

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN  
PIKE COUNTY, CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES, AND THE REGION**

**Planning Code**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) dictates, and common sense suggests, that planning and development in contiguous municipalities, the county and the region be considered when a local municipal plan is adopted. MPC §301.4(a) goes on to state that *municipal comprehensive plans which are adopted shall be generally consistent with the adopted county comprehensive plan.*

**County Planning**

In 1988 the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) was amended to require all counties in the Commonwealth to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan within three years. Pike County adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1993 which identified a broad range of growth and development issues facing the County, suggested a framework to address the issues, called for ongoing planning, and recognized the importance of intemunicipal cooperation. The same, but much intensified, issues continue to face the County, and the Board of Commissioners and the County Planning Office of Community Planning initiated the preparation of a *Comprehensive Plan Update* in 2003 and the *Update* was adopted in November of 2006.

Given that the County *Plan Update* sets goals which are similar to those of this *Blooming Grove Township Comprehensive Plan* and will provide a broad framework for the future, no inconsistencies between the two plans are anticipated. In addition, local municipalities are responsible for many of the actions proposed by the *County Plan*, particularly those related to land use management and community facilities and services.

**County Planning Mission**

The Introduction of the County Plan notes:

*The primary purpose of this update to the Pike County Comprehensive Plan is to set Countywide planning goals and priorities, develop partnerships, and enhance the quality of life for the residents of the County. The plan’s mission is to:*

- *Manage growth and development pressures;*

- *Stimulate progressive planning and visionary thinking;*
- *Improve County-Municipal partnerships/cooperation;*
- *Identify infrastructure needs;*
- *Preserve sensitive lands/open space;*
- *Enhance local land use controls;*
- *Increase housing options;*
- *Enhance economic development;*
- *Enhance tourism opportunities;*
- *Improve on our quality of life .*

The goals and objectives and proposed actions of this *Blooming Grove Township Comprehensive Plan* are consistent with, and largely mirror, the County Plan mission. In the case of tourism and economic development, Township goals and objectives recognize the need for county leadership.

The County Plan Update goes on to state:

*In the end, the success in managing growth, improving the quality of development, protecting the natural resources of Pike County, and creating partnerships to achieve the vision for the County depends upon active participation of municipal officials; state and federal government agencies; municipal commissions, boards and committees; community associations; and most importantly, the citizens of Pike County. Ultimately, this plan is about the citizens of Pike County, intended to protect the quality of their environment and enhance the quality of their lives.*

**Municipal Guideline**

*This (Pike County) Comprehensive Plan is not an ordinance or regulation, but is a guideline for municipal plans and regulations and the basis for undertaking specific County functional plans designed to implement the policies set forth within this Plan. Each municipality retains the right to prepare multi-municipal or individual municipal plans; to control zoning within its boundaries, whether through individual zoning ordinances or a joint zoning ordinance; and to regulate subdivision and land development, and retain their autonomy. The County will be available as a resource that municipalities can utilize to assist in their planning efforts.*

*This Comprehensive Plan is not a means to stopping development but rather to ensure that development considers the County’s resources and occurs in designated growth areas where it will not adversely impact the County’s character and quality of life. Economic development is important to the County, but it should occur with better design, better mix of uses, and more attention to addressing traffic and environmental impacts.*

**Municipal Bottom Line**

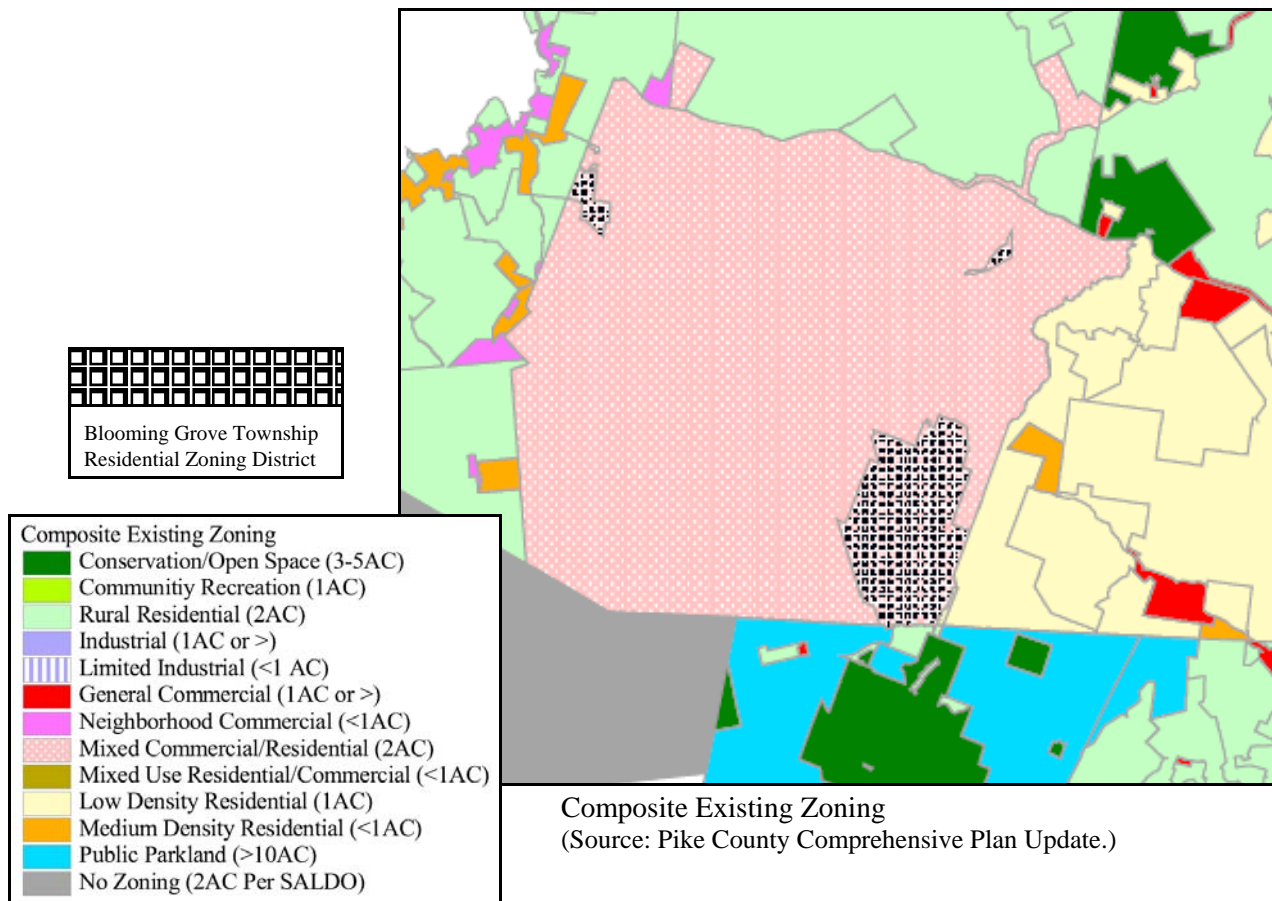
*What does the Plan mean for the 11 Townships and 2 Boroughs in the County and why is it relevant to them? The Plan presents policies and actions that will guide how County government will work with the municipalities in the future to address growth issues. The Plan recognizes the important role the municipalities play in land use decisions and implementation of their individual municipal Comprehensive Plans. It indicates how the County intends to provide technical assistance to municipalities. In addition to identifying sources of funding, it supports and sets priorities for future planning efforts and grant applications which will benefit the municipalities.*

**Conservation Planning**

In the Fall of 2006, the Pike County Conservation District and Pike County Office of Community issued a report titled *A Review of Blooming Grove Township’s Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulations with Recommendations to Enhance Natural Resource Conservation and Open Land Preservation*. The proposed actions in this *Blooming Grove Township Comprehensive Plan* are consistent with, and are intended to address, the recommendations of the *2006 Report*. Of particular import, is the inclusion of the conservation design process into Township ordinances, which is also recommended by this *Comprehensive Plan*.

**Planning and Zoning in Contiguous Municipalities**

Six townships adjoin Blooming Grove Township - - Dingman, Greene, Lackawaxen, Palmyra, Porter, and Shohola. All but Greene Township have adopted a comprehensive plan and Greene Township is currently working on a plan. Palmyra Township and Porter Township are each updating their plans, and Lackawaxen Township and Shohola Township are working on a joint comprehensive plan.



Although the adjoining adopted comprehensive plans vary in date, status of formal adoption, and content, all of the plans concentrate on land use issues and no significant inconsistencies are anticipated between those plans and this *Plan*. The public review and adoption process for this *Comprehensive Plan* will enable municipal officials of the contiguous municipalities to identify any potential inconsistencies.

The real issue in terms of effects on adjoining municipalities is zoning. As shown on the *Composite Existing Zoning Figure* adapted from the *County Comprehensive Plan Update*, all of the adjoining townships are zoned with the exception of Greene Township. In the area along the common borders, the adjoining municipalities are generally similar in character to Blooming Grove Township, that is, residential generally adjoins residential, commercial adjoins commercial, and open land adjoins open land. In any case, two of Blooming Grove Township’s zoning districts, the Residential District and the Mixed Use District, adjoin neighboring municipalities; the Commercial District does not. Tanglwood North and Hemlock Farms are both zoned residential in Blooming Grove Township and each development is zoned residential where it lies in the adjoining township, so no conflicts exist.

The Mixed Use District in Blooming Grove Township allows all types of residential and commercial uses. While the potential for conflicting land uses does exist where the District adjoins residential districts in neighboring municipalities, all nonresidential uses are considered conditional uses in the Mixed Use District. The performance standards in the Blooming Grove Township Zoning Ordinance and the conditional use process, which enables the Township to attach conditions of approval, are expected to provide protection for adjoining uses.

**Contiguous Municipality Review**

MPC §502.1(b) provides standing for local municipal governing bodies to appear before and provide comments to any contiguous municipality considering a proposed subdivision, change of land use, or land development, thereby allowing issues of conflicts to be raised. Any changes made to zoning districts must be considered in terms of the zoning and existing land uses in any adjoining municipality to avoid such land use conflicts. For example, it would be inappropriate to designate an industrial or heavy commercial area adjacent to an existing residential development or

residential zoning district in an adjoining municipality. Blooming Grove Township officials should work with the officials of adjoining municipalities to establish agreements to formalize this process among contiguous municipalities so that any municipality potentially affected by a zoning change or a development project has the opportunity for review. The MPC already requires this for comprehensive plans and amendments.

**Regional Planning**

Regional planning in the Pike County area of Pennsylvania is not formalized in any municipally organized body. Each county planning agency is responsible for review and coordination of planning within its jurisdiction. The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance, located in Pittston, Luzerne County, serves as a community and economic planning and development information source and funnel for grants and special projects for Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Lackawanna Counties, but has no municipally authorized regional planning power.