide cost-savings. A couple opportunities might exist in buying items in bulk or hiring a single contractor for computer services or solid waste disposal.

14. Partner with the school districts and developers in the Region to locate new schools next to or within existing towns and new villages to minimize transportation impacts and promote schools as an integral part of the community and preserve existing schools within downtown and village locations

Within the Region as the school districts expand due to growth pressures, it is important to maintain existing schools and strive to create new schools that serve as physical and social centers in the community. Schools have historically been located at the center of a community in close proximity to their pupils and as meeting space for community events. Programs like the Governor's Safe Routes to School program emphasize the importance of schools being in areas that are walkable. In the last few decades as the Region grows, new schools are being located on the periphery of communities.

It is important for the municipalities to monitor the plans of the school districts and become involved in their planning initiatives. Municipalities that fall into the same school district should partner in their efforts to guide the location of future schools. West Vincent recently worked collaboratively with the Owen J. Roberts school district to locate a new elementary school within walking distance of Ludwigs Corner.

15. Evaluate the system of volunteer fire departments in the Region and consider ways to provide assistance to the volunteer fire departments

All of the fire companies in the Region accept volunteers and rely on them to provide adequate coverage to the area. Municipalities should continue to work closely with the fire and emergency service providers to monitor for any shortfalls. Many of the fire companies in the area apply regularly for federal grants to provide much needed funding for the purchase of apparatus, maintenance, and operation upgrades to the fire and emergency service providers throughout the Region. Municipalities should provide support in submitting these grant applications.

16. Provide equitable funding for libraries utilized by the Region

A Region-wide committee could be formed with members from each municipality as well as the libraries to identify equitable ways to fund libraries based on available usage and population statistics.

Each municipality, except Charlestown, has appropriated funds to a library in the last two years. East Vincent Township appropriated $5,493 to Spring City Library in 2003. West Vincent Township appropriated $3,200 to Chester Springs Library in 2002, but none since. East Pikeland and Schuylkill Townships appropriate funds to Phoenixville Library

through the Phoenixville Area School District (PASD). For 2003-2004 the total appropriated from the PASD was $342,000.

17. Work with Chester County and the French Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust to develop regional trails such as the Pickering-Upper Uwchlan, Sow Belly-French Creek, Schuylkill River, and Horse-Shoe trail corridors through the Region

The Chester County Linking Landscapes Plan identifies the Pickering-Upper Uwchlan Corridor, Sow Belly-French Creek Corridor, and Horse-Shoe Corridor as informally used greenways through the Phoenixville Region. These corridors connect regional parks, municipal parks, and points of interest along their routes through the Region. The existing Horse-Shoe Trail, which has been utilized by equestrians and hikers since 1935, loosely parallels the turnpike through Chester, Berks, Lancaster, Lebanon, and Dauphin Counties. All of the trails listed are recommended for expansion, but Chester County designated the Horse-Shoe Corridor as a priority trail for the County.

As the primary greenway in the Region, the Schuylkill River Corridor is identified by Chester County as a 'partially developed corridor', which means that the corridor includes existing County or municipal trails. The Schuylkill River Trail currently has two sections completed – the Thun Trail in Berks County and the Philadelphia to Valley Forge section to the south. Chester and Montgomery Counties are working together to acquire the property for this trail and have already determined the route of the trail along the Schuylkill River on the Montgomery County side and crossing over to Phoenixville on the Route 29 bridge. The Schuylkill River Trail is a regional priority for the County, and it is important for the Phoenixville Region Region to build connections to this greenway.

18. Expand the local trail system and provide connections to the regional trail system as well as connections to open spaces, residential areas, commercial areas, and recreation facilities

The regional trail system is important; however, it is the local connections to that trail system that boost its usage. Municipalities should identify potential linkages to the regional trail system from park spaces, subdivisions, and commercial areas. One of the initial steps the Region can take to work together in creating a regional trail system is to create a GIS map of the existing trail network and work as a group with French Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust to identify linkages within each municipality as well as connecting across municipal boundaries.

19. Investigate grants, donations, fees-in-lieu and other funding sources to preserve open space within the Region

The Phoenixville Region has a total of 161.8 recreation and parks facility acres. The Linking Landscapes report from Chester County recommended an additional 146.3 acres in the Region based on the 2000 Census population density data. It is evident from Table 16.1, that more park space is needed across the Region. Municipalities should plan for and identify parcels to acquire and develop as recreational and park spaces. As municipalities identify desired open space, parks and recreation areas, they should update their Official Map to indicate these locations.

Funding sources for the acquisition and design can be available through the State and foundations. In addition to grants, municipalities can raise funds through bonds, property taxes, and earned income taxes. See Table 6.2 for a summary of East Vincent, West Vincent, and Charlestown open space funding sources.

Another option to create open space, parks, and recreation facilities is to require them in new subdivision designs or require a fee-in-lieu of providing open space to be used in the municipality for open space.

Table 6.1: Recreation and Park Facilities Needed (Linking Landscapes Report 2002)

	Types of Facilities Needed			Total Existing Acreage	*Additional Acreage Needed to Meet*	
Municipality	Community Parks	Neighbor-hood Parks	Mini-Parks		2000 Needs	2025 Needs
East Pikeland Twp.	1	1	0	63.4	0	13.0
East Vincent Twp.	1	1	0	10.2	33.7	69.4
Phoenixville Borough	1	1	1	35.1	49.9	64.1
Schuylkill Twp.	1	1	0	0	55.7	60.8
West Vincent Twp.	1	0	0	12.0	7.0	13.8
Charlestown Twp.	1	0	0	41.1	0	0
Region Total	6	4	1	158.8	146.3	221.1

Table 6.2 Municipalities with Open Space Funding

Municipality	Description	Finance Mechanism	Estimated Total Funds	% Voting Yes	% Voting No
East Vincent	0.1325%	Earned Income Tax	$13,600,000	80%	20%
West Vincent	0.00049 mill per $100	Property tax	$2,900,000	63%	37%
Charlestown	$2,100,000	Bond	$2,100,000	-	-

7. Transportation and Circulation Plan

Goal & Objectives

Plan for a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system that meets the existing and future needs of the Phoenixville Area Region.

- Develop roadway design standards with greater regional consistency.
- Develop appropriate design standards to preserve scenic roadways, villages and historic resources.
- Coordinate safety, operational and capacity improvements with a focus on regional corridors.
- Appeal to SEPTA, Chester County and the Transportation Management Associations to develop additional public transportation service.
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the Region.
- Develop safe pedestrian links to enable revitalization efforts.
- Develop strategies to provide parking supply that will to enable revitalization efforts.
- Coordinate regional transportation studies to develop a regional implementation plan for proposed projects.
- Pursue private, municipal, State and federal funding opportunities to implement high priority projects.
- Continue to coordinate regional transportation improvements with FHWA, PennDOT and DVRPC to better achieve common goals.
- Coordinate land use and transportation planning to achieve the land use objectives of the Region.

Background

The transportation conditions analysis provided in the appendix outlines the modes of transportation, circulation system, functional classification, road and bridge conditions, congestion, scenic roads, crash data, planned improvements, previously completed transportation studies and regional transportation issues impacting the Region. Transportation planning tools and techniques are recommended in this chapter to address the regional transportation issues raised in the traffic conditions analysis. These tools and techniques can be implemented by municipalities individually or as a collaborative effort by one or more municipalities. In some instances, they can be implemented as a Region to address the issues.

The consistent implementation of the tools and techniques recommended in this chapter will most effectively implement the regional transportation goal:

Plan for a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system that meets the existing and future needs of the Phoenixville Area Region.

The recommended tools and techniques recommended in this chapter fall under the following categories:

- Functional classification system and regional design standards
- Multi-modal transportation
- Capital improvements and implementation strategies

Recommendations

1. Adopt a functional classification system consistent with the Chester County system.

As summarized in previous sections, there are several inconsistencies between the functional classifications currently used by each of the municipalities in the Region in their respective comprehensive plan. The inconsistencies in functional classification systems can also lead to inconsistencies in roadway geometric design and capacity as roadways cross municipal boundaries. These inconsistencies can begin to be resolved if the municipalities of the Region adopt a regional functional classifications system consistent with the system developed by the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC). The CCPC system contains the following classifications:

- Expressways
- Major arterials
- Minor arterials
- Major collectors
- Minor collectors
- Local distributors
- Local roads

Map 7-1 depicts the functional classification for the Region as classified by the CCPC. The intent of the regional classification is to promote consistency in safety and capacity for the roadways crossing the municipal boundaries within the Region.

Map 7-1:
Road Functional Classification

LEGEND

Study Area Boundary

Municipal Boundaries

Road Functional Classification:

- *Expressway*
- *Major Arterial*
- *Minor Arterial*
- *Major Collector*
- *Minor Collector*
- *Local Distributor*
- *Local*

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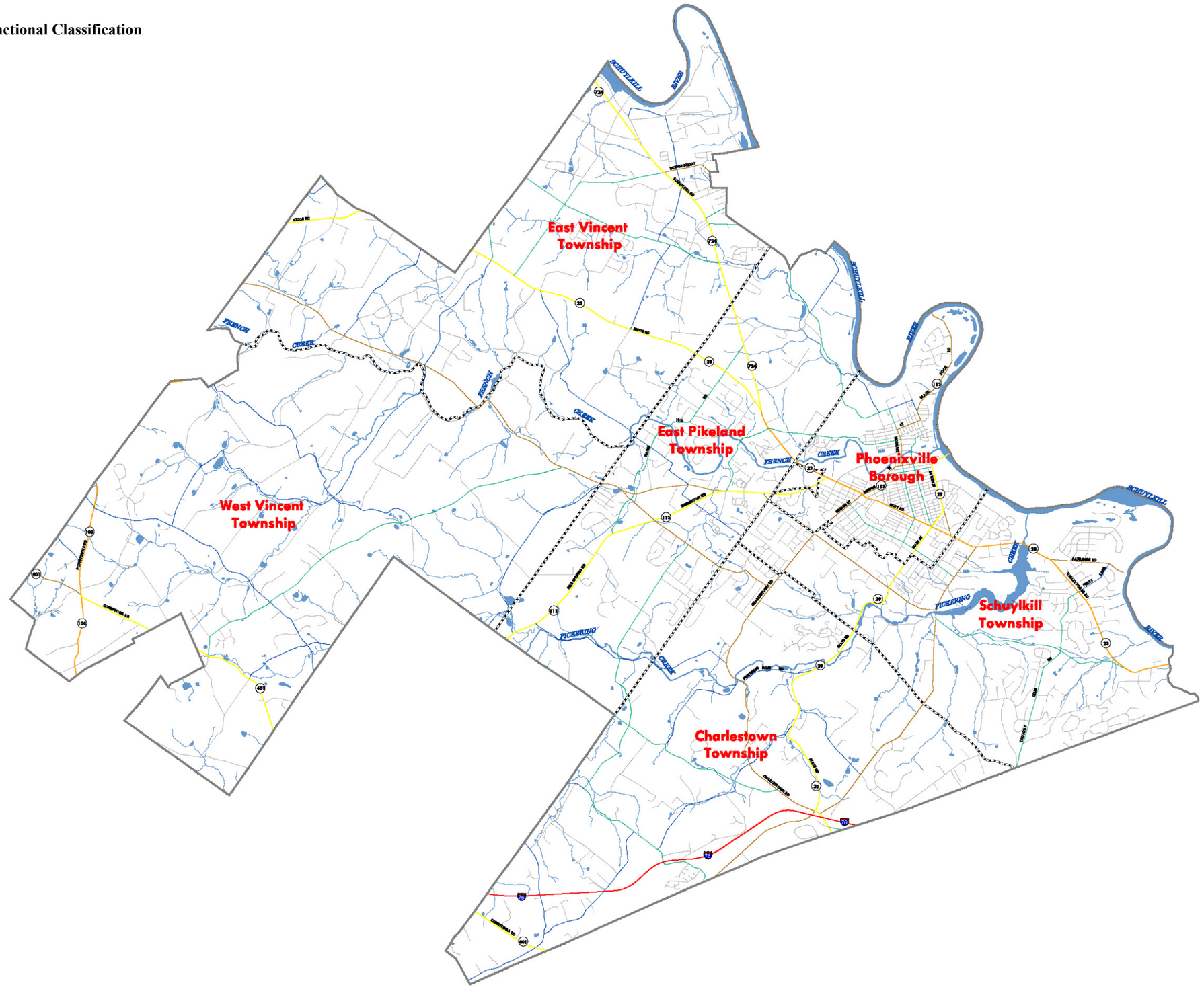


Kise Straw and Kolodner
in association with:
Urban Partners
Cahill Associates
Smith & McMaster
Traffic Planning & Design

Note : GIS Base Data provided by
Chester County Planning Commission

2. **Update subdivision and land development ordinances that applies access management measures found in PennDOT's model access management ordinance.**

The most effective means of preserving the safety and capacity of regional corridors is through effective access management regulations contained in the municipal ordinances. The Transportation Research Board (TRB) Access Management Manual defines access management as:

"The systematic control of the location, spacing, design and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway. It also involves roadway design applications, such as median treatments and auxiliary lanes, and the appropriate spacing of traffic signals. The purpose of access management is to provide vehicular access to land development in a manner that preserves the safety and efficiently of the transportation system."

As land development in the Phoenixville Region and surrounding areas continue, traffic will continue to absorb the available capacity and contribute to existing hazards of regional corridors such as PA 23, PA 100, PA 724, PA 113, PA 401, and PA 29. Each municipality should revise its SLDO to contain access management design criteria and regulations. PennDOT has recently developed an access management model ordinance for use by municipalities. The ordinance contains model language for three tiers of access management practices:

Tier 1: The practices included in this tier are those that involve one driveway, intersection or property. These practices can be implemented during the land development approval process and require coordination between the municipality, property owner and possibly PennDOT. The practices included in this tier are generally the easiest to implement because they cost less, take less time to implement and require the least amount of coordination between the property owner, municipality and PennDOT. Tier I practices include number and location of driveways, internal circulation, corner clearance and driveway radius, profile, and throat width and length.

Tier 2: The practices contained in this tier include those that involve individual or multiple driveways, intersections or properties. The practices in this tier can be implemented during the land development approval process, but they could require a higher level of coordination between the municipality, multiple property owners and PennDOT. Some of the practices could require implementation through multiple land development approvals. The practices in this tier can be more costly and require a longer period of time to implement than the practices in Tier 1 due to the participation of multiple property owners. Tier II practices include, driveway spacing, traffic signal spacing, auxiliary lanes and driveway spacing from interchanges.

Tier 3: The practices included in this tier involve multiple driveways, intersections and properties, however, these practices cover a much larger corridor or area. Some practices may require the highest degree of coordination between property owners, the municipality and PennDOT. In most situations, the transportation related practices would require capital funding for implementation. These practices are more expensive; require much higher levels of coordination between stakeholders and much more time to implement than Tier 1 and 2 practices. Tier III practices include two-way left turn lanes, median barriers,

frontage/service roads, access management overlay districts and the official map for right-of-way preservation.

At a minimum, each municipality should revise their ordinance to reflect the practices from Tiers 1 and 2 from the PennDOT model ordinance. Regulations that are revised or added to municipal ordinances should be consistent along regional corridors. Tier III contains access management techniques that can be implemented through the various planning options available to municipalities such as corridor plans, overlay districts and the official map. This tier contains techniques that are more comprehensive and are typically used to control access to arterials and major collector roads. Tier III techniques used in conjunction with those from Tiers I and II are the best techniques for maintaining efficient traffic flow and high safety levels in areas experiencing intense land development pressures.

The techniques, such as non-traversable medians, two-way-left-turn lanes (TWLTL), and frontage roads, often require right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and roadway widening. They require significant funding and therefore, are often implemented through a capital project administered by PennDOT.

3. Develop residential street design standards that preserve regional resources.

Municipal roadway design standards are most often found in the subdivision and land development ordinance (SLDO). In addition, PennDOT design criteria and regulations for access and roadways govern state maintained facilities. After a regional functional classification system is adopted, the appropriate design criteria can be included in municipal ordinances to ensure that roads can be improved to the proper standards to meet the local or regional intent of the road based on its classification.

The design of the roadway network should directly correlate to the functional classification system. Design criteria that affect the function of the network include, cartway widths, shoulders, access, signalization, design speeds and right-of-way. Therefore, the Region's municipalities should review their ordinances to determine necessary revisions needed for regional consistency in the design of roadways.

4. Implement context sensitive design solutions during the PennDOT project development process.

To provide a safe and efficient roadway, yet preserve the rural and historical character of the Region, context sensitive design solutions can be incorporated into a municipality's roadway design criteria and regulations. Context sensitive solutions meet the objectives of safety and mobility, while preserving the natural environment and community character. In addition, municipalities should participate in the PennDOT Project Development Process to provide input on context sensitive design solutions that can be implemented during the final design of road and bridge improvement projects

5. Develop a regional inventory of scenic roadways.

As summarized in Chapter 10, some of the municipal comprehensive and open space plans contain inventories of scenic roads. In many cases, scenic roads are an unprotected natural resource of a municipality. The features that create a scenic roadway often affect transportation mobility and safety.

A scenic road overlay district can be used as a tool to protect scenic roadways. While the underlying zoning district(s) designates basic zoning regulations, an overlay district can be used as a layer over more than one district and will generally prevail over those underlying districts. Scenic overlay districts can establish regulations for managing scenic roads associated with viewshed protection, safety, access, aesthetics and land use planning. The objective of the scenic overlay district is to not only sustain the best use of the land, but to also protect its scenic quality and preserve the safety and capacity of the roads.

At a minimum, the municipalities of the Region should update their open space, recreation or environmental resource plans to contain an inventory of scenic roads. An inventory can be used to accomplish the following objectives:

- Increase public awareness of scenic resources;
- Identify scenic areas to be preserved;
- Encourage land owners to recognize their role in protecting scenic resources;
- Identify areas that require enhancement efforts;
- Incorporate scenic resources into the land use planning process.

Prior to the implementation of a scenic road overlay district, the need for such a district should be identified. The need should be established through the municipal comprehensive plan, open space plan, recreation plan or a special planning study to address a perceived problem with the protection of scenic areas or roads identified in the scenic road inventory. The plan or study should verify that a problem exists, the area impacted and the issues to be resolved. *Landscapes: Community Planning Handbook Volume 1, A Toolbox for Managing Change in Chester County* published by the Chester County Planning Commission provides a detailed process for the implementation of a scenic road overlay district. For scenic roads that cross municipal boundaries such as Whitehorse Road, Ashenfelter Road, Buckwalter Road and PA 401. Coordination should occur between the municipalities to ensure consistency between each of the overlay districts.

6. **Prioritize regional corridors and implement safety, operational and capacity improvements recommended in past studies.**
7. **Develop additional corridor plans that improve safety, operations, and capacity while reducing the need for significant corridor widening.**
8. **Develop a regional plan that prioritizes proposed improvements based on their compatibility with regional land use and transportation objectives.**
9. **Locate new land development that will generate significant traffic near arterials and major collector roads.**

Several regional transportation studies have been completed for the major roadway corridors of the Region including Routes 100, 113, and 724, the northern relief route and the Phoenixville Area Intermodal Transportation Study. These studies contain numerous recommended safety and mobility improvements as well as multi-modal transportation improvements.

Due to the limited funds available to address all of the transportation needs identified by the Region, these transportation studies need to be evaluated collectively to establish a priority list of projects to pursue funding opportunities on the PennDOT Twelve Year Program and DVRPC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A regional implementation and funding and plan should be developed by the Region because such an initiative will place the Region ahead of many other municipalities and regions in the competition for State and federal funds. A list of

various funding sources is listed in the **Appendix**, including descriptions of the programs, matching requirements and eligible projects.

The official map is an effective planning tool to reserve right-of-way for new road alignments and interchanges. In addition, it can be used to reserve right-of-way along existing roadways for turning lanes at intersections and additional through lanes along corridors.

The MPC provides that a municipality may adopt an official map covering a portion or the entire municipality to show elements of the comprehensive plan pertaining to public lands and facilities. An official map identifies areas of public interest and need for the purpose of reserving lands for public use. It can be used to implement the transportation network and other community facilities. Section 401(a) of the MPC permits the municipality to represent the following transportation facilities on the official map:

- Existing and proposed public streets including widening, narrowing, extensions, diminutions, openings, or closings.
- Pedestrian facilities and easements.
- Railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements.

The municipality may use property records, aerial photography, photogrammatic mapping, geographic information systems (GIS) or other methods for the identification, description and publication of elements of the official map. An ordinance must accompany the official map that describes the lands identified for future public use. The municipality does not need to survey designated lands prior to the adoption of the official map and ordinance. At the time of land acquisition or easements, boundary descriptions by metes and bounds must be provided by a licensed surveyor.

The official map should be considered by the municipalities to preserve right-of-way for the potential of street grid system to accommodate new development in villages and centers. In addition, the official map may be used in the Region to preserve right-of-way for corridor improvements and new collector roads such as the northern relief route.

10. Support improvements to regional expressways such as US 422 and 202.

11. Participate on PennDOT technical and steering committees during their project development process.

Each municipality and the Phoenixville Area Regional Planning Commission should continue to promote and support the currently planned and programmed improvements included in **Table _**. In addition, the Region should lend political support to improvements currently programmed for the US 422, US 202 and Pennsylvania Turnpike corridors. The major capacity improvements proposed for these corridors will provide some traffic relief for the Region. These two corridors serve as a bypass system around the Region for commuters traveling between western Montgomery County and employment centers in the Great Valley and Exton areas. The improvement of congestion points along these corridors will reduce cut through traffic that currently utilize PA 29, PA 113 and Charlestown Road and other local roads as alternatives. The municipalities and Region should participate in technical and steering committees established by PennDOT for major capital projects to ensure that improvements are consistent with the land use and transportation objectives of the individual municipality and Region.

12. Develop traffic calming plans in residential areas, villages and centers to improve safety and promote non-motorized travel.

13. Consider roundabouts as an alternative to traffic signals and turning lanes on secondary roads.

Traffic calming measures are intended to address speeding and high cut through traffic volumes on residential or collector streets in villages and central business districts. Speeding and cut through traffic in residential areas, villages and central business districts can create intimidation of non-motorists. Addressing these issues through traffic calming measures can increase both the real and perceived safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in these areas. Traffic calming is not appropriate for use on arterial roadways that are intended to accommodate higher volumes of traffic at higher speeds. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) has defined traffic calming in the following manner:

"The combinations of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for non-motorized street users."

Horizontal deflections consist of traffic calming measures that hinder the driver's ability to drive in a straight line and measures designed to narrow the travel lane. Vertical deflections are traffic calming measures that create a change in the height of the roadway. When designed properly, these measures force vehicles to reduce speed to avoid unpleasant bumping sensations. Although horizontal and vertical deflections are designed to address vehicle speeds, measures that narrow the travel lane also improve pedestrian safety by reducing the distance necessary to cross a street, and vertical deflections can create more clearly delineated pedestrian crossings. Physical obstructions are traffic calming measures that prevent particular vehicle movements. As a result, they discourage or eliminate cut-through traffic. Signs and pavement markings can be used as an alternative to physical obstructions to address cut-through traffic. However, their effectiveness often depends on adequate police enforcement strategies.

PennDOT Publication 383: Pennsylvania's Traffic Calming Handbook contains a Traffic Calming Study and Approval Process to serve as a guide for municipalities to determine when traffic calming measures are appropriate based on existing conditions. It also includes a public involvement process to ensure community consensus for the acceptance of traffic calming measures. The study and approval process may be used by municipalities in its presented format, or it may be modified to more accurately reflect local conditions. The study and approval process is not needed for every traffic calming project. Measures such as bulb-outs and islands are used routinely without resistance from communities.

Each of the municipalities should adopt a Traffic Calming Study and Approval Process to establish policy for when traffic calming measures will be considered, design criteria for construction and a public involvement process to ensure acceptance from the affected residents and/or businesses. More specifically, traffic calming plans should be developed for the villages and centers targeted for future land development and the central business district for Phoenixville Borough to encourage use of local retail business and commuting to local jobs for non-motorists. In addition, roundabouts should be considered as an alternative to traffic signals and turning lanes on secondary roads.

14. Work with the appropriate agencies to develop bus routes linking residential areas with economic activity centers within the Phoenixville Region and neighboring centers such as Great Valley, Exton and King of Prussia.

Due to population and employment growth in the Region, there is an apparent need for additional public transportation service in the Region to help alleviate traffic congestion and provide

alternative means of transportation for job access for the economically disadvantaged. There is a lack of bus service to the Region because of a perceived lack of ridership. Continuous coordination efforts are needed between the Region, TMACC, Chester County and SEPTA to expand existing services and identify potential new services to meet the increasing demand.

The SEPTA Route 99 provides bus transportation between the Borough of Norristown and the Borough of Pottstown with a stop at the intersection of Bridge Street and Main Street. There is also limited service to the Shoppes at Valley Forge in East Pikeland Township via the Route 99 bus route. It also makes informal stops at locations not recognized on the schedule. Opportunities to optimize this route to provide more frequent connections along the Schuylkill River Corridor should be pursued.

The TMACC attempted a new bus service recently to link the Phoenixville Region with employment centers in Great Valley and Exton, but failed due to lack of ridership and promotion. Although this service failed, the Region, governmental entities and responsible agencies should continue to identify opportunities in the future for connections between expanding residential concentrations and employment centers inside and surrounding the Region along the US 422 and US 202 corridors.

15. Support the construction of the Schuylkill Valley Metro with a transportation center in the French Creek Center located in Phoenixville and Pawlings Road in Schuylkill Township.

Currently there is no passenger rail service in the Phoenixville Region. Commuters from the Phoenixville Region frequently use the SEPTA R5 regional rail line. This line provides service between Thorndale in Chester County and Doylestown in Bucks County with stops at significant activity centers such as Exton and Paoli in Chester County, Villanova and Ardmore in Delaware County, 30th Street, Suburban and Market East Stations in Philadelphia and Lansdale in Bucks County. The Region should support improvements and expansion of the R5 service.

The Schuylkill Valley Metro is a proposed new passenger rail service connecting between Center City Philadelphia and the City of Reading. The new rail line would include a station in the Borough of Phoenixville in the French Creek Center and Pawlings Road area in Schuylkill Township. The passenger service would reduce traffic volumes on regional arterials by providing a commuting alternative for residents, particularly through transit oriented development and provide direct access for those outside the Region to employment opportunities in the French Creek Center. SEPTA is currently studying variations of the preferred alternative to provide service to meet projected demand at the most fiscally responsible cost. The preferred alternative originally included a transportation center located in the French Creek Center. However, in an effort to reduce the total project cost which originally exceeded $1 billion, the Region should also coordinate with SEPTA to investigate additional locations for transportation centers such as Pawlings Road in Schuylkill Township.

16. Support the implementation of currently proposed recreation trails.

17. Identify additional regional recreation trails that link residential and economic activity centers in the Region.

These modes of transportation include networks for bicyclists and pedestrians. Many areas throughout the Region lack suitable facilities for the safe and efficient movement of bicyclists and pedestrians. The Region has proposed projects for regional recreation trails serving the French

Creek and Schuylkill River Corridors. As land development continues in the Region, bicycle and pedestrian facilities will become a more important means of transportation to link open spaces, parks, community facilities and parks, villages, Phoenixville Borough and other economic activity centers.

18. Coordinate with land developers, PennDOT and the Chester County Planning Commission to implement the County on-road bicycle network.

Bicycle facilities should be viewed differently from pedestrian facilities because natural ground surfaces of trails are too irregular to accommodate bicycle travel. A recreational trail may be used for bicyclists if the proper surface improvements are made. Low volume roads can also accommodate bicycle travel, but on higher volume roads, bicycle lanes should be provided on each side of the cartway.

The Chester County Planning Commission recently adopted recommended networks of bicycle facilities. As shown in **Map 7-2**, the network identifies routes for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of recreation, as well as commuter/connector routes. The commuter routes identified in the Region include PA 113, Pughtown Road, and Bridge Street from PA 23 to Stoney Run Road. These networks and routes should be considered in the development of any bicycle plan developed on a municipal wide basis or for specific areas such as villages development centers. Municipalities should look to implement the County networks and routes during municipal road reconstruction, and also coordinate with the County and PennDOT during reconstruction of state maintained roadways. It is essential to take the necessary steps for implementation of the County system well in advance of reconstruction projects.

19. Complete pedestrian circulation studies for Phoenixville Borough and villages and centers in the Region.

20. Implement pedestrian facilities that link residential areas, villages and centers.

Pedestrian circulation requires different facilities in urban, suburban and rural areas. In urban areas such as Phoenixville Borough, facilities are made up of mostly sidewalks. Sidewalks within the Borough serve as a link between residential areas, recreational facilities, stores, and employment. The Borough currently has a Main Street Program to address pedestrian facilities in the central business district. The Borough through the Program is implementing a streetscapes improvement that will provide amenities such as street furniture, landscaping and street lights. Traffic calming will also be implemented to improve pedestrian safety. Suburban and rural areas typically consist of a mix of sidewalks and trails that link residential areas, open spaces, villages and other economic activity centers. Pedestrian circulation plans should be developed for the villages and centers targeted for new development to promote the creation of service and retail business that can be accessed by local residents by means other than the automobile and allow circulation between businesses without being forced to use the automobile for each trip.

Map 7-2: Bicycle and Public Transit Facilities

LEGEND

Study Area Boundary

Municipal Boundaries

Bikeway Network Functional Classification

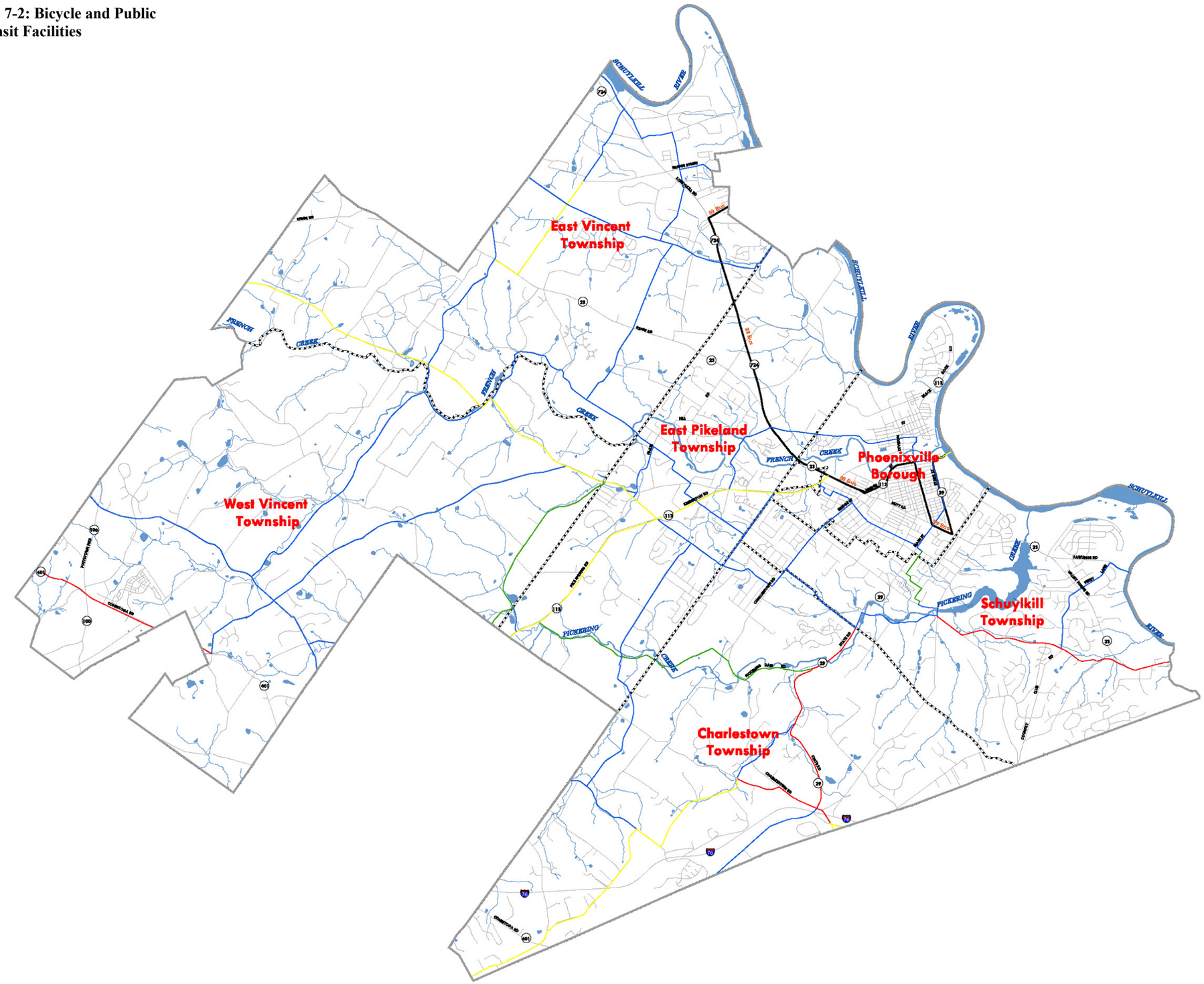
Beginner Recreation

Intermediate Recreation

Commuter / Connector

Advanced

99 Bus — *SEPTA Bus Route 99*



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Note : GIS Base Data provided by Chester County Planning Commission

21. **Complete a parking supply and demand study in Phoenixville Borough that identifies parking improvements that support office and retail uses.**
22. **Provide sufficient parking supply in villages and centers targeted for development that supports retail and office uses.**

Phoenixville Borough is in the process of completing a parking study to identify supply needs for residential areas and anticipated retail and office redevelopment in the central business district and French Creek Center. Parking supply and demand should also be carefully considered for the villages and centers targeted for redevelopment in the Region to accommodate retail and employment uses. Each of the municipalities should review their ordinances to confirm parking space standards are consistent with industry standards such *The Parking Generation Manual* published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). In addition to ensuring sufficient parking supply, excessive parking standards can result in unwanted and unnecessary impervious surface coverage.

23. **Provide input as a Region on high priority regional improvements to the Chester County Planning Commission for their Transportation Improvements Inventory.**
24. **Provide input as a Region to PennDOT and DVRPC on the development of the Twelve Year Program and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

The improvements identified in regional implementation and funding plan should be submitted by the Phoenixville Area Regional Planning Commission to the CCPC on a bi-annual basis for their update of the Chester County Transportation Improvements Inventory (TII). The Inventory serves as Chester County's direct input to the update of the Region's TIP and PennDOT Twelve Year Transportation Program. Prior to each update the Region should meet with CCPC and more importantly PennDOT to discuss the improvements identified in this report, the Department's role and their possible financial involvement.

In addition to submitting the comprehensive list of improvements from the plan, the Regional Planning Commission should identify a shorter list of projects as priorities that CCPC should seek funding for immediately. The initial priority list should consist of the improvements that address existing deficiencies. PennDOT will give more consideration to these improvements than those, which address problems ten or twenty years into the future. As time progresses and initial projects are completed, projects that address projected deficiencies should be gradually moved onto the priority list. In order to lend further support for the priority projects, each municipality should submit separate input containing the projects that are located within their jurisdiction. **Table 7-1** consists of a preliminary priority list of unfunded transportation improvements:

Table 7-1: Phoenixville Area Region High Priority Unfunded Proposed Improvements

Project	Municipality	Type of Improvement
Northern Relief Route	Phoenixville/East Pikeland/Upper Providence (Montgomery County)	New Collector Road
PA 100: Blackhorse to Horseshoe Trail	West Vincent	New Collector Road
PA 724: PA 23 – Bridge Street	East Vincent/ East Pikeland	Safety/Auxiliary Lanes
PA 23: PA 724 – PA 113 (Kimberton Road	Phoenixville/East Pikeland	Safety/Auxiliary Lanes/ Signalization
PA 23: Pawlings Road – PA 252	Schuylkill	Safety
Charlestown Road: PA 23 – Phoenixville Pike	Schuylkill/Charlestown	Reconstruction/Safety
PA 29: PA 23 – Phoenixville Pike	Schuylkill/Charlestown	Reconstruction/Safety

Table 7-1 identifies reconstruction and safety improvements for Charlestown Road and PA 29 between PA 23 and Phoenixville Pike. These improvements would consist of reconstruction of the existing cartway, shoulders, drainage, sight distance and minor realignment. Additional capacity for these roads is not a priority of the Region. Additional capacity would impact natural resources and create greater demand for regional traffic that wish to access the slip ramps at PA 29 and the Turnpike and the employment centers in Great Valley.

In addition, the CCPC TII includes more than ten state, county and municipal maintained bridges that have been identified as needing replacement or rehabilitation and are unfunded. It is likely that there are many more bridges in the Region that need similar repairs.

25. Pursue funding from State and federal grant and reimbursement programs.

26. Develop public/private partnerships during the land development approval process to implement transportation improvements.

Typically, projects are funded with 80 percent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds and 20 percent other funds. Traditionally, PennDOT provides the entire 20 percent of other funds. Typically, priority is generally given to projects that are presented for inclusion in the Twelve Year Program and TIP if the 20 percent other funds are provided by local sources. These projects are known as Local Match Projects. Typically, the greater the local match, the more likely the project will be added to, and given priority on the Twelve Year Program and TIP.

Providing the local match is accomplished in a number of ways. Right-of-way can be acquired as development occurs along the corridor. Making right-of-way available can be credited toward the 20 percent local match. Also, certain developers might be willing to contribute toward the design of the project, realizing their responsibility to mitigate impact and the importance of maintaining traffic flow and good access. Other possible sources of the 20 percent local match are utility clearance, environmental clearance and design. Typically, the more work provided by the municipality to advance the project through the design process, the higher the priority it will be for PennDOT to fund the construction. Typically, PennDOT prefers and gives the highest priority to municipalities that can fund and manage all pre-construction phases of a project. The local match can be provided by funding sources other than the municipalities' general fund such as public/private partnerships developed during the land development approval process and the adoption of a traffic impact fee ordinance which generates funds for the completion of off-site roadway improvements that cannot be legally required as part of a developer's land development approval.

In addition to traditional funding programs for roadway and bridge improvements, there are also special programs sponsored by PennDOT and FHWA for "non-traditional" transportation improvements. Non-traditional improvements can be classified as those other than roadway and bridge such as streetscapes, traffic calming, recreational trails and safe walking routes to school. The municipalities should pursue funding from these type of programs to implement the traffic calming and bicycle and pedestrian plans.

27. Determine the feasibility of adopting transportation impact fee ordinances.

Transportation impact fees are one of the least used implementation techniques but, it is probably one of the most important funding tools offered in the MPC for transportation improvements. It has the potential to be extraordinarily effective in providing the means to schedule and construct adequate transportation infrastructure within designated growth areas and areas of regional significance. The regulations apply to single municipalities (must have comprehensive plan or land use regulations in place) or more than one municipality, which have adopted a multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

The MPC enables municipalities to charge impact fees for new development in a designated transportation service area. The use of these fees is restricted to the implementation of new offsite, capital improvements for public highways, roads, or streets (not multimodal connections or other transportation facilities). Fees may not be used for the construction, acquisition, or expansion of municipal streets; repair, operation, safety improvements or maintenance of existing or new improvements; upgrades, expansions, or replacement to serve existing development in meeting new standards or to remedy deficiencies; and preparation and development of land use assumptions and roadway sufficiency analysis and transportation capital improvement plans. However, the impact fees can be used for costs incurred for capacity improvements designated in a municipality's transportation capital improvement program which includes acquisitions of land and rights-of-way, engineering, legal and planning costs and other costs directly related to road improvements within the service area.

The major asset of the transportation capital improvement programming is the development of a sustainable funding mechanism to offset the cost of needed transportation improvements in rapidly developing areas. The impact fee is calculated based on the total cost of the identified road improvements within a given transportation service area attributable to new development within that service area.

It can be very difficult to obtain the political support and public consensus to launch a transportation capital improvement program. The barriers are inherent in the legislation. Only highly organized municipalities with adequate municipal staff, including skilled administrators, technicians, and consultants typically undertake impact fees.

- Getting started requires upfront costs. Prior to enactment of the transportation impact fee ordinance, a transportation capital improvements plan must be prepared and adopted.
- There is a limitation on costs for State and federal highways. Roads that qualify as a state highway or rural state highway may only be funded by impact fees to a maximum of 50 percent of the total costs of the improvements.
- Impact fees cannot be used to fund projects needed to improve existing deficiencies or future deficiencies prior to new development occurring.
- The continuation of the program requires continuous monitoring and adjustments.

- The use of the impact fee for specific purposes must be identified in the transportation capital improvement program; therefore, the use of funds is not transferable to projects that have not been previously identified.
- The transportation impact fee creates additional costs that are passed through the land development process from developer to owner or lessee, making land development more expensive, prescriptive, and perhaps less profitable.

Municipalities across the state are determining that an impact fee ordinance's value outweighs the barriers, particularly due to rising project costs, limited State and federal funding and higher levels of competition for those funds. As a result, they are gradually gaining in popularity as an alternative funding source.

Transportation impact fees should be considered in municipalities that are currently or anticipating to experience intense development pressures. Impact fees are a far less valuable tool for municipalities that have nearly realized their full build-out potential or anticipate minimal new growth, because large amounts of revenue will not be generated by new development. Phoenixville Borough and Charlestown and Schuylkill Townships would likely not generate large amounts of impact fee revenue due to limited development potential. Impact fees have merit for East Pikeland, East Vincent and West Vincent Townships. East Pikeland Township is currently in the process of developing an ordinance. Prior to beginning the necessary study procedures for the adoption of an ordinance, the municipalities should review land development anticipated to occur in the next ten years including the identification of particular parcels, the level of existing pre-development transportation needs and administrative requirements to manage the impact fee process.

8. Cultural Resources Plan

Goal & Objectives

Conserve the historic resources of the Phoenixville Region and protect the cultural setting of these resources from incompatible modern development.

- Promote the preservation and, where appropriate, the adaptive reuse of historic properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- Promote cultural tourism within the Region

Background

Significant cultural resources are located throughout this Region (**Map 8-1**) and are related to the urban, village and rural aspects of the Region's history. These include resources as diverse as railroads, mills, farms, rural landscapes, bridges, dwellings and archaeological sites. These resources serve as connections to our past, particularly when viewed within their historical physical context, such as an urban downtown or village cluster. Focusing on the protection of significant cultural resources is related to environmental conservation, smart growth and other planning measures designed to maintain the important features of our landscape while allowing for growth and economic diversity.

Scenic areas are also located throughout the Region, including watersheds, rural landscapes and roads. Some of these have been identified in Charlestown Township, East Vincent Township, West Vincent Township and Phoenixville Borough. The French Creek was designated a "Scenic River" in 1982 by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A similar designation has also been recommended for the Pickering Creek Valley. The French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust is active in the preservation of open space and historic resources within these watersheds.

In general, communities in Chester County are keenly aware of the wealth of historic resources and the importance of protecting them. This is certainly the case in the Phoenixville Region. Several measures in various municipalities have been adopted to aid in the preservation of historic resources, including local historical commissions with regulatory controls, transfer of development rights (TDR), and conservation easements such as those offered by the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. Agricultural preservation efforts are also linked to historic preservation. As municipalities continue to update planning documents in accordance with the latest Municipalities Planning Code, communities continue to increase their awareness of historic preservation and the available preservation-related tools. Working together, these programs can have a profound impact on the preservation of historic resources and their context in the landscape.

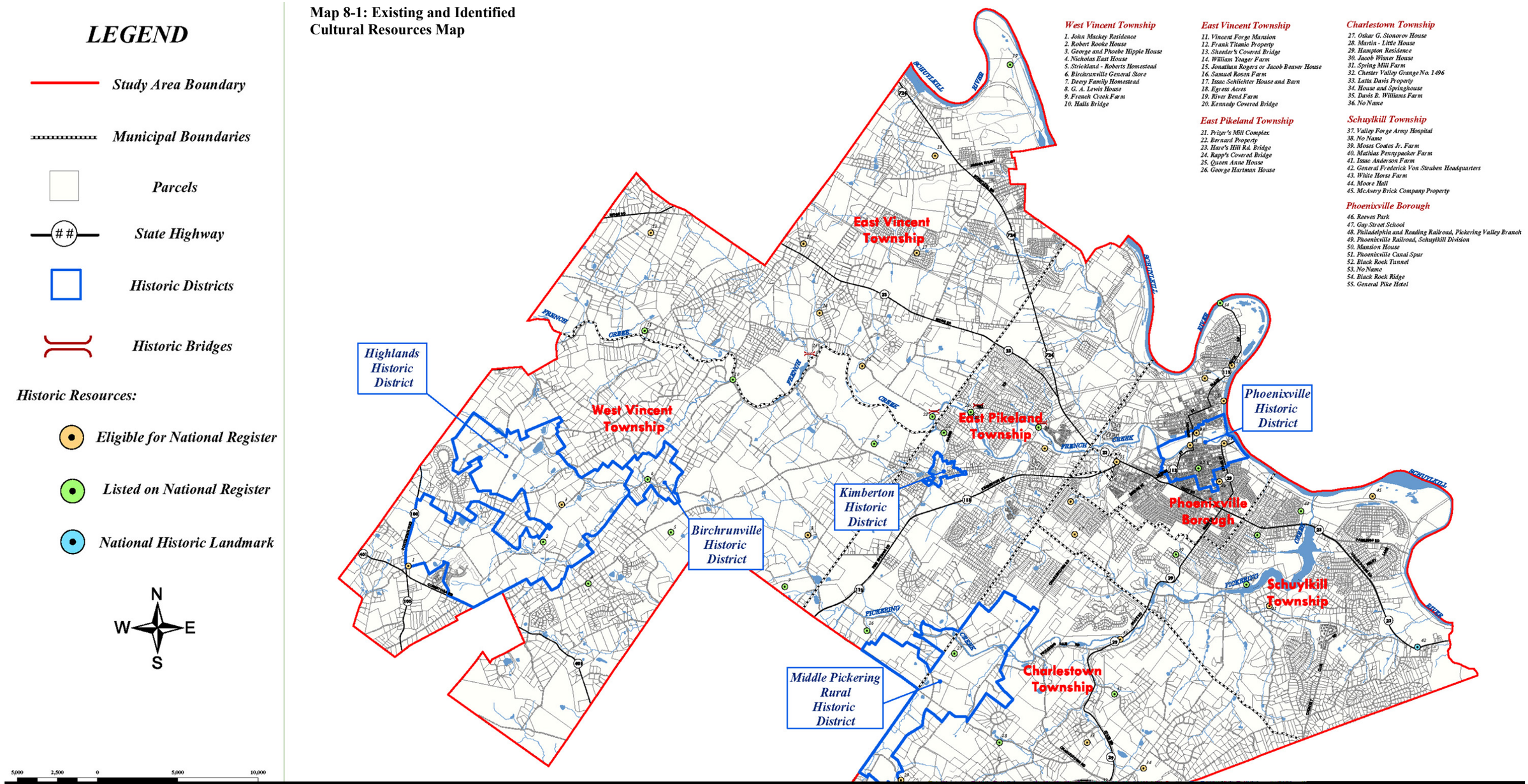
While many positive steps have been taken to preserve historic resources, there are additional issues that could enhance existing efforts.

- Comprehensive identification of potential historic resources
- Coordination of various protection measures currently in place
- A comprehensive funding strategy for implementation

These issues relate to the basic tenets of historic preservation: identify, protect, and preserve. A comprehensive identification and evaluation effort would identify significant resources from all

periods of local and regional history worth preserving. The coordination and potential expansion of existing programs within the Region would aid in the protection of significant resources. Preservation of those resources requires funding – for repairs, maintenance, restoration and reuse. The identification and/or establishment of funding pools for various types of investigations and "bricks and mortar" projects greatly increases the chances for the survival of the Phoenixville Region's historic resources.

Map 8-1: Existing and Identified Cultural Resources Map



Recommendations

1. **Update historic resource surveys to adequately determine historic properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or local designation (coordinate with the survey being conducted by Chester County that is underway)**

The identification of significant sites is the first step in protecting them. Although numerous sites in the Region have been identified over the years through regulatory and planning surveys, no updated comprehensive surveys of potentially significant historic sites has been conducted in the Phoenixville Region. Any comprehensive survey should identify buildings at least fifty years of age or older in order to capture potentially significant sites that are related to the Region's recent past. Further, the evaluation of these sites for National, State and local significance and integrity will help municipalities to prioritize and focus their efforts and resources on those properties that adequately convey their significance. Any survey and evaluation efforts should be undertaken in concert with the ongoing historic resource identification, verification and mapping efforts of the Chester County Parks & Recreation department and the geographic information systems (GIS) staff.

2. **Identify and list historic resources in the zoning ordinances**

The listing of known resources within zoning ordinances will provide a centrally located ready reference for municipal staff and other users. The list, and an accompanying map, clearly defines those resources that are considered significant to the local municipality and are regulated under an existing historic preservation ordinance. The list and map should be updated periodically. East Pikeland Township and West Vincent Township already have historic resources listed in their zoning ordinances. East Vincent Township resources are enumerated in the East Vincent Township Historic Resource Inventory, and Schuylkill Township resources are noted in the S*chuylkill Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Plan*.

3. **Consider adoption of a comprehensive historic resources ordinance**

Although most municipalities in the Phoenixville Region have historic preservation ordinances in place, the ordinance in the West Vincent Township Historic Preservation Overlay District regulates a broad array of resource types and potential alterations to those resources. The overlay applies to resources portrayed on a list and map accompanying the local zoning ordinance, which makes it easy to see what properties are regulated under the overlay. By identifying the historic resources on a map in the zoning ordinance, however, it might limit the ability to review development projects that impact unidentified historic resources. In light of that problem, some flexibility should be incorporated into zoning when adopting an ordinance. When locally significant historic resources are involved, the overlay requires a review of a variety of development projects by the local historical commission. This ordinance also provides for the protection of archaeological resources, which are critical to our understanding of local prehistoric and historic lifeways. Demolition delay ordinances are a good measure, as well as requiring a developer to have and be able to present all their permits and funding in place before demolishing an historic building.

4. **Adopt zoning regulations that protect the cultural setting of historic resources**

In many areas of the Phoenixville Region, clustered development in small villages and towns with nearby agricultural areas are characteristic aspects of the local landscape. The adoption of appropriate zoning regulations can help to maintain those physical patterns that are characteristic of the landscape in the Phoenixville Region. (Refer to the Future Land Use Plan for more information about revisions to zoning.)

5. **Adopt design guidelines for infill development that are protective of historic districts or adjacent to historic resources**

Design guidelines that are specific to individual historic districts can be useful in guiding property owners, developers and local historical commissions in the consistent and appropriate treatment of historic buildings. Design guidelines should take into account local architectural styles, uses, height, massing and materials, in addition to setbacks, landscape features and other applicable features of the site and community, in order to guide infill development, new construction and building alterations that are appropriate to the surrounding area.

6. **Provide cultural tourism brochures in public places**

Brochures about the history and significance of a place, as well as including local amenities, can provide information to local residents and tourists alike. Making cultural tourism brochures available in public places can be an effective passive marketing tool for the significant and interesting destinations in the Region. Schuylkill River Heritage Area is expanding the tourism opportunities for the area by developing brochures and maps.

7. **Coordinate with the County to provide website links to online cultural tourism resources**

Tourists often review websites to get an idea of what a particular location offers in terms of historic sites, recreational opportunities, restaurants and other amenities prior to traveling. Providing current website links in strategic locations can increase the visibility of historic and other resources and potentially garner a wider audience.

9. Implementation Plan

Introduction

This chapter provides a work plan for implementing the recommendations listed in each chapter of this Plan. It also reviews how the Plan relates to adjacent municipalities. These two components are important because they provide a guide for the six municipalities through the 10 year life of the Plan and they evaluate how the Plan will be received by adjacent communities. The Implementation Matrix (9.2) lists all of the recommendations identified in the Phoenixville Region Comprehensive Plan along with a time frame for the strategy initiation and who will be responsible for implementing the recommendations. Each recommendation has an assigned *time frame* for initiation - Short term (Years 1 and 2), Medium term (Years 3, 4, and 5), Long term (Years 6, 7, and 8), and On-going. Next to the time frame columns is the *responsible party(s)* column, which lists the municipality, organization, or commission responsible for initiating the recommendation. In some cases more than one party is listed, indicating the partnerships needed to effectively implement the project. Next to the responsible party(s) column is the *method of implementation* column, which describes the first steps necessary to complete the recommendation.

Most of the recommendations listed for initiation in the short term are related to adjusting the zoning in each municipality to be generally consistent with the natural resource and land use chapters of this Plan. Other short term recommendations include planning efforts to refine the zoning and design in specific areas of the Region. Longer term recommendations include both complex actions that will take some time to develop and less critical issues such as programmatic and community facilities improvements.

In some cases the actions described in the matrix require a collaborative effort between some or all of the six municipalities, and in other cases they will be implemented by one municipality. It will be critical for the Phoenixville Region Planning Commission to continue to take the lead role in coordinating the implementation of the Plan, even though it is not always listed as the responsible party. The Implementation Matrix should be shared widely, but especially with the municipal administration because it is a good reference for preparing annual budgets and work agendas.

After the Plan has been adopted by resolution in each municipality, each municipality has two years to adopt the recommendations related to consistent zoning and SALDO ordinances that conform with and implement the multi-municipal plan. These tasks will be outlined in an implementation agreement as drafted by the Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission and adopted by each municipality. Items in the Plan that are not related to consistent zoning and SALDO ordinances may be implemented at the discretion of the Commission and/or each municipality as suggested in the following matrix.

Implementation Matrix

Land Use Plan Recommendations

Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[2]	Medium-term[6]	Long-term[6]	On-going[6]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
2.1	Modify existing zoning ordinances to reflect residential densities and the location of residential land uses in the Future Land Use plan	✓				Local planning commissions, elected officials	Zoning Ordinance
2.2	Modify existing zoning ordinances to establish Kimberton and Valley Forge as village locations	✓				Local planning commissions, elected officials	Zoning Ordinance
2.3	Modify existing zoning ordinance to provide for mixed use and commercial growth in Devault		✓			Charlestown Planning Commission and Supervisors	Zoning Ordinance, Special Study (Specific Plan)
2.4	Establish enabling legislation for regional transfer and purchase of development rights that are applicable across municipal boundaries	✓				West Vincent, East Vincent, Phoenixville, and Charlestown	Zoning Ordinance, Implementation Agreement
2.5	Establish a regional financial and administrative entity to facilitate the purchase and sale of development rights	✓				West Vincent, East Vincent, Phoenixville, and Charlestown	Zoning Ordinance, Implementation Agreement

[2] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

2.6	Review, or create where necessary, zoning ordinances and design guidelines to support village style and mixed use style development where designated	✓				Local planning commissions, elected officials	Zoning Ordinance, Special Study
2.7	Consider establishment of an Official Map that shows future desired locations of public facilities, including parks, trails, municipal structures, and roadways – official maps are especially encouraged for the designated growth areas.		✓			Local planning commissions, elected officials	Official Map Study, Zoning Ordinance
2.8	Establish a regional planning commission to review developments of regional impact.	✓				Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission	Implementation Agreement
2.9	Develop and adopt master plans for Devault and the 724 Corridor areas as an amendment to this Plan.	✓				East Vincent and Charlestown planning commissions and elected officials	Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance
2.10	Consider regulating the location and size of particularly large buildings that generate a significant amount of traffic.		✓			Local planning commissions and elected officials	Zoning Ordinance

Environmental and Natural Resources Plan Recommendations

Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[3]	Medium-term[7]	Long-term[7]	On-going[7]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
3.1	Implement consistent natural resource protection standards.	✓				Board of Supervisors, Local planning commissions	Zoning ordinance amendments
3.2	Protect natural resources through programs which maximize open space in two ways: 1) on a parcel basis when subdivisions are developed using conservation design and smart growth tools, and 2) through programs which maximize open space across the entire Region by concentrating planned development in and around existing development in maximally compact forms.		✓			Board of Supervisors, Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Amendments to Zoning ordinance and/or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance; Use of Innovative Zoning Tools such as TDR
3.3	See Community Facilities Plan 5.9	✓					
3.4	Implement minimum disturbance and minimum maintenance techniques, and other preventive methods, for land development activities in the Region.	✓				Board of Supervisors, Local planning commission	Amendments to Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance; Zoning ordinance

[3] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

3.5	Map and identify all FEMA-identified floodways, including the 100-year, 500-year and 1000-year floodplain.	✓				Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Special Study
3.6	The Region should actively participate in Chester County Conservation District plan review function.				✓	Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Memorandum of Understanding
3.7	Implement a regional water conservation and re-use program in order to educate the public on the need for groundwater dependency.	✓				Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Special Study, Public Workshop
3.8	Establish 100' native riparian forest buffer networks, at minimum, in first order streams. Municipal owned land may be the first target phase for implementation, but the Region should ultimately establish a partnership with private property owners.				✓	Board of Supervisors, Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Special Study; Amendments to Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance; Public Workshop
3.9	Engage and outsource non-profits to provide educational opportunities for property owners adjacent to riparian areas, including residential, agricultural, or other uses.				✓	Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Outsource Public Workshops and the production of informational material to non-profit organizations (such as Green Valleys Assoc. and FPCCT)
3.10	Protect the maximum amount of open space and greenways, consistent with individual municipal goals, Region goals, and Chester County Linking Landscapes program.	✓				Board of Supervisors, Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Amendments to Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

3.11	Establish an active reforestation program, possibly in partnership with local school districts, Audubon Society, Green Valleys Association, TreeVitalize, Natural Lands Trust, the National Arbor Day Foundation, and others.		✓			Board of Supervisors, Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Special Study
3.12	Each member municipality should identify existing pilot projects, and implement future demonstration projects, that could serve as visible examples that fulfill the goals and objectives of this Plan.	✓				Local planning commission, Municipal Open Space Commission, and/or Municipal Environmental Advisory Council	Special Study, Public Workshop

Housing Plan Recommendations

Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[4]	Medium-term[8]	Long-term[8]	On-going[8]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
4.1	Target new residential development to existing residential and designated mixed-use areas with sound environmental protection and infrastructure utilization practices.				✓	Municipalities	Zoning Ordinance and other land use controls
4.2	Encourage innovation in site design and promote residential development diversity in lot sizes, lot widths, and building types within the same development.				✓	Municipalities	Zoning Ordinance and other land use controls
4.3	Modify zoning regulations to ensure a diversity of housing types.	✓				Local planning commissions, Municipalities	Zoning Ordinance
4.4	Preserve the quality of existing housing stock through code enforcement and programs like Phoenixville's Abatable Structure Program.				✓	Code Enforcement Departments of Municipalities	Code Enforcement

[4] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

Economic Plan Recommendations

Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[5]	Medium-term[9]	Long-term[9]	On-going[9]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
5.1	Steer appropriate commercial and industrial development to French Creek Center and other Phoenixville Borough locations, which complement and add to the Borough's revitalization efforts.	✓			✓	Borough, Borough Main Street Program Manager, Other Municipalities in Region	Recruitment, Zoning, Infrastructure Investment
5.2	Continue the revitalization of downtown Phoenixville using various strategies, such as infill development and adaptive reuse.	✓			✓	Borough, Main Street Program Manager	Residential and Commercial Recruitment, Financing Incentives, Zoning
5.3	Target Devault and the East Vincent Business Park as areas for commercial and light industrial development.	✓			✓	East Vincent Township, Charlestown Township	Commercial Recruitment, Zoning
5.4	Target Devault in Charlestown and the Route 724 corridor in East Pikeland and East Vincent as areas for retail and commercial development.	✓			✓	Charlestown Township, East Vincent Township, East Pikeland Township	Commercial Recruitment, Zoning, Infrastructure Investment

[5] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

5.5	Reinforce Kimberton, Ludwigs Corner, Valley Forge, Corner Stores, and Wilmer as retail villages that provide goods and services to nearby residents and improve the quality of life of these residents.	✓			✓	East Pikeland Township, West Vincent Township, Schuylkill Township	Zoning and other land use controls
5.6	Create a new village at the location of the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro station in Schuylkill Township that provides goods and services to nearby residents and supplies commuters with convenience-type goods and services.			✓		Schuylkill Township	Zoning, Infrastructure Investment, Special Study
5.7	Any retail development in existing villages should be compatible with a pedestrian-oriented retail environment and be supportive of the overall village atmosphere.				✓	Local planning commissions	Land Use Controls, Zoning, Special Studies

Community Facilities Plan: Wastewater, Drinking Water and Stormwater Recommendations

Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[6]	Medium-term[10]	Long-term[10]	On-going[10]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
6.1	Limit public water/wastewater expansion to Growth Areas in *Watersheds Plan*, consistent with the *Landscapes Plan*				✓	Municipal planning commissions and boards	Zoning, SLDO, 537 plan amendments
6.2	Integrate water supply/wastewater treatment planning, with focus on areas with water imbalances.				✓	Municipal planning commissions and boards	Zoning, SLDO, 537 plan amendments
6.3	Modify 537 plans to be consistent with Comprehensive Plan, focusing on wastewater and water supply; consider multi-municipal 537 planning.				✓	Municipal planning commissions and boards	Zoning, SLDO, 537 plan amendments
6.4	Strike agreements with PUC-regulated utilities establishing a process for coordinating and approving extensions of service, to guarantee that extensions are compatible with this Plan.	✓				Municipal boards	Municipal board action

[6] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

6.5	Use community water supply and wastewater treatment systems for isolated non-publicly watered and sewered cluster development and for other development concentrations and for special cases.	✓			✓	Municipal planning commissions and boards	SLDO amendments
6.6	Prohibit customer connections in any areas not planned for public water and sewer service.	✓				Municipal boards	Municipal board action
6.7	Allow individual sewage systems in designated open space if superior subdivision design is achieved.	✓				Municipal planning commission and boards	SLDO amendments
6.8	Implement management programs for onsite wastewater treatment systems	✓				Municipal boards	Municipal board action
6.9	Adopt stormwater management regulations consistent with Green Valley's Association's Sustainable Watershed Management program	✓				Municipal planning commissions and boards	SLDO amendments

Community Facilities: Recreation and Community Services Recommendations

Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[7]	Medium-term[11]	Long-term[11]	On-going[11]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
6.10	Develop an inventory of all recreation programs and evaluate for redundancy		✓			PRPC and Recreation Coalition	Special study
6.11	Create a regional recreation coalition		✓			PRPC, Northern Federation, Recreation Coalition	Organize key stakeholders and schedule initial meetings
6.12	Promote agricultural and horticultural recreation programs			✓		Recreation Coalition	Organize key stakeholders and schedule initial meetings
6.13	Continue coordination between police departments, park rangers, fire companies, and other emergency services				✓	PRPC, Municipalities administration	Periodically, contact fire companies, police departments, and other emergency services and report on staffing levels and other pertinent issues
6.14	Partner with school districts and developers to locate new schools within villages				✓	Municipal officials, Local planning commissions, PRPC	Participate in the school districts' long range studies and make recommendations when reviewing large new residential developments to consider school options

[7] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

6.15	Evaluate the system of volunteer fire departments for staffing issues and opportunities to partner			✓		PRPC, Fire Chiefs	Contact fire chiefs and report on staffing levels and other pertinent issues, organize an initial roundtable discussion about the existing service
6.16	Provide equitable funding or resources for libraries utilized by the Region			✓		Municipalities	Discussion at municipal budgetary meetings
6.17	Work with French Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust and Chester County to develop continuous trails network				✓	FPCCT, PRPC, Chester County	
6.18	Expand local trail system and provide connections to the regional trail system		✓			PRPC, FPCCT, Municipalities	Special Study; Map trails; Organize meetings with greenway organizations and locate potential connections to trails; prioritize these for acquisition
6.19	Investigate funding sources to preserve open space within the Region	✓				PRPC	Consider a regional bond or other source of funding to purchase open space or easements.

Transportation Plan Recommendations

Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[8]	Medium-term[12]	Long-term[12]	On-going[12]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
7.1	Adopt a functional classification system consistent with the Chester County system.	✓				Local planning commissions	Comprehensive Plans
7.2	Update subdivision and land development ordinances that applies access management measures found in PennDOT's model access management ordinance.	✓				Municipalities	Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances
7.3	Develop residential street standards that preserve regional resources.		✓			Municipalities	Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances
7.4	Implement context sensitive design solutions during the PennDOT project development process.				✓	Municipalities	Coordination with PennDOT
7.5	Develop a regional inventory of scenic roadways.			✓		Regional Planning Commission	Special Study
7.6	Prioritize regional corridors and implement safety, operational and capacity improvements recommended in past studies.	✓			✓	Municipalities	Special Studies

[8] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

7.7	Develop additional corridor plans that improve safety, operations and capacity while reducing the need for significant corridor widening.			✓		Municipalities	Special Study
7.8	Develop a regional plan that prioritizes proposed improvements based on their compatibility with regional land use and transportation objectives.		✓			Regional Planning Commission	Special Study
7.9	Locate new land development that will generate significant traffic near arterials and major collector roads.		✓			Local Planning Commissions	Zoning Ordinances
7.10	Support improvements to regional expressways such as US 422 and 202.				✓	Municipalities, Regional Planning Commission	Coordination with CCPC and PennDOT
7.11	Participate on PennDOT technical and steering committees during their project development process.				✓	Municipalities	Coordination with PennDOT
7.12	Develop traffic calming plans in residential areas, villages and centers to improve safety and promote non-motorized travel.	✓				Municipalities	Special Study
7.13	Consider roundabouts as an alternative to traffic signals and turning lanes on secondary roads.				✓	Municipalities	Special Study, PennDOT coordination
7.14	Work with the appropriate agencies to develop bus routes linking residential areas with economic activity centers within the Phoenixville Region and neighboring centers such as Great Valley, Exton and King of Prussia.		✓			Municipalities	Coordination with CCPC, SEPTA and TMACC

7.15	Support the construction of the Schuylkill Valley Metro with a transportation center in the French Creek Center located in Phoenixville and Pawlings Road in Schuylkill Township.	✓			✓	Phoenixville Borough, Schuylkill Township and Regional Planning Commission	Coordination with CCPC and SEPTA
7.16	Support the implementation of currently proposed recreation trails.		✓			FPCCT, Municipalities	Coordination with CCPR
7.17	Identify additional regional recreation trails that link residential and economic activity centers in the Region.			✓		FPCCT, Municipalities	Special Study
7.18	Coordinate with land developers, PennDOT and the Chester County Planning Commission to implement the County on-road bicycle network.				✓	Municipalities	Coordination with CCPC and PennDOT
7.19	Complete pedestrian circulation studies for Phoenixville Borough and villages and centers in the Region.		✓			Municipalities	Special Study
7.20	Implement pedestrian facilities that link residential areas, villages and centers.			✓		Municipalities	Special Study
7.21	Complete a parking supply and demand study in Phoenixville Borough that identifies parking improvements that support office and retail uses.	✓				Phoenixville Borough	Special Study
7.22	Provide sufficient parking supply in villages and centers targeted for development that supports retail and office uses.			✓		Municipalities	Municipal Ordinances, Special Study

7.23	Provide input as a Region on high priority regional improvements to the Chester County Planning Commission for their Transportation Improvements Inventory.				✓	Municipalities, Regional Planning Commission	Coordination with CCPC
7.24	Provide input as a Region to PennDOT and DVRPC on the development of the Twelve Year Program and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).				✓	Municipalities, Regional Planning Commission	Coordination with CCPC, DVRPC and PennDOT
7.25	Pursue funding from State and federal grant and reimbursement programs.				✓	Municipalities	Coordination with CCPC, DVRPC and PennDOT
7.26	Develop public/private partnerships during the land development approval process to implement transportation improvements.				✓	Municipalities	Land Development Approvals
7.27	Determine the feasibility of adopting transportation impact fee ordinances.	✓				Local Planning Commissions	Special Study

Cultural Resources Recommendations

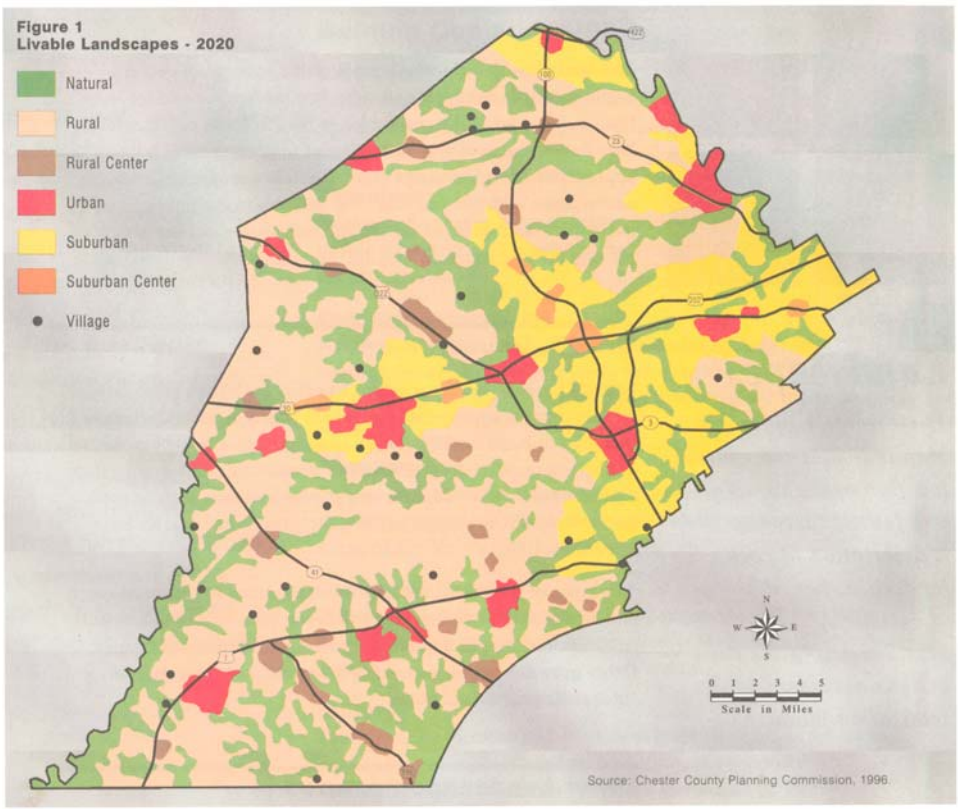
Item Number	Recommendation	Short –term[9]	Medium-term[13]	Long-term[13]	On-going[13]	Responsible Parties for Implementation	Method of Implementation
8.1	Update historic resource surveys and determine eligibility for National Register or local designation	✓				Local Historical Societies, Chester County,	Historic Resource Survey, Special study
8.2	Identify and consider listing historic resources in zoning ordinance		✓			Municipalities, Local Historical Societies	Special study
8.3	Consider adoption of a comprehensive historic resources ordinance			✓		Planning commissions, elected officials, Local Historical Societies	Zoning Ordinance, Special Study
8.4	Adopt zoning regulations that protect the cultural setting of historic resources		✓			Planning Commissions, Elected Officials, Local Historical Societies	Zoning Ordinance
8.5	Adopt design guidelines for infill development that are protective of historic districts or adjacent to historic resources				✓	Local Planning Commissions, Elected Officials	Zoning Ordinance, Special Study
8.6	Provide cultural tourism brochures in public places			✓		Municipalities, Local Historical Societies, Schuylkill River Heritage Area	
8.7	Coordinate with the County to provide website links to online cultural tourism resources			✓		Municipalities, Local Historical Societies	

[9] Explanation of Timeframes: *Short-term:0-2 years; Medium-term:2-5 years; Long-term:5-10 years; On-going: project to be continuous or completed as need arises*

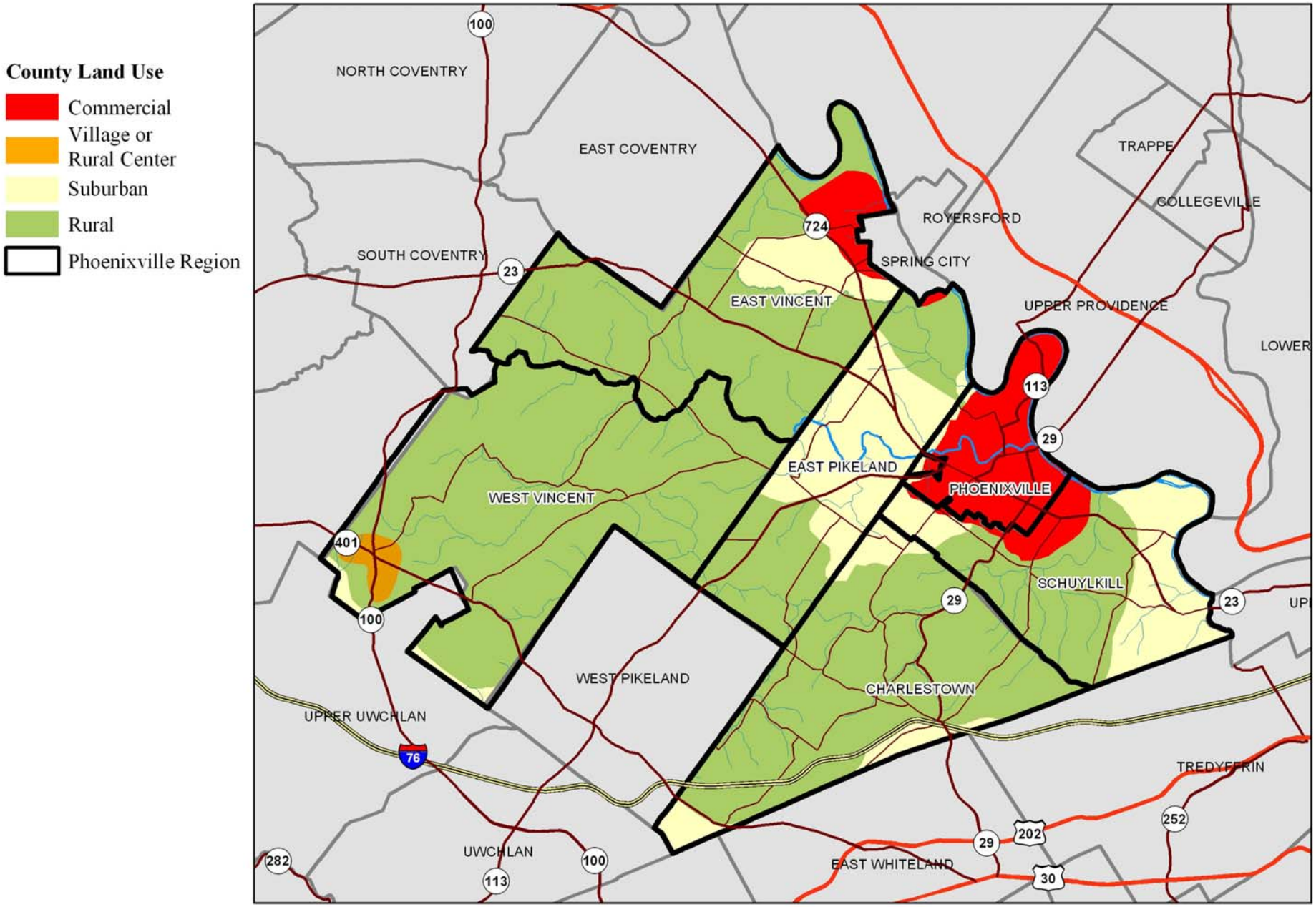
Plan Consistency

This section summarizes findings from a planning consistency review of adjacent municipalities' zoning ordinances and relevant county and multi-municipal plans.

County Comprehensive Plan (Landscapes Plan) Consistency Analysis
In 1996, the Chester County Commissioners adopted a comprehensive plan policy element titled *Landscapes: Managing Change in Chester County, 1996-2020.* This highly acclaimed planning document produced by the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) highlights the County's past and present land use trends and identifies a future land use vision appropriate for the County's legacy. In particular, *Landscapes* states that the County has been experiencing the most intense rate development in its history, and that more land has been consumed by sprawling development in the last 25 years than in the previous 300 years. As part of the *Landscapes* planning effort, CCPC conducted a public opinion survey that found by a 10 to 1 margin that people would prefer a development pattern that consumes less land. As a result, *Landscapes* encourages the establishment of growth boundaries and the creation of "livable landscapes" as a positive alternative to sprawl.



The Logic of Livable Landscapes: "The urban and suburban landscapes have been centers for development and have the infrastructure to best accommodate the anticipated future population. The natural and rural landscapes, because of their important open space, environmental, scenic, and agricultural resources, are least appropriate for development."


County Land Use
Commercial
Village or Rural Center
Suburban
Rural
Phoenixville Region
NORTH COVENTRY
EAST COVENTRY
SOUTH COVENTRY
TRAPPE
COLLEGEVILLE
ROYERSFORD
SPRING CITY
EAST VINCENT
UPPER PROVIDENCE
LOWER
EAST PIKELAND
PHOENIXVILLE
WEST VINCENT
SCHUYLKILL
WEST PIKELAND
CHARLESTOWN
UPPER UWCHLAN
TREDYFFRIN
UWCHLAN
EAST WHITELAND
100
23
724
113
29
401
76
202
252
282
30

The Landscapes map highlights Phoenixville Borough as an urban center to target for revitalization and new growth. This is consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Regarding the suburban landscapes, the Landscapes map highlights significant suburban areas within Schuylkill and East Pikeland Townships and smaller suburban areas reaching into East Vincent and Charlestown Townships. These areas are largely established. The Landscapes plan, much like this plan, recommends integrating compact mixed use areas into these suburban spaces to provide small-scale neighborhood serving retail, pocket parks, and possibly townhomes and/or apartments type uses.

Lastly, the Landscapes map highlights significant rural areas with East Vincent, West Vincent, and Charlestown Townships, and a small area in the southern district of East Pikeland, through which it may be possible to create a rural "greenbelt" that forms a de facto growth boundary in a semi-circular arc southwest of Phoenixville. This greenbelt would provide a clear break from the suburban sprawl that currently spreads outward from Phoenixville into Schuylkill and East Pikeland Townships. In addition, the Landscapes map highlights Ludwigs Corner as a rural center. West Vincent is currently working to create an appropriate mixed-use center at Ludwigs Corner, as a way to accommodate new retail, office, medium-to-high density housing, and civic uses, such as a library, school, and village green.

Areas of Inconsistency with the County's Landscapes Map
The Landscapes map does not identify the Devault area in Charlestown as a future mixed use area. This area should be added as a Rural Center or Suburban Center to the Landscapes map to reflect the development pressures and opportunities created by the new Pennsylvania Turnpike exit expected to open in 2007.

In East Pikeland, an area along the Schuylkill River is designated for industrial use on the future land use map, whereas on the Landscapes map it is rural. East Pikeland will continue to zone this land for industrial use, but will seek opportunities to acquire and develop open space along the waterfront.

Northern Federation Consistency Analysis
The Federation of Northern Chester County Communities (Northern Federation) consists of 10 municipalities that encompass nearly 120 square miles. Three of the municipalities involved in this plan, East Vincent, West Vincent, and East Pikeland are also members of the Northern Federation. This group of municipalities has planned together since 1974 and has produced eight regional planning documents. Currently, the Northern Federation is developing a Regional Resource Protection Plan to identify and protect the area's vast array of resources. The municipalities participating in both planning efforts continue to work to ensure consistency between Northern Federation plans and this plan.

Overview of Land Use in Adjacent Municipalities
In order to create a regional land use map to compare land uses in adjacent communities to the future land use plan for the Phoenixville Region, the zoning designations from each municipality were categorized into the following categories:

- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial/Office
- High Density Residential
- Medium-Low Density Residential
- Rural-Low Density Residential

Tredyffrin Township
The land uses as identified in the zoning ordinance of Tredyffrin Township are consistent with those in the Phoenixville Region land use plan. Tredyffrin Township is a "Main Line" community that borders Charlestown and Schuylkill Townships. Part of the Valley Forge National Park is located in the northern area of Tredyffrin. The low density residential land uses are generally consistent along the border with Schuylkill Township, however, it is important to identify and protect scenic views of the National Park and other natural resources such as the stream network along this boundary. The rural area along the border of Charlestown Township is also generally consistent with this plan.

East Whiteland
The land uses as identified in the zoning ordinance of East Whiteland Township are consistent with the Phoenixville Region land use plan. Along the border with Charlestown, East Whiteland has large portions of its land devoted to the Great Valley office park development and future light industrial and office development. The plans for the Devault interchange on the turnpike in this Region will very likely speed the pace of development in both East Whiteland and Charlestown.

West Whiteland
West Whiteland shares a small border with Charlestown Township. Adjacent land uses are consistent with the bordering residential and rural land uses defined in this plan.

Uwchlan
Uwchlan Township shares a small border with Charlestown Township. Adjacent land uses are consistent with the bordering residential and rural land uses defined in this plan.

Upper Uwchlan
Upper Uwchlan and West Vincent Township share a boundary and its land uses of rural and low density residential are consistent with this plan. The Route 100 corridor ties these two communities together as well as East Nantmeal and Uwchlan Townships. The system of commercial nodes along Route 100 combined with other growth along Route 100 in each of these communities will continue to congest the corridor. However, in an effort to limit the regional and local trips incurred by new development, this plan calls for pedestrian friendly design and mixed use building pattern as described in the Ludwigs Corner Master Plan. The Master Plan also identifies an additional roadway that is parallel to Route 100 through Ludwigs Corner to reduce the amount of congestion along Route 100 and provide improved connectivity to new development.

East Nantmeal
East Nantmeal has a rural landscape except along portions of Route 100. The land uses adjacent to West Vincent are consistent with this plan.

South Coventry
South Coventry borders East Vincent and a small piece of West Vincent. Most of its commercial and medium density residential development is along Route 100 and 23. Along the East Vincent and West Vincent boundaries, there are areas that are zoned rural and agricultural conservation, which is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan. However, along a portion of its boundary with East Vincent, some land is zoned for medium density residential adjacent to land in East Vincent that is zoned for rural conservation and agricultural preservation. This is an inconsistency; however, the medium density residential is adjacent to two commercial areas in

South Coventry and perhaps East Vincent's zoning could act as a greenbelt around the two villages.

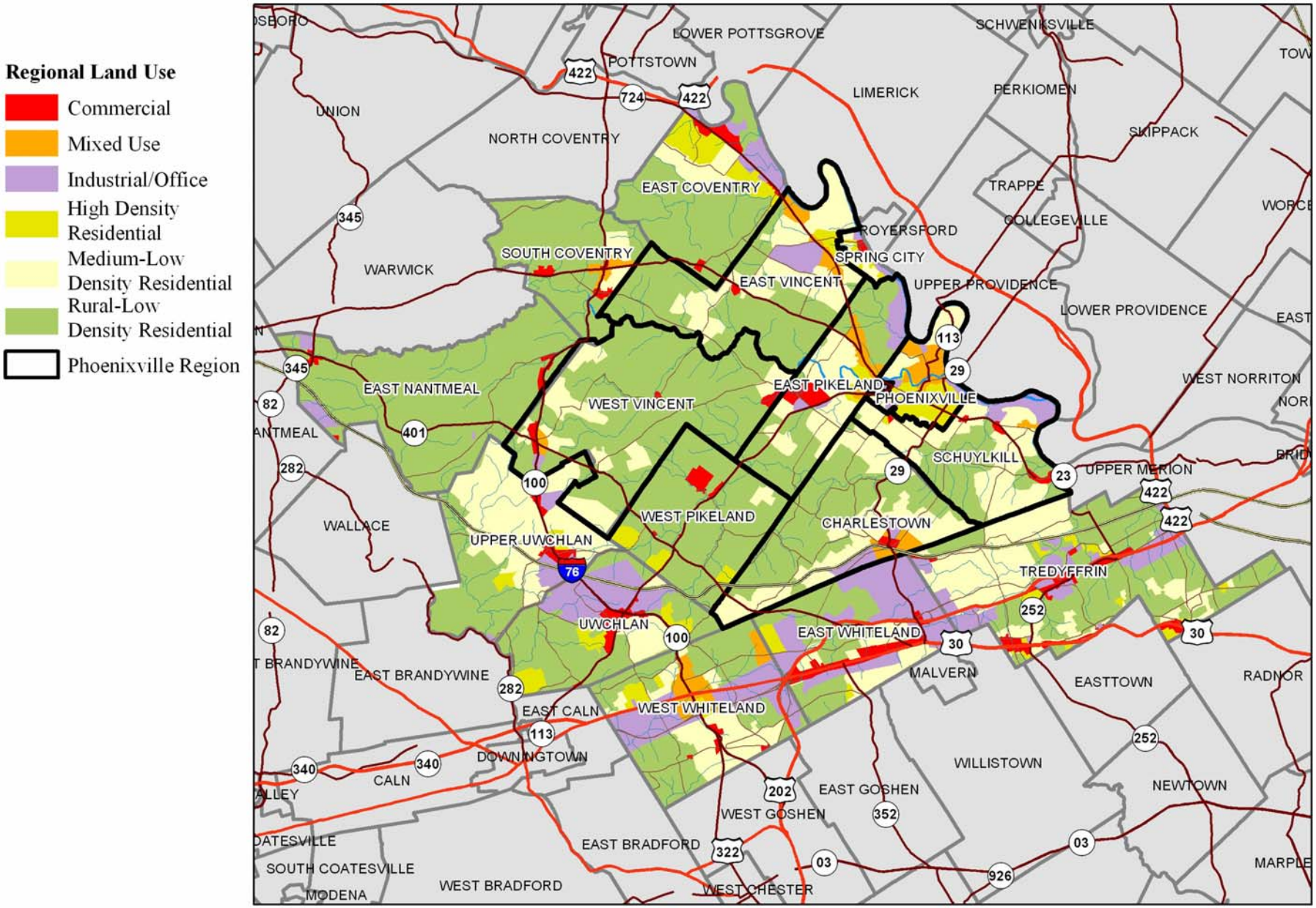
East Coventry
East Coventry is adjacent to East Vincent Township, and like East Vincent it focuses industrial, commercial, and high and medium density residential development along the 724 corridor.

Spring City
Spring City is adjacent to East Pikeland and East Vincent. The medium to high density residential land uses along the East Vincent border in Spring City are consistent with this plan.

Areas of Inconsistency with Land Use in Adjacent Communities

South Coventry
Along the East Vincent boundary, there is an area of South Coventry zoned for medium density residential adjacent to land in East Vincent zoned for rural conservation and agricultural preservation. This is an inconsistency; however, the medium density residential is adjacent to two commercial areas in South Coventry and perhaps East Vincent's zoning could act as a greenbelt around the two villages. This plan proposes no changes to address this inconsistency.

Spring City
East Pikeland has a rural land use adjacent to the low density residential in Spring City. This plan recommends no changes to address this inconsistency.


Regional Land Use
Commercial
Mixed Use
Industrial/Office
High Density Residential
Medium-Low Density Residential
Rural-Low Density Residential
Phoenixville Region
LOWER POTTSGROVE
SCHWENKSVILLE
POTTSTOWN
LIMERICK
PERKIOMEN
UNION
NORTH COVENTRY
SKIPPACK
EAST COVENTRY
TRAPPE
COLLEGEVILLE
ROYERSFORD
SPRING CITY
SOUTH COVENTRY
WARWICK
EAST VINCENT
UPPER PROVIDENCE
LOWER PROVIDENCE
EAST NANTMEAL
WEST VINCENT
EAST PIKELAND
PHOENIXVILLE
WEST NORRITON
SCHUYLKILL
UPPER MERION
WEST PIKELAND
CHARLESTOWN
WALLACE
UPPER UWCHLAN
TREDYFFRIN
UWCHLAN
EAST WHITELAND
MALVERN
EASTTOWN
RADNOR
EAST BRANDYWINE
EAST CALN
WEST WHITELAND
DOWNINGTOWN
CALN
WILLISTOWN
NEWTOWN
EAST GOSHEN
WEST GOSHEN
EAST BRADFORD
SOUTH COATESVILLE
WEST BRADFORD
WEST CHESTER
MODENA
MARPLE

Plan Interconnections

Each section of this plan has been reviewed to ensure that the recommendations are consistent and in balance with each other.

This plan is fundamentally interconnected through all of its goals, objectives and recommendations. The basis of the plan is provided in the Land Use chapter, where it discusses the importance of targeting growth into the existing economic centers and locating new growth based on natural resource protection, transportation and infrastructure availability or capacity, and market demand for development. These components are structured as separate plan chapters. All of the chapters provide recommendations focused on targeting growth into the existing economic centers and away from sensitive natural resources.

Developments of Regional Impact

Developments of regional impact are defined as large-scale developments that have the potential to affect neighboring municipalities as well as the host. They are generally considered to include projects such as large-scale residential development, regional shopping centers, industrial parks, schools, airports, power plants, sewage plants, landfills and others. What constitutes a development of regional impact is generally defined by thresholds set for a defined set of land uses measuring such things as the number of housing units, acres of development, number of parking spaces or intensity of use.

The Phoenixville Region Intergovernmental Cooperative Implementation Agreement for Regional Planning (Implementation Agreement) provides the thresholds that define developments of regional impact for the Phoenixville Region. Developments that meet the criteria specified in the Implementation Agreement will be subject to the review and approval of the Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission.