



Executive Summary



OUR VISION

Whether you’ve lived in Lancaster County your entire life, or just moved here yesterday, we all feel a connection to our world-class farmland, vibrant urban places, and outstanding natural areas. We also feel a connection to the people who live here.

This unique combination of people and place makes Lancaster County like no other place in the world – a place that deserves careful planning to keep it special.

But we’re hearing concerns about the county’s future. **There’s a new sense of urgency, because there seems to be a disconnect between what we say we want and what we’re actually doing.**

The good news is, **trend is not destiny.** We can do things differently. The purpose of places2040 is to ensure that Lancaster County remains a special place in the future.

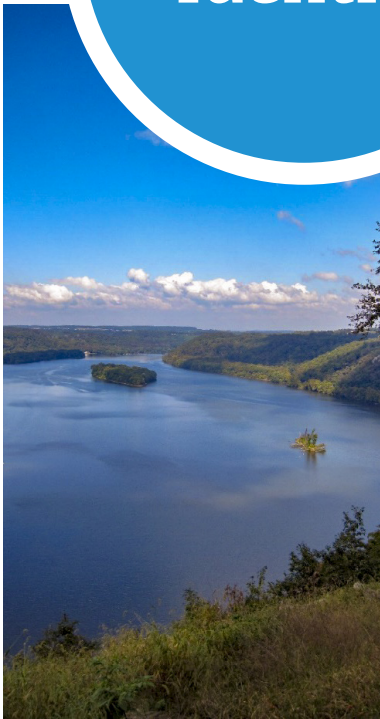


Photo credit: Michael Kendrick

Priorities for Lancaster County's Future

As part of the civic engagement process, we asked Lancaster County residents what they love and what they want to make better about our community.

They identified eight priorities as the focus for the plan. These priorities were later integrated together to form the plan's 5 big ideas.



MANAGING GROWTH

Create compact, walkable communities

We've made progress, but we're concerned about the type and pattern of development we're seeing.



URBAN PLACES

Promote reinvestment through rehab and infill

We're glad to see ongoing reinvestment in urban places – especially the city and a few boroughs – but there's still some room for improvement.



HOUSING CHOICE

Ensure safe, quality housing options for everyone

We'd like people at every income level to have safe, quality housing options they can afford.



EMPLOYMENT

Support 21st-century industries and jobs

We want to strengthen existing industries, invest in emerging ones, and prepare our workforce for the future.



TRANSPORTATION

Build a network with more alternatives and connections

We want a more efficient and flexible transportation system with more alternatives and connections.



PARKS, TRAILS, AND NATURAL AREAS

Provide more places to hike, bike, and enjoy nature

We love our parks, trails, and natural areas – but we also care about the quality of our environment.



AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND

Protect both the farm and the farmer

We must continue to protect agriculture and farmland, because it's an essential part of the county's economy, identity, and sense of place.



THINKING BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Promote cooperation, work together, and share resources

All of us – particularly municipalities – need to look past traditional boundaries. We need to promote cooperation, work together, and share resources.

THE BIG IDEAS

Integrating the Silos

Traditionally, comprehensive plans address topics one by one, focusing on separate silos of information. Previous Lancaster County comprehensive plans followed that same pattern. This time around, we took a fresh look at the usual topics. We integrated the 8 priorities into 5 big ideas that cut across traditional silos. These ideas help us think more holistically about the challenges and opportunities ahead of us, and about the policies that will guide us in creating the kind of future we all want to see.



Creating Great Places

Great places are places where we're proud to live, work, learn, play, and visit. They're safe and attractive environments that improve our quality of life – and ensure the success and sustainability of our economy. When we create great places, we make it easier to achieve many of our other goals.

What We Need to Do Differently

- Make our downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive
- Design communities that put people first
- Create a mix of uses in our communities and corridors
- Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent
- Find new and innovative ways to reduce congestion





Connecting People, Place, & Opportunity

We need to work harder to connect people with each other and the places around them – students with schools, workers with jobs, and jobs with housing. Simply put, it should be easier for residents and visitors to get around. By maximizing connections, we make everything more efficient, and create more opportunities for interaction.

What We Need to Do Differently

- Make our downtowns into regional hubs
- Create more places to hike, bike, play, and enjoy nature
- Make it easier for residents and visitors to get around without a car
- Connect housing, jobs, schools, transportation, and other destinations
- Intentionally cultivate, retain, and expand industry
- Maintain, attract, and retain a skilled workforce that earns a competitive wage
- Facilitate business partnerships



Taking Care of What We Have

Our world-class farmland, urban places, and natural areas provide a strong foundation for our quality of life, and distinguish this place from any other. Stewardship of our heritage should be a priority, not just because we like the view, but because it makes the county more attractive to investment – particularly from visitors and prospective employers.

What We Need to Do Differently

- Preserve large, contiguous areas of agricultural and natural land
- Preserve the farmer as well as the farm
- Improve water quality and work together on stormwater management
- Use existing buildings and maintain public infrastructure
- Promote entrepreneurship and help local businesses grow

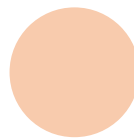


Growing Responsibly

We need to consider where development happens, when it happens, and what form it takes. By 2040, the data tells us we can expect about 100,000 new people to live here. To accommodate them, we need to improve the pattern of growth and ensure that we develop in a more compact, efficient, and fiscally responsible way.

What We Need to Do Differently

- Grow where we're already growing
- Prioritize redevelopment and infill in Urban Growth Areas
- Manage the use of large tracts of vacant land in Urban Growth Areas
- Limit large-lot suburban development in rural areas
- Build more compactly and efficiently



Thinking Beyond Boundaries

We need to think and act differently. We need to see places as they are, rather than dividing them up in traditional ways. Many of the issues we face aren't limited to municipal and school district boundaries. We need to approach challenges more collaboratively, cultivate leadership, and take our partnerships to the next level.

What We Need to Do Differently

- Integrate place-based thinking into all future planning initiatives
- Break down the traditional silos that limit our effectiveness
- Make planning and regulation more efficient, consistent, and regional
- Keep ourselves accountable for the goals we've set

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Catalytic Tools & Strategies

Implementation of the big ideas and policies in places2040 will take a direct and sustained effort from all our community partners – public, private, and nonprofit. We'll need our Partners for Place – more than 20 countywide, regional, and city organizations that helped guide this plan – to continue to play a lead role. Municipal involvement is just as critical to the success of this plan.

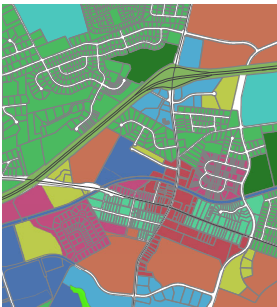
While there are dozens of approaches we could take to implement the plan's big ideas, it's important to focus our energy moving forward. After researching best practices in Lancaster County and elsewhere, we feel that the tools and strategies listed here have the greatest potential to move our community toward the future we all want to see. If all of us concentrate our limited resources on these seven items, we're confident they will spur a host of other actions – and boost our chances for overall success.



Practice place-based planning and analysis

We need to plan for places as they are, not by political boundaries. We also need to apply what we've learned in places2040 at a different scale – to communities, corridors, and landscapes and to character zones. The more we reorient our planning efforts around these concepts, the more successful we'll be.

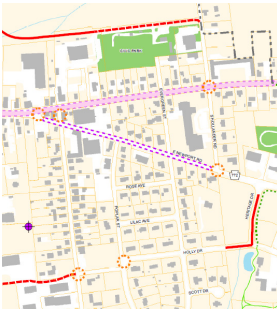
We need to: Integrate multi-municipal regional plans with place-based planning and analysis. Focus on achieving consistency in policy and regulation within communities, corridors, and landscapes, and within character zones. Align countywide, regional, and local visions.



Simplify zoning

Zoning has gotten more complicated to administer and more difficult to achieve positive results. Current zoning ordinances often frustrate efforts to create the types of communities, corridors, and landscapes we want to see – and that the market wants to build.

We need to: Consolidate zoning districts and streamline reviews. Consider regional zoning ordinances. Incentivize land assembly for infill and redevelopment. Align zoning districts with character zones. Minimize discretionary review processes, and make uses “by right.”



Utilize official maps

Official maps include an adopted ordinance and map that illustrates future improvements related to transportation, community facilities, and environmentally critical areas. Every effort should be made to adopt official maps at the regional level.

We need to: Identify transportation, community facilities, and environmentally critical areas on a regional basis and align funding with these needs. Ensure that official maps identify all motorized and non-motorized connections that need to be made at the local, regional, and county levels.



Implement complete streets

Complete streets accommodate all modes (automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, etc.), and people of all ages and abilities. It's a concept that focuses on the transportation network as a whole. Not every street needs a bike lane, but the network should provide safe options for bicyclists, pedestrians, and cars.

We need to: Align regulations and funding sources with the goals of complete streets. Create networks of complete streets at the regional level. Integrate green infrastructure into transportation planning and design.



Invest in sufficient infrastructure and public services

Providing infrastructure is critical to sustaining our economy and meeting future land-use needs – but it should only be provided in the right places. It's also important to provide appropriate public services including emergency services, libraries, and technology.

We need to: Align public sewer and water service areas with Urban Growth Areas and zoning. Ensure sufficient system capacity and sustainability of on-lot sewage disposal systems and private wells. Recognize stormwater management facilities as public infrastructure. Provide public services needed for a growing population.



Collaborate to implement places2040 policies

Planning issues such as traffic, stormwater, affordable housing, trails, air quality, streams, and landscapes pay no mind to jurisdictional boundaries, and they can't be effectively addressed by any municipal government working alone. Instead, the public, private, and nonprofit sectors should collaborate on a regional basis.

We need to: Create public, private, and nonprofit partnerships to implement places2040. Organize around the types of places highlighted in this plan, rather than places defined by traditional boundaries. Pursue regional partnerships for public and community services.



Align community resources with these policies

Lancaster County has a wealth of talent, technical resources, and funding opportunities. If these resources are aligned around the big ideas and policies in this plan, we will be much more effective in meeting our goals.

We need to: Prioritize the distribution of funding and technical resources to applicants and projects that are consistent with places2040 big ideas and policies. Seek out additional resources to incentivize implementation of places2040.

Place-Based Thinking

Communities, Corridors, and Landscapes

Historically, Lancaster Countians have had strong associations with their municipality or school district. While this kind of local identity contributes to the county’s character, it makes it challenging to plan for the future, because many of the county’s places aren’t defined by these boundaries.

Today, we’re thinking about places in a new way — one that doesn’t

focus on traditional boundaries. To maintain our quality of life and economic competitiveness, we have to look past what divides us. We need to look beyond individual resources and see places as a whole.

That’s why we’re emphasizing the concept of communities, corridors, and landscapes. Thinking about places in these terms helps us approach them with a fresh perspective.



Communities

Communities can be as small as a neighborhood, or as big as an Urban Growth Area. They’re places where people live, work, and play in close proximity, and where they find a variety of amenities. Most of our jobs are located here, as well as many of our retail and commercial uses.



Corridors

Corridors are linear places (on land or water) that serve as a pathway for people or even as a link between plant and animal habitats. Examples include trails, roads, railroads, and streams.



Landscapes

Landscapes are large-scale places where interaction between people and the land has created an area with distinct natural, historic, and cultural character.

Character Zones

Another aspect of place-based thinking is represented in the county’s character zones, which are based on a planning tool called a “transect.” It’s a concept that organizes land into zones from the most rural to the most urban, or the least intense land use to the most intense. In other words, these zones describe the character — or predominant land-use pattern — of different areas of land within a larger geographical area.

We’ve identified seven character zones in Lancaster County — six that classify land from rural to urban, and one “special district” for industrial, institutional, and airport uses in urban areas. On the other side of this document, a table explains these zones in more detail, and the Lancaster County Future Land Use and Transportation Map shows where they’re located.

On the map, each character zone has a unique color, so all the areas of land shown in the same color have similar characteristics.

Of course, our land uses are more complicated than the character zones make them out to be, but it’s still a useful way to classify the land in simpler terms.

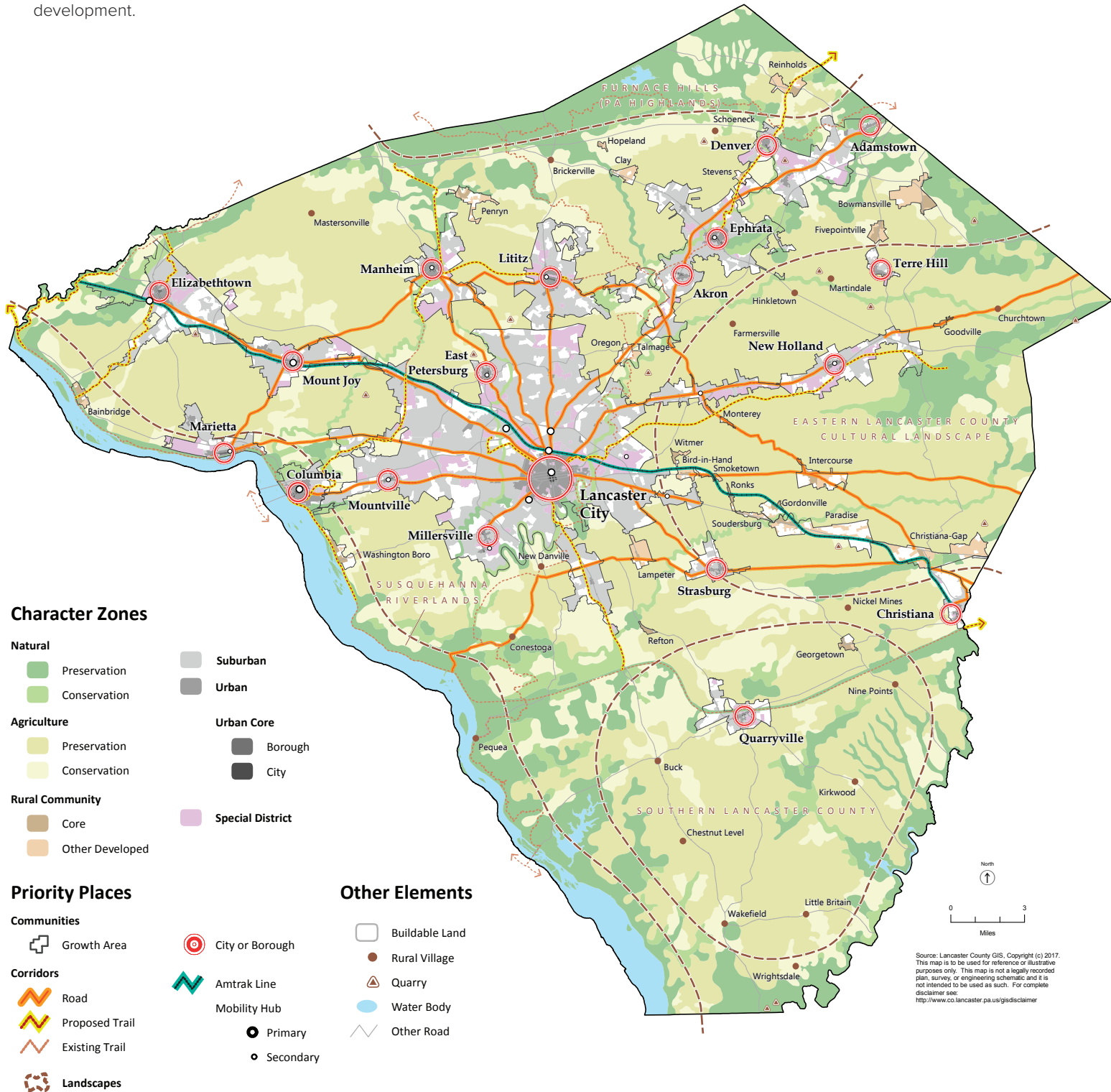
The confusing thing is that character zones have nothing to do with zoning — at least, right now. While the character zones aren’t zoning districts in the typical sense, they could potentially be used to guide the way different parts of the county are zoned.

If municipal zoning ordinances were tied to the character zones in places2040, it could simplify the way land-use decisions are made, and eliminate a lot of waste and redundancy. For example, our borough downtowns — all of which form a part of the urban core character zone — could apply similar policies and regulations to manage density, dwelling unit types, number of stories, building setbacks, street connectivity, etc.



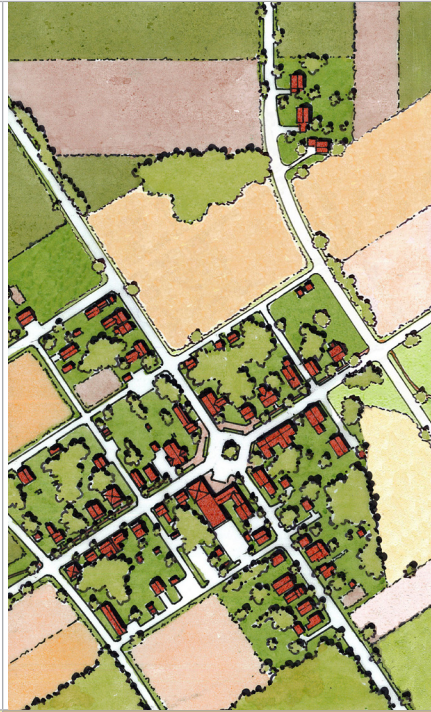
Future Land Use and Transportation Map

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

This map graphically represents many of the big ideas and policies in places2040. It introduces character zones and priority places – communities, corridors, and landscapes – that Lancaster County residents said were important to them. It also shows areas planned for future growth and development.



Character Zones: Description and Policy

Natural	Agriculture	Rural Community
		
Preservation	Preservation	Core
<p>Description: Large contiguous areas of exceptional natural lands, including woodlands and wetlands. Also includes natural-resource based industries. Provides ecological benefits. May also provide scenic and recreational value.</p> <p>Policy: Preserved in perpetuity and managed for environmental benefits and passive recreation. Development strongly discouraged. Expansion of existing natural resource-based industries appropriate under certain conditions.</p>	<p>Description: Large contiguous areas of farmland with fewer incompatible intrusions. Includes natural-resource based industries. Best prime soils and physical characteristics that produce economically sustainable yields.</p> <p>Policy: Preserved in perpetuity and managed for agricultural use. Development strongly discouraged. Expansion of natural resource-based industries appropriate under certain conditions.</p>	<p>Description: Moderate to higher density; traditional village scale and character. Typically detached dwelling units on smaller lots, mixed with small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.</p> <p>Policy: Enhancement, reuse, and infill, with some retrofit and redevelopment (if consistent with infrastructure capacity).</p>
Conservation	Conservation	Other Developed
<p>Description: Important natural lands that are smaller in area, more fragmented, and lower in quality. Includes other low-density uses and natural-resource based industries. Serves as a buffer. May provide scenic and recreational value.</p> <p>Policy: Strong protection warranted, but generally not a priority for preservation. Development limited, but appropriate if sensitive to natural resources. Expansion of natural resource-based industries also appropriate.</p>	<p>Description: Smaller, more fragmented areas of farmland with greater number of incompatible intrusions. Includes low-density uses and natural-resource based industries. Lower soil quality, but vital to sustaining the rural economy.</p> <p>Policy: Strong protection warranted, but generally not a priority for preservation. Development limited, but appropriate if related to agricultural context or natural resource-based industries.</p>	<p>Description: Low to moderate density; automobile-oriented. Typically does not have traditional village scale and character. Single-family detached dwelling units on larger lots, mixed with small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.</p> <p>Policy: Enhancement, retrofit, and redevelopment, with some infill and reuse. New development incorporates aspects of traditional village scale and character. More connections and pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.</p>

Suburban



Description: Low to moderate density; automobile-oriented. Uses typically separated. Primarily single-family detached dwelling units on larger lots, with commercial uses in strip centers, big boxes, and shopping malls. Minimal connections; pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure limited.

Policy: Enhancement, retrofit, and redevelopment, with some infill and reuse. New development incorporates aspects of traditional urban scale and character. More connections and pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

Urban



Description: Higher density; traditional urban scale and character. Attached and detached dwelling units on smaller lots, mixed with small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. More connected, with some pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

Policy: Emphasis on enhancement, reuse, and infill, with some retrofit and redevelopment. Significant pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

Urban Core



Borough

Description: Highest density outside city; traditional urban scale and character. Mixed-use 2- to 3-story buildings, with a few near 10 stories. Some dwelling units above commercial uses. Highly connected, with some pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

Policy: Enhancement, reuse, and infill, with some retrofit and redevelopment. Building heights greater, but sensitive to surrounding scale and character. Significant pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

City

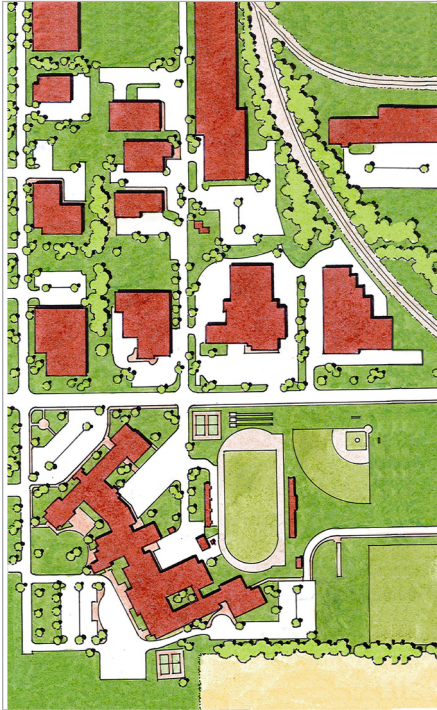
Description: Highest density; traditional urban scale and character. Mixed-use 3- to 5-story buildings, with a few near 20 stories. Dwelling units often above commercial uses. Highly connected; pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure more extensive.

Policy: Enhancement, reuse, and infill, with some retrofit and redevelopment. Building heights greater, but sensitive to surrounding scale and character. Extensive pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

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Special District



Description: Differs significantly from other zones. Typically a single large-scale commercial, industrial, or institutional use, often in a campus-like setting. With exception of college campuses, typically has minimal connections; pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure limited.

Policy: Enhancement, retrofit, and redevelopment, with some infill and reuse. Mixed use more common. More connections and pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

Notes: Special Districts are also found in rural areas, but were not identified as part of the places2040 planning process. In the future, Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC) staff will identify these areas in the context of place-based planning and analysis to implement places2040. “Special District” does not refer to a governing or taxing entity, but to certain land uses and patterns that don’t fit other zones.

Priority Places

Priority places are communities, corridors, and landscapes that residents said should be our focus for the next several years. Other places are important, too – the public just didn’t identify them as a high priority in the near term. The places shown on the map are the ones that people mentioned over and over again in our extensive places2040 civic engagement process.

Communities

Growth Area

These include Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) and Village Growth Areas (VGAs) with some existing infrastructure (sewer service, and sometimes water) to support growth – or which have plans to provide sewer service.

UGAs – These areas will accommodate the majority of our population and employment growth. UGAs surround or are adjacent to the city or borough(s). The map shows boundaries that existed in 2015.

VGAs – These communities will accommodate some rural growth. VGAs surround or are adjacent to a village outside UGAs. The map shows VGAs that are proposed to exist by 2040. Some boundaries are illustrative.

City or Borough

Residents have expressed renewed interest in making each of these communities the hub of the UGA associated with it.

Corridors

Road

These roads were mentioned most often in our civic engagement process. In some corridors, residents want improvements that reduce congestion; complete streets; and compact, mixed-use development. In others, residents want to protect natural, historic, and cultural qualities.

Proposed Trail

These segments are high-priority connections that would link existing regional (multi-municipal) trails to form a more complete countywide network.

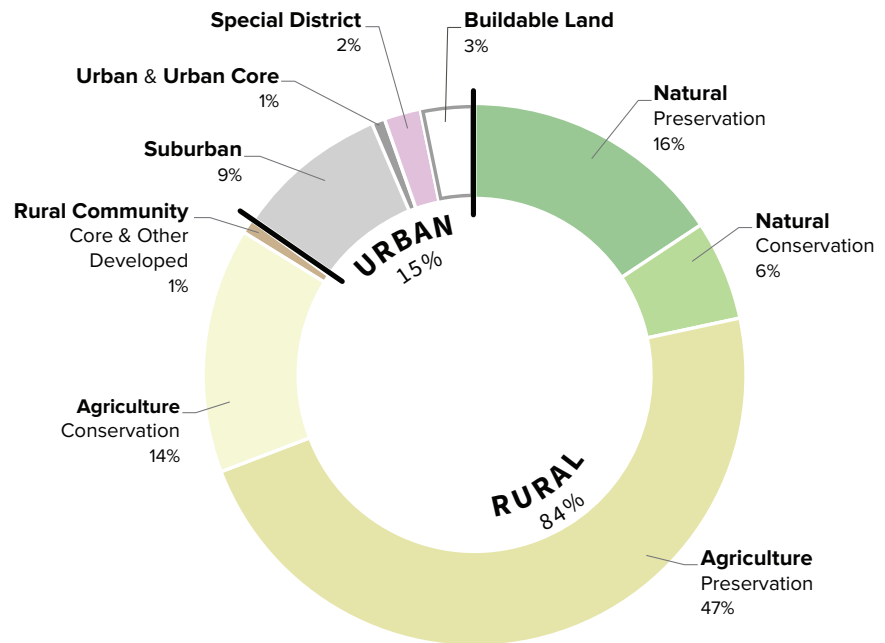
Existing Trail

These trails are regional (multi-municipal) trails that are currently (2018) open to the public. They serve as the foundation of a network that could become an integrated countywide system for recreation and transportation.

Amtrak Line

This corridor serves as an alternate mode of transportation; provides a convenient link to other cities; and presents an opportunity for placemaking efforts.

Lancaster County Land Area: Percentage by Character Zone



Due to rounding, whole number percentages add up to 99%.

Mobility Hub

These places serve as focal points on the transportation network. Two types are shown on the map:

- Primary – These hubs provide the most transportation options and connections between modes. They include Amtrak stations and the transfer centers identified in the South Central Transit Authority's *Transit Development Plan Update: Final Report* (2018).
- Secondary – These hubs are important transit stops that make transit more accessible to other modes. The hubs shown on the map were identified during the planning process for the *Lancaster Active Transportation Plan* (2019).

Landscapes

Landscapes are areas of land with common characteristics – places defined by historic, natural, or cultural features, rather than by existing boundaries. The landscapes shown on this map are the ones that rose to the top in our civic engagement process:

- Furnace Hills (PA Highlands)
- Eastern Lancaster County Cultural Landscape
- Southern Lancaster County
- Susquehanna Riverlands

Other Elements

Buildable Land

Inside Growth Areas, areas shown in white represent areas of land that were considered “unbuilt” based on analysis undertaken during development of the map. These areas are a generalized visual representation of unbuilt land.

Rural Village

These villages 1) are located outside the UGAs and VGAs defined in this plan, 2) have 50+ dwelling units, and 3) do not have the infrastructure (sewer service) necessary for significant growth. The focus is on redevelopment and infill.

Quarry

Quarries are shown on this map because mining focuses on natural resources that exist only in certain locations. The quarries shown on this map are those with active permits (2018) issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Water Body

For clarity, this map only shows the largest and most significant water bodies: the Susquehanna River, Middle Creek Lake, Octoraro Reservoir, and Muddy Run Reservoir.

Other Road

A selection of major roads is shown as a point of reference – a visual aid in locating places on the map.



places2040.com

stay involved!

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This executive summary is a shortened version of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, called places2040. To see the full plan, please visit places2040.com or lanastercountyplanning.org, or contact the Lancaster County Planning Commission using the information below.

**LANCASTER COUNTY
PLANNING
COMMISSION**

Lancaster County Planning Commission
150 North Queen Street • Suite 320 • Lancaster, PA 17603
717-299-8333 • F 717-295-3659

www.lancastercountyplanning.org

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