

# Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan 2024



*Adopted December 19, 2024*

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Stakeholder Engagement .....	9
Protect The Best First .....	19
Grow In Not Out .....	28
Housing for All .....	36
Plan for People and Places .....	43
Expand Transportation Choices .....	51
Adapt and Stay Safe .....	63
Open for Business .....	70
Engage to Improve .....	77
Future Land Use .....	83
Implementation Plan .....	87
Appendix A: Acronyms .....	93
Appendix B: Survey Results .....	95
Appendix C: Photo Credits and End Notes .....	105





# Introduction

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## Community Context

The 2020 U.S. Decennial Census identified Cumberland County as the fastest-growing county in Pennsylvania. Since the 2010 Census, the county added more than 25,000 residents to reach a population of 259,469<sup>1</sup>. By 2043, Cumberland County's population is expected to swell to over 330,000 residents<sup>2</sup>.

The county's population growth has fueled demand for residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Since 2013, over 1,300 new residential dwelling units have been proposed each year, yet, vacancy rates remain at historic lows and prices have escalated to levels unaffordable for many residents<sup>3</sup>. The county's strategic location and residential growth have attracted commercial and industrial development that provides needed services, jobs, and tax revenue. The county's access to major highways and consumer purchasing habits have been a powerful attractant for the transportation and warehousing industry with 319 establishments employing nearly 20,000 people, the largest employment sector in the county<sup>4</sup>.

The county's growth, despite its benefits, must be carefully managed to avoid irreparable harm to the county's natural environment.

Since 2017, 23,265 acres of farmland in the county have been transitioned to another use, making Cumberland one of the top farmland loss leaders in the state<sup>5</sup>. Productive agriculture lands must be considered "developed" land and losses mitigated in the future given their contributions to the county's food security and rural quality of life. The county's rich groundwater resources and high-quality surface waters provide drinking water supplies to over 160,000 residents while also supporting water based outdoor recreational opportunities<sup>6</sup>. With 30% of the county's 760 stream miles showing pollution impairments, existing and new development must protect water quality to avoid further degradation<sup>7</sup>.

## Trends Shaping Cumberland County's Future

- ✓ Rapid population growth and increasing diversity.
- ✓ Insufficient housing inventory and different unit types.
- ✓ Increasing traffic.
- ✓ Losing prime farmland and open space to support new development.
- ✓ Intense demand for regional transportation and warehousing facilities.
- ✓ Infrastructure upgrades needed to keep pace with development.
- ✓ Changing climate resulting in warmer temperatures and more extreme weather.
- ✓ Protecting community character and quality of life in conjunction with new development.
- ✓ Growing demand for parks, trails, and other facilities that support healthy living.





The county's sense of place and high quality of life are regularly cited as key reasons why residents and businesses call Cumberland County home, factors that cannot be taken for granted in the future. Increased investments in parks, trails, public lands, and thoughtful community design will be necessary to keep residents healthy and make neighborhoods distinctively appealing. History must be protected and interpreted, telling the stories of the people, places, and structures that have contributed to the county's reputation as a preferred destination in Pennsylvania.

The county needs to remain nimble in the future, adjusting to forces of change, both predictable and unpredictable. With temperatures projected to increase by 5.4°F and precipitation by 8% by 2050, severe weather and heat may threaten public health, agriculture productivity, and the sufficiency of public infrastructure<sup>8</sup>. Pandemic-induced workforce changes and broadband technology have yielded a 175% increase in residents working from home while also making the county an attractive place for remote workers from surrounding metropolitan areas<sup>9</sup>. Environmental concerns and geopolitical tensions will require utility system upgrades as new non-fossil fuel energy sources are used.

Cumberland County's success must not be taken for granted. Careful, proactive planning, as detailed in the comprehensive plan, is required to leverage the community's assets for maximum benefit while avoiding the pitfalls commonly associated with rapid growth communities.

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan is a long-range policy document that establishes goals and objectives for the orderly development of the county. Comprehensive plans typically consider a wide variety of topics including land use, housing, economic development, public facilities, transportation, and natural resource protection. A comprehensive plan has no legal authority. Other planning tools with the force and effect of law, such as a zoning ordinance, are used to implement the goals and objectives found in the comprehensive plan.

Legendary New York Yankee, Yogi Berra, once observed, "If you don't know where you are going, you will end up someplace else." Cumberland County, its municipal governments, and residents have the shared responsibility of planning for the future. Comprehensive plans collaboratively completed at the county and municipal level serve as the essential tool for charting the path to success while avoiding the undesirable "someplace else" where a community's success is left to chance and rarely achieved.

*"If you don't know where you are going, you will end up someplace else."*

- Yogi Berra





# Why Does the County Prepare a Comprehensive Plan?

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The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Act 247 of 1968<sup>10</sup>, as reenacted and amended, requires all counties to prepare a comprehensive plan following the guidelines established in Section 301 of the statute and review that plan at least every 10 years. Further, the MPC requires "general consistency" between the county comprehensive plan and comprehensive plans adopted by townships and boroughs. The required general consistency of county and municipal comprehensive plans ensures that issues transcending municipal boundaries are effectively coordinated between the municipal and county levels. The MPC directs counties to achieve plan consistency by publishing advisory guidelines that will promote uniformity between county and municipal plans. Municipalities implement the consistent policy guidance found in municipal and county comprehensive plans through local zoning, subdivision and land development (SALDO), and official map ordinances.

The Cumberland County Planning Commission (CCPC) is the agency charged with preparing the comprehensive plan. The Cumberland County Board of Commissioners appoints the nine members of the CCPC. The CCPC is supported by the Cumberland County Planning Department (CCPD) that includes the county staff members who provide professional planning services to the county and its municipal partners. Collectively, the CCPC and CCPD prepare, steward, and implement the comprehensive plan at the direction and approval of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners.





## Plan Organization

The Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan is organized around the Cumberland County Principles for Responsible Growth<sup>11</sup> (i.e. the “Cumberland Principles”), eight policy statements that epitomize effective planning practices in the county. Those eight policy statements respond to the requirements outlined in section 301 of the MPC as well as the future trends identified in the planning process.

The Cumberland Principles are a unifying planning policy guide that enables consistency between municipal and county plans, while also serving as an educational tool that shows residents, municipal partners, and stakeholder organizations what responsible planning looks like. Implementing the Cumberland Principles through plans, policies, and projects results in a positive triple bottom line for the county where the environment, businesses, and communities simultaneously benefit.

The comprehensive plan includes a chapter for each Cumberland Principle and an explanation of its importance to the county's communities, environment, and businesses. An accompanying implementation plan identifies actions that the county and its partner organizations can take to put each principle into practice.

## The Cumberland Principles



### **Protect the Best First:**

Safeguard the county's irreplaceable natural resources



### **Grow In Not Out:**

Efficiently accommodate growth in locations with appropriate infrastructure



### **Housing for All:**

Create housing options within the financial reach of all residents



### **Plan for People and Places:**

Design communities to value sense of place and encourage healthy living



### **Expand Transportation Choices:**

Provide safe, accessible, and affordable transportation choices



### **Adapt and Stay Safe:**

Ensure communities are safe and resilient to future change



### **Open for Business:**

Support a diverse economic base that enhances the quality of life



### **Engage to Improve:**

Engage residents, municipalities, non-government organizations, and business partners in the decision-making process



## Supporting Plans

The Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundational document for the county's land use, transportation, economic development, housing, and natural resource protection policies. The county and its affiliated organizations prepare other supporting plans that are used to supplement the comprehensive plan. Those plans contain higher levels of detail, more specific action recommendations, and are updated on a separate cycle from the comprehensive plan. Thus, the comprehensive plan incorporates the broader concepts included in the supporting plans and refers to those full plan documents. The table below lists the supporting plans used in the preparation of the comprehensive plan and includes links to each current plan, where available.

SUPPORTING PLAN	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FOCUS AREA	UPDATE CYCLE
<a href="#">Land Partnerships Plan</a>	Cumberland County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks, trails, and greenways</li> <li>Farmland preservation</li> <li>Natural resource protection</li> </ul>	5-years
<a href="#">Climate Action Plan</a>	Cumberland County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GHG emission rates and reduction opportunities</li> <li>Mitigation and adaptation opportunities</li> </ul>	As necessary
<a href="#">Hazard Mitigation Plan*</a>	Cumberland County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural and manmade hazards</li> <li>Prevention and mitigation opportunities</li> </ul>	5-years
<a href="#">Countywide Clean Water Action Plan</a>	Cumberland County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water quality and pollution mitigation strategies</li> <li>Best management practices</li> </ul>	2-years
<a href="#">Solid Waste Management Plan*</a>	Cumberland County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public waste disposal capacity</li> <li>Waste reduction and recycling strategies</li> </ul>	10-years
<a href="#">Stormwater Management Plan*</a>	Cumberland County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stormwater modeling for county watersheds</li> <li>Model stormwater ordinance for municipal adoption</li> </ul>	As necessary
<b>Economic Development Strategic Plan</b>	Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation (CAEDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business retention/attraction</li> <li>Tourism development</li> <li>Workforce development</li> <li>Entrepreneurial development</li> </ul>	2-years
<b>Five-Year Consolidated Housing Plan</b>	Cumberland County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (CCHRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing trends</li> <li>Affordable housing</li> <li>Housing priorities</li> </ul>	5-years
<a href="#">Long-Range Transportation Plan*</a>	Harrisburg Area Transportation Study (HATS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20-year planning horizon</li> <li>Multimodal improvements on federal and state transportation system</li> <li>Funding projections</li> </ul>	6-10 years

\*Statutorily required plan.



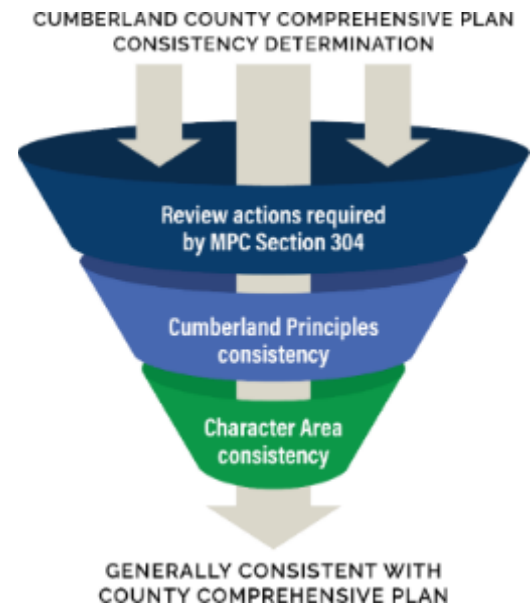
# Consistency Determinations

Section 301.4.a of the MPC requires general consistency between municipal and county comprehensive plans. To achieve that consistency, municipalities and counties are required to forward new and amended comprehensive plans to one another for review and comment with the goal that “the objectives of each plan can be protected to the greatest extent possible” as enumerated in Section 306.a of the MPC. Similarly, Section 304 of the MPC identifies municipal actions that must be submitted to the CCPC for its recommendations, thereby providing municipal officials with an objective, broader perspective on plans, ordinances, or projects that may have impacts outside of a single municipality.

The Cumberland Principles and the comprehensive plan future land use map serve as the definitive tools for judging consistency between municipal actions and the Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan. The CCPC will evaluate each action with the applicable Cumberland Principles and offer recommendations on how it could be modified to improve consistency with the county comprehensive plan.

The future land use map delineates six “character areas” with distinguishable geographic areas that exhibit unique land use and built environment design characteristics (see page 85 for more detail). The future land use map includes specific planning guidance customized for each character area that addresses conservation, housing, economic development, transportation, and design issues. Proposed municipal actions will be evaluated using these specific planning guidelines and opportunities for improved consistency noted as applicable. The future land use map designation is not the sole factor that must be relied upon in determining consistency, rather it is one component of the CCPC’s consistency determination process.

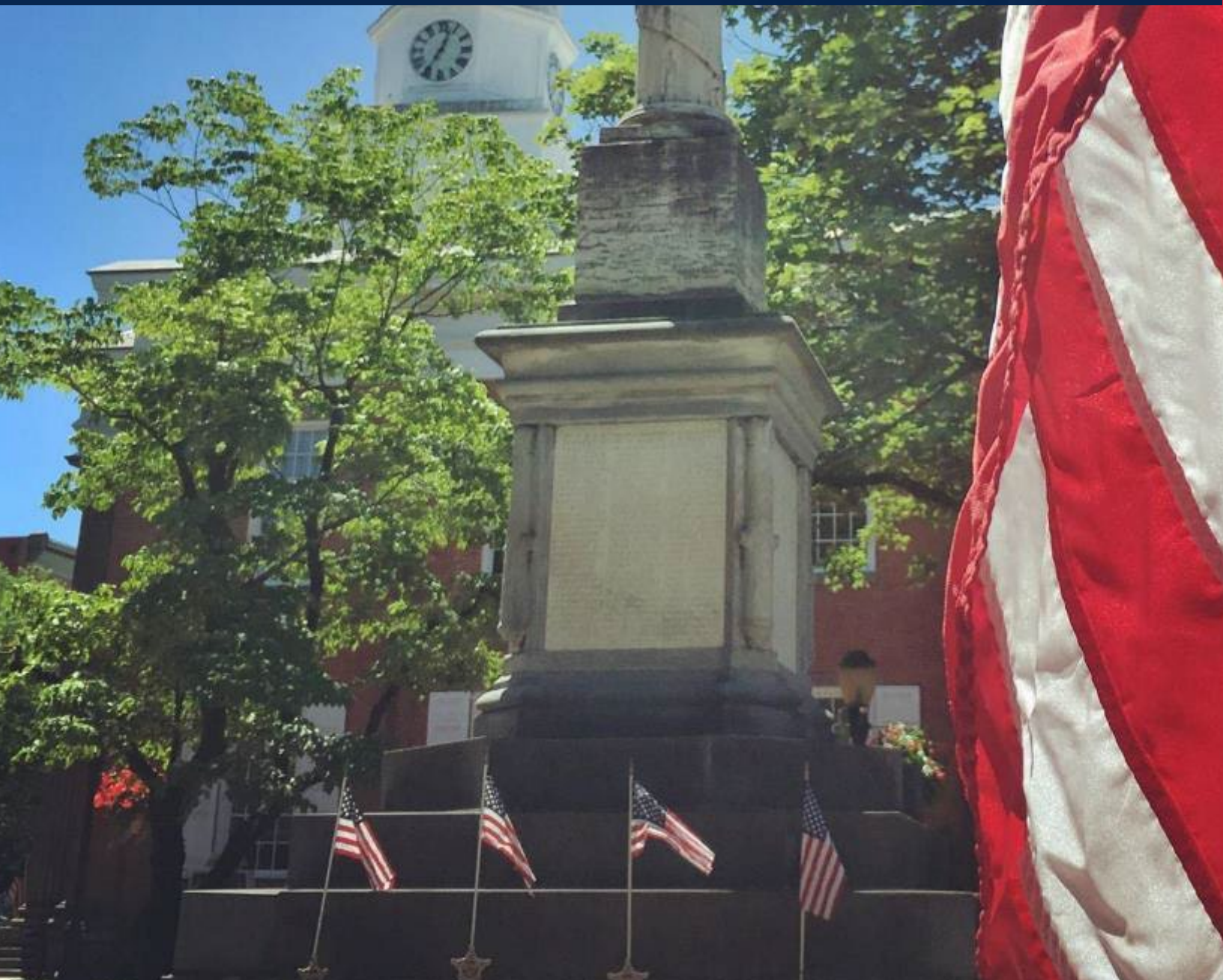
Aside from MPC-required reviews, partner organizations may request letters from the CCPC indicating that proposed actions are consistent with the Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan. These requests, while not required by the MPC, are common requirements for regional, state, or federal grant applications. Such requests will follow the same consistency determination process as MPC-required reviews. CCPD staff will work with applicants to ensure that consistency determinations address key issues that may result in favorable responses from review agencies.





# Stakeholder Engagement

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## Public Survey Overview

The Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan is founded upon the active engagement and input from a wide cross-section of stakeholders. A public survey served as the primary public engagement tool for the plan. Cumberland County promoted the survey through social media, news media, municipal partners, chambers of commerce, and the contact networks of partner organizations. In addition to these tools, the CCPC relied upon recent stakeholder engagement that was conducted as part of the 2022 Climate Action Plan development and the 2024 Land Partnerships Plan update. These recent planning efforts included significant input that remains relevant to the current planning process.

The public survey asked participants a mixture of open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions. The open-ended questions asked participants what they liked best about Cumberland County, what changes they would recommend to improve the quality of life, and to identify the special places in the county. Multiple-choice questions asked participants to identify priorities in certain programmatic areas and their knowledge of planning tools and processes. The CCPD used an artificial intelligence application to analyze the open-ended responses and identify commonly cited responses on what participants liked best, what they would change, and the special places they identified.

The survey was available in paper format upon request and was also translated into Spanish. The survey ran from mid-August to October 31, 2023, and received 1,354 responses. A survey summary is included below with full survey responses provided in Appendix B.

### Comprehensive Plan Public Engagement Tools



County website



Social media including Facebook and LinkedIn



Individual/group stakeholder meetings



Public meetings



Public survey



Newspaper articles

### MEET THE TYPICAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY RESPONDENT

**FEMALE** 55% female vs. 39% male

**WELL EDUCATED** 79% with a college degree

**AFFLUENT** 44% with income over \$100K per year

**WHITE** 86% of respondents

**OLDER** 46% age 55 or older





# What Survey Respondents Like Best and Would Change

Respondents were asked open-ended questions to identify what they liked best about Cumberland County and what they would change. Respondents showed strong preferences for the county's small-town feel, natural resources, proximity to major urban areas and good schools. The county's rapid growth rate, housing affordability, and transportation safety were commonly cited changes to consider for the future.

WHAT RESPONDENTS LIKE BEST AND WOULD CHANGE IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY	
What Respondents Like Best	What Respondents Would Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small town feel</li> <li>• Distinctive historic features</li> <li>• Diverse commercial amenities</li> <li>• Good schools and multiple colleges/universities</li> <li>• Low crime rate</li> <li>• Available jobs</li> <li>• Affordable cost of living</li> <li>• Balance of development and open space</li> <li>• Outdoor recreation</li> <li>• Natural features (farmland, mountains, streams/lakes)</li> <li>• Convenient transportation facilities</li> <li>• Proximity to major population centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rate of growth is too fast</li> <li>• Diversify the economy from a strong focus on warehousing/distribution facilities</li> <li>• Increased land preservation</li> <li>• More recreational opportunities</li> <li>• Enhanced broadband coverage</li> <li>• Additional services and living opportunities for senior citizens</li> <li>• Better coordination between municipal land use and zoning</li> <li>• Provide more affordable housing</li> <li>• Traffic congestion and safety on I-81</li> <li>• More transportation options aside from the automobile</li> </ul>

# Special Places in Cumberland County

Respondents overwhelmingly listed natural features and recreational amenities as the most significant special places in Cumberland County. Leading this list were the following: Children's Lake, Kings Gap State Park, Yellow Breeches Creek, Adams Ricci Park, Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Cumberland Valley Rail Trail, Appalachian Trail, Michaux State Forest, Conodoguinet Creek, and Opossum Lake.

Public parks owned by municipalities, such as South Middleton Park and Lower Allen Park were also commonly noted. Small towns and activity centers such as Carlisle, Mechanicsburg, and Camp Hill were cited as respondents' favorites as well as businesses located in those areas including breweries, coffee shops, and farmers markets. Public amenities such as public libraries and the Army Heritage Education Center were also favored by respondents.





# Programmatic Priorities

Respondents were asked to identify priority initiatives for several programs administered by Cumberland County. Responses to these questions are used by the county to consider current and future investments in priority service areas. The following table identifies the top three priorities identified in each initiative area.





PRIORITY RANK	CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INITIATIVES	TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES	WATER QUALITY INITIATIVES
1	Preservation of open space and natural areas	Road repairs and improvements	Planting trees and natural plant buffers along stream banks to capture and clean stormwater runoff
2	Preservation of working farmland	Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, walking paths, crosswalks, etc.)	Installing structures on farms to reduce barnyard runoff into streams
3	Construction of trails	Bridge repair and replacement	Installing facilities in developed areas that collect and clean stormwater runoff from buildings, roofs, and paved areas

## Planning Familiarity and Participation

The final survey questions polled respondents on their familiarity with local planning documents and participation in the land use approval processes. These questions were designed to identify stakeholder educational needs and improve communication. Key findings included:

- Respondents know the least about the comprehensive plan and the SALDO with nearly 1/3 of respondents having never heard of either planning tool.
- Respondents reported the most familiarity with their municipality's official map and zoning ordinance with 38% responding they knew "a fair amount" or "knew it well" for both tools.
- Respondents are not familiar with the process required to plan for development in their community as nearly 30% have never heard of the approval process.
- Respondents rarely participate in the local decision-making process and when they do, it is typically for special topics of interest. Less than 6% of respondents attend county or municipal elected official or planning commission meetings on a regular basis.
- Respondents cited they were very likely to use municipal newsletters (38%) and websites (38%) to learn what is going on in their community.

## Other Significant Stakeholder Engagement Findings

The survey responses echoed observations of the key stakeholder interviews that were conducted as part of the plan's stakeholder engagement process. The community and social service provider interview focused on the combination of impacts that vulnerable populations face. It is difficult to isolate and work on one key issue such as increasing opportunities for affordable housing without also factoring in transportation infrastructure and the availability of stable jobs that offer a living



wage with room for growth. If housing costs are lowered but workers still must drive several miles to work or live in areas that are not located near community amenities, they will likely have greater expenses related to transportation and childcare due to the length of commute and schedule conflicts with schools. The stakeholders stressed consideration of the social determinants to health and that community connectivity, social engagement, and a balance of open space with economic development are keys to quality of life.

The chamber of commerce stakeholders said that they felt the small-town feel was essential to the attractiveness of many communities in the county. They observed that housing and workforce development are both necessary to retain the younger demographics in the county. Area homebuilders and real estate professionals noted the importance of quality schools, proximity to transportation networks, recreational opportunities, community character, and a low cost of living as powerful attractants for new county residents. They shared that housing affordability is a major goal but the costs of construction materials, land prices, and regulatory barriers contribute to higher housing costs. They suggested that multi-municipal planning, more flexibility with housing types, and more education on what a healthy mix of housing looks like could help achieve affordable housing goals.

## Translating Input to Action

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Commonly cited issues emerged from the public engagement process. Whether mentioned as an open-ended survey response or as comments recorded during stakeholder interviews, these issues were clearly important to county stakeholders and thus, must be addressed by the comprehensive plan.

The public engagement component of the planning process is foundational for plan development. The key issues cited by county stakeholders led to the development of the Cumberland Principles that aim to address those issues, not as discrete components, but rather as interconnected community elements that require comprehensive consideration.

The following table summarizes the commonly cited issues from the public engagement process and links each with a Cumberland Principle where that issue is further discussed. Page numbers are included for the implementation plan in each principle that proposes actions directly related to the stakeholder issues. Illustrative comments taken directly from the engagement process convey participant sentiments using their own words.





Commonly Cited Stakeholder Issues	Planning Principle Linked to Issue Identified								Where Addressed in Plan	Related Quotes or Views Expressed
	Protect the Best First	Grow in Not Out	Housing for All	Plan for People and Places	Expand Transp. Choices	Adapt and Stay Safe	Open for Business	Engage to Improve		
Small town feel of Cumberland County communities	✓	✓		✓			✓		Pages 20, 29, 44, and 71.	"I loved raising our children in a rural area, with a smaller, quality school district. They grew up with a sense of community that is just not available in a large urban area."
Excellent access to jobs and community services for most population centers		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		Pages 29, 44, 52, 64, and 71.	"Can have a small-town experience without sacrificing access to amenities."
Scenic beauty of landscape, including farms and open space	✓	✓		✓					Pages 20, 29, and 44	"The natural landscape (creeks, farmland and wooded areas) anchored between two beautiful mountain ranges."
Ample parks, trails, and recreational opportunities	✓			✓	✓				Pages 20, 44, and 52	"Would like to see the addition of county parks, or acquisition of land for parks and recreation"



Commonly Cited Stakeholder Issues	Planning Principle Linked to Issue Identified								Where Addressed in Plan	Related Quotes or Views Expressed
	Protect the Best First	Grow in Not Out	Housing for All	Plan for People and Places	Expand Transp. Choices	Adapt and Stay Safe	Open for Business	Engage to Improve		
Access to a wide variety of retailers, restaurants, and businesses		✓		✓			✓		Pages 44 and 71.	"We have a lot of nice retail, both mom and pop type establishments, big retailers, restaurants and fun family-owned businesses."
Opportunities for social connections and community engagement		✓		✓			✓	✓	Pages 44, 71 and 78.	"There are many family friendly festivals and community engagement events."
Too much development, especially warehouses and residential, converting open space and agricultural land	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		Pages 20, 29, 44, and 71.	"Stem overgrowth of development by reusing currently developed properties rather than converting existing open areas."
More land needs to be preserved to keep pace with development	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		Pages 20, 44, and 64.	"Plan for more land preservation and less development. Undeveloped, preserved, protected areas give our area character, beauty and value."





Commonly Cited Stakeholder Issues	Planning Principle Linked to Issue Identified								Where Addressed in Plan	Related Quotes or Views Expressed
	Protect the Best First	Grow in Not Out	Housing for All	Plan for People and Places	Expand Transp. Choices	Adapt and Stay Safe	Open for Business	Engage to Improve		
More public transportation is needed		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Pages 44, 52, and 64.	"Improved public transportation, including increased bus routes and consideration of fixed rail routes to connect our communities and decrease congestion and pollution."
There is too much traffic and congestion		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Pages 44, 52, and 64.	"Roads (local), highways (state) and bridges are not supporting growth in Cumberland County. Dangerous accidents especially on Rt. 81, 83, & 15 have increased due to high volume of traffic. There needs to be a comprehensive plan to address this situation."
The transportation network needs to accommodate all modes of transportation, pedestrians, cyclists and others		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Pages 44, 52, and 64	"I don't bike as much as I'd like, because traffic gets dangerous; we need to connect Carlisle to Newville"



Commonly Cited Stakeholder Issues	Planning Principle Linked to Issue Identified								Where Addressed in Plan	Related Quotes or Views Expressed
	Protect the Best First	Grow in Not Out	Housing for All	Plan for People and Places	Expand Transp. Choices	Adapt and Stay Safe	Open for Business	Engage to Improve		
More affordable housing is needed.		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		Pages 29, 37, and 44.	“Build more affordable housing – the cost of housing and limited number of affordable rentals for the regular working people is terrible.”

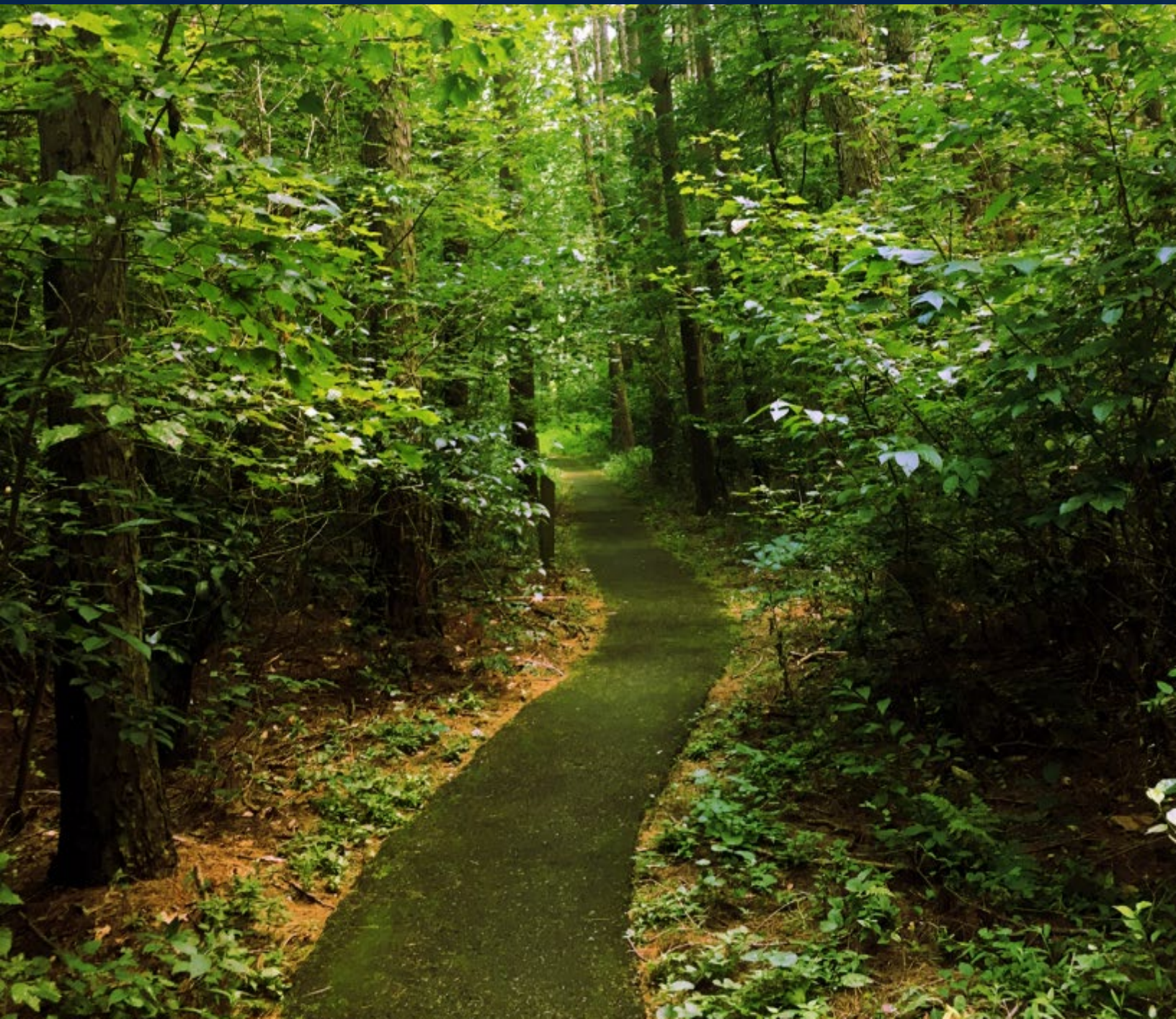






# Protect The Best First

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## Overview

Section 27, Article 1 of the Pennsylvania State Constitution recognizes the right of all residents to have a clean environment and calls on the Commonwealth, and in turn, the county, to conserve and maintain natural resources for the people<sup>12</sup>.

Cumberland County encompasses significant natural features that deliver essential ecological services and scenic beauty, enhance the quality of life, and contribute to businesses' successful bottom lines. The wooded ridges of Blue Mountain and South Mountain, the stream corridors of Yellow Breeches Creek and Conodoguinet Creek, and the Susquehanna River along the eastern boundary are natural resources that define Cumberland County. The valley with rich agricultural soils, wetlands, and riparian areas adds to the diversity of the County's natural resources.

Natural resources are the foundational, irreplaceable part of a thriving community. Clean water, air, and soil are requisite components of the residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial development that drive the county's economy and high quality of life. The county's economy further benefits from its mountains that support hiking, hunting, and birdwatching and the exceptional value limestone streams that sustain world renowned trout fisheries.

Protecting those natural resources can be particularly challenging given Cumberland County's current and projected rapid growth. Since 2006, the county has seen 15,000 acres, or 563 acres on average each year, transition from vacant or agricultural land use to a developed use<sup>13</sup>. Future population growth will increase demand for residential and service-based land uses. While this growth is welcomed and expected, it should not come at the expense of the natural resources that have enabled it.

## Protect the Best First

### Principle Definition

Cumberland County must safeguard the irreplaceable natural resources that are essential for healthy living and economic prosperity.

### Principle Benefits

- ✓ High quality of life and healthy living environment for residents and visitors
- ✓ Healthy wildlife populations
- ✓ Economic development from outdoor recreation activities
- ✓ Food safety and security with locally grown produce and meat
- ✓ Clean, sustainable water supply for future generation
- ✓ Prime farmland protected
- ✓ Air quality that supports resident health



Cumberland County, much like the Commonwealth, recognizes its role as a natural resource trustee and is committed to its long-term protection. Protection of those natural resources must be the first policy priority for Cumberland County's future growth. New development must be closely evaluated to ensure that natural resource impacts are avoided and mitigated. Prime farm soils should be identified and protected to support the agriculture industry while providing local food. Stormwater must be controlled to decrease soil erosion and pollutant loading on the county's pristine streams. Groundwater aquifers, the clean water sources required by residents and visitors, should have withdrawals monitored and wellheads delineated to protect long-term natural recharge from precipitation. Emissions from vehicles and businesses should be limited to keep our air clean and safe to breathe. Limited financial resources and competing priorities require the county to identify and protect those natural resources with the highest ecological value as identified through county-based planning processes.



Source: PA DCNR, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis  
Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, November 2023.

***“The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania’s resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.”***

**- Section 27, Article 1 of the Pennsylvania State Constitution**





# Principles in Practice

## 1

### **Provide financial and technical assistance to create plans and ordinances that preserve natural resources and the agriculture industry.**

Fee simple acquisitions and conservation easements are effective tools that permanently preserve natural resources, but those tools may be costly, time-consuming, and lack landowner interest. Municipal zoning and SALDOs offer shorter-term, cost-effective natural resource protection opportunities as part of every subdivision or land development project. While subject to change, such ordinances ensure that development projects of all sizes respect, and not damage, the county's natural resources.

Cumberland County offers financial and technical assistance to its municipal partners and stakeholder organizations to develop plans and ordinances that protect natural resources. The county has several grant programs for municipalities interested in preparing plans and ordinances that protect natural resources. Likewise, the CCPD offers ordinance and plan writing assistance to municipalities not interested or financially able to participate in the grant programs.



Cumberland County should invest its financial and technical assistance resources with municipalities interested in using the following types of natural resource protection plans and ordinances:

- **Effective agriculture zoning** – protect prime farmland by limiting the number of dwelling units or size of subdivisions in agriculturally zoned areas.
- **Allowing for agriculture-related businesses** – retail, service, and tourism uses in agriculture areas to improve agriculture business opportunities.
- **Source water and wellhead protection districts** – zoning districts that overlay known public/private water sources or aquifers that limit the type of intensity of development to protect water quality and quantity.



- **Riparian buffers** – improve water quality by limiting development within a certain proximity to important watercourses.
- **Floodplain districts** – limit loss of life and property in federally designated flood hazard areas by limiting the type and intensity of uses.
- **Transfer of development rights** – enable higher densities in growth areas by limiting development on properties in preservation areas.
- **Steep slopes** – improve water quality by limiting development and vegetation removal on properties with slopes greater than 25%.
- **Tree protection** – requires protection of wooded areas in identified locations or of trees of a certain size.
- **Stormwater management** – control the volume and rate of water generated by impervious coverage on newly developed properties.
- **Conservation subdivision/zoning** – process to protect natural resources through improved residential design development.



## 2 Preserve working farmland as the foundation of a strong agriculture industry.

Farmland is the backbone of the agriculture industry in Cumberland County. Approximately 146,000 acres or 42% of Cumberland County is designated as farmland<sup>14</sup>. Working farms on those lands provide food for the county, state, and nation while boosting the economy, and preserving the county's rural character.

Cumberland County established its farmland preservation program in 1989 and has permanently preserved over 23,000 acres to date. In 2020, the Board of Commissioners established the goal of preserving 30,000 acres of farmland by 2030. Reaching this goal constitutes a secure investment in the county's future agriculture economy.

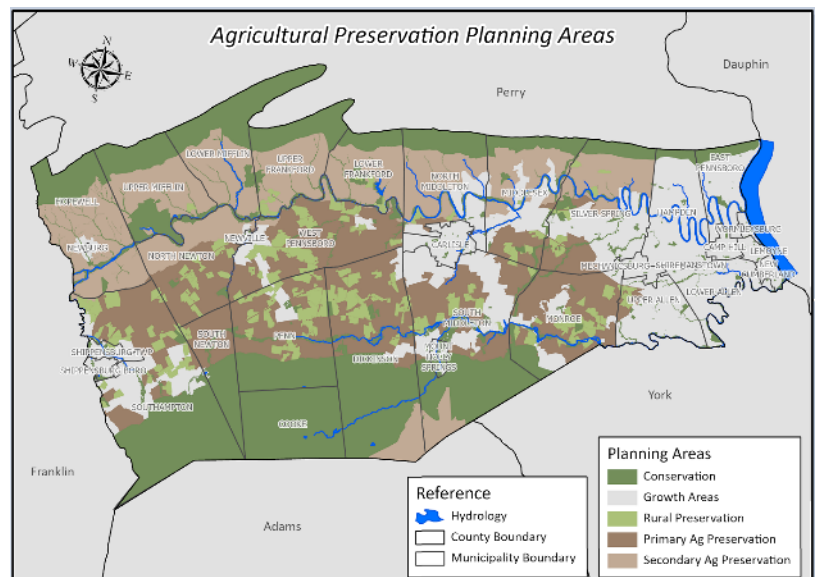
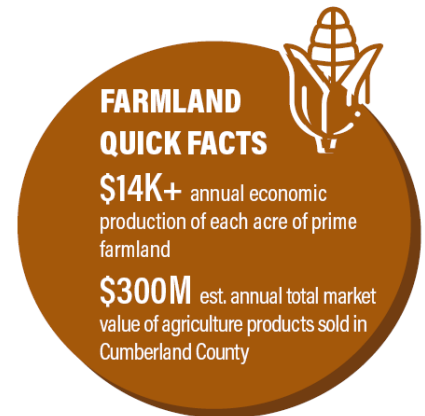


Figure 1 Click on image while holding ctrl to access interactive map or visit <https://gis.ccpa.net/ag-resources/>



To preserve working farmland, Cumberland County should:

- Allocate appropriate levels of general fund revenue to leverage federal, state, and local farmland preservation funding to reach 30,000 preserved acres by 2030.
- Focus preservation efforts on the areas identified in the Land Partnerships Plan's Priority Farmland Preservation Map through proactive landowner outreach and education programs.
- Steward the Agriculture Security Area Program by assisting landowners with program enrollment and municipalities with program administration.
- Partner with the Lancaster Farmland Trust, Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, and municipalities to preserve farmland through non-county-based programs.
- Connect county farmers with sources of technical and financial assistance from USDA, PADA, and others to support them in adapting to the changing climate so that agriculture can continue to thrive in the county.



Source: CCPD and USDA 2022 Census of Agriculture.

### 3

#### Preserve priority conservation areas as identified Cumberland County "Conservation Investment Plan".

Natural resource protection opportunities vary greatly in scale, priority, and impact given the number and diversity of resources found in the county. Likewise, priority conservation lands may have unpredictable availability as landowners may quickly or discretely sell their properties. Thus, a collaborative project identification, prioritization, and fund-raising effort between public agencies and land conservation organizations is needed to ensure that critical natural resources are preserved when opportunities arise.

The Land Partnerships Plan identifies a "Conservation Investment Plan" that includes noteworthy conservation and recreation projects currently under consideration or active implementation by the county/municipal/state/federal governments, conservation organizations, and land

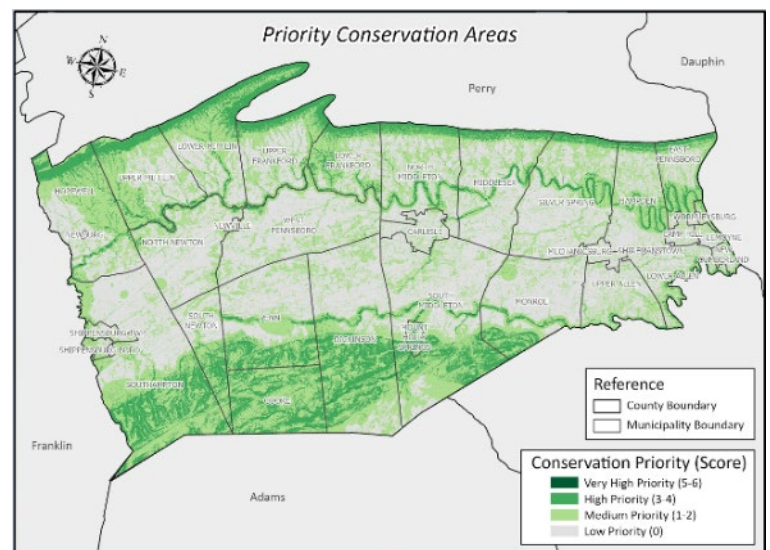


Figure 2 Click on image while holding ctrl to access interactive GIS map or visit <https://gis.ccpa.net/labs/lpp/?page=Priority-Conservation-Areas>





conservancies. Those projects, as well as others that are not yet identified, can form the foundation of a long-term plan to actively pursue the highest value conservation lands in the county.

To advance the Conservation Investment Plan the county should:

- Convene partner organizations, municipalities, and the public to identify important conservation lands worthy of protection.
- Prioritize projects based upon their respective community impact and project readiness.
- Identify federal, state, and nonprofit grant opportunities that can supplement local funding to implement projects.
- Allocate appropriate levels of general fund or county grant funds to assist in leveraging federal, state, local, and nonprofit project funding.

## 4 Improve water quality through the implementation of the Cumberland County Clean Water Action Plan.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) initiated its Phase 3 Watershed Improvement Program in 2019 to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. In 2021, DEP partnered with Cumberland County and seven other counties

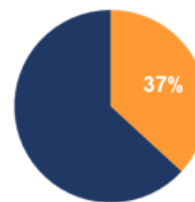
accounting for 50% of the bay pollution emissions to create county-based Clean Water Action Plans (CWAP) to remove nonpoint source pollution entering local waterways and in turn, the Chesapeake Bay. Collectively, those plans would substantially augment Pennsylvania's contribution to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) bay pollution reduction standards by the established 2025 deadline.

Cumberland County's CWAP, which is updated biannually, includes pollutant reduction strategies such as cover cropping, lawn conversion, forest buffers, barnyard runoff controls, conservation landscaping, tree planting requirements, and urban stormwater management. As of 2023, the county's CWAP projects have reduced annual nitrogen loadings by 1.1 million pounds and phosphorus loadings by 36,000 pounds, 37%, and 36% percent respectively, of DEP's goals for nitrogen and phosphorus pollution reduction by 2025.

### Pollutant Reduction Progress

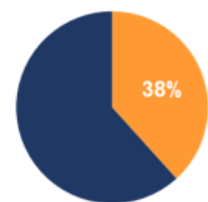
By 2025, Cumberland County needs to reduce 2.9M lbs of nitrogen and 95K lbs of phosphorus. Cumberland County has developed a plan to reduce 1.1M lbs of nitrogen, which is 37% of the goal and 36K lbs of phosphorus, which is 38% of the goal.

**Nitrogen (N)**  
Reduction Goal (lbs):  
2,886,000



Reduction Progress:  
1,063,000 lbs

**Phosphorus (P)**  
Reduction Goal (lbs):  
95,000



Reduction Progress:  
36,000 lbs

■ Remaining  
Reduction  
■ Nutrient  
Reduction  
Progress

Source: PA DEP.



While the county has not met its pollution reduction goals, DEP is ultimately responsible for achieving the state's share of bay pollutant reductions. Cumberland County faces no penalties if it is unable to achieve its pollution reduction goals.

Cumberland County, under the joint leadership of the CCPD and Conservation District, should continue implementation of its CWAP and accelerate progress toward established pollution reduction goals. To achieve its pollution reduction goals, the county should:

- Prepare biannual updates to the CWAP focusing on high-impact pollution reduction projects.
- Engage urban and rural stakeholders in water quality partner organizations to identify potential projects in impaired watersheds.
- Leverage federal, state, and nonprofit funding to increase progress toward established goals.
- Communicate successes to raise awareness and stress the importance of the CWAP to improve local water quality.
- Monitor, anticipate, and plan for potential reductions of non-point source pollution loads that may be required by the Chesapeake Bay Program in response to changing runoff volumes and warmer water temperatures.

## **5 Prepare a water supply plan in conjunction with public water suppliers and municipal partners.**

Section 301.b of the MPC requires a comprehensive plan to include "a plan for the reliable supply of water" that is consistent with the State Water Plan and other water resource plans adopted by a river basic commission. To date, Cumberland County has not prepared a water supply plan consistent with this requirement as the authority, need, scope, and cost of such a study have not been determined.

While water is generally plentiful in the county, periodic droughts or pollution events have led to use restrictions and water conservation measures. Projected changes in climate may result in droughts or severe weather events that threaten public and private water supply quality and availability. Future development in sensitive locations may unintentionally disrupt groundwater resources that in turn threaten water availability for a broader population. Degradation of the county's water supply would have a catastrophic impact on the county's economy, public health, and quality of life.

Cumberland County should partner with municipalities, public water suppliers, the Penn State Cooperative Extensions, and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to prepare a water supply plan for the county. The plan would identify source water areas for public and private water suppliers and recommend strategies for their future protection. Protective measures could include source water protection zoning districts, subdivision regulations, and conservation easements that permanently protect the most sensitive or productive lands.



# 6

## Support efforts to improve air quality.

A recent report noted that the Harrisburg-Carlisle Metropolitan Area had the second worst air quality in the state in 2018 when half or more of the regional air quality monitoring locations reported elevated ozone and/or particulate matter pollution on 114 days<sup>15</sup>. More recently, the American Lung Association gave Cumberland County a “D” grade for 24-hour particle pollution which represents spikes in particle pollution that can last from a few hours to a few days<sup>16</sup>.

The documented air quality problems are attributable to the abundance of agriculture, industrial development, major interstate highways, and surrounding mountains acting as a sink for pollutants<sup>17</sup>. Poor air quality can detract from the quality of life in the county and threaten the health of residents and visitors. Air pollution can cause health ailments including respiratory illness, heart attack, stroke, cancer, dementia, mental health problems, and birth complications. While all residents may suffer, reactions to poor air quality may be more apparent in children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

The county should support stakeholder organizations such as the Clean Air Board of Central Pennsylvania and the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study (HATS) to improve air pollution awareness and decrease emissions by:

- Tracking air quality data from monitoring stations located in the county and region.
- Notifying residents when air pollution monitors indicate unhealthy levels of particulate matter or ozone.
- Reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions through the implementation of the Cumberland County Climate Action Plan (CAP).
- Certifying compliance with air quality standards as part of the HATS Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Promoting implementation of the Cumberland Principles that result in compact development, increased transportation choice, and adoption of electric vehicles.
- Inviting input and comment on local and regional projects with air quality impacts.

POPULATIONS AT RISK	
Total Population	262,919
Children Under 18	54,039
Adults 65 & Over	49,533
Pediatric Asthma	3,521
Adult Asthma	21,722
COPD	14,075
Lung Cancer	155
Cardiovascular Disease	19,758
Pregnancy	2,681
Poverty Estimate	20,156
People of Color	45,108

Source: American Lung Association, State of the Air Report 2024.





# Grow In Not Out

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## Overview

Cumberland County's population is projected to add over 70,000 residents by 2043, bringing the county's total population to over 330,000 people<sup>18</sup>. The county's land area is 352,000 acres which unlike its population, will not grow in the future<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, the county must accommodate future growth within that established land area, the entirety of which is not available to support development. Permanently preserved public lands, prime farmland, steep slopes, floodplains, and environmentally sensitive areas provide important services to residents and businesses and should not be altered to accommodate new growth. Other areas served by public water, sewer, utilities, and highways are particularly well-suited to all types of development but may have limited infrastructure capacity. Successfully targeting growth in our existing communities, as opposed to sprawling, unplanned growth, enables the county to efficiently support future growth while protecting the quality of life and natural resources that have contributed to its popularity.

An analysis of county land use data revealed that approximately 108,000 of the county's 352,000 acres include the basic water or sewer infrastructure required for future growth. Of those 108,000 acres, only 3,800 acres remain undeveloped<sup>20</sup>. Those undeveloped, infrastructure-served areas are generally located east of Carlisle with South Middleton Township, Silver Spring Township, and Hampden Township having the most acreage available to support future growth.

A survey of the county's wastewater treatment plants revealed that approximately 22 million gallons per day of sewer treatment capacity remains available across all wastewater facilities in the county<sup>21</sup>. That level of sewer capacity, absent major upgrades, will dictate the amount and intensity of the county's future growth.

Thus, the county must strategically plan how future growth is accommodated using its limited land area and infrastructure capacity. Available land must be efficiently used to accommodate higher amounts of growth on smaller tracts of land. Redevelopment and reuse policies should create new developable acreage within established communities suitable for new growth. Infrastructure improvements must be made to increase the capacity of aging sewer and water systems while

## Grow In Not Out

### Principle Definition

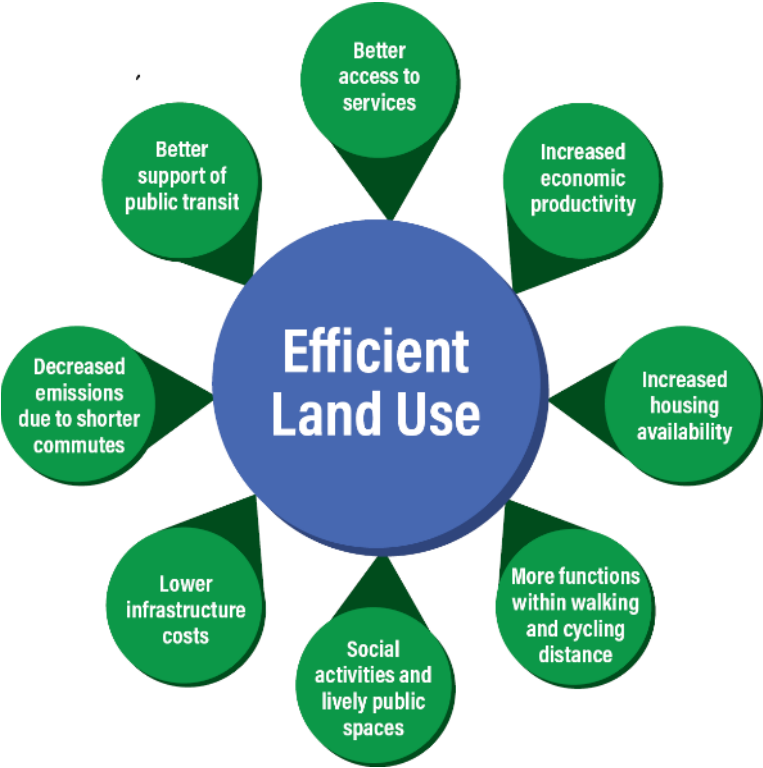
Growth must be directed to locations in Cumberland County with the appropriate supporting infrastructure.

### Principle Benefits

- ✓ More housing options at affordable costs
- ✓ Quality of life benefits from colocation of housing, services, and amenities
- ✓ Efficient usage of public infrastructure
- ✓ Compact development that can be served by multiple modes of transportation
- ✓ Enhanced walkability
- ✓ Protection of natural resources from sprawling development
- ✓ Increased tax base
- ✓ Decreased cost of sewer, water, and utility services
- ✓ Diverse business opportunities



extensions, when necessary, must be planned to have growth occur in the right locations and at proper intensity consistent with local plans. The county's remaining land base must be efficiently used, growing in and not out, to continue its success into the future.



Source: Michael Baker, Inc





# Principles in Practice

## 1

### **Provide financial and technical assistance for municipal ordinance amendments that efficiently use land in preferred growth areas.**

Municipal zoning ordinances and SALDOs ultimately determine the type, location, density, and intensity of growth that occurs in the county. Ideally, such ordinances should be written to encourage growth in planned locations where infrastructure such as sewer, water, utilities, and transportation are located. By enabling a wide array of uses at higher densities in those preferred growth areas, municipalities can accommodate more growth on less land with reduced site costs and increased tax revenues.

Efficient land use can be a challenge in Cumberland County. The county encompasses 33 municipalities with zoning ordinances and SALDOs that accommodate growth differently. While some municipalities promote sprawling, land-consumptive growth patterns, others use innovative planning techniques that support the most growth on the least amount of land. Achieving efficient land use requires consistent ordinance provisions that can be coordinated across municipal boundaries to direct growth into preferred locations.

The county should provide financial and technical assistance to municipalities for ordinance amendments that promote efficient land use in infrastructure-served areas. Such amendments should use similar language and standards to enhance municipal consistency, coordination, and improve countywide impact.

The following planning techniques were identified during the planning process as high-impact opportunities for more efficient land use in Cumberland County.

- **Mixed use** – permit more than one use on a lot or in a building to decrease overall land needs, encourage walkability, promote more business opportunities, and encourage housing choices.
- **Reduced setbacks** – reduce setbacks of complementary land uses to increase density and decrease overall land needs.
- **Increase density** – allow more residential dwelling units per acre in accordance with infrastructure availability and community character to efficiently accommodate new residents and improve affordability.
- **Increased height** – allow buildings over 2 stories to accommodate more growth in a smaller area in conjunction with available infrastructure.



# 2

## Reduce land consumed by parking.

Parking is a necessary element of Cumberland County's landscape with 85% of residents using automobiles for daily travel<sup>22</sup>. With limited alternative transportation availability, parking is needed at every origin and destination.

Those parking spaces add cost and consume land for every type of development. A single parking space consumes on average 200 square feet and can cost nearly \$9,000 or more each depending upon the market<sup>23</sup>. In most cases, the land required for parking exceeds the land required for buildings. Further, many communities in Cumberland County have adopted a stormwater fee that will require the parking lot owner to pay an annual fee to account for the stormwater generated by those spots.

Municipal ordinances require a certain number of parking spaces for each type of land use. Those requirements are often excessive and arbitrary, borrowed from estimates and studies in other locations unrelated to a proposed development. Minimum parking requirements, along with changes in consumer demand and shopping preferences, have left many parking spaces unused, costing owners money, consuming land that could be used for other purposes, and increasing stormwater that may carry pollutant loads.

Reducing and reusing parking provides more developable land in the county's infrastructure served by municipalities. Land once used for vacant parking can be transformed into retail, service, housing, and institutional uses that respond to community needs, generate tax revenue, promote a sense of place, and reduce costs of ownership.

Cumberland County should work with its municipal partners to transform parking in the county by providing technical and financial assistance to municipalities to update municipal ordinances that:

- Require a parking study for new development to determine real-world parking needs for specific developments, as opposed to arbitrary estimates.
- Require a shared parking analysis, especially in dense suburban settings, that enables adjacent developments to share parking and reduce overall demand.
- Promote parking reductions through a conditional use or special exception process for municipalities that retain parking minimums.
- Require bicycle parking as part of new development.



### \$9,000

POSSIBLE COST OF  
A SINGLE SURFACE  
PARKING SPACE  
WITH ALL COSTS INCLUDED  
(COUNTY STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH)

### \$50,000

POSSIBLE COST OF A  
SINGLE PARKING SPACE  
IN A PARKING GARAGE  
(WITF, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED,  
JANUARY 2, 2024)

### 6

PARKING SPACES FOR  
EVERY CAR IN THE US  
ACCORDING TO SOME ESTIMATES  
(WITF, HOW PARKING EXPLAINS  
EVERYTHING, CONSIDER  
THIS, MAY 9, 2023)

### \$300

PER YEAR ESTIMATED  
OWNER COST IN  
STORMWATER FEES  
OF A 100-SPACE PARKING LOT IN  
HAMPDEN TOWNSHIP, NOT  
INCLUDING FEES FOR ACCESS  
DRIVES AND CIRCULATION



# 3

## Increase development opportunities in existing communities through blight removal, redevelopment, infill, and reuse of existing properties.

Economic forces, ownership changes, consumer preferences, and varying industry standards have resulted in vacant or underutilized properties in the county's infrastructure-served areas. For example, contemporary consumer shopping patterns have led to the closing of major retail establishments. Vacant office space has resulted from COVID-19-induced work-from-home opportunities. Light industrial space has been vacated as tenants require larger buildings with higher ceilings and wider column clearances. Blighted properties sit in decay awaiting new ownership and transformation to a new productive use. These properties can be transformed into new, high-value development sites capable of supporting a wide range of future growth using the following three tools:



- **Blight removal** – demolishing or repairing vacant structures and properties that have fallen into a dangerous state of disrepair
- **Redevelopment** – demolishing or restructuring existing buildings and properties to support new uses
- **Reuse** – creating new, higher-value uses on an existing property

To increase redevelopment, blight removal, and reuse in infrastructure-served areas Cumberland County should:

- Promote the Cumberland County Housing and Redevelopment Authority's (CCHRA) Blighted Properties Reinvestment Board process with municipalities to identify, remediate, and redevelop blighted properties.
- Leverage the Cumberland County Demolition Fund, a \$5 fee charged on recording of deeds and mortgages, to demolish certified blighted properties, making them "shovel ready" for purchase and redevelopment by a new owner.
- Use the CCHRA Land Bank to acquire, improve, hold, and transfer blighted and underdeveloped properties to new owners.
- Support CAEDC's business retention and expansion efforts, especially in the county's core communities.





# 4

## Support infrastructure investments that are coordinated and consistent with county and local plans.

Public water, sewer, natural gas, electric, and telecommunications infrastructure are the "engines of growth" in the county. The location of future residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development is dictated by infrastructure availability, design, and capacity. Thus, preferred growth areas must be carefully planned and coordinated with infrastructure upgrades and expansions.

The county's future growth will undoubtedly require investments in infrastructure. While the county does not control infrastructure investments, it can play an important advocacy and communication role for its communities and infrastructure providers.

To support future infrastructure investments, the county should:

- Provide funding and technical support for coordinating municipal infrastructure plans with comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, SALDOs, and official maps.
- Support modernization projects that increase the capacity, efficiency, and resiliency of infrastructure systems
- Work with electric utilities, broadband internet providers, the PA Public Utilities Commission, and landowners to improve the reliability of electric power and telecommunications in the county and reduce the frequency and duration of service interruptions from severe storms and other hazards.
- Promote expansion of solar and other clean sources of electric power.
- Meet with utility providers to understand future infrastructure needs and potential locations for expansions or improvements.
- Share county and municipal plans with infrastructure providers that show the locations of conservation and limited development areas where infrastructure expansions are not appropriate.
- Comment on proposed infrastructure projects and suggest opportunities for improving consistency with local and county plans.
- Communicate the need for infrastructure projects with residents, especially when private properties may be impacted by construction.
- Advocate for federal and state funding to support infrastructure projects.



# 5

## Support broadband capacity, coverage, and reliability improvements.

Broadband connects residents and businesses with goods, services, and customers locally and globally. The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the need for fast, reliable broadband access in communities across the nation and has elevated its reputation as critical infrastructure. Wireless and fiber broadband are in high demand now more than ever as employees have permanently transitioned to the home office. US Census data reported that Cumberland County's work-from-home population nearly tripled from 2016 to 2021 with an estimated 13,455 residents now working from home<sup>24</sup>.



Figure 3 Broadband coverage map for Cumberland County. Unserved (red), underserved (purple) and served (blue) locations. Click on image while holding ctrl to access interactive map or visit [CPF\\_BIP\\_Map\(arcgis.com\)](http://CPF_BIP_Map(arcgis.com)).

Cumberland County has high levels of broadband access, with 96% of residents having access to 25Mbps, 100Mbps, or 1 Gbps service<sup>25</sup>. While these access levels exceed the state, certain locations, particularly those in the northwest part of the county remain unserved or underserved with inappropriate speeds to support personal and business needs. An estimated 11,325 households in the county do not have an internet subscription and another 8,078 households do not have a computer. Alternatively, growth areas may require additional capacity as more users consume available bandwidth.

The county will require broadband increases in both coverage and capacity to remain competitive in the global marketplace and support its projected population growth. While the county does not own broadband infrastructure, it can increase broadband coverage and capacity by:

- Coordinating with broadband service providers to identify underserved and unserved locations in the county.
- Supporting broadband provider funding requests for federal and state grants to expand broadband capacity and coverage.
- Providing financial and technical assistance to integrate wireless communication facility regulations into municipal zoning and SALDOs.
- Promoting broadband hot spots in publicly accessible spaces such as libraries, churches, schools and municipal offices.
- Supporting initiatives of the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority.





# Housing for All

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## Overview

The availability of adequate permanent housing has a direct relationship to the county's economic and social health. New residential construction, improvements, and rehabilitations not only add to the tax base but also provide housing for county residents that supply the workforce for local and regional businesses. Similarly, a variety of housing types and affordability provides for rich community diversity where neighborhood pride, family stability, and lifelong relationships are born. Thus, a sufficient supply of diverse housing types across all income levels is an essential building block needed to support ongoing growth in the county.

Recent trends have challenged the county's ability to provide enough housing units of the right type and at an affordable price for residents. From 2017 to 2021, the county's housing stock grew by 5,443 units or 5.3% from the previous 5-year period and its population grew by 5.5% to nearly 257,333<sup>26</sup>. While the number of units grew over that time, demand outpaced supply as the homeowner vacancy rate decreased to .9% and the number of vacant units decreased by 10%<sup>27</sup>. Other indicators such as low average days on the market and average selling prices that exceed asking prices point to a highly competitive housing market.

The increased demand for housing has resulted in higher housing costs that are outpacing income of county residents. The median price for a house in Cumberland County has increased 72% since 2014 with a median house price of \$320,000 in June of 2024. However, since 2014, the median household income in the county has only increased 32% to \$82,849 in 2022<sup>28</sup>. The housing market continues to thrive despite 12 interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve since March 2022.

The rental market is facing similar challenges to the homeowner market. Despite an increase of

## Housing for All

### Principle Definition

Cumberland County must create housing options for residents of all income levels and in every stage of life.

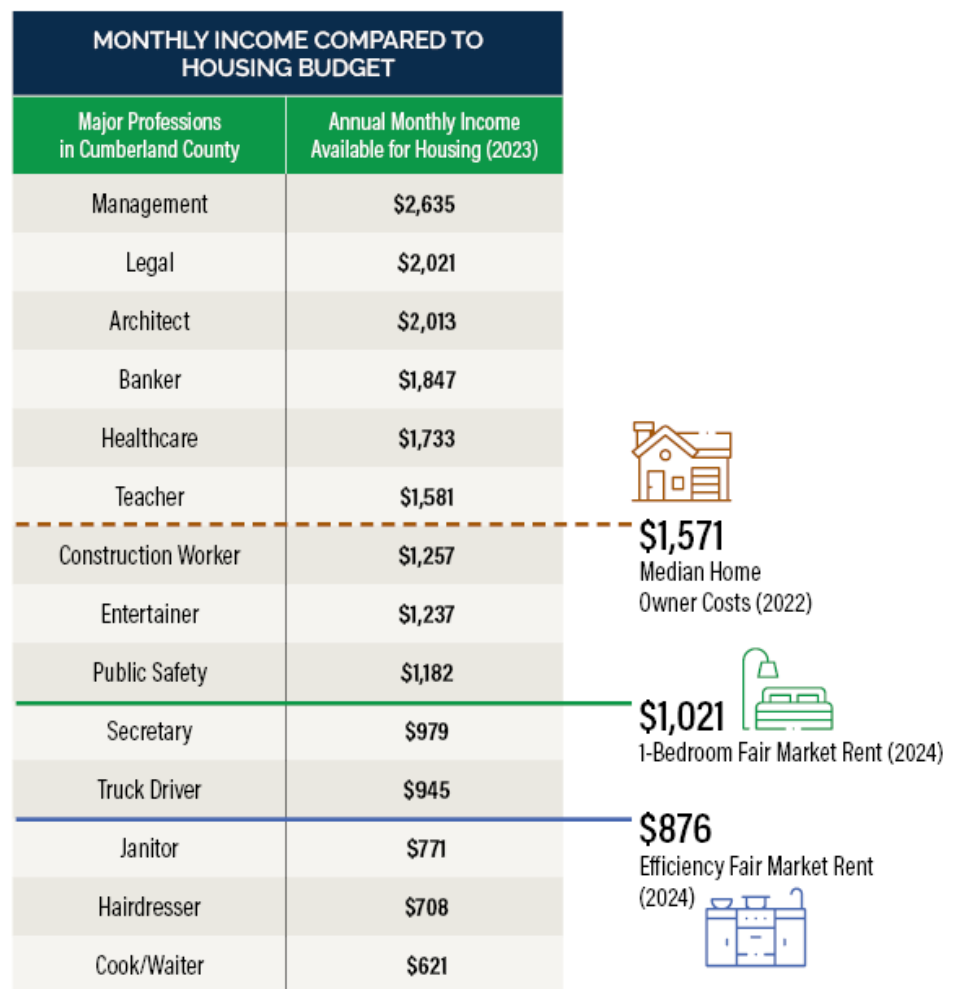
### Principle Benefits

- ✓ Residents of all ages and income levels are accommodated
- ✓ Housing options provided for residents at all stages of life
- ✓ A sustainable workforce that supports job and economic growth
- ✓ Increased tax base
- ✓ Convenient access to jobs, services, and education
- ✓ Residential communities that foster social interaction and improve mental health
- ✓ Resident health is improved through the provision of basic shelter
- ✓ Greater financial security for households who are less burdened by housing costs



1,825 occupied units paying rent from 2016-2021, median gross rent increased by 16.4% to just over \$1,000 per month. That increase has led to nearly half of renters spending 30% or more of their income on housing<sup>29</sup>.

Multifaceted changes are needed if Cumberland County is to attain its housing for all principle in the future. New residential units of all types must be constructed. Regulatory barriers must be decreased, and densities increased to ensure that new units are reasonably priced, while also assuring that renters and homeowners' costs for heating, cooling, and maintaining housing units are affordable. Sufficiently sized, appropriately zoned lands near employment and activity centers must be identified to decrease transportation costs and increase family budgets available for housing. New jobs must be created that pay a wage sufficient to afford typical housing prices in the county.



Sources: Living wage data, [livingwage.mit.edu](https://livingwage.mit.edu/); Fair market rent, U.S HUD; Homeowner costs, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 5-year estimates.



# Principles in Practice

## 1

**Provide financial and technical assistance to create municipal ordinance amendments that increase housing supply, reduce housing costs, and eliminate fair housing regulatory barriers.**

Land use regulations have a direct impact on housing supply, affordability, and accessibility. An individual's ability to live in a community depends upon the location, type, density, and design of residential development permitted. Similarly, a business' desire to locate in a community relies upon those same factors that determine the number, type, and price of housing for its employees. Municipalities may unknowingly exclude residents and businesses from locating in their community through the housing regulations contained in their ordinances.

The county should provide technical and financial assistance to municipalities that adopt the following types of ordinance amendments designed to increase housing supply, decrease cost, eliminate fair housing barriers while maintaining community character:



- **Higher density** – allowing construction of more residential units on a lot increases overall housing supply.
- **Encourage smaller units** – permit increased density when the average unit size is smaller.
- **Use standards** – allow single-family detached, attached, and multifamily housing in the same zoning district, on the same lot, and in combination with commercial uses to provide houses of various sizes and costs.
- **Housing mix** – require differing types of housing to be mixed in a residential development to create a cohesive feel and avoid segregation of housing types.
- **Bulk and dimensional standards** – reductions in minimum lot areas, setbacks, and increases in height.
- **Fair Housing Act** – update ordinances consistent with the policies and benchmarks contained in CCHRA's Analysis of the Impediments to Fair Housing Choice plan.
- **Site design standards** – narrower streets calm traffic, reduce stormwater runoff, limit maintenance costs, and decrease the overall cost of residential development.
- **Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)**– secondary dwelling units on a residential lot that can accommodate a variety of users at a low cost.
- **Affordable housing incentives** – density bonuses and other incentives linked to the number of affordable housing units provided in new residential developments.
- **Preserving naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)** – preserve existing manufactured home parks and smaller, older housing stock that have lower costs than new construction.





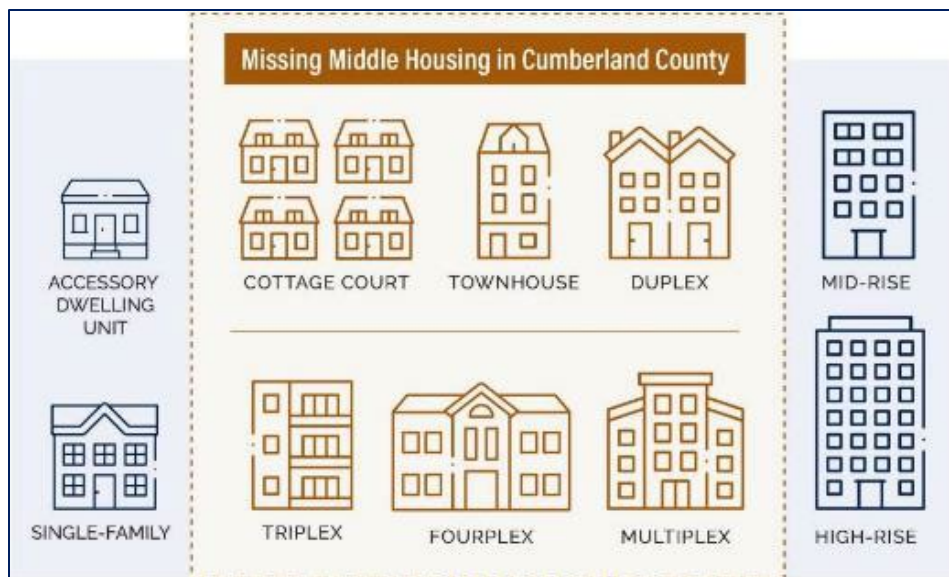
# 2

## Support emerging opportunities that may increase the supply of affordable housing.

Increasing the housing supply was a commonly cited tactic during the planning process to improve housing affordability in the county. Construction of traditional single-family detached, attached, or multifamily units can increase supply but may not achieve associated affordability goals. Other emerging housing options may hold the opportunity to advance supply outside of traditional means but may face regulatory or other barriers that challenge successful implementation.

Cumberland County should partner with CCHRA, municipalities, and the residential construction industry to support the implementation and construction of the following affordable housing opportunities:

- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)** – smaller, secondary residential units on an existing residential lot or property that can provide affordable housing to a wide cross-section of residents across all stages of life.
- **Tiny homes** – a small house, often on a mobile platform, with floor space of less than 500 square feet designed for efficiency and low cost.
- **Affordable housing land preservation** – public or non-governmental organization (NGO) acquisition and selling of property at a subsidized rate for affordable housing projects.
- **Container homes** – smaller, lower-cost residential units constructed from shipping containers.
- **Manufactured homes** – prefabricated residences assembled on a site that lack a basement or foundation and cost less than a traditionally constructed home.



Source: Michael Baker, Inc.

# 3

## **Promote housing affordability incentives for owners, renters, and landlords.**

Land purchase costs, site preparation, utility connections, material costs, and land development approvals all contribute to housing affordability in Cumberland County. Developers have limited control over these factors and must price their products accordingly, often at a price outside of affordability standards. Homeowners and renters must pay the resulting prices that may be unattainable to many individual and family budgets.



Several county-based programs can offset housing costs for developers, renters, and homeowners and provide relief from escalating prices. Those programs are funded through the county's financial support of CCHRA which is used to match federal, state, and fee revenue.

Cumberland County should continue its investment in affordable housing incentives by supporting CCHRA programs that can be used for the following housing-related purposes:

- Interest-free, emergency home repair loans
- First-time homebuyer counseling, down payment, and closing cost assistance
- Rental assistance for low-income, elderly, and persons with disabilities
- Emergency rental assistance for renters in financial distress
- Landlord loans and payments for repairs and vacancies on units for low-income renters
- Grant funding for developers to build, buy, and rehabilitate affordable housing units
- Weatherization and energy efficiency improvements to low-income households.

# 4

## **Maintain the Cumberland County Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in conjunction with CCHRA.**

CCHRA prepares a Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing every 5 years. The plans provide a contemporary analysis of the county's housing market and are an important tool for understanding the solutions to emerging housing and community development needs. Those planning documents are required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to enable the county to receive federal housing and community development funding.





Cumberland County should continue to partner with the CCHRA to update the Consolidated Plan and Impediments to Fair Housing Plan every 5-years. The information contained in the plans provides a data baseline for the county to track housing needs and trends, to develop actions and policies to improve affordable housing, and to remove barriers to fair housing.

# 5

## **Partner with county agencies to host regular housing summits.**

The county's housing issues are dynamic and variable. Improving Cumberland County's housing supply and affordability requires the active participation of government, nonprofit, and private sector interests to identify and respond to housing needs. Each of these housing stakeholders has a unique focus and service area that impacts housing supply and affordability in the county. The services of housing stakeholders must be closely coordinated to avoid duplication, efficiently use available resources, and address the most pressing issues.

Cumberland County should partner with other county agencies to convene regularly scheduled housing summits with builders, municipalities, human service agencies, and other countywide housing stakeholders. These forums will enable participants to stay abreast of emerging trends, address contemporary challenges, forge collaborative partnerships, and track progress toward established goals.





# Plan for People and Places

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## Overview

Unique, memorable places have distinct physical features, economic vitality, rich history, cultural events, social interaction, and recreation opportunities that attract residents and visitors alike. These factors provide people with an emotional, psychological, and cultural connection with their surroundings. This sense of place, while difficult to describe with words, stirs emotions and creates experiences that make a place memorable, desirable, and distinguishable from its neighbors.

Residents validated the county's strong sense of place during the comprehensive plan's community survey. Respondents cited the following elements of the Cumberland County community that contribute to its special sense of place:

- Proximity to major metropolitan areas
- Abundant outdoor recreation opportunities
- Tranquil rural landscapes
- Small, neighborly communities
- Variety of shopping and restaurants

Cumberland County's sense of place has led to its distinction as the preferred place to live in Pennsylvania, attracting new residents of varying ages and races. Since 2010 the county's racial and ethnic diversity has expanded as the Asian, Black, and Hispanic populations have grown by 96%, 47%, and 85%, respectively. Residents that live in Cumberland County often stay through all stages of life with the over 65 age group adding 12,345 residents since 2010, the fastest growing age group over the same period<sup>30</sup>.

Health and safety are strong contributors to a community's sense of place as well. The county's health was documented in a 2023 study by the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute that ranked Cumberland County the 5th healthiest county in Pennsylvania according to social, economic, health, and environmental factors <sup>31</sup>. Likewise, the county's low violent crime rate, 86.3 crimes per 100,000 population, nearly four times less than the state, gives residents a sense of

## Plan for People and Places

### Principle Definition

Cumberland County's communities must protect and promote their unique sense of place.

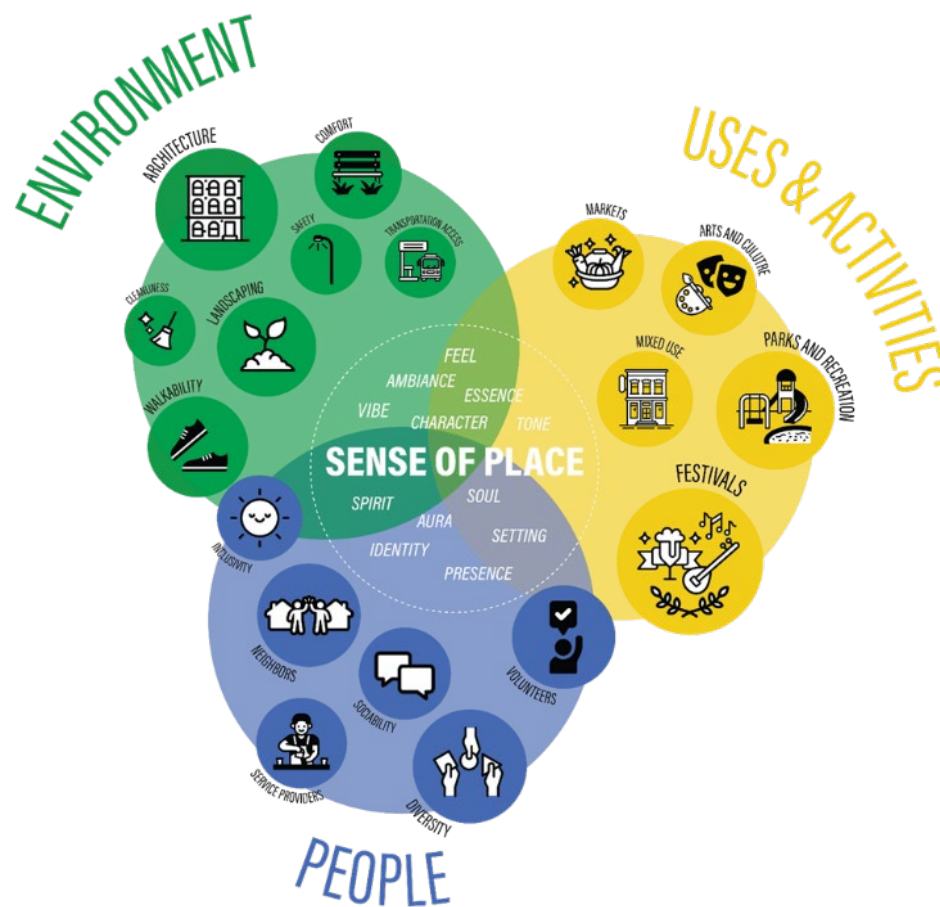
### Principle Benefits

- ✓ Improved physical and mental well-being for residents
- ✓ Preservation of the county's history and heritage
- ✓ Stewardship of natural resources
- ✓ Business attraction and employment opportunities
- ✓ Clean, safe neighborhoods
- ✓ Increase in property values
- ✓ Strong sense of community, shared by all



security when choosing to call Cumberland County home<sup>32</sup>.

Sense of place rarely happens by chance and is the result of proactive planning. Cumberland County and its municipalities must protect the county's unique sense of place to ensure continued prosperity even in the face of rapid growth.



Source: Michael Baker, Inc





# Principles in Practice

1

## Collaborate with historic preservation partners to secure long-term protection of the county's historic resources.

Cumberland County's historic resources provide a connection with the past and create a sense of place that enhances the county's quality of life while promoting economic development opportunities. Future growth should complement and not threaten the historic resources that contribute to the county's success.

Cumberland County includes 30 properties listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places that tell the county's timeless history. The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) and county records include another 820 historically significant sites located in the county but lack permanent protection. Other important resources may be present in the county but have not been documented in current inventories.

The county should work with its historic preservation partners to identify and protect historic resources by:

- Updating historic resource inventories to reflect current preservation priorities.
- Enabling the public to nominate important places or structures for preservation.
- Supporting applications to include resources on the Cumberland County Register of Historic Places or the National Register of Historic Places.
- Providing financial and technical assistance to municipalities to update local plans and ordinances that include historic preservation provisions.
- Educating the public and local elected officials about the benefits of historic preservation and what actions they can take to protect important places.
- Maintaining appropriate historic resources owned by Cumberland County.

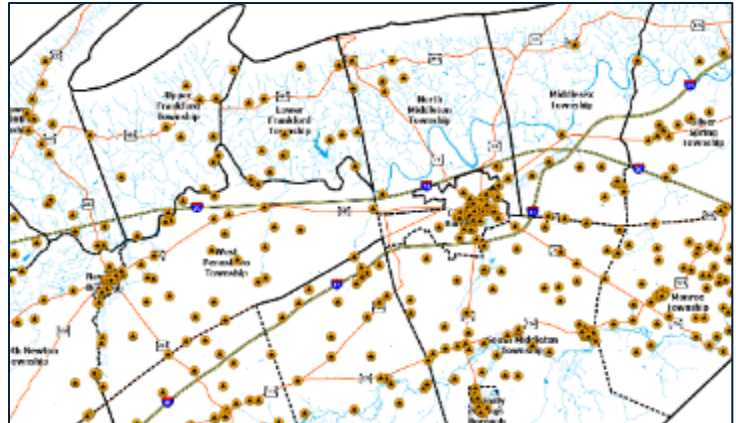


Figure 4 Cumberland County historic resources map. Click on image while holding ctrl to view interactive map or go to <https://gis.ccpa.net/comp-plan-maps/>.



## 2

### Provide strategically located, interconnected public parks and trail systems with convenient access for every resident.

Public parks and trails provide benefits to Cumberland County residents and visitors alike. The county's 54,400 acres of public parks and natural areas provide residents with access to exercise opportunities that contribute to their physical and mental well-being. The county's 200 miles of trails offer additional exercise opportunities while also contributing to the county's active transportation network that provides low-cost travel opportunities for all residents<sup>33</sup>. Those same park and trail resources attract visitors who support local hotels and restaurants, further boosting the local economy.



Cumberland County's park and trail network includes federal, state, municipal, and county-owned facilities. While those parks and trails are broadly spread across the county, they were often developed individually without consideration of the overall need for various types of facilities, the populations they serve, or connections with adjacent jurisdictions. A broader view of parks and trails is needed to ensure the desired facilities are constructed in the right location and meet the current and future needs of residents.

Cumberland County should convene with parks and trails stakeholders to plan and implement a strategically located, interconnected public parks and trail system with convenient access for every resident by:

- Convening a countywide parks and trails task force to inventory existing assets, identify locations for new facilities, and develop a prioritized list of improvements.
- Initiating planning for a countywide trail network that connects local parks and trails to regional active transportation facilities.
- Providing county funding to support new park acquisitions and develop new trails.
- Identifying grant funding opportunities to implement prioritized projects.

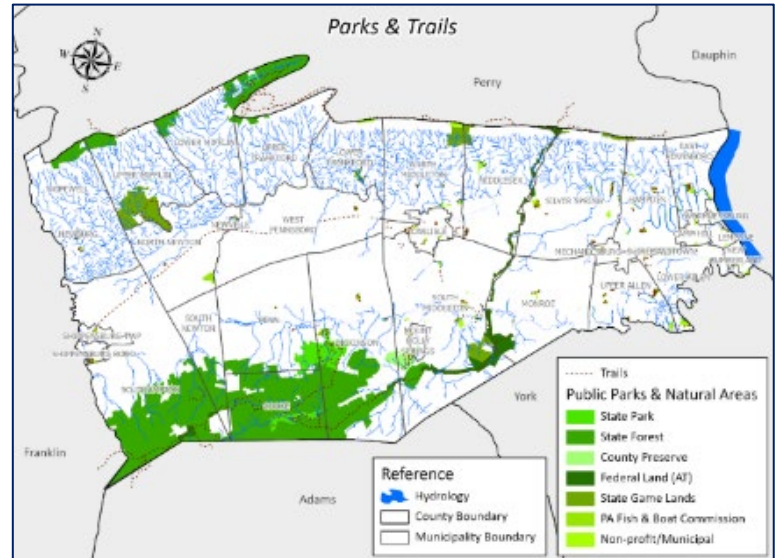


Figure 5 Cumberland County parks and trails viewer. Click on image while holding ctrl to view interactive map or visit <https://gis.ccpa.net/parks-trails/>



# 3

## Support flexible design guidelines that enable attractive design, promote community character, and enhance land use compatibility.

The size, arrangement, and appearance of buildings directly contribute to a community's sense of place and desirability for residents and businesses. Accompanying community amenities such as sidewalks, shared spaces, landscaping, pedestrian facilities, signage, and decorative lighting further enhance a community's appeal. Thus, if Cumberland County's communities are to retain their sense of place and community character, attractive design must be considered and protected as part of redevelopment, reuse, and new development projects.



Cumberland County should support flexible design guidelines for its communities by providing financial and technical assistance for municipal plans, ordinances, and construction projects that address the following topics:

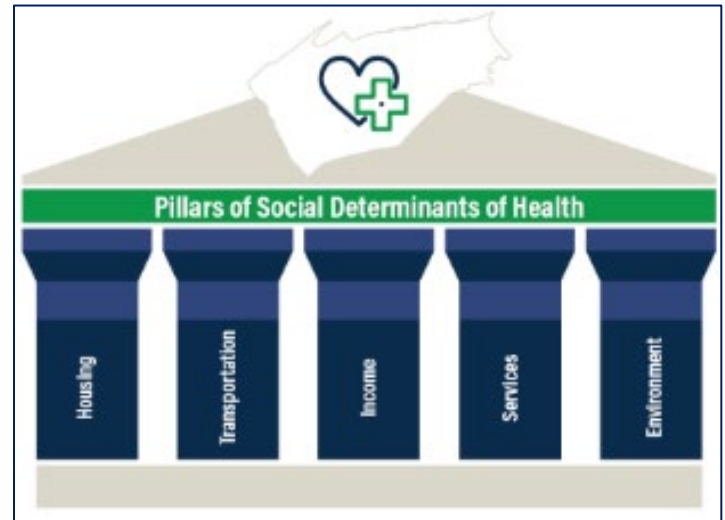
- Community design guidelines that establish preferred building sizes, arrangements, and appearances that mesh with existing community character.
- Buffering and screening requirements between incompatible uses.
- Pedestrian amenities including sidewalks, benches, shade structures, and trash/recycling receptacles
- Historic districts and historic resource protection
- Pedestrian scale design that encourages walkability over vehicular access
- Bicycling amenities including bike routes and parking
- Community gardens
- Street trees and green infrastructure
- Sign ordinances
- Creation of public spaces and public art
- Lighting





## Consider the social determinants of health in all relevant county and municipal community planning efforts.

Housing, transportation, human services, employment, and environmental quality represent the “social determinants of health” that significantly impact an individual’s well-being. Often, these factors are considered independently thus, overlooking important interrelationships between the factors. The availability and cost of housing are directly related to the number and location of employment opportunities. Healthcare, education, and food access are criteria used by residents to choose where they live. Transportation enables residents to work and secure necessary services. A clean environment is a crucial element necessary to resident and business health that must not be compromised as the county grows.



Source: Michael Baker, Inc

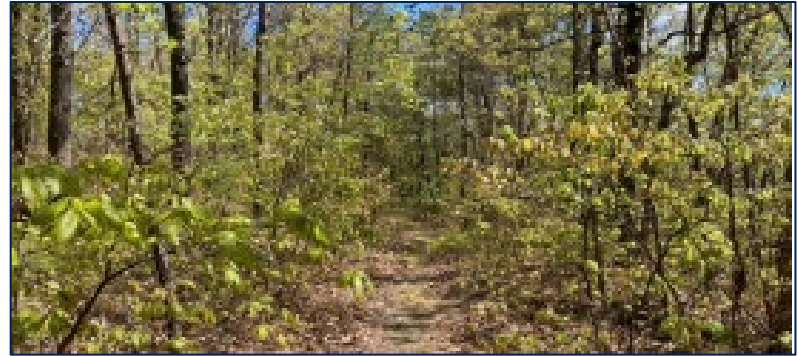
Cumberland County and its municipal partners should consider the social determinants of health in all relevant planning, zoning, and community development initiatives. The county and municipalities should engage stakeholder groups representing each social determinant of health to ensure that all needs are identified and planned for. The following interrelationships between the social determinants of health should be considered during those processes:

SOCIAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH	PLANNING INTERRELATIONSHIPS FOR CONSIDERATION
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right units in the right location at the right price</li> <li>• Integrated housing types to promote resident interaction</li> <li>• Connected to jobs and services with multiple transportation modes</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple modes of transportation connect to housing, jobs, and services</li> <li>• Transportation options of varying costs to support all incomes</li> </ul>
<b>Income</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of jobs available to residents of all backgrounds</li> <li>• Jobs with pay sufficient to afford housing and transportation</li> <li>• Jobs located near where residents live</li> </ul>
<b>Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare, education, religious institutions, and healthy food opportunities located close to housing</li> <li>• Facilities accessible with multiple, affordable modes of transportation</li> </ul>
<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean air, land, and water protected as the county grows</li> <li>• Efficient growth reduces land consumption</li> <li>• Transportation fuel usage and emissions are reduced through compact development and multimodal connections</li> </ul>

# 5

## Steward and improve the Mt. Holly Marsh Preserve.

The county-owned Mt. Holly Marsh Preserve encompasses over 900 acres in Mt. Holly Springs Borough, and Dickinson and South Middleton Townships. The preserve is the largest municipal park in the county and offers a variety of passive recreation opportunities including hiking, birdwatching, fishing, and hunting. The Marsh Preserve sees extensive use from local and regional recreation enthusiasts with a noted uptick in use following the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.



The CCPD is the county agency charged with oversight of the preserve. The CCPD recently completed a management plan for the Marsh Preserve that outlined actions necessary to maintain the preserve's natural resources and improve the recreational amenities that make it a desired local and regional destination. Cumberland County should implement the Marsh Preserve management plan by:

- Providing annual maintenance funding as part of the county's general fund budget
- Removing invasive species
- Managing forested land for wildlife species and ecosystem health
- Restoring Mountain Creek's stream banks
- Improving fish and wildlife habitat
- Clearing and signing trails
- Removing litter
- Updating visitor information and maps
- Maintaining the parking lot





# Expand Transportation Choices

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## Overview

Transportation touches all aspects of a person's life, influencing where they live, the education they pursue, the health care they access, the jobs they hold, the daily services they need, and the family members or friends they visit. That same transportation system is the lifeblood of county businesses that create jobs, deliver goods, and provide services to drive local and global economies alike.

Cumberland County houses a diverse transportation system that gives residents the options of driving, using public transit, ridesharing, bicycling, or walking to meet daily needs. While all modes of the transportation system are present in Cumberland County, the availability and utility of each mode differs drastically by location. Residents with vehicle access can travel virtually anywhere on the county's nearly 2,000 miles of roads that include minimally traveled 2-lane roads to major 4-lane interstate highways carrying over 60,000 vehicles per day. Meanwhile, the 2.2% of residents with no vehicle access are left with significantly fewer transportation choices<sup>34</sup>.

The county's active transportation infrastructure including paved shoulders, bike lanes, sidewalks, and off-road trails is inconsistent, lacks connectivity, and may not be accessible to persons with disabilities. The county's fixed route public transportation system, used by under 1% of county residents, affords access to 5 county areas, yet has insufficient coverage and frequency necessary for employment, medical, or other daily travel needs<sup>35</sup>. The shared ride transportation system offers connections throughout a 10-county area, with subsidized fares for certain passengers but is an expensive

## Expand Transportation Choices

### Principle Definition

Cumberland County's residents and businesses require safe, accessible, and affordable transportation choices.

### Principle Benefits

- ✓ Improved resident mobility regardless of income, age, physical impairment, or car ownership
- ✓ Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- ✓ Expanded employment opportunities
- ✓ Improved business attraction and retention
- ✓ Increased disposable income for individuals and families who can choose from multiple, affordable transportation options
- ✓ Decreased development cost as fewer parking spaces are required in new development
- ✓ Improved quality of life as multipurpose bicycle and pedestrian facilities enable commuting, recreation, and healthy living
- ✓ Decreased loss of life and property with transportation safety improvements
- ✓ Clean air and better health



option for public use. All transportation system users could benefit from more affordable and interconnected transportation options that serve popular destinations.

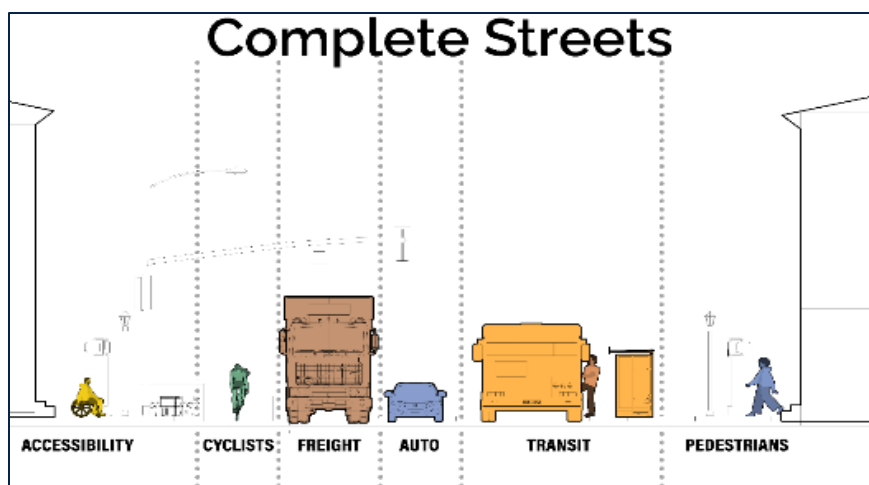
The county's intermodal transportation system makes it a hotbed for freight traffic with destinations in and outside the county. Cumberland County's location on the periphery of the Northeast megalopolis and at the intersection of major interstate highways affords businesses access to 40% of the United States population within a day's drive<sup>36</sup>. The county's 70 miles of active railroads make important intermodal connections to major surrounding ports and intermodal locations. Major cities are only a few hours away with private flights from the Carlisle and Capital City Airports and commercial connections through the Harrisburg International Airport.

Transportation was a popular topic in the comprehensive plan survey, cited as a both a need and a concern for the future. Over half of respondents cited road repairs and pedestrian infrastructure as the highest transportation priorities the county needs to address. Freight-related traffic congestion and safety on the county's major roadways was a top concern repeatedly stated by respondents.

Cumberland County's historic growth has been founded upon its rich transportation system. That system will require investment, expansion, and innovation to support the county's future growth and accommodate all users.



Source: PennDOT.



Source: Michael Baker, Inc



# Principles in Practice

## 1 Coordinate and pursue improvements on federal and state-owned transportation facilities through the HATS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

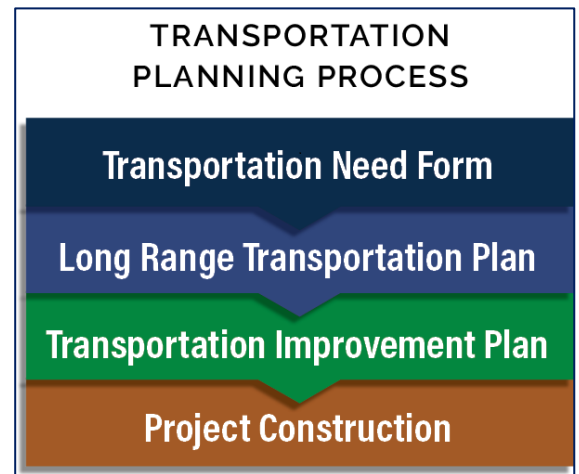
HATS is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Harrisburg area. HATS is comprised of federal, state, and local agencies, including officials from Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry Counties, Harrisburg City, and the Susquehanna Regional Transportation Authority (SRTA). The organization develops transportation plans and improvement programs for the region and is the conduit for transportation funding from the federal and state levels.

The LRTP establishes a direction for the regional transportation system over a 20-year planning horizon and is fiscally constrained by ensuring project budgets fall within anticipated revenues. The TIP is a 12-year implementation plan for the region and includes projects that are under active engineering or construction in the HATS region.

HATS' investment in Cumberland County's transportation system reflects the transportation needs identified by Cumberland County and its constituent municipalities, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. As part of its role on HATS, Cumberland County should actively solicit projects from county municipalities, businesses, and residents for inclusion on the LRTP and TIP during update periods.

Cumberland County in cooperation with HATS staff can secure more transportation funding for county projects by:

- Hosting regular informational sessions on the transportation planning process that explain how transportation needs can be transformed into constructed projects.
- Assisting project sponsors to complete transportation need forms, the gateway step that leads to project inclusion on the HATS LRTP and TIP.
- Conducting studies to quantify transportation needs and identify improvement options.
- Creating project inventories with municipal partners of projects eligible for state and federal funding.
- Communicating funding opportunities to eligible project sponsors that may submit projects for funding consideration.





## **Invest the county's \$5 Local Use Fee in the Cumberland County Connects (3C) Transportation Program to achieve coordinated, multi-municipal investments in locally owned roads and bridges.**

The 3C Transportation Program was unanimously approved by the Cumberland County Commissioners on March 1, 2023. The 3C Program invests county funds into improvements on county and municipally owned transportation infrastructure. The County Commissioners identified the following focus areas for the 3C Program:

- Municipally owned "small bridges" with an 8'-20' span
- Municipal and county-owned bridges with a >20' span
- Roadway projects on municipal-owned roads infrastructure not on a federal aid-eligible route.

Cumberland County funds the 3C Program using a portion of its Local Use Fee made possible by Act 89 of 2013, Pennsylvania's most recent transportation funding legislation<sup>37</sup>. The legislation enables counties to impose a \$5 fee on vehicles registered in their jurisdiction, the proceeds of which can be used to finance transportation projects on locally owned infrastructure. The Local Use Fee generates approximately \$1.2 million per year and was adopted by the county in 2015.



The fee's use is constitutionally restricted to transportation purposes and cannot be used on federal or state-owned roads or bridges. While the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) collects the fee, Cumberland County is responsible for its administration and appropriate use in accordance with Section 9010(c) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code<sup>38</sup>.

The 3C Program offers a unique opportunity for the county to invest in local transportation when available funding is in short supply and high demand. The county has full autonomy with the 3C Program and needs only to coordinate with its program participants to identify priorities and execute projects. The county should continue the development of the 3C Program by:

- Delivering existing large and small bridge projects, demonstrating the cost and efficiency benefits of regional cooperation and project bundling.
- Inventorying the transportation projects on municipally owned roadways and their connections with the state system to establish investment priorities.
- Developing a county-based planning committee that would oversee the development and delivery of 3C Program projects.
- Identifying opportunities to leverage HATS funding using 3C Program funds to match TIP funding for priority projects.



# 3

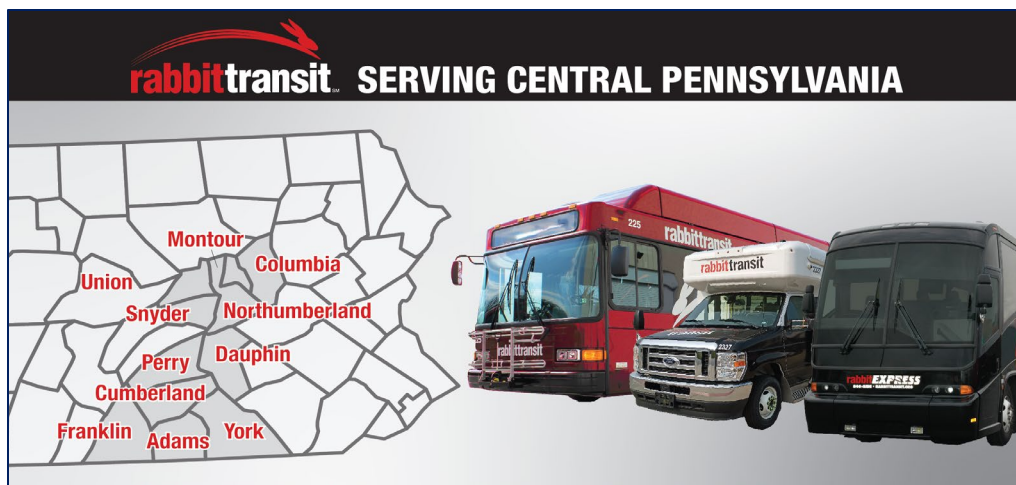
## Reimagine Cumberland County's public transportation system as part of SRTA's transit development plan.

SRTA, doing business as rabbittransit, is the fixed-route public transportation provider for Cumberland, Adams, York, Dauphin, and Franklin Counties. SRTA is also the shared ride operator for those same fixed-route counties.

SRTA was founded in 2021 after years of study that analyzed the cost, benefits, and process required to merge Capital Area Transit (CAT), serving Cumberland and Dauphin Counties, and rabbittransit serving York, Adams, and Franklin Counties. The successful merger has already shown cost savings, service improvements, and efficiencies in its first two years of operation.

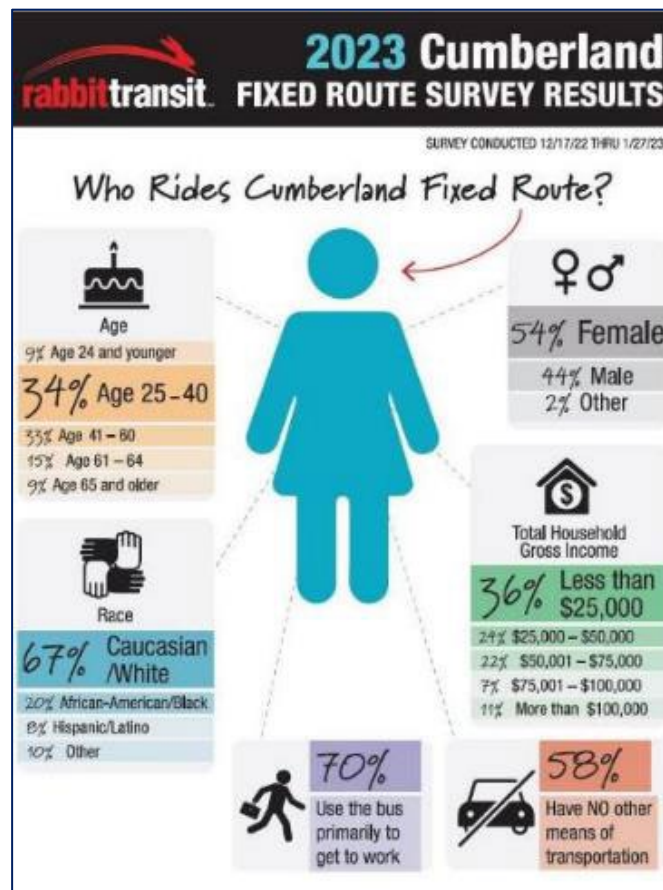
The public transit routes in Cumberland County have not changed since the 1970s when Capital Area Transit was initially formed. Those routes reflected development patterns at that time with Harrisburg serving as the activity hub for the region where all public transit trips started or ended. Since that time, Cumberland County and Dauphin County have both experienced significant, decentralized growth that has made the Harrisburg-centric service model obsolete resulting in only .5% of the county's population using public transportation. Redesigned service capable of serving the contemporary development patterns in the region, while still providing service to the region's Capital City, is desperately needed.

As a core component of the regionalization process, SRTA regularly completes a transit development plan (TDP) that offers a strategic opportunity to reimagine public transportation in the five-county region. The TDP employs a "clean slate" approach to evaluate the regional development trends, travel patterns, and accompanying transportation needs. New transit service plans will be developed to link customers' origins and destinations. The plan will analyze how SRTA's service can seamlessly integrate with other modes of transportation to provide customers in the region with borderless travel options.



As a SRTA Board member and funding partner, the county should actively participate in the transit development plan process and ongoing implementation by:

- Engaging residents, businesses, and NGOs in the process to determine their respective transportation needs.
- Sharing growth trend data that can identify current and emerging locations that may be transit supportive.
- Supporting microtransit and other innovative public transit projects that offer flexibility and service improvements when compared to traditional delivery models.
- Monitoring new routes and technologies to ensure identified needs are met.
- Accommodating SRTA's bus maintenance facilities on county property as a staging and launch point for regional service.





# 4

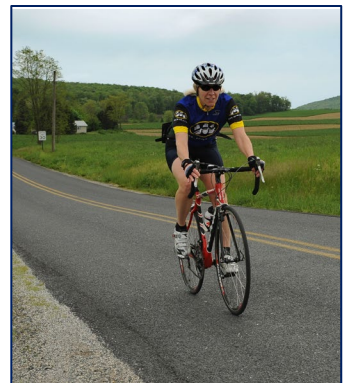
## Advance active transportation facilities in new development and retrofits in existing communities.

Active transportation, bicycling and walking, is a cost-efficient mode of transportation that is available to everyone, regardless of income. Sidewalks, wide shoulders, shared-use paths, and trails support active transportation either as an independent mode or as the critical "last 1,300 feet" of transportation that connects other modes with origins and destinations. The active transportation network supports travel for daily needs while providing recreation and healthy living co-benefits.

The active transportation network, while a legitimate transportation mode, has not benefited from the high levels of planning and investment commonly associated with highway transportation. The active transportation system is inconsistent, fractured, lacks integration with other transportation modes, and is often unsafe. Focused efforts to plan, expand, and connect the county's active transportation system are needed in the future.

The county should advance its active transportation network by:

- Participating in the HATS Regional Active Transportation Plan and coordinating its development and implementation with the county's Land Partnerships Plan.
- Advocating for the inclusion of active transportation infrastructure during the planning and engineering phases of appropriate municipal and state transportation projects.
- Incorporating active transportation facilities into county and municipal transportation projects, consistent with the surrounding community character.
- Providing financial and technical assistance for municipal zoning and SALDO amendments that require sidewalks, bike lanes, shared-use paths, or trails as part of new developments.
- Assisting municipalities to secure federal and state funding to upgrade pedestrian facilities, including Americans with Disabilities Act improvements, in existing communities.
- Using the county's 3C Program and Land Partnerships Grant Program to fund eligible active transportation projects.



# 5

## Support HATS and PennDOT freight planning efforts that enable goods movement to and through the county.

Cumberland County's strategic location and advanced transportation network make it a hub for freight transportation. Within a one-day drive of the county lies 40% of the United States population which represents 60% of the nation's buying power and 50% of Canada's population. The Ports of Baltimore and Philadelphia are located 100 miles or less from the county, providing access to international trade<sup>39</sup>.



The regional highway and rail transportation network accommodates millions of tons of freight that move to, from, or through the region daily. That intermodal freight movement system requires careful planning to foster the region's ongoing growth without compromising safety or quality of life.

HATS prepares a regional freight plan that supports economic vitality, improves freight mobility and operations, enhances safety, and reduces community and environmental impacts on the region's communities. Cumberland County should support regular updates to the regional freight plan and represent the county's interest in the plan's implementation by:

- Advocating for improvements to I-81 that ease congestion and improve safety.
- Identifying freight bottlenecks that hamper goods movement.
- Mitigating the negative impacts on the county's quality of life created by freight movement such as truck parking, poor signage, light pollution, noise, energy usage, groundwater quality, and air pollution.
- Communicating with county businesses to determine freight needs.
- Collaborating with Norfolk Southern to discuss county operations and business trends.
- Supporting federal and state transportation investments that improve freight movement.
- Providing technical and financial assistance to municipalities to prepare plans and ordinances that locate freight-intensive uses such as warehousing/distribution centers in the appropriate location to minimize the negative impacts of those uses on surrounding communities.



# 6

## Monitor and adopt transportation technology advancements that improve mobility, enhance safety, and decrease cost.

Transportation technology advancements respond to system users' desire for innovations that ultimately move people and goods faster, safer, and with fewer environmental impacts. The county's 2050 transportation system will look dramatically different than that of 2025. New transportation technologies are emerging now that hold the potential to transform the way people and goods are moved in the future. Other technologies, currently unheard of, may emerge in the future and be the "next big thing" in how people and goods are moved.

Cumberland County should monitor transportation technology advancements as they develop and determine their potential applicability to the community. Then working with government, businesses, and nonprofits, the county will collaboratively pursue the necessary funding, policies, or regulations that support the implementation of those technologies. The following transportation technology innovations identified through the planning process have proven success or hold potential for the county's future:

- **Micromobility** – low-speed, lightweight scooters or e-bikes that require less effort to operate, operate at higher speeds and access broader ranges than walking or bicycling.
- **Adaptive traffic signals** – reduce congestion and improve safety using real-time data to monitor and direct traffic flow.
- **Smart roadways** – roads that detect and communicate traffic and weather problems, charge electric vehicles, weigh-in-motion vehicles.
- **Connected and automated vehicles** – offer the potential to eliminate human error with computer-assisted driving.
- **Electric vehicles (EV)** – reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels through the development of a regional network of publicly available EV charging infrastructure.
- **Delivery drones** – package delivery option with no highway impacts.
- **Mobility As a Service** – a digital platform that integrates various transportation providers and enables users to choose from a variety of transportation modes to complete their trip thereby decreasing reliance on the automobile.





# 7

## Support airports that serve Cumberland County and the region.

County residents, businesses, and visitors have access to three airports, all within a 30-mile radius. The Carlisle Airport, the only airport physically located in the county, is owned by South Middleton Township and serves business, recreation, and emergency medical aviation needs using its 4,008' runway.

The Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority (SARAA) owns and manages four regional airports: Harrisburg International Airport, Capital City Executive Airport, Franklin County Regional Airport, and the Gettysburg Regional Airport. Cumberland County appoints three members to the SARAA board. SARAA has a staff of 120 that manage and maintain the four airports.

Capital City Executive Airport, located in Fairview Township, York County, serves the region's corporate and general aviation needs with its air traffic control tower and two runways of 5,000' and 3,500'.

Harrisburg International Airport (HIA) is a Federal Aviation Administration designated Small Hub and Part 147 certified full service commercial airport. HIA served over 1,300,000 passengers in 2023<sup>40</sup>. HIA is the third largest airport in Pennsylvania and provides daily non-stop passenger service to seventeen cities and direct flights to global destinations via its 9,501' runway. HIA is the Pennsylvania Air National Guard base for the 193rd Special Operations Group and an active cargo hub for national shipping companies such as FedEx and UPS. The airport moved 53,940 tons of freight in 2023<sup>41</sup>. The presence and diversity of these 3 airports contribute to the county's economic development, safety, and quality of life. The county should support the long-term viability of those airports by:

- Encouraging business and resident usage.
- Supporting funding requests for operational and capital improvements.
- Appointing board members to the 15-member Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority to represent the county's interest and collaborate with regional partners.



# 8

## Promote Commute PA's ridesharing programs with county residents and visitors.

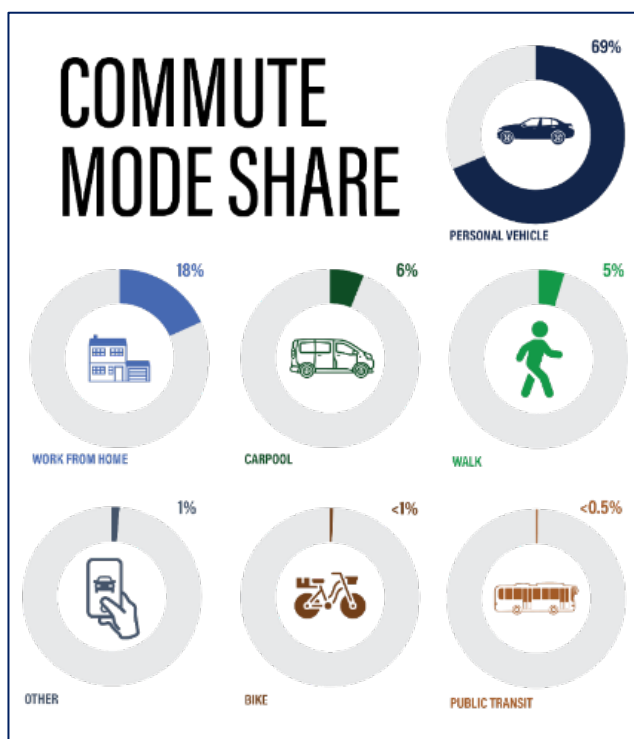


Commute PA is a nonprofit organization that coordinates ridesharing programs such as carpools, vanpools, and public transit for businesses and residents in its eight-county service area that includes Cumberland County. Operated using federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality funds from HATS, Commute PA offers its

programs at no cost. Such programs offer affordable transportation options that can alleviate congestion, enhance safety, improve air quality, and reduce transportation costs for businesses and residents alike.

The efforts of Commute PA are responsible, in part, for the 6.2% of county residents who carpool when traveling to work<sup>42</sup>. Ongoing promotion of those services will increase ridesharing usage and the associated benefits. Cumberland County should promote Commute PA's programs by:

- Participating in ridesharing programs as an employer and offering the services to county employees.
- Supporting dedicated allocation of HATS funding to Commute PA's initiatives.
- Partnering with CAEDC to identify businesses that may participate in ridesharing programs



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2022.





# Adapt and Stay Safe

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## Overview

Resilience can be defined as a community's ability to prepare for anticipated natural and manmade hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand or recover from disruptions. Resilient communities proactively envision and predict the future, making associated financial investments and policy decisions that protect community assets and provide a safe environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Cumberland County cannot rest on the laurels of its current success and must prepare for the change that will be an integral component of its future. New county residents will require housing, jobs, and services. The county's economy must adapt to market forces that could shape new industry clusters while expanding or contracting current businesses. Natural resources must be protected in the face of all types of future change.

Environmental changes will require the county to adapt in the future. In the past 110 years, Pennsylvania's climate has warmed by nearly 2°F and experienced a 10% increase in annual precipitation amounts. By 2050, the temperature may increase another 5°F and 8% in precipitation, raising concerns about water quality, severe weather, air quality, human health, extreme heat, and infrastructure integrity<sup>43</sup>. The warming climate may also create more extreme precipitation events, defined as 1.5" of rain or snow melt in a day, with recent studies predicting a 52% increase in such events by 2099<sup>44</sup>. Those extreme precipitation events may create more flooding, especially for the 1,500+ properties located in a special flood hazard area as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In addition to increasing natural hazards, the county must prepare its response to unpredictable manmade hazards as well. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way of life for the entire nation and was associated with the deaths of nearly 1,000 county residents from 2020-2022. Terrorism is similarly unpredictable but a real possibility, given the critical energy and military facilities located

## Adapt and Stay Safe

### Principle Definition

Cumberland County must be safe and resilient to future change.

### Principle Benefits

- ✓ Reduced loss of life
- ✓ Decreased property damage to homes and businesses
- ✓ Reduced emergency response and disaster recovery costs
- ✓ Safe communities with low crime rates
- ✓ Faster economic recovery from hazards and disruptions
- ✓ Uninterrupted public service provision during and after disasters
- ✓ Secure food and energy systems
- ✓ Sustainable, ongoing growth



in and near the county. The 2,011 miles of roads and 70 miles of railroads in the county carry the people and goods that drive the nation's economy but also create risk for transportation accidents of unknown magnitude that threaten personal, economic, and environmental health. Technology and cyber-attacks can cripple the financial institutions and utility grids that power the nation's economy and energy needs.

With so much change on the horizon, both predictable and unpredictable, Cumberland County must prepare now to maintain its reputation as a preferred location for living and doing business.

CHANGE ON THE HORIZON IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY	
ANTICIPATED CHANGES	ANTICIPATED IMPACTS TO PLAN FOR
<b>Increasing Populations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New housing</li> <li>▪ Healthcare</li> <li>▪ Education</li> <li>▪ Public safety</li> <li>▪ Natural resource impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Climate and Weather</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More precipitation, stormwater, and flooding</li> <li>▪ Increase in severe weather incidents</li> <li>▪ Higher temperatures impact agriculture practices</li> <li>▪ New invasive pests and flora</li> </ul>
<b>Business Patterns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New jobs</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure needs</li> <li>▪ Vacant properties</li> <li>▪ Natural resource requirements</li> </ul>
<b>External Geopolitical Forces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Terrorism</li> <li>▪ Civil unrest</li> <li>▪ Energy instability</li> <li>▪ Food instability</li> </ul>



# Principles in Practice

## 1

### **Improve the county's resilience to natural, manmade, and technological hazards through implementation of the Cumberland County's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).**

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, is intended to reduce the loss of life and property, human suffering, economic disruption, and disaster assistance costs resulting from natural disasters<sup>45</sup>. Under this legislation, state, tribal, and local governments must develop a HMP as a condition for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Cumberland County Public Safety Departments (DPS) and the CCPD jointly prepare and steward the Cumberland County HMP. The HMP is developed through a structured process that responds to FEMA requirements. The plan identifies the natural, manmade, and technological hazards facing the county, assesses the county's vulnerability to those hazards, and develops a mitigation strategy of actions the county should take over a five-year period to increase overall community resilience.

The CCPD and DPS in conjunction with municipal partners should prepare updates of the HMP every five years and pursue grant funding for priority projects as identified in the plan. The following hazards discussed during the planning process should be focus areas for forthcoming plan updates:

- Extreme heat, drought, and precipitation events caused by climate changes
- Flooding and stormwater management
- Utility interruptions, including those due to terrorism
- Pandemic
- Winter storms
- Transportation accidents
- Technological hazards





# 2

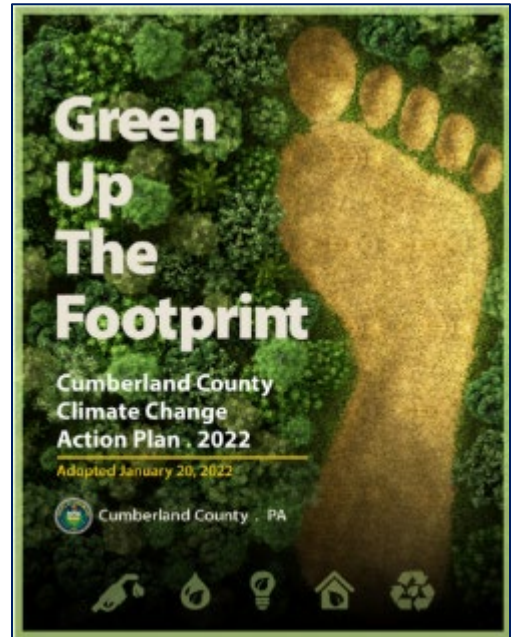
## Mitigate and adapt to climate change through implementation of the Cumberland County Climate Action Plan (CAP).

Cumberland County completed its first CAP in January of 2022. The plan concluded that human activities and increased greenhouse gas emissions have contributed to changes in temperature and precipitation that can negatively impact human health, infrastructure, water quality/quantity, and ecosystem health. The accompanying implementation plan outlines a series of measures that local governments, residents, and businesses can take to limit greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate climate change impacts, and adapt to a different climate in the future.

The recommendations included in the climate action plan not only help to address climate change, but they also represent implementation of the Cumberland Principles. Mitigating and adapting to climate change are not a set of actions that are separate from the other Cumberland Principles. They are actions that can and will advance protecting the best first, growing in not out, housing for all, planning for people and places, expanding transportation choices, opening for business, and engaging to improve. Reciprocally, many of the actions identified in other parts of this plan can and will contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Cumberland County should update the CAP on a regular basis and implement the plan's recommendations by:

- Transitioning the county vehicle fleet to electric vehicles as necessary and practical in the future.
- Examining the feasibility of solar energy for use in county facilities and advocating for community solar legislation.
- Pursuing projects that reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.
- Leading by example through energy efficiency best practices and sharing with the county's 33 municipal governments.
- Assisting municipalities to prepare local climate action plans that are consistent with the county CAP.
- Supporting residents and businesses to adapt and build resilience to extreme rain, extreme heat, severe storms, droughts and other climate-related hazards.
- Combining the CAP into the HMP to enhance plan integration.



### 3 Ensure the county's long-term solid waste disposal capacity and recycling needs through the implementation and stewardship of the Cumberland County Municipal Solid Waste Management Plan.

Pennsylvania Act 101 of 1988, the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act, requires all counties to prepare and revise a municipal waste management plan that establishes an appropriate system to ensure the proper management, collection, transporting, recycling, and disposal of all municipal waste generated within the county<sup>46</sup>. The Cumberland County Recycling and Waste Department prepares this plan that ensures adequate solid waste disposal capacity exists in local landfills and proposes several recycling programs that decrease overall waste generation. These programs are essential functions that protect resident health, enhance environmental quality, support business growth, and increase community sustainability.

The Cumberland County Recycling and Waste Department should continue its stewardship and implementation of the Solid Waste Management Plan. The following key implementation activities have demonstrated public support and should be the focus of the Authority's future activities:

- **New recycling center facility** – a new recycling center constructed on county-owned land would enable the Authority to expand its recycling offerings to include paper, appliances, and cardboard while providing more convenient hours to residents.
- **Electronics recycling** – since its inception in 2017, the county's electronics recycling center has collected nearly 4 million pounds of electronics from residents.
- **Household hazardous waste (HHW) recycling** – over the program's 25-year history, 2.5 million pounds of paint, fertilizer, chemicals, oil, gasoline, and other harmful materials have been diverted from landfills and safely recycled.



Cumberland County Recycling Program Impacts Through 2024			
Program	# Program Years	# Participants	Tons Recycled
Electronics Recycling	17	38,388	1,874
Household Hazardous Waste Recycling	26	25,029	1,265

Source: Cumberland County Recycling and Waste Department



# 4

## Coordinate reliable emergency services with the county's first responders.

Cumberland County plays an important role in the coordination and delivery of the emergency services that make the county a safe place to live. The county should continue its support of the following services offered by the DPS:

- Operate the Cumberland County 911 Public Safety Telephone and Radio Systems from the Emergency Communications Center.
- Provide comprehensive planning and situational readiness for first responders, municipalities, businesses, and individuals to prepare, respond, and recover from natural and manmade hazards.
- Facilitate opportunities for first responder training to maintain technical proficiency.
- Provide incident coordination with subject matter expertise and logistical support to minimize impacts of natural, technological, and human-made hazards.
- Provide first responders with property tax relief in appreciation for their public service.
- Manage the master street address guide to ensure accurate emergency service deployment.





# Open for Business

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## Overview

A strong economy is the foundation of any successful community. Businesses provide goods and services needed by residents and the associated jobs they create provide wealth to residents necessary for healthy daily living. The real estate and income taxes associated with business growth enable local governments to provide public services such as roads, sewer, and water infrastructure. Federal, state, and local governments as well as higher education institutions provide stable employment opportunities. Tourist destinations generate spending from outside the area that further bolsters local economies as visitors frequent hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues.

Cumberland County's strategic location, skilled workforce, multiple educational institutions, quality of life, and available infrastructure serve as powerful attractants for business development. Collectively, 7,000 businesses are in Cumberland County and deliver a gross domestic product of over \$20,000,000<sup>47</sup>. Those same businesses employ over 135,000 individuals and pay an average annual wage of \$62,008 across all industries<sup>48</sup>. The county's 2.7% unemployment rate, the fifth lowest in the state, is a testament to its strong and growing workforce, a crucial need for business attraction and expansion<sup>49</sup>.

The top three industries by employment include transportation/warehousing, health care, and retail which comprise 41% of the total employment by county businesses. While not generating large employment numbers, the agriculture industry consumes nearly half of the county's land area and generates products with a combined market value of over \$300 million<sup>50</sup>.

Despite its success to date, Cumberland County must continue to pursue a flexible economic development strategy capable of responding to a changing marketplace. Changes in consumer shopping patterns reduced the sales and service workforce, left large retail properties vacant, and created an insatiable demand for logistics facilities near major highways. Inflation and low wages have left many households unable to afford basic expenses, despite working a full-time job. The

## Open for Business

### Principle Definition

Cumberland County must have a diverse economic base that enhances its quality of life.

### Principle Benefits

- ✓ New job creation that increases resident wealth
- ✓ Attracting businesses to the region that provide new goods and services
- ✓ Retaining and growing existing businesses
- ✓ Creating a skilled workforce that supports existing and future businesses
- ✓ Insulation from fluctuating market conditions due to a diverse industry base
- ✓ Innovation and creativity through entrepreneurial development
- ✓ Growing a sustainable tax base that supports necessary public services
- ✓ Sustaining a high quality of life that attracts new residents and visitor





COVID-19 pandemic resulted in work-from-home practices that have rendered once-bustling office properties vacant. Housing affordability and limited transportation options create workforce challenges necessary for new and expanding businesses. Limited land availability and infrastructure capacity require focused, prioritized development efforts to ensure space for new businesses. Cumberland County's future economic success will depend upon its ability to leverage its traditional strengths while pivoting to address these emerging opportunities and challenges.

Cumberland County Top 15 Employers 2024	
1.	Federal government
2.	Amazon.com Services LLC
3.	Giant Food Stores LLC
4.	State government
5.	Select Employment Services, Inc
6.	Excel Inc
7.	Walmart Associates Inc
8.	Holy Spirit Hospital
9.	Cumberland Valley School District
10.	UPMC Pinnacle Hospitals
11.	Dickinson College
12.	Carlisle Construction Materials LLC
13.	Cumberland County
14.	Messiah University
15.	Pinnacle Health Medical Services
Source: PA Department of Labor and Industry, 2024.	





# Principles in Practice

## 1

### Support updates and implementation of CAEDC's strategic plan.

The Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation (CAEDC), a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, was founded in 2005 by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. CAEDC is the county's authorized agency charged with leveraging and promoting Cumberland Valley's economic development and tourism assets to drive growth, create jobs, and improve the quality of life.

CAEDC develops and implements a strategic plan that represents Cumberland County's official economic development policy. The plan is developed in partnership with state, county, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and the business community. The plan includes goals, objectives, and tactics to achieve success in four strategic pillars that include:

- Economic development
- Workforce development
- Innovation and small business
- Tourism

Cumberland County should support ongoing updates to CAEDC's strategic plan and participate in implementation activities. The comprehensive planning process yielded the following considerations that should be integrated into future strategic plan updates.

- Diversifying the county's industry mix to positively respond to global, national, and state market trends.
- Promoting economic development opportunities that enhance the county's sense of place and quality of life.
- Reusing vacant commercial offices and commercial retail spaces.
- Promoting and expanding the agriculture economy and outdoor recreation amenities found in the county's rural areas.
- Identifying and recruiting high priority occupations and employers as identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.



# 2

## Support revisions to the MPC to streamline the development approval process.



New development projects in Pennsylvania must follow a review and approval process dictated by the MPC, the state legislation that authorizes counties and municipalities to plan and implement land use ordinances. Enacted in 1968, the MPC includes detailed regulations on the timing of reviews, required contents, and approval responsibilities.

A [2023 study by the Pennsylvania State Planning Board](#), commissioned at the request of Governor Josh Shapiro, examined opportunities to reduce complexities and improve efficiency with the local permitting process. The development approval process has been often cited as an economic development barrier that complicates resident improvement projects, expansion of existing facilities, and

construction of new development. The process' outdated requirements, inconsistent administration, municipal capacity requirements, and lack of integrated permitting reviews across various levels of government have been the focus of public and private sector criticism. Stakeholder input from the planning process confirmed the findings of the State Planning Board report and included associated calls for reform.

Cumberland County should support those revisions to the MPC that result in an accountable, streamlined development review process for municipalities and applicants and protects public health, safety, and welfare. The following legislative and policy recommendations should be advanced with municipal and legislative partners:

- Encourage regional planning that enables consistent submission and review of development plans across municipal boundaries.
- Expand the MPC's authority for specific plans to include residential plans as current authority limits specific plans to nonresidential applications.
- Amend the MPC to provide for unified development ordinances that represent a single ordinance containing zoning and subdivision provisions in one location.
- Promote the use of a sketch plan as an optional step in the review process to encourage early collaboration between developers and local governments.
- Amend the MPC to authorize one substantive review step that includes technical and administrative approvals instead of the current MPC preliminary and final plan requirements.



# 3

## **Encourage coordination of municipal plans and ordinances and the county's economic development strategies.**

The county's economic development strategy and municipal land use regulations must be mutually supportive. Zoning ordinances should support preferred types of development in the right locations, at appropriate densities, with attractively designed buildings that meet market demands. Infrastructure should be located and designed to meet new development's sewer, water, and utility needs. Review processes should be streamlined and predictable, resulting in the timely delivery of new development without sacrificing public accountability or any of the Cumberland Principles.

Successful coordination of the county's economic development policies and municipal land use regulations will enable the county to continue its prosperous growth while enhancing the overall quality of life enjoyed in each of the county's 33 municipalities. Cumberland County should coordinate its economic development strategy with its municipal partners by:

- Discussing economic development issues during regularly scheduled coordination meetings such as the Municipal Advisory Board or Planning Department Outreach Meetings.
- Requesting CAEDC review of new municipal plans and ordinances to assess consistency with county economic development strategies.
- Providing financial and technical assistance to municipalities that want to update plans and ordinances to better align with the county's economic development strategy.
- Engaging municipal partners in future updates of CAEDC's Strategic Plan.
- Sharing site selection inquiries with municipalities to identify suitable sites and incentives that could be used to attract new businesses.



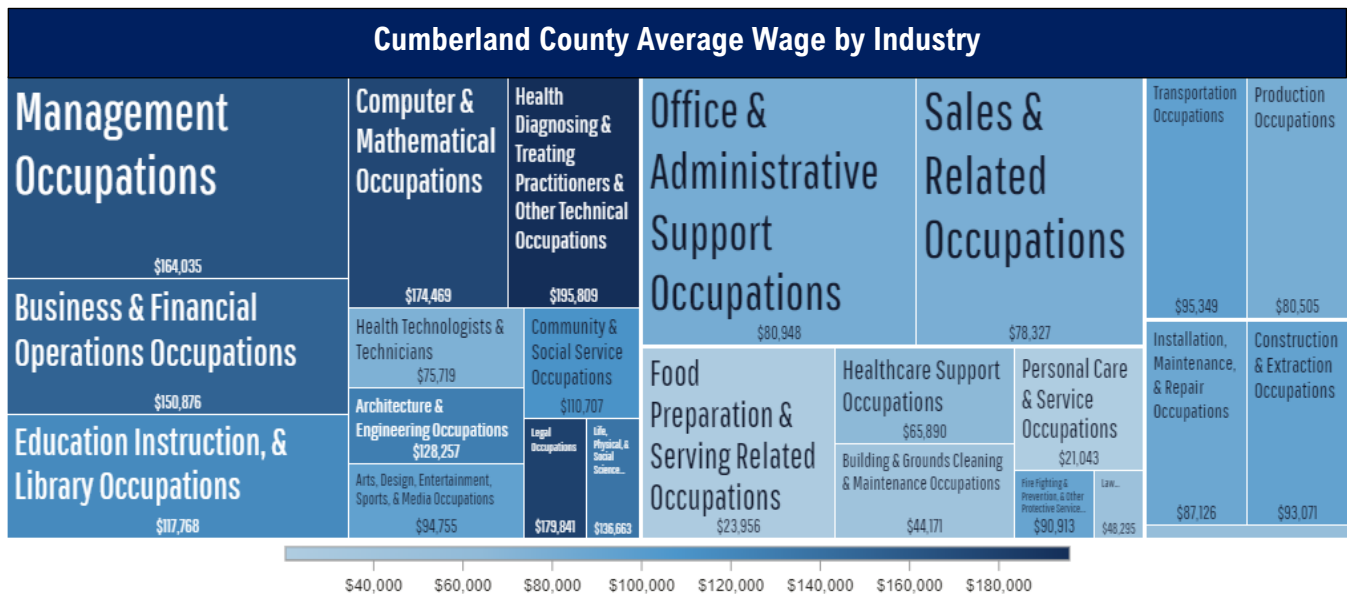


# 4

## Update the county's economic profile.

Cumberland County partnered with the Penn State Extension to create an economic profile for the county in 2014. The profile evaluated employment, wage, economic production, location quotient, shift-share analysis, and industry-specific data for the county. CAEDC used the profile in its strategic planning efforts to identify industries that would be likely targets for business attraction and retention.

Pennsylvania developed an economic development strategic plan in January of 2024 that used statewide economic and employment data to identify agriculture, energy, life sciences, manufacturing, and robotics/technology as priority industries for attraction and retention in the Commonwealth. With the release of the state plan, CAEDC should develop a new economic profile to better understand the market trends facing the county, identify priority industry types, and recognize collaborative opportunities with the state. The profile should be updated on a regular basis to achieve a contemporary understanding of the county's dynamic economy that can inform future updates of CAEDC's strategic plan.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-year Estimate. Graphic from DATAUSA.



# Engage to Improve

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## Overview

The growth challenges facing a community like Cumberland County are numerous, complex, and interrelated. Houses need built. Roads need improved. Stormwater needs controlled. Utilities need to be extended. Jobs need created. Services need delivered.

The decisions on how to address these issues generate substantial public interest given their broad community and financial impacts. Solutions must carefully consider a variety of perspectives from both inside and outside of the community. Those solutions must reflect the collective will of the entire community so that growth benefits are enjoyed, and negative impacts are avoided. Thus, if growth-related decisions should reflect the will of the community, then all members of that community must be knowledgeable of, engaged in, and welcome to participate in the decision-making process.

Unfortunately, traditional public involvement techniques such as in person meetings fail to garner necessary stakeholder engagement. Busy residents may not be available on scheduled meeting dates. Limited notifications may lead to residents learning about decisions after they have been made. Elected officials and appointed boards may not reflect the composition of the community, thereby unintentionally neglecting the insight of important demographic groups. Frustration and distrust often arise when key decisions are made absent meaningful community input.

Government agencies need to pursue fresh new ways to engage busy residents and in turn improve their community. Decision making processes must be clearly explained. Advanced notice must occur before public input periods begin. Multiple platforms, not a singular public meeting, must be employed to accept insight at any time of day from any interested stakeholder. Decisions must be clearly explained with results regularly tracked and communicated to the community. Participation from all community members must be sought, not just invited.

## Engage to Improve

### Principle Definition

Cumberland County's decision-making process is improved through the collaborative engagement of residents, government partners, nongovernment organizations, and businesses.

### Principle Benefits

- ✓ Policies and projects are responsive to stakeholder needs
- ✓ Transparency between elected officials, appointed boards, staff, and the public
- ✓ Innovative solutions are achieved by soliciting new ideas and perspectives
- ✓ Increased civic involvement in county, municipal, and community organizations
- ✓ Improved trust and respect between elected officials and stakeholders
- ✓ Enhanced elected official accountability
- ✓ Better representation and input from underrepresented socioeconomic groups
- ✓ Increased understanding of governing body deliberative and decision-making processes, and knowledge of effective means of participation





## Principles in Practice

### 1 Conduct coordination meetings with school districts, municipal staff, planning commissions, and elected officials to discuss opportunities of mutual interest.

Collectively, over 200 elected officials at multiple governmental levels represent both the diverse and common needs of Cumberland County's 260,000 residents. Growth challenges and the associated impacts do not respect political boundaries. Decisions made by one level of government or in a particular location in the county often have broader regional impacts that spill into adjacent townships, boroughs, school districts, or legislative districts. Thus, collaboration among all governmental entities is critical to ensure that all communities in the county continue to prosper.

As the steward of the comprehensive plan, Cumberland County should take a leadership role in convening its partner governing organizations to discuss community issues of mutual interest. The county should use the following engagement tools to foster collaboration between all levels of government:

- **Municipal Advisory Board** – quarterly meetings between county, municipal, and school district elected officials and staff.
- **Outreach Meetings** – quarterly meetings between the CCPD, municipal elected officials, staff, and citizen planning commission members.
- **Legislative Delegation Update Meetings** – regularly scheduled meetings between County Commissioners, staff, and the federal/state legislative delegation.
- **Special issue task forces** – the county should convene ad hoc multidisciplinary task forces to address specific countywide issues that require coordination across all levels of government.



CUMBERLAND  
COUNTY  
GOVERNMENTAL  
UNITS

**33**  
MUNICIPAL  
GOVERNMENTS

**9**  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICTS

**5**  
STATE HOUSE  
DISTRICTS

**2**  
STATE SENATE  
DISTRICTS

**2**  
US HOUSE  
DISTRICTS

**2**  
US  
SENATORS



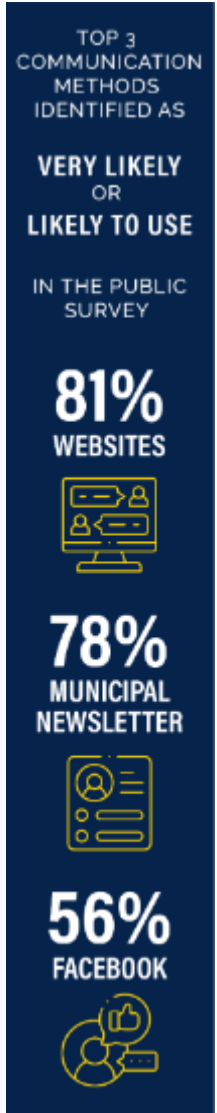
# 2

## Regularly engage with residents through a variety of communication media.

Communication with residents is essential to a governing body's ability to understand and respond to the trends, needs, and concerns of a growing community. Growth-related issues such as traffic, stormwater management, light pollution, noise, and overcrowding are often at the forefront of residents' minds who want to see their quality of life sustained in the face of a changing community. Residents who are disproportionately affected by changes associated with new development need their concerns heard.

Traditionally, residents have been required to attend in-person elected official meetings held during designated times during the day or in the evening to provide their input. Busy lifestyles, full schedules, and competing priorities often lead to residents' nonparticipation and dissatisfaction with the local government's decision-making process. Contemporary communication tools are needed to "meet residents where they are at" and allow ongoing, convenient opportunities for public input.

Cumberland County should enhance its communication strategies and encourage municipal partners to use the various communication media listed below to regularly educate, notify, and seek the input of its residents.



MEDIA	NOTIFY	SEEK INPUT	EDUCATE	OPPORTUNITIES
Television	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announce major plans, projects, events</li> <li>Direct to other media for input and education</li> </ul>
Radio	✓			
Newspaper	✓			
Municipal Newsletter	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announce and provide opportunities for input on major plans, projects, and events</li> <li>Links to educational resources with more information</li> </ul>
Websites	✓	✓	✓	
Facebook	✓	✓	✓	
Next Door	✓	✓	✓	
Instagram			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual, educational content with pictures and videos</li> </ul>
YouTube			✓	



# 3

## Deliver training sessions for residents, elected officials, municipal staff, and citizen planners on the planning process and emerging planning issues.

If a community expects future success, everyone involved in the local planning and decision-making process must have familiarity with the basic planning documents such as comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and SALDOs that lay the foundation for a community's future growth. Unfortunately, many residents are not aware of those planning documents or the associated processes that local governments follow to direct new development. Thus, residents may feel excluded from the process or that outside interests are determining an undesirable future for their community.

Respondents to the comprehensive plan survey showed limited understanding of the planning documents and associated development approval processes used in their community. Under 8% of participants reported "know it well" for the county and municipal comprehensive plan, the policy blueprints for how a successful community will develop in the future. Similarly, only 16% of participants responded "know it well" for the zoning ordinance in their community, the document that regulates future land uses. Finally, just 8% of participants reported "know it well" for the process to approve a new plan, the real-world implementation of a community's planning documents.

Not only do residents not understand their local planning documents, they also do not participate in the decision-making process. The table below summarizes responses from the community survey and demonstrates that additional efforts are needed to engage residents and local elected officials.

ANSWERS PROVIDED FROM THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY	COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS	MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS	CUMBERLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING	TOWNSHIP/ BOROUGH ELECTED OFFICIALS MEETING
I have never attended a meeting	71%	65%	80%	48%
Attend only for a special topic of interest	22%	25%	15%	33%
Attend occasionally through the years	6%	7%	5%	13%
Attend monthly	2%	3%	1%	6%





The CCPD should invest in the capacity of its citizen planners and municipal partners by offering regularly scheduled planning-related training courses. Training sessions could be offered using a variety of media and formats including in-person and self-service online opportunities. The following topics should be targeted given feedback from the community survey and planning process:

- Commonly used planning tools such as comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision/land development ordinances
- Local plan review and approval process
- How to effectively participate in the local plan approval process
- Collaboration with developers to preserve community features and present local concerns
- Emerging issues

## **4 Engage with nongovernmental organizations and the business community to implement the comprehensive plan.**

Cumberland County cannot implement its comprehensive plan independently. Success demands the participation of a diverse group of stakeholders that have a shared interest in advancing actions included in the comprehensive plan. Organizations representing real estate, engineering, construction, law, conservation, human services, and business have a keen interest in planning related initiatives. Engagement with such stakeholders enables an informed planning process and accelerates implementation efforts.



The county should engage with nongovernmental organizations and the business community by:

- Diversifying CCPC membership by seeking representatives from relevant nongovernmental organizations and business representatives.
- Encouraging staff to serve on nongovernmental organizations and chamber of commerce committees or boards.
- Hosting training sessions on planning-related topics for NGOs and businesses
- Securing grants and support letters from NGOs and businesses comprehensive plan implementation projects.
- Conducting regular coordination meetings with appropriate NGO associations and chambers of commerce to discuss issues of mutual interest.
- Organizing volunteers to perform community service tasks.



# Future Land Use

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## Overview

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The Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan's future land use map shows the generalized development patterns anticipated in the county over the next 10 years. The future land use map delineates six "character areas" that represent geographic areas in the county with distinguishable land use and built environment design characteristics. The character areas progress in land use intensity from the largely undeveloped conservation character area to the regional activity center that accommodates nearly every land use type. The character area's geographic extent was developed using local comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, satellite imagery, and projected locations of future growth.

The future land use map is not a zoning map that governs the location, type, and dimensional characteristics of land uses. Rather, the future land use map envisions successful implementation of the Cumberland Principles. Each character area has recommended land uses, economic development opportunities, housing, and transportation opportunities that are consistent with the Cumberland Principles. Accompanying design guidelines and renderings further visualize how the Cumberland Principles will look when advanced from policy to practice in the real world.

The future land use map is an interactive geographic information system (GIS) application, not a static map, of the comprehensive plan. The future land use map includes a description of each character area, discusses its growth potential, and includes the housing, economic development, infrastructure, transportation, and design typically found in that area. Additionally, visual renderings are included for each character area that show how the Cumberland Principles look when successfully implemented in communities throughout the county. The interactive future land use map can be accessed by clicking the map below or by using this link [Future Land Use 2024](#).





## Cumberland County Future Land Use Character Area Descriptions



### Conservation

Intact natural landscapes, often permanently preserved, that have inherent public benefits for agriculture, recharging groundwater, mitigating floods, filtering air, purifying water, recreation, and providing critical plant and animal habitat.



### Rural

Primarily agricultural landscapes with limited infrastructure characterized by low density residential and commercial development.



### Village

Clustered smaller scale mixed-use activity centers, often located at historic crossroads, that serve the needs of the surrounding, often rural, community.



### Core Communities

Dense mixed-use boroughs built in traditional neighborhood style that often predates zoning, featuring a diverse mix of housing, businesses, parks, institutional buildings, and may include a centralized downtown area.



### Suburban

Contemporary development emanating from the Core Communities that includes a variety of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses served by public infrastructure that may be mixed or separated in single use areas.



### Regional Activity Center

Concentrations of large-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional development clustered around major transportation corridors that provide goods and services to Cumberland County and the broader Harrisburg region.



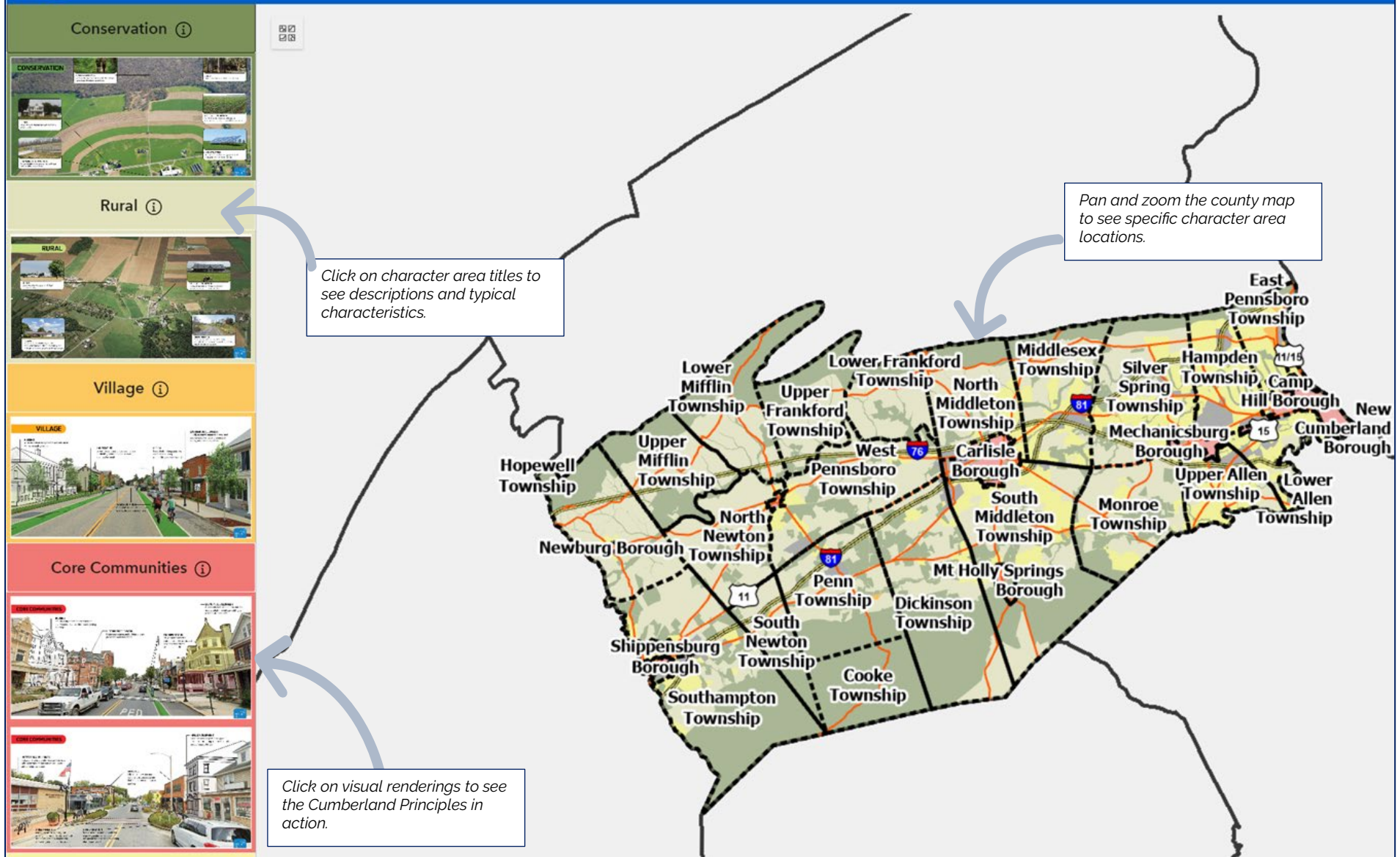


Figure 6 Interactive Cumberland County Future Land Use Map. Click image while holding ctrl to access interactive GIS map or visit <https://gis.cumberlandcountypa.gov/flu/>





# Implementation Plan

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# Overview

The Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan is not just a "guide", but rather an action plan that advances the Cumberland Principles. Adoption of the plan by the County Commissioners marks the completion of the planning process and the starting point for plan implementation, the most important part of the planning process. The county cannot implement the comprehensive plan on its own and must rely upon collaborative participation with its partner organizations to successfully achieve the plan's strategies. In working with its implementation partners, the county will assume various roles that reflect its authority, resources, and ability to directly implement the plan's strategies. The following table identifies the implementation partners that will help advance the actions included in each Cumberland Principle.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



## Cumberland County's Comprehensive Plan Implementation Role Descriptions

### LEADER

The county has independent, direct authorization to execute the strategy and assumes leadership in developing the associated policies and programs. Partner organizations may participate in policy and program development through boards of directors or steering committee.

### CATALYST

The county uses its financial and technical resources to support partner organizations' actions that implement plan strategies.

### CONVENOR

The county serves as a thought leader and organizer to rally partner organizations to address strategies of countywide significance.

### AFFILIATE

The county exercises authority over implementation strategies as an active participant in the governance, financing, and operations of an implementing organization.

### ADVOCATE

The county supports and encourages the policies and programs of partner organizations that are consistent with the Cumberland Principles.

## Comprehensive Plan Implementation Partners and Roles

### PARTNERS KEY

- **M** – Municipalities
- **S** – State government
- **B** – Businesses
- **C** – County affiliated organizations
- **F** – Federal government
- **N** – Nonprofits
- **R** – Residents

PRINCIPLE	STRATEGY	COUNTY ROLE	PARTNERS						
			M	F	S	N	B	R	C
Protect the Best First	Provide financial and technical assistance to create plans and ordinances that preserve natural resources and the agriculture industry.	Catalyst	✓						
	Preserve working farmland as the foundation of a strong agriculture industry.	Leader	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Preserve priority conservation areas as identified Cumberland County “Conservation Investment Plan”	Convenor	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Improve water quality through the implementation of the Cumberland County Clean Water Action.	Leader	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Prepare a water supply plan in conjunction with public water suppliers and municipal partners.	Leader	✓		✓	✓			
	Support efforts to improve air quality.	Advocate	✓			✓			✓
Grow In Not Out	Provide financial and technical assistance for ordinance amendments that efficiently use land in preferred growth areas.	Catalyst	✓				✓		
	Reduce land consumed by parking.	Catalyst	✓				✓		
	Increase development opportunities in existing communities through blight removal, infill, redevelopment, and reuse of existing properties.	Affiliate	✓						✓
	Support infrastructure investments that are coordinated and consistent with county and local plans.	Advocate	✓				✓		
	Support broadband capacity, coverage, and reliability improvements.	Advocate	✓	✓	✓		✓		



PRINCIPLE	STRATEGY	COUNTY ROLE	PARTNERS						
			M	F	S	N	B	R	C
Housing For All	Provide financial and technical assistance to create municipal ordinance amendments that increase housing supply, reduce housing costs, and eliminate fair housing regulatory barriers.	Catalyst	✓						✓
	Support emerging opportunities that may increase the supply of affordable housing.	Convenor	✓						✓
	Promote housing affordability incentives for owners, renters, and landlords.	Affiliate	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
	Maintain the Cumberland County Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in conjunction with CCHRA.	Affiliate	✓	✓				✓	✓
	Partner with county agencies to host regular housing summits.	Convenor	✓			✓			✓
Plan for People and Places	Collaborate with historic preservation partners to secure long-term protection of the county's historic resources.	Catalyst	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
	Provide strategically located, interconnected public parks and trail systems with convenient access for every resident.	Convenor	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Support flexible design guidelines that enable attractive design, promote community character, and enhance land use compatibility.	Catalyst	✓						
	Consider the social determinants of health in all relevant county and municipal community planning efforts.	Advocate	✓			✓	✓		✓
	Steward and improve the Mt. Holly Marsh Preserve.	Leader				✓		✓	





PRINCIPLE	STRATEGY	COUNTY ROLE	PARTNERS						
			M	F	S	N	B	R	C
Expand Transportation Choices	Coordinate and pursue improvements on federal and state-owned transportation facilities through the HATS Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan.	Affiliate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Invest the County's \$5 Local Use Fee in the 3C Transportation Program to achieve coordinated, multi-municipal investments in locally owned roads and bridges.	Leader	✓	✓	✓				✓
	Reimagine Cumberland County's public transportation system as part of SRTA's transit development plan.	Affiliate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Advance active transportation facilities in new development and retrofits in existing developed communities.	Catalyst	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Support HATS and PennDOT freight planning efforts that enable goods movement to and through the county.	Affiliate	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Monitor and adopt transportation technology advancements that improve mobility, enhance safety, and decrease cost.	Advocate	✓	✓	✓				✓
	Support airports that serve Cumberland County and the region.	Advocate	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	Promote Commute PA's ridesharing programs with county residents and visitors.	Affiliate						✓	✓
Adapt and Stay Safe	Improve the county's resilience to natural, manmade, and technological hazards through implementation of the Cumberland County's Hazard Mitigation Plan.	Leader	✓	✓	✓				
	Mitigate and adapt to climate change through the implementation of the Cumberland County Climate Action Plan.	Leader	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure the county's long-term solid waste disposal capacity and recycling needs through the implementation and stewardship of the Cumberland County Municipal Solid Waste Management Plan.	Leader	✓		✓		✓	✓	
	Coordinate reliable emergency services with the county's first responders.	Leader	✓		✓				



PRINCIPLE	STRATEGY	COUNTY ROLE	PARTNERS						
			M	F	S	N	B	R	C
Open for Business	Support updates and implementation of CAEDC's strategic plan.	Affiliate	✓				✓		✓
	Support revisions to the MPC to streamline the development approval process.	Convenor	✓		✓		✓		✓
	Encourage coordination of municipal plans and ordinances and the county's economic development strategies.	Catalyst	✓				✓		✓
	Update the county's economic profile.	Leader			✓		✓		✓
Engage to Improve	Conduct coordination meetings with the school district, municipal staff, planning commission, and elected officials to discuss opportunities of mutual interest.	Convenor	✓					✓	
	Regularly engage with residents through a variety of communication media.	Convenor						✓	✓
	Deliver training sessions for residents, elected officials, municipal staff, and citizen planners on the planning process and emerging planning issues.	Convenor	✓					✓	
	Engage with nongovernmental organizations and the business community to implement the comprehensive plan	Catalyst	✓			✓			✓



# Appendix A: Acronyms

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## ACRONYMS

3C -Cumberland County Connects Transportation Funding Program  
ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act  
ADU - Accessory Dwelling Units  
CAEDC - Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation  
CAP - Climate Action Plan  
CWAP - Clean Water Action Plan  
CAT - Capital Area Transit  
CCHRA - Cumberland County Housing & Redevelopment Authority  
CCPC - Cumberland County Planning Commission  
CCPD - Cumberland County Planning Department  
CIP - Capital Improvements Plan or Conservation Investment Plan  
DEP – Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
DPS - Department of Public Safety  
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency  
EV - Electric vehicle  
FCC - Federal Communications Commission  
FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency  
GIS - Geographic Information System  
HATS - Harrisburg Area Transportation Study  
HHW - Household Hazardous Waste  
HIA - Harrisburg International Airport  
HMP - Hazard Mitigation Plan  
HUD - Department of Housing and Urban Development  
LRTP - Long Range Transportation Plan  
MPC - Act 247 Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code  
MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization  
NGO - Nongovernmental Organizations  
NOAH - Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing  
PennDOT - Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
PHMC - Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
SALDO - Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance  
SRTA - Susquehanna Regional Transportation Authority, doing business as rabbittransit  
TIP - Transportation Improvements Plan



# Appendix B: Survey Results

Residents & Employees in Cumberland County:

## TAKE OUR ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY!



We need **your** feedback!

Cumberland County has proven itself as a preferred destination to live, work, and visit. To maintain that status, we are updating our Comprehensive and Land Partnerships Plans to guide future development and conservation efforts. We need your help to plan for the future by telling us:

- ✓ Special places that should be preserved for future generations
- ✓ Actions that should be taken to enhance the county's quality of life
- ✓ Projects that should be pursued to improve transportation, outdoor recreation, and protect natural resources
- ✓ The best ways to communicate and engage our residents in decision-making

**TAKE OUR ONLINE SURVEY  
BY TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31!**

Scan the QR code or use  
the link below:  
<https://arcg.is/1481b50>



**NEED A PAPER SURVEY OR HELP  
COMPLETING THE ONLINE SURVEY?**

Contact the Cumberland County  
Planning Department at 717.240.5362 or  
[planningreviews@cumberlandcountypa.gov](mailto:planningreviews@cumberlandcountypa.gov)



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE COMPREHENSIVE OR LAND PARTNERSHIPS PLANS, VISIT: [WWW.CUMBERLANDCOUNTYPA.GOV/PLANNING](http://WWW.CUMBERLANDCOUNTYPA.GOV/PLANNING)

**Question #1. Are you a Cumberland County resident?**

Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes, I live in Cumberland County	1,291	95%
No, I do not live in Cumberland County, but I work or visit the county.	63	5%

**Question #2. Which municipality do you live in?**

Municipality	# of Responses	% of Responses
Camp Hill Borough	33	2.4%
Carlisle Borough	98	7.2%
Cooke Township	2	0.1%
Dickinson Township	22	1.6%
East Pennsboro Township	76	5.6%
Hampden Township	131	9.7%
Hopewell Township	10	0.7%
Lemoyne Borough	28	2.1%
Lower Allen Township	67	4.9%
Lower Frankford Township	16	1.2%
Lower Mifflin Township	11	0.8%
Mechanicsburg Borough	66	4.9%
Middlesex Township	43	3.2%
Monroe Township	40	3.0%
Mt. Holly Springs Borough	17	1.3%
New Cumberland Borough	38	2.8%
Newburg Borough	1	0.1%
Newville Borough	4	0.3%
North Middleton Township	73	5.4%
North Newton Township	26	1.9%
Penn Township	18	1.3%
Shippensburg Borough	11	0.8%
Shippensburg Township	6	0.4%
Shiremanstown Borough	6	0.4%
Silver Spring Township	165	12.2%





Municipality	# of Responses	% of Responses
South Middleton Township	92	6.8%
South Newton Township	3	0.2%
Southampton Township	15	1.1%
Upper Allen Township	111	8.2%
Upper Frankford Township	1	0.1%
Upper Mifflin Township	5	0.4%
West Pennsboro Township	50	3.7%
Wormleysburg Borough	11	0.8%
Not a resident	57	4.2%
Unsure	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1354</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Questions #3-5.

These open-ended questions asked respondents to identify what they like most about Cumberland County, changes they would make, and special places. Each question had between 800 to 1,100 responses. The CCPD used an artificial intelligence application to summarize key themes in those responses.

#### Question 3: What do you like most about living or working in Cumberland County?

The open-ended responses provided reflect key aspects of quality of life in Cumberland County. These fall broadly into themes touching on community features and amenities, natural features, recreational amenities, employment, transportation and regional connections.

Approximately 37% of respondents to the open-ended questions discussed elements of Cumberland County related to geographic location and community features. Community features that were highlighted included the small town feel of most areas in the county, the friendliness of the people who live in the county and the sense of living in and belonging to a community. Respondents enjoy the sense of place that small downtowns provide, with distinctive historic features and diverse selections of restaurants and other commercial amenities such as farm markets. They characterized the standard of living as affordable, with a low crime rate, good schools and a strong library system. Respondents also mentioned the diversity of development density as providing a good mix of urban, suburban and rural areas in the county. They said that while there are widely accessible healthcare facilities, gas stations, grocery stores and shopping areas, there is still a balance between development and open space so that features that make the communities unique are retained.



More than 35% of all respondents to the open-ended questions focused on the environment and landscape of Cumberland County. The natural features respondents discussed most often included the rural countryside, mountains, streams and lakes, forests and the temperate weather of Cumberland County. Respondents valued the aesthetic and scenic beauty of the landscape, open spaces and farmland, and the recreational opportunities for which the county is renowned. These include state and municipal parks, playgrounds, biking/walking trails and water trails. Respondents enjoy fishing, hiking, cycling, and boating in Cumberland County.

Overall, respondents felt that there is ample opportunity for employment in Cumberland County, with many area colleges and training programs, which give young people avenues to stay in or return to the area after graduation.

The transportation system was highlighted due to the ease of accessibility to major interstate corridors, even from back roads in the county. Respondents also noted that transportation networks also support accessibility to work, shopping and community service locations. They highlighted the walkability of some communities in the county and praised development that provides for non-vehicular forms of transportation.

On a regional level, respondents discussed the key location of Cumberland County with respect to major population centers and destinations on the east coast being within a few hours' drive. The Cumberland Valley Rail Trail, Appalachian Trail, sporting arenas, entertainment venues, theaters, metropolitan cities and the shoreline are major destinations that have regional appeal and accessibility to Cumberland County.

**Question #4. List up to 3 changes that you would make to improve the quality of life in Cumberland County.**

Respondents to the open-ended question about what should be changed zeroed in on slowing, stopping or redirecting development and increasing land preservation. These responses combined accounted for more than 38% of the key element to change in Cumberland County. Most of the comments for what should be changed focused on warehouse development, specifically the need for Cumberland County's economic base to be diversified and less dependent on warehousing, for new warehouses to be restricted to previously developed areas to utilize less farmland and open space.

Respondents said that they wanted to see more preservation of farmland, open space and forested areas, and more efforts to reduce air pollution, light pollution, and water quality concerns. They wanted to see more public parks, including county parkland, and more recreational amenities, such as trails in greenways, more pools, boat launches and dog parks. One key priority was the completion of the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail.

Community features that were highlighted in need of improvement included better coverage in



rural areas for broadband and support for emergency services providers. Respondents wanted more services tailored to the needs of seniors, including retirement housing and activities centers. The consolidation of services, including school districts and better coordination between municipalities in land use planning, zoning and SALDO provisions were all mentioned.

Housing was discussed as a key area that is need of change, in particular, less housing at the \$300K and above price range, more diversity in housing options, and better integration of housing with amenities to support less need for vehicle usage.

Respondents felt there was some room for improvement in the area for more jobs that offer living wages, and more opportunities for specialized training and education. This seemed to conflict slightly with the respondents who felt there were sufficient opportunities for education and well-paying employment in the county. One distinguishing factor was the call for more career opportunities in the trades which are not dependent on college education to support more sustainable and stable incomes.

Related to the concerns about too much industrial development were comments related to the transportation network including too much truck traffic, congestion on major thoroughfares such as I-81, in between Middlesex and Carlisle, and the nearby Carlisle Pike. They also cited safety concerns on these roadways, including extension of entrance and exit ramps on I-81 to promote safer ingress and egress. Respondents wanted more options for transportation including bus, commuter rail, and safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure off roadways, expressing the need for an integrated trail system to reduce dependency on vehicles.

**Question #5. Cumberland County is interested in knowing the places in the county that make it an attractive destination to live, work, or visit. Please use the tool below to identify the places in Cumberland County that are special to you.**

Respondents overwhelmingly listed natural features and recreational amenities as the most significant special places. Leading this list were the following: Children's Lake (includes Boiling Springs Lake and similar - 69), Kings Gap State Park (53), Yellow Breeches Creek (51), Adams Ricci Park (45), Pine Grove Furnace State Park (42), Cumberland Valley Rail Trail (includes Rails to Trails and similar – 40), Appalachian Trail (39), Michaux State Forest, Conodoguinet Creek, Opossum Lake and others.

Others named public parks managed by municipalities, such as South Middleton Park, Lower Allen Park, and others. Other popular responses included downtowns or other popular sites of specific communities such as Carlisle, Mechanicsburg, and Boiling Springs as well as businesses such as Denim Coffee, Wolf Brewing and Desperate Times Brewery. The list also included the Army Heritage Center, Libraries, Williams Grove Speedway, Wegmans and Trader Joes, and Farmers Markets. While some respondents named commercial chain businesses, most comments related to business locations were focused on family-owned restaurants, shops and entertainment options.





### Question #6, 7, 8.

This series of 3 questions asked respondents to identify priorities from a list of county-based initiatives.

**Question #6. Please rank the following conservation and recreation initiatives in priority order from 1 (most important) to 4 (least important)**

- a. Preservation of working farmland
- b. Preservation of open space and natural areas
- c. Acquisition and development of parkland
- d. Construction of trails

Overall Rank	Answers	1 <sup>st</sup> Priority	2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority	3 <sup>rd</sup> Priority	Average Score
1	Preservation of open space and natural areas	42% 566	37% 504	15% 196	3.14
2	Preservation of working farmland	35% 477	28% 380	17% 231	2.79
3	Construction of trails	14% 189	17% 231	32% 427	2.08
4	Acquisition and development of parkland	9% 122	18% 239	37% 500	1.99

**Question #7. Please rank the following types of transportation projects in priority order from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important).**

- a. Bridge repair and replacement
- b. Road repairs and improvements
- c. Improving traffic signals to reduce wait times
- d. Providing public transit (i.e. bus transportation)
- e. Pedestrian facilities (Sidewalks, walking paths, crosswalks, etc.)
- f. Bicycle facilities (bike lanes, separated bike paths, bike racks, etc.)

Overall Rank	Answers	1 <sup>st</sup> Priority	2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority	3 <sup>rd</sup> Priority	Average Score
1	Road repairs and improvements	40% 540	20% 267	13% 177	4.51
2	Pedestrian facilities (Sidewalks, walking paths, crosswalks, etc.)	17% 277	19% 257	19% 252	3.77
3	Bridge repair and replacement	11% 147	23% 315	19% 263	3.58
4	Improving traffic signals to reduce wait times	13% 178	16% 210	21% 278	3.39
5	Bicycle facilities (bike lanes, separated bike paths, bike racks, etc.)	9% 122	15% 200	14% 185	2.97
6	Providing public transit (i.e. bus	10%	8%	15%	2.79



Overall Rank	Answers	1 <sup>st</sup> Priority	2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority	3 <sup>rd</sup> Priority	Average Score
	transportation)	140	105	199	

**Question #8. Please rank the following types of water quality projects in priority order from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important).**

- Installing structures on farms to reduce barnyard runoff into streams
- Installing facilities in developed areas that collect and clean stormwater runoff from buildings, roofs, and paved areas
- Reducing sediment into waterways by stabilizing stream banks
- Planting trees and natural plant buffers along stream banks to capture and clean stormwater runoff.
- Replacing traditional grass lawns with native landscaping.

Overall Rank	Answers	1 <sup>st</sup> Priority	2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority	3 <sup>rd</sup> Priority	Average Score
1	Planting trees and natural plant buffers along stream banks to capture and clean stormwater runoff	45% 612	26% 354	15% 208	3.99
2	Installing structures on farms to reduce barnyard runoff into streams	16% 217	20% 265	22% 302	2.90
3	Installing facilities in developed areas that collect and clean stormwater runoff from buildings, roofs, and paved areas	16% 218	17% 228	23% 310	2.85
4	Reducing sediment into waterways by stabilizing stream banks	9% 117	22% 303	25% 343	2.79
5	Replacing traditional grass lawns with native landscaping	14% 190	15% 204	16% 219	2.46

### Question #9. Planning Process Familiarity

This question asked residents to identify their familiarity with a variety of local planning documents.

Planning Document	Never Heard of It	Heard of It	Know a Little	Know a Fair Amount	Know It Well
Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan	28.4% 386	26.8% 363	24% 325	13.5% 183	7.3% 99
Zoning Ordinance where you live	18.8% 255	19.7% 266	23.3% 316	22.2% 301	16% 216
Comprehensive Plan where you live	28.7% 389	25.2% 342	24.7% 334	13.6% 184	7.8% 105
Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance where you live	28.4% 384	26.8% 363	24% 325	13.5% 183	7.3% 99



Planning Document	Never Heard of It	Heard of It	Know a Little	Know a Fair Amount	Know It Well
Official Map where you live	18.8% 255	19.7% 266	23.3% 316	22.2% 301	16% 216
Process required to approve a new plan in my municipality	28.7% 389	25.3% 342	24.7% 334	13.6% 184	7.7% 105

#### Question #10. Planning Process Participation

This question asked respondents how often they participate in local planning and elected officials' meetings.

Participation Level	County Planning Commission	Municipal Planning Commission	Cumberland County Board of Commissioners	Municipal Elected Officials
I have never attended a meeting	71% 960	65% 878	80% 1,072	48% 654
Attend only for a special topic of interest	22% 292	25% 333	15% 202	33% 450
Attend occasionally through the years	6% 74	7% 99	5% 67	13% 170
Attend monthly	2% 28	3% 44	1% 13	6% 80

#### Question #11. Communication Preferences

This question asked respondents to indicate the likelihood of using various communication tools to learn about planning initiatives in the county and their community.

Communication Method	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely
Television	28% 382	13% 185	16% 223	25% 335	17% 229
Radio	31% 416	19% 260	19% 257	23% 306	9% 115
Newspaper	35% 474	19% 254	17% 230	20% 265	10% 131
Municipal Newsletter	6% 84	4% 57	11% 151	40% 545	38% 517
Websites	3% 44	4% 55	12% 164	43% 577	38% 514
Facebook	23% 314	8% 104	13% 176	31% 421	25% 339





Communication Method	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely
Instagram	54% 733	15% 212	11% 150	12% 156	8% 103
Twitter/X	72% 968	11% 154	9% 114	6% 74	3% 44
YouTube	54% 724	16% 222	17% 225	10% 134	4% 49

## Questions #12-16. Demographics

Basic demographic questions were asked to learn more about respondents.

### Gender

Answers	Count	Percentage
Female	750	55%
Male	525	39%
Prefer not to answer	65	5%
Other	8	1%

### Educational Attainment

Answers	Count	Percentage
Some high school or less	3	0%
High school graduate or equivalent (GED)	137	10%
Some College	176	13%
College Graduate	552	40%
Graduate degree(s)	448	33%
Prefer not to answer	31	2%

### Household Income

Answers	Count	Percentage
Less than \$10,000	1	0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	7	1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	14	1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	35	3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	65	5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	178	13%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	182	14%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	302	22%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	167	12%
\$200,000 or more	132	10%
Prefer not to answer	257	19%

### Race



Answers	Count	Percentage
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5	0%
Asian	12	1%
Black or African American	4	0%
Hispanic/Latino	15	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
White	1,164	86%
Prefer not to answer	131	10%
Other	15	1%

## Age

Answers	Count	Percentage
18-24	19	1%
25-34	133	10%
35-44	237	18%
45-54	259	19%
55-64	263	19%
Over 64	359	27%
Prefer not to answer	77	6%
Other	1	0%



# Appendix C: Photo Credits and End Notes

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## Photo and Graphic Credits

Pg.	Description	Credit/Source
Cover	Letort Spring Run	CAEDC
Cover	Lindt Warehouse	CCPC
Cover	Firehouse	CAEDC
Cover	Pennsylvania Bakery	CCPC
Cover	I-81	CCPC
Cover	Appalachian Trail	CAEDC
Cover	Multifamily building	CCPC
Cover	Cumberland Valley Rail Trail Bridge, Shippensburg Township	Mary Bistline
Cover	Farm	CAEDC
Cover	Laughlin Mill	Jeremy Shultz
5	Horseback riding, Cumberland Valley Rail Trail	Harvey Barrison
9	Veterans Square, Carlisle Borough	CAEDC
12	Conodoguinet Creek,	Chris Sechrist
12	Farmers Market,	Chris Sechrist
12	Kings Gap State Park,	Valeric Carchidi
12	Appalachian Trail,	CAEDC
12	Adams Ricci Park,	CAEDC
12	New Cumberland Library	Linda Ries
12	Cumberland Valley Rail Trail,	CAEDC
12	Williams Grove Speedway,	Williams Grove Speedway
12	US Army Heritage Education Center,	AHEC
19	Kings Gap Trail, Dickinson Township	CAEDC
21	South Mountain overlook	Steve Deck
22	Waggoners Gap	CAEDC
23	Colonel Denning State Park	CAEDC
24	Water quick facts.	PA DEP
28	Downtown Carlisle	CAEDC
31	Mechanicsburg Gingerbread Man	CCPC
33	Tyco property rendering	CAEDC Real Estate Collaborative
33	Former Lowes building, Carlisle Pike	CCPC
34	Hampden Township Sewer Treatment Plant	Google Earth
34	Natural gas pipeline installation	Sunoco Logistics
34	Fire hydrant	CCPC
35	Broadband infrastructure map	PA Broadband Authority
36	New Cumberland Borough housing	CCPC
39	Housing construction	CCPC
41	Workforce housing, Hampden Township	Monarch Development
42	Senior housing	CCHRA
42	Townhouses	CCHRA
43	Kayakers, Yellow Breeches Creek, Boiling Springs	Premise Studio
46	Cumberland County Courthouse	CCPC
47	South Middleton park trail	Chris Sechrist
48	Oakville	Harvey Barrison



Pg.	Description	Credit/Source
48	Mural, Shippensburg Borough	CCPC
50	Mt. Holly Marsh Preserve Trail, Mt. Holly Springs Borough	CCPC
50	Mt. Holly Marsh Preserve welcome sign	CCPC
51	rabbittransit bus	SRTA
52	Complete Streets diagram	Michael Baker, Inc
55	Orrs Bridge, Hampden Township	CCPC
56	rabbittransit buses	rabbittransit
58	Crosswalk, Mechanicsburg Borough	CCPC
58	Bike lane, Carlisle Borough	Carlisle Borough
58	Cyclist	Stuart Leask
59	Norfolk Southern trail	CCPC
59	Trucks in Carlisle	CCPC
60	EV charging stations	CCPC
60	Electric scooters	Ivan Radic, licensed under Creative Commons 2.0
60	Delivery drone	www.routexl.com Licensed under Creative Commons 2.0
61	Carlisle Airport, South Middleton Township	South Middleton Township
61	Capital City Airport	Skyvector
61	Harrisburg International Airport	Skyvector
62	Commute mode share graphic	Michael Baker, Inc
62	Commute PA logo	Commute PA
63	Ice jam, Susquehanna River	John Owen
66	Firefighters in mountain fire	Cumberland County DPS
66	Collapsed road	Cumberland County DPS
66	Mobile home in stream	Cumberland County DPS
66	Commercial solar installation, Franklin County	CCPC
67	Recycling center graphic and statistics	Cumberland County
68	Union Fire Company, Carlisle Borough	Cumberland County DPS
68	Mechanicsburg Fire Company	Cumberland County DPS
70	Paulus Farm Market, Upper Allen Township	Eric Forberger
72	Penn State Health, Hampden Township	CCPC
73	Ahlstrom, Mt. Holly Springs Borough	CCPC
74	Camp Hill Mall, Camp Hill Borough	CCPC
75	Employees by industry graphic	U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year ACS 2022
77	Chamber mixer	Carlisle Chamber of Commerce
82	Training session	CCPC
83	Arcona mixed use development, Lower Allen Township	CCPC
84	Three square hollow overlook, Dickinson Township	CAEDC
87	Members First Credit Union headquarters, Hampden Township	CAEDC
105	Cow in barn	CCPC



## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.

<sup>2</sup> Projections prepared by Cumberland County as part of its 2024 Facilities Master Plan. Assumes 1% growth per year.

<sup>3</sup> Cumberland County Planning Commission, 2024 Growth Trends Report.

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Cumberland County Work Stats Profile, September 2024.

<sup>5</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, 2022 Census of Agriculture.

<sup>6</sup> Cumberland County Planning Commission survey of public water providers, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Climate Change. (n.d.). Department of Environmental Protection. Retrieved March 24, 2021, from <https://www.dep.pa.gov:443/Citizens/climate/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2021 American Community Survey.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/US/HTM/1968/0/0247..HTM>

<sup>11</sup> The Cumberland Principles are based upon the "Smart Growth Principles" developed in the early 2000s by the Smart Growth Network, a network of private, public, and non-governmental partner organizations seeking to improve development practices in neighborhoods, communities, and regions across the United States. The Cumberland Principles build upon the initial Smart Growth Principles to create a contemporary, tailored set of aspirational land use planning policies that reflect the unique experiences in Cumberland County.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/CT/HTM/00/00.001..HTM#:~:text=%C2%A7%2027.&text=The%20people%20have%20a%20right,including%20generations%20yet%20to%20come>.

<sup>13</sup> Cumberland County GIS analysis, 2023

<sup>14</sup> Cumberland County GIS analysis, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> <https://environmentamerica.org/pennsylvania/resources/trouble-in-the-air-2/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/states/pennsylvania/cumberland>

<sup>17</sup> [https://cleanairboard.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/CAB\\_purpleair\\_final\\_report\\_220802.pdf](https://cleanairboard.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/CAB_purpleair_final_report_220802.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Projections prepared by Cumberland County as part of its 2024 Facilities Master Plan. Assumes 1% growth per year.

<sup>19</sup> Cumberland County GIS analysis, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Cumberland County GIS analysis, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Survey of municipal wastewater treatment plants conducted by Planning Department staff, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

<sup>23</sup> Estimate provided by commercial developer during stakeholder engagement.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016, 2021





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- <sup>25</sup> <https://broadbandnow.com/Pennsylvania>
- <sup>26</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021
- <sup>27</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021
- <sup>28</sup> <https://www.pennlive.com/business/2024/07/affordable-housing-is-increasingly-out-of-reach-in-central-pa-heres-why.html>
- <sup>29</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021
- <sup>30</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census
- <sup>31</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/pennsylvania/cumberland?year=2023>
- <sup>32</sup> <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/cumberland-county-pa>.
- <sup>33</sup> Public land acreage and trail mileage from Cumberland County GIS analysis.
- <sup>34</sup> Road mileage data from the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. Car ownership data from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021
- <sup>35</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021
- <sup>36</sup> Harrisburg Area Transportation Study 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- <sup>37</sup> <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=2013&sessInd=0&act=89>
- <sup>38</sup> <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/CT/HTM/75/00.090.010.000..HTM>
- <sup>39</sup> Harrisburg Area Transportation Study 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- <sup>40</sup> Federal Aviation Administration, 2023.
- <sup>41</sup> Federal Aviation Administration, 2023
- <sup>42</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021
- <sup>43</sup> Cumberland County Climate Action Plan, 2022.
- <sup>44</sup> <https://home.dartmouth.edu/news/2023/06/extreme-precipitation-northeast-increase-52-2099>).
- <sup>45</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/stafford-act>
- <sup>46</sup> <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/US/HTM/1988/0/0101..HTM>
- <sup>47</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Economic Data, 2022.  
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GDPALL42041>
- <sup>48</sup> <https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Cumberland%20County.pdf>
- <sup>49</sup> <https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Cumberland%20County.pdf>
- <sup>50</sup> <https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Cumberland%20County.pdf>

