

CHAPTER 7

FUTURE LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan establishes policies for guiding future land use within the area and serves as a guide on which to base regulatory controls, such as municipal zoning maps and zoning ordinances. The Future Land Use Plan is not a zoning map nor does it change zoning in a municipality. The zoning ordinances and maps separately adopted by the municipalities establish zoning district boundaries, permitted land uses and the permitted density of development. In the land use categories established below, the types of land uses recommended in each category will be indicated, as well as the proposed density range.

The Future Land Use Plan has been developed in recognition of remaining rural areas and agricultural lands, charming villages and Borough, historic sites in the villages and rural areas, existing traditional neighborhood development, existing recreational opportunities and trails, stream valleys, Schuylkill River valley, steep slopes, visual access to hills and ridgelines, and areas with restraints to development. This plan is intended to preserve and enhance assets valued by the residents of the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity Region and retain areas of open space and rural character in the face of development pressure.

Development is not prohibited, but it is managed and controlled. The appropriate locations for development have been determined with the intent to direct most development to areas where public sewer and water are or could be available, and in some cases allow for appropriate orderly expansion of existing developed areas. This logical growth pattern will allow for the retention of areas of rural character in the Region and conservation of natural features.

Improving the quality of development which occurs is also a concern, particularly along the Route 422 corridor. The following indicates ways of improving the quality of development which occurs in the Region through ordinance provisions.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ORDINANCES

- Establish interactive process with developers to convey expectations
 - Pre-design meetings
 - Joint Site visits

- Establish data and analysis requirements
 - Submission requirements
 - Impact studies requirements
 - Relate use and area and bulk regulations to character of area
- Adopt design and performance standards
- Promote flexibility
 - Conditional uses
 - Built in negotiation processes
- Use incentives for good design
- Use buffering requirements
- Improvements requirement and standards

Goals and Objectives

The goal for land use and housing is to plan a regional pattern of land use which recognizes the existing character and land use patterns of the municipalities and will be consistent with the goals of preserving the natural, scenic, historic, agricultural and open space resources of the region. The goal for natural and scenic resources is to protect, conserve, sustain and enhance the natural and scenic resources of Amity, Exeter, and St. Lawrence for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. The goal for historic and cultural resources is to preserve and enhance the historic, architectural and cultural heritage of Amity, Exeter and St. Lawrence. The goal for agricultural resources is to preserve remaining agricultural areas for agricultural use and support the continuation of agricultural activities in the region. The goal for open space and recreation is to provide open space within the municipalities through the preservation and acquisition of farmland, river and stream corridors, woodlands and hills, and the development and retention of recreation areas and parks.

The economic development goal is to provide for additional light industrial, office and commercial development to enhance the region's tax base, provided such development occurs at designated appropriate locations, does not adversely affect the built and natural environment and the region's infrastructure, is compatible, attractive, and environment-friendly.

The following are the specific objectives the Future Land Use Plan is designed to meet:

- Manage growth in order to preserve the natural environment and remaining rural character and agricultural areas.
- Designate growth areas, which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development, have appropriate access, can be efficiently served by the circulation system, and can be efficiently served by public sewer and water systems.
- Encourage a compact development pattern, which minimizes land consumption and maximizes open space.
- Direct new development in the municipalities to the designated growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal, which cannot be feasibly sewerred.
- Coordinate policies for land use, circulation and community facilities and services to assure they do not have conflicting results.
- Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through proper allocation of land use and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards. Discourage proximity of incompatible land uses within the area and along adjoining municipalities.
- Coordinate future development with transportation infrastructure to minimize traffic volumes and congestion.
- Allow a variety of housing densities, development patterns, and attractive residential housing types for all age groups in appropriately designated areas, within the natural and service constraints of the municipalities.
- Encourage land development techniques, such as conservation development, based on land characteristics, which will preserve natural resources, agricultural, lands, and open space.
- Provide for well-planned development in each municipality, which will be consistent with community character.
- Discourage development in areas susceptible to sinkhole development unless adequate mitigation measures are practiced.

- Encourage infill development among existing developments where appropriate because of available infrastructure and lack of environmental constraints.
- Establish a permanent open space system.
- Provide community facilities to serve the needs of all residents.
- Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents of the region.
- Provide for the maintenance of the character of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate coordinated land use controls.
- Address the housing needs of the elderly and disabled in the community.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate, environmentally responsible and compatible commercial, office, and industrial activities at appropriate locations, within the context of existing land use patterns, support services, transportation networks, natural constraints, and environmental concerns.
- Manage development in the Route 422, 562 and 662 corridors and require development to employ techniques to prevent the decline of and enhance the aesthetics, safety and mobility of the corridors.
- Consider opportunities for transit-oriented development if the Schuylkill Valley Metro becomes a reality.
- Provide for a mix of land uses, which will balance growth with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the area, and have manageable tax structures.
- Protect and enhance the existing character of St. Lawrence Borough and the villages in the Townships such as Douglasville, Limekiln, Jacksonwald, Amityville, Weavertown, Yellow House, Stonersville and Monocacy.

Land Use Categories

The following is a summary of the categories shown on the Future Land Use Plan:

Agricultural Preservation - Agricultural Preservation areas are intended to be retained as areas where agriculture will be practiced and appropriate uses related to agriculture

allowed. Residential development is discouraged. Some of the most productive farmland within the Region can be preserved for agricultural use and the value of agricultural land that remains can be retained by limiting adverse effects from the encroachment of residential development on agricultural uses. If the Townships utilize effective agricultural zoning, as Exeter Township now does, the intent is to severely restrict residential development through zoning. Administrative means for agricultural preservation detailed in this chapter and Chapter 14 could also be used. If a Township determines that it does not want effective agricultural zoning or will consider it in the future, primarily reliance would be an administrative means to preserve agriculture.

Rural Conservation- The intent of this category is to encourage the retention of rural character of portions of Amity Township that are not going to be designated Agricultural Preservation or River Conservation. These areas now contain a mix of agriculture, woodland, recreation, and single-family development. The density of development for single family dwellings would be two net acres per dwelling. Conservation development is the preferred means of development.

Rural Preservation - The intent of this category is to protect areas with severe limitations to development and vulnerable natural area such as steep slopes, woodlands, watersheds, water courses, and wildlife habitats from intensive development. This also serves to perpetuate rural character and landscapes outside designated growth areas. The density of development for single-family dwellings would be three net acres per dwelling. Conservation development is the preferred means of development.

Rural/Institutional – This category recognizes an existing large cemetery area. On land not developed for cemetery use, single family dwellings on one acre lots would be permitted.

River Conservation – The Schuylkill River is a tremendous asset to and key natural area within the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity Region. The intent of this land use category is to preserve the character of the River and protect its floodplains and wetlands, wildlife habitats and recreation areas. Conservation and related recreation uses and acquisition for public or quasi-public open space are encouraged.

Low Density Residential - The Low Density Residential areas are intended to provide for single-family residential development at a density of ¼ to 2 net acres per dwelling, depending on sewer and water facilities, or in areas abutting developed land where low density residential development has occurred or was proposed and considered appropriate. Conservation development is the preferred means of development.

Medium Density Residential - The Medium Density Residential areas are intended to accommodate most of the residential growth in the region. The types of units and density of development would depend upon the availability of public sewer and water facilities.

Many Medium Density areas are or are likely to be sewerred. Others adjoin areas that will be or are sewerred, and could be sewerred in the future. Types of units and density of development would also vary by municipality. In the Townships, with on-site sewage disposal, typically single-family homes at a density of one dwelling per one or two net acres would be permitted. If public sewer and water facilities were available, the municipalities could, if they felt it appropriate, allow two family development and/or apartments and townhouses. With public sewer and water, the typical density for single-family dwellings would be two to five dwellings per acre. The maximum density of development, which would be for two-family, apartment, and townhouse development, would range up to three to six dwelling units per acre with public sewer and water. In the Borough, with public sewer and water, single-family development would be permitted, and two-family development could be considered.

High Density Residential - The High Density Residential areas are intended to accommodate residential growth in the region, with the highest permitted densities. All proposed High Density areas currently have public sewer facilities along their frontage. Types of units and density of development will vary by municipality and sewer capacity. With public sewer and water, the typical density for single-family dwellings would be one to six dwellings per acre. The maximum density of development, which would be for two-family, apartment, and townhouse development, would range up to five to ten dwelling units per acre with public sewer and water.

Town Center - This category is found in the Borough of St. Lawrence. The intent of this category is to permit a mix of residential development, commercial uses intended to serve the day-to-day needs of the residents of the Borough and surrounding areas, offices and personal services. Public sewer and water facilities would be required. The types of residential uses permitted would include single family and townhouses at a density of four to seven units per acre, depending upon zoning district.

Rural Village - This category is found in the Townships. The intent of this category is to permit a mix of residential development and commercial uses intended to serve the day-to-day needs of residents based on historic settlement patterns. The density of residential development would depend upon the availability of public sewer and water facilities. Typically, if public sewer and water facilities were available, single family homes on lots as small as one-fifth acre would be allowed. If public sewer and water were not available, single family dwellings would be permitted on one acre lots.

Mobile Home Park - This category reflects the areas of existing mobile home parks in Amity Township, where such uses will be allowed in the future.

Shopping Center Commercial - The intent of these Commercial areas is to provide for a wide range of commercial uses, including those serving the day-to-day needs of area residents and some regional-oriented commercial uses, which could include highway

oriented commercial uses and tourist-oriented uses. Typically, residential development is not permitted. Commercial development occurs as well-planned, unified developments.

Highway Commercial - The intent of the Commercial areas is to provide for a wide range of commercial uses, which would include commercial uses, such as highway oriented commercial uses and tourist-oriented uses. Typically, residential development is not permitted.

Neighborhood Commercial - The intent of the Commercial areas is to provide for a limited range of commercial uses, including those serving the day-to-day needs of area residents and would not included "heavier" commercial uses, such as highway oriented commercial uses. Typically, residential development is not permitted.

Office Park - The Office Park area is intended for the development of a well-planned, unified office park of professional and corporate offices.

Light Industrial - The Light Industrial area is intended for uses such as office, wholesaling, warehousing, research, limited manufacturing, packaging, and assembling. Typically, commercial and residential uses are not allowed.

General Industrial - The Industrial area is intended for uses allowed in Light Industrial areas and for "heavier" industrial uses, such as junkyards, surface mining and landfills. Typically, commercial and residential uses are not allowed.

Public - This category includes public buildings, such as municipal buildings and schools, and recreational uses such as the Daniel Boone Homestead and municipal parks.

Restricted Office/Commercial - This area reflects and is intended to allow continuation of a mix of single family dwellings, professional services and businesses, and professional or governmental offices and studios.

In all areas intended for non-residential development it is expected that any development which occurs will not have adverse impacts on residential areas, will not adversely impact the public health, safety, and general welfare, and will be subject to appropriate buffering requirements and design and performance standards.

ST. LAWRENCE-EXETER-AMITY FUTURE LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES

LAND USE CATEGORY	POTENTIAL PRIMARY TYPES OF USES ALLOWED	LIKELY DENSITY RANGE	POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED
Agricultural Preservation	Agriculture and agricultural related, single family dwellings	5 to 10 acre lots to 40 acre farms (1 acre lots for developed parcels if use sliding scale)	Large lot zoning, Agricultural Preservation Zoning (large parcel or sliding scale), administrative procedures, transfer of development rights; depending upon municipality
Rural Conservation	Single family dwellings, agriculture, conservation uses, recreation	1 dwelling unit per 2 acres net tract area	2 acre lots, cluster development, Growing Greener subdivisions (open space developments [conservation development]), transfer of development rights
Rural Preservation	Single family dwellings, agriculture, conservation uses, recreation	1 dwelling unit per 3 acres net tract area	3 acre lots, Lot averaging, cluster development, Growing Greener subdivisions, transfer of development rights
Rural/Institutional	Cemetery, single family dwellings, conservation uses	1 acre lots	1 acre lots
River Conservation	Open space, recreation, trails, municipal	None	Floodplain and wetland protection
Low Density Residential	Single family dwellings	2 acre to 1/4 acre lots, depending on sewer and water facilities	2 acre to 1/4 acre lots, cluster development, Growing Greener subdivisions

LAND USE CATEGORY	POTENTIAL PRIMARY TYPES OF USES ALLOWED	LIKELY DENSITY RANGE	POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED
Medium Density Residential	Single family dwellings, two family dwellings, townhouses, apartments, elderly housing, mobile home parks, mixed housing -- depending on zoning district and municipality	2 net acres to 1/5 acre lots SF, depending on sewer and water facilities; 2 acre to 1/7 acre lots TF, depending on sewer and water; 3 to 6 units per acre MF, public sewer and water required; depending on zoning district and municipality	Standard lot developments, cluster development, Growing Greener subdivisions, planned residential developments, traditional neighborhood development
High Density Residential	Single family dwellings, two family dwellings, townhouses, apartments	1 acre to 1/6 acre lots SF; 1 acre to 1/2 acre lots TF; 5 to 10 units per acre MF; depending upon municipality, district, and sewer and water availability	Standard lot developments, traditional neighborhood development
Rural Village	Single family dwellings, community facilities, public and quasi-public, limited commercial, serving the day-to-day needs of residents (limited retail sales), professional offices, financial institutions, restaurants, personal and household service establishments), bed and breakfasts, historic buildings	1 acre to 1/5 acre lots, depending on sewer and water facilities	Standard lot development, village pattern
Town Center	Single family dwellings, professional offices, residential conversion, retail sales, personal and household services, restaurants, offices, financial institutions, funeral homes, townhouses, contractors, retirement community, nursing home, depending on zoning district	1/4 acre to 1/7 acre lots	Standard lot development, traditional neighborhood development, borough infill

LAND USE CATEGORY	POTENTIAL PRIMARY TYPES OF USES ALLOWED	LIKELY DENSITY RANGE	POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED
Shopping Center Commercial	Retail sales, offices, financial institutions, restaurants, personal and household services, indoor places of amusement	3 acres sites, smaller pad sites permissible	Unified community shopping centers
Neighborhood Commercial	Limited commercial serving the day-to-day needs of residents; professional offices, financial institutions, restaurants, personal and household service uses	1 acre to 1/4 acre lots, depending on sewer and water facilities	Standard lot development, mini-malls
Highway Commercial	Neighborhood commercial uses; vehicle-related uses; vehicle sales; funeral homes; nursing, personal care, and retirement homes; indoor places of amusement; lumber and building materials supply; contractors; hotels and motels; nurseries and greenhouses; country club; retirement community; office park; research park	2 acre to 1/2 acre lots, depending on sewer and water facilities	Standard lot development, mini-malls, neighborhood shopping centers, stressing access management and performance and design standards
Office Park	Offices; research and testing; medical use, excluding hospitals	1 acre lots	Standard lot development; office; research and business parks; campus
Light Industrial	Offices; wholesaling and warehousing; printing and publishing; research and testing; manufacturing, processing, packaging, assembling; self-storage units	3 to 5 acre lots	Standard lot developments; industrial, office, research and business parks; campus; transit oriented development near Schuykill Valley Metro if appropriate

LAND USE CATEGORY	POTENTIAL PRIMARY TYPES OF USES ALLOWED	LIKELY DENSITY RANGE	POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED
General Industrial	Light Industrial uses; junk yards; surface mining; sanitary landfills; adult uses; race tracks; truck distribution center	3 to 5 acre lots	Standard lot developments; industrial office, research and business parks; campus; transit oriented development near Schuylkill Valley Metro if appropriate
Public	Public Uses		
Restricted Office/ Commercial	Single family dwellings, professional services and business, professional or governmental office or studio	1 acre to ¼ acre lots, depending on sewer and water facilities	Standard lot development, conversion of existing buildings

IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES

<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Agricultural Preservation</u>	<u>Environmental Protection</u>	<u>Rural Conservation and Open Space Preservation</u>
<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Administrative Means</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Administrative Means</u>
Percentage of tract		>25 Slopes -- restrict development	Conservation Development Donation
Sliding Scale	see attached list	15-25 Slopes -- larger lots	Cluster Development Purchase with fees
Large Lot		Floodplains -- restrict development	Open Space Requirements Purchase with tax revenue
Conservation Development		Wetlands -- restrict development	Net out Provisions Purchase with grants
		Hydric Soils -- restrict development pending wetlands study	Lot Averaging Purchase with bond issues
		Wetlands Margins -- restrict development	Conservation easements
		Woodland -- limit clearing	Transfer of development rights
		Riparian Buffers/Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning	
		Net out provisions	
		Larger Lot Sizes	

ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

- Work with local farmers to ensure participation in County's Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Program
- Establish Township Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Program
- Establish Transfer of Development Program within a municipality or across municipal boundaries
- Promote the inclusion of farms in Agricultural Security Areas.
- Support measures to relieve property tax burden for farmers
- Limit extension of public sewer and water facilities to agricultural areas
- Permit businesses which support agricultural operations
- Allow farmers to supplement incomes through home businesses, home occupations and farm related businesses
- Permit appropriate recreational activities, such as hayrides, corn mazes, and festivals
- Limit non-farm uses which could cause conflicts with agricultural practices and/or require buffers for non-farm uses around the perimeter of farms
- Allow conservation development (Growing Greener) as an option
- Promote enrollment in Act 319 tax relief program
- Allow and give incentives to compact development and higher densities where public sewer and water are available in areas designated for development, and give disincentives to inefficient development techniques

Acreages in Future Land Use Plan Categories

The following table indicates the available acres contained in certain categories on the Future Land Use Plan. To arrive at available acreage, land classified as Open and Farm on the Existing Land Use Map has been totaled.

<u>Future Land Use Plan Category</u>	<u>Available Acres</u>
Rural Preservation	2171
Rural Conservation	2753
Town Center	0.68
Shopping Center Commercial	55
Highway Commercial	441
Neighborhood Commercial	5
Office Park	62
Light Industrial	673
General Industrial	13
Low Density Residential	864
Medium Density Residential	1628
High Density Residential	66

Designated Growth Area

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code creates the concept of a Designated Growth Area, which is a region within a multi-municipal plan that preferably includes and surrounds a borough or village, and within which residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned for densities of one unit to the acre or more, commercial, industrial and institutional uses are permitted or planned for and public infra-structure services are provided or planned. The intent of the designated growth area is to provide for orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area, provide for the economic and employment needs of the area, and allow for increase of the tax base of the region.

In the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity region, the Designated Growth Area includes land within the High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Town Center, General Industrial, Light Industrial, Highway Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Shopping Center Commercial, Office Park, and Restricted Office/Commercial land use categories, and the Rural Village in Douglassville.

Future Growth Area

The Municipalities Planning Code also includes the concept of future growth area, which is an area of a multi-municipal plan outside of and adjacent to a designated growth area where residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses and development are permitted or planned at varying densities and public infrastructure services may or may not be provided, but future development at greater densities is planned to accompany the orderly extension and provision of public infrastructure services. The potential Future Growth Areas would be the Low Density Residential areas in Amity Township; but those areas have already been planned for residential development, so they have not been designated as Future Growth Areas.

Public Infrastructure Areas

Another concept identified in the Municipalities Planning Code is public infrastructure area, which is a designated growth area or all or any portion of a future growth area described in a multi-municipal comprehensive plan where public infrastructure services will be provided and outside of which such public infrastructure services will not be required to be publicly financed. No area within the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity area has been designated as a public infrastructure area because the municipalities within the area will not guarantee the financing of public infrastructure services to and for developments on the behalf of developers. Municipal policy is that the cost of expanding the necessary infrastructure to developments be borne by the developers, and not by the municipalities.

Rural Resource Areas

Rural resource areas are areas described in a multi-municipal plan within which rural resources including, but not limited to, agriculture, timbering, mining, quarrying and other extractive industries, forest and game lands and recreation and tourism are encouraged and enhanced, development that is compatible with or supportive of such uses is permitted, and public infrastructure services are not provided except in villages. Rural resource areas are further categorized as areas where: (1) rural resource uses are planned for; (2) development at densities that are compatible with rural resource uses are or may be permitted; (3) infrastructure extensions or improvements are not intended to be publicly financed by municipalities, unless the participating or affected municipalities agree that such service should be provided to an area for health or safety reasons or to accomplish one or more of the purposes set forth in Section 1101 of the Municipalities Planning Code.

No rural resource areas have been designated in this Comprehensive Plan because no areas appropriately fit all the criteria which have been established. In the proposed

Future Land Use Plan, areas for agriculture, mining, quarrying and other extractive industries, recreation, tourism and development compatible with or supportive of such uses are typically found in separate land use categories, which may allow some of these uses. No area has been established for the wide range of these uses. For example, in Agricultural preservation areas, typically extractive industries are not permitted. Extractive industries will typically not be permitted where residential development, forest, recreation and tourism are encouraged. Some rural resource uses, such as quarrying and other extractive industries, could be permitted within industrial areas, which are considered Designated Growth Area.

Environmental Considerations for Future Development

As development occurs in the region, care must be taken to preserve and protect identified sensitive environmental resources. The following approaches should be taken when development takes place.

- An ongoing awareness of and sensitivity toward the natural resources of the area should be encouraged.
- Development should be concerned with geologic stability, soils suitability, groundwater supplies and stream flows.
- Groundwater resources should be protected against depletion and contamination.
- Methods of encouraging replenishment of the groundwater supply should be encouraged.
- Streams, ponds and wetlands should be protected against pollution from point sources and runoff.
- Floodplains and wet soils should be protected from encroachment.
- The loss of topsoil should be minimized.
- The retention and establishment of trees and other vegetation should be encouraged to control erosion, shade surface waters, control stormwater flow, create wind breaks, provide animal habitats and provide visual amenities.
- The preservation of scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors should be encouraged.
- Steep slopes should be avoided.

- The protection, preservation and enhancement of historic resources should be encouraged.
- The adaptive reuse of historic structures should be encouraged where appropriate.
- Innovative land development techniques should be used to minimize land consumption, preserve ecosystems, preserve agricultural lands and preserve natural resources and open space.
- The provision of open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation should be encouraged. Visual and physical access to the open space system should be provided.
- The coordination of open space and circulation systems among adjoining developments should be encouraged.
- A system of bicycle paths and sidewalks should be encouraged.
- Incorporation of resources into development plans should be encouraged.
- Flexible approaches to site design to recognize resources should be encouraged.

Housing

The objectives for housing are to provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents; to allow for a variety of housing densities, development patterns, and attractive residential housing types for all age groups in appropriately designated areas within the natural and service constraints of the municipalities; to provide for maintenance of the character of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate coordinated land use controls, and address the housing needs of the elderly and disabled in the community. No significant housing problems within the area have been identified.

Provision for a variety of housing densities, housing types, and development patterns in appropriately designated areas is accomplished through the Land Use Plan. Maintenance of the existing housing stock and adequacy of new housing can be accomplished through enforcement of building codes and utilization of property maintenance codes.

The existing character of residential areas can be maintained through appropriate zoning provisions and review of subdivision and land development plans.

As taxes and housing costs rise, there is always concern for the elderly. Long term residents of the area can find themselves in positions where it is increasingly difficult to maintain or keep their properties. The municipalities should work with older residents to identify various programs that are available to help them meet their housing expenses and retain their homes. Provision will be made in zoning ordinances for elderly housing development.