

MERCERSBURG AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**BOROUGH OF MERCERSBURG
FRANKLIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

RESOLUTION NO. 15-25

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF MERCERSBURG,
FRANKLIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA IN SUPPORT OF THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTI-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN.**

WHEREAS, the Borough desires to work collaboratively with Peters Township and Montgomery Township towards the establishment of a multi-municipal comprehensive plan (the "Plan") for purposes of establishing the objectives for future development, land use, housing, transportation, community facilities, and the protection of natural and historic resources within the Borough of Mercersburg and Peters and Montgomery Townships;

WHEREAS, the Borough desires to cooperate with Peters and Montgomery Townships to assist in handling the administrative aspects of the Plan's creation, including but not limited to, assistance with seeking the necessary funding for creation of the Plan and engagement of the necessary professionals to assist with creation of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Borough recognizes that the Mercersburg Vibrancy Steering Committee is committed to assisting with the establishment of the Plan and has offered to perform the coordination of planning tasks and other matters related to the establishment of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, Borough Council has determined that it is in the best interests of the health, safety, and general welfare of the Borough and its residents for the comprehensive plan to be established and to provide administrative support for such establishment.

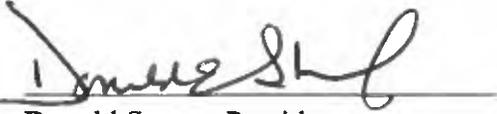
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Mercersburg, Franklin County, Pennsylvania as follows:

1. The recitals set forth above are incorporated herein by reference.
2. Borough Council is committed to the establishment of a multi-municipal comprehensive plan, provided that Peters Township and Montgomery Township also agree to participate in the Plan, and further provided that the outside funding needed to establish the Plan can be secured.
3. Borough Council encourages the Boards of Supervisors for Peters Township and Montgomery Township to adopt similar Resolutions committing to the establishment of a multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

DULY ADOPTED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Mercersburg this 28th day of April, 2025.

ATTEST:

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE
BOROUGH OF MERCERSBURG**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Stoner", written over a horizontal line.

Donald Stoner, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dawn Scheller", written over a horizontal line.

Dawn Scheller, Manager/Secretary

(SEAL)

RESOLUTION *2501*

ADOPTING THE MERCERSBURG AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Act of 1968 P.L. 805 No. 247 as reenacted and amended empowers Townships to plan their development through provision of comprehensive planning:

WHEREAS, Montgomery Township began the process of creating the Comprehensive Plan in 2024; and

WHEREAS, the process of creating the Comprehensive Plan included: five Community Events; a Community Survey; appointment of a Steering Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery Township Planning Commission held a public Meeting in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code Section 302 (a); and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery Township board of Supervisors held a Public Hearing pursuant to public notice in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code Section 302 (b); and

WHEREAS, the creation process has produced a document containing maps charts textural matter and other data titled Comprehensive Plan 2025 (Section 302(c)).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of Montgomery Township in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code Section 302 (c) that the Mercersburg Area Comprehensive Plan 2025 is hereby adopted for use as the planning document for Montgomery Township.

ENACTED, into a Resolution this 6th day of March 2025

ATTEST:

Jay H. [Signature]
SECRETARY

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

RESOLUTION 3-A-25

ADOPTING THE MERCERSBURG AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Act of 1968 P.L. 805 No. 247 as reenacted and amended empowers townships to plan their development through provision of comprehensive planning and

WHEREAS, Peters Township began the process of creating the Comprehensive Plan in 2024, and

WHEREAS, the process of creating the Comprehensive Plan included five community events, a community survey, appointment of a steering committee, and

WHEREAS, the Peters Township Planning Commission held a public meeting in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code Section 302 (a) and

WHEREAS, the creation process has produced a document containing maps, charts, textural matter and other data titled Comprehensive Plan 2025 (Section 302 c)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of Peters Township in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code Section 302 (c) that the Mercersburg Area Comprehensive Plan 2025 is hereby adopted for use as the planning document for Peters Township.

ENACTED this 25th day of March 2025.

Peters Township Board of Supervisors

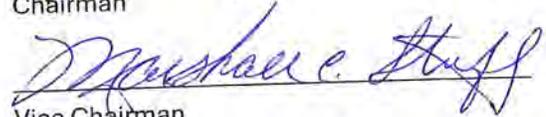
Attest:



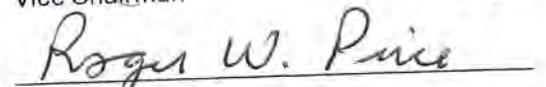
Administrative Assistant



Chairman



Vice Chairman



Secretary/Treasurer





INTRODUCTION

The Mercersburg Area Comprehensive Plan for Mercersburg Borough, Montgomery Township, and Peters Township represents a unique opportunity for intermunicipal cooperation, and collaboration with the Mercersburg Vibrancy Steering Committee, to create a first-ever comprehensive plan and vision for the future of this unique area. The Mercersburg region combines rich historical resources fundamental to the creation and defense of the United States. It offers a stunning combination of natural settings and rural landscapes including views of the surrounding mountains, large, unbroken forests, rich pasture and crop lands, and historic villages that date to before the American Revolution. All of this surrounds the historic community of Mercersburg Borough with a strong colonial presence and one of the most historic African American settlements and cemeteries in the United States. The Mercersburg Academy, one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious college preparatory and day schools with roots going back almost 200 years, is also located in the Borough.

This Comprehensive Plan was made possible through the support of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Special thanks go to the elected and appointed officials of Mercersburg Borough, Montgomery Township, and Peters Townships who provided financial assistance and invaluable input. Local businesses and community members also supported the project with significant financial contributions. Expertise and recommendations were provided by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, interviews with numerous community leaders, and survey input from over 400 citizens.

Lastly, this Plan would not be possible without the financial support and guidance of the Mercersburg Vibrancy Steering Committee.

SECTION ONE: **BACKGROUND**

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Economy

Farmlands and forests are the backbone of the Mercersburg Area. Together they comprise 90% of the land base in both Peters and Montgomery Townships.

The economic importance of agriculture in Franklin County is indicated in the U.S. Agricultural Census. While statistics are not reported at the municipal level, Franklin County's overall agricultural production is among the highest in Pennsylvania and in some specific areas, the United States. Franklin County is ranked fifth out of 67 Pennsylvania counties in the total market value of agricultural products sold. It ranks first in market value in the category that includes vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes. It also ranks second in the state in the value of milk sold and ranked 30th among all counties in the U.S. in market value of milk sales.



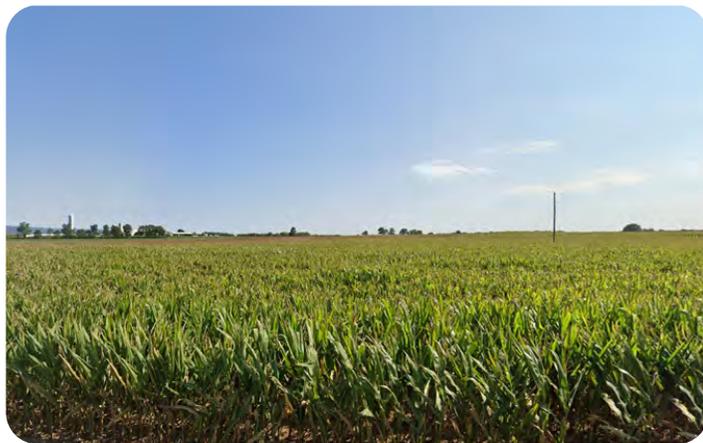
Welsh Run Road, Montgomery Township (Google Maps)

Economically, the numerous agriculture and forestry operations constitute a major component of the Township's and School Districts' tax base and provides employment that sustains the region. Some of the largest operations include:

- Herbruck's Poultry Ranch-Blue Springs Farm
- Mercer-Vu Farms
- Stoner's Dairy Farm and Corn Maze
- Hord Family Farms
- Mello-D Farm and Fertilizer

The farm and forestry economic sector also include numerous support businesses and associated firms that provide both jobs and the infrastructure needed for the continued for the long-term health of the industry. These include:

- Snider's Elevator
- Mellott Manufacturing
- Agronomy Inc. Fertilizer
- Ag Equipment Specialties



Lemar Road, Peters Township (Google Maps)

Preservation

In Pennsylvania, the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) program was created in 1981 to strengthen and protect agriculture. Participating farmers are entitled to special consideration from local and state government agencies, and other "nuisance" challenges, thus encouraging the continuing use of the land for productive agricultural purposes. Agricultural Security Areas are created by local municipalities in cooperation with individual landowners who agree to collectively place at least 250 acres in an agricultural security area.

In Counties that have established Farmland Preservation Programs, including Franklin County, pursuant to the Agricultural Area Security Law, farms located in an ASA consisting of at least 500 acres are eligible to apply for the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement by the Commonwealth. Local governments are not permitted to enact local laws or ordinances, which would unreasonably restrict farm structures or farm practices within the

area. Additionally, land within an ASA is protected from condemnation through eminent domain by any state or local agency, authority, or utility unless prior approval has been obtained from the state Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board.

The Montgomery and Peters Townships' farm community as demonstrated a strong commitment to the long-term health the agricultural economy. According to the PA Department of Agriculture 's Bureau of Farmland Preservation 2023 Annual Report, a large percentage of agricultural land in the two Townships are enrolled in an Agricultural Security Area:

Montgomery Township

- 11,725 acres (27% of Township.) enrolled in an ASA
- 59 landowners comprising 112 parcels
- Created in 1983
- Total Township land base in ASA is 27%
- Portion of the Township classified as crop and pasture- 52%

Peters Township

- 15,757 acres (% of Township.) enrolled in ASA
- 59 landowners comprising 141 parcels
- Created in 1990
- Percentage of the total Township land base in ASA 44%
- Percentage of the Township classified as crop and pasture- 86%

According to information provided by the Franklin County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, there is 7,684 acres preserved in Montgomery and Peters Township.

- Montgomery Township- 22 farm parcels, 2931 acres
- Peters Township- 25 farm parcels, 3,387 acres
- Montgomery and Peters Townships- 9 farm parcels, 1,322 acres
- Peters and St. Thomas Townships- 1 farm parcel, 44 acres in Peters Township

The 2023 Annual Report also reports that 150 farms in Franklin County have been preserved, through the Franklin County Agricultural Land Preservation Program. The 150 preserved farms total 18,846 acres in the County, with an average purchase price of \$1,926/ acre.

Almost 41% of the preserved farm acreage in Franklin County is in Montgomery and Peters Townships. According to the most recent records from Franklin County, 4,208 acres have been preserved in Peters Township and an additional 3,632 acres in Montgomery Township.



Mapping created from data provided by FR. PENN. STATE COUNTY, 2022.

HRG

 95 South College Street, Suite 300

 York, PA 17403

 717.893.2030 (phone)

 www.hrginc.com

Agriculture Easements and Solar Farms

Mercersburg Borough, Montgomery Township, & Peters Township
Comprehensive Plan
Franklin County, Pennsylvania

HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Housing

Between 2010 and 2020, the Area's housing stock increased from 4,974 to 5,232 dwelling units, a 6% increase. The bulk of all housing units in the Area (79%) is comprised of single detached homes. During this same period the number of multi-family units increased by 14% from 305 units to 348 units, comprising 7% of the dwelling unit stock in 2020. Similarly mobile homes, trailers and other housing types increase by 6%, to comprise 11% of the dwelling unit stock in 2020. Although single attached units accounted for only 4% of all units in 2020, they were the only housing type to see a decrease from 2010 to 2020, from 265 to 214 units. Although the Area's housing stock has increased, 12% remain vacant.

A significant amount of the housing units in Mercersburg Borough are rental units. According to the U.S. Census' American Community Survey data from 2022, 43% of the occupied dwelling units in the Borough were renter occupied. This reflects the pattern found in other boroughs in Franklin County and for most rural areas in Pennsylvania where the largest percentage of affordable housing options are found within boroughs. Although the Area's housing stock has increased, 12% remain vacant.

Household Income and Poverty Levels

The 2020 U.S. Census found that the median household income in Mercersburg Borough was significantly lower than both Montgomery and Peters Townships, and Franklin County.

Median Household Income (2020)

Mercersburg Borough	\$51,333
Montgomery Township	\$80,515
Peters Township	\$75,581
Franklin County	\$71,808
Pennsylvania	\$64,994
United States	\$69,717

The United Way of Pennsylvania, representing 42 member United Ways, prepared the ALICE in Franklin County Report (Report) in 2023. The acronym ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE is a measure that has been used across the country to describe households whose income is above the Federal Poverty Level- so they don't qualify for public assistance, yet they don't earn enough to cover basic expenses such as rent, food and childcare. It's estimated that 29% of American households fall into this

category. The Report used data from the U.S. Census' American Community Survey from 2021. The report found that of the 742 households in Mercersburg Borough, 45% were either below the poverty line or within the ALICE range. This was the third-highest level of all municipalities in Franklin County, only slightly better than Chambersburg Borough (50%) and Waynesboro Borough (46%). Montgomery Township had approximately one-quarter (24%) of its population in these categories, while Peters Township had a little over a third (34%).

HUMAN SERVICES

The food pantry in Mercersburg, My Neighbor's Bounty, serves a wide audience in and around the Borough. The Steering Committee noted that there is very little childcare in the community, and that after-school services have never been strong. First Start Partnerships offers pre-kindergarten programs for children in Franklin County, including Mercersburg Elementary School. People with other needs, such as special needs services primarily go to Chambersburg.

Pennsylvania 211 is a service provided by United Way of Pennsylvania. It helps citizens connect with resources in their community by dialing 211. It provides connection to a wide range of public services including help with utility payments, mental health services, food pantries, and crisis hotlines, among others.

The Franklin County United Way partners with a number of programs in the County including Emergency and Transitional Housing, the Franklin County Shelter for the Homeless, financial stability programs, and legal services for low-income individuals.

Franklin County's Human Services Administration leads all of the County's Human Services organizations. These include the Area Agency of Aging, Children and Youth Services, and Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Franklin County also provides services through the Veterans Affairs office, Transportation Services, and the Tuscarora Managed Care Alliance for Medicaid HealthChoices members in Franklin and Fulton Counties providing behavioral health treatment and services.

The United Way also works with a unique program called The Gleaning Project which works with local growers, producers, and backyard gardeners to harvest food that would have gone to waste and distributes it to food insecure families across Franklin County.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Known for its rich cultural and architectural history, Mercersburg features an unusually high number of intact 18th and 19th century structures. The Mercersburg Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and includes 124 contributing buildings and one contributing historic site. Many historic structures are sheathed log, stone, and brick, and the town features notable examples of Federal, Greek Revival, and Colonial Revival styles.

The Shawnee and other Ohio Valley tribes of indigenous peoples were most likely among the earliest inhabitants of the region, although the lack of evidence for permanent settlements indicate that the area was most likely used for hunting and migration. The founding of Mercersburg is often attributed to James Black, who established a mill and settlement in about 1750. He later sold his land to the Smith family. In 1786 William Smith Jr. laid out the town and named it Mercersburg in honor of Revolutionary War General Hugh Mercer, who died in 1777 from wounds received at the Battle of Princeton.

Notable residents from Mercersburg include 15th President of the United States James Buchanan and his niece Harriet Lane, who served as First Lady during his administration. The Harriet Lane House was independently added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Other notable residents include William Findlay; former Senator and Governor of Pennsylvania, Blanche Nevin; famed sculptor, and Jane Irwin Harrison, who served as hostess of the White House during the brief administration of William Henry Harrison.

In October 1862, Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart and his troops raided Mercersburg. Remarkably, the town was left unscathed, unlike the decimated county seat in nearby Chambersburg. Due to Mercersburg's proximity to the Mason-Dixon line, many self-emancipated men, women, and children settled in the area. Prior to the Civil War, Mercersburg had the highest free black population in Franklin County. Eighty-eight African Americans from Mercersburg volunteered to defend the Union during the Civil War. At least 36 of those veterans lie in Zion Union Cemetery, established in 1876 by local African American citizens.

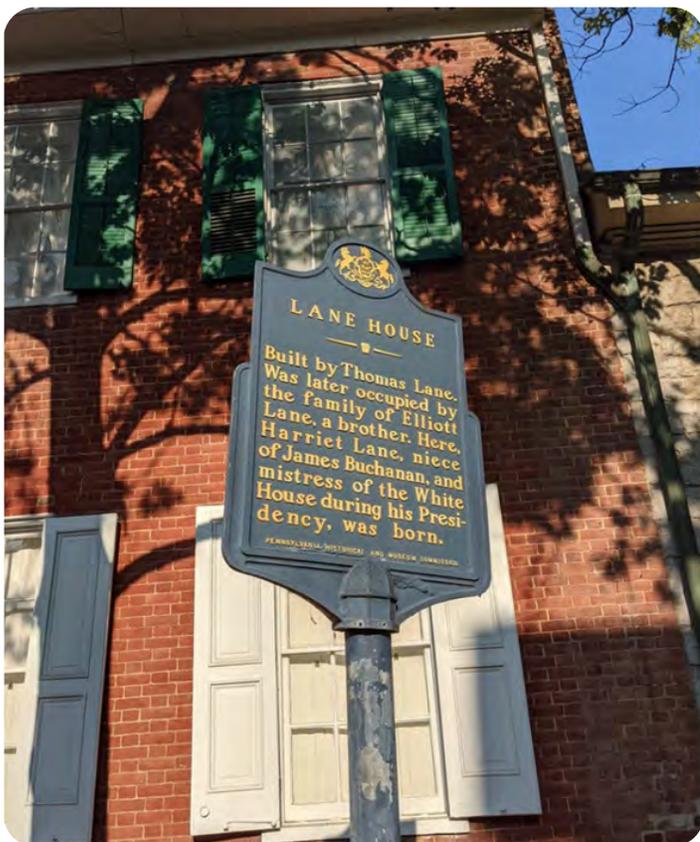
Also located within the Borough and on the National Register of Historic Places is the Mercersburg Academy. Originally established as Marshall College in 1836, it is one of the oldest and most prestigious college preparatory and day high schools in the country. The James Buchanan Cabin, believed to be the birthplace of the 15th president, is currently located on the Mercersburg Academy campus.



President James Buchanan cabin, located on the campus of Mercersburg Academy

The Mercersburg area also served as a key location for many events in American History. The Black Boys, an armed uprising at Fort Loudoun in 1765 between citizens of Pennsylvania and the British Army, is considered by many to be an early precursor to the American Revolution. The fort has since been rebuilt by the Fort Loudoun Historical Society and hosts educational programming throughout the year.

This is only a partial history of Mercersburg. The MVSC, Mercersburg Historical Architectural Review Board, and the Mercersburg Historical Society can provide extensive information and additional resources regarding the history of this area.



Lane House Historical Marker- Mercersburg Borough

NATURAL RESOURCES

Conococheague Creek Watershed

The Conococheague Creek Watershed is in both Maryland and Pennsylvania with a drainage area of 568 square miles (363,567 acres). The majority (363,567 acres or 88.4%) of the watershed is in Pennsylvania (in Franklin, Adams, Cumberland, and Perry Counties) with a portion in Washington County, Maryland (42,200 acres or 11.6%). The headwaters of the Conococheague Creek originate approximately 13 miles east of Chambersburg. Passing through Chambersburg it continues flowing southwest through Pennsylvania and into Maryland and finally empties into the Potomac River near the town of Williamsport.

The Maryland portion of the Conococheague Creek Watershed was included on Maryland's Impaired Streams List as impaired by fecal coliform bacteria (2002), high pH (2002), and sediments (1996).



Witherspoon Covered Bridge over Licking Creek, Montgomery Township (Google Earth)

Johnston Run Sub Watershed

Johnston's Run subwatershed drains directly into the West Branch of the Conococheague Creek. The West Branch confluences with the mainstem of the Conococheague, which is a tributary of the Potomac River. This ultimately drains to the Chesapeake Bay.

The Johnston's Run subwatershed has a drainage area of approximately 8.5 square miles with approximately 15.6 miles of mapped stream channels. The watershed includes a mix of agricultural, urban, and industrial land uses. The headwaters of Johnston Run originate at the foothills of the Cove Mountain located west of Charlestown Road and are largely fed by limestone springs. Limestone streams should be great natural resources that support an abundance of aquatic wildlife and trout due to the clear, cold and mineral

rich water that percolates up from the limestone spring to feed the stream. However, like many limestone streams in central Pennsylvania, Johnston Run is impacted by both urban and agricultural stressors. Chief among these stressors is those associated with stormwater runoff that washes pollutants from both urban and rural landscapes into streams and rivers. If these pollutants, which can include sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, oils, bacteria, and metals among others, are delivered to the stream system in high enough concentrations the results can be very harmful to the fish, amphibians and insects that inhabit the water, and to humans and livestock that come in contact with and rely on good water quality.

The Johnston's Creek Implementation Plan includes descriptions of a range of recommended management strategies and restoration projects and provides an estimation of the water quality benefits that would be realized from plan implementation. It also includes cost estimates for strategy implementation, identified potential funding sources and partners, and describes monitoring programs to document plan implementation and changes in the watershed condition over time.

Mountains

Big Mountain Overlook is located at the top of Tuscarora Mountain right on the line between Franklin and Fulton Counties in the Buchanan State Forest. This vista is close to McConnellsburg, PA, and less than three miles from Route 30. While there are hiking trails in the area, this is an overlook that you can drive to, with parking located only about 200 feet from the rock outcropping. The Kittatinny Ridge, also known as the Blue Mountains, stretches for 185 miles across Pennsylvania from the Delaware River Gap in the east to the Mason-Dixon line.



Big Mountain Overlook (Google Earth)

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) designated the Kittatinny Ridge a Conservation Landscape (one of eight in PA) in 2018. Founded on a “sense of place,” a conservation landscape is a large region where residents, local officials, organizations, and agencies work together to drive strategic investment and actions around sustainability, conservation, community revitalization, civic engagement, and recreational projects. The landscape has strong natural assets, local readiness and buy-in, and state-level investment and support.

The KRCL is managed by a DCNR Internal Staff Lead; Audubon Mid-Atlantic, the External Lead Organization; and a KRCL Steering Committee. The KRCL Steering Committee includes DCNR representatives, five primary KRCL partners, and stakeholders representing the broader Conservation Landscape. The KRCL supports partner activities through an annual mini-grant program.

KRCL Goals:

- Identify and protect biologically important land and open space to advance wildlife and water conservation along the Ridge.
- Build community identification with, and ownership in, the Kittatinny Ridge as a critical/valued natural asset.
- Collaborate with counties, municipalities, and other organizations along the Ridge to contribute to their collective understanding of the ecological, economic, recreational, and social values of protecting the Ridge and advance the adoption of land-use, sustainability and climate resiliency plans, and programs and policies which foster its natural health.
- Promote science as a basis for the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape’s recommendations/actions by enlisting support from academicians and scientists who generate research that is relevant to the Ridge.

Conservation Plan Goals:

- Increase coordinated and holistic land conservation, natural resource protection, and stewardship initiatives
- Promote the KRC’s sense of place and build community identity around our shared natural systems
- Sustain and expand outdoor recreation resources and access
- Support nature-based economic development
- Build a strong and diverse partner network

Tuscarora Mountain Range

The Tuscarora Mountain runs northeast from approximately the Pennsylvania/Maryland line to the Juniata River in Perry County. It forms the western border of Franklin County. It runs through the Tuscarora State Forest, which is 96,000 acres in size and located in six Pennsylvania Counties. The range also runs through the Buchanan State Forest which includes 19 tracts of land comprising almost 72,000 acres of land. Buchanan’s Birthplace State Park in Peters Township is also located in the Tuscarora Range.

Pennsylvania State Game Lands 124 is also located in the Tuscarora Range, totaling over 6,800 acres along the border between Franklin and Fulton County’s.

Tuscarora Wildlife Education Project (TWEP)

The Tuscarora Wildlife Education Project (TWEP) is located at the Charles Brightbill Environmental Center adjacent to James Buchanan High School in Peters Township.

In 1987, a group of Tuscarora School District residents and educators formed the Tuscarora Education Project (TWEP). The group was given classroom space at James Buchanan High School from 1987-1999. Charles Brightbill, a teacher in the Tuscarora Area Schools and an environmentalist at Cowan’s Gap State Park, worked as the director of the TWEP classroom until his death in 1994. In 1997 TWEP acquired a 99-year lease of a section of land on the school campus and the Charles T. Brightbill Environmental Center was constructed. TWEP offers classroom instruction, summer camps, and homeschool programs. It also holds an annual photography contest and hosts special exhibitions.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation planning in Franklin County is coordinated through the Franklin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally designated regional transportation planning body that is charged with carrying out the transportation planning process for the designated area. For the Franklin County MPO, the area covered is all of Franklin County. The Franklin County Planning Commission staff serves as staff for the MPO.

The goal of the MPO is to ensure existing and future governments funded transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. The MPO administers federal and state funding for projects and programs. It represents localities in all urbanized areas with populations over 50,000. In Franklin County, the urbanized areas are Chambersburg, Waynesboro, and Greencastle.

The MPO is made up of two organizations. The Policy Board, which is the decision-making body, is composed of elected and appointed officials, community members, local business interests, and representative local and state governments. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is an advisory body to the Policy Board. It has technical and expert-level staff which offers technical insight, advice, and recommendations.

Although the MPO performs many functions, it has three primary responsibilities

1. Creation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP establishes goals and potential projects for the identified improvements to the transportation system using public and stakeholder engagement. It has a long-term, 25-year planning horizon, and must be updated every 5 years. Creation and adoption of the LRTP is a prerequisite to receiving federal transportation funding. The LRTP contains the following components:

- Existing conditions
 - Socio-economic trends
 - Highways and bridges
 - Transit
 - Rail freight and aviation
 - Active transportation (bicycle and transportation)
- Performance measures-proposing future goals and baseline calculations
- Public and stakeholder outreach
- Strategic directions
- Financial plan
- Environmental impacts

Listed below are long range projects in Mercersburg Borough, Montgomery Township, and Peters Township.

Balance of the Twelve-Year Program 2027-2034

- Lemar Road bridge preservation over West Branch Conococheague
 - Church Hill Road bridge West Branch Conococheague-Peters Township
 - Bear Valley Road bridge over Broad Run- Peters Township
 - Bino Road bridge Conococheague Creek-Montgomery and Antrim Townships
 - Oregon Street bridge over Steigers Run- Montgomery and Peters Townships
 - Stony Batter Road bridge replacement over Buck Run- Peters Township
 - PA 16 bridge replacement over Buck Run- Peters Township
 - Route 30/Lincoln Way resurfacing from Fulton County line to PA 75/Path Valley Road- Peters Township
2. Creation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a short-range list of priority projects for the next 4 years. It is a prerequisite for federal funding assistance from PennDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It must be consistent with the Long-Range Transportation Plan, which is the primary source for identifying projects. It must be fiscally constrained and include all revenue and resources that will finance the projects on the TIP. The TIP is updated every 2 years.

The following is a list of projects in Mercersburg Borough, Montgomery Township, and Peters Township that are included on the 2025-2028 Franklin County TIP.

Franklin County TIP 2025-28 Projects

- Bridge improvement- PA 75/Fort Loudon Road over Buck Run- Peters Township
- Bridge improvement- PA 16 over Buck Run- Peters Township
- Bridge improvement- PA 995/Welsh Run Road over Welsh Run- Montgomery Township
- Bridge replacement- Rockdale Road over Tributary to Back Creek- Peters Township
- Bridge improvement- Route 30 over West Branch of Conococheague Creek- Peters Township
- Bridge improvement- Corner Road over Licking Creek- Montgomery Township
- Resurfacing- PA 75/Fort Loudon Road from Licking Creek to PA 16- Mercersburg and Montgomery Townships

- 3. Conducting special studies and plans. The MPO creates special studies and plans, including the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail Feasibility Study, and the I-81 Improvement Strategy and the I-81 Widening Prioritization.



Lemar Road bridge, Peters Township (Google Earth)



Corner Road over Licking Creek- Montgomery Township (Google Earth)

COMMUNITY UTILITIES

Public Sewer

Mercersburg Sewer Authority

- Existing Facility and System Overview
The Mercersburg Sewer Authority provides sewer treatment to Mercersburg and consists of a gravity fed collection and conveyance systems, three (3) pumping stations, and a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The sewer main collection system has a main sewer underground piping system ranging in size from 6 inch to 15 inch in diameter and approximately 6 miles in total. The WWTP process is achieved by using a Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR), aerobics digesters, SBR tanks, ultraviolet (UV) disinfection and four (4) reed beds for biosolids stabilization and storage.

The current WWTP was designed and permitted for a maximum design flow of 675,000 gallons per day (GPD). In 2023 the average design flow was 118,140 GPD with 837 separate connections to the system.

- WWTP Upgrades
The wastewater treatment plant is currently being updated. The project consists of the following improvements and estimated costs:
 1. New ultraviolet (UV) treatment system
 2. Solids Management System- design and implement a new biosolids processing system to convert from the reed beds to a Class A Exceptional Quality (EQ) processing system. A Class A EQ system creates treated sewage sludge that meets the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's standards for land application.
 3. Build a new SBR system on the property of the existing main pumping station, including new blowers and controls. This will also include a new screen system. Drain, sandblast, and epoxy coat the existing SBR Tanks for re-use as equalization and digester tanks. Build a new pumping station and a new pump station to transport flow from the Mercersburg Academy.
- Sewer and water system mapping
The Borough sewer authority is looking to purchase a High Accuracy GPS Unit and hopes to split the costs with the Water Authority. This mapping system would allow the collection of survey grade locations of the sewer and water infrastructure including manholes, curb boxes, and valves. The collection of the locations is the first step in building accurate base maps. This could eventually be integrated into the County GIS system.

Peters Township Municipal Authority

The Peters Township Municipal Authority serves a total of 927 customers, consisting of 881 residential customers, 30

commercial, and 16 institutional. The Authority is comprised of two systems, the Fort Loudon/Mountain View treatment plant and collection system, and the Mercersburg Junction treatment plant and collection system. No residents in Mercersburg Borough are served by these systems. The Fort Loudon system has 352 customers, and the Mercersburg Junction system has 575 customers.

The Fort Loudon/Mountain View system serves customers along Fort Loudon Road/Route 75, Path Valley Road/Route 75, Route 30, Bear Valley Road, and Lemar Road. The Mercersburg Junction system serves the villages of Lemasters, Markes, and Cove Gap, as well as residential development adjacent to Mercersburg Borough. The system is located along Mountain Road, Buchanan Trail West/Route 16, Dickeys Road, Mercersburg Road/Route 416, Lemar Road, and Steele Avenue.

Guest Farm Village Sewer Authority

The Authority serves 54 residential customers fronting Punch Bowl Road, Heather Lane, Kathryn Drive, and Anne Lane in Montgomery Township. In 2017, the Authority performed an evaluation of the existing facility, identifying needs and recommendations for repairs and improvements. Due to the age, poor conditions, and design of the treatment plant, the required effluent quality could not be met, resulting in a notice of violations from the Department of Environmental Protection. The authority applied for funding for a PA Small Water and Sewer Program grant. The grant was approved, providing 85% of the total project cost of \$476,800.

Private Sewer

Valley Creek Estates HOA

The facility serves the community of Valley Creek with a total of 49 single family homes.

Deerwood Mountain Estates

This facility serves the Deerwood Mountain Estates development in Montgomery Township.

Public Water

Mercersburg Water Authority

- Existing Facility and System Overview
The Mercersburg Water Authority supplies water to Mercersburg Borough and to a limited number of users in both Peters and Montgomery Townships. The main source of water is via Buck Run Reservoir and supplemented by two (2) well sources. The main water treatment plant (WTP) is located adjacent to Buck Run Reservoir which provides chemical conditioning, filtration, sedimentation, and water storage. The main water distribution system is an underground piping system ranging in size from 2 inches to 10 inches in diameter and approximately 8.5 miles in total.

The current capacity of the Buck Run WTP is 400 gallons per minute (GPM) while maintaining permit mandated minimum storage tank and operating levels. In 2020 the average water use was 156 GPM with 995 separate connections to the system.

– Water System Failures

From January 2015 through August 2018, the Buck Run Reservoir was found to be not capable of supplying system demand and unable to comply with mandatory conservation release requirements. In August 2018, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) found that the Buck Run Water Treatment Plant (WTP) was not able to comply with new regulations.

In September 2019 the Water Authority began a feasibility study of the existing facilities and treatment alternatives. The feasibility study was completed in April 2020 with a recommendation to remove the reservoir from service, locate and drill a new well source near the Buck Run WTP, and construct a new WTP. In 2020, an Interim Operations Plan was entered into with PA DEP and the Authority entered into a Consent Order and Agreement (COA) with PA DEP. The COA required the Mercersburg Water Authority to prepare and submit to the PA DEP an Existing Facilities and Treatment Alternative Study which outlined methods for compliance, the costs of those methods and the Mercersburg Water Authority's plan for achieving compliance. The two new treatment plants represent the Mercersburg Water Authority's chosen methods of compliance and will allow the Mercersburg Water Authority to provide an adequate supply of safe and potable water to its users.

In 2020 the Authority located and drilled the new well (Zimm Well) and located a new source of water on Well #3 Park Street property. The COA was updated with DEP in 2022 to reflect new project details:

– Water System Upgrades

The overall project consists of the construction of two separate water treatment facilities. The first facility will treat water from the existing Zimm Well and the Buck Run Well. This facility will be rated for the full combined capacity of the two wells of approximately 150 gallons per minute (gpm) and will contain systems for caustic soda addition, sodium hypochlorite addition, chlorine contact time, pressure filtration, backwash recycling, finished water booster pumps and orthophosphate addition for general corrosion control.

The second facility will treat approximately 150 gpm of water from the new Park Avenue Well and will contain systems for raw water straining, softening, nitrate removal, orthophosphate addition, sodium hypochlorite addition and chlorine contact

time. This project also includes construction of a 300,000-gallon finished water storage tank and a 500-gpm booster pump station to deliver water from the new Park Avenue Well treatment facility.

– System Upgrade Projects

1. Pressure Relief Valve Station Project
2. Buck Run WTP
3. New WTP at well #3 property

– Project Funding

- A Pennsylvania Small Water and Sewer Grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development was awarded in 2020 and was used for the PRV Station project
- A Franklin County IMPACT Grant was received in the amount of \$199,000.
- U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Project grant for \$2,500,000 has been requested
- Local Share Account grant administered through the Pennsylvania, total grant of \$335,700 has been requested
- DCED's H2O PA Grant Program- \$7,580,000 has been requested
- Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PennVEST) funding request was submitted in June 2024 for the construction of the two water treatment facilities. The first is for the existing Zimm Well and Buck Run Well, the second for the new Park Avenue Well.

Bear Valley Water Authority

The Authority was formed in 1965 by Peters, Hamilton, and St. Peters Townships, and began operations in the early 1970s. It now serves 4,400 customers in the three Townships. The original Broad Run Water Treatment Facility was built off Bear Valley Road in Fort Loudon. It draws surface water from the Broad Run and a well near Route 75. It was upgraded in 2006 to a membrane filtration system.

The Fort Loudon Water Treatment Facility is a modern membrane filtration system that came online in 2018. It is connected to the Fort Loudon Wellfield and the Widow Barr Wellfield.

The water distribution system contains over 120 miles of mains. There are five above-ground storage tanks located in Fort Loudon, St. Thomas, Upton, Warm Springs Road, and Kensington Heights. The tanks provide constant pressure to the system and contain over 5 days of backup storage.

Of the 4,400 total customers, approximately 450, or 11%, are in Peters Township, primarily along Route 30 extending west to Fort Loudon. There is also a branch running south on Route 416/Mercersburg Road and Parnell Road to Lemasters. Another branch extends south on Route 75 and Lemar Road

from Fort Loudon to Markes, Lemasters and south to Upton. A third branch extends southwest from Markes on Route 416 terminating north of Mercersburg Borough.

Stormwater Management

The stormwater requirements of the federal Clean Water Act are administered under the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Program. MS4s are conveyances or systems of conveyances including roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, or storm drains that are owned or operated by a public entity, are designed or used for collecting or conveying stormwater, and are not a combined sewer or part of a publicly owned treatment works. Municipalities that have an Urbanized Area (UA) of at least 50,000 people are required to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and develop and implement a stormwater management plan (SWMP) according to the details of their specific permit.

Mercersburg Borough is currently not designated an MS4 community. However, in 2014, the Johnston Run Watershed Management Plan was prepared as a collaborative effort between Mercersburg Borough, the Johnston Run Revitalization Council, and KCI Technologies, Inc. The Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was developed to “address key issues impacting natural resources in the watershed; specifically - improving in-stream water quality and habitat conditions, with an overarching goal of re-connecting residents and visitors to a restored and healthy waterway.” The recommendations of the Johnston Creek Watershed Management Plan are discussed in the Natural and Cultural resources chapter.

Public Safety

Mercersburg Police Department

The Mercersburg Police Department has one and a half equivalent officers.

Pennsylvania State Police

Franklin County citizens living in areas without a local municipal police force are provided coverage from the Pennsylvania State Police Troop H, Franklin County Station, Chambersburg. The station is in Greene Township, northeast of Chambersburg, and is approximately 15-20 miles from locations in Peters and Montgomery Townships.

Mercersburg Montgomery Peters and Warren (MMPW) Volunteer Fire Company

The MMP&W Volunteer Fire and Ambulance Company serves Mercersburg Borough and Montgomery, Peters, and Warren Townships. The company was renamed in 1942 to its current MMP & W Fire Company.

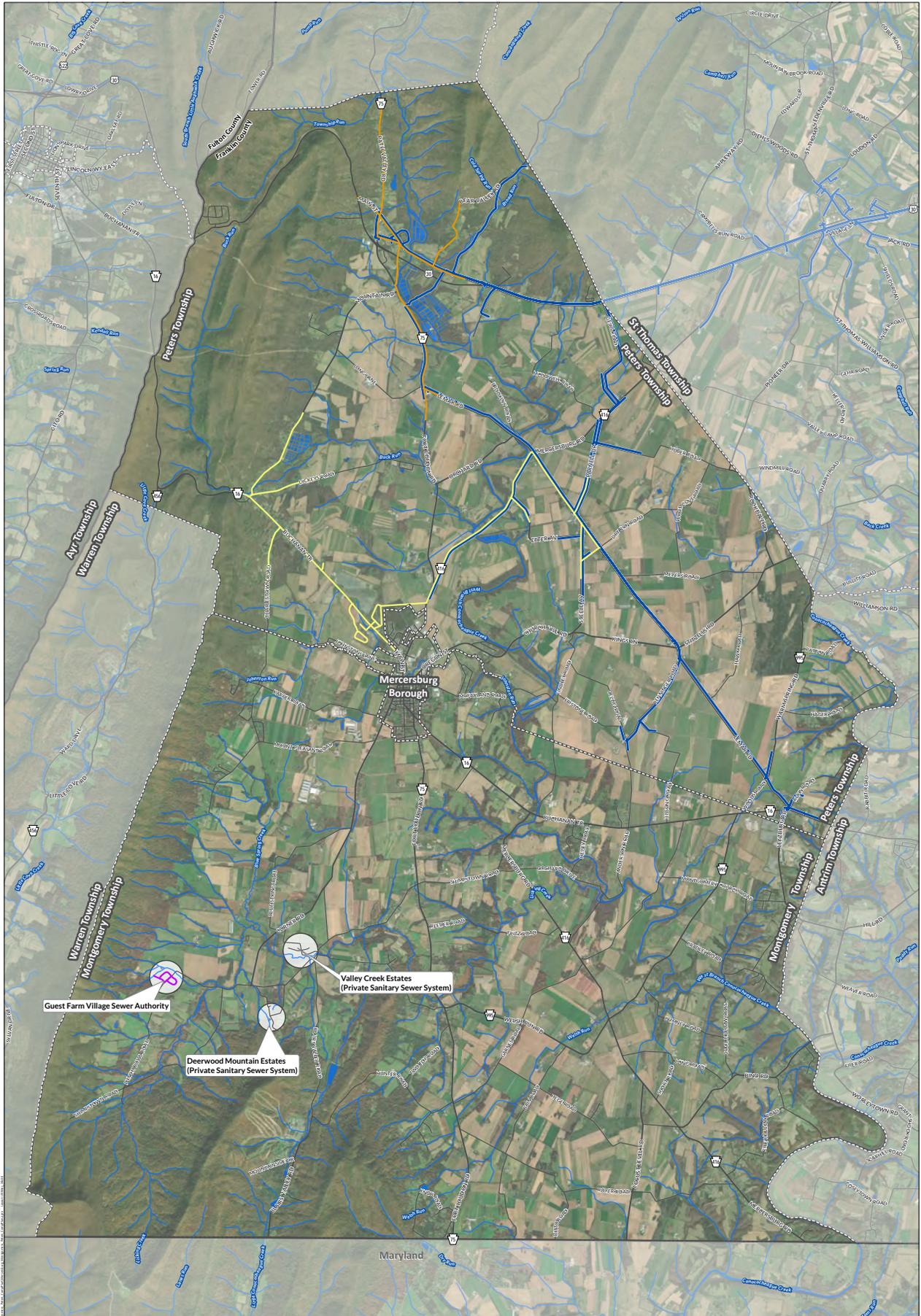
The company has paid employees to supplement the volunteer firefighter and EMS force.

Fire and ambulance apparatus includes:

- Pierce Arrow XT Engine- used for all types of fires and vehicle accidents
- Sutphen Rescue-Engine- used for vehicle accidents, technical rescues, all types of fires
- Sutphen Engine-Tanker-used for water supply, fire suppression
- Ford Brat- used for brush fires, mountain fires, wires and trees down
- Ford F-350- used for transporting personnel, transporting Ranger 9, medical assist
- Polaris Ranger Wildland- used for brush and mountain fires / rescues, technical rescue
- Ford F-450 ambulance- used for EMS emergencies, rehab on fire scenes
- Ford 550 Road Rescue ambulance- used for EMS emergencies, rehab on fire scenes
- Chevy Tahoe 4 X 4- used for medical assist, transporting rehab equipment to fire scenes

The following is the log of fire and emergency calls from January 2023 through June 2024:

Month	EMS	Fire
1/23	111	38
2/23	71	33
3/23	90	47
4/23	83	39
5/23	95	44
6/23	112	41
7/23	98	47
8/23	86	32
9/23	95	42
10/23	77	30
11/23	97	48
12/23	86	30
1/24	106	57
2/24	67	23
3/24	100	35
4/24	85	32
5/24	80	49
6/24	89	33



86 South George Street
 Suite 200
 York, PA 17403
 717.875.2500 (toll-free)
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- Bear Valley Water Authority Water Lines
- Guest Farm Village Sewer Authority
- Peters Township Municipal Authority - Mercersburg Junction Sanitary Sewer System
- Peters Township Municipal Authority - Fort Loudon/Mountain View Sanitary Sewer System
- ~ Waterbody
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- Municipal Boundary
- County Boundary

Utilities

Mercersburg Borough, Montgomery Township, & Peters Township
 Comprehensive Plan
 Franklin County, Pennsylvania

Education

Tuscarora School District

The Tuscarora School District serves: the Borough of Mercersburg as well as Montgomery, Peters, St. Thomas, and Warren Townships. The District operates four K-5 elementary schools:

- Saint Thomas Elementary School
- Mountain View Elementary School in Peters Township
- Mercersburg Elementary School
- Montgomery Elementary School

James Buchanan Middle School (6th-8th grades) and James Buchanan Senior High School (grades 9-12) are located on the school campus on Fort Loudon Road in Peters Township.

Similar to a pattern for other rural school districts in Pennsylvania, the Tuscarora School District has experienced steadily decreasing enrollments. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Education Public School Enrollment Reports, The District's total enrollment has decreased by 14% since the 2013-14 school year.

School year	Total District Enrollment
2013-14	2,554
2014-15	2,498
2015-16	2,463
2016-17	2,444
2017-18	2,357
2018-19	2,358
2019-20	2,353
2020-21	2,294
2021-22	2,245
2022-23	2,268
2023-24	2,191

Additionally, the Franklin County Career and Technology Center (FCCTC) is located in Chambersburg and serves high school students and adults throughout Franklin County.

Mercersburg Academy

The Mercersburg Academy is a college preparatory boarding and day high school for students grades 9-12. The school has an enrollment of approximately 450 students. Approximately 84% of the students are boarding students, with the remaining 16% being day students. The history of the school dates back to 1836 with the founding of Marshall College.

The Academy is housed on a 300-acre campus located primarily located east of Seminary Lane and south of McFarland Road in Mercersburg Borough. The campus includes seven student residences and three main academic buildings, 10 playing fields (including a synthetic turf field), a gymnasium complex, a tennis center, a squash center, an outdoor track, and a 65,500-square-foot arts center.

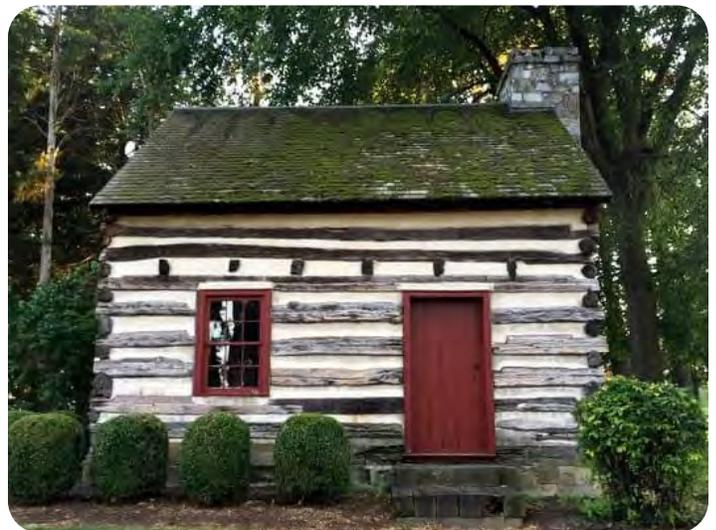
The James Buchanan Cabin, birthplace of President Buchanan, was purchased by the Academy in 1953 and moved to the campus. The log-cabin structure is maintained by the Academy and contains a few pieces of period furniture.



Mercersburg Academy



James Buchanan Middle School



President James Buchanan cabin

PARKS

There are several local and state parks and recreational facilities serving residents in the region.

Montgomery Township Park

The Park offers walking, including the Eagle Trail and the Eagle Walk. The location also offers a picnic spot and playground area, a baseball field, a softball field, and soccer fields with goals for a full range of age groups. The park is home to several local recreational team systems, who make frequent use of the facility.

Mercersburg Lions Club Park

This Lions Club Park provides play and picnic area, fitness trail, and hosts an annual Strawberry Festival and Community Fair. the weeklong Mercersburg Lions and Community Fair, a Lions Easter Egg Hunt, a Beer / Wine Festival sponsored by the Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce, a Five Mile Run sponsored by MACWell, and numerous other community events.

In 2023, the Mercersburg Lions established the 501(c)(3) organization Mercersburg Lions Community Park Association. The organization has conducted a capital campaign for the purpose of renovating the existing playground area and creating new recreation options on the existing footprint. In 2020 the Lions completed the purchase of an additional parking area contiguous with the park, and have intentions to increase the size of the park as opportunities arise.

Upton Ballfield and Park

Located in the village of Upton in Peters Township.

Tuscarora Softball Complex

The Softball Complex is located behind Montgomery Elementary School in Montgomery Township. There are four fields and a concession stand, with lighting for nighttime games.

Buchanan's Birthplace State Park

Buchanan's Birthplace State Park is an 18.5-acre park located in the Tuscarora Mountain in the village of Cove Gap in Peters Township. The Park, locally referred to as Stony Batter, includes a pyramid monument to President Buchanan which was constructed beginning in 1907. The pyramid was built of native stone and is 38 feet square and 31 feet high. It is made of 45 tons of granite and 250 tons of mortar and native stones. The monument was accepted by the state in 1911.

The Park also includes two picnic pavilions, picnic tables and restrooms. Beautiful Buck Run flows through the park and hosts a population of native trout.

Peter's Township Future Park

Peters Township recently purchased 15.62 acres of land which adjoins the current Township building in the village of Lemasters. The tentative plan is to use a portion of the land for a park/recreation area for the community, and the remaining portion of the tract will remain in agricultural crop land. Proceeds from the lease of the land would be used to maintain the park. It is hoped that construction will begin in approximately three years.

The Conococheague Institute

The Conococheague Institute near Welsh Run in Montgomery Township is a hands-on regional learning center headquartered within Rock Hill Farm, a well-preserved historic farmstead that was established in the early 18th century.

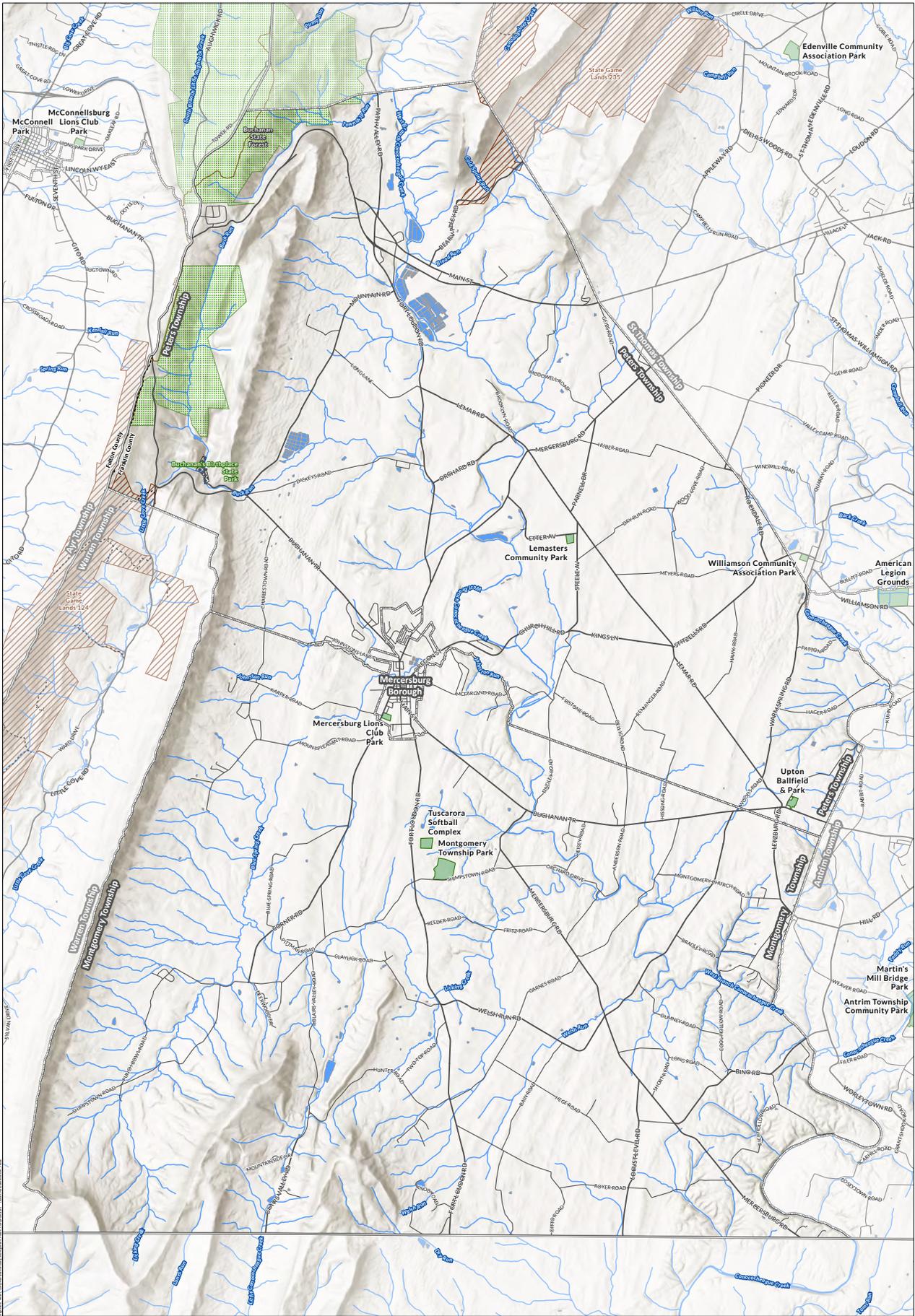
The 30-acre site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and includes two historic house museums with outbuildings, a research library, two relocated historic log structures, dog walking trails with access to a pioneer cemetery, several historic gardens, playground, and picnic areas. It offers free weekly programs on frontier homestead life and year-round education bookings.



Buchanan's Birthplace State Park



Conococheague Institute



- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Camelnd Trails
- Trails
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- Waterbody
- State Game Lands
- State Parks
- Local Parks
- State Forests

HRG
 16 South George Street
 Suite 200
 York, PA 17402
 717.852.2242 (phone)
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Natural Resources

Mercesburg Borough, Montgomery Township, & Peters Township
 Comprehensive Plan
 Franklin County, Pennsylvania

SECTION TWO: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

AGRICULTURE

The issue mentioned the most in Steering Committee meetings for the Comprehensive Plan and in survey results from the public were the threat of solar development to the region's agricultural resources. Several large solar developments have already occurred in the region, converting hundreds of acres of productive agricultural land to non-agricultural use.

The primary way that land uses are regulated in Pennsylvania is through the adoption and enforcement of a zoning ordinance, or cooperative land use agreements between municipalities. Montgomery Township has, however, adopted the Montgomery Township Solar Regulations (2021) and the Amendment to the Solar Regulations (2023) through the powers granted to them through the Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code. The regulations for ground-mounted systems include setback requirements from property lines, screening requirements, stormwater management requirements, decommissioning standards, and access drive requirements, among other regulations.

Peters Township has also adopted a solar ordinance in 2021, with an amendment in 2023, known as the "Solar Energy System Regulations Ordinance." It has been well examined and proven to parallel what many municipalities, including those that do and do not have zoning ordinances, regulate solar development.

Other issues that have emerged include the need to bring more young farmers into agriculture, and the opportunities for development of agri-tourism activities that could both bring more tourists to the region and provide alternative income sources for farmers.

The lack of young people choosing a career in agriculture is a nationwide issue. The average age of farmers have steadily increased to the mid-50s to early 60s. The financial demands of starting a new business or purchasing an existing agricultural operation are usually cost prohibitive for young farmers.

The Franklin County Visitors Bureau offers a tremendous number of rural tourism activities and attractions including corn mazes, farm to table dinners, and pumpkin festivals. Farm wedding venues have also been developed in many nearby areas in Franklin and Fulton Counties.

1. Regulate solar development

Montgomery and Peters Township should provide information available for landowners who are considering entering a solar lease.

Landowners that are considering entering into solar lease agreements for their land may not have adequate information to fully understand their rights and responsibilities as landowners. Issues that must be discussed with the solar developer include who is responsible for obtaining permits and licenses, who is responsible for specific taxes, potential conflict with other easements, decommissioning costs, and conversion of the land back to farmland.

Three good examples are:

- Pennsylvania Landowners Guide to Utility-Scale Solar Leasing Penn State Extension. This Guide provides a definition and background information on what utility-scale solar is, a discussion of Letters of Intent from a developer, maintenance requirements, and termination, removal and restoration requirements.
- Landowner Leasing for Utility-Scale Solar Penn State Extension. This document also provides details for details of key considerations for landowners before signing a lease agreement including the terms and annual payment, the landowners' rights

in using the rest of the property, maintenance responsibilities, and questions about the company's experience in developing solar fields. The Guide also cautions landowners to check on the impact a solar development may have on their Clean and Green tax status, whether solar is allowed if a farm is preserved, tax considerations, and questions about future borrowing ability on a property if there is a solar development.

- Solar Energy: Solar Land Lease Agreements for Landowners Frequently Asked Questions Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. This guide also provides answers to common questions landowners may have including topics such as what happens if a solar developer defaults on the land lease agreement, can the lease be modified, and what are the typical decommissioning cost?

These documents should be made available for landowners at both the Montgomery and Peters Township municipal offices, posted online if a municipal website is created, and posted online by the Mercersburg Vibrancy Steering Committee. The documents should also be made available by area agricultural lenders.



Solar field, Waste Management Authority property- Montgomery Township

2. Bring young farmers into agriculture

Organizations that support efforts to bring young farmers into agriculture should coordinate resources and outreach efforts.

There are no easy solutions to solving the aging farmer crisis the United States is facing. Many young people, both from agricultural and non-agricultural backgrounds, are interested in entering agriculture but are discouraged by the financial constraints and lack of opportunities available.

PA Farm Link is a non-profit organization founded in 1993. It's Board of Directors includes members from FFA, Penn State Extension, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, and ag lenders and insurance providers, among others. It offers on-line courses from PA Farm Link, Penn State Law School, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in a variety of topics for new farmers getting started in the industry including succession planning and mentoring opportunities.

The website also has a database to link existing landowners with aspiring farmers. This provides an opportunity for the new farmer to establish a work history at a farm and equitably take possession of a farm, providing a benefit for the new farmer and the retiring farmer who wants to pass on the agricultural operation. PA Farm Link also has a list of mentors who can help with questions regarding business plans, accounting and finance, and farm operations.

The Conococheague Chapter of Future Farmers of America (FFA) at James Buchanan High School is a career and technical student organization that supports agricultural education. The FFA offers students the opportunity to apply for grants and scholarships from a variety of organizations.

The Mercer Vu Farms/Ron and Judy Hissong Scholarship for Agriculture was established for any student residing in the Tuscarora School District who plan to continue their education in agriculture or an agricultural field. Up to four students are awarded scholarships annually for up to \$5,000 each.

Interested students should also contact the Penn State Extension, Franklin County office Client Relationship Manager Donna Scherer, and the Chambersburg Chapter Advisor of the Pennsylvania Young Farmers' Association Eddie Parsons.

3. Promote agri-tourism

Montgomery and Peters Township should work with the Franklin County Visitors Bureau and the Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce to promote agri-tourism in the region.

Agri-tourism economic activities can include a range of businesses, events, and activities that operate continuously, seasonally, or once a year. It includes not just the specific activity on a farm or rural property, but also all the supporting economic activities for tourists who are visiting the area.

An international example of how agri-tourism can drive rural economic development comes from the Tuscany region of Italy. The Tuscany Region was the first Italian region to recognize the new trend of integrated rural development and in 1985 stated the first regional law on agritourism. In this context Tuscany is the one of the first Italian and European regions committed to the development of rural areas. This effort developed the link between tourism and local sustainable development in rural areas.

Agri-tourism can benefit both regional economic efforts, as well as supplement the primary agricultural business for farmers, diversifying their income flow and sustaining the agricultural operation. The key feature for visitors is that they can experience an authentic agricultural operation as opposed to a commercial recreation event that just happens to occur on a farm. An example are farm stays where visitors can experience farming in unique ways such as milking cows.

The Penn State Agritourism Program provides resources and educational support for agritourism operators and tourism agencies. It provides recommendations to diversify agri-tourism operations, as well as a discussion of legal and regulatory issues facing agri-tourism operators. In 2021, the State passed the Agritourism Activity Protection Act to protect operators from lawsuits where no one is at fault. The Franklin County Visitors Bureau offers the Franklin Fresh Guide which lists farm markets, orchards, and festivals: FRANKLIN FRESH | Visit Franklin County PA (explorefranklincountypa.com)

The Visitors Bureau should work with the Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce and area restaurants to create a Farm to Table connection. This would allow restaurants to showcase local farms and advertise the local produce used in the meals they produce.

MERCERSBURG BOROUGH REVITALIZATION

Mercersburg Borough, like many small towns in Pennsylvania, was established in the 1750s around a mill that served the surrounding agricultural community. Its role as the hub of a larger region in southwestern Franklin County continued with the growth and development of the surrounding area. Its role as the center of the region has changed with Mercersburg now seeking a rejuvenated identity.

1. Create a Main Street Plan

A Main Street Master Plan would start with a vision exercise involving Borough officials, citizens, business owners, representatives from the Mercersburg Academy, business owners and others to create a vision of what downtown Mercersburg could be. Examples could be a place where there are businesses that have consistent operating hours, a variety of dining options, personal service retail options, places for outdoor dining, coordinated and easily accessible parking, and mixed-use properties with retail or restaurants on the ground floor and residential above.

Key objectives of the Master Plan should include the expansion of the tax base, promote adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings, and increase street-level activity and pedestrian traffic. Positive outcomes of a Main Street Plan and Program could involve a focused effort to attract specific businesses that would complement and strengthen the existing businesses. First steps could include uniform business hours or events such as First Friday to draw customers to the Main Street area.

A local example of an organization that sponsors many of these activities, although not a Main Street program, is the Cumberland Valley Business Alliance (CVBA), which is a business partnership between the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce and the Greencastle-Antrim Chamber of Commerce. The CVBA sponsors events such as Icefest, Restaurant Week, and the Fall Food Truck Fest. It also sponsors peer-to-peer meetings between business owners, and a breakfast with local legislators.

The Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce is also active with events such as the Mercersburg Town Fest, and the annual Christmas tree lighting.

An exemplary example of a Main Street Master Plan is the Downtown Hummelstown Master Plan prepared for Hummelstown Borough in Dauphin County. The Plan includes recommendations for economic restructuring, promotions, organizational structuring, and recommendations for implementation. Also included are a series of Planning Graphics for specific topics including streetscapes, façade renovation, adaptive reuse and infill redevelopment.

Another example of a community revitalization plan is the Claysville Area Master Revitalization Plan for Claysville Borough and Donegal Township in Washington County, Pennsylvania. A key goal of this Plan is to reinvigorate the downtown business district. The Borough had lost several long-established family-run businesses from its main street business district.

Among the goals of the Plan are to improve infrastructure, enhance the streetscape, increase occupied storefronts, expand the hospitality industry, and promote tourism.

The Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) is a nonprofit organization which provides outreach, technical assistance, and educational services to assist communities in revitalizing their central business districts and surrounding residential neighborhoods. It can assist with community visioning, strategic planning, work plan development, and marketing and promotions. The services are provided on a fee -for-service basis.

A Main Street Plan for the Borough would define the organizational structure of the Program, the costs and benefits, and the expected outcomes for both the short-term (1-2 years) and long-term (3-5) years). The MVSC could serve as the organizational umbrella, in partnership with Mercersburg Borough, for the operation of a Main Street program.

Key objectives of the Main Street Master Plan should also include identification of strategies to enhance the gateways coming into the Borough through streetscape and signage improvements. The Plan should also examine key focal points that could serve as an historic and civic center. One potential location is the intersection of North Park Avenue/ Oregon Street and Main Street. This intersection is near the geographic center of the Borough, is the intersection of the main north-south and east-west routes that run through the Borough and is close to Johnston's Run which could be developed as community green space.

Mercersburg Borough, with the assistance of the Franklin County Area Development Corporation and the Franklin County Planning Commission, should apply for revitalization funding through the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Keystone Community Program.

The Keystone Communities Program is described as, "a program that assists Pennsylvania's core communities in achieving revitalization." The program supports physical improvements to both designated and other communities that are undertaking revitalization to restore deteriorated downtowns, residential neighborhoods, and industrial/

manufacturing sites. Keystone communities also provide funding for accessible modifications for the homes of persons with physical disabilities. There are four Program designations:

- Main Street- Funding and technical assistance for a community's downtown revitalization
- Elm Street- Funding and technical assistance for residential and mixed-use areas in proximity to the central business district.
- Keystone Communities Enterprise Zone Designation- Funding and technical assistance for disadvantaged industrial/manufacturing and business sites
- Designation and potential access to funding and Neighborhood Assistance tax credits.

The Keystone Communities Program offers a variety of grant programs. Some require designation as one of the four Program options. Most of the grant programs require some percentage of local matching funding:

Planning Grants are available to address a particular need or circumstance within a community, undertake a study relevant to an identified need, or study the results of implementing a specific activity. Planning activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Planning toward designation under the Keystone Communities Program
- Implementing a business development survey in preparation of a business development strategy and/or preparation of the business development strategy
- Planning for the establishment of a Neighborhood Improvement District

Business Implementation Grants are implementation grants and are available to assist designated Keystone Communities program communities in implementing critical components of their approved Five-Year Strategy. Implementation grant activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Signage
- Program promotion and advertising
- Implementation of a business retention program

Façade Grants are available to stimulate private investment in properties, foster an attractive environment, and preserve the architectural heritage of properties and communities. The grant funds may be used for primary street-facing, exterior building improvements in a defined target area of a downtown or neighborhood such as storefront signs, exterior façade painting, design assistance, etc. Communities requesting façade grant funding will be responsible for the administration of a local façade grant program which meets the general requirements.

Development Grants are available to fund a variety of physical improvements. Development grant activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Revitalization of a neighborhood, downtown, or specific targeted and strategic location in a community
- Development of a housing project
- Site improvements to support the construction of new housing units
- Acquisition, rehabilitation, and/or new construction of housing resulting in homeownership or rental opportunities
- Rehabilitation of owner-occupied residential properties
- Acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of housing units
- Public improvements to support the rehabilitation of housing units
- Public infrastructure improvements such as road rehabilitation or construction, streetscape improvements, and water and sewer improvements
- Acquisition costs to assist in the implementation of immediate reuse of a parcel or building
- Rehabilitation or restoration of older or under-utilized buildings for immediate reuse supporting other community development goals
- Extension of service through public rights-of-way (i.e. paving or widening of access roads and upgrading water, sanitary or storm sewers)
- Demolition of blighted structures with a plan for committed private or public development and/or site maintenance
- Redevelopment of an anchor building in a community. To be considered an anchor building, the building must be: - Located within or close by the traditional business district supporting the downtown, - Larger than 10,000 square feet, - Vacant or underutilized, and - Considered by the community to be an important downtown building vital to the downtown's health.

Public Improvement Grants are available to assist communities in a variety of development projects to help eliminate decline, provide gap financing for proposed projects, and assist in emergency efforts to recover from a natural disaster.

Accessible Housing Grants are available to undertake accessibility improvements to housing units for people with permanent physical disabilities to allow the individuals to reside in their current home rather than an institution or to return to the community from an institution.

2. Conduct a Parking Plan

The Borough should work with businesses and residents in the downtown area to identify existing parking issues and create solutions.

The goals of a parking plan include managing parking in a way that supports local businesses, updating pricing and enforcement programs, and efficiently managing existing parking facilities and loading zones. Potential outcomes of a parking plan include transitioning to pay stations instead of parking meters, cooperation with private landowners to provide shared parking solutions, and coordinated signage and direction finding for parking.

Hanover Borough in York County conducted a parking study in 2020 to look at the existing parking inventory, calculate utilization of existing parking, and calculate future demand based on future land use plans. The Plan resulted in the following strategies:

- Improve parking utilization by supporting economic development
- Right-side the Borough's parking supply by spreading parking demand and preserve and grow on-street parking in high-demand locations
- Improve the parking experience by introducing multiple payment methods and creating welcoming and attractive parking options
- Prepare for shifting peak demand with dispersed parking versus centralized parking models and encouraging private lots to open to the public.
- One of the recommendations of the Plan was to introduce multiple payment methods

3. Promote Home Improvement Projects

The Mercersburg Vibrancy Steering Committee should take the lead in organizing home improvement projects in the Borough.

While Mercersburg Borough is responsible for enforcing regulations for homeowners to maintain their properties, the MVSC, operating as a non-profit organization, can sponsor programs to assist homeowners in maintaining their properties.

One option is to create a tool library which allows homeowners to borrow tools, usually for a week at a time, either for free or for a small annual membership fee. The tools are usually donated by community members and local businesses. The objective of a tool library is to allow homeowners to borrow a tool that they could not afford to purchase or may only use one time. This provides an opportunity for homeowners to complete a landscaping or home improvement project that they would otherwise have to put off.

Another option is to sponsor a free paint weekend which would provide homeowners free paint, caulking materials, and other supplies to enable homeowners to maintain their properties exteriors.

COMMUNICATION

1. Improve regional communication

In the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, it became apparent that there are many units of governments, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and individuals all volunteering their time and effort to make the Mercersburg area a better place to live and work. Often, these groups and individuals aren't familiar with the work that others are doing, resulting in overlapping efforts and missed opportunities for collaboration. Citizens have expressed frustration that they aren't familiar with what is going on with their municipal governments. The following recommendations can start to build bridges of better communication in the community.

Create a regional website that, at a minimum, posts meeting dates and times for all three municipalities.

The website should also include contact information for municipal officials, a list of community resources and contact people, and community events. The website that was created for the Comprehensive Plan should be converted to the community website. The MVSC should manage the website and use it to post information on their meetings and activities. Each of the municipalities should be responsible for regular updates of the website and share the annual cost of hosting the website.

The Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) should coordinate community events where the business community, non-profit organizations, and service providers, and municipalities can share information.

The Chamber holds several events for its members, including Lunch and Learn meetings where the members can learn more about topics affecting their businesses. These events could be expanded to invite community groups such as the United Way of Franklin County or the MMP &W Fire Company to speak on their activities and programs and explore how they can collaborate with the business community.

Organize meetings between the three municipalities on a regular basis.

The MVSC can coordinate regularly scheduled meetings between officials of the three municipalities. These meetings wouldn't involve any formal actions but rather an informal gathering or clearinghouse to share information between

officials. Each meeting could start with exploring and discussing one specific topic such as road equipment and materials sharing or natural disaster preparedness. The meetings should rotate between the three municipalities.

TOURISM

The Mercersburg region is a unique setting that includes an historic downtown, rich and productive farmland, unbroken stands of forested acres, scenic mountain ridges, and historic sites that are a key part of American history. Although the rural region contains scenic treasures, it's only a three-hour drive or less from four major metropolitan areas- Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. Although the region is enjoyed by residents as a great place to live, in many ways these assets are little known to visitors from outside the region. The following are a set of recommendations to both enhance the quality of life for the region's residents, and to strengthen the region's travel and tourism economic sector.

1. Focus Economic Development Efforts on Creating Tourism Infrastructure

The three municipalities and the MVSC should work with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the Franklin County Area Development Corporation, Franklin County Visitors Bureau, and the Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce to develop an economic development strategy focused on travel and tourism for the region.

A frequent comment heard from businesses, visitors, Steering Committee members, and respondent to the community survey is that the region doesn't have all the necessary infrastructure needed to attract visitors to the region. Most often mentioned are a lack of a range of accommodation and dining options, and no conference or meeting spaces. Bicycle tourism also lacks rest areas with bathroom facilities and places to repair bicycles.

The Trail Towns program is a non-profit organization that promotes community development with outdoor tourism throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland, and west Virginia. Trail Towns states that there are five keys to a successful Trail Town:

- Partnerships
- Assessment and research
- Connecting town to trail
- Business and real estate development
- Marketing

The Program offers an Assessment Workbook that helps communities and regions determine whether they have the businesses and amenities to attract trail-goers. The Program also provides guidance on building a business district, supporting local businesses so they thrive, developing local real estate, and finding funding.

Many of these recommendations aren't necessarily specific to just bike trail visitors but are general enough so that they are applicable for all visitors. Besides funding available through various DCED programs, loans are also available through the Progress Fund. The Progress Fund, which was founded in 1997, created the Trail Towns program. The Fund works to create economic opportunity in northern Appalachia including western and northern Pennsylvania, western Maryland, and northern West Virginia. The primary activity of the Progress Fund has been to provide loans to underserved small businesses and microenterprises in tourism and local food industries. It focuses on regional economic development

2. Develop a regional trail system that connects Mercersburg Borough Area Attractions and Visitors From Throughout the Region

A Master Plan should be created by the three municipalities, the Franklin County Area Development Corporation, Franklin County Visitors Bureau, and the Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce to identify and drive the actions needed to plan, coordinate and implement the creation of the trail, provide uniform signage and trail information and develop the necessary infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience.

The three municipalities working together to create this Comprehensive Plan are home to an amazing array of historic and natural resources. The elements of a regional trail are already in place. Ideally, a regional trail system should connect the historic resources listed above, and the local, regional, and state parks listed in the Community Utilities, Facilities, and Services chapter. A regional trail would spotlight many of the natural and agricultural features of the region, including mature deciduous forests, uninterrupted views of the regions' mountains, pristine streams, and meadows and farm fields. Black locusts and dogwood trees, mountain laurel, rhododendron, ferns, wildflowers, and more mushrooms are all present in the region's natural areas.

The essential elements of a regional trail system have also been documented. MacWELL created the Regional Bike Trail map on the following page.

Key:

- Punch Bowl Loop
- Mill & Bridge Loop
- Conococheague Loop
- Mountain Views
- Ride to Whitetail
- Jeb Stuart's Ride
- James Buchanan Birthplace
- Tuscarora Climb
- Lemasters Views
- MPMC 5 Miler

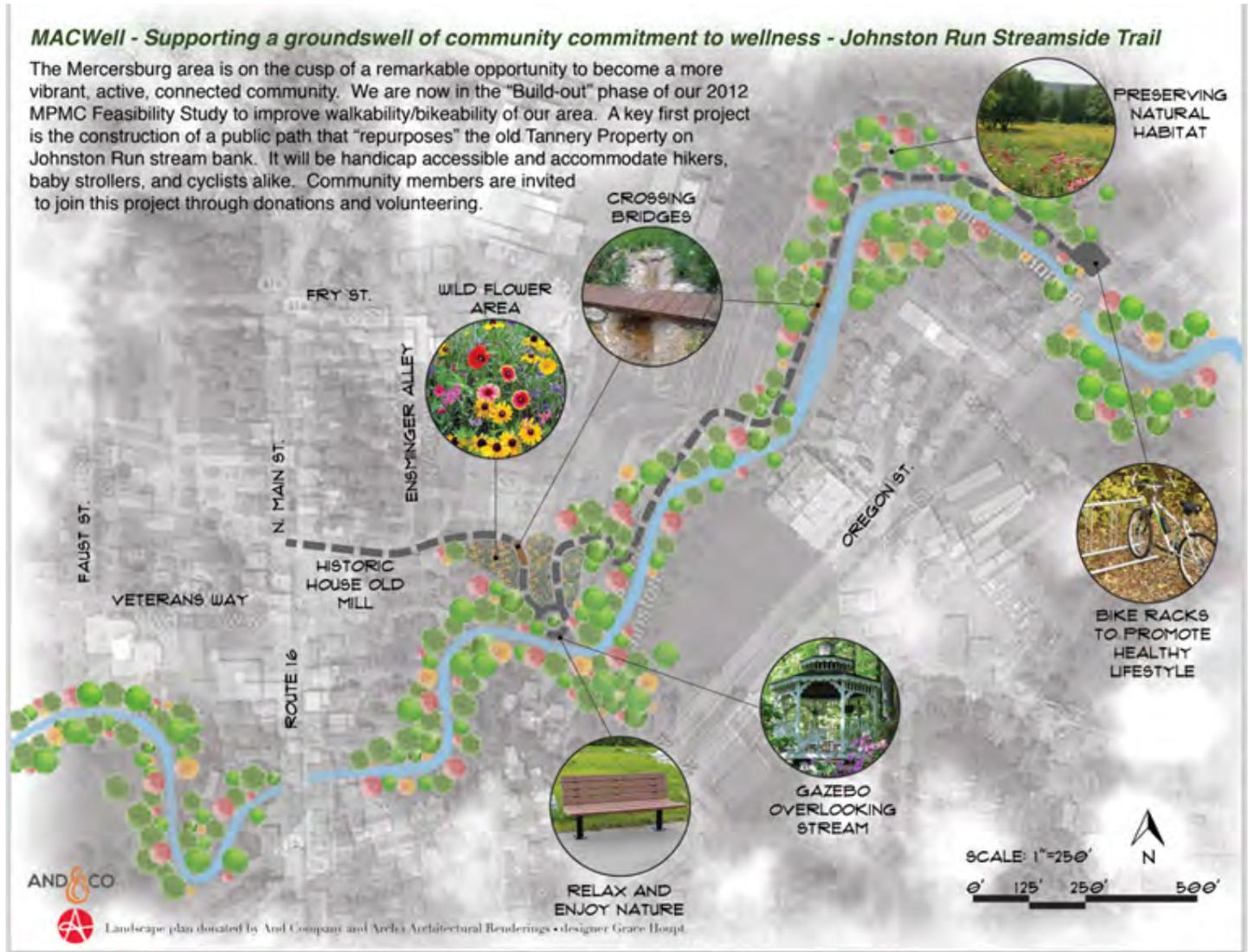


The Tuscarora Trail (hiking) is a spur of the Appalachian Trail (AT) that travels through four states and enters Pennsylvania's Ridge and Valley Region from Maryland, south of McConnellsburg, and joins the Appalachian Trail north of Carlisle.



The Tuscarora Trail travels southward to connect with the C & O Canal Towpath trailhead in Cumberland, Maryland. The C & O Canal Towpath is a dirt and stone path that runs 184 miles from Cumberland, Maryland to Georgetown in Washington, D.C. This trail, along with the Great Allegheny Passage which runs from Cumberland to Pittsburgh, creates a 335-mile trail from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C.

The regional trail system should focus on local connections. Two important connections are the extension of Johnston's Trail within the Borough, and potentially creating a trail from the Borough to the reservoir site at Buchanan's Birthplace State Park and connecting to the Tuscarora Trail. Connecting Mercersburg Area Schools including the Mercersburg Academy, to key destinations, including the Food Lion grocery store on the north side of town, and the Mercersburg Lions Park on the south side of town, should be an immediate focus of the Mercersburg Area walking / biking trail system development.



The regional trail system should also explore the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail which is currently being constructed between Carlisle and Shippensburg. Both the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal trail are segments of the planned 9/11 National Memorial Trail. This Trail is a 1,500-mile system of trails and roadways that will link the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York, the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, and the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

3. Create a Regional Brand

As part of the economic development activities centered around travel and tourism, the municipalities, MVSC, economic development entities, and the Franklin County Visitors Bureau should collaborate on the creation of a regional brand that could be used for signage, internet identification, and promotional materials.

As an example of a successful branding effort, the Pennsylvania Wilds is a 12-county area in northern Pennsylvania. In addition to joint tourism efforts, they have also created the Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship (2017).

The Design Guide is a voluntary planning document that highlights how communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds can "... protect or enhance their unique community character as they grow whether that growth is due to tourism, other economic development planning, resource extraction, or other industries."

TRANSPORTATION

1. Coordinate truck routing throughout the region

Work with the Franklin County Planning Commission to create a coordinated, regional truck routing plan.

The issue of heavy trucks traveling through Mercersburg Borough was one of the most mentioned concerns that residents noted in the Community Survey. Truck traffic was seen as negatively impacting the quality of life and damaging the structural integrity of buildings. However, as is true with many other boroughs in Pennsylvania, the major north-south corridor (Route 75) and southeast-northwest corridor (Routes 16/416) traverses the downtown core of the Borough.

Truck traffic in the region has increased recently with the construction of the Herbrucks egg facility on Corner Road in Montgomery Township. The facility connects to the east on a private access drive to Fort Loudon Road/Route 75 and the turn onto Route 16/416/ Buchanan Trail West.

Montgomery Township and Mercersburg Borough should work with the Franklin County MPO to conduct an origin and destination study to determine existing truck routing and study the adequacy of the routing. Particular emphasis should be placed on the current configuration of the Route 75 and Route 16/416/Buchanan Trail West. A weight restriction study should also be included to ensure that heavy trucks aren't routed onto inadequate roadways.

This assessment would include a review of the Herbrucks truck routing, regarding any possibility for weight restriction and posting roads with respect to the current route between Corner Road in Montgomery Township and Landis Drive in Peters Township, which routes trucks through downtown Mercersburg using Main Street

2. Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Mercersburg Borough

Work with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)'s District 8 Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and the Franklin County Planning Commission to create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Borough.

A Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Mercersburg Borough would serve many purposes. First, it would identify and prioritize those portions of the sidewalk network that are most critical for safety improvements. A continuous sidewalk network from the Food Lion and the Academy has frequently been identified as a priority. Secondly, it would provide information to the Borough's Streets Committee to help coordinate the programming of street, sidewalk, and curb projects. Finally, it would provide connection points for the regional trail system discussed in Theme 3: Celebrate.

The following is a list of plan steps, funding options, and planning partners to create the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:

A. Identify Goals and Objectives for the Plan. Goals could include:

- Design streets that accommodate cars, but also permit residents to bike and walk safely and comfortably
- Develop communities of neighborhoods connected by sidewalks
- Make crossing streets safer and easier
- Develop a safe network of bicycling and walking routes that connect neighborhoods with popular destinations
- Encourage increased physical activity
- Encourage bicycle and pedestrian commuting
- Expand off-road cycling opportunities
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian route signage, maps, and informational brochures
- Promote economic development through bicycling and walking
- Expand recreational bicycling and pedestrian opportunities
- Connect to the regional trail system

B. Inventory and Analysis

Create a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the sidewalk and trail network, and popular destinations such as the Food Lion, restaurants, and stores and banks that people are walking to and having trouble with walkway/bikeway conditions or marginal safety because of conflicts with roadway traffic. Identify whether sidewalks are located on both sides of the street, sidewalk widths, and places where sidewalks would be impractical due to physical constraints.

As an example, shown on the following page is an Inventory and Analysis of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities in Jersey Shore Borough in Lycoming County. The Plan identifies Commercial, Recreation and Municipal Destination Hubs as well as existing trail locations, and areas where there are bicycle and pedestrian safety concerns. The inventory and analysis should also include the Johnston's Run Trail.

PennDOT Planning Assistance

PennDOT developed its Active Transportation Plan in 2019. This plan outlines a vision and framework for improving conditions for walking and bicycling across Pennsylvania communities. The department is coordinating with planning regions and stakeholders across the Commonwealth to implement the Plan. PennDOT’s current Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for Franklin County is Kenana Zejcirovic and The PennDOT Connects planner for District 8 and Franklin County is Carey Mullins.

Themes of the Active Transportation Plan are shown below:

Themes at a Glance



ENHANCE SAFETY

- S1:** Increase PennDOT capacity to plan, design, construct, and maintain active transportation facilities that support and encourage users of all ages, skills, and abilities.
- S2:** Improve PennDOT processes to ensure the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are adequately identified during scoping and included in design for all project types.
- S3:** Implement additional education and enforcement programs to reduce crashes and provide a better sense of security for people who walk and bicycle.
- S4:** Improve policies and practices for maintaining access for people who walk and bicycle during construction and maintenance projects.

PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

- E1:** Integrate equity criteria into decision-making and prioritize walking and bicycling investments in underserved areas with transportation disadvantaged populations.
- E2:** Improve active transportation engagement as part of project-specific transportation planning/design and create specialized outreach for people with disabilities and people from minority groups.
- E3:** Improve non-motorized access to transit and other modal connections.
- E4:** Provide ongoing outreach and education to partners with a focus on partners that focus on underserved communities.

CONNECT WALKING AND BICYCLING NETWORKS

- C1:** Support the development of regional and local plans that identify bicycle and pedestrian needs and priority projects with a focus on closing gaps and building complete, comfortable networks.
- C2:** Improve connectivity by addressing bicycling and pedestrian network gaps through the transportation project development process.
- C3:** Improve access to parks, trails, and other recreational amenities.

LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS

- P1:** Strengthen ongoing coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between federal, state, regional, local, and private partners to facilitate a seamless pedestrian and bicycle system.
- P2:** Coordinate PennDOT planning and policy with all levels of government to encourage mode shifts, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and provide a flexible and resilient transportation network.
- P3:** Improve the quality and availability of data on bicycle and pedestrian travel and infrastructure.
- P4:** Engage in proactive evaluations and discussions on emerging technologies and mobility solutions.

IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH

- H1:** Continue and enhance ongoing state agency coordination to improve public health outcomes through active transportation.
- H2:** Engage health policy practitioners in policy development, comprehensive transportation planning, and early project development.
- H3:** Link state grant program criteria to community projects designed to strengthen health and active transportation.
- H4:** Address health disparities through active transportation policies, plans, and project selection.
- H5:** Improve data collection and sharing between transportation and public health agencies.
- H6:** Improve access to community health resources.

INCREASE ECONOMIC MOBILITY

- M1:** Promote local land use policies and practices that support increased bicycling and walking and add to the overall livability and vitality of communities.
- M2:** Build partnerships between PennDOT, other state agencies, visitors, and convention bureaus, chambers of commerce, local governments, and private sector to support bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to enhance economic initiatives within communities.
- M3:** Identify pre-construction and post-construction assessment methodology to determine the economic vitality of completed pedestrian and bicycle projects.
- M4:** Improve access to job centers and downtown districts.

More Information: For more information on the Plan please visit: [Pennsylvania Active Transportation Plan](https://www.penn.gov/active-transportation).

Franklin County MPO

Staff for the Franklin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) can assist in planning for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and assist coordination with PennDOT staff.

Volunteers

Community members can assist in the creation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. It is recommended that the Mercersburg Borough manager and MVSC coordinate a community day for volunteers including Lions Club members, students, and others to inventory and photograph each section of the Borough. Volunteers will be given instructions to measure the widths of existing sidewalks, note and photograph areas with broken or upturned pavements, missing sidewalk segments, and areas with dangerous segments for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Funding Options

PennDOT Connects is a policy implemented by PennDOT in 2016 to better involve local communities into planning and scoping transportation projects. The policy states that considerations should ensure that “Local government outreach should involve consideration of local planning objectives and community mobility needs, including, but not limited to, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, transit access, stormwater management, and green infrastructure. Planning partners and local governments must demonstrate the need to include community mobility and related objectives in project scopes. Ideally, decisions should be based, in part, on comprehensive planning, corridor studies, resource management studies, multimodal studies or other related planning that demonstrate a need for community features.”

1. Safe Routes to School

PennDOT’s Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program is a national program intended to create safe, convenient, and healthy opportunities for students to walk and bicycle to school. The program encourages students to walk, bike, and roll to school. SRTS programs are built by collaborative partnerships among many stakeholders, including educators, parents, students, elected officials, engineers, planners, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates.

The SRTS program has funding for infrastructure improvements, safety education, and incentives to encourage walking and bicycling.

Non-infrastructure projects do not involve physical improvements to the transportation structures but instead serve to increase awareness and encourage safe use of existing or future facilities. Specifically, non-infrastructure support involves development, implementation, or expansion of programs that educate, promote equity, encourage, engage, and evaluate safe routes to school. For SRTS non-infrastructure

projects, PennDOT will fund the activities (such as a bicycle rodeo, educational assembly, safety outreach program, etc.) or items (e.g., crossing guard equipment, encouragement, or safety items). The project sponsor must pay for all activity planning, coordination, and development.

Infrastructure projects involve physical additions or improvement of existing transportation facilities in and around a school. Traditionally, such improvements include sidewalks, bike lanes, cross-walks, signs and signals, although smaller improvements such as bike racks or bike lockers will qualify too.

2. Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Funding

The federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) program provides funding for projects and activities defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation, trails that serve a transportation purpose, and safe routes to school projects. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), enacted as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), continues to fund the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program through 2026.

Selected projects are funded at 100% of the construction cost (including construction inspection). No applicant match is required, and project sponsors must pay for project design, pre-construction permits, clearances, etc. There is a minimum award of \$50,000 for construction projects and a maximum award of \$1,500,000, although higher awards can be justified for “exceptional” projects.

Eligible projects may include the following:

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Bicycle and pedestrian education (grades K-12)
- Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
- Outdoor advertising management
- Historic preservation and rehab of historic transportation facilities
- Vegetation management
- Archaeological activities
- Vulnerable road user safety assessment activities
- Stormwater management
- Wildlife mortality mitigation

EMERGENCY SERVICES

1. Examine the adequacy of local police, fire and emergency services

Utilize the Department of Community and Economic Development's Governor's Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS) to study local fire and police system organization and services.

The GCLGS provides technical expertise through intergovernmental agreements. They offer consulting services through a network of experts including retired police, fire, and emergency service directors. They can provide Fire Studies including emergency services evaluation, fire services management, and fire apparatus and equipment evaluations, among others. : "Upon the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, representatives of MMPW EMS and officials of the four communities should begin meeting to discuss service provision, staffing, funding, and other issues as part of comprehensive review of emergency services provision in the region."

Conduct a feasibility study of a regional police system.

The Steering Committee and numerous respondents to the Community Survey noted the poor response times provided by the State Police Barracks in Chambersburg. The GCLGS should be contacted to determine what level of technical and financial assistance can be provided. There are various options for providing police service in the future. The first is to maintain existing protection from the Pennsylvania State Police. The second is to explore regional policing options with Peters and Montgomery Townships, Mercersburg Borough, and neighboring municipalities. The third option is a hybrid approach with part-time state police coverage and part-time local police coverage.

If the region does decide to maintain the current structure of police protection, Mercersburg Borough should review its current staffing levels to determine if they are adequate to meet current and future needs. The Borough currently has a full-time chief, and one part-time officer and community members have expressed concern over the adequacy of current police staffing levels.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

1. Study the feasibility of looping the Bear Valley Water Authority water system and the Mercersburg Borough Water Authority Water System

The Bear Valley water system serves portions of Peters Township, extending service to the villages of Fort Loudon, Lemasters, Markes, and Upton. The system extends southward on Route 416 to its closest location north of the Borough. The Borough's water system extends northwest into Peters Township to the water treatment plant at the Buchanan's Birthplace State Park location.

It is assumed that the systems aren't interested in consolidation but rather to provide an interconnecting loop system to provide redundancy. The Borough' water system could possibly benefit from having a secondary source of water in case of emergencies, and Bear Valley could benefit from eliminating dead ends in their current water system. The following questions should be addressed when considering interconnecting the two systems:

- Does either system, particularly Bear Valley, have current issues with water quality given the long water supply lines with no current looping?
- Do the systems have additional capacity to serve one another in the event of an interconnection?
- Do they have source capacity/yield for the other systems?
- Do they have multiple sources and redundancy?
- What are the current rate structures for each system?
- Are any improvements proposed that would change the rate structure?
- Does either system currently test for PFAs and if so, are they within the proposed EPA limits?
- Do both systems have adequate pressure to supply the other system, or would a booster station be required?

Interconnection of the two systems would require DEP Public Water Supply permitting. The supplying system would need to be permitted to provide supply while the receiving system needs to be permitted to receive the other's supply.

Identify Funding Sources for a Shared Water System

- Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) funding

The PA Race Horse Development and Gaming Act provides for the distribution of gaming revenues administered through the CFA to support projects in the public interest. The grants are known as Local Share Account Grants.

The CFA program also has Small Water and Sewer Grants. The PA Small Water and Sewer Grant program provides grants to construct, repair, or improve water, wastewater, or stormwater systems, including green infrastructure. The Program focuses on smaller projects, between \$30,000 and \$500,000 and must comply with local, regional, or county planning. Funding can be used for combining water or wastewater systems. The Program focuses on cost-effective projects that show economic development and/or more efficient service to customers.

PAH2O grants are similar to the Small Water and Sewer Grants and are funded through COVID-19 ARPA funds. The program has the same project eligibility lists and also covers construction, acquisition, fixed equipment, engineering, inspections, permits, and administrative costs.

– PENNVEST

The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) provides low-interest loans and grants for new construction or for improvements to public or privately-owned drinking water, storm water, or sewage treatment facilities. The program offers grants, loans, and loan guarantees

– USDA Rural Development

The United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service and Environmental Programs, rural communities can apply for Water and Environmental Grant and Loan funding to obtain the technical assistance and financing necessary to develop drinking water and waste disposal systems. Eligible areas include rural areas with populations of 10,000 or less. Long-term, low-interest loans are available.

2. Implement the recommendations of the Johnston’s Run Watershed Plan (Plan)

The Plan identified several watershed management strategies for Johnston Run. These included restoration projects including voluntary programs for agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs), reforestation of riparian buffers, and stormwater retrofits that capture and treat stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces in existing development.

Grants for outreach and public education are available from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, South Mountain Partnership, and others.

3. Implement the digitization of Mercersburg Borough’s sewer and water line locations, stormwater management facilities, and infrastructure information.

This information is currently only available on a series of paper maps which hinders updating and utilization of this information. The Borough should also document and digitize all its storm water system infrastructure. It is anticipated that this information will be required when the Borough is designated an MS-4 Community requiring planning for and permitting stormwater flows in the Borough.





SECTION THREE: **FUTURE LAND USE**

IMAGINE FRANKLIN 2035 FUTURE LAND USE – CHARACTER AREA

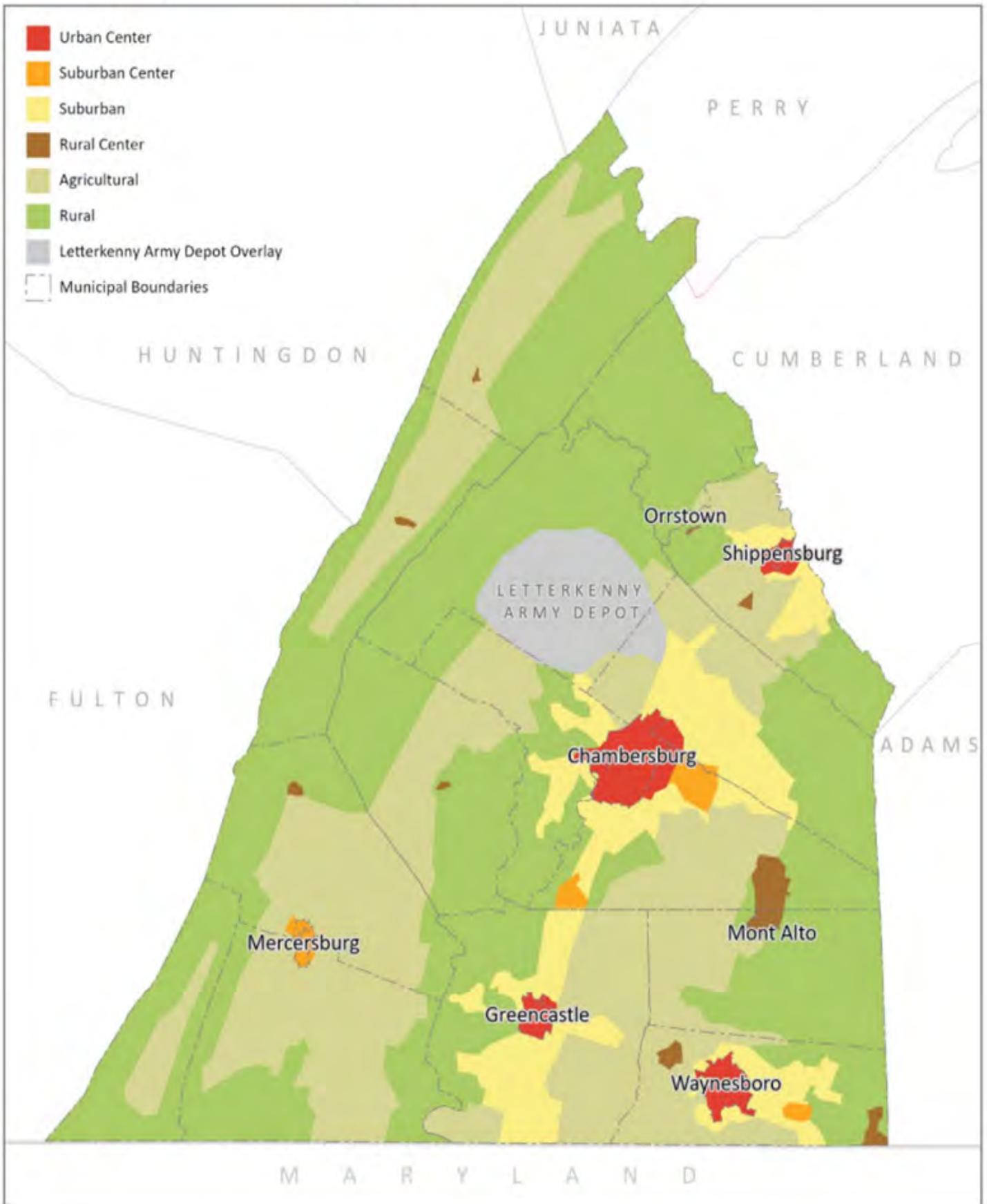
The Franklin County Future Character Area Map (CAM) is designed to help guide growth and resource preservation for Franklin County communities over the next 10 years. The map reflects six categories, four in the Growth Areas and two in the Rural Resource Areas, that are designed to promote development within areas with sufficient infrastructure to support growth while preserving areas of significant natural resources, prime farmland, and protected open space. Special Overlays identify areas within the county that are unique in their design and use of space. Collectively these areas define Franklin County's unique development patterns and history. Smart growth planning principles and design standards accompany each character area to cover the three themes of the county comprehensive plan: Quality of Life, Quality of Place, and Quality of Growth. Development in the respective character areas that is consistent with Imagine Franklin 2035 will exhibit these principles and collectively benefit the environment, community, and businesses

GROWTH AREAS

The four classifications within Growth Areas are designed to preserve existing developed areas while allowing for growth to occur in areas that have or are planned for a full array of public infrastructure.

- Urban Center- Historic downtowns and boroughs that represent centers of economic activity and population density.
- Suburban Center- Predominantly regional centers of economic activity containing multiple land uses of varying degrees of intensity.
- Suburban-These areas are predominantly residential communities with locally oriented commercial uses and community facilities.
- Rural Center- Rural, unincorporated villages with limited access to major infrastructure, such as public water or sewer and interstates.

Franklin County Character Area Map (CAM)



RURAL RESOURCE AREAS

Rural Resource Areas include two character area classifications focused on conservation of natural resources and agricultural industries while supporting rural living.

- Rural- Open and wooded lands with scattered villages, farms, and residential uses.
- Agricultural - Large concentrations of high-quality soils and active and diverse farm operations along with related support services.

The Mercersburg Area Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Plan map generally reinforces the land use designations used in Imagine Franklin 2035 and supplements them with a Village and a Forest land use designation.

- Agricultural- lands currently used for agricultural production and include all preserved farms.
- Forest- lands predominantly in forest cover and forestry operations.
- Village- includes the Villages of Fort Loudon, Lemasters, Markes, Upton, Cove in Peters Township, and the Villages of Shimpstown, Claylick, Kasieville, Welsh Run and Bino In Montgomery Township. These places are the historical centers of economic, educational, government, and social activity in the Townships. Some commercial uses are still located there as well as post offices, schools, and Township buildings.
- Suburban Center- Mercersburg Borough

The following is a detailed Future Land Use Map for Mercersburg Borough. In general, the land use designations mirror the Zoning Districts found on the Borough's zoning map:

- The Low-Density Residential designation is the same as the SFR Single-Family Residential Zoning District. This area is located primarily in the northwest part of the Borough between Buchanan Trail West and Fort Loudon Road, and in the western part of the Borough on either side of Johnstons Lane.

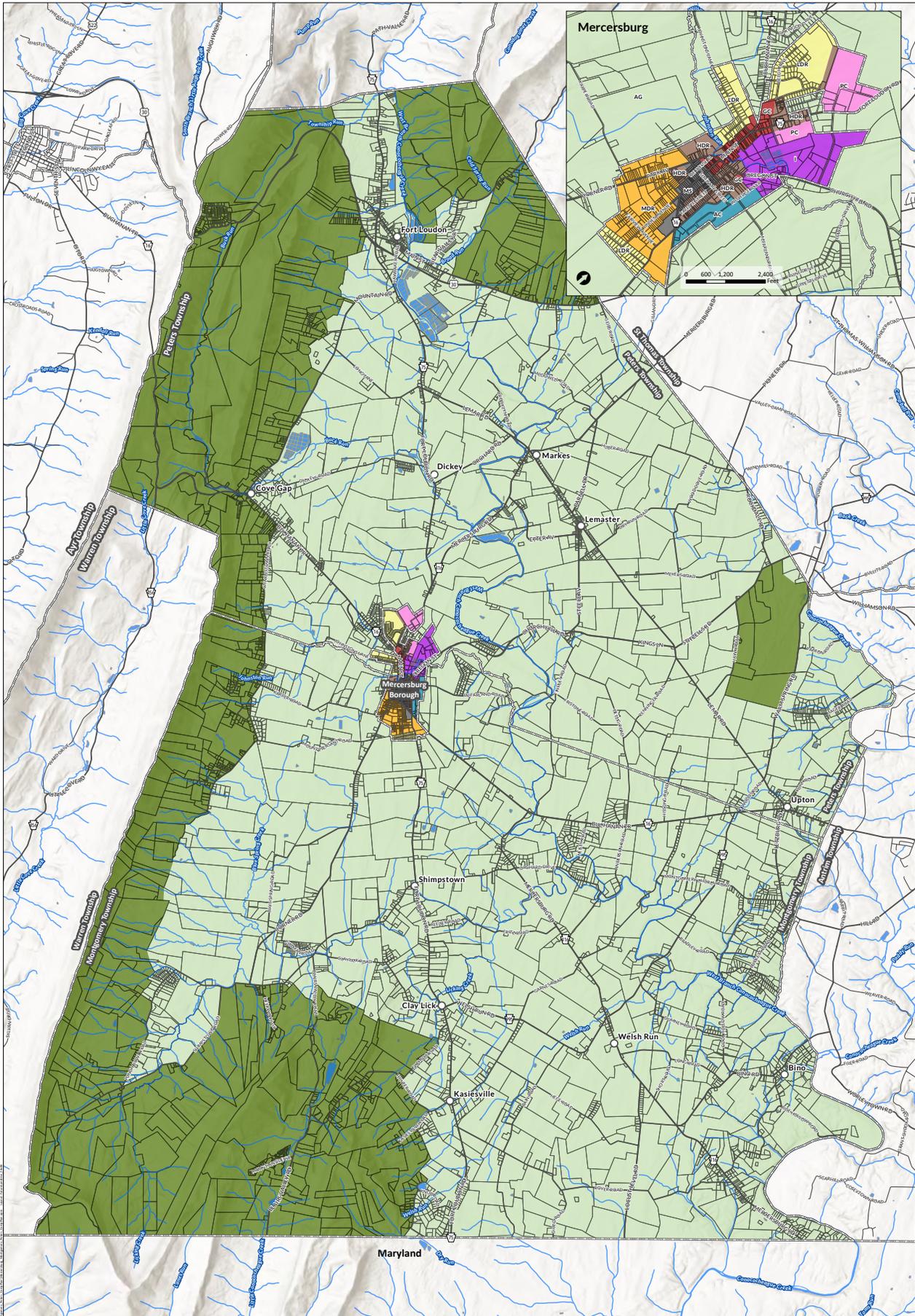


- The Medium-Density Residential Designation coincides with the TR Town Residential District in the southern and southwestern part of the Borough, generally located between South Park Avenue and Buchanan Trail West.
- The High-Density Residential designation is the same as the GR General Residential zoning District. It is primarily located in six specific areas of the Borough:
 - Between Constitution Avenue and Jeb Stuart Alley
 - Both sides of West California Street
 - North of West Seminary Street, West of North Park Avenue, and south of Johnston Run
 - North and south of Oregon Street
 - Between Black Road and Fort Loudon Road
 - A small area in the northern part of the Borough east of Locust Drive
- The General Commercial designation is the same as the GC General Commercial Zoning District which is generally located on both sides of North Main Street, north of the intersection with North Park Avenue/Oregon Street
- The Planned Commercial designation coincides with the PC Planned Commercial Zoning District and includes an area east of Fort Loudon Road in the northeast part of the Borough, as well as an area in the far northern part of the Borough that includes the Food Lion.
- The Academic Designation is the same as the AC Academic zoning district and includes lands owned by the Mercersburg Academy on the east side of the Borough
- The Industrial designation includes the land zoned I Industrial in the northeast part of the Borough, generally located between Oregon Street and Fort Loudon Road.

The TC1 Town Center 1 and TC2 Town Center 2 Zoning Districts were designed to encourage pedestrian-scale development while respecting the historic character of the Borough. The TC1 District is centered on the square of the Borough at Seminary Street and Main Street, extending west to South Park Avenue and east to Fayette Street.

The TC2 District is located to the north of TC1, extending to North Park Avenue/Oregon Street. It is also located south of TC1, extending south to Mercer Avenue and southeast along Buchanan Trail West to Constitution Avenue.

The areas within these two zoning districts have been designated as Main Street on the Future Land Map. There is also a property, currently zoned PC, located on the west side of Main Street and north of North Park Avenue, located with the Main Street land use designation. This area encompasses the area identified in Revitalize section of the Plan which includes a recommendation for a Main Street Plan.



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 10/20/2024 PM-05 GIS-AJF 10/20/2024
HRG
 86 South George Street
 Suite 200
 York, PA 17403
 717.872.2330 (office)
 www.hrg-inc.com

- Villages
- Municipal Boundary
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- Waterbody
- Future Land Use
Agriculture
- Forest
- Industrial
- Medium-Density Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- General Commercial Designation
- Planned Commercial Future Land Use
- Academic Designation
- Main Street

Future Land Use

Mercersburg Borough, Montgomery Township, & Peters Township
Comprehensive Plan
Franklin County, Pennsylvania