

# **BOROUGH OF PORTLAND**

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT**

**FEBRUARY 2014**

**WORKING DRAFT  
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**KEY QUESTIONS**

**Planning Process**

In short, the planning process involves finding the sometimes complex answers to four simple questions:

1. *Where are we?*
2. *Where do we want to be?*
3. *How do we get there?*
4. *How are we doing?*

***Where are we?***

BOROUGH OF PORTLAND POPULATION	
Year	# Persons
1870	550
1880	608
1890	676
1900	490
1910	649
1920	545
1930	551
1940	427
1950	551
1960	589
1970	612
1980	540
1990	516
2000	579
2010	519
2020	643*
2030	793*
U.S. Census; *LVPC	

**Background Studies**

A key step in the process is the collection and analysis of information on a range of community characteristics and issues and concerns aimed at defining the existing condition of the community and identifying planning implications.

- Land use and housing
- Community facilities and services
- Business community and mixed use buildings
- Natural resources, open land and development potential
- Highways and parking
- Historic resources
- Demographics and economic base
- Planning and Development in Northampton County, the region and contiguous municipalities

***Where do we want to be?***

**Goals and Objectives/ Plans**

The *Plan Goals and Objectives* are a vision of how residents and local officials expect the community to develop and evolve into the future. Objectives are specific actions which are designed to achieve goals and satisfy community needs. The *Goals and Objectives* are formulated based on public input, the findings of the background studies and local official understanding of the community’s needs and expectations. Based on this community vision and the issues identified in the planning process, the various plans to guide the future growth and development of the Borough are developed.

## Basic Planning Steps

*Where are we?* - inventory

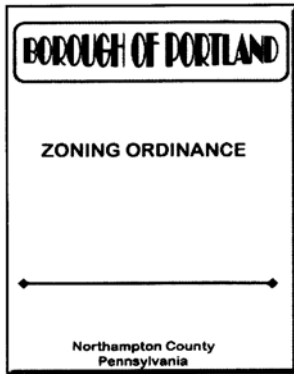
*Where do we want to be?* - goals/plans

*How do we get there?* - implement

*How are we doing?* - evaluate



***How do we get there?***



**Implementation Strategies**

The specific means to reach the Borough’s goals are discussed at various points in the specific plans. In addition, and to facilitate on-going use of the *Plan*, the actions and the responsible entities required to carry out the plan’s expectations are summarized in the *Findings and Action Plan*. Examples of *implementation strategies* include zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, historic structures preservation, and capital improvement budgeting.

While the ultimate responsibility for the Borough lies with the Borough Council, much of the work of implementation, assessment of the accomplishment of goals and objectives, and periodic comprehensive plan review can be accomplished by the Planning Commission and citizen volunteers who are appointed to special committees or task forces along with Borough officials. These groups can provide evaluations and recommendations to the Council for action.

***How are we doing?***

**Need for Continued Planning**

It is important to emphasize that a comprehensive plan should not simply be considered a *document on a shelf*, but instead, one element of a community management process dependent upon the attitude and on-going foresight of the public officials charged with the responsibility of guiding the growth and development of the community. The *Plan* should be used by the community when important decisions are made and its goals and objectives and prioritized actions should be reviewed at least each year to assess the community’s accomplishments or the need to shift priorities for action.

Simply stated, a comprehensive plan is a starting point - a blueprint to guide the future development of the Borough and should be revised and updated periodically to reflect changing conditions, attitudes, situations, and goals of the community. The success of the planning program will be measured only in the form of accomplishment. The effectuation of the plan will be the responsibility of the area's residents. It will require public support and positive action by the Borough Planning Commission and the Borough Council.

**State Mandated Plan Review**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (§301,c) requires local municipal comprehensive plans to be reviewed *at least every ten years*. The ten-year review window is certainly far too long for local municipalities to incorporate the planning process into normal operations. Planning, that is, assessing how decisions and community changes fit into the long range plan, should be practiced continually.



## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### Planning Needs

This *Comprehensive Plan* was undertaken by the local officials of the Borough of Portland in recognition of a number of principal critical community needs including to:

- Identify and inventory the changes which have taken place in the Borough since the adoption of the *1966 Comprehensive Development Plan*, but particularly over the last 10 or 15 years.
- Address key growth and development issues.
- Establish a framework for sustainable growth and development while concurrently providing for the conservation of small town community character, residential neighborhoods, open land, and the environment.
- Promote well designed residential and commercial development by providing the foundation for updated land use management tools, principally the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and land development ordinance.
- Organize for the most efficient administration of local government and the delivery of community facilities and services.
- Achieve consistency with the *2005 Comprehensive Plan, The Lehigh Valley . . . 2030*.

#### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan does not have the force of law. Instead, it serves as a policy statement and an action guide. As community conditions change, the actions in the Plan may require adjustment. The Plan should be continually reviewed to assess what adjustments are necessary to address these changes.

### Framework for the Future

This *Comprehensive Plan* provides a framework for the growth and development of the Borough. Although the *Plan* is comprised of a number of separate elements, each element, and, in fact, each planning and development action taken by a public body or private individual, is inextricably interrelated with other plan elements and planning and development actions. For example, the development of housing implementation strategies cannot be accomplished without taking into account land use controls and economic development trends. Economic development strategies cannot be formulated without considering land use controls and transportation needs. Community facilities and services planning requires an assessment of future development, transportation needs, and housing affordability. These types of interrelationships and implementation strategies are discussed in the various comprehensive plan elements.

### Planning Participants

The Borough Council appointed a Planning Committee comprised of residents, representatives of community organizations and Borough officials to conduct the planning process. Citizen participation included community meetings, key person interviews and the Planning Commission meeting and Council hearing required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code prior to the adoption of the plan. RKR Hess of East Stroudsburg, PA, and Community Planning and Management, LLC, of Paupack, PA, provided professional assistance with the financial support of the Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development via a Community Development Block Grant. The Slate Belt Council of Governments provided technical support.



#### **1966 Comprehensive Development Plan - Borough of Portland**

*United States Highway 611 is the major route providing regional access to the Borough. U. S. 611 enters the southwestern part of the Borough and proceeds eastward through the Borough to the Portland-Columbia Bridge, which adjoins Warren County, New Jersey. An interchange is provided near the bridge where U.S. 6 11 extends northward to the Delaware Water Gap through Portland and Upper Mount Bethel Township. This highway serves as the Borough's major street and also functions as a route for through traffic. It also links Portland to the A-B-E area, and provides for the movement of through traffic from the A-B -E area and northeastern Northampton County to the Delaware Water Gap and the State of New Jersey. (Page I-1)*

*Today, Portland is basically a residential community with a limited amount of economic activity. Businesses continue, but have difficulty in competing with commercial establishments in larger urban areas. Most of the business continues to be oriented toward serving the daily needs of Borough residents by offering convenience shopping goods. Industries are engaged in the production of apparel products, household furniture, and machinery. (Page I-3)*

#### **Community Balance**

Rural communities and residents of rural communities are characteristically different from their more urban counterparts, and have the opportunity to directly mold their communities. The same can be said for the Borough which is clearly a rural community and will remain rural. *The rural community is seen as the conservator of its own resources, habitat, and culture. Local citizens are directly involved in the control of community assets as they plan for the retention, enrichment, and equitable use of those assets for present and future generations. Along with the community's goals, specific objectives must be identified; actions and methods for achieving the goals. Some objectives will be the direct responsibility of local elected and appointed officials. Others will require the cooperation and participation of other levels of government and the private sector.*<sup>1</sup>

The goals of all residents of the community will not be the same. Some residents expect community conservation and environmental protection while other residents will favor increased economic development. Some residents will demand more community facilities and services, while others prefer lower taxes. Some residents will strive for land use diversity while others would prefer to live in a residential community. One function of the community planning process is to strike a balance between these varied expectations and develop a shared vision to meet the overall goals of the community.

#### **Planning Issues Overview**

Once served by a major north/south highway, Route 611, Portland is now bypassed by major routes. Although the Borough has easy access to these major routes, its population has experienced little change over the years and is currently less than in the late 1800's. In contrast, many of the other municipalities in the Slate Belt, nearby Monroe County and Warren County, New Jersey have experienced significant population growth owing to expanding demand for housing from the Lehigh Valley and nearby employment centers in New Jersey.

The Borough continues as a largely residential community with relatively few commercial establishments, primarily retail service businesses and two manufacturing concerns. The recent construction of the central sewage system coupled with the public water system opens the possibility

<sup>1</sup> P. Lusk, J. A. Rivera, F. O. Sargent, M. Varela, (1991) Rural Environmental Planning for Sustainable Communities, Island press, Washington, D. C., p. 5

for residential and commercial development and population growth. However, this will be tempered by the paucity of large parcels for development, the uncertainty that owners of single-family dwellings on larger lots will subdivide, and the periodic flooding of the business district along Delaware Avenue (Route 611).

### Need for Planning

Borough officials realize the importance of planning for the future to anticipate change and take the necessary steps to address community challenges and take advantage of opportunities. In addition, Borough officials must continue to provide and maintain public facilities and services in a climate of increasing costs and stable tax revenues. Concurrently, the Borough is responsible to ensure that the growth and development that does occur is in accord with sound planning principles with the goal of preserving the environment and community character, while at the same time encouraging economic development to provide jobs for residents and increase the overall tax base.

This combination of growth and development issues clearly demonstrates the critical need for this *Comprehensive Plan*, and the consideration of new and innovative land use and community management techniques. The subdivision and land development ordinance and the zoning ordinance will continue to play a vital role in the growth and development planning program by directing residential and commercial development to the areas best suited for such development and requiring adequate community facilities and infrastructure.

Portland's citizens, business owners and public officials must choose its direction, and continue to work to accomplish the goals of the *Plan*.

### A Guide and Policy Statement

This *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to serve as a means of addressing the future growth and development of the Borough by identifying key issues and establishing goals and objectives. The community planning process is also aimed at fostering cooperation between Northampton County and the Borough as envisioned by §306 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code which states, *both the county and the municipality shall each give the plan of the other consideration in order that the objectives of each plan can be protected to the greatest extent possible.*

The goals and objectives were developed by local officials based on the planning process. The goals and objectives are intended to serve the Borough as a guide and policy statement for land use management and community facilities and services decision making. Any significant action taken by a local municipality, be it the adoption of a zoning ordinance amendment or the improvement of a municipal building, should be evaluated in terms of the community's goals and objectives. In addition, community planning and land conservation and development management is an on-going process, and the municipality must periodically evaluate the goals and objectives to ensure that they adequately reflect current community conditions and the expectations of residents and officials.

### Planning Process

A theme consistent throughout all elements of this *Comprehensive Plan* is the concept of *process*. The published comprehensive plan document represents only the first step of what should evolve into an on-going planning process. If this *process* frame of mind is not firmly established, local officials, businessmen, land developers, and citizens, all players in the community growth and development arena, will have little chance of

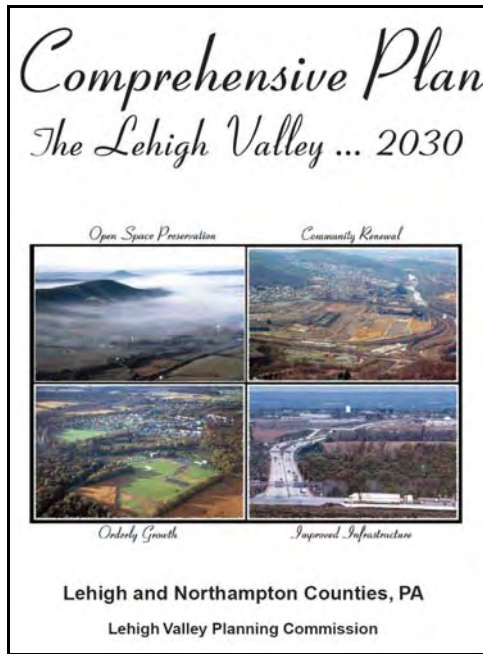
achieving the sustainable growth vital to the social, economic and environmental future of Portland. This process will also allow the recognition of the shifting interrelationships of community growth and development decisions vital to the success of long-term planning efforts.

### **Conservation of Community Character**

Another key theme of this *Plan* is the conservation of Portland's rural, small town character. All public and private actions must be assessed in terms of its effect on the community's character. For example, residential development standards in the normal pattern of large lots will fragment remaining open land. The alternative, cottage housing or planned residential development for example, provides the opportunity to maintain small town character at higher density made possible by the central sewage system. The conundrum of central sewage disposal provides another good example of planning interrelationships. This community facility is often the only means of correcting sewage disposal problems yet can stimulate development of more land at higher population densities. Increases in population could trigger the need for improved or new community facilities and services such as schools and police protection. In short, without careful analysis, one *implementation action* taken by a municipality can have unexpected and often undesirable effects.

To achieve growth and development goals and to establish the community's planning process for the future, this *Plan* makes the following overall recommendations:

- Evaluate all public and private actions with the goal of preserving open land as a viable part of community character.
- Direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas and conserve large blocks of open land.
- Encourage a mix of business and commercial development in the Borough.
- Identify areas for growth within and adjacent to existing developed areas.
- Require adequate community facilities for new development.
- Carefully consider how the new central sewage system, in combination with zoning updates, can best be used to meet community development goals.
- Plan for street maintenance and improvements to continue good quality streets and maximize safety.
- Provide for sound housing and all types of housing.
- Provide for sufficient parks and recreational facilities.
- Promote historic preservation.
- Promote the idea of growth management - an effort to manage the location, type, and timing of future growth.



- Encourage increased local, intermunicipal, and regional cooperation for comprehensive planning and land use control implementation; and overall local municipal administration and management.

**County Planning and Area Wide Planning**

A key factor in formulating a local plan is the planning conducted at the county and regional level. Typically, a county-wide comprehensive plan establishes a broad framework for the future growth and development of the county. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code §301.4, states *municipal comprehensive plans which are adopted shall be generally consistent with the adopted county comprehensive plan*. This *Borough of Portland Comprehensive Plan* is intended to maintain consistency with the recommendations of the *Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan* to the extent that it is not untenable in terms of the key provisions of the *Borough Plan*. In addition, the intent is to coordinate with the plans and policies of the Slate Belt Council of Governments, particularly in the delivery of community facilities and services (e.g., purchase of heating oil and anti-skid) and consistency of land use regulations.

**Community Involvement**

It is obvious that the implementation of the *Comprehensive Plan* will require broad-based community involvement and coordination and cooperation among various federal, state, and local agencies. Plan implementation will require both a commitment of financial resources and human resources. The human resources can include both volunteer and paid staff and professional assistance. Many of the recommendations identified in the *Plan* could require increased staff support and demand for volunteer services.

**Community Partnerships**

Cooperation among community organizations will also be critical to the future success of the community. The dedicated work of community non-profit, service and similar organizations are critical to the quality of life. The Portland Hook and Ladder Company and the Borough Recreation Board are prime examples. All of these organizations should plan and work together to accomplish community goals and objectives.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**Overview**

As part of the planning process community leaders, residents and business owners identified past successes, revealed issues needing attention and identified preferences for the future. Some items listed as challenges appeared to be hurdles or problems without viable solutions; however, challenges are, in reality, unexplored opportunities. Opportunities and challenges are influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors are those that the Borough can manage; external influences are those beyond the community's control.

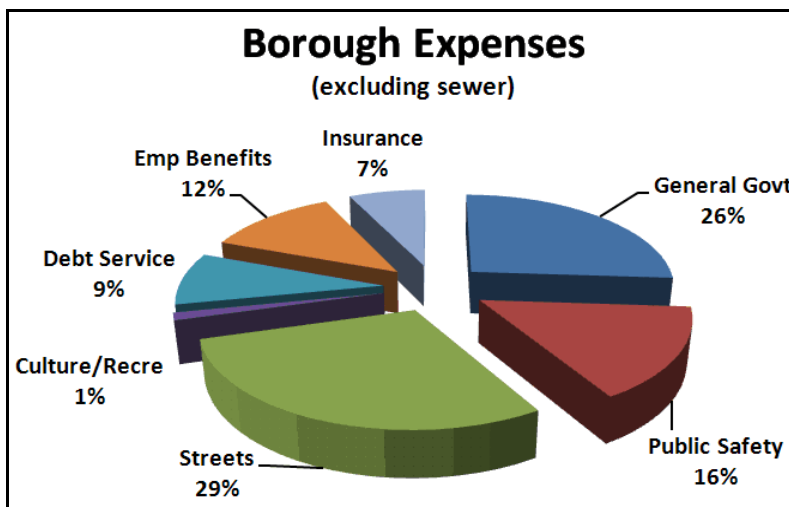
The Borough's significant opportunities and challenges are related to reinforcing its place in the region, strengthening the vitality of its downtown and business community, safeguarding the character of its residential neighborhoods, providing safe and efficient streets, maintaining the effectiveness of its water supply and sewage disposal system and as delivering quality borough facilities and services. An overview of these key issues is outlined on the following pages.

**Portland's Significance in the Region**

The development of the interstate highway system altered significantly the Borough's position as a thriving community along Route 611, once a major north/south highway. Today Portland is largely a bedroom community whose residents travel throughout the region for employment and to retail and service establishments. Nevertheless, the Borough is, in fact, within easy reach of employment and activity centers and this provides the opportunity to highlight assets such as safe and clean neighborhoods, small town character and myriad outdoor recreation opportunities.

**Public Sewer and Public Water**

If the Borough central sewage collection and treatment system had been in place during the high growth and development period of the Slate Belt Region, the Borough would look far different today. The lack of public sewer limited residential density and business development with higher sewage flows. This limitation is now not an issue and, with the public water system, provides the opportunity for residential and commercial development. In addition, the sewer system serves the Portland Industrial Park which will make it more competitive in the region where numerous buildings and sites with infrastructure and direct access to interstate highways are available.





**Borough Facilities and Services**

Providing facilities and services professionally and efficiently while minimizing tax increases is a major goal of Borough officials. This is becoming more difficult as costs rise while Borough revenue is based largely on taxes and user fees. The cost of improved or additional facilities and service must be balanced against the ability of Borough residents and property owners to pay more taxes. Unfunded state and federal mandates add to the challenge.

Borough staff, elected officials and voluntary commission members are increasingly doing more with available funds to maintain facilities and services. For example, the Borough Building is used to its fullest capacity, street maintenance is contracted to minimize staff and road equipment expense and Council members all actively participate on committees to do Borough business.



County Property at Walking Bridge

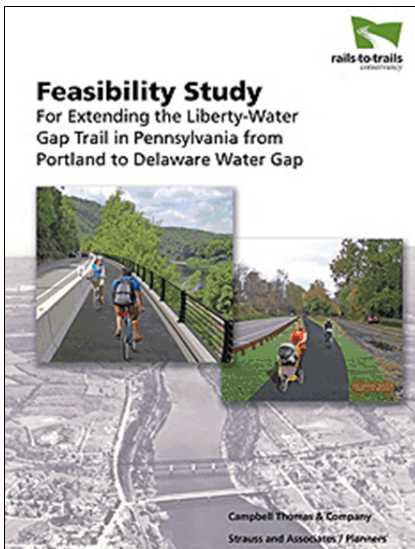
**Business Community**

In addition to the flooding issue, the recent sluggish economy has dampened the Portland business community. Several storefronts are vacant and only one new business has opened over the past year. However, the quaint character of the commercial buildings, the business district streetscapes, the walking bridge across the Delaware River and the potential for adaptive use of the former train station hold potential for revitalization. As discussed below, Jacoby Creek flooding presents a significant challenge to business development.



Capitalizing on area tourism, particularly that associated with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Delaware River Water Trail, is an opportunity the Borough must pursue. Northampton County owns property along the River and under the walking bridge including an informal access way used by boaters. This site could be developed into a recognized waypoint to attract additional tourists who would patronize local businesses. Another option to be pursued is the development of a boat launch at the Jacoby Creek confluence with the River where, via an existing railroad crossing, vehicle could reach the access.

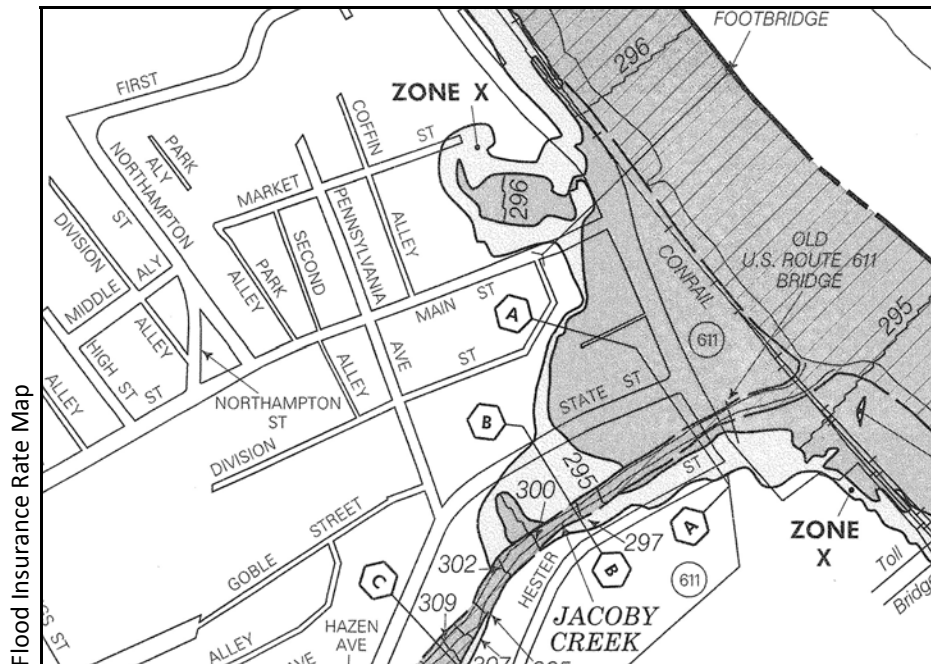
The business community and the Borough should also support and promote the completion of the Liberty-Water Gap Trail to capitalize on capturing additional tourist dollars. A longer term possibility to build on a revitalizing main street is working with the Water Gap Trolley Company to extend service to the Borough, perhaps including a stop at the Slateford Farm historic site.



Business revitalization must be a partnership of local business owners and Borough officials. Borough officials must enable revitalization with appropriate zoning and serve as a conduit for state and federal grant and loan programs. Business owners must take the lead role by organizing to work as a unified group and garner support from regional economic development organizations. The business district streetscapes completed in cooperation with the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission are a critical first step in the process.

**Flooding**

The Borough business district has been flooded three times over the last 10 years and the damage caused by these recurring floods is the most significant challenge facing the revitalization of the business district. Business owners can only afford to *recover* only so many times before resources and will are depleted. The flooding arises not only from Jacoby Creek spilling over its banks when its flow into the swollen Delaware River is impeded, but in more recent events, also from rising groundwater. No solutions to preventing future floods have been identified. With increased potential for tourism businessmen may be willing to alter buildings so that goods and services are provided on upper stories with parking and storage below or over the long term, and with significant private investment, the Business Zoning district could be expanded beyond the flood zone.



**Parking**

Parking for the business district is not a critical issue at this time. However, with the success of the revitalization program and increased commercial activity in the Borough additional parking will be required. In addition, when the River access is developed, an area for canoe and kayak loading will be required. The challenge is to maximize the efficient use of existing parking and locate more parking in an area with few vacant lots. Parking meters and additional Borough-owned parking lots may be options.

**Business District Parking**





**COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Need for Goals and Objectives**

Any community planning effort by its very nature must include goals. Without goals there would be little direction to the future of the community. In the case of planning for a rural small town such as Portland Borough, goals establish the framework for change and growth management, and the foundation for maintaining key community characteristics. Goals pronounce the community's expectations and provide a vision of how the community plans to evolve into the future. Objectives are specific actions which are designed to achieve goals and satisfy community needs. Making decisions based on planning goals and attaining specific objectives improves the physical condition of the community and sustains and enhances the overall quality of life.

**SHARED VISION** - *Every successful business, organization, or individual has a plan for the future. Communities are no different. If nothing else, a community needs to agree on a shared vision of what it wants to become. This vision should address the full range of local concerns: schools, housing, economic development, neighborhoods, parks and open space. Creating a shared vision is important because it provides a blueprint for the future of the community. People may differ on how to achieve the community's vision, but without a blueprint nothing will happen. (Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities, Howe, J., McMahon, and Propst, L., Island Press, Wash., D.C., 1997, p. 48.)*

**General Community Development Objectives**

This statement of the General Community Development Objectives is intended to set the overall tone for the *Comprehensive Plan* and its implementation. More detailed goals and specific objectives for particular aspects of the community follow.

**Cooperation** - To use the comprehensive planning process to explore the potential for cooperation between the Borough and other municipalities and the County on growth and development issues of area wide concern.

**Internal Coordination** - To strive for coordination between policies, plans, and programs in the community through cooperation among governing officials, appointed boards, community interest groups, and residents.

**Public Information** - Achieve greater awareness, understanding and participation of residents with the recommendations in the *Comprehensive Plan* via an active public information process with such methods as a web site, newsletter, and public meetings.

**Economic Development** - To provide, within the context of overall community conservation, the opportunity for local business and strengthen the area economy by encouraging well-planned commercial, industrial, residential, and recreational growth which will provide for local employment, shopping facilities, and recreational opportunities which in turn will strengthen the local tax base.

**Use of Land** - To achieve the best use of the land within the while allowing for reasonable residential and commercial development. The focus will be on the preservation the environment and open space. This will ensure that the varying uses

of land will complement one another and thus improve the economic, social, and aesthetic character of the overall community.

**Range of Land Uses** - To allow a range of residential and commercial uses at appropriate locations and establish performance standards through zoning to ensure that such uses do not unduly affect adjoining properties or the public health, safety and general welfare and are consistent with the historic and gateway character of the communities.

**Population Density** - To establish realistic population densities in order to ensure health standards, privacy and open space and in order to allow for the provision of community facilities and services in the most convenient and efficient manner.

**Streets and Sidewalks** - To maintain and improve the street and sidewalk system for better internal circulation and to protect residential neighborhoods from through traffic.

**Facilities and Services** - To provide the necessary community facilities and services to meet the needs of increased development and the increasing and changing population.

**Environmental Protection** - To guide the location of future development and establish performance standards to minimize negative impacts (*externalities*) on the natural and community environment.

**Housing** - To provide the opportunity for a wide-range and variety of housing types for individuals and families of all incomes.

**Monitoring** - To update and revise planning goals and objectives, and the operational tools necessary for implementation, in light of new data and changing conditions, and to meet a changing population, both current and new residents, in concert with maintaining small town character and quality environment

**GOAL - COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND QUALITY LIFESTYLE**

Preserve and enhance predominant characteristics of the region including, but not limited to the *small- town feel*, the cultural heritage and tradition, the sense of security and safety, the community's cleanliness and tidiness and the people's neighborliness and helpfulness.

Portland’s physical environment, regional location and past development practices have shaped and maintained its small town character. Without careful planning, vigilant land use management, and continued community conservation, the quality lifestyle which will retain current residents and attract new residents can succumb to the cumulative effects of uncoordinated development with eventual direct threats to the environment and public health and safety. Of special concern are residential neighborhoods, street trees and remaining open space and business district development.

**L**IVABLE COMMUNITIES have a balance of jobs, homes, services, and amenities and provide interconnections among these elements. Livable communities provide housing choices and are walkable and affordable. They're also well designed and attractive. Vibrant downtowns are especially important because they are the heart and soul of Pennsylvania communities, appeal to all ages, and provide the distinctive image that people take with them. We can even reshape the strip to make it more appealing and functional. Wherever new development or redevelopment occurs, location, scale, siting and design decisions should be carefully considered. (Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania, McMahon, E.T. and Mastran, S.S., The Conservation Fund and PA DCNR, 2005, p.59.)

**OBJECTIVES:**

**Development**

- Innovate Design - Maintain the size, scale and mix of uses within the Borough by updating land use management ordinances to incorporate current practices and innovate design.
- Performance Standards - Apply zoning performance standards to address noise, lighting, outdoor storage, and other potential effects as well as ensuring appropriate landscaping and signs.

**Celebrate**

- Activities and Events - Continue to support and celebrate activities and events, which express the Portland’s character and maintain an orientation to family.

**Cooperate**

- Community - Support and enhance community cooperation among and between individuals, neighborhoods, for-profit and non-profit organizations and businesses, social and fraternal organizations, community service providers and government entities.
- Area-wide - Promote the idea of area-wide cooperation via the Slate Belt COG.
- Public Involvement - Continue to hold community forums and embrace other opportunities to involve the public in the enhancement of assets, the resolution of issues and the monitoring of the ongoing planning process.

**Neighborhoods**

- Encourage neighborhood watch organizations to help maintain safety, security and cleanliness.

**Nuisances**

- Control common law nuisances and threats to public health and safety due to, among others, noise, lack of property maintenance, poor building practices, junk accumulation, and odors.

**GOAL - BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

**Promote and strengthen commercial opportunities in the Borough.**

The vitality of the local business community is critical to the quality of life in the Borough. Local business provides employment, contributes significantly to tax revenues with less demand for services than residential development, reduces traffic on area roads by providing goods and serves locally, and captures traveler expenditures, particularly in tourist areas.

Commercial development in Portland is found primarily in the B - Business and MC - Mixed Commercial Zoning Districts. Historically, the Borough served as a retail/service center along a primary north/south transportation corridor - Route 611 and the railroad. As the region developed and transportation routes changed, fewer area residents and travelers looked to Portland to meet their retail/service needs. The recent, and possibility of additional, flooding of the Business District presents a significant challenge for business investment. However, the Business District has great potential. It contains a mix of residential, retail and office uses housed in buildings - some historic - that exemplify the rural, small town character of the Slate belt. Recent streetscape improvements along with a strong connection to the Delaware River can begin to restore the appeal of the downtown and attract new economic and social activity. In addition, the Portland Industrial District now provides the opportunity for economic development for the Borough and Slate Belt Area,

**B** **USINESS DEVELOPMENT** - *What brings money into the community? manufacturing? agriculture? tourism? The economic character of a community does not usually change quickly. A community with a large base of skilled machine operators will be far less successful in attracting a software company than will a university town. Thus, the existing economic character of the community must be considered both an opportunity and a constraint.*

*Sometimes called the regulatory climate, local policies toward growth and change create significant opportunities and constraints. In general, antigrowth communities are likely to grow less than similarly situated progrowth communities. These polices are only one part of the larger system and are not independently meaningful – a progrowth attitude is unlikely to create growth in a community with overloaded infrastructure, and an antigrowth attitude alone will not keep people from flocking to a popular beach community. These policies are extremely important at the margins, however, and can have a significant impact over the long run. (Community Planning, An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan, Kelly, E.D. and Becker, B., Island Press, 2000, p. 96, 97 and 98.)*

**OBJECTIVES:**

**Organization**

**Develop a business owner-driven, community-based committee as the key element of the revitalization program.**

- Organized Committee - Demonstrate local commitment for revitalization with an active and well organized committee comprised of residents, business owners and local government representatives.
- Leadership - Involve individuals who are willing to take leadership roles in the revitalization process.
- Involvement and Participation - Foster community involvement and participation in the revitalization effort.

**Business Plan**

**Formulate a Business District plan which seeks a balanced mix of local retail/service and tourist-oriented businesses.**

- Formal Organization - Develop a formal organizational structure with officers

and by-laws to take the lead role.

- Marketing - Develop an on-going marketing approach which promotes the Business District as a destination, recognizes the importance of existing businesses, seeks viable users for vacant properties, and assists local government in preserving the character of the area.
- Redevelopment Programs - Explore the use of the Main Street and Elm Street Programs, possibly in cooperation with other Slate Belt Boroughs.
- Borough Support - Support the Business Plan with Borough resources to the extent such resources are available and are authorized by Commonwealth statute.
- Train Station - Secure the preservation and use of the train station to serve as the foundation for making the Business District a tourist destination.

**Streetscape**

**Protect, maintain and, where possible, enhance the physical features which contribute to the *sense of place and pedestrian-friendly environment*.**

- Commercial Guidelines - Develop guidelines for commercial building design that will ensure high aesthetic quality while meeting basic development standards.
  - Historic buildings and building facades.
  - Street trees and landscaping.
  - Signs and lighting
  - Setbacks, dimensional size and scale of buildings.
  - Pedestrian and bicyclist access and circulation.
- Zoning - Adopt zoning requirements which will help to preserve the character of the community while offering flexibility for individual business and property owners.

**MAIN STREET** (Main Street, National Trust for Historic Preservation.)  
*As a unique economic development tool, the Main Street Four-Point Approach® is the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets—from cultural or architectural heritage to local enterprises and community pride. The four points of the Main Street approach work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort. Coincidentally, the four points of the Main Street approach correspond with the four forces of real estate value, which are social, political, physical, and economic.*

**Organization** involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program. A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director as well. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

**Promotion** sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district.

**Design** means getting Main Street into top physical shape.

**Economic Restructuring** strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base.



**GOAL - COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**Ensure that community facilities and services are provided to meet the needs of the Borough.**

Residents rely on community and public facilities and services to meet their transportation, educational, water supply, sewage disposal, police protection, emergency response, recreation and other daily living needs. Municipalities, particularly rural municipalities such as Portland Borough, do not, and cannot, provide all the facilities and services required by residents. Instead, many such services are provided by other levels of government or volunteer organizations. Nevertheless, without diligent and ongoing attention to the operation and maintenance of existing facilities and services, and planning for new facilities and services, a municipality can fall short in adequately serving its residents.

**C** **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES** should be considered resources with limited capacities that are to be provided in appropriate places to support and implement a multi-municipal comprehensive plan. The location of certain key facilities, including water, sewer, schools, and roads, are often essential to providing the necessary services to accommodate more intensive residential and nonresidential development. Conversely, these services will facilitate unintended development in areas, such as important farming areas or areas with limiting natural resources, where growth may not be appropriate. The location of other services, facilities, and utilities should be considered in relation to their ability to support or conflict with the land use planning for the multi-municipal area. The land use planning should facilitate the efficient and economic provision of public, quasi-public, and privately provided community services wherever possible. (Planning Beyond Boundaries, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, 2002, p. 3-18.)

**OBJECTIVES:**

**Public Facilities and Services**

**Maintain existing public facilities and services and plan carefully for new public facilities and services.**

- Maintenance - Provide necessary maintenance of existing municipal buildings, equipment and other community facilities to extend the useful life and forestall unnecessary capital expenditures.
- Capital Budget - Systematically identify the need for local municipal community facilities and services, including useful life replacement of existing facilities, and develop a capital budget to meet the needs.

**Administration**

**Maintain a high level of administrative services and manage all municipal facilities and services efficiently and effectively.**

- Staff - Continue to evaluate administrative staff levels and needs to meet the day-to-day local government operations.
- Technology - Continue to explore new ways of utilizing technology to facilitate routine government functions and facility maintenance and development.

**Cooperation**

**Encourage and participate in the Slate Belt Area Council of Governments and other intergovernmental cooperation efforts for community facilities planning and economies of scale for joint purchasing, recreation and other facilities and services.**

- Exchanges - Support cooperative exchanges of equipment and personnel between municipalities.

- Intermunicipal Agreements - Use written agreements for intermunicipal projects when necessary to ensure responsibilities and liabilities.

**Emergency Services****Protect the Borough with effective emergency services.**

- Fire and Ambulance - Acknowledging the critical importance of such groups to the community, encourage and continue to support volunteer fire and ambulance organizations to improve operations and service.
- Police - Maintain existing levels of police protection and explore the cost/benefit of various cooperative methods to provide police services.

**Water Supply and Sewage Disposal****Ensure adequate water supplies and sewage disposal facilities.**

- Water Supply - Maintain the Borough water supply system in good operating condition and develop a capital improvements program to plan for necessary improvements and replacements.
- Well Head Protection - Identify important groundwater supply areas and actively protect the sources by applying well head protection standards.
- Sewage System - Maintain the Borough sewage collection, conveyance and treatment system in good operating condition and develop a capital improvements program to plan for necessary improvements and replacements.

**Recreation****Provide adequate recreation facilities and programs to serve the community.**

- Existing Facilities - Focus resources on maintaining and improving existing recreation facilities.
- New Facilities - Develop new facilities as resident needs dictate and financial resources permit with consideration of the cost of long-term maintenance and replacement.
- Regional Facilities - Plan for and provide recreation facilities regionally.



**GOAL - LAND USE**

**Develop a land use plan for Portland Borough that integrates all aspects of growth and development including residential, commercial, industrial and open space.**

Land use management is a complex process that depends on the interrelationship of a number of factors including the historic development pattern, regional location, demographics, the regional economy, the transportation network, and soils and land capability. Most of these factors are beyond the control of local municipalities.

Portland Borough, compared to the Slate Belt Townships, is a mature community where the land use pattern has been established. Land use in the Borough is currently a good combination of residential, commercial and industrial intermixed with small areas of open space. While several larger parcels remain vacant, in-fill and redevelopment will comprise much of the change in the Borough. Without increased private reinvestment in the Business District and additional firms locating in the industrial park, the Borough will likely continue its transition to a bedroom community.

In any case, this *Comprehensive Plan* gives the Borough the foundation to manage the growth and development of the community using innovative land use management ordinances, careful programming of public facilities, and active participation of residents.

**R**URAL SMALL TOWNS offer a high quality of life . . . In addition, the strong sense of community in rural towns, their proximity to open space, and the absence of traffic-clogged commutes to work available there are also attributes that make the entire state more attractive. By the same token, Pennsylvania's numerous cities, boroughs, and older townships are also precious and important. These more "urban" communities retain a special potential to catalyze growth because they possess assets unavailable elsewhere, such as: regional centers of business, medicine, and education; strong existing road and rail systems; distinctive livable neighborhoods, and a wealth of restaurants, shops, and entertainment. (*Committing to Prosperity: Moving Forward on the Agenda to Renew Pennsylvania*, The Brookings Institute, 2007, p. 22.)

Boroughs are smaller urban or quasi-urban centers. Largely associated with industrialization, boroughs are compact, and average just one-eighteenth the area of a typical township.' Boroughs are also ubiquitous. One-third of the 961 boroughs lie within the state's most developed areas. But more than 600 boroughs are scattered across rural Pennsylvania, where they function as the historic and commercial town centers of numerous non-urban counties. Every county but Philadelphia contains at least one borough; most contain 10 or more. Boroughs range in population from 18 in Green Hills (Washington County) to 38,420 in State College Borough, which anchors that region. (*Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania*, The Brookings Institute, 2003, p. 18.)

**OBJECTIVES:**

**Neighborhoods**

**Preserve the quality of existing neighborhoods and encourage quality residential development on available parcels.**

- Resident Organizations - Encourage the formation of resident organizations to promote neighborhood maintenance and restoration.
- Maintenance Code - Consider the adoption and enforcement of a property maintenance code.
- Residential Development - Encourage residential development with direct visual access to open land, with amenities in the form of neighborhood open space, and with a strong neighborhood identity.
- Diversity - Provide for a diversity of lot sizes, building densities, and housing choices to accommodate a variety of age and income groups and residential

preferences, so that the community's population diversity may be maintained.

- Small Town Character - Maintain, where possible, the small town character of development by continuing existing street patterns and area and dimensional characteristics.
- Home Occupations - Allow home occupations in residential districts in compliance with a range of reasonable standards to minimize impacts.
- Nonconforming Uses - Limit expansion of nonconforming uses in residential districts.

**Zoning Districts****Provide adequate separation between incompatible land uses.**

- Existing Districts - Maintain the existing zoning districts and evaluate the location of the districts relative to one another.
- Retail/Service District - Create a Retail/Service District from the Business District on the south side of Delaware Avenue allowing less intensive development which can cater to the tourist trade.
- Setbacks and Buffers - Provide appropriate setbacks and buffers between land uses at zoning district boundaries.
- Commercial Uses - Evaluate the allowed uses in commercial zoning districts and encourage retail, office, and service uses.
- Cooperative Zoning - Consider the use of cooperative zoning as a means of recognizing the regional nature of development patterns and for locating commercial and industrial uses proximate to such existing uses and where community facilities are adequate.

**Land Use Types****Ensure that the zoning ordinance adequately provides for the Borough's fair share of all types of land uses in compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and case law while protecting community character.**

- Allowed Uses - Review the range of uses allowed in the various zoning districts in terms of current land use types and development practices.
- Development Standards - Adopt, monitor and update commercial and industrial development standards to protect the public health, welfare and safety, to preserve community character, and to minimize conflicts with small town character by controlling such activities as noise; outdoor manufacturing, processing and storage; lighting; and other potential effects.
- Prohibited Uses - Consider prohibiting certain uses entirely if the Borough can show that a particular use is inherently noxious or there would be exceptional community impacts caused by the use.

**GOAL - HOUSING**

**Provide for secure and sound housing in a variety of types and densities.**

Families and individuals of all income levels live and work in the Borough with homes ranging from very modest mobile homes to more recently constructed large single-family dwellings. Families with low to moderate incomes need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. Similar to commercial development, the Borough can employ zoning to direct housing types and densities to the most appropriate locations. Conservation subdivision design with a density bonus and allowing multi-family dwellings as part of conservation design in all zoning districts are examples.

**T**HE PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE requires a plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.

**Z**oning must provide for housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements, mobile homes and mobile home parks.

**OBJECTIVES:**

**Current Residents**

**Meet the housing needs of current Borough residents.**

- Sound Housing - Encourage preservation of presently sound housing.
- Rehabilitation - Promote rehabilitation of houses in decline.
- Housing Programs - Encourage participation in all county, state and federal housing rehabilitation and assistance programs to ensure residents receive full benefit from such programs.
- Maintenance - Consider adopting standards which require the maintenance of dwellings to prevent dilapidation.

**Types and Affordability**

**Provide a diversity of housing types and affordability levels.**

- Cottage Housing - Encourage the development of cottage housing where smaller single-family dwellings are sited around a common open space.
- Type and Density - Allow residential development of various types in suitable areas at a density sufficiently high to moderate the land cost of the increasing cost of housing, while requiring adequate off street parking, water supply and sewage disposal.
- Fair Share - Ensure that the Borough provides for its required *fair share* of housing in any land use management ordinances.
- Innovative Design - Advocate conservation design, village style or traditional neighborhood development.
- Incentives - Consider density and design incentives to encourage the development of age-restricted and affordable housing.

**GOAL - NATURAL RESOURCES AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS**

**Conserve streams, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplain groundwater and natural resources as vital elements of the community.**

Without careful planning and management, the use of natural resources and disturbance of sensitive environmental areas can lead to the decline of community character and the quality lifestyle it affords, with eventual direct threats to the environment and public health and safety. If the quality of the area’s natural features is diminished, the quality of life and the local economy will suffer, and water supplies could be threatened.

**T**he purpose of conservation: The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time.  
- Gifford Pinchot

**I** recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use our natural resources, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.  
- Theodore Roosevelt

**I**f we learn, finally, that what we need to “manage” is not the land so much as ourselves in the land, we will have turned the history of American land-use on its head.  
- Gaylord Nelson, Founder of Earth Day

**OBJECTIVES:**

**Conservation and Sensitive Natural Areas**

**Conserve open land, including those areas containing unique and sensitive natural features such as woodlands, steep slopes, streams, flood plains and wetlands, by setting them aside from development.**

- Identification - Identify sensitive natural areas such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, steep slopes, poor soils and flood plains, and adopt regulations to protect such areas by requiring resource sensitive development.
- Land Use Ordinances - Evaluate and develop land use ordinances in terms of effects on sensitive environmental areas with the goal of maintaining open space to the greatest extent possible while allowing a reasonable density of development.
- Development Standards - Maintain up-to-date standards for storm water control, soil erosion and sedimentation control, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal and other environmental concerns.
- Area Wide Cooperation - Coordinate environmental preservation efforts with neighboring jurisdictions, and establish an action plan targeting environmental concerns that require a regional approach.

**Water Supply and Streams**

**Protect the supply and quality of drinking water and protect surface water quality.**

- E & S Control - Reduce erosion and sedimentation by requiring compliance with DEP regulations
- Stormwater - Adopt up to date stormwater ordinances to control runoff through the use of best management practices.

- Water Quality - Consider the impacts of residential and nonresidential development on water quantity and quality and encourage the use of best management practices to preserve stream and River water quality for aquatic life and recreational use.
  
- Floodplain - Use land use controls to direct new residential and commercial development away from floodplain to areas where land is adequate to provide facilities necessary to support development and flood damage is minimized.

**GOAL - CIRCULATION SYSTEM**

**Establish and maintain an adequate circulation system to safely and efficiently move people and goods.**

Safe and well maintained streets and highways are vital to all communities, serving not only as the means of travel within the community, but as the direct link to the region and beyond. Public streets in Portland Borough total 4.27 miles including 2.70 miles of Borough-owned streets and 1.57 miles of state-owned routes. Street maintenance accounts for 20 percent of the Borough’s 2013 operating budget; \$61,300, of \$302,4000 (excluding sewer operation). Local officials must plan carefully to ensure adequate funding for the improvement and maintenance of locally-owned roads. Sidewalks in Portland, where they exist, range in condition from new to poor, and *Bicycle PA Route V* follows Route 611 south from Delaware Water Gap into Portland and connects to the pedestrian bridge across the Delaware River to New Jersey. The freight rail line passing through ca minimal traffic, averaging about five trains per week.

**C***IRCULATION* - Planners typically talk about "circulation" rather than transportation because circulation (getting around) is the goal of the citizens they serve, whereas transportation is just a method of achieving that goal. A good circulation plan includes more than streets and roads – it includes means of pedestrian and bicycle circulation and, in many communities, some form of mass transportation.

*Although good circulation plans involve more than roads, the starting point for an existing conditions analysis of circulation is a map of streets and highways in the community. (Community Planning, An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan, Kelly, E.D. and Becker, B., Island Press, 2000, p. 80.)*

**OBJECTIVES:**

**State Roads**

**Assess state road maintenance and safety concerns and the improvements needed.**

- Road Task Force - Consider organizing a local Road Task Force with Slate Belt municipalities to address regional traffic impacts and highway improvement needs.
- Planning - As a Slate Belt group, actively participate in all Lehigh Valley Transportation Study and PennDOT highway planning programs.

**Borough Actions**

**Develop a coordinated program to maintain the Borough street and sidewalk network.**

- Improvements Program - Develop a local street, intersection and sidewalk maintenance and capital improvements program.
- Cooperation - Work cooperatively with the Slate Belt COG to achieve road maintenance and improvement efficiency by sharing equipment and coordinating contract bidding for services and materials.
- Development Location - Limit higher density and higher traffic impact development to areas with adequate highway capacity.
- Parking and Access - Require adequate, but not excessive, off-street parking and loading, limit curb cuts, and require well designed access points.
- New Development - Maintain up-to-date standards for construction of new

subdivision roads.

- Road Linkages - Include the consideration of through road connections as part of the development review process.
- Highway Occupancy Permit
  - Require as part of zoning approval for new or expanded uses, the issuance of a highway occupancy permit by the Borough or PA DOT, as appropriate.
  - Maintain an up-to-date road occupancy ordinance setting standards for driveway access to Borough streets and storm water and utility improvements within the right-of-way.
- Official Map - Using an official map, establish and reserve public street alignments and adequate rights-of-way for planned street improvements.

### **Pedestrians and Bicyclists**

#### **Consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in all transportation planning.**

- Opportunity - Provide opportunities for a range of non-automotive transportation alternatives that are easily available to residents and visitors.
- New Development - Consider all new development proposals in terms of effects on existing facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists and provision for new facilities.
- Pedestrians - Provide a safe environment for pedestrians by improving sidewalks, controlling traffic, and requiring new development to address pedestrian traffic.
- Sidewalks - Recognize the importance of sidewalks to the quality of life in the Borough and develop a sidewalk inventory, improvement, construction, and maintenance program to ensure long term viability of sidewalks.

**GOAL 7 - HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**Protect historic resources as an important part of the character of the Borough.**

A number of historic sites and structures are found in Portland, ranging from residences and outbuildings, to the train station and the stone arch bridge. Buildings and structures were erected as part of a growing community, and although many of the early structures are now gone, the many which remain add tremendously to the character of the community. The preservation of historic buildings and other features, and encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing historic character are critical to the future of the community.

**P**ENNSYLVANIA has more than 100,000 historic resources identified by the National Register of Historic Places. Thousands more could be identified across the state, in cities, towns and villages, and rural areas. This rich heritage is under threat-from abandonment and demolition of decaying urban building stock, destruction of rural landscapes and prime farmland for housing and business, and highway construction to accommodate the tidal wave of trucking and passenger traffic. As with our natural resources, we must strengthen our values and develop strategies to maintain our historic resources. Historic resources are worth saving. Without these resources, communities would lose their integrity, identity, and their attractiveness to newcomers. The goal is to strike a balance between development and saving what's important to the community's past. (Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania, McMahon, E.T. and Mastran, S.S., The Conservation Fund and PA DCNR, 2005, p. 83.)

**OBJECTIVES:**

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Historical Society</b>    | <p><b>Work with the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society to promote historic preservation in the Borough.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Historical Society</u> - Consider the creation of a local historical society.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Identify and Evaluate</b> | <p><b>Develop an inventory of historic resources and evaluate the resources for register status.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Historic Register</u> - Based on the historic resources inventory, create a local historic register and consider nomination of qualifying structures and places to the National Register of Historic Places.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Adaptive Reuse</b>        | <p><b>Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic resources.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Adaptive Use</u> - Allow the adaptive use of large older homes to enable owners to adequately maintain the structures.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Design Guidelines</b>     | <p><b>Develop guidelines for residential and commercial development to encourage historically sensitive design.</b></p>  |
| <b>Education</b>             | <p><b>Educate property owners on the significance and value of historic resources, and of the opportunities for their preservation.</b></p>  |
| <b>Funding</b>               | <p><b>Identify funding sources for historic preservation.</b></p>  |



**ACTION PLAN**

**Introduction**

The Action Plan provides a blueprint for the future of the community, building on the past and community assets and recognizing challenges while planning for a variety of community and economic development projects and programs. It provides a summary of the steps necessary to complete the Comprehensive Plan’s major recommendations.

Coordinated planning and implementation efforts will maximize opportunities for development, redevelopment, investment and activity in ways that support Borough policies. It is vital that Portland’s officials reach out to citizens, stakeholders, area municipalities, Northampton County, and state and federal agencies to obtain support and assistance in implementing this Comprehensive Plan. Forming partnerships will extend and expand the Borough resources and aid in accomplishing planning goals.

Over the years, physical, policy and economic influences will affect the feasibility and priorities of the actions. Certain actions may be completed in the near term while others will likely require much longer. The Borough must respond to opportunities that emerge and issues and emergencies that arise. The Borough Council and Planning Commission must review and update the Action Plan annually to assess accomplishments, adjust priorities, add or remove actions and confirm participants.

**Format**

The issues of most importance are discussed first with the less critical Comprehensive Plan elements following. Comprehensive Plan goals related to each Action are also noted to identify the primary purpose of the Action.

**Flooding:**



**Priority**

The periodic flooding of the Business District is the most challenging issue now facing the Borough. A result of Delaware River flood waters preventing the discharge of Jacoby Creek, often associated with heavy upriver rain, the flooding not only causes community disruption and costly damage, it is inhibiting reinvestment and new investment in businesses. In addition, the Borough stormwater management system may be adding to the problem.

Ref #	FLOODING Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
1	Find <u>structural solutions</u> to the flooding	ongoing	Borough Council Emerg Mngt Coord	County EM Dept PEMA, FEMA
2	Evaluate capacity of <u>Route 611 Bridge</u> to pass Jacoby Creek flows, correct any deficiency	high	PennDOT Borough Council	Borough Engineer
3	Complete a <u>storm sewer/stormwater study</u> with the aim of managing flows to Jacoby Creek	high	Emerg Mngt Coord	Borough Engineer
4	Enforce floodplain <u>management regulations</u>	ongoing	Zoning Officer	Borough Council

Ref #	FLOODING Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
5	Prohibit <u>floodplain development</u> in identified areas without a variance to: A. Ensure the property cannot be reasonably developed outside the floodplain B. Enable the Borough to set conditions of approval such as the installation of flood barriers	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	Lehigh Valley PC
6	Participate in National Flood Insurance Program <u>Community Rating System</u> to reduce flood insurance premiums.	medium	Borough Council	FEMA
7	Ensure that Martins Creek/Jacoby Creek Watershed <u>Stormwater Management Plan</u> requirements are enforced	high	Planning Commission Borough Council	Slate Belt COG Upper Mt. Bethal Co Conserv Dist
8	Encourage Upper Mount Bethel Township to require <u>conservation design for new development</u> in the watershed to maximize open space and minimize impervious areas.	high	Planning Commission Borough Council	Slate Belt COG Upper Mt. Bethal
9	Preserve <u>open space</u> in the watershed via acquisition of conservation easements	ongoing	Co Open Space & Natural Areas Prog	Borough Council Upper Mt. Bethal
Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.) 1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle      4. Land Use 2. Business Development                              6. Natural Resources/Sensitive Environmental Areas 3. Community Facilities				

**Business Development**

**★ Priority**

The vitality of the local business community is critical to the quality of life in the Borough. Local business provides employment, contributes significantly to tax revenues with less demand for services than residential development, reduces traffic on area roads by providing goods and serves locally, and captures traveler expenditures, particularly in tourist areas.

In addition to the flooding issue, the recent sluggish economy has dampened the Portland business community. Several storefronts are vacant and only one new business has opened over the past year. However, the quaint character of the commercial buildings, the business district streetscapes, the walking bridge across the Delaware River and the potential for adaptive use of the former train station hold potential for revitalization.

Business revitalization must be a partnership of local business owners and Borough officials. Borough officials must enable revitalization with appropriate zoning and serve as a conduit for state and federal grant and loan programs. Business owners must take the lead role by organizing to work as a unified group and garner support from regional economic development organizations.

Ref #	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
1	Develop a <u>business owner-driven, community-based committee</u> by convening an initial meeting	high	Business owners Borough Council	Econ dev organiz's
2	Create a <u>formal organization</u> with officers and by-laws to take the lead role.	high	Business Committee	--
3	Formulate a <u>Business District plan</u> which seeks a balanced mix of local retail/service and tourist-oriented businesses.	high	Business Organization	Borough Council Econ dev organiz's Poco Mt Vis Bureau
4	Develop an on-going <u>marketing approach</u> which promotes the Business District as a destination	high	Business Organization	Borough Council Econ dev organiz's Poco Mt Vis Bureau
5	Capitalize on area <u>tourism</u> attractions: - Walking Bridge - Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area - Delaware River Water Trail	high	Business Organization	Borough Council Econ dev organiz's Poco Mt Vis Bureau
6	Explore the use of the <u>Main Street and Elm Street Programs</u> , possibly in cooperation with other Slate Belt Boroughs.	high	Borough Council Business Organization	PA DCED Slate Belt COG
7	Improve <u>County property</u> under Walking Bridge for informal boater access (See also Land Use #6B and Transportation #6D)	high	Co Parks & Rec Div	Business Organiz Fish & Boat Comm Borough Council
8	Develop <u>boat launch</u> at Jacoby Creek/Delaware River confluence (See also Transportation #6D)	high	Co Parks & Rec Div Fish & Boat Comm	Business Organiz Borough Council
9	Secure the preservation and use of the train station	high		
10	Support and promote the completion of the <u>Liberty-Water Gap Trail</u>	ongoing	Business Organization Borough Council	Econ dev organiz's Poco Mt Vis Bureau
11	Work with the <u>Water Gap Trolley Company</u> to extend service to the Borough	low	Business Organization	Econ dev organiz's Poco Mt Vis Bureau
12	Update the <u>zoning ordinance</u> to: A. Create a <u>retail/service zoning district</u> on the River side of Delaware Ave B. Change the <u>Hester St MC- Mixed Commercial District</u> to a B - Business District to enable development of retail and service establishments outside floodplain C. Encourage <u>upper story apartment units</u> in Business District with no minimum parcel size and no density limitation when parking requirements are satisfied	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	Business Organiz
13	See Historic Resources #4	--	--	--
Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.) 1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle                      5. Housing 2. Business Development    8. Historic Resources 4. Land Use				

**Land Use**

**☆ Priority**

The purpose of this Land Use Plan is to devise a strategy to effectively enable economic development in the business district and industrial park, balancing the need to promote development with the need to preserve natural and historic resources, and the need to provide infrastructure and services. To accomplish this objective the Land Use Plan is formulated with consideration of natural and historic resources, infrastructure, and community facilities and services in order to produce a coordinated and efficient development pattern that reflects the Borough’s land use goals, preserves its character and identity, promotes economic viability, enhances the community’s quality of life, and protects resident health, safety, and welfare.

Ref #	LAND USE Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
1	Review and update as necessary <u>district boundaries</u> and the <u>allowed uses</u> in current zoning districts and <u>development standards</u> (See also Business Development #12)	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	Lehigh Valley PC
2	Arrange detailed <u>training</u> for local officials about SALDO and zoning ordinance preparation and administration	moderate	Planning Commission Borough Council	Lehigh Valley PC PA Borough Assoc PA Muni Plng Educ Institute
3	Initiate discussion of <u>cooperative zoning</u> and how it can be developed for the Slate Belt	moderate	Planning Commission Slate belt COG	Lehigh Valley PC
4	<u>Residential</u> A. Use zoning and SALDO to encourage <u>cottage housing</u> B. Provide for a <u>mix of housing</u> types in development projects for a more efficient use of land and conserving open space C. see Business Development #12C	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	Lehigh Valley PC
5	<u>Nonresidential</u> A. Include a broad range of nonresidential <u>performance standards</u> in zoning ordinance B. Require consideration of <u>site physical characteristics</u> as part of the design in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas C. Allow the <u>clearing of vegetation and grading</u> in buffer areas only after a development plan has been approved, but provide for timbering the interior of the property D. Develop updated <u>landscaping standards</u> to ensure development is consistent with Borough character and provide adequate buffers E. Allow <u>no-impact home based businesses</u> in all dwellings as required by the PA MPC	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	Lehigh Valley PC
6	<u>Open Land Preservation</u> A. Encourage developers to include areas of <u>open space</u> in residential subdivisions  B. Improve public access to the <u>County-owned nine acres</u> along the Delaware River	immediate  moderate	Planning Commission Borough Council  Co Parks & Rec Div	Lehigh Valley PC  Borough Council

Ref #	LAND USE Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
7	<u>Official Map</u> A. Consider <u>adoption</u> of an official map and required ordinance in accord with Planning Code Article IV B. Include on the maps <u>needed community facilities and road and intersection improvements, and open space areas</u>	low	Planning Commission Borough Council	Lehigh Valley PC
8	Allow <u>forestry</u> as a principal permitted use in all zoning districts as required by the PA MPC	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	--
9	See Transportation #s 3, 5B, 6B	--	--	--
10	See Historic Resources #5	--	--	
Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.) 1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle      5. Housing 2. Business Development                              6. Natural Resources/Sensitive Environmental Areas 4. Land Use				

**Community Facilities and Services**

Public community facilities and services in the Borough are provided on several levels: local, county and state government, and by quasi-public institutions such as volunteer fire departments, hospitals and libraries. They are most often considered in terms of government or institutional response to meet the needs and demands of the community's residents. The provision of these facilities and services is dependent largely on tax dollars, whether in the form of federal and state aid, county supported programs, or locally funded facilities and services.

Maintaining existing facilities and planning for capital expenditures associated with existing facilities and equipment are the primary actions.

Ref #	COMMUNITY FACILITIES Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
1	Fully explore and take advantage of any opportunities to improve facilities and services via <u>intermunicipal cooperation</u>	ongoing	Borough Council	Slate Belt COG Northampton Co
2	Monitor the need for <u>police regionalization</u> and participate if beneficial to the Borough.	moderate	Borough Council Police Chief	Slate Belt COG other municipalities
3	Focus <u>emergency management</u> planning on finding a means of minimizing the flooding in the Borough's business district	ongoing	Emerg Mngt Coordin Borough Council	County EMA PEMA FEMA
4	<u>Portland Hook and Ladder Company</u> A. Pursue <u>equipment</u> upgrades as necessary  B. Consider <u>consolidation/regionalization</u> of fire companies if funding or volunteer difficulties dictate	ongoing  long term	Hook and Ladder Co  Hook and Ladder Co	--  Borough Council other fire co Slate Belt COG

Ref #	COMMUNITY FACILITIES Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
5	<u>Water Supply</u> A. Continue to maintain current facilities B. Continue to identify and repair leaks in the water system	ongoing	Borough Authority	Borough Council
6	<u>Wastewater Disposal</u> A. Continue to <u>maintain</u> current facilities B. Monitor <u>inflow and infiltration</u> and make repairs as necessary C. Address current wastewater disposal needs and to promote commercial development north and south along <u>Route 611 and the Route 512 corridor</u>	ongoing	Borough Council	--
		ongoing	Borough Council	--
		long term	Borough Council	Upper Mt Bethel Twp
7	<u>Shade Trees</u> A. Reestablish the Borough <u>Shade Tree Commission</u> B. Include <u>tree preservation and tree planting</u> in the zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance	immediate	Borough Council	--
		immediate	Borough Council Planning Commission	LVPC
8	<u>Solid Waste</u> A. Continue <u>contracting</u> for solid waste disposal and recycling B. Investigate <u>joint contracting</u> with other area municipalities to reduce costs	ongoing	Borough Council	--
			Borough Council	Slate Belt COG Other municipalities
9	Develop a <u>capital improvements program</u> A. Police cars - two cars with five-year, one car replacement cycle B. Restrooms for Park and Walk - two to three years C. Pick-up truck - replacement anticipated in next ten years D. Stormwater management and flood prevention - mid-term E. Gymnasium roof and heating system - long term F. Borough building slate roof replacement - long term G. Restrooms at ball field - long term H. See Transportation #1B	moderate	Borough Council	--
Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.) 1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle 3. Community Facilities				

**Natural Features**

The Comprehensive Plan focuses on those resources and features most critical to the growth and development of the Borough and issues related to their current state and protections afforded by the Borough and other regulatory agencies. The various elements of the natural environment must be conserved because the environment has a finite, limited capacity for development. Furthermore, given the interrelationship of all elements of the environment, a change in one element will result in an often unexpected effect on another element.

<b>Ref #</b>	<b>NATURAL FEATURES Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Lead(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b>
1	<u>Floodplain</u> - See preceding priority floodplain actions.	--	--	--
2	<u>Groundwater</u> A. Monitor <u>supply and quality</u>  B. Promote <u>conservation</u>  C. Apply proper <u>land use controls</u> to protect groundwater recharge areas	ongoing  ongoing  immediate	Authority  Authority  Borough Upper Mt Bethal Twp	Borough PA DEP, DRBC  Borough PA DEP, DRBC  Authority
3	<u>Steep Slopes</u> (in zoning ordinance) A. Strictly control <u>site disturbance</u> B. Establish <u>design and performance</u> criteria for buildings or structures C. Set a maximum <u>building envelope</u> size D. Limit final slopes of <u>cuts and fills</u> to 50 percent	immediate	Borough Council Planning Commission	LVPC
4	<u>Wetlands</u> (in zoning ordinance) A. Prohibit disturbance and require buffer B. Require detailed wetland data for development projects	immediate	Borough Council Planning Commission	LVPC
5	Adopt zoning ordinance standards for the <u>control of lighting and glare</u>	immediate	Borough Council Planning Commission	LVPC
Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.) 1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle      4. Land Use 2. Business Development                              6. Natural Resources/Sensitive Environmental Areas				

**Housing**

Families and individuals of all income levels reside in the Borough and need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home, individuals with disabilities and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. The Housing Plan examines the characteristics of Portland Borough’s existing housing stock and provides strategies to address the housing needs of current residents and future housing issues and to accommodate anticipated growth while maintaining community character. In addition, the Housing Plan seeks to ensure that the Borough continues to provide for housing of various types and in various arrangements under the terms of the zoning ordinance.

Ref #	HOUSING Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
1	<p><u>Zoning</u></p> <p>A. Encourage the use of <u>cottage housing development</u> and provide incentives such as density bonuses as a means of providing more affordable housing at densities higher than standard subdivisions</p> <p>B. Provide density or design incentives for developers who provide affordable, <u>workforce, and/or age restricted housing</u></p> <p>C. Allow <u>multi-family housing in the Low Density Residential District</u>, but consider reducing the minimum parcel size from four acres to two acres</p> <p>D. Eliminate the two-acre minimum parcel size for <u>multi-family dwellings in the Medium Density Residential District</u> and increase density.</p> <p>E. <u>Reduce the minimum parcel size</u> for single-family and two-family dwellings in the Medium Density Residential District.</p> <p>F. Encourage <u>dwellings over businesses</u> in the Business District by retaining the provision that sets no density limitation.</p> <p>G. Ensure groups of <u>persons with disabilities</u> are treated the same as groups of non-disabled persons such as allowing group homes in the same zoning districts as single-family dwellings.</p> <p>H. While allowing higher residential density, continue to apply setback, building height, parking and other <u>standards critical to public health, safety and welfare.</u></p> <p>I. Eliminate the <u>prohibition of mobile homes and sectional ranch houses</u> (manufactured homes), include standards for mobile homes on individual lots, and provide for mobile home parks.</p>	<p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>ongoing</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p>	<p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p>	<p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p>



Ref #	HOUSING Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
2	<u>Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance</u> A. Make <u>road construction standards</u> reasonable for safety and durability without adding unnecessary costs  B. Include updated standards for <u>mobile home parks</u>	immediate   immediate	Borough Council Planning Commission  Borough Council Planning Commission	LVPC   LVPC
3	Ensure area residents receive fair consideration for available <u>housing programs</u>	ongoing	Co Housing Authority	community organiz churches Borough Council
4	<u>Property Maintenance</u>  A. Apply the <u>property maintenance code</u> to ensure the structural integrity of dwellings, prevent dilapidation and preclude negative effects on the community  B. Regulate <u>nuisances and safety hazards</u> associated with dilapidated and dangerous structures	ongoing	Borough Council	Business Organiz
Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.) 1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle      4. Land Use 2. Business Development                              5. Housing				

**Transportation**

Certainly, an ideally sound transportation system would include adequate, safe and well maintained roads and bridges, available public transportation, safe and convenient pedestrian access, and bicycle routes. However, few communities are able to achieve this ideal level of service. This is particularly true in small, less populated communities with limited budgets in a time when local, state and federal resources are less robust. In the end, local municipalities must evaluate transportation needs, set priorities, and garner all available resources to make improvements. These decisions must be made in the overall context of the Comprehensive Plan. Key elements that will influence the Transportation Plan include the Land Use Plan, the Community Facilities Plan and the Open Space/Recreation Plan.

Maintaining existing streets, drainage systems, sidewalks and other facilities is the most critical and highest priority element of meeting current and future transportation needs of Portland. Increasing costs and limited resources demand that existing transportation facilities be maintained to extend useful life.

Ref #	TRANSPORTATION Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
1	<p><u>Maintenance</u></p> <p>A. Complete and update annually a detailed municipal <u>street inventory and evaluation</u></p> <p>B. Plan for the improvement of:                      - <u>Weidman Street</u>: \$50,000 - \$75,000                      - <u>Hester Street</u>: minimum of \$75,000.</p> <p>C. Monitor the effectiveness of <u>new materials and practices</u> and use such innovations to best advantage</p> <p>D. Maintain an up-to-date <u>street maintenance equipment inventory</u></p> <p>E. Develop a <u>transportation capital improvement program</u></p> <p>F. Repair/replace all traffic control <u>signs and pavement markings</u> as needed</p>	<p>moderate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>ongoing</p> <p>moderate</p> <p>moderate</p> <p>ongoing</p>	Borough Council	--
2	Participate in <u>regional transportation planning</u> to ensure local issues and needs are addressed	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	LV Transp Study PennDOT Joint Toll Br Comm

Ref #	TRANSPORTATION Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
3	<p><u>Zoning Ordinance and SALDO</u></p> <p>A. Maintain the <u>B District and the MC District</u> to provide nonresidential development direct access to higher capacity roads</p> <p>B. Update <u>parking and loading standards</u> to ensure safe and adequate facilities without requiring excessive parking areas</p> <p>C. In the case of <u>PennDOT roads</u>, make the zoning use permit contingent on the installation of all required improvements</p> <p>D. Require a permit prior to the installation of a <u>driveway</u> to access any PennDOT or local municipal road</p> <p>E. Review <u>street construction standards</u> to ensure adequacy for public safety and eliminate excessive requirements</p> <p>F. Establish procedures for <u>dedication of development streets</u> to the Borough</p> <p>G. Require commercial and residential development plans to design for <u>pedestrian and bicyclist</u> access and safety</p> <p>H. Provide for joint driveways and cross accesses for <u>adjoining commercial parking lots</u></p> <p>I. Reserve rights-of-way in residential subdivisions to provide for <u>interconnection of roads</u> to adjoining parcels</p>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p>	<p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p> <p>Planning Commission Borough Council</p>	<p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p>
4	<p>Work to have the <u>State Street/Jacoby Creek Bridge</u> replaced and to address the height limitation of the <u>Route 611 railroad bridge</u></p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Borough Council</p>	<p>Business Organiz LV Transp Study PennDOT Slate Belt COG</p>

Ref #	TRANSPORTATION Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
5	<p><u>Pedestrians and Bicyclists</u></p> <p>A. Develop a <u>sidewalk inventory</u> to map the sidewalk network, identify strengths and deficiencies, and prioritize improvements</p> <p>B. Include requirements in the subdivision and land development ordinance for <u>sidewalks</u></p> <p>C. Require commercial and residential development plans to <u>design for pedestrian and bicyclist</u> access and safety</p> <p>D. Limit <u>obstructions on business district sidewalks</u> such as retail displays and restaurant seating</p>	<p>long term</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>immediate</p>	<p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p>	<p>LVPC</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>Business Organiz LVPC</p> <p>Business Organiz LVPC</p>
6	<p><u>Parking</u></p> <p>A. Consider <u>parking meters</u> to limit long term parking, particularly by occupants of dwellings above business establishment</p> <p>B. Include off-street parking requirements for any <u>dwellings</u> proposed in the Business District</p> <p>C. Investigate the development of additional <u>Borough-owned parking lots</u> for business patrons to supplement the existing lot on Delaware Avenue</p> <p>D. Include adequate parking in any plans for the development of a <u>River access</u> to serve boaters</p>	<p>long term</p> <p>immediate</p> <p>long term</p> <p>moderate</p>	<p>Borough Council</p> <p>Borough Council Planning Commission</p> <p>Borough Council</p> <p>Borough Council</p>	<p>Business Organiz</p> <p>LVPC</p> <p>Business Organiz</p>
<p>Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.)</p> <p>1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle      4. Land Use</p> <p>3. Community Facilities                              7. Circulation System</p>				

**Historic Resources**

Historic resources provide a sense of place that fosters a connection to the community and a sense of pride among its residents. The aim of historic resource protection is to retain the heritage and identity of a community or region as reflected in its natural and built environment and to ensure that the community’s history and unique character are preserved for future generations. Preserving historic buildings, structures, sites, and landscapes, and encouraging new development to be consistent with existing historic character are critical to the future of the Borough.

Ref #	HISTORIC RESOURCES Action	Priority	Lead(s)	Partners
1	Organize a <u>Borough Historical Commission</u> or Historical Society charged with creating a historic resource inventory	long term	interested citizens Business organization	Borough Council North Co Hist/Gen* PA Bur Hist Pres* Preservation PA National Trust* NPS*
2	<u>Historic Resource Inventory</u> A. Develop a <u>local historic register program</u> aimed at identifying properties eligible for state and national recognition, and list and preserve such properties  B. Create a system for efficient storage, mapping, and retrieval of historic resource data and maintain a <u>historic resources database</u>  C. Seek <u>funding</u> for programs  D. Prepare design guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development	long term	Boro Historical Comm	NPS* PA DCNR* LVPC
	B. Create a system for efficient storage, mapping, and retrieval of historic resource data and maintain a <u>historic resources database</u>	long term	Boro Historical Comm	
	C. Seek <u>funding</u> for programs	long term	Boro Historical Comm	
	D. Prepare design guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development	long term	Boro Historical Comm	
3	Conduct a <u>public outreach</u> program	long term	Boro Historical Comm	
4	Incorporate historic resources into <u>tourism, recreation and trail planning</u> (See Business Development #s 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11)	immediate	Planning Commission Borough Council	Boro Hist Comm North Co Hist/Gen* PA Bur Hist Pres* Preservation PA National Trust* NPS*
5	Once historic resources are inventoried, adopt <u>ordinance provisions</u> that will: - Prohibit demolition by neglect - Facilitate the adaptive re-use - Provide incentives for rehabilitation - Require an impact assessment for nearby development - Require review of demolition, alteration, erection, reconstruction, and restoration - Allow home occupations in all zoning districts	long term	Planning Commission Borough Council	PA DCNR* LVPC
6	Consider participation in the <u>Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Program</u>	long term	Planning Commission Borough Council	Boro Hist Comm NPS* PA Bur Hist Pres*
*	Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society PA Bureau of Historic Preservation National Trust for Historic Preservation		PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources National Park Service	
Associated Goals (See Goals and Objectives Section for details.) 1. Community Character/Quality Lifestyle      4. Land Use 2. Business Development                              8. Historic Resources				

## **LAND USE**

### **Introduction**

A community's growth and development is affected by a broad range of interrelated factors including such things as regional location, the transportation system, natural resources, land suitability for development, available community facilities such as sewage disposal, condition of the general economy, local land values and real estate taxes. A change in one factor will in all likelihood result in a change in another factor and the overall character of the community. In short, how a community's character has developed and how it will change into the future are the result of a complex interaction of sometimes opposing forces played out over the community's history.

While the townships in the Slate Belt Area have experienced considerable growth, Portland's population has remained stable for many years, due in part to the lack of a central sewage disposal system and limited room for expansion with large lots to accommodate on-site sewage disposal. The challenge for the Borough is to provide for essential economic growth and development while concurrently maintaining the attractive character of its residential neighborhoods. Without continued careful planning and land use management, Portland's small town character could be forever altered by the loss of local businesses to the larger region, with a complete transition to a bedroom community.

The purpose of this Land Use Plan is to devise a strategy to effectively enable economic development in the business district and industrial park, balancing the need to promote development with the need to preserve natural and historic resources, and the need to provide infrastructure and services. To accomplish this objective the Land Use Plan is formulated with consideration of natural and historic resources, infrastructure, and community facilities and services in order to produce a coordinated and efficient development pattern that reflects the Borough's land use goals, preserves its character and identity, promotes economic viability, enhances the community's quality of life, and protects residents' health, safety, and welfare.

### **Land Use Overview**

Existing land use in Portland Borough is shown on the Existing Land Use Map which accompanies this Plan and on the aerial photo on the following page. The U.S. Census reports Portland Borough at 0.5 square miles in area, which at 640 acres per square mile, converts to 320 acres. In terms of land area, Portland is the smallest municipality in the Slate Belt and one of the smallest in the County.

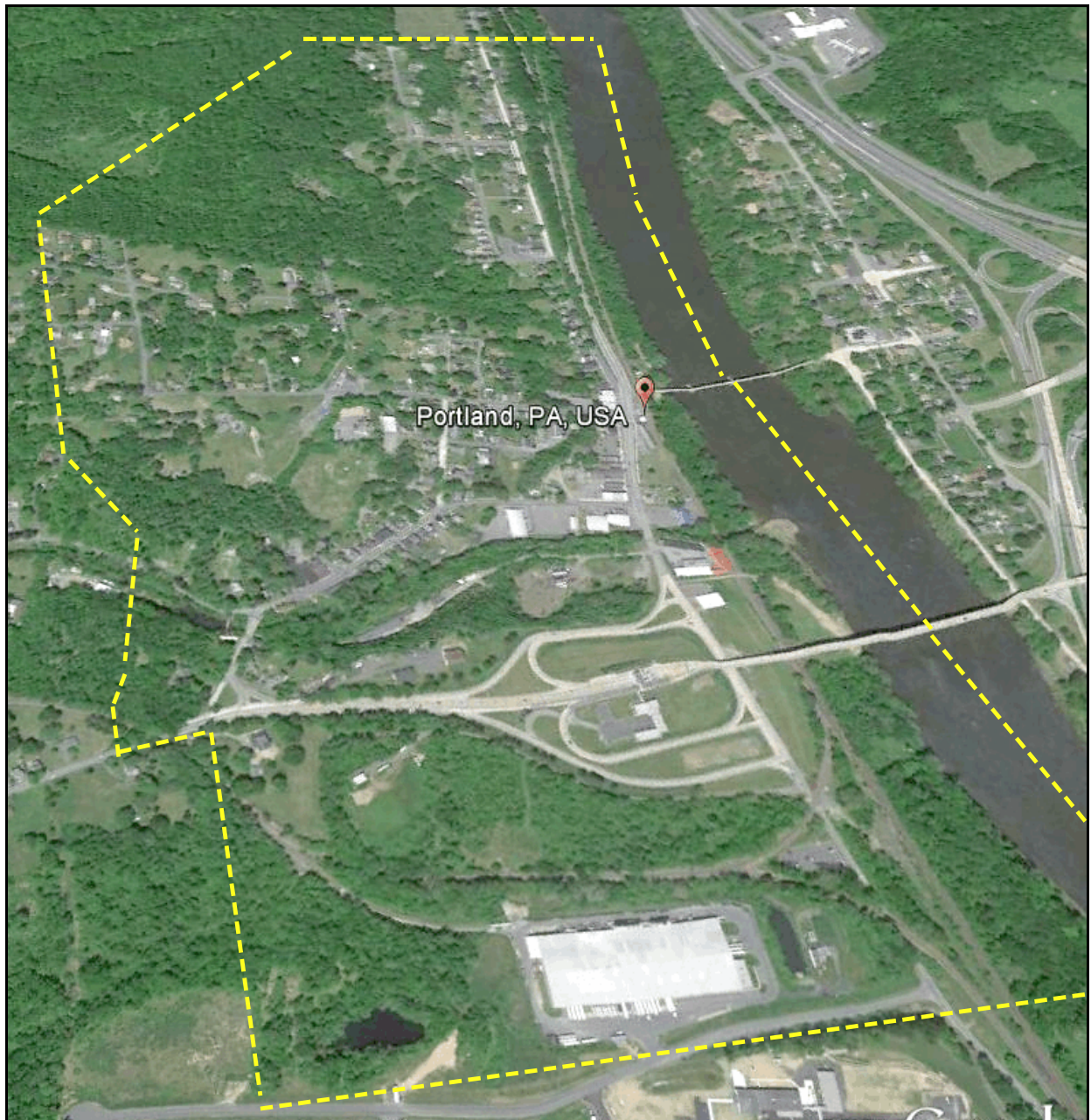
The most significant land use change in the Borough was the 2000 development approval for the Portland Industrial Park which is shared with Upper Mount Bethel Township. The Park is now home to two manufacturing firms, one in the Borough and one in the Township. Otherwise, there has been no significant change in land use in the Borough in the past ten years. The business district, anchored by a firm crafting fine furniture since 1959 and a bank, is otherwise comprised of retail and service establishments, and is now recovering from a series of floods over the past ten years. The balance of development in the Borough is residential, with a mix of duplexes and apartments in the older sections of the Borough, and single-family dwellings on larger lots in the more recently developed neighborhoods.



Portland Single-Family Residential

**Residential**

Residential development comprises about 60 percent of the total land area in the Borough. The primary type of residential development in Portland is single-family residential with the U.S. Census 2007-11 American Community Survey reporting 130 single-family dwellings, 24 duplexes, 59 apartment units and 6 mobile homes. A few of the apartment units are located above businesses in the commercial district. A sketch plan for a 20-unit planned residential development in the north section of the Borough was recently discussed with the Borough.



Google Earth





PNC Bank and Post Office



Joint Toll Bridge Commission  
(Photo: Adam Elmquist)



Portland Hook and Ladder Social Hall

**Commercial, Industrial and Institutional**

Commercial, industrial and institutional uses in the Borough total about 20 percent of the total Borough area. Commercial development is situated primarily along Route 611 and is comprised largely of retail and service establishments along with Frederick Duckloe & Brothers, Inc., crafter of *heirloom quality furniture* (see accompanying sidebar) and a metal fabrication shop. The Ultra-Poly Corporation plastic recycling facility, with some 75 employees, is located in the Industrial Park and several firms are located on 11 acres on the south side of Jacoby Creek. Institutional uses include, among others, the Borough building, gym and ballfield; the Portland Hook and Ladder Company fire house and the social hall, the Portland Post Office, the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission Facility, and a number of churches a cemetery.



**Family patriarch  
Frederick Duckloe Sr  
1922-1999**

**History in the Making: Frederick Duckloe & Brothers, Inc.**

*It's rare to find an American company that continues to take pride in the meticulous craftsmanship of years past to produce heirloom quality furniture. But there is a small, colonial furniture manufacturer tucked away in Portland, Pennsylvania, a village near the Delaware Water Gap, which does exactly that. The family company was started just a few years prior to the Civil War, in 1859, by master craftsman and carriage maker Frederick Duckloe, who experimented with the making of Windsor chairs from available sketches and drawings of the great English masters. Plain and fancy Windsor chairs soon replaced his carriage sales, and many of the models he made during the late 19th century are highly prized by today's serious antique collectors. In the 1930s, his only son, W.J. Duckloe – who had made his mark by making many fine reproduction pieces in solid wood – turned his attention to Windsor chairs. With razor sharp hand-turning tools and a lathe powered by a foot treadle instead of electricity, W.J. Duckloe made his early chair models. These handmade Windsor chairs were signed with chisel marks and perfect in every detail. In 1938 Frederick Duckloe Sr., eldest son of W.J., joined his father and by 1946, there was a great demand for all Duckloe products. In the 1950s, Frederick Duckloe decided to specialize in the making of Windsor chairs and settees. Private and commercial customers would often submit special drawings of a favorite chair or settee for exact duplication. While this new demand on the skill and tools of a small shop would often place orders a half year behind in delivery, the Duckloe name continued to gain recognition. When Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, was in its formative years, Frederick Duckloe offered to donate the furnishings for the now renowned Medal of Honor Room. In 1976, Frederick Duckloe was asked to reproduce in faithful detail, two of the most-prized original pieces from the collection of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a chair and a settee, for the U.S. Bicentennial. In 1980, the Smithsonian Institution requested Duckloe to reproduce a circa-1800 chair from its National Museum of American History. Sold exclusively through the Smithsonian, it is shown in the Institution's Catalog. In 1981 the First Boston arm and side chairs were first reproduced under a commission by The First Boston Corporation. And in 1988, The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) commissioned Frederick Duckloe & Brothers to be the exclusive makers of all Windsor chair reproductions for their museum. Frederick Duckloe & Brothers Inc. continues to employ many talented artisans and their apprentices who are firmly committed to a long tradition of making only the finest handcrafted Windsor furniture reproductions. Today family members Barbara Duckloe Townsend and Frederick B. Duckloe, who represent the fourth generation of the family, head the company. (www.duckloe.com.)*



**Woodland**

Woodland that is not associated with an already developed or scheduled-for-development parcel, the Industrial Park for example, is situated primarily at the north end of the Borough and totals almost 50 acres. While this area does include some wetlands, steep slopes and wet soils, more than half appears suitable for development and the area is zoned R-15 Low density Residential. (See the Natural Features Map.)

**Planning Implications**

Portland is faced with both challenges and opportunities in the current land use configuration and careful and continued planning is essential.

- The Borough, given its location near New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania metropolitan areas, its small town character and its quality of life holds potential for continued growth and development.
- Although the availability of land for residential is somewhat limited, the new central sewage system and the long existing central water system provide the opportunity for growth which was previously stymied by the dependence on on-lot sewage disposal systems.
- As demand for housing in the region recovers, the likelihood of development of vacant land, the subdivision of already developed larger lots and residential use of upper stories of commercial buildings increases.
- More residential development in the Borough and surrounding municipalities will spawn more pressure for retail/service commercial development, and increased demand for municipal facilities and services.
- The B - Business District includes only about 15 acres, but several commercial buildings remain vacant, due in part to the expense of flood recovery and the possibility of additional flooding.
- The Portland Industrial Park and other vacant areas of the MC - Mixed Commercial have ample room for additional development.
- The challenge is to provide for essential economic growth and development while concurrently conserving its scenic, historic and natural environment, and affording protection to existing residential development.

**Zoning - Principal Land Use Management Tool**

This Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the continued use of the zoning ordinance is the most critical action required to implement the future land use plan and manage the growth and change which is inevitable for the Borough. Continued planning by consulting, reviewing and updating this Comprehensive Plan, and amending the zoning ordinances to address changing conditions are associated on-going actions.

**Need for Area Wide Land Use Planning and Cooperative Zoning**

The future land use and character of Portland and all of the Slate Belt Area will evolve in response to the actions of community leaders and active citizens combined with the forces of the local and regional economy, and the demand for land and community facilities and services. Most land use issues extend beyond municipal boundaries and can best be addressed through intermunicipal cooperation.

**Basic Land Use Management Approach**

- Conserve and protect vulnerable environmental resource areas.
- Protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible development.
- Allow and encourage residential development at densities consistent with the availability of central water and central sewage.
- Provide incentives and standards for good design and open space conservation as property is developed.
- Provide adequate areas for businesses and manufacturing and work with area economic development organizations to promote the Industrial Park.
- Rely on the larger region for major retail and service needs.
- Encourage the preservation of historic buildings. and sites.

The idea is that individual municipalities can avoid the impact of uncoordinated land use control decisions made independently and by other involved agencies. Two or more municipalities working together would manage land use from a regional perspective. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code provides specific authorization for cooperative municipal planning and goes on to authorize cooperative municipal zoning via intermunicipal agreements. This enables communities to locate particular land uses in the most appropriate locations in the planning area rather than providing for every type of use in each participating municipality. The adoption of a multi-municipal comprehensive plan prior to *land use sharing* is a Planning Code requisite and should be a long term goal for the Slate Belt Area. Each participating municipality can adopt and administer its own ordinance or can adopt and administer a joint ordinance.

Zoning cannot generally be used to exclude particular uses from a municipality, a dogma long held firm by the courts. In other words, a local municipal zoning ordinance must provide reasonable opportunity for the development of all legitimate uses including such activities as adult businesses, cell towers, solid waste disposal facilities, jails, and drug treatment centers. Cooperative zoning enables participating municipalities to spread the range of legitimate uses around the entire area, each not having to provide for every use within individual municipal boundaries. Other benefits derived from cooperative zoning include the ability to address land use on an area wide basis, less duplication of effort, shared manpower and decreased staff costs, increased availability of grant monies, and the option of using one zoning hearing board.

**Zoning Districts Affirmed**

Based on this approach and all of the elements of this *Comprehensive Plan*, the Portland Borough Council and Planning Commission recognize that the continued enforcement of the zoning ordinances and periodically updating the ordinance to address changing conditions, are the most critical actions required to manage the growth and development which is inevitable for the Borough. With some adjustment discussed below, the existing zoning districts in the Borough as delineated by the current zoning map are affirmed as the foundation for the future land use plan for the Borough. The Portland zoning districts include: R-15 - Low Density Residential, R-10 - Medium Density Residential, B - Business, MC - Mixed Commercial and RO - Recreation, Open Space Preservation.

**Specific Actions:  
SALDO and Zoning**

Borough officials recognize that management of land use is the key to the long-term realization of any adopted land use plan, yet also realize that zoning is a community-changing action. In addition to periodic updates, specific actions include:

- Consider the creation of a new zoning district on the River side of Delaware Avenue to cater to the tourist trade by limiting allowed uses to retail and service establishments.
- Consider changing the Hester Street MC - Mixed Commercial District to a B -

Business District to enable the development of retail service establishments outside the floodplain and close to neighborhoods.

- Review and update as necessary district boundaries and the allowed uses in current zoning districts and development standards.
- Use this Comprehensive Plan to foster a better public understanding of growth and development issues, subdivision and land development ordinances and zoning ordinances.
- Arrange detailed training for local officials about SALDO and zoning ordinance preparation and administration.
- Focus efforts on cooperative zoning and how it can be developed for the Slate Belt.

**Residential Neighborhoods**

Borough officials recognize that the Future Land Use Plan must allow for all types of commercial and manufacturing uses. However, this *Comprehensive Plan* must also afford protection to existing residences and new residential development from incompatible uses and the externalities, that is, negative effects, of unrestrained commercial and industrial development. This is best accomplished by continuing to maintain separate residential areas, applying environmental, development and operational performance standards to commercial and industrial uses, and establishing increased setbacks and landscaped buffers where such uses adjoin residential development.

**Residential Policies and Actions**

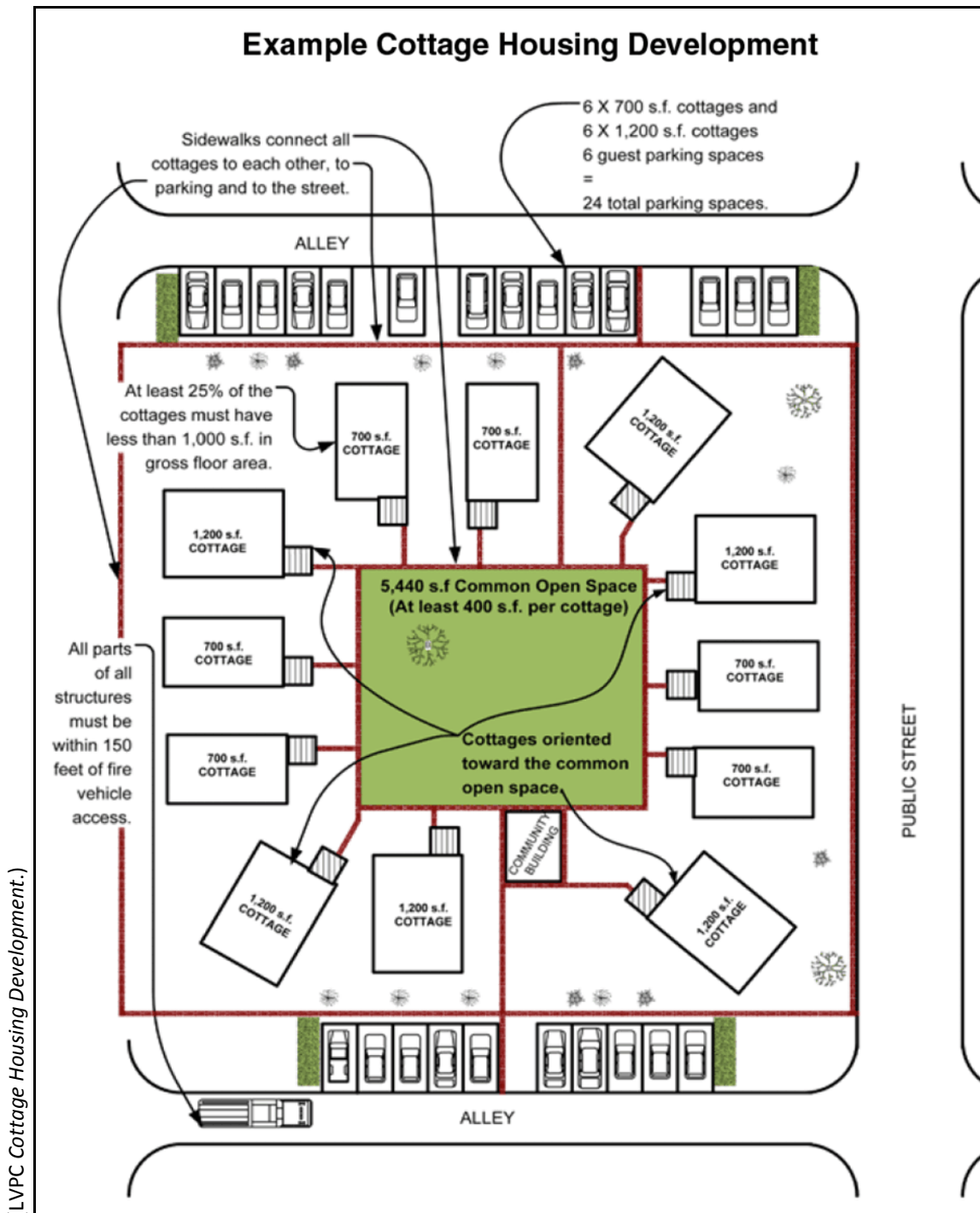
(See the Housing Section for additional discussion.)

- Continue to provide protection for residential areas by maintaining separate residential and nonresidential zoning districts, applying environmental, development and operational performance standards to commercial and industrial uses, and establishing increased setbacks and buffers where such uses adjoin residential development.
- Use zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance provisions to encourage cottage housing development. (See Cottage Housing Sidebars.)
- Provide for a mix of housing types within development projects for a more efficient use of land and conserving open space.
- Encourage development of apartment units in upper stories of commercial building in the Business District when parking requirements are satisfied.

**SALDO Compared to Zoning** - The subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) provides standards for dividing land and for residential and commercial development projects ensuring the provision of adequate community facilities such as roads, water supply and sewage disposal, utilities, proper highway access, and storm water control. The zoning ordinance regulates the use of land by dividing a community into districts to separate land use activities (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.); sets standards for lot size, setbacks and building height; includes specific standards for a broad range of land uses including for example: parking, signs, junkyards, mobile home parks, natural resource uses and multi-family dwellings, and other general community development and environmental performance standards.

**COTTAGE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT** (LVPC Cottage Housing Development.)

- A collection of small houses-less than 1,200 square feet in gross floor area arranged around a common open space, or courtyard, with parking screened from public view.
- Cottages gain their efficiency through higher densities, so they are usually permitted at double the normal density for single family detached homes.
- Cottages can fill a number of roles: →Townhouses without shared walls (multi-family detached) → Affordable housing →Urban in-fill of smaller parcels →Downsized housing for empty-nest families; →Energy efficiency →Upscale housing, where floor space is traded for higher quality amenities;



**Cottage Housing vs. "Conventional" Housing**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>"Conventional" Housing</b>	<b>Cottage Housing</b>
Density	Less than eight units per acre.	Double underlying zoned density.
Unit orientation	Facing out on a public access street or cul-de-sac.	Facing in on a common open space, in a cluster of 4-12 units.
Floor area	Typically, 2,500 sq. ft. and up.	No more than 1,200 sq. ft.
Common open space	Either provided on-site or a fee is paid to the municipality for improvements to parks off-site.	Per-unit common open space requirement. Cottages are required to be clustered around the open space.
Design restrictions	Few.	Design standards are needed to make cottages more acceptable to neighbors.
Ownership	Fee-simple.	Fee-simple or condominium association.
Parking	Garage facing the street; two spaces per unit.	Shared parking or individual garages permitted, but buffered from public view and accessed via alleys or private driveways. Parking requirements can be reduced for smaller cottages, to encourage singles and families without children to occupy them.
Zoning	Single Family.	Medium density single family to medium density multi-family.
Footprint	Maximum lot coverage.	850 sq. ft. maximum footprint.
Second floor	Typically, up to 35 ft. overall height.	Cottages limited to two stories. Living space directly under the roof is not uncommon. Height restricted to 25 feet.
Porches	Not required.	Required.

**Nonresidential Development**

This Comprehensive Plan recognizes commercial, manufacturing and institutional uses as vital to maintaining the economic and social health of the Borough. While the type, location and intensity of such uses in Portland have changed over its development histories, local residents rely on such establishments for employment, for goods and personal services, and for community facilities and services. Large scale retail/service commercial development is not envisioned for the Borough with industrial development directed to the Portland Industrial park and the balance of the Mixed Commercial Zoning District.

**Nonresidential Policies and Actions**

- Commercial, manufacturing and institutional uses require good highway access and will continue to be directed to the Business Zoning District and the Mixed Commercial Zoning District.
- Buffering standards are important to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential areas, and design standards and guidelines should be created to foster attractive and well-landscaped projects and design of any building consistent with existing buildings. Pedestrian access and interconnections should be emphasized.
- Include a broad range of nonresidential performance standards in zoning which must be continually reviewed and updated to address changing development patterns and ensure community and environmental protection.
- Do not make standards and the development review process so onerous that commercial and manufacturing development is discouraged.

### Commercial Design Standards and Guidelines

Design guidelines, along with development standards and permit approval requirements for specific location and site requirements, can be used to retain rural character. Standards and design guidelines in rural areas should consider historic design trends in the built environment and should specifically address issues surrounding the massing, form, materials, and color of new buildings or structures. Zoning performance standards in Pennsylvania generally cannot be used to govern the specific architectural appearance of buildings. Design guidelines, which can be suggested by the municipality with development incentives offered, and voluntarily adopted by the developer, can be effective for ensuring building designs are consistent with community character. Site design zoning standards should include, for example, maximum impervious cover, landscaped setbacks between buildings and the road, modest parking lot size, interior landscaping for larger parking lots, sign requirements, and vegetated buffers along property lines. A critical requirement is the retention of existing vegetation to the greatest extent possible. Development standards for lighting, circulation, parking, landscaping, and noise should be consistent with small town character.

- Require nonresidential development to consider the physical characteristics of the site as part of the design in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Allow the clearing of vegetation and grading in buffer areas only after a development plan has been approved, but provide for timbering the interior of the property.
- Develop updated landscaping standards that will ensure development is consistent with the character of the Borough and which will provide adequate buffers.
- In accord with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, allow *no-impact home based businesses* in all dwellings and continue to allow a reasonable range of other home occupations consistent with residential neighborhoods .
- Encourage area economic development organizations to include efforts for the retention of existing business, improvement of the small business climate, and the promotion of tourism instead of simply committing resources to *attracting industry*.

### Environmental Protection

Development and environmental protection, as well as conserving open land and natural resources, need not be mutually exclusive. While a clean environment and open land are key elements of the quality of life in the Borough, one must recognize that change is inevitable and can contribute positively to a healthy community. The goal is to strike a balance between development and preserving the essential character of the community. Development practices which recognize the importance of the local built and natural environment will ensure the continuation of the quality of life that residents enjoy and which is so attractive to new residents. Concurrently, land owners and developers will be able to provide the home sites and businesses that a healthy community demands.

The intent is to ensure *environmentally friendly* development within the context of the existing zoning districts. State and federal regulations address many aspects of resource conservation and environmental protection, and these regulations should be the foundation - the base from which local municipal regulations should be built. Local standards must be consistent with and be coordinated with state and federal requirements. In some cases, the zoning ordinance can simply reference the other

applicable standards.

**Local Authority  
for Regulation**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) authorizes land use planning and management tools for the Commonwealth's municipalities. Compliance with the MPC, along with case law, dictates the legality of local regulations. For this reason it is very important to remember that all land use management tools must be prepared and administered within the bounds of the MPC and current case law. In addition, the Pennsylvania Borough Code provides authorization for special purpose ordinances aimed at protecting public health, safety and welfare. Other state laws, such as the Floodplain Management Act and Stormwater Management Act, mandate local regulation of resources. In all cases, the municipal solicitor must be involved in reviewing any changes to municipal plans and ordinances.

**Integrated Approach**

Given the range of authorizing state statutes, municipal open land, natural resource and environmental regulations are typically found throughout a number of ordinances. While this may appear problematic at first glance, the integration of such standards in various ordinances is important because a certain ordinance may govern one type of development while another governs a different type. For example, the subdivision and land development ordinance governs how land is divided and improved while the zoning ordinance governs the specific uses on the land. In some cases a special purpose ordinance may be more effective than including standards in the zoning ordinance. The important point is consistency of standards in all ordinances.

**Range of Standards**

The Borough will continue to periodically review and update local environmental standards to ensure the most effective protection. The possible range includes:

- Retention of existing vegetation on development sites.
- Soil stabilization and landscaping.
- Stream, lake and wetland buffers.
- Stormwater best management practices including quality treatment and infiltration.
- Floodplain management.
- Hydrogeological studies for proposed uses with large groundwater consumption.
- Limitations and special standards for development on steep slopes.

**Open Land Preservation**

Why is the preservation of open land important for a community? The value of open lands extends beyond monetary worth. Residents know that these open lands, whether riparian, forest land, hillside, ridge line or park, affect community livelihood, property values, and recreational opportunities. While the value may be difficult to quantify, we know open lands:

- *Provide agricultural (and forestry) jobs and sales.*
- *Boost property values for surrounding developed areas.*
- *Offer a scenic backdrop for a tourist economy.*
- *Form a link to a historic past.*
- *Offer recreation opportunities.*
- *Provide habitat for native plants and wild animals.*
- *Replenish groundwater and act as a filter to improve water quality.*

- *Enhance the quality of life of area residents.*<sup>1</sup>

**Note About Open Space:**  
 Open space is land which has not been developed for a constructive or productive use and is intended for environmental protection, natural resource conservation, scenic, or recreational purposes. Open space may include, for example, woodland, wetlands, watercourses, reverting farmland, and floodplain. In the case of a development project, open space may include passive recreation areas such as trails, lawns and buffer areas. Agricultural land, although sometimes highly developed for crop and livestock production, is often important open land for retaining a community's character.

Open land and natural areas are key ingredients of the area's landscape, and local and county officials must encourage the conservation of open land if this character is to be maintained. Conceivably, all areas of privately owned land which are not wetlands or are not extremely steep, or not already protected by easement, could be developed, using central sewage disposal if necessary. Fortunately, as evidenced by this *Comprehensive Plan* and the land use management ordinances, coupled with the County Scenic Rural Character Preservation Program, private conservation easements, and landowner commitment to conservation, there is a continuing effort aimed at open land conservation.

About nine acres along the Delaware River from Jacoby Creek north to the Borough line has been preserved through the ownership by Northampton County. This key riparian open land is administered by the Northampton County Parks and Recreation Division and is an asset for the Borough in terms of its potential for River access and increased tourism spending. Northampton County also operates an Open Space and Natural Areas Program which has preserved hundreds of acres of open land. However, the undeveloped land in the Borough would likely not qualify for funding based on the Program criteria of resource valley, size and public access, among others.

**Open Land Preservation Actions**

- Encourage developers to include areas of open space in residential subdivisions.
- Work with the Northampton County Parks and Recreation Division to improve public access to facilitate the use of the nine acres along the Delaware River.

**The Official Map**

Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code grants the authority to municipalities to adopt an official map. The official map shows the location of areas which the municipality has identified as necessary for future public streets, recreation areas, and other public grounds, or for open space.

By showing the area on the official map, the municipality puts the property owner on notice that the property has been identified for future acquisition for a public facility or purpose or for open space. The municipality may refuse to issue a permit for any building or development on the designated parcel; however, the municipality has up to one year to purchase the property, or an easement in the case of open space, upon notice by the owner of intended development.

This little used land use management tool can be invaluable for minimizing the cost of public facilities and open space acquisition. The Borough should consider the adoption of an official map as part of its long term planning for community facilities and open space preservation. By setting aside funds for the eventual fee purchase or easement acquisition of priority open land areas, municipal resources can be used to the best long term advantage, ensuring that open land preservation is a coordinated effort rather

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<sup>1</sup>Santa Barabara County 2030: The Open Lands, p.2, [http://www.countyofsb.org/plandev/pdf/comp/programs/Newsletters/open\\_lands\\_newltr/value\\_all.pdf](http://www.countyofsb.org/plandev/pdf/comp/programs/Newsletters/open_lands_newltr/value_all.pdf)



than uncoordinated reactions to unanticipated needs.

What should be shown on the Official Map?

The official map should show existing public lands, public roads and other public facilities and anticipated municipal facility needs and parcels for potential open space acquisition in fee or by easement. For example, the municipality could designate a specific parcel for a municipal park or building, or intersections requiring improvement can be shown to ensure that additional building improvements do not add to the cost of right-of-way acquisition.

What are the benefits of the Official Map?

- *Provides for the coordination of public and private goals* - Property owners are informed, up front, of long range municipal goals for roads, parks, other public facilities and conservation easements. This allows development plans to be adjusted before detailed and costly plans are prepared.
- *Provides an effective method for implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the Open Space Plan and other planning goals* - Most municipalities rely primarily on their zoning and subdivision ordinances to advance their future land use goals. The official map provides an additional and highly effective tool to ensure that a municipality is developed in accord with its land use policies. It is particularly effective for achieving transportation and community facility goals and objectives.
- The implementation of an open space or park and recreation plan can benefit from the designation of existing and proposed parks, related facilities and conservation easements on the official map.
- *The municipality can plan ahead to provide community facilities, parks and open space important to the community* - By setting aside funds for the eventual purchase or easement of the identified areas the municipality can use limited resources to the best long term advantage. Priorities can be established instead of reacting to unanticipated needs undertaking uncoordinated acquisitions.
- *Provides support for grant applications* - When the municipality applies for grants or other funding, the official map can provide an advantage. Including specific features on the official map indicates a commitment to purchase the land or easement and/or make improvements. For example, mapping future parks or recreation facilities demonstrates that the municipality has planned ahead for these improvements, and could be considered favorably when grant applications are reviewed.

**Official Map Actions**

- Consider an official map and required ordinance in accord with Planning Code Article IV.
- Include on the maps needed community facilities and road and intersection improvements, and open space areas.

**Forestry**

This Comprehensive Plan recognizes the historical and continuing importance of forestry enterprises to the area economy and encourages forestry activities in the Borough provided such operations are conducted in accord with sound forest management practices and environmental regulations. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), at §603(c)(7), states that *zoning ordinances may not unreasonably restrict forestry activities* and goes on to require that in the Commonwealth, *forestry activities . . . shall be a permitted use by right in all zoning districts in every municipality*. The Code defines *forestry as the management of forests and timberlands when practiced in accord with accepted silvicultural principles, through developing, cultivating, harvesting, transporting and selling trees for commercial purposes, which does not involve any land development* (buildings such as sawmills and wood products manufacturing are treated as separate uses). Any zoning provisions will be consistent with the MPC by classifying forestry as a principal permitted use in all zoning districts.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Overview**

Public community facilities and services in the Borough are provided on several levels: local, county and state government, and by quasi-public institutions such as volunteer fire departments, hospitals and libraries. They are most often considered in terms of government or institutional response to meet the needs and demands of the community's residents. The provision of these facilities and services is dependent largely on tax dollars, whether in the form of federal and state aid, county supported programs, or locally funded facilities and services.

Both public and private funds support institutional facilities and services. Certainly, the facilities and services provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Northampton County are vital to Borough residents, but are somewhat beyond the scope of this Plan. Should community residents find that state or County facilities or services are inadequate, local municipal officials can serve as a conduit for communication with responsible state and county officials to effect facility and service improvements.

Community facilities and services can serve as a tool, or as an unexpected trigger, to guide or stimulate community growth and development. Provision of a public water supply or sewage disposal system can be used to remedy an existing problem or foster business development, but unexpected (and perhaps undesired) development can result. The construction or improvement of highways, often to solve traffic congestion, can have similar effect resulting in even more traffic and a change in community character.

**Local Providers**

This section focuses on those facilities, services and utilities provided by the Borough and quasi-public institutions such as fire and ambulance companies serving the area. It addresses existing issues related to these services and seeks to coordinate the provision of community facilities, services and utilities with the development pattern advocated by the Future Land Use Plan.



*Our mission is to address local government concerns on a regional basis providing a neutral forum to discuss issues of common concern. When appropriate we will articulate common positions on major issues and our municipalities may individually opt-in or opt-out for the provision of programs, services and/or utilization of municipal equipment to spread costs and increase efficiency of service.*

**Cooperation**

The Comprehensive Plan also supports intermunicipal cooperation for the provisions of community facilities, services and utilities. Local officials should fully explore and take advantage of any opportunities to improve facilities and services offered by the intermunicipal cooperation initiated by this Comprehensive Plan.

In recent years, more and more municipalities in the Commonwealth have begun working together on a number of issues and programs. This is the case with the Slate Belt Council of Governments which includes the Borough, nine other municipalities, Northampton County, the Bangor Area School District and the Pen Argyl School District. The Borough will also participate in on-gong discussions about the formation of a county-wide COG. The provision of community facilities and services offers myriad opportunities for continued cooperation which can result in efficiency of program operation and service delivery,

and economies of scale in purchasing of supplies and materials.

### Community Facility and Service Priorities

A common theme in this *Comprehensive Plan* is the need for local municipalities to set priorities for the use of resources in meeting community needs and resident expectations. Concurrently, immediate community needs and resident expectations must be balanced with local officials' long term view of the future of the community and the costs of action or non-action in providing or postponing facilities and services. Based on this tenet, the Borough will focus local municipal resources on those facilities and services traditionally provided by small municipalities and those important to residents.

- Streets - Street maintenance now accounts for much of the Borough budget and this will continue to be a primary role of the municipalities.
- Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal - The operation, maintenance and improvement of the public water supply and public wastewater disposal systems will continue to be high priorities.
- Police Protection - The Borough will strive to provide police protection at least at current levels.
- Emergency Services - The Borough will continue to support and work with the volunteer organizations to maintain and improve emergency services.
- Stormwater Management - The improvement of storm sewers in the three Boroughs must be addressed over the long term. Evaluation of the storm sewers is the first step with planned improvements included in the capital improvements program.
- Recreation - The Borough will focus on maintaining existing recreation facilities and will add facilities and services only as funding, particularly grant funding, permits and the funding of long term operation and maintenance is considered and secured.



Borough Building

### Municipal Facilities

The Borough is providing staff, facilities and services within its means based on current economic conditions, rising costs and available tax revenues. There are no plans or immediate need for additional administrative facilities, maintenance facilities or staff.

The Borough employs seven part-time staff including two administrative personnel, one street maintenance worker and a police chief and three police officers. The former Portland School Building, which closed in 1969, houses all of the Borough's administrative functions including Council office and meeting room, the Borough Authority and the Police Department. An upstairs meeting room is also available for community organizations. The building is used under a long

term lease from the Bangor Area School District, and with the improvements made by the Borough, is adequate for the foreseeable future.

The Borough also owns the gymnasium aside of the school building and the 1877 Portland Council Chambers and Pokey which is used for community events. Smaller buildings include four storage garages, two on the school property, one on Division Street and one behind the park. In addition, a small Borough storage building at the Park and Walk is planned to be replaced with public restrooms. Vehicles include a pick-up truck and two police cars.

**Actions:  
Municipal Facilities**

Based on the condition and adequacy of current Borough facilities and adequacy of services, no capital improvements and no staff additions are planned in the near term. The principal action for Borough facilities and services is maintenance and replacement of the Borough pick-up truck and two police cars as necessary. Over the longer term, the Borough must begin saving for the replacement of the Borough building slate roof and the gym roof and heating system and the restrooms at the Park and Walk.

**School Districts and the  
Municipalities Planning Code**

*Section 305. The Legal Status of Comprehensive Plans Within School Districts. Following the adoption of a comprehensive plan . . . , any proposed action of the governing body of any public school district located within the municipality or county relating to the location, demolition, removal, sale or lease of any school district structure or land shall be submitted to the municipal and county planning agencies for their recommendations at least 45 days prior to the execution of such proposed action by the governing body of the school district.*

**Public Schools**

Portland is served by the Bangor Area School District which operates three elementary schools (Defranco , Five Points, and Washington), the Middle School and the High School with a total of some 3,350 students and 245 teachers. Although local municipalities have no direct control over school district facilities and activities, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code recognizes the importance of school buildings and land to the community. Public schools account for the largest expenditure of local tax dollars. The public school system not only provides education for a community’s children, but also provides adult and community education, library facilities, cultural and social activities, and recreational and sport facilities for the surrounding communities. The Planning Code requires school districts to submit certain proposed actions related to land and buildings to the municipality for review if a comprehensive plan has been adopted. (See the *School Districts and the Municipalities Planning Code* Sidebar.) Most school districts are not aware of this provision and local municipalities must monitor school district activities and notify school administrators about the requirement.

**Police Protection**

Located in the Borough Building, the Portland Police Department is comprised of a part-time Chief and three part-time Officers who provide 45 hours of coverage each week based on the available budget. The number of calls reached almost 250 in 2013, ranging from crimes to the typical vehicle-related, domestic, public disturbance and agency assistance calls. The Department works with area departments on mutual aid. The Department operates with two police vehicles with a planned replacement schedule of one vehicle every five years. The other Police Department need is the acquisition of an AR-15 rifle.

**Regional Police Study**

More than ten years ago, the Pennsylvania Governor’s Center for Local Government Services completed a Regional Police Study for several Slate Belt communities including Portland. The Study evaluated the possibility of consolidation as a means of improving coverage and maximizing efficient use of municipal funding. While no action was taken

on the idea of a regional police force, the possibility of regionalization should be considered if individual funding of police departments becomes problematic.

**Actions:  
Police Protection**

- Monitor the need for police regionalization and participate in any such discussions and in regionalization if beneficial to the Borough.
- Plan and budget for a new police car and AR-15 rifle.



Portland Hook and Ladder Engine



Portland Hook and Ladder Company

**EMS and Fire Protection**

Adequate emergency service will continue to be an important element of maintaining the existing quality of life in the Borough. Emergency medical services are typically one of the most important services to residents of small communities and must be addressed as a long term goal of the Borough and area wide municipalities.

*Suburban EMS has coverage responsibility for emergency services in 20 municipalities, covering 197 square miles and over 115,000 people. We have a combined total of 21 vehicles from ambulance to wheelchair vans and a Quick Response/Command Vehicle at four locations in Northampton and Monroe Counties. (www.suburbanems.org/history)*

The Portland Hook and Ladder Company has been serving the Borough since 1895. All of the Company’s personnel are volunteers, while basic life support and advanced life support services are provided by Suburban EMS with paid staff. The Hook and Ladder Company operates with 28 active volunteers along with 25 other members and six junior members, responding to about 100 calls per year. In addition to covering the Borough, the Company responds to call on Interstate 80 for Hardwick Township in New Jersey.

The Company operates from its firehouse on Route 611 with an auxiliary storage building on the same site. The Company’s social hall on State Street is used for weekly bingo, the primary funding source, and is rented for banquets. Hardwick Township donates annually and the Commonwealth Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution provides some \$3,500 annually for the fireman’s relief fund.

Apparatus includes two engines, two ladder trucks (50 feet and 75 feet), a rescue truck, an incident command vehicle, and three boats. The vehicles are adequate for current operations, nevertheless, the Company maintains an equipment fund in anticipation of required replacements or additions. No new building projects are planned.

The Company participates with area municipalities in mutual aid supporting each other on call response. With its ladder trucks, the Company is on first call for all structure fires. The mutual aid agreements have worked effectively for years,

**Municipal Assistance  
for Emergency Service Providers**

A recent *Pennsylvania Township News* article suggested the following ways in which EMS (and other emergency service providers) can be assisted by municipalities:

**Find out what they need** - Meet with your EMS provider on a regular basis to find out what the group needs and how the township can help.

**Put out the call for volunteers** - Advertise for EMS volunteers in your newsletter and on your Web site. Find out if the EMS provider needs administrative volunteers, in addition to medical ones, and try to connect the group with local business people, a CPA, or a bank manager.

**Offer volunteer incentives** - If the township sponsors recreation programs, special events, or even has a township pool, offer free tickets or a free membership to anyone who volunteers for EMS duty.

**Help EMS providers with grant searches and grant writing** - Use your own experience securing grants for the township to show EMS providers where to look, such as the state Department of Community and Economic Development and other state and federal agencies. If they're new at grant writing, offer some pointers.

**Check out purchasing options using state contracts** - Emergency medical equipment is available for purchase through statewide contract. Tell the EMS provider how the system works and also alert them to the availability of state and federal government surplus programs.

**Consider funding options** - Townships can use the new emergency and municipal services tax to help fund emergency medical services. They can also dedicate up to half a mill of township taxes to such services. Some townships make annual donations to their EMS provider a regular part of the budget, and others participate in special fund raising campaigns.

providing additional manpower and equipment when needed. This enables each community to provide service while reducing costs for apparatus. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that the mutual aid agreements be continued, and if volunteer or funding shortfalls dictate, the costs and benefits of consolidating fire companies should be considered .

**Volunteers**

Rural emergency service providers are finding it more and more difficult to find volunteers given the increased demands for training and qualifications. Fortunately, this has not severely affected the Portland Company, but the situation must be monitored.

- The volunteer organizations are finding it more and more difficult to recruit and retain volunteers.
- Large time commitment required not only for answering calls but for training.
- Individual liability does not appear to be an issue; the *Good Samaritan Law* applies.
- Husband and wife both work in most families which limits volunteer time.
- More and more residents work at jobs out of the area which limits availability for day time response.
- Many young recruits go away to college and do not return.
- Fewer and fewer residents have a direct feeling of connection to the community.
- Generally changing attitudes about volunteering -- more people expect to be paid.
- What to do about volunteers and staffing?
  - Work with the State Office of Fire Prevention and Control to set standards for volunteer firefighter and ambulance personnel which are reasonable for rural areas and which do not discourage volunteer participation.
  - Regionalize services with a number of paid staff supplemented by volunteers.
  - An adequate pay scale would be critical.

- Volunteer marketing plan linked to service organizations, schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, etc.
- Offering EMT and paramedic training in high school.

**Emergency Management** Emergency management planning involves plans for emergency prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. The Borough emergency management Coordinator is currently working with the Council to update the Borough Emergency Management Plan. The Plan, as periodically updated, is fully incorporated into this Comprehensive plan by reference. In addition to providing the organizational details for emergency response, a key element of the plan is finding a means of minimizing the flooding in the Borough’s business district, including an inventory and analysis of the stormwater drainage system and how Jacoby Creek flood waters are prevented from discharging into a flooded Delaware River.

**FEMA and PEMA** - The Federal Emergency Management Agency oversees emergency management at the federal level. Each state also has its own emergency management agency. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency coordinates state agency response to support county and local governments in the areas of civil defense; disaster mitigation; and preparedness, planning, and response to and recovery from man-made, technological or natural disasters.

The Northampton County Emergency Management Division is responsible for coordinating local emergency planning and maintaining an ongoing program of emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery and coordinates available county and local resources to deal with emergencies effectively, thereby saving lives, avoiding injury, and minimizing economic loss. Entities involved in emergency response include local governments and public works departments, police departments, fire companies EMS providers, and volunteers. The County EMA also operates the hazardous materials response and is involved in a number of community outreach and education programs.

**Actions:  
Emergency Services**

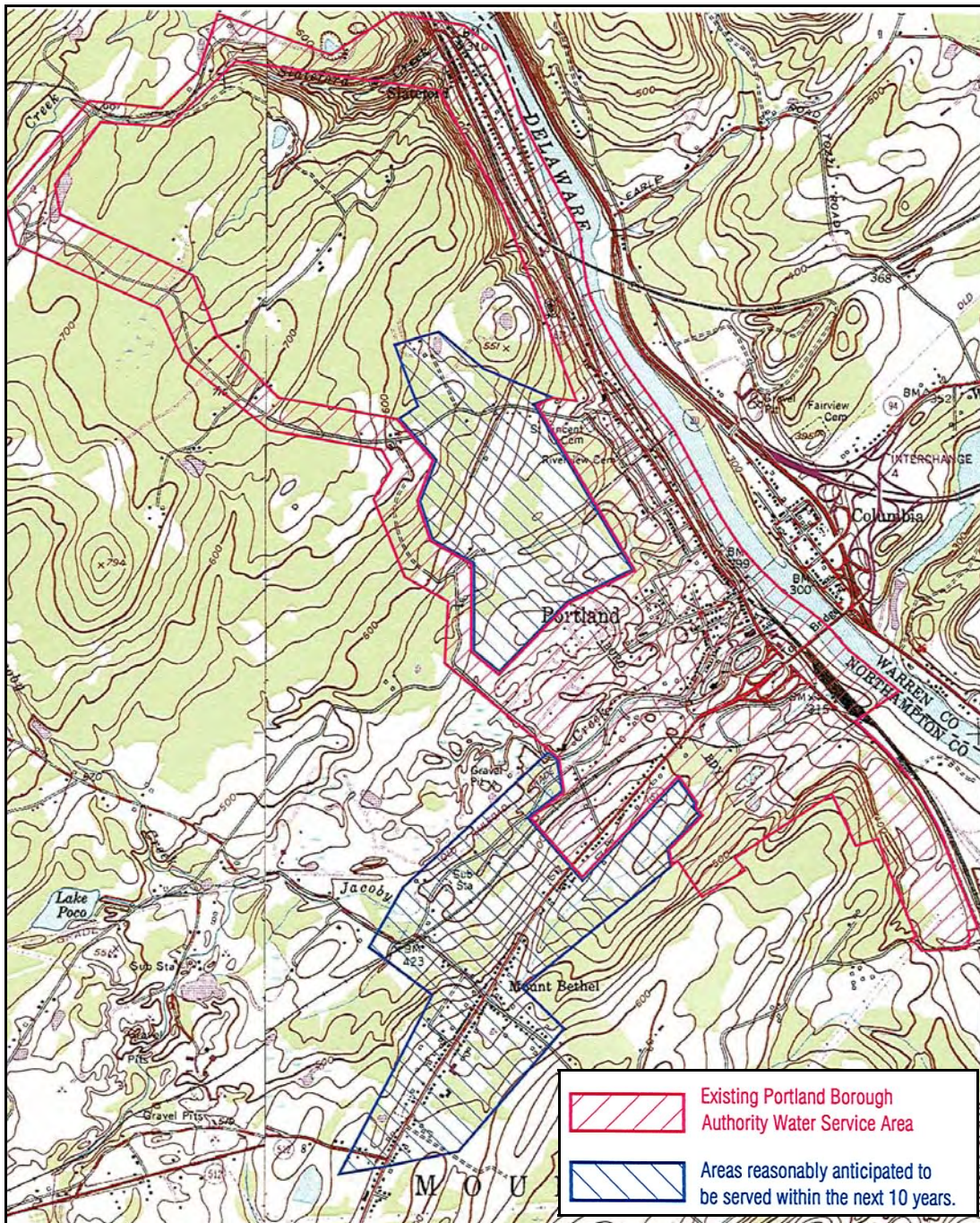
Borough

- Assist the Hook and Ladder Company with promoting volunteerism.
- Provide support to the Emergency Management Coordinator to update Emergency Management Plan every two years as required by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.
- Focus on finding a solution to the Jacoby Creek flooding problem.
- Continue to work with the Northampton County Emergency Management Division on planning and programs.

Portland Hook and Ladder Company

- Pursue equipment upgrades as necessary.
- Consider consolidation/regionalization of fire departments if funding or volunteer difficulties dictate.





Portland Authority Water Service Area  
(RKR Hess Associates, Inc.)

**Borough Water Supply**

For more details see the *Natural Resources Section*.

The Portland Borough Authority supplies water to about 1,300 customers on some 470 metered domestic, commercial and industrial service connections in the Borough and parts of Upper Mount Bethel Township which adjoin the water mains connecting the Authority wells to the Borough. See the accompanying map for current and anticipated service areas. All connections are metered and, owing to recent line leak repairs, average daily flows have been reduced from 130,000 to 70,000 - 80,000 gallons.

The Authority maintains four wells on 120 acres located in Upper Mount Bethel Township. Three of the wells are drilled in bedrock: well #1 - 500 feet, well #2 - 800 feet and well #4 - 650 feet. Well #3, with a depth of 69 feet, is in sand and gravel and is screened and gravel-packed. The Authority also maintains an intake in a raw water supply reservoir supplied by five springs previously used for supply and the Snowden Quarry, both of which could be used in the event of an emergency.

**Actions:**  
**Water Supply**

No system expansions or major capital improvements are planned by the Authority. The Authority will:

- Continue to maintain current facilities.
- Continue to identify and repair leaks in the water system.

**Wastewater Disposal**

The Borough owns and operates the wastewater treatment plant serving Portland and the Industrial Park which began operation in 2009. The MBR (membrane bioreactor) plant is operated under permits from the PA Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware River Basin Commission at a capacity of 105,000 gallons per day. Current flows average 32,000 gallons per day from about 280 connections with little on no inflow or infiltration. Flowing by gravity to a pump station at the bagel shop at Delaware Avenue and State Street, wastewater is conveyed to the treatment plant on Demi Road. (See Community Facilities and Utilities Map for service area.)

The operation of the plant is contracted by the Borough to a PA DEP-licensed operator. Following some initial problems with low flows, the plant now operates well within permit effluent discharge parameters. Following treatment, effluent is discharged to the Delaware River.

**Actions:**  
**Wastewater Disposal**

No immediate system expansions or major capital improvements are planned by the Borough.

The Borough will:

- Continue to maintain current facilities.
- Monitor inflow and infiltration and make repairs as necessary.
- Work with Upper Mount Bethel Township to address current wastewater disposal needs and to promote commercial development north and south along Route 611 and the Route 512 corridor.

**Shade Trees**

Shade trees are an important part of the social, economic, and environmental well-being of a community. Shade trees benefit communities in numerous ways, including providing cleaner air, shadier streets that reduce summer heat, a more attractive streetscape, increased community pride, increased outdoor social activity, an increased feeling of safety and comfort, and enhanced community character. In commercial areas, shade trees are particularly beneficial to businesses, as an aesthetically pleasing and comfortable streetscape can stimulate business by attracting shoppers and patrons. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry provides assistance to landowners and





*Northeastern Pennsylvania Urban & Community Forestry Program*

Since 1995, the program has supported more than 200 projects in communities throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania. These projects have brought diverse organizations together in a shared effort to support the long-term care and management of trees and natural resources in their communities.

Partnership building fostered through NEPA UCFP has helped to raise community awareness and participation in tree planting, tree care, stewardship, and educational activities throughout a thirteen-county region that encompasses three watersheds and supports more than a million residents. The program seeks to improve the ecological health of the region and to restore damaged ecosystems, to support economic improvements through natural resource planning, and to create pleasant places to live and work through sustainable community forestry programs.

Projects funded through the NEPA UCFP have involved more than 2,450 partners in planting, tree risk assessment, and restoration projects on degraded mine lands and parks, along highways, trails and river corridors, in downtown districts, neighborhoods, schools and at tourist attractions.

The program is sponsored through the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area, State and Private Forestry, and the Urban and Community Forestry Program. It is directed by the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry and the Penn State Cooperative Extension. (Source: www.patrees.org.)

municipalities for management of forest land and shade trees as a partner in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry partner.

**Actions: Shade Trees**

- Reestablish the Borough Shade Tree Commission and coordinate programs with civic organizations.
- Include tree preservation and tree planting and replacement provisions for new development in the zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance.

**County Municipal Waste Management Plan**

*Northampton County does not intend to purchase or operate its own disposal facility. . . The County does intend to continue operating its own special waste collection programs. . . With the exception of municipal waste collection in some municipalities, the County intends to continue to rely on the private sector to provide municipal waste collection and disposal services. The private sector will also remain responsible for managing recyclable materials generated by commercial and institutional entities in Northampton County, including collection, processing and marketing. (2010 Northampton County Municipal Waste Management Plan, p. 8-1.)*

**Solid Waste Disposal**

Portland Borough currently contracts with Waste Management, Inc., for the collection of household waste and recyclables which are separated by residents for collection. The contacts are bid by the Borough every five years.

Planning for solid waste disposal is a county responsibility as mandated by state statute, and local municipalities are authorized to regulate solid waste disposal by ordinance. The 2010 Northampton County Municipal Waste Management Plan fulfills the requirements of the PA Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 and details all aspects of solid waste disposal and recycling.

**Actions: Solid Waste**

- Continue contracting for solid waste disposal and recycling.
- Investigate joint contracting with other area municipalities to reduce costs.

**Community Facilities for New Development**

A critical concern for any community is the provision of adequate facilities for new development. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code establishes the authority for local governments to require developers to provide adequate community facilities for their particular project. Via the subdivision and land development ordinance, roads, central water supply, central sewage disposal, storm water control and other facilities, must either be installed or be financially guaranteed prior to the sale of any lots in the development. It is critical that the Borough carefully enforce each subdivision and land development ordinance, and continue to update it to ensure that roads, drainage and other community facilities are installed to standards which will result in quality, durable facilities.

**Action:  
New Development**

Enforce the subdivision and land development ordinance and update to ensure that roads, drainage and other community facilities are installed to standards which will result in quality, durable facilities.

**Capital Improvements Program**

Along with land use control ordinances, a formal capital improvements program (CIP) is a primary tool for the implementation of a comprehensive plan. Although not legally binding, the CIP includes and establishes a time frame for the long-term capital expenditures planned by a municipality. A capital expenditure may be defined as an outlay of municipal funds to purchase, improve or construct a piece of equipment or a facility that is expected to provide service over a long period of time.

Typically, a capital expenditure is relatively large when compared to normal operating expenditures included in the budget. Examples include the construction of, or major improvements to, buildings, land acquisition, recreation facilities, highway improvements, and vehicle purchases. In short, the CIP is a budgeting device to guide the allocation of non-operating funds, and to avoid the unexpected mid-year expenditure of large sums.

**Informal v. Formal**

Many local officials think in terms of a capital improvements program in the more informal terms of simply setting aside funds for anticipated large expenditures. Local officials know what they need, how much it costs, and if the municipality can afford it. While this is certainly one technique in planning for community facilities and services, a more formal approach with an adopted, written CIP with projected revenues, expenditures and capital improvement costs has certain advantages. *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, published by the International City Management Association, identifies the following benefits of an effective CIP:

- Ensures that plans for community facilities are accomplished.
- Provides an adopted plan that continues even if local officials change.
- Allows improvement proposals to be evaluated against established policies and the comprehensive plan.

- Enables the scheduling of improvements requiring more than one year to construct.
- Provides the opportunity for the purchase of needed land before costs increase.
- Encourages long range financial planning and management.
- Provides for sensible scheduling of improvements.
- Offers the opportunity for public participation in decision making.
- Leads to improved overall municipal management.

**Prioritization of Municipal Needs**

In developing a CIP Portland Borough must prioritize its capital needs based on planning findings, and the CIP establishes commitment for public investment in accord with the specific goals and objectives included in the comprehensive plan. *The Practice of Local Government Planning* suggests one method is for a community to divide its needs into three categories: essential, desirable and deferrable. In prioritizing needs, municipal officials must also consider the revenue side of the equation. Needed capital expenditure can only be made by identifying anticipated revenues in terms of other operating expenditures.

In other words, the costs of scheduled capital expenditures must be evaluated in terms of acquiring the necessary revenue to fund the improvements. In any case, the CIP is, by necessity, an on-going process which must be reevaluated annually, with a planning period of six years being typical. It is also critical that the costs of operation and maintenance of new facilities and equipment must also be considered for inclusion in annual budgets.

**Action:  
Capital Improvements**

Develop a capital improvements program with projected revenues, expenditures and capital improvement costs to plan for community facilities and services. Anticipated capital expenditures include:

- Police cars - two cars with five-year, one car replacement cycle.
- Restrooms for Park and Walk - two to three years.
- Pick-up truck - replacement anticipated in next ten years.
- Stormwater management and flood prevention - mid-term.
- Gymnasium roof and heating system - long term.
- Borough building slate roof replacement - long term.
- Restrooms at ball field - long term.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Overview**

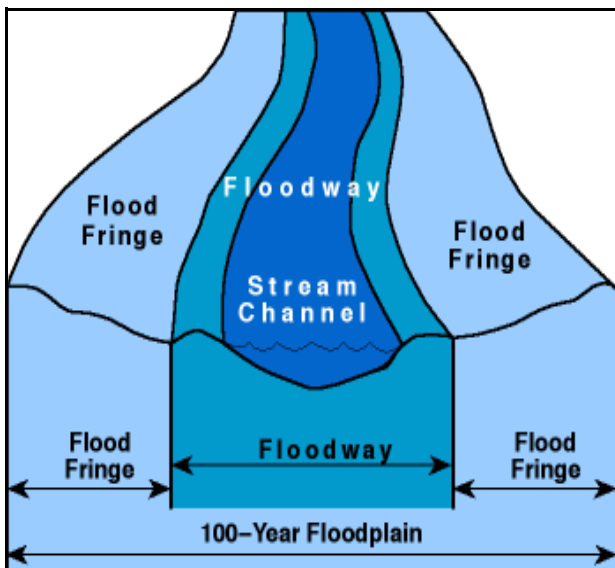
The Portland Borough landscape is comprised of a variety of natural features ranging from the Delaware River, streams and ponds, to wetlands, to upland forest and areas of steep slope. This landscape gives the Borough its distinctive character and has been an integral part of its unique history, attracting residents and recreation visitors. Natural resources and environmental quality are very fragile. Clean plentiful water, pure air, open space, vegetation and wildlife can be irreparably damaged by development undertaken without concern for the natural environment and careful planning and land use control. It is incumbent upon the Borough to work to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of its residents, as well as the identity and heritage of the community. Natural resource conservation and environmental protection are critical elements in accomplishing this task. This Plan is intended to introduce contemporary conservation and management practices to derive the maximum benefit for the health and safety of residents and visitors.

**Critical Natural Features**

The discussion focuses on those resources and features most critical to the growth and development of the Borough and issues related to their current state and protections afforded by the Borough and other regulatory agencies. The assessment forms the basis of future planning policy recommendations and implementation strategies. The various elements of the natural environment must be conserved because the environment has a finite, limited capacity for development. Furthermore, given the interrelationship of all elements of the environment, a change in one element will result in an often unexpected effect on another element.

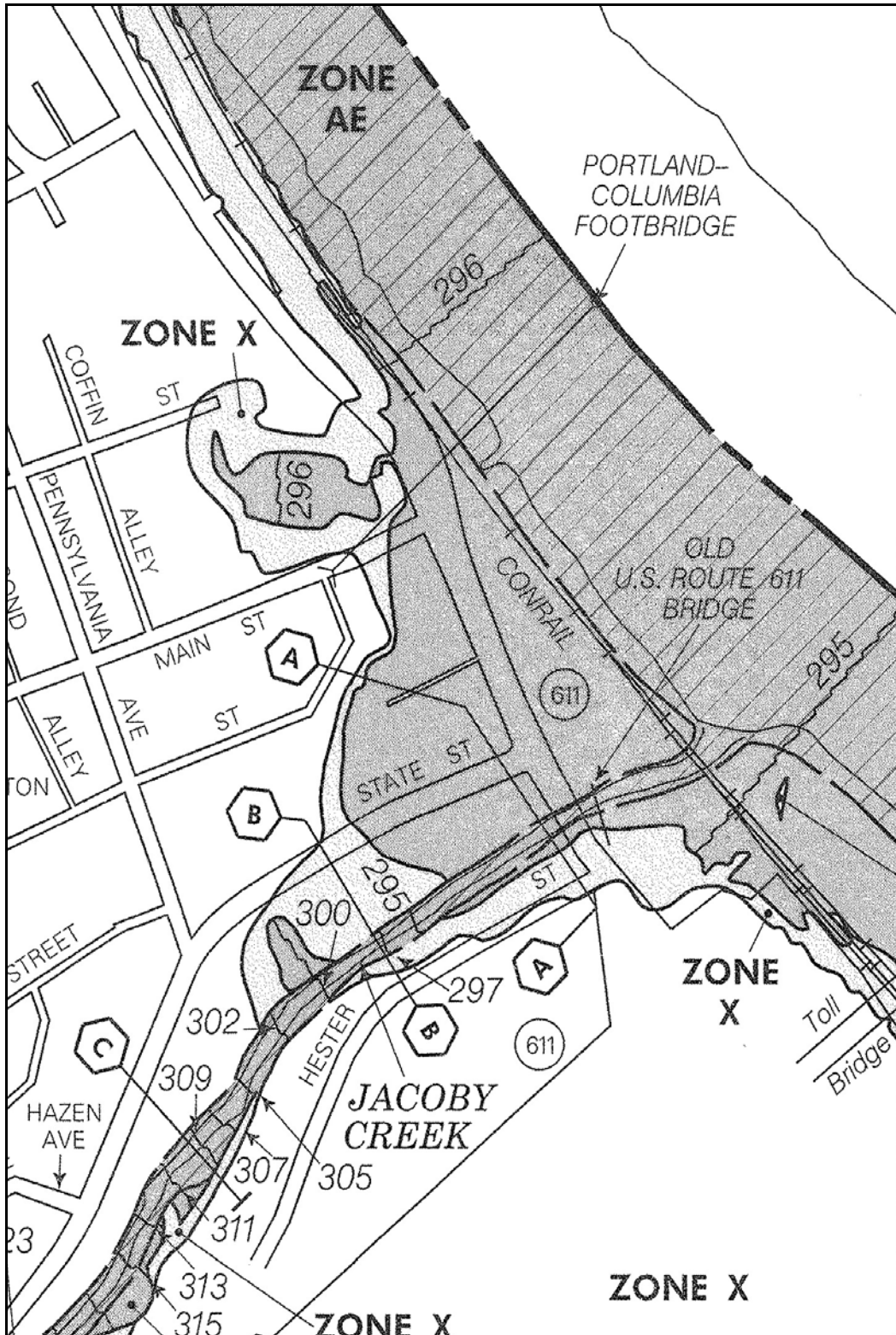
**Floodplain**

The effect of flooding of Jacoby Creek is one of the key issues affecting the growth and economic condition of the Borough. Recent periodic flooding caused by the backup of water as Jacoby Creek enters the Delaware River has damaged businesses around the intersection of Delaware Avenue with Main and State Streets and the probability of additional floods limits reinvestment.



Floodplain Cross Section

The National Flood Insurance Program is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which also has prepared and issued the Flood Insurance Rate Maps which identify flood prone areas throughout the Country. Flood hazard areas are identified for the base flood (*100-year flood*) which is a flood event of a magnitude which is expected to be equaled or exceeded once on the average during any 100-year period (1% chance of occurrence in any given year). This is a long term average period between such floods and such floods can occur at shorter intervals or conceivably in the same year. Areas of 500-year floods (0.2% chance of occurrence in any given year) and 100-year floods of less than 1-foot depth are also shown. (See Flood Insurance Rate Map excerpt on following page.)



Business District Flood Zones (Flood Insurance Rate Map)

Special Flood Hazard Areas

AE - 100-year flood (1% chance of annual flood)

X shaded - 500-year flood (0.2 % chance of annual flood)

X unshaded - outside flood hazard area

**Floodplain Regulations**

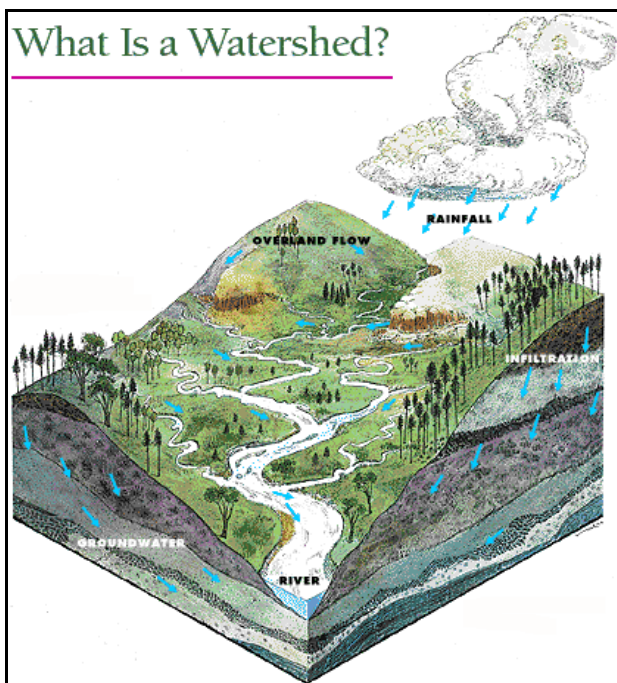
Both the state and federal government administer programs for flood control and flood plain development and provide certain regulatory standards which local municipalities must adopt in order for property owners to be eligible for flood insurance. Minimum state and federal requirements allow dwellings in the floodplain if the lowest floor is elevated up to or above the 100-year flood elevation and nonresidential structures if flood-proofed or elevated. The Pennsylvania Flood Plain Management Act (Act 166 of 1978) requires local municipal participation in the flood plain management program, or state funding allocations such as Liquid Fuel Funds can be withheld.

Portland’s floodplain regulations meet the state and federal minimum by requiring all new residential structures to be elevated at least 1.5 feet above the base flood elevation and requiring all nonresidential structures to be elevated at least 1.5 feet or to be floodproofed. The regulations also prohibit the use or storage of certain hazardous materials in the floodplain and require special permits for hospitals, nursing homes, and jails and prisons.

**Floodplain: Actions**

Floodplain is important for its natural functions of flood flow conveyance, stream channel formation and water filtration. Building within floodplain areas upsets flood conveyance and increases risks to human life and property, and managing new development in floodplain is critical to forestall downstream increases in flood height. In addition, finding a solution to minimize damages from future floods is critical. The Borough will:

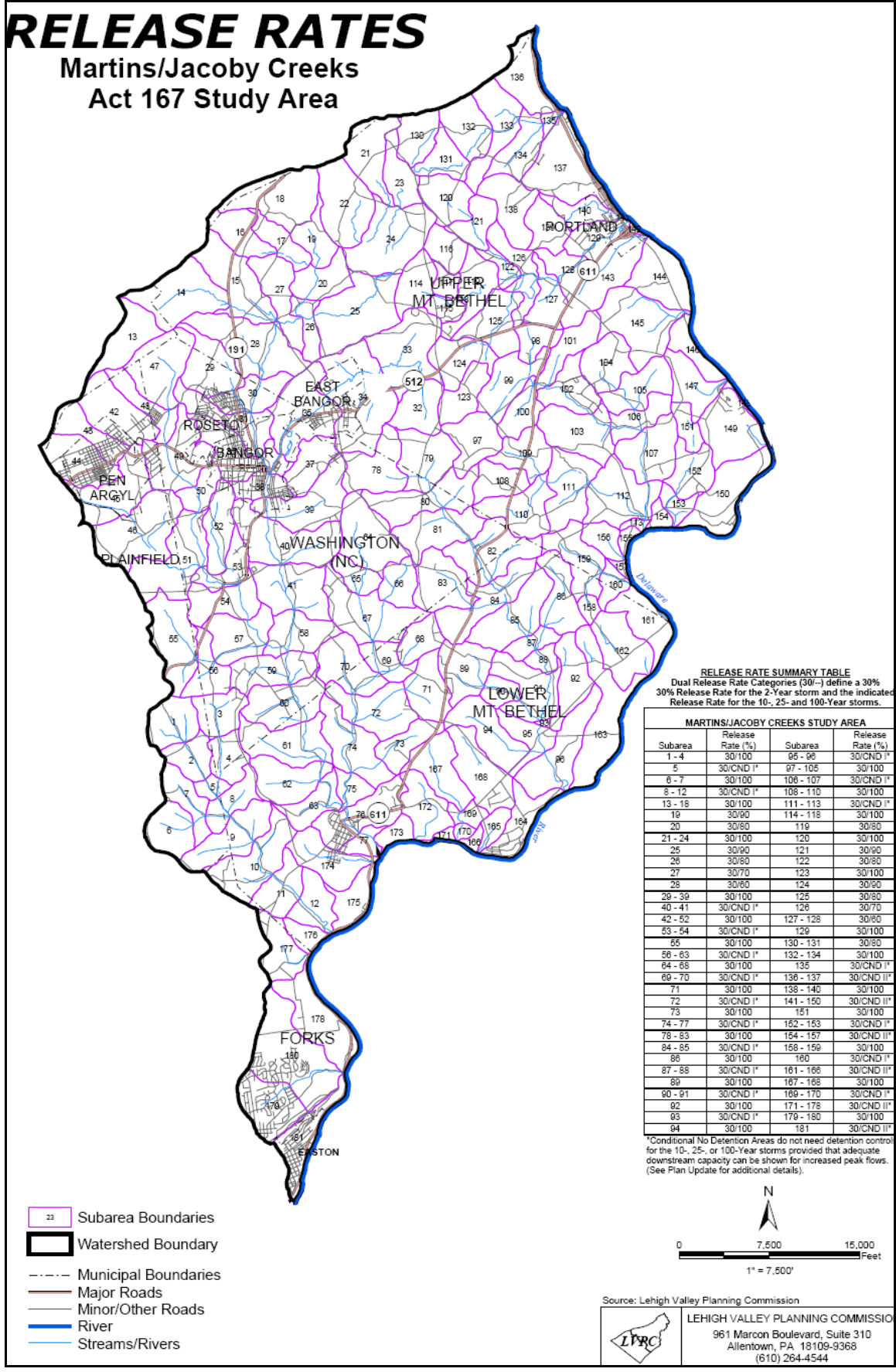
- Continue to work with the Borough Emergency Management Coordinator and the Borough Engineer to find structural solutions to the Delaware Avenue flooding.
- Evaluate the capacity of the Route 611 bridge to pass Jacoby Creek flood flows and work with PennDOT to correct any deficiency.



<http://www.co.berks.pa.us>

- Complete a storm sewer/stormwater study with the aim of managing flows discharging to Jacoby Creek and reducing flood heights.
- Continue to enforce floodplain management regulations.
- Consider prohibiting development in identified floodplain areas without a variance to:
  - Ensure that the property cannot be reasonably developed outside of the floodplain.
  - Enable the Borough to set conditions of approval such as the installation of flood barriers.
- Work through the Slate Belt COG to ensure that the requirements for the Martins Creek/Jacoby Creek Watershed in the Lehigh and Northampton Stormwater Management Plan are enforced to minimize flood height increases. (See the following Release Rate Map.)





**The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS)**

Implemented in 1990 as a voluntary program for recognizing and encouraging community floodplain management activities exceeding the minimum NFIP standards. Any community in full compliance with the minimum NFIP floodplain management requirements may apply to join the CRS.

The CRS uses a class rating system that is similar to fire insurance rating to determine flood insurance premium reductions for residents. CRS classes (footnote) are rated from 10 to 1. A community that does not apply for the CRS or that does not maintain the minimum number of credit points would be considered a Class 10 community. Today, most communities enter the program at a Class 9 rating, which entitles residents in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) to a 5 percent discount on their flood insurance premiums. As a community engages in additional mitigation activities, its residents become eligible for increased NFIP policy premium discounts. Each CRS Class improvement produces a 5 percent greater discount on flood insurance premiums for properties in the SFHA, with a Class 1 community receiving the maximum 45 percent premium reduction. A community accrues points to improve its CRS Class rating and receive increasingly higher discounts. Points are awarded for engaging in any of 18 creditable activities, organized under four categories: Public Information, Mapping and Regulations, Flood Damage Reduction, and Flood Preparation. (Source: www.fema.gov)

- Encourage Upper Mount Bethel Township to require conservation design for new development in the watershed to maximize open space and minimize impervious areas.
- Consider participating in the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System to reduce flood insurance premiums.
- Work with the Slate Belt COG and the Northampton County Open Space and Natural Areas Program to preserve open space in the watershed via acquisition of conservation easements.

**Improving Stormwater Management**

Municipal zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances also include stormwater management standards. In addition, many municipalities adopt stand-alone stormwater management watershed specific ordinances based on county-adopted stormwater management plans. Enforcing such ordinances, and updating as necessary, will ensure best management practices for stormwater control and minimize downstream flooding increases.

Borough stormwater management controls should address the following and the Borough should encourage Upper Mount Bethel Township to maintain similar standards.

Preserve Existing Hydrologic Conditions

The key is to promote development practices to minimize post-development runoff rates and volumes and the need for artificial conveyance and storage facilities.

- Preserve natural drainage features such as vegetated drainage swales, channels, valleys, or depressions where water normally ponds.
- Minimize earth disturbance and preserve natural vegetation to the greatest extent possible by conforming plans to existing topography.

- Minimize impervious surfaces to the maximum extent possible.
- Disconnect impervious areas by directing runoff to areas where it may either infiltrate into the soil or be filtered through vegetation.

#### Maintain Groundwater Recharge

Simple provisions are critically important in areas where groundwater use is increasing dramatically and stormwater is too often simply considered a problem.

- Require the use of infiltration to provide groundwater recharge whenever possible in recognition that stormwater as an important resource to maintain groundwater supplies.
- Ensure that any infiltration does not pose a threat to groundwater quality.

#### Maintain Water Quality

Measures to prevent degradation of surface water quality from pollutants carried in stormwater discharges should be incorporated into management practices.

- Vegetative filter strips to remove sediment and other pollutants.
- Oil removal from parking lot drainage.
- Infiltration basins, bioretention areas and wet detention ponds.

#### Reduce Erosion and Stream Scouring

As storm flows increase, the velocities in streams increase. Both the volume and rate of stormwater discharges should be managed to prevent physical degradation of receiving waters, such as stream bank erosion and channel scour.

- Minimize site disturbance and maintain vegetation.
- Install and maintain temporary controls during construction and permanent controls.

#### Control Flooding

Flooding and stormwater problems are caused by excess stormwater quantity. While some over-bank (typically 2-year to 10-year storm events) and extreme (25, 50, and 100-year) flooding events are inevitable the goal of stormwater management standards is to control the frequency of occurrences so that damages to existing infrastructure are not exacerbated by upstream development.

- Use infiltration to the greatest extent possible.
- Limit floodplain development.

#### Inspection and Maintenance

Without regular inspections during construction and proper and long term maintenance, stormwater infiltration devices, detention basins, pollution control and

other facilities will not function properly, often with problematic or even disastrous downstream effects. Even the addition of homes within a residential subdivision can have serious effects on neighbors if facilities are inadequately constructed and maintained.

- Include standards to address inspection during construction, long term ownership, maintenance agreements for privately owned stormwater facilities and specific maintenance schedules.
- Make the failure to maintain any facility an ordinance violation and to provide the authority for enforcement and correction.

### Physiography and Geology

*Northampton County is in the Ridge and Valley Provinces of the Appalachian Highlands. The area has three major landforms: (1) steep, high, generally narrow, mountainous ridges that run in a northeast- southwest direction and have large amounts of colluvial material at their bases (2) rolling inter-mountain valleys that are underlain by shale: and (3) rolling uplands that are underlain by limestone.<sup>1</sup> Portland Borough lies in the Great valley Section of the Province. (See illustration on the following page.)*

Geology is a fundamental natural feature because it shapes all other features including topography, soils, vegetation, and hydrology. The physical characteristics and geographic patterns exhibited by these features are in large part a result of underlying geologic formations and processes along with the more recent glaciation. The specific characteristics of the underlying bedrock and other geologic strata determine the quality and quantity of the ground water.

*The surface rock in Northampton County formed during three geologic periods: the Cambrian (the oldest of the three), the Ordovician, and the Silurian (the most recent of the three). Rocks of all but one of these systems have at one time or another been commercially utilized, generally for building material.<sup>2</sup> As shown on the accompanying Geology Map, the Borough is underlain by Portland is underlain by several types of limestone: Allentown Dolomite, the Epler Formation and Rickenbach Dolomite of the Beekmantown Group, and Jacksonburg Limestone.*

*One of the most important geologic formations in the county is the Beekmantown-Allentown-Tomstown limestone. This formation consists of interbedded, high-magnesium strata and low-magnesium strata. It is dominated in most areas by dolomitic stone. It has been quarried extensively. Crushed stone is the major product at present. In the past, this formation has supplied lime for farming and clay or bricks. Some deposits of iron ore have been found, but they are irregular in distribution and seem to be located where the limestone strata are closely folded or faulted. The most valuable geologic formation in the county is the Ordovician Jacksonburg limestone, or cement rock. This formation extends across the entire county from Riverton to Northampton; small detached areas occur near Portland and Brodhead. The raw stone*

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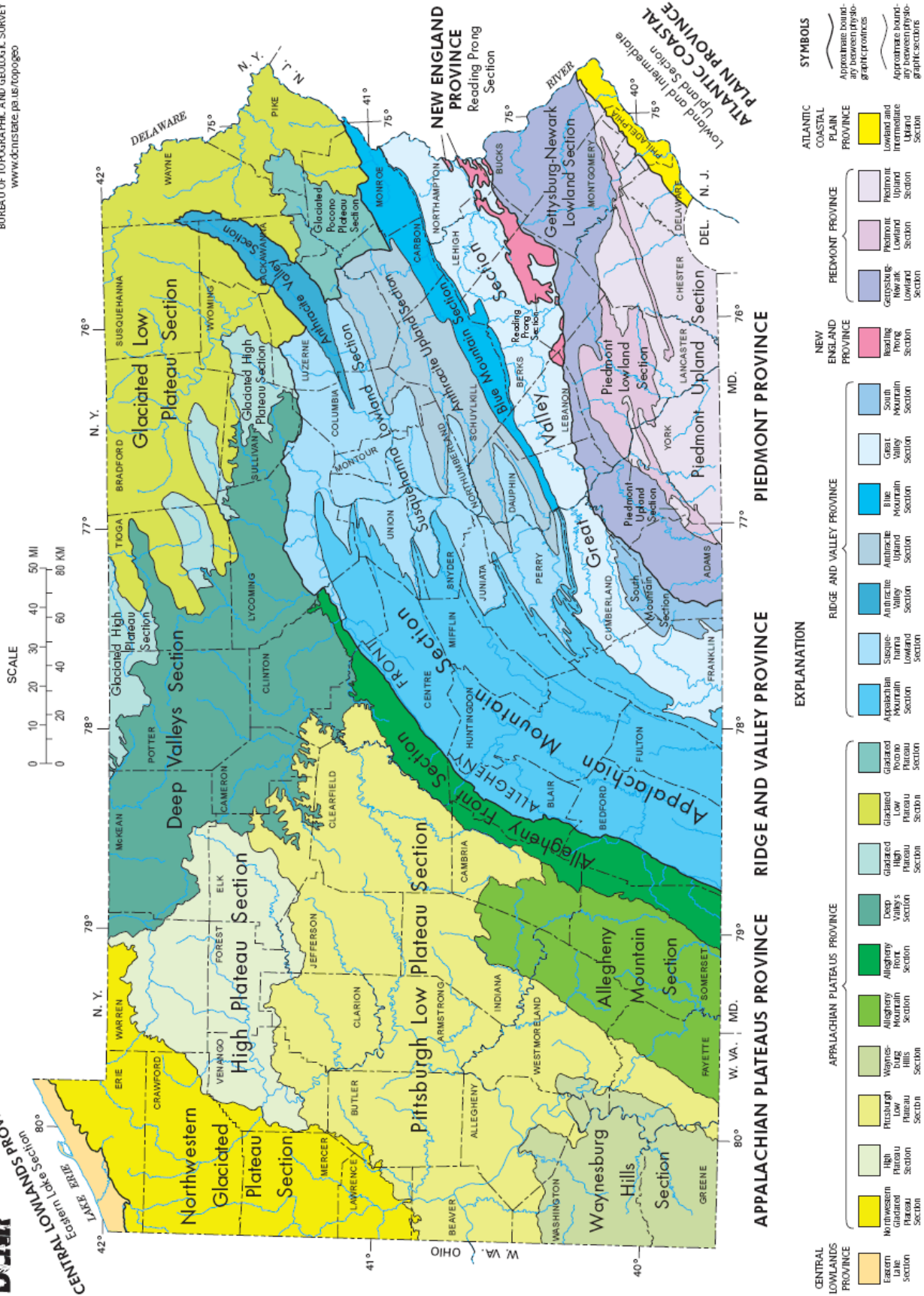
<sup>1</sup>Soil Survey of Northampton County, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1974, p. 113

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 114

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
BUREAU OF TOPOGRAPHIC AND GEOLOGIC SURVEY  
www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES OF PENNSYLVANIA

MAP 13  
**DNCR**



**EXPLANATION**

	Northwestern Glaciated Plateau Section		Reading Prong Section
	Eastern Lake Section		Piedmont Upland Section
	High Plateau Section		Piedmont Lowland Section
	Deep Valleys Section		Gettysburg-Newark Lowland Section
	Glaciated High Plateau Section		Lowland and Intermediate Upland Section
	Glaciated Low Plateau Section		
	Pittsburgh Low Plateau Section		
	Allegheny Front Section		
	Allegheny Mountain Section		
	Wayneburg Hills Section		
	Susquehanna Upland Section		
	Antietam Upland Section		
	Blue Mountain Section		
	Reading Prong Section		
	Gettysburg-Newark Lowland Section		
	Piedmont Upland Section		
	Piedmont Lowland Section		
	Lowland and Intermediate Upland Section		

**SYMBOLS**

- Approximate boundary between physiographic provinces
- Approximate boundary between physiographic sections

Compiled by W. D. Swon, Fourth Edition, 2000.

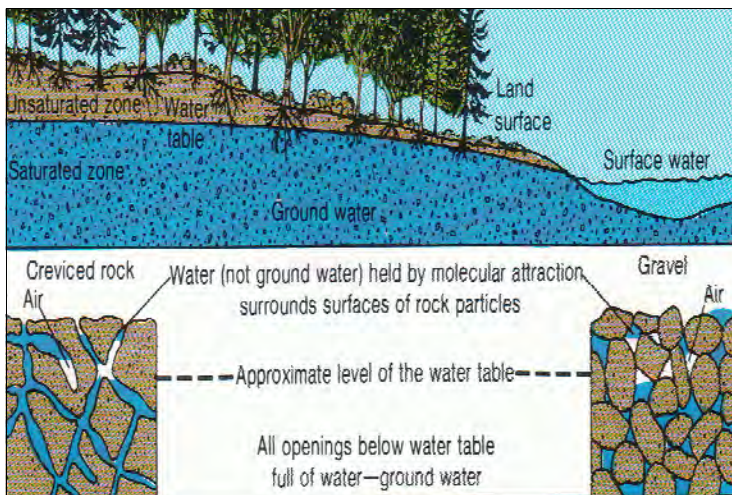


of this formation is composed of the kind of material necessary for the production of high-quality natural cement. As much as 40 percent of some townships is owned by companies engaged in quarrying cement rock. The quarries are very large.

The remaining geologic formation, the Martinsburg shale of the Ordovician system is economically fairly important. This shale is the basis of the slate industry.<sup>3</sup> This formation surrounds the Borough throughout northeast Northampton County and is basis for the moniker *Slate Belt*. One frequently overlooked facet of the geologic history of Northampton County is the great glaciers, which at one time or another practically covered the county. Although these ice sheets were quite widespread, workable deposits of glacial sands and gravels are comparatively sparse, except in the vicinity of the Delaware River, where they occur as terraces, kames, and outwash. The most extensive sand and gravel beds in the county are the kame deposits along Jacoby Creek near Mount Bethel. These are thick deposits of intermixed sand, gravel, and cobblestones.<sup>4</sup>

**Groundwater**

Groundwater is that subsurface water in the saturated zone - the zone in which all the spaces or interstices in the rocks, ideally, are filled with water under pressure equal to or greater than atmospheric pressure. Rocks that are capable of yielding usable supplies of water to wells or springs are called aquifers. Ground water occurs in joints, bedding planes, fault and other fractures in the rock. The extent to which the rock is fractured, its density and size will all contribute to its ability to store and move water. In unconsolidated rock, water is stored and moves through the openings in these deposits. In consolidated rock aquifers, water moves primarily through fractures, joints and along bedding planes.<sup>5</sup>



Water Bearing Geology

**Action: Groundwater**

Portland relies entirely on groundwater for its drinking supply. Three of the Portland Borough Authority wells are drilled in bedrock: well #1 - 500 feet, well#2 - 800 feet and well #4 - 650 feet. Well #3, with a depth of 69 feet, is in sand and gravel and is screened and gravel-packed. A total of some 100,000 gallons per day are supplied to the Authority’s customers with no quantity or quality problems. The Authority will continue to monitor supply and quality, promote conservation, and work with the Borough and Upper Mount Bethel Township to apply proper land use controls to protect groundwater recharge areas.

See the *Community Facilities and Services Section* for more details on the water system.

Methods available for local municipalities to conserve the groundwater supply and

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>5</sup>*Water Resources Report 65, Groundwater Resources of Pike County, Pennsylvania*, Pennsylvania Topographic and Geologic Survey, D. K. Davis, 1989, p. 11.

**Land Use and Water Quality and Quantity**

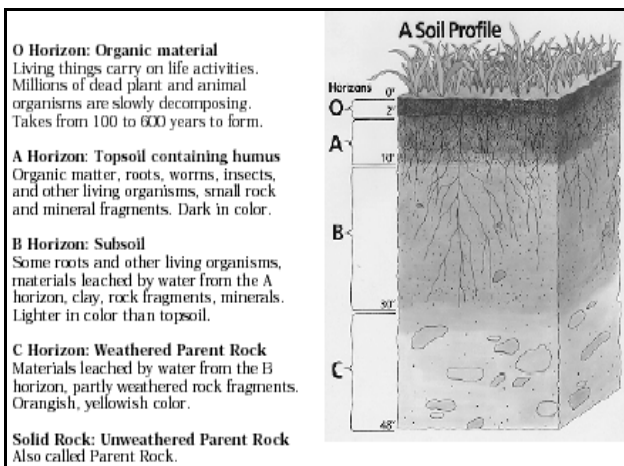
Surface water and groundwater quality and quantity can be affected by land use in the following ways:

- Large amounts of sediment can enter streams from farms and construction sites, and pollutants can wash off lawns, parking lots, and industrial properties.
- Removing vegetation adjacent to streams (riparian buffers) can increase stream bank erosion, raise water temperature, and allow non-point source pollutants to enter the stream.
- Channelizing streams during development can result in stream bank erosion and increase flooding and siltation problems downstream.
- Solvents and other liquids associated with non-residential development can leak or be spilled onto the ground, and eventually reach the groundwater.
- Homeowners who dispose of toxic household cleaners, pesticides, oil and other similar products can cause surface water and groundwater contamination as well.
- Failing on-lot sewage disposal systems can allow partially treated sewage to reach surface or ground water.
- Groundwater recharge can be hindered as impervious surfaces increase with development.
- Stormwater systems that remove stormwater quickly from a site and direct it into nearby streams reduce the amount of precipitation that infiltrates the ground (and eventually the underlying aquifers) and increases stream bank erosion and downstream flooding.

Source: *Upper Hanover Township Comprehensive Plan, 1994*, Montgomery County Planning Commission.

protect quality are well documented, and have been successful in many areas of the Commonwealth. The same methods can be applied to surface drinking water supplies. Details of available methods, the authority for action, and sources of assistance are detailed in *Groundwater Protection and Management in Pennsylvania*.<sup>6</sup> The Report recommends the following five-step process to develop and put into place an effective groundwater protection program:

- Involve the community by organizing a committee of interested individuals from the community, and neighboring communities, if appropriate.
- Determine sources and uses of the community's water supply and define the proposed groundwater protection areas.
- Identify possible contamination sources-past, present, and future-in the groundwater protection areas.
- Establish goals and priorities based on an evaluation of the groundwater threats.
- Implement appropriate management measures, including plans for future needs.



Source:  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~pdf2krech/SoilProfile.pdf>

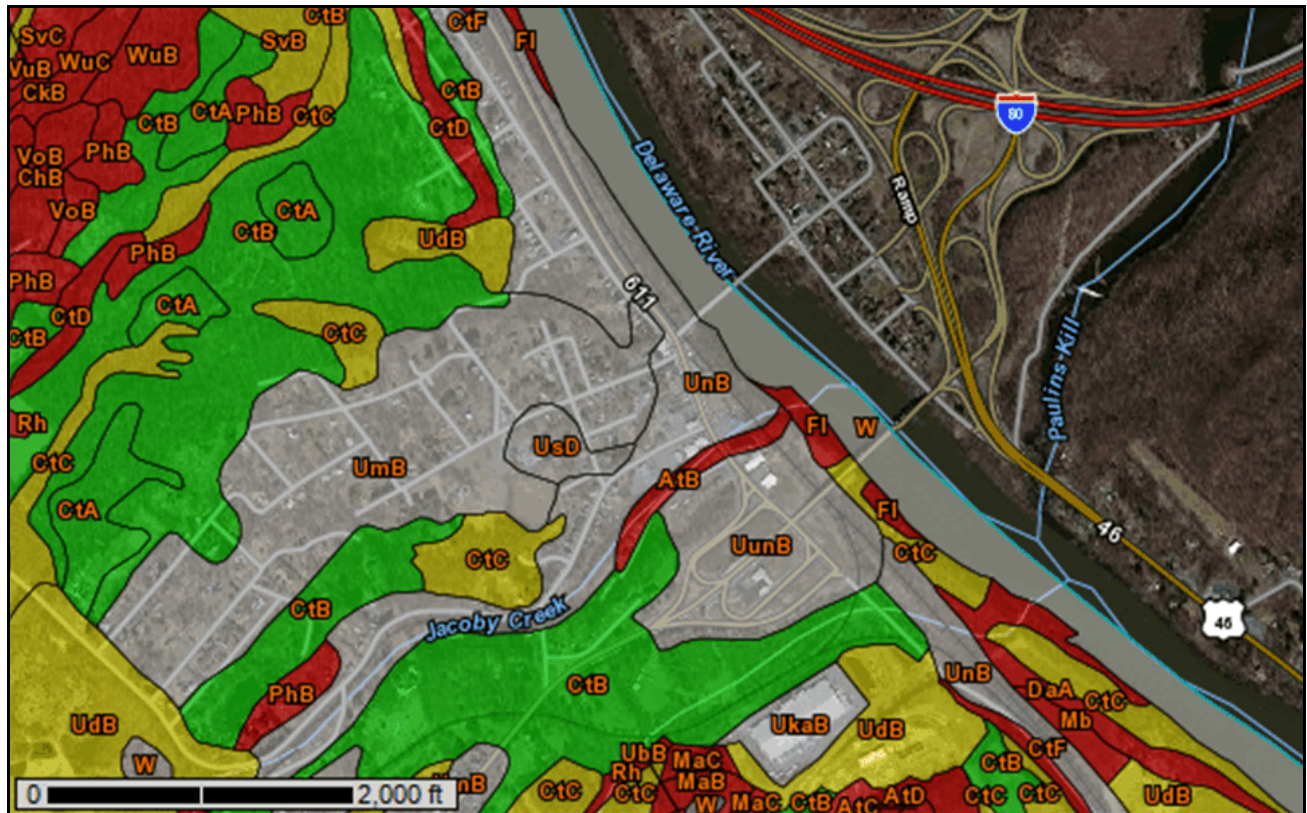
**Soils**

The land's suitability for development largely determines the character of a community's land use, and the most basic component of the land is its soil. Beyond the basic function of the production of food and fiber, soils may either limit or foster community growth depending upon specific soil characteristics. Soils influence local vegetative cover, hydrology, and land use patterns and activities. The Natural Features Map accompanying this Plan shows steep slopes, wetlands, hydric soils and floodplain, all of which affect soil suitability for development. Variables in the formation of soils include climate (precipitation and temperature affecting weathering), biological activity in the forming soil,

<sup>6</sup>Groundwater Protection and Management in Pennsylvania, An Introductory Guide for Citizens and Local Officials, League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund and Water Resources Education Network Project, R. Merideth, J. R. Drohan, C. W. Abdalla, J. R. Jessen, E. D. Stevens, 2001, Third Edition.







Soil Limitations for Buildings with Basements (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>)  
 Red = very limited, Yellow = somewhat limited, Green = not limited, Gray = not rated

the parent material (e.g., bedrock vs. glacial material), topography (e.g., steep slopes vs. flood plain), and time. A number of soil series (i.e., groups of soils formed from a particular parent material and exhibiting similar soil horizons) and different soil types are found in the Borough. The soil types are shown on the following Soils Map and Soils in Portland Borough Table.

Prior to the construction of the central sewage disposal system, finding soils suitable for on-lot sewage disposal systems was a primary concern and a limitation on higher residential density. Now, as shown on the Soils in Portland Borough Table and the Soil Limitations Map, the areas which have building limitations are relatively small, including wetlands and slopes in excess of 25 percent. In short, soil limitations will not have a significant effect on development.

**Action: Wetlands and Steep Slopes**

Despite the limited areas of wetlands and steep slopes, conservation is essential. Although development on steep slopes is technically feasible, development costs increase dramatically as the slope increases, and the environmental concerns also escalate. For example, soil erosion control and stormwater management are more difficult on steep slopes because rainfall run-off volume and velocity increase.

Measures are needed to maintain slope stability, prevent erosion, and minimize stormwater runoff.

- Strictly control site disturbance of steep slopes – tree and vegetation removal, soil

removal, grading.

- Establish design and performance criteria for buildings or structures on steep slopes including submission of detailed site, grading and drainage plans.
- Set a maximum building envelope size.
- Limit final slopes of cuts and fills to 50 percent.

Wetlands have in past times been considered wastelands, and, as a result, it is estimated that over half of all wetlands in the nation have been lost to development. Wetlands are an integral part of the environment and provide such benefits as groundwater recharge, stormwater control, surface water quality improvement and habitat for unique plant and animal species. Wetland buffer areas are necessary to ensure proper filtration of runoff prior to its entry into the wetland system.

- Prohibit disturbance of wetlands and within an established wetland buffer area.
- As part of all development applications, require detailed wetland data that identifies wetlands that are not captured by the National Wetlands Inventory.

**Dark Skies**

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA, Inc.) notes: *Today, people who live in or near cities have lost much of their view of the universe. This view is often substantially diminished even for people who live in smaller towns and rural areas. The spectacular view of the sky that our ancestors had on clear dark nights no longer exists. The great increase in the number of people living in urban areas has resulted in a rapid increase in urban sky glow due to outdoor lighting, brightening the heavens to such an extent that the only view most people have of the Milky Way or most stars is when they are well away from cities. This excess light in the sky has an adverse impact on the environment and seriously threatens to remove forever one of humanity's natural wonders - our view of the universe.*



Artist rendering of city glow effect and a dark sky site. (IDA, Inc.)

*This sky glow that adversely affects the environment and compromises astronomical research is called light pollution, for it is wasted light that does nothing to increase nighttime safety, utility, or security. Such wasted light only serves to produce glare, clutter, light trespass and light pollution and wastes energy, money, and natural resources in the process.*

*Some solutions that minimize light pollution without compromising in any way nighttime safety, security, or utility:*

- *Use night lighting only when necessary. Turn off lights when they are not needed. Timers can be very effective. Use the correct amount of light for the need, more is not better.*

- *Direct the light downward, where it is needed. The use and effective placement of well designed fixtures will achieve excellent lighting control. When possible, retrofit or replace all existing fixtures of poor quality. In all cases, the goal is to use fixtures that control the light well, minimizing glare, light trespass, light pollution, and energy usage.*
- *Use low pressure sodium (LPS) light sources whenever possible. This is the best possible light source to minimize adverse effects on astronomical activities. LPS lamps are also the most energy-efficient light sources that exist. Areas where LPS is especially good include street lighting, parking lot lighting, security lighting, and any application where color rendering is not critical.*
- *Avoid development near existing observatories, and apply rigid controls on outdoor lighting when development is unavoidable. Such controls do not compromise safety, security, or utility. Outdoor lighting ordinances and codes have been enacted by many communities to enforce quality and effective nighttime lighting.<sup>7</sup>*

**Action:**  
**Lighting and Glare**

The Borough will include in its zoning ordinance standards for the control of lighting and glare and encourage Slate Belt municipalities to do the same.

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<sup>7</sup>International Dark Sky Association, Inc., *Information Sheet #1*.

## HOUSING

### Overview

Families and individuals of all income levels reside in the Borough and need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home, individuals with disabilities and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. The Housing Plan examines the characteristics of Portland Borough's existing housing stock and provides strategies to address the housing needs of current residents and future housing issues and to accommodate anticipated growth while maintaining community character. In addition, the Housing Plan seeks to ensure that the Borough continues to provide for housing of various types and in various arrangements under the terms of the zoning ordinance.

### Municipalities Planning Code

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) addresses housing from the perspective of ensuring affordable housing for families of all income levels. In terms of planning, MPC §301 requires comprehensive plans to include an element *to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.*

In terms of land use management as effected by zoning, MPC §604 requires zoning ordinances to *provide for the use of land within the municipality for residential housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements, mobile homes and mobile home parks, provided, however, that no zoning ordinance shall be deemed invalid for the failure to provide for any other specific dwelling type.*

Court decisions have upheld this zoning provision of the MPC establishing a *fair share* rule which considers the percentages of land available for a given type of housing, current population growth and pressures within the municipality and surrounding region, and the amount of undeveloped land in a community. The Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development publication titled, *Reducing Land Use Barriers to Affordable Housing, Fourth Edition, August 2001*, lists a number of barriers to affordable housing associated with land use regulations, including among others:

- insufficient amount of land zoned for medium and high density residential development
- excessive lot frontage and setback requirements which dictate greater lot sizes
- excessive street widths and construction standards unrelated to expected traffic volumes
- lack of provisions for cluster design and planned residential development
- limitations on the use of mobile homes and manufactured homes

- plan review and administrative delays

### Fair Housing Act

*The (federal) Fair Housing Act prohibits a broad range of practices that discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, and disability. The Act does not pre-empt local zoning laws. However, the Act applies to municipalities and other local government entities and prohibits them from making zoning or land use decisions or implementing land use policies that exclude or otherwise discriminate against protected persons, including individuals with disabilities.*

*The Fair Housing Act makes it unlawful . . .*

- *To utilize land use policies or actions that treat groups of persons with disabilities less favorably than groups of non-disabled persons. An example would be an ordinance prohibiting housing for persons with disabilities or a specific type of disability, such as mental illness, from locating in a particular area, while allowing other groups of unrelated individuals to live together in that area.*
- *To take action against, or deny a permit, for a home because of the disability of individuals who live or would live there. An example would be denying a building permit for a home because it was intended to provide housing for persons with mental retardation.*
- *To refuse to make reasonable accommodations in land use and zoning policies and procedures where such accommodations may be necessary to afford persons or groups of persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy housing.<sup>1</sup>*

### Portland Zoning

The Portland Borough zoning ordinance . . .

- Requires a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet for single-family ( 2.9 units per acre) and two-family dwellings ( 5.8 units per acre) in the Low Density Residential District (§544.1) and the Medium Density Residential District. (§554.1)
- Allows multi-family dwellings on sites of four acres or more in the Low Density Residential District at a density of 7,500 square feet per dwelling unit or 5.8 units per acre. (§544.1)
- Allows multi-family dwellings on sites of two acres or more in the Medium Density Residential District at a density of 5,000 square feet per dwelling unit or 8.7 units per acre.. (§554.1)
- Allows apartments in the Business District with no minimum parcel size and no density limitation. (§641.8 and §644)
- Prohibits mobile homes and *sectional ranch houses* (manufactured homes). (§711.9)
- Does not specifically address group homes, but does not exclude such households from the definition of dwelling unit. (§325)

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<sup>1</sup>[www.justice.gov/crt](http://www.justice.gov/crt)

- The definition of *family* is inclusive of persons with disabilities living as a single household. (§326)

The real issue affecting higher density residential development was the lack of central sewage disposal. Now with central sewage and central water available, the zoning ordinance provides ample opportunity for multi-family housing development at relatively high density. The multi-family density in the Medium Density District is at the low end of that recommended by *An Affordable Housing Assessment of the Lehigh Valley, 2007*, but the Business District sets no density limitation and multi-family is allowed in the Low Density Residential District in contrast to many such districts which prohibit multi-family dwellings. Single-family and two-family densities fall somewhat below the *Assessment* recommendations. However, the ordinance is clearly defective with its prohibition of mobile homes and *sectional ranch houses*. The ordinance does not contain provisions *that treat groups of persons with disabilities less favorably than groups of non-disabled persons*, but should include specific inclusive provisions.

**An Affordable Housing Assessment of the Lehigh Valley, 2007, Figure 7-2.**

Land Use Category	Recommended Densities (Dwelling units per acre)
<i>Urban Development</i>	With public utilities: Single family detached: 4-7 Twins: 6-12 Townhouses, condominiums: 8-15 Apartments: 8-50 Planned residential development: 4-12 No separate standard for non-residential uses
	With on-lot utilities: 1 unit per acre (maximum)
<i>Rural Development</i>	1 unit per acre (maximum) preferably using conservation design practices
<i>Farmland Preservation</i>	Housing related to agriculture: 1 unit per acre (maximum)
	Housing not related to agriculture: Minimum lot size 30,000 square feet with no more than 10% of tract in non-agricultural use
<i>Natural Resources</i>	Steep slope areas with public utilities: 1 unit per acre (maximum)
	Steep slope areas with on-lot utilities: 1 unit per 3 acres
	Very steep slope areas, floodplain areas, and other high priority natural areas: No development permitted

**Housing Affordability**

Municipalities throughout the country have been addressing housing issues for many years. *Pennsylvania Housing*, a 1988 study conducted by the Pennsylvania Housing Financing Agency, defined *affordable* as requiring less than thirty percent of gross monthly income for rent or less than twenty-eight percent for a mortgage and other related housing costs. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines continue to define *affordable housing* as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income and the U.S. Census provides this information. (See also the *Affordable Housing Study Sidebar*.)

**Affordable Housing Study**

The Summer 2000 *Affordable Housing Study* for Jacksonville, Florida provides a good description of how affordable housing is assessed. *The American Dream* has long been associated with the possibility of owning one's home. National housing-market surveys report that the home ownership rate reached a peak in the late 1990s—almost sixty-seven percent in 1999—due mainly to a robust economy with record levels of low unemployment and low interest rates. However, while this unprecedented economic expansion enabled many Americans to purchase their own homes, it has pushed housing prices and rental rates higher, preventing many other households, with insufficient incomes, from either becoming homeowners or finding affordable, safe, and decent rental housing. Housing affordability is a relative concept—both rich and poor can experience difficulty in affording housing, depending on how much they spend toward housing costs. Housing in one community with a relatively high median income can be quite expensive but affordable compared to housing in another community with a relatively low median income.

Federal governmental guidelines, primarily those established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), define affordable housing as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income—referred to here as the 30 percent rule. The income counted is derived from all wages earned by people fifteen and older in the household. For homeowners, affordability is generally defined as owning a house with a value equal to slightly more than twice the household's annual income. The homeowner costs counted typically include a mortgage payment (principal, interest, taxes, and insurance) and utilities. For renters, the costs usually include contract rent and utilities. The 30 percent rule leaves seventy percent for food, clothing, health care, child care, transportation to work, and other basic expenses. Because of increasing housing costs, many lower income Americans are forced to make tradeoffs and go without necessities. Tenants experiencing unexpected emergencies typically fall behind in their rent and face eviction. If not assisted, they may become homeless.

**Housing Units**

As discussed in detail in the Demographics section, the number of housing units in the Borough has changed little over the past 30 years and was county at 244 in 2010. Other housing characteristics related to affordability are discussed below.

<b>AGE OF HOUSING</b>						
<b>2007-11 American Community Survey, U. S. Census</b>						
<b>Year Constructed</b>	<b>Portland</b>		<b>Slate Belt</b>		<b>Northampton Co.</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
1939 or earlier	151	69.0%	5,976	39.3%	34,690	28.9%
1940 to 1949	0	0.0%	911	6.0%	7,112	5.9%
1950 to 1959	14	6.4%	1,588	10.5%	13,831	11.5%
1960 to 1969	12	5.5%	1,037	6.8%	10,518	8.8%
1970 to 1979	22	10.0%	1,775	11.7%	12,960	10.8%
1980 to 1989	5	2.3%	1,797	11.8%	13,252	11.1%
1990 to 1999	15	6.8%	1,221	8.0%	13,063	10.9%
2000 to 2004	0	0.0%	593	3.9%	9,161	7.6%
2005 to 2011	0	0.0%	291	1.9%	5,264	4.4%
Total units	219	100.0%	15,189	100.0%	119,851	100.0%

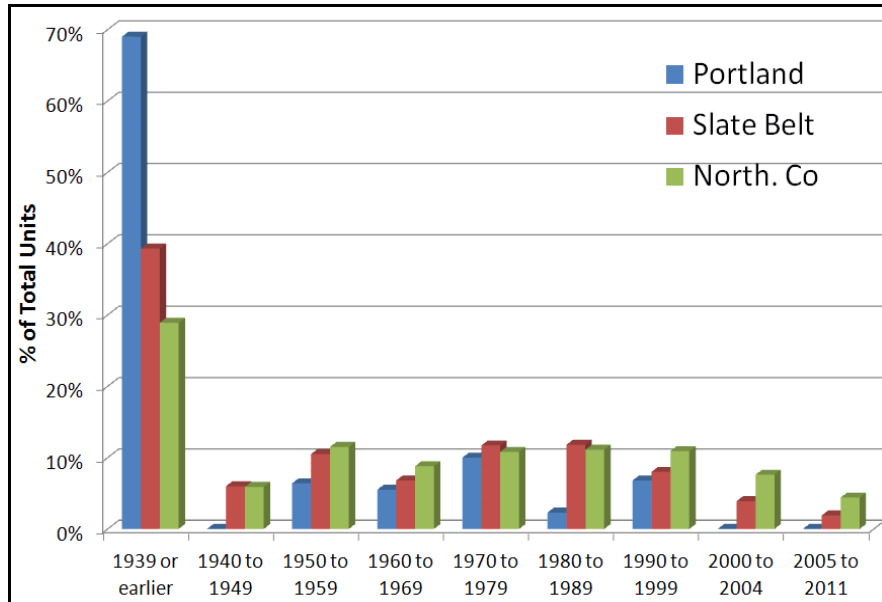
**Age/Condition**

Portland Borough's housing stock is considerably older than in the Slate Belt and the County, with almost 70% of units constructed before 1940. As would be expected, the other Slate Belt Boroughs also have an older housing stock and the age of the overall Slate belt stock is moderated by the more recent housing construction in the Townships. Although the housing stock is quite old, the condition of most housing units in the Borough is good with no areas of any concentration of conditions which could be considered blight. In some cases, the age of a home may deter a buyer because the condition and continued maintenance of an older home make affect future value and resale.

In addition, if the number of nonresident landlords increases delayed maintenance and deterioration of the housing stock may become more of a problem. As the population ages and home owners move to other living arrangements or die, more absentee landowners can be expected to purchase homes for rental units. This, combined with the relatively high age of the housing stock could easily lead to deterioration in condition.



**Age of Housing**



**American Community Survey:** After the 2000 Census, the Census long form became the American Community Survey which collects long-form-type information throughout the decade. The ACS includes the basic short-form questions and detailed questions about population and housing. ACS is a nationwide, continuous survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, housing, social, and economic data every year.

**Tenure and Median Rent**

The rate of home ownership in Portland, the Slate belt and the County has remained fairly stable since 1990. The proportion of homeowners in the Slate Belt Townships is consistently higher than in the Boroughs. As discussed in a following section, housing value in the Boroughs, and particularly in Portland, is lower than in the Townships which should be reflected in lower rents. However, median rent in Portland, which rose from \$747 in 2000 to \$875 in 2011 when adjusted for inflation, is higher than most other Slate Belt municipalities and the County as a whole.

TENURE							
U. S. Census							
Community	Owners			Renters			Median Gross Rent 2007-11 ACS*
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	
Percent of Total Households							
Portland	69.3%	61.0%	64.1%	30.7%	39.0%	35.9%	\$875
Bangor	60.5%	59.3%	59.3%	39.5%	40.7%	40.7%	\$732
East Bangor	74.5%	72.1%	64.4%	25.5%	27.9%	35.6%	\$925
Lower Mount Bethel	81.9%	81.6%	82.1%	18.1%	18.4%	17.9%	\$747
Pen Argyl	68.0%	66.8%	65.8%	32.0%	33.2%	34.2%	\$842
Plainfield	85.8%	85.6%	83.7%	14.2%	14.4%	16.3%	\$934
Roseto	75.6%	74.2%	73.2%	24.4%	25.8%	26.8%	\$689
Upper Mount Bethel	82.8%	80.9%	82.7%	17.2%	19.1%	17.3%	\$876
Washington	79.7%	81.0%	83.7%	20.3%	19.0%	16.3%	\$711
Wind Gap	56.7%	55.8%	48.7%	43.3%	44.2%	51.3%	\$802
Slate Belt	74.2%	73.6%	73.6%	25.8%	26.4%	26.4%	not avail.
Bethlehem City	61.0%	58.1%	53.6%	39.0%	41.9%	46.4%	not avail.
Easton City	52.1%	48.5%	46.5%	47.9%	51.5%	53.5%	\$841
Northampton County	73.6%	73.3%	72.8%	26.4%	26.7%	27.2%	\$862

\*2007-11 American Community Survey, U.S. Census



**Vacancy**

The number and proportion of vacant housing units in the Borough and the Slate Belt Area decreased and then increased again over the last 30 years. Vacant units include those for sale or rent and sold or rented, but not occupied; and units for seasonal, recreational or occasional use, with only one such unit reported in the Borough in 2010. The homeowner vacancy rate<sup>2</sup> increased from 0.7 in 2000 to 1.4% in 2010 and the rental vacancy rate<sup>3</sup> increased from 4.2% to 14.9%.

VACANT HOUSING UNITS (U. S. Census)								
Year	Portland				Slate Belt			
	Pop.	Housing Units		Percent Vacant	Pop.	Housing Units		Percent Vacant
		Total	Vacant			Total	Vacant	
1980	540	248	31	12.5%	29,054	11,355	785	6.9%
1990	516	235	23	9.8%	32,559	13,091	707	5.4%
2000	579	247	11	4.5%	34,068	14,165	832	5.9%
2010	519	244	21	8.6%	35,913	15,184	1,116	7.2%

**Type of Housing Units**

Almost 60% of the housing units in Portland are single-family dwellings, somewhat lower than the Slate Belt area but on par with the County. The proportion of apartments in the Borough is substantially higher than most other Slate Belt communities, but in terms of numbers Portland’s 59 apartment units is the lowest in all of the Slate Belt. Multi-family dwellings are typically rentals and often provide a more affordable type of housing. Mobile homes, often more affordable, accounted for only a small proportion of dwelling units in the Borough, which may be evidence of the zoning prohibition.

TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS							
2007-11 American Community Survey, U. S. Census							
Community	Total Units	Percent of Total Structures					Number of Apart's
		single-family	duplex or townhouse	apartment 2-9 units	apartment 10+ units	mobile home	
Portland	219	59.4%	11.0%	26.9%	0.0%	2.7%	59
Bangor	2,299	48.5%	26.4%	19.0%	6.1%	0.0%	577
East Bangor	471	71.3%	7.4%	15.3%	0.0%	5.9%	72
Lower Mount Bethel	1,389	85.8%	2.2%	5.7%	0.0%	6.3%	79
Pen Argyl	1,501	46.2%	36.6%	13.7%	2.4%	1.0%	242
Plainfield	2,366	80.7%	9.0%	5.0%	0.0%	5.3%	118
Roseto	733	76.8%	5.7%	12.4%	2.3%	2.7%	108
Upper Mount Bethel	2,888	80.9%	2.9%	1.1%	1.2%	13.9%	66
Washington	2,025	81.3%	3.9%	6.0%	4.0%	4.8%	203
Wind Gap	1,298	50.2%	24.9%	13.7%	8.9%	2.3%	293
Slate Belt	15,189	69.6%	13.1%	9.2%	2.8%	5.3%	1,823
Bethlehem City	31,290	36.7%	29.9%	20.7%	12.6%	0.1%	10,420
Easton City	10,918	26.8%	35.2%	28.0%	10.0%	0.0%	4,149
Northampton County	119,851	58.7%	21.1%	11.8%	5.7%	2.7%	20,974

<sup>2</sup>The proportion of the homeowner inventory that is vacant *for sale*.

<sup>3</sup>The proportion of the rental inventory that is vacant *for rent*.

**Housing Value**

Housing values are largely dependent on demand, location, lot size and the type, age and condition of the unit. As reported by ACS, median and average housing value in Portland was higher than the other Boroughs in the Slate Belt and just somewhat lower than the County. In 2011 dollars, median housing value in the Borough increased from \$165,640 to \$199,000 between 2000 and 2011. Comparing housing value to household income provides a measure of housing affordability. (See the following housing affordability discussion.) While high values are positive in terms of housing condition and real estate tax revenue, it may indicate the need to evaluate the affordability of housing for younger couples and older residents.

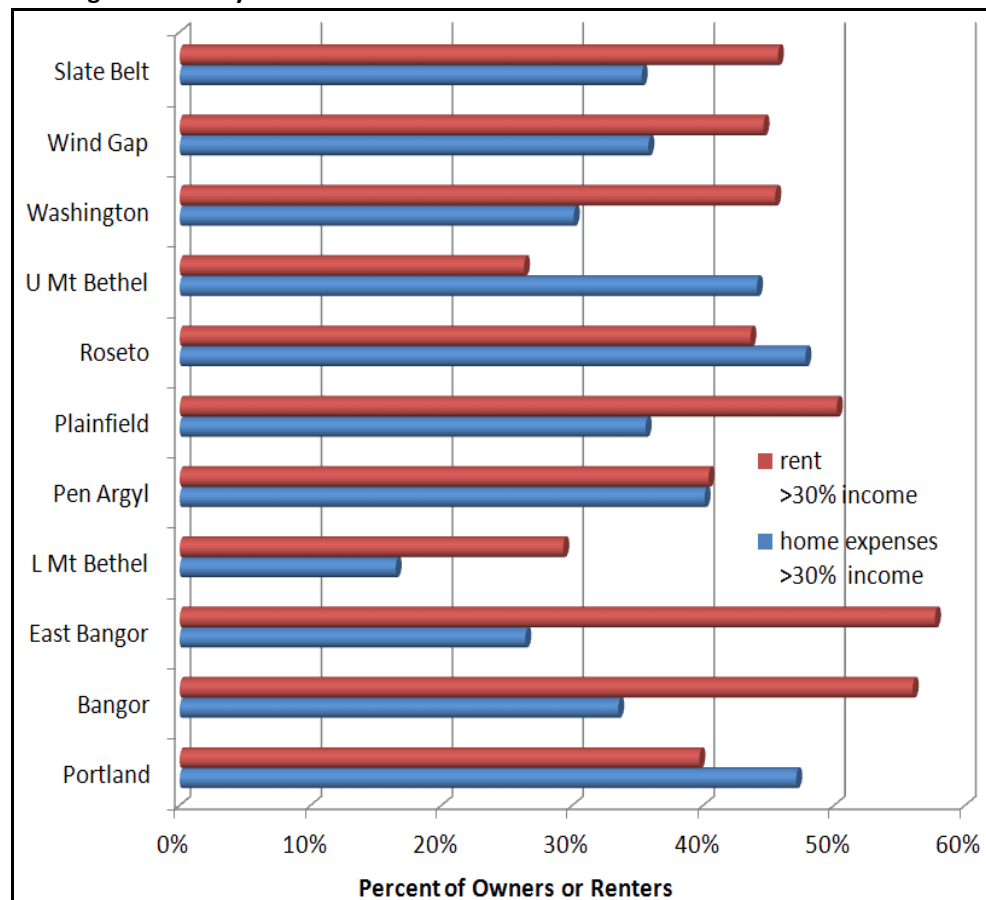
OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE								
2007-11 American Community Survey, U. S. Census								
	Portland		Bangor	East Bangor	Lower Mt Bethel	Pen Argyl	Plain-field	Roseto
# owner occupied units	119		1,407	352	1,080	900	1,970	540
less than \$50,000	3	2.5%	8.0%	6.5%	5.5%	1.9%	3.6%	2.2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	25	21.0%	7.7%	8.8%	7.9%	16.7%	5.5%	10.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2	1.7%	29.5%	22.4%	6.9%	28.7%	10.4%	18.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	30	25.2%	30.3%	40.1%	17.1%	17.2%	9.1%	28.3%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	42	35.3%	20.5%	16.8%	41.5%	21.9%	39.2%	30.0%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	5	4.2%	4.0%	5.4%	18.7%	12.9%	26.0%	11.1%
\$500,000 +	12	10.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.8%	6.3%	0.0%
median value	\$199,100		\$159,300	\$160,660	\$231,300	\$164,200	\$241,500	\$180,000
average value	\$226,555		\$163,662	\$161,896	\$250,074	\$189,717	\$285,462	\$196,963
	Upper Mt Bethel	Washington	Wind Gap	Slate Belt		Beth. City	Easton City	Northam. County
# owner occupied units	2,341	1,569	695	10,937		15,898	4,831	83,858
less than \$50,000	5.9%	2.7%	2.2%	4.5%		2.9%	3.3%	3.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	10.6%	4.8%	5.8%	8.4%		9.0%	23.3%	6.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	6.7%	9.1%	21.9%	14.4%		21.6%	28.0%	13.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	19.4%	17.0%	41.7%	20.8%		26.9%	22.5%	19.1%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	24.0%	26.8%	25.6%	28.5%		28.0%	12.8%	31.6%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	25.1%	34.4%	2.9%	19.3%		9.0%	7.7%	21.6%
\$500,000 +	8.4%	5.4%	0.0%	4.1%		2.6%	2.4%	4.8%
median value	\$230,400	\$259,500	\$171,200	not avail.		not avail.	\$141,400	\$221,800
average value	\$272,832	\$302,278	\$178,975	\$242,580		\$202,593	\$176,428	\$251,601

**Housing Affordability**

Housing affordability is a complex issue related to the unique mix of the housing types, real estate demand, housing values, and household incomes in the community. A substantial proportion of home owning households and renting households in Portland and all of the Slate Belt have housing costs which exceed the thirty percent rule for household income and housing expense indicating a housing affordability problem. In fact, Portland Borough had the second highest proportion of homeowner households with an affordability issue. (See the preceding *Affordable Housing Study Sidebar*.)

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY								
2007-11 American Community Survey, U. S. Census								
Community	Median Hsehold Income	Owner Households			Renter Households			Median Gross Rent
		# with positive income	home expenses >30% of income		# paying rent	rent >30% of Income		
			#	%		#	%	
Portland	\$39,625	119	56	47.1%	68	27	39.7%	\$875
Bangor	\$51,507	1,407	471	33.5%	718	402	56.0%	\$732
East Bangor	\$61,250	352	93	26.4%	97	56	57.7%	\$925
Lower Mount Bethel	\$64,672	1,080	178	16.5%	116	34	29.3%	\$747
Pen Argyl	\$50,156	900	361	40.1%	485	196	40.4%	\$842
Plainfield	\$65,870	1,970	701	35.6%	259	130	50.2%	\$934
Roseto	\$51,250	540	258	47.8%	133	58	43.6%	\$689
Upper Mount Bethel	\$60,065	2,341	1,033	44.1%	198	52	26.3%	\$876
Washington	\$61,750	1,569	473	30.1%	242	110	45.5%	\$711
Wind Gap	\$48,238	695	249	35.8%	498	222	44.6%	\$802
Slate Belt	not avail.	10,973	3,873	35.3%	2,814	1,287	45.7%	not avail.
Bethlehem City	not avail.	15,821	4,772	30.2%	12,934	6,673	51.6%	not avail.
Easton City	\$39,488	4,800	1,990	41.5%	4,398	2,184	49.7%	\$841
Northampton County	\$60,540	83,598	25,674	30.7%	26,441	12,797	48.4%	\$862

Housing Affordability



## PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

**Affordability**  
**- A Regional Issue**

The percentage of cost burdened homeowners and renters in the Planning Area is high. However, the type and price of housing available in any municipality is largely market driven and beyond a municipality's direct control. Local municipalities must recognize that housing needs cannot be addressed entirely at the local level. In fact, with the exception of ensuring that land use and building regulations are reasonable in terms of affecting costs, small municipalities can do little to manage housing affordability which is so dependent on regional economic and real estate market factors. In addition, municipalities can take steps to encourage innovative forms of housing that meet the community's needs and satisfy the market; age restricted housing is a good example.

**Affordable Housing**  
**Assessment**

Recognizing the regional nature of affordable housing, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission completed in 2007 *An Affordable Housing Assessment of the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania* which notes that *the primary issue confronting the Lehigh Valley is how to create affordable housing opportunities for households with lower incomes. Many of these households include hard-working people who provide for their families and others, but cannot afford market rate housing, whether they are renters or home owners looking to move. The challenges facing these households are numerous.*

The *Assessment* includes many recommendations for county action and those related to Portland Borough actions include:

- *Develop a model inclusionary housing ordinance. (Lehigh Valley Planning Commission; Lehigh County) The ordinance, developed by LVPC, could provide financial and other incentives to developers in exchange for the provision of a percentage of housing units set aside for households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income.*

*For an inclusionary ordinance to be effective, there must be specific incentives offered in exchange for specific measures to be undertaken by a developer. For example, the ordinance might require a developer to set aside at least 5% of all single family housing units in a project to be sold for no more than \$135,000 each. For a multi-family development plan consisting of a minimum number of units, a specified percentage of the units (usually 5% to 10%) would be required to be set aside for households under a specified income threshold.*

*In exchange for providing the required set asides, a developer would be awarded one or more of the following incentives:*

- *Impact fee waivers or reductions*
- *Planning fee waivers or reductions*
- *Streamlined and priority*
- *Density bonuses, and*
- *Local funding to assist with the construction of the housing units made affordable to households at or below 80% of the area median income.*

*A specific inclusionary housing ordinance would need to be developed for each county. The percentages and dollar amounts used here are presented as examples*

only.

- Encourage municipal officials to revise their local zoning ordinances to reflect more opportunities for affordable housing development. (Lehigh Valley Planning Commission) Using cost-benefit analyses, illustrate how multifamily housing and clustered single family developments can be more cost effective to local elected officials. Encourage local units of government to revise their ordinances to reflect housing densities that are consistent with the Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan. Other development standards that encourage affordable housing include:
  - The provision of density bonuses to developers who agree to build affordable housing.
  - The requirement that affordable housing units, built as part of a market rate subdivision, be scattered throughout the development and indistinguishable from market rate units.
  - Reductions in building setbacks and height requirements.
  - The requirement that for every 25 market rate housing units developed in a project, at least 5% of the units to be developed must be affordable to households with incomes of 80% of the area median income or less. (In 2006, this was equivalent to \$52,720 for a family of four.)
  - Expedited review and permitting processes for projects including affordable housing units.
- Provide relief from impact fees to developers who build affordable housing units. (Municipalities) Developers of market-rate housing should be assessed the full impact fee amount, but developers who create new affordable housing units should be given relief from these assessments.
- Encourage participation with the region's housing and redevelopment authorities. The local housing authorities and redevelopment authorities bring a vast amount of development and management experience to the table. They understand the region's affordable housing needs and they control resources to address these needs. They may also have access or knowledge of available sites for acquisition. Furthermore, municipal officials should also be encouraged to share information about vacant and distressed properties which may lend themselves to an adaptive re-use.

### Housing Programs

The Boroughs and Township must look to the Northampton County Housing Authority and their contacts with private affordable housing providers to meet the specific housing needs of lower income residents. Housing Authority assistance is necessary to ensure resident access to publically funded housing development, rent assistance and housing rehabilitation programs. Assisted housing is available in buildings owned by the Northampton County Housing Authority, in privately-owned buildings the construction of which was subsidized with federal funds, and with Section 8 tenant based voucher which are accepted by participating landlords. Assisted housing in the Borough currently includes only one Section 8 unit.

**Housing in the Lehigh Valley, 2008 - Lehigh Valley Planning Commission  
Affordability, P. ii**

- Many parts of the Lehigh Valley remain unaffordable to families earning below the household median income (\$54,496).
- The three cities and most boroughs are affordable to families earning below the median income.
- The income needed to purchase a median priced home in the Lehigh Valley was \$53,100. In Lehigh County, an income of \$50,311 would make the median priced home affordable; in Northampton County it would take an income of \$56,948.
- New construction in the Lehigh Valley is unaffordable for families earning less than 155% of the household median income. However, existing construction is affordable to families earning at least 90% of median.
- Attached housing is more affordable than detached. A family earning \$37,300 could afford to buy the region’s median priced attached home; it would take an income of \$59,959 to buy the median detached home.
- Although attached housing is the affordable option for families earning less than the median income, many municipalities’ attached housing is still unaffordable. In Forks, Bethlehem, South Whitehall and Upper Milford Townships, an income greater than \$65,800 would be needed to purchase the median priced attached home. In many other municipalities, attached housing was not sold at all in 2008.
- Workers in some of the region’s key job categories—retail salesperson, janitor and packaging worker—do not make enough to afford the median home—attached or detached—in any municipality in Lehigh or Northampton Counties.
- Nurses, Police Officers and Elementary School Teachers do have enough income to affordably purchase the median home in the three cities and many boroughs. However, detached housing is out of reach of these workers in most municipalities—only West Easton Borough and the City of Easton are affordable for nurses, for example.

**FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES**

**Overview**

Future planning and policy recommendations pertaining to housing are intended to ensure that the Borough accommodates a diverse and affordable mix of housing types and maintains a sound housing stock.

**Policies**

- Promote housing opportunities for a range of income groups, including those able to pay market rent or sales prices, *workforce* income families (80% median family income), very low- and low-income families (less than 50% median family income), as well as special needs residents.
- Promote mixed-use development that would accommodate various dwelling types in proximity to commercial and civic services.
- Encourage multi-family dwellings on the upper floors of commercial establishments provided adequate parking is available.
- Provide for a variety of housing types, including single-family attached and multi-family dwellings and mobile home parks, in order to accommodate individuals and families of various income levels.

- Review land use controls in terms of standards not directly linked to public health and safety which increase housing costs.
- Provide for age-restricted housing in proximity to services to accommodate seniors.
- Investigate ways to bring relief to cost burdened households (owner and renters).
- Permit a mix of lot sizes within residential developments to encourage diversity of housing structures and styles.
- Encourage rehabilitation of substandard housing.
- Cooperate with area municipalities and the County to plan for housing needs regionally and as housing needs are identified consider the development of joint housing plans with neighboring municipalities.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

**Overview**

Implementation of the housing plan proposes actions aimed at supporting existing residents, accommodating future housing needs, and providing a variety of housing types and affordability levels. Housing goals can be accomplished through the following initiatives.

**Zoning Ordinance and SALDO**

Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance provisions intended to implement the policies and recommendations:

Zoning

- Include provisions to encourage the use of cottage housing development and provide incentives such as density bonuses as a means of providing more affordable housing at densities higher than standard subdivisions.
- Provide density or design incentives for developers who provide affordable, workforce, and/or age restricted housing.
- Continue to allow multi-family housing in the Low Density Residential District, but consider reducing the minimum parcel size from four acres to two acres.

<p><b>Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Model Ordinances</b> (<a href="http://www.lvpc.org">www.lvpc.org</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cottage Housing Development</li> <li>- Inclusionary Zoning</li> <li>- Better Densities, Better Communities</li> <li>- Density Bonuses/Minimum Density</li> <li>- Mixed Uses</li> </ul>
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- Eliminate the two-acre minimum parcel size for multi-family dwellings in the Medium Density Residential District and increase density.
- Reduce the minimum parcel size for single-family and two-family dwellings in the Medium Density Residential District.
- Continue to encourage dwellings over businesses in the Business District by retaining the provision that sets no density limitation.

- Include specific provisions to ensure groups of persons with disabilities are treated the same as groups of non-disabled persons such as allowing group homes in the same zoning districts as single-family dwellings.
- While allowing higher residential density, continue to apply setback, building height, parking and other standards critical to public health, safety and welfare.
- Eliminate the prohibition of mobile homes and *sectional ranch houses* (manufactured homes), include standards for mobile homes on individual lots, and provide for mobile home parks.

#### Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

- Make road width and other construction standards in the SALDO reasonable in terms of meeting safety and durability requirements without adding unnecessary costs to housing.
- Include updated standards for mobile home parks.

#### **Housing Programs**

Support the housing programs and recommendations of the County Housing Authority relative to subsidized housing programs for low and moderate income families and ensure area residents receive fair consideration for available programs. In addition, encourage the County Housing Authority to take the lead to develop innovative housing actions identified in recent Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Envision Lehigh Valley and other studies.

#### **Property Maintenance**

Continue the application of the property maintenance code with reasonable public health, safety and welfare standards to ensure the structural integrity of dwellings, prevent dilapidation and preclude negative effects on the community. Support this with an ordinance to regulate nuisances and safety hazards associated with dilapidated and dangerous structures.



**TRANSPORTATION****Transportation  
and Land Use**

*Transportation and land use need to be considered together for Pennsylvania municipalities to achieve quality of life objectives for their communities. Transportation systems serve communities in various ways: the regional transportation system provides the mobility to travel throughout the region quickly, whereas the local network provides travelers access to the places that they want to go—home, work, school, shopping, appointments, activities, etc. Pennsylvania municipalities should consider how their transportation system meets both the mobility and accessibility needs of the community. Concurrently, municipal land use policies help shape and rearrange the origins and destinations of travel and can either support or hinder mobility and accessibility. Transportation operates most efficiently when it provides a connected network of transportation modes serving a mix of land uses in close proximity. This type of system provides the traveler with a host of options and makes it possible to make fewer, shorter trips and be less dependent on a personal automobile.*

*A variety, or mix, of land uses, and an increase in land use densities, can lead to shorter trip distances, a better blend of jobs and housing within a community, and an increase in the use of alternative modes of transportation (walking, biking, transit) because different destinations are closer together. A corner store within walking distance of one's home, for example, means that picking up a bottle of milk can be pleasant exercise rather than requiring another trip to the supermarket by car. Also, by providing a range of transportation choices beyond the automobile, individuals who do not drive are provided with new travel opportunities, and congestion and pollution can be eased. By contrast, separating land use types and/or reducing densities can increase the dependency on motorized transportation, thereby increasing congestion and/or the demand for additional roadways.*

*Thus, the design of Pennsylvania communities can either encourage or discourage the range of transportation options. Thoughtful and functional land use and transportation design (i.e., streetscapes, roadway design, traffic calming, and the connection of commercial and residential developments) can provide a safer environment for travel and encourage the development of healthy communities that appeal to all citizens including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Where applicable, roadways should be designed to be Complete Streets to accommodate vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, the disabled, and transit by providing travel lanes, sidewalks, bike lanes, wider shoulders, raised crosswalks and medians, audible traffic signals, bus pullouts, and improved access to bus stops. The design of communities can also encourage the use of transit through compact, mixed-use development surrounding a transit station. Transit-oriented developments (TODs) may be appropriate for growing municipalities aiming to reduce the need for more highways in favor of broader transit use. Through careful planning, TODs can also be effective in connecting to existing and planned infrastructure, and linking different transportation modes to one another to form one complete system. In more rural municipalities, community design may include land use controls such as agricultural preservation to focus new development in targeted growth*

*areas and lessen the demands on the overall transportation system.<sup>1</sup>*

**Transportation  
in Rural Municipalities**

Certainly, an ideally sound transportation system would include adequate, safe and well maintained roads and bridges, available public transportation, safe and convenient pedestrian access, and bicycle routes. However, few communities are able to achieve this ideal level of service. This is particularly true in small, less populated communities with limited budgets in a time when local, state and federal resources are less robust. In the end, local municipalities must evaluate transportation needs, set priorities, and garner all available resources to make improvements. These decisions must be made in the overall context of the Comprehensive Plan. Key elements that will influence the Transportation Plan include the Land Use Plan, the Community Facilities Plan and the Open Space/Recreation Plan.

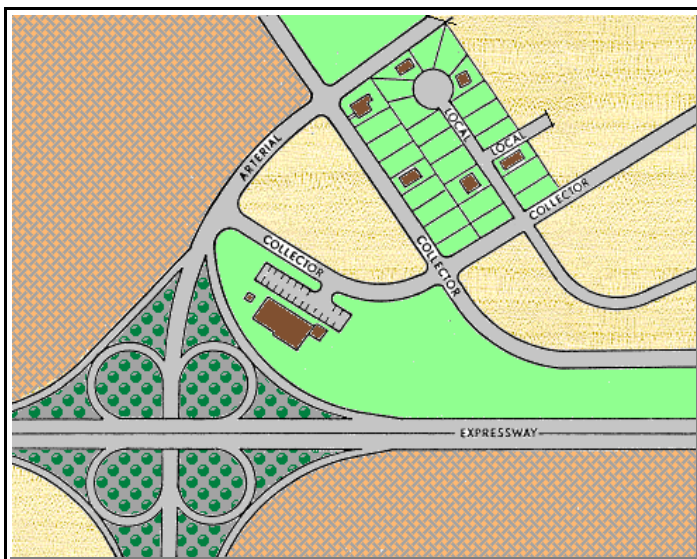
**Access - Mobility**

Each highway, road or street in a community plays a specific role for the movement of traffic and it is useful for planning purposes to classify roads according to the particular function each serves. In general terms, the functional classification of a road is based largely on two factors -- access and mobility -- and typically, as access declines mobility increases. For example, Interstate Route 80 clearly serves a different function than does a street in a Borough or a residential subdivision. Although the I-80 and local street example compares streets at the opposite ends of the road classification hierarchy, it clearly depicts the relationship between access and mobility. Traffic on a limited access highway travels over long distances at high rates of speed. On the other hand, traffic using a residential street with unlimited access from individual properties moves at minimum speeds to reach roads that connect the residential community with other areas in the Borough and the region at large.

**Highway  
Classification Factors**

As previously noted, access, how traffic enters the traffic stream, and mobility, the physical capability of the road to carry traffic, are the key determinants of a road's functional classification. However, several other road and network characteristics also

affect the functional classification of a road. Traffic volume in relationship to the physical design of the road, including lane and shoulder width, right-of-way alignment and surface treatment, is important to its classification. Generally, as a community develops, roads are improved to meet the increased traffic demands, with specific routes moving higher in the functional classification as they are improved.



Highway Functional Classification

However, in areas of rapid growth and associated traffic increases, the amount of traffic carried by specific roads may increase to the point of exceeding the road's capacity. The road, in terms of traffic, may be serving as an arterial route, but may not have been physically upgraded from a minor collector or local road. In urban areas, mass transit and non-capital approaches such as ride sharing and

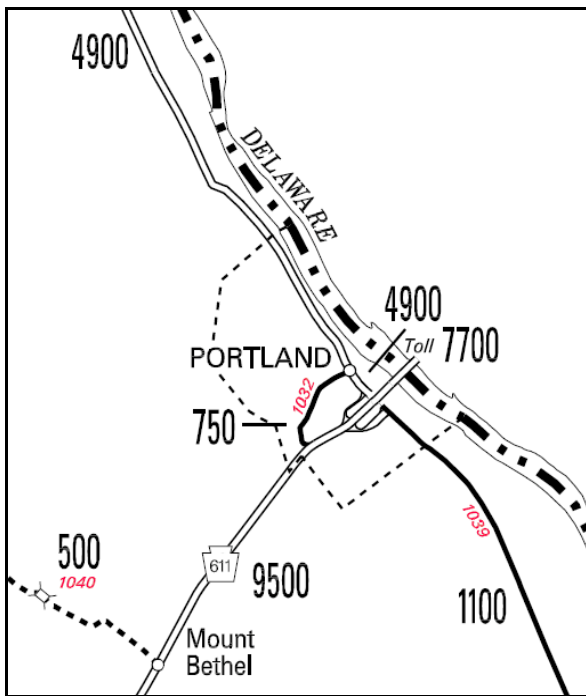
<sup>1</sup>*Integrating Transportation and Land Use - A Handbook for Pennsylvania Municipalities*, PennDOT Publication 688, December 2009, p. 5.

staggered work hours are promoted as a means of reducing traffic congestion as an alternative to upgrading roads. In a community such as Portland Borough, where much of the traffic is to travel to work to distant employment centers, such solutions are impractical. A road's location and relationship to other roads in the intra- community and inter-regional highway network may also help define the road's classification.

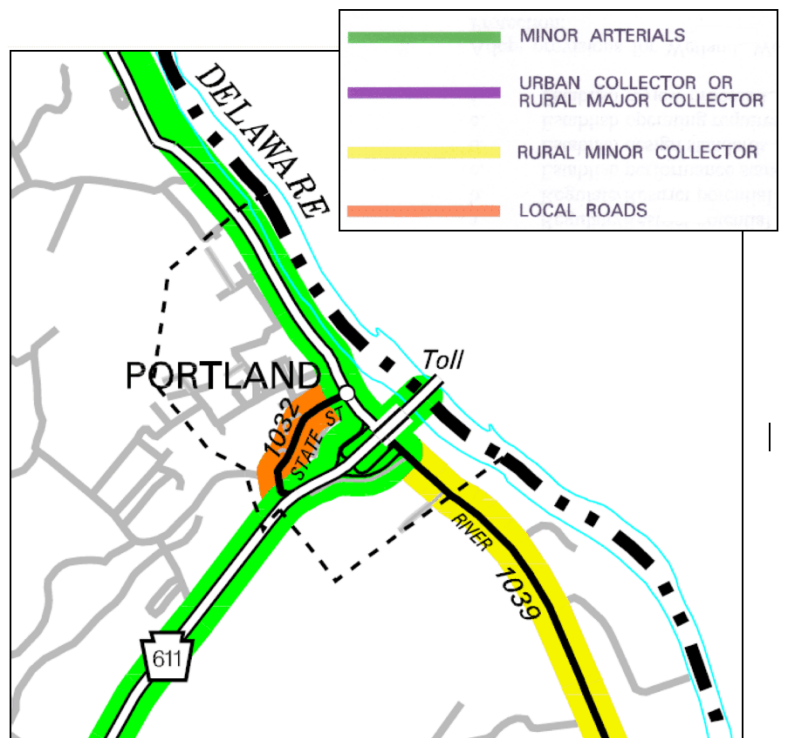
Those roads which provide direct and convenient connection to arterial routes and expressways typically develop into roads which carry increasing amounts of traffic. Conversely, interchanges for expressways are normally located to provide connection with those roads in a community which historically have developed into arterials and collectors. Traffic flow problems and declines in level-of-service on routes connecting areas of the municipalities and routes providing access to the region are directly related to the capacity of collector and arterial roads. As traffic increases on the collectors and arterials, where access to abutting properties has historically not been limited to any significant degree, increasing traffic congestion can be expected. Also resulting from such access by adjoining residential and commercial properties and intersecting streets are the safety problems associated with increased congestion.

**Functional Classification and Federal Aid Status** *All roadways in Pennsylvania are categorized by “functional classification,” a system developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Design guidelines are customized by AASHTO to meet the demands common to each category. The AASHTO categories are as follows:*

1. Principal Arterial, 2. Minor Arterial, 3. Collector (Minor and Major in Rural Areas), and 4. Local.



2011 Average Annual Daily Traffic (PennDOT)



Functional Classification of PennDOT Roads (PennDOT)

*Roadway functional classification is significant not only for design standards, but it can also be used to determine the eligibility of transportation facilities for federal financial aid. All rural roadways functionally classified in the AASHTO system as higher than a minor collector, and all urban roadways classified as higher than a local roadway, are eligible for federal aid.<sup>2</sup>*

In addition, functional classification may be used by local municipalities to direct higher density (e.g., multi-family housing) or higher intensity (e.g., big-box retail) to areas which are served by roads with adequate capacity. The zoning ordinance can require such uses to be located on arterial roads as identified in the municipal comprehensive plan.

A description of the functional classification of state-owned roads in Portland as classified by PennDOT follows. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) is also from PennDOT for 2011.



Route 611 (arterial) Approaching Bridge to Columbia, NJ

**Expressway**

- Provides interregional and interstate connections.
- Designed for unrestricted, high speed (55+ mph) mobility of
- Limited access only - no direct access from private property.
- Provides highest level of mobility.
- Intersects selected arterial or collector routes with interchanges.
- Carries highest volumes of automobile and truck traffic with longer trip lengths.

Borough residents have easy access to Interstate Route 80, the closest expressway, through New Jersey via Route 94 and in Delaware Water Gap via Route 611 just to the north.



Route 611 (arterial) and State Street (local)

**Arterial Highway**

- Provides connection between commercial and population centers in the region.
- Provides connection between the municipalities and adjoining communities, counties and states.
- Carries higher volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds (45-55 mph).
- Serves a mix of local and through traffic.
- Carries low volumes of through truck traffic.
- Provides moderate to high levels of mobility.
- Access limited only by PennDOT highway occupancy permits and local zoning and subdivision ordinances.

<sup>2</sup>Integrating Transportation and Land Use - A Handbook for Pennsylvania Municipalities, PennDOT Publication 688, December 2009, p. 40.





Delaware Avenue (collector) and Route 611 (arterial)

Minor Arterial - Route 611

- Primary route connecting to the Slate Belt, Monroe County and New Jersey.
- Serves as the Borough’s *main street*.
- AADT - 4,900 to 9,500.

**Collector Road**

- Collects traffic from local streets for connection of residential areas to commercial and activity centers and arterials.
- Serves moderate levels of traffic at reduced speeds (35-45 mph).
- Serves more locally oriented traffic and few through trips.
- Carries primarily only *local delivery* truck traffic.
- Access from smaller and more numerous properties.
- Access limited only by local municipal and PennDOT highway occupancy permits and local zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- Provides reduced levels of mobility.

Rural Minor Collector - SR 1039 (River Road)

- Connects Route 611 to the Portland Industrial Park and the GenOn Energy electricity generating station.
- AADT - 1,100.



State Street (local)

**Local Road**

- Provides connection of residential properties and communities and less populated areas to collectors.
- Serves lowest levels of traffic at slowest speeds (less than 35 mph).
- Provides high level of access from smaller residential parcels or areas with little development.
- Carries local trips only with no through trips.
- Carries minimal truck traffic for local deliveries.

Local Road - SR 1032 (State Street)

- Interconnects Route 611 in the Borough.
- Has lost much of its function due to the closure of the Jacoby Creek Bridge.

Local Roads - All Borough-Owned Roads.

- All roads owned by the Borough serve as local roads,
- Connect residential properties to PennDOT roads.



Typical Borough Street (local)

**Public Streets in the Borough**

Public streets in Portland Borough total 4.27 miles including 2.70 miles of Borough-owned streets and 1.57 miles of state-owned routes. Street maintenance accounts for 20 percent of the Borough’s 2013 operating budget; \$61,300, of \$302,4000 (excluding sewer operation).

**Borough Streets**

Streets owned and maintained by the Borough are in good condition, having been paved beginning in 2009 at the time of the installation of the sewage collection system. The Borough will focus on continued maintenance, including resurfacing, and monitor the need to correct specific drainage problems and add shoulders based on available funding. Paving projects in the Borough are scheduled annually based on street condition and available funding. There are no near term plans for the relocation, widening, curve elimination, or grade changes of any streets.

Funding for street maintenance is taken from the general fund and the Liquid Fuels Fund, and no shortfalls are anticipated to meet the maintenance needs. Some 30 percent of the Borough's annual \$256,000 budget<sup>3</sup>, excluding the operation of the sewer system, is allocated to street maintenance. Borough Council has made the logical and cost effective decision to contract for all street maintenance, including snow plowing, to minimize staff and capital equipment costs. The Borough employs only two part-time workers for sidewalk snow removal and owns one pick-up truck and a snow blower.

Included in the Appendix is a *Road Inventory and Evaluation Worksheet* which will enable Borough officials to periodically evaluate the condition of all streets and plan and budget for necessary improvements as part of a long term maintenance plan and capital improvements program.

**Liquid Fuels Program**

The streets owned and maintained by the Borough are part of the State Liquid Fuels Programs which provides state payments to local municipalities for street maintenance and reconstruction based on population and miles of streets meeting PennDOT specifications. However, the Liquid Fuels Funds comprise only a small part of the municipal street maintenance budget and do not nearly cover the cost of long term maintenance and replacement. The 2013 Borough budget includes \$61,300 for street maintenance (excluding street lights) with \$12,165 expected from the Liquid Fuels Program, just 20 percent of the total.

**New Borough Streets and Subdivision Streets**

Portland is not likely to undertake any new street construction. Streets serving new residential developments will be constructed by developers in accord with the applicable subdivision and land development ordinance standards for street layout, design, and construction. Streets may be owned and maintained by private communities, or if a street is constructed to the required standards of the street dedication ordinance it may be accepted by the municipality for general public use.

**Street Dedication**

Local municipalities may, but are not required to, accept for public dedication streets which have been privately constructed to specified municipal standards. This typically occurs in residential subdivisions as part of the development process. Many developers choose to maintain the private status of streets. Ownership and maintenance of these private streets is the responsibility of property owners' associations, a practice somewhat unique to the Pocono Region where recreation communities have typically chosen to restrict access to the community rather than dedicate streets to the municipality, which would open the streets to public use.

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<sup>3</sup>Based on 2012 Annual Audit and Financial Report.

Tax revenues generated from residential development do not typically cover the cost of associated street maintenance. Boroughs and townships are not obligated to accept streets for dedication even if a street meets current municipal design and construction standards. These streets can be accepted for public dedication by the municipality, and provided such streets meet PennDOT standards, the municipality's State Liquid Fuels Fund allocation would increase. However, funds received from the Commonwealth from the Liquid Fuels Program fall far short of the long term cost of the maintenance of public streets. Local officials must carefully weigh the long term maintenance costs against the local tax revenues generated by development and increased state funding before accepting private streets for dedication.

**State Roads**

The condition of the state roads in Portland is also generally good, with continued maintenance the primary concerns. Given the modest traffic volumes on state roads and limited funding available, the upgrading of these roads by PennDOT is obviously not a priority in the near term and is unlikely to occur in the longer term. Although the Borough has no direct control over state roads, the roads that carry the most traffic at higher speeds and present the most safety concerns, this Plan identifies a number of concerns which must be monitored:

- Increasing volumes of traffic
- Speed limit enforcement
- Adequate surface and drainage maintenance
- Improved signs for hazards and traffic control
- Maintenance of lane markings
- Adequate winter maintenance

Should the condition of state routes deteriorate due to lack of maintenance, or if PennDOT does not make improvements in anticipation of traffic volume increases over the long term, the capacity and level-of service could degenerate. The Borough should work with the Slate Belt Council of Governments and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to identify the most critical state route improvement needs and work to have the improvements programmed by PennDOT.

**Bridges**

Public bridges carrying municipal and state roads throughout the Commonwealth are owned by local municipalities, counties or the state. All bridges in the Borough are owned and maintained by PennDOT. The Borough is fortunate for not owning any bridges because maintenance, repair and replacement is very costly.



State Street Bridge

The PennDOT bridge that carries State Street across Jacoby Creek is closed due to structural deterioration. Its replacement has not been scheduled by PennDOT and is not anticipated before 2025. With an average daily traffic volume of 750 and access also available from Route 611 to the south, replacement is obviously not a PennDOT priority. The other bridges are not posted with weight limits and are detailed in the Bridges in Portland Borough Table and the Structurally Deficient/Sufficiency Rating Sidebar from PennDOT..



Route 611/Jacoby Creek Bridge

BRIDGES IN PORTLAND BOROUGH (Source: PennDOT)						
Feature Carried	Feature Intersected	Length (feet)	Year Built	Post Status	Struc Def	Suff Rate
PA 611	Jacoby Creek	43	1907	Open	--	85
PA 611	Trib. to Delaware River	10	1936	Open	--	84.6
SR 1032	Jacoby Cr. & Mill Race	38	1921	Closed	SD	23.5
SR 1039	Trib. to Delaware River	13	1929	Open	SD	68.4

**“Struct Def” (Structurally Deficient)**  
 Indication of bridge’s overall status in terms of structural soundness and ability to service traveling public. “SD” indicates that the bridge has deterioration to one or more of its major components.

**“Suff Rate” (Sufficiency Rating)**  
 A calculated rating indicating the bridge’s sufficiency (or capability). Factors included in the calculation are:

- the structure’s adequacy and safety (accounting for 55% and based on inspection data),
- the structure’s serviceability and functional obsolescence (accounting for 30% and based on ability of bridge to meet current traffic conditions), and
- how essential the bridge is for public use (accounting for 15%)

Ratings range from 100 (entirely sufficient) to 0 (entirely insufficient or deficient).

The Sufficiency Rating is considered by the federal government when a state requests federal bridge dollars to improve the condition of the bridge. Bridges with low sufficiency ratings are eligible for more funds.

Sufficiency Rating	Funding Eligibility
80 – 100	Not available
50 – 79	Eligible for costs to rehabilitate or refurbish bridge
0 – 49	Eligible for costs to replace bridge

Structurally Deficient / Sufficiency Rating

The railroad bridge which crosses the southern leg of Route 611 just outside the Borough in Upper Mount Bethel Township is posted at 13' 3" while the state limits overall vehicle height to 13' 6". The underpass is apparently able to accommodate vehicle of 13' 6", but due to the posting, unfamiliar tractor trailer drivers often avoid using Route 611 south. This may have an effect on accessing the Industrial Park. The Borough will work with PennDOT to address this issue.

**Public Transportation**

Public transportation in Northampton County is provided by the Allentown-based Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority, but no service is provided to Portland. Direct local participation in public transportation, fixed route or on-demand, is typically undertaken only by the most populous municipalities given the large volume of riders necessary to meet expenses. In most cases, such systems operate with government subsidies and agency support for specific qualifying clients. Extensive public transportation systems in rural communities are generally limited by low population density, the cost of providing the service, and uncertainty of public acceptance and use. In short, the cost is too high in relation to the potential revenue from the users of the system, and without public subsidy, it is often not feasible. In addition, even in areas where the public subsidy has been provided, use of public transport is often low given long trips and limited schedules, and the historic reliance on automobiles in rural areas.



**Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission** ([www.drjtbc.org](http://www.drjtbc.org))

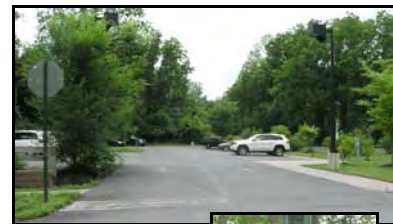
The **Portland-Columbia Toll Supported Pedestrian Bridge** connects Portland Borough, Upper Mount Bethel Township, Pennsylvania with Columbia, Knowlton Township, New Jersey. The original structure, constructed in 1869 as a vehicular bridge, was a four-span timber bridge reinforced with wooden arches. The entire structure was protected from the weather by a wooden shed surmounted by a slate roof. On December 1, 1953, all vehicular traffic formerly using this structure was rerouted over the new Portland-Columbia Toll Bridge, constructed just south of the old bridge. The last of its kind on the Delaware River, three spans of this historical timber bridge floated off its piers during Hurricane Diane in August 1955. The present four-span continuous, thru-deck girder superstructure was constructed along with pier and abutment revisions in 1957-58. The former bridge lighting was removed and replaced in 1990 with high-mast lighting at each approach. In 1996, new approach guide rails and an ADA access ramp were added to the New Jersey side. More recently, in 1998, this pedestrian bridge, as well as the main river vehicular toll bridge, was blast cleaned and painted.

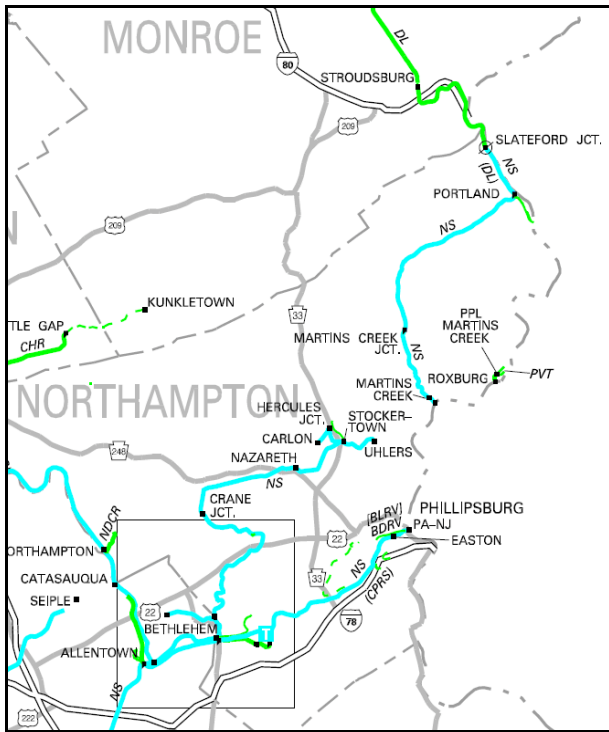


The **Portland-Columbia Toll Bridge** connects PA. Route 611 at Portland, Pennsylvania with U.S. Route 46 at Columbia, New Jersey. Route 46 merges with Interstate Route 80 located just north of the bridge on the New Jersey approach. Opened to traffic on December 1, 1953, the main river bridge consists of a ten-span steel girder system with total length of 1,309 feet and a 32-foot curb-to-curb width. The substructures consist of reinforced concrete piers and concrete bin abutments. A one-way toll plaza, located at the Pennsylvania approach, has three toll lanes. Tolls are collected in the westbound direction. The Commission also owns a pedestrian bridge 1000 feet north of the toll bridge, which is separately described under Toll Supported Bridges.



Recognizing how its bridges and approach roadways can impact the local communities that host these facilities, the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission established a \$40 million **Compact Authorized Grant (CAI)** grant program in 2005 to help these communities improve their own transportation infrastructure. This unique partnering initiative helped many local communities address issues arising from the fact that they encounter more traffic, more accidents, more pedestrians, and corresponding accelerated wearing of transportation facilities because they host a Commission bridge crossing or -- in some cases -- multiple Commission bridge crossings. The resulting projects improved conditions for local residents as well as the thousands of motorists and pedestrians who make use of the Commission's 20 bridge crossings. To this day, the results of the grant program are providing a better travel experience between Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as improving the quality of life in Delaware River Communities. The CAI program officially ended December 31, 2012 and the Commission's CAI Department was disbanded for 2013.





Portion of Pennsylvania Railroad Map, PennDOT

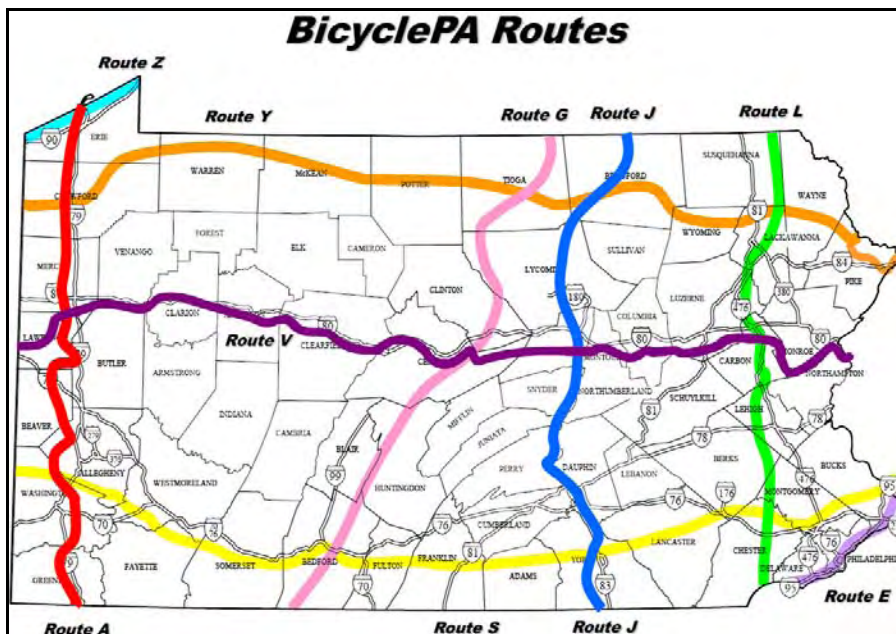
**Railroads**

The Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NS on map) provides freight service through Northampton County and runs through Portland from points south north to Slateford Junction. The Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad Company (DL on map) operates from Slateford Junction north to Stroudsburg and Scranton, connecting the Norfolk Southern from Portland to the NRG Energy coal-fired electricity generation facility and the Portland Industrial Park. Traffic on the lines is minimal, averaging about five trains per week.

The Norfolk Southern line, which crosses into New Jersey at Slateford Junction just north of the Borough, is part of the route proposed for New Jersey Transit rail service from New York City and Hoboken, NJ, via the Lackawanna Cut-Off to Scranton. This project has been under study for many years and will not be realized for many more years, certainly beyond the scope of this Plan. Nevertheless, if the passenger service is restored into any part of Pennsylvania along this line, the effects on Portland Borough and the Slate Belt will be significant in terms of population and land use changes.

**Bicycle Routes**

*Bicycle PA* is the name for a network of cross-state bicycle routes that guide the bicycle tourist across the Commonwealth. The routes generally use existing highways that have been identified as desirable roads for bicycling. In some cases, the routes use improved rail trails to bypass difficult sections. *Bicycle PA Route V* follows Route 611 south from Delaware Water Gap into Portland and connects to the pedestrian bridge across the Delaware River to New Jersey.



Source: PennDOT





Business District Streetscapes



**Sidewalks**

Sidewalks and crosswalks are critical to safe and convenient pedestrian circulation, particularly in the business district of the Borough. Walking is the most basic form of transportation and in small communities such as Portland and in new residential developments with smaller lot sizes walking is a very viable means of transportation for many residents. What are the impediments to walking? Safety and lack of adequate facilities top the list. Increased traffic volume and speeds on roadways underscore the importance and necessity of sidewalks to separate pedestrians from vehicles.



Division Street

Sidewalks and crosswalks in the Portland business district are in good condition owing largely to the recent improvement projects financed by the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission. Sidewalks in the other areas of the Borough range from excellent condition for recently installed segments with handicapped access to areas where maintenance is required, to areas without sidewalks.



Delaware Avenue and Ruth Street

A sidewalk inventory could be to map the sidewalk network, identify strengths and deficiencies, and prioritize needs. Some items to take note of in the sidewalk inventory include the material or composition of the sidewalks, profiles, dimension, overall condition, curbs, ADA accessibility, breaks or gaps in the sidewalk network, and street crossings and intersection design. One method for identifying and prioritizing the various tasks is to complete a walking audit or *walkability checklist*, a concept developed a partnership of the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, and the Partnership for a Walkable America. A *walkability checklist* is a subjective method to help communities identify problems and deterrence's to safe walking in their communities. (See the *How walkable is your community? Sidebar* on the following pages.)



Pennsylvania Avenue

Sidewalk ordinances can be used to govern the installation and maintenance of sidewalks and identified deficiencies should be included in a capital improvements program. In addition, the updated subdivision and land development ordinance will include requirements for sidewalks in higher density residential subdivisions.



Partnership for a Walkable America



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center



U.S. Department of Transportation



Take a walk and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's walkability.

# How walkable is your community?

Location of walk \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



### 1. Did you have room to walk?

- Yes     Some problems:
- Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
  - Sidewalks were broken or cracked
  - Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
  - No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
  - Too much traffic
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Was it easy to cross streets?

- Yes     Some problems:
- Road was too wide
  - Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
  - Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
  - Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
  - Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
  - Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Did drivers behave well?

- Yes     Some problems: Drivers...
- Backed out of driveways without looking
  - Did not yield to people crossing the street
  - Turned into people crossing the street
  - Drove too fast
  - Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights?
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Was it easy to follow safety rules?

#### Could you and your child...

- Yes     No    Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?
- Yes     No    Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing streets?
- Yes     No    Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?
- Yes     No    Cross with the light?
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Was your walk pleasant?

- Yes     Some unpleasant things:
- Needed more grass, flowers, or trees
  - Scary dogs
  - Scary people
  - Not well lighted
  - Dirty, lots of litter or trash
  - Dirty air due to automobile exhaust
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

### How does your neighborhood stack up?

#### Add up your ratings and decide.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 26-30 Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 21-25 Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 16-20 Okay, but it needs work.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 11-15 It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ 5-10 It's a disaster for walking!

Total \_\_\_\_\_

<http://www.walkableamerica.org/checklist-walkability.pdf>

Now that you know the problems,  
you can find the answers.

# Improving your community's score...



## 1. Did you have room to walk?

Sidewalks or paths started and stopped  
Sidewalks broken or cracked  
Sidewalks blocked  
No sidewalks, paths or shoulders  
Too much traffic

### What you and your child can do immediately

- pick another route for now
- tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist

### What you and your community can do with more time

- speak up at board meetings
- write or petition city for walkways and gather neighborhood signatures
- make media aware of problem
- work with a local transportation engineer to develop a plan for a safe walking route

## 2. Was it easy to cross streets?

Road too wide  
Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross  
Crosswalks/traffic signals needed  
View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants  
Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair

- pick another route for now
- share problems and checklist with local traffic engineering or public works department
- trim your trees or bushes that block the street and ask your neighbors to do the same
- leave nice notes on problem cars asking owners not to park there

- push for crosswalks/signals/ parking changes/curb ramps at city meetings
- report to traffic engineer where parked cars are safety hazards
- report illegally parked cars to the police
- request that the public works department trim trees or plants
- make media aware of problem

## 3. Did drivers behave well?

Backed without looking  
Did not yield  
Turned into walkers  
Drove too fast  
Sped up to make traffic lights or drove through red lights

- pick another route for now
- set an example: slow down and be considerate of others
- encourage your neighbors to do the same
- report unsafe driving to the police

- petition for more enforcement
- request protected turns
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- ask schools about getting crossing guards at key locations
- organize a neighborhood speed watch program

## 4. Could you follow safety rules?

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen  
Stop and look left, right, left before crossing  
Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic  
Cross with the light

- educate yourself and your child about safe walking
- organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

- encourage schools to teach walking safely
- help schools start safe walking programs
- encourage corporate support for flex schedules so parents can walk children to school

## 5. Was your walk pleasant?

Needs grass, flowers, trees  
Scary dogs  
Scary people  
Not well lit  
Dirty, litter  
Lots of traffic



- point out areas to avoid to your child; agree on safe routes
- ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- report scary people to the police
- report lighting needs to the police or appropriate public works department
- take a walk with a trash bag
- plant trees, flowers in your yard
- select alternative route with less traffic

- request increased police enforcement
- start a crime watch program in your neighborhood
- organize a community clean-up day
- sponsor a neighborhood beautification or tree-planting day
- begin an adopt-a-street program
- initiate support to provide routes with less traffic to schools in your community (reduced traffic during am and pm school commute times)

## A Quick Health Check

Could not go as far or as fast as we wanted  
Were tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles  
Was the sun really hot?  
Was it hot and hazy?

- start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days
- invite a friend or child along
- walk along shaded routes where possible
- use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher, wear a hat and sunglasses
- try not to walk during the hottest time of day

- get media to do a story about the health benefits of walking
- call parks and recreation department about community walks
- encourage corporate support for employee walking programs
- plant shade trees along routes
- have a sun safety seminar for kids
- have kids learn about unhealthy ozone days and the Air Quality Index (AQI)

**FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

**Need for Prioritization** The cost of transportation improvements, particularly at the local municipal level, must be evaluated in terms of other community facility and service demands. Local resources are limited and large tax increases are not a realistic option in this time of an uncertain economy and employment opportunity.

**Policies** Future planning policies and actions are intended to address identified problems and achieve the goals established by the Borough. The policies and actions are intended to be practical and achievable within the framework of available resources and acceptance by the community. Policies and actions are discussed in detail on the following pages and are summarized in the *Policies and Actions Table*. Categories include:

- Maintenance - Maintaining existing roads and facilities to preserve capacity.
- Regional Transportation Planning - Transportation issues cross local municipal and county boundaries. Northampton County and the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study must continue regional transportation planning programs.
- Land Use Planning and Ordinances - Linking land use to highway capacity.
- Signals/Signal Systems - Improving the area’s transportation operations.
- Geometric/Capacity Improvements - Monitor for long term capacity improvements.
- Intersection Safety - Where sight distance is a factor.
- Bridges - Maintain to extend useful life and replace if necessary.
- Public Transportation - As provided by Lehigh and Northampton Transit Authority.
- Pedestrians and Bicyclists - How to improve pedestrian bicyclist circulation.

**Actions:**  
**Maintenance** Maintaining existing streets, drainage systems, sidewalks and other facilities is the most critical and highest priority element of meeting current and future transportation needs of Portland. Increasing costs and limited resources demand that existing transportation facilities be maintained to extend useful life.

- Complete and update annually a detailed municipal street inventory and evaluation to identify needs and develop an improvements schedule within normal budgetary process, and to identify potential capital projects.
- Plan for the improvement of:
  - Weidman Street - serves six homes; drainage, curbs and sidewalks required, \$50,000 - \$75,000.
  - Hester Street - access to proposed Business Zoning District; reconstruction, minimum of \$75,000.

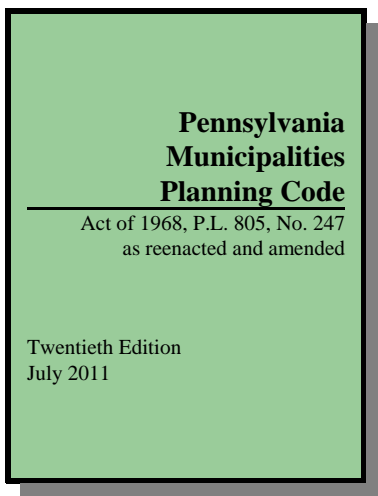


- Maintain an up-to-date inventory of street maintenance equipment as a means of planning for replacement and inclusion the capital improvements program.
- Monitor the effectiveness of new materials and practices and use such innovations to best advantage. Good examples are plastic culverts and plastic head walls.
- Develop a Transportation Capital Improvement Program to plan and budget for improvements.
- Monitor condition of and repair/replace all traffic control signs and pavement markings.

**Actions:  
Regional Planning**

The Borough will participate in regional transportation planning to ensure local issues and needs are addressed. Given that transportation is an issue that transcends municipal and county boundaries and affects the entire region, the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study must continue to take the lead role in coordinating and promoting the idea of regional transportation planning. This includes local municipalities, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, PennDOT and the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission.

*The **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** for Lehigh and Northampton Counties is the **Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS)**. The role of the MPO is to promote transportation projects, plans, programs, and policies that are consistent with the locally adopted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Lehigh Valley Transportation Plan (LVTP) in accordance with Federal law. LVTS was created in 1964 through a legal agreement between the Cities of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton; the Counties of Lehigh and Northampton; and the Department of Highways of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (now the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation). The LVTS was founded in response to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, which stated, in part, that any urban area with a population of more than 50,000 must maintain a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning process consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urbanized area in order to be eligible to receive Federal funds for transportation projects. LVTS satisfies this planning requirement and assures the region continued eligibility to receive state and federal funding for highway and transit system capital improvements and operating assistance. ([www.lvpc.org/pdf/surfaceTransPlan2011-2030](http://www.lvpc.org/pdf/surfaceTransPlan2011-2030).)*



**Actions: Land Use Planning and Ordinances**

Local municipalities, as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, may adopt a number of land use management ordinances which are critical to addressing transportation issues. The key ordinances for the Borough are the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and land development which are discussed in detail in the Land Use Section. As part of the zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance updates the Borough will:

- Maintain the B - Business District and the MC - Mixed Commercial District to continue to provide nonresidential development direct access to higher capacity roads.
- Update standards for parking and loading areas to ensure safe and adequate parking facilities without requiring excessive parking areas.

### Why Access Management?

Without applying access management techniques, studies show that corridors experience:

- Diminished roadway capacity, resulting in greater congestion.
- An increase in the number of crashes with other vehicles, as well as pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reduced character.
- An unfriendly environment for those who walk or bike.
- Commercial strip development.
- Overburdened arterials resulting in more cut-through traffic in residential areas.
- Homes and businesses adversely affected by a continuous cycle of widening roads.
- Increased commute times, fuel consumption, and vehicular emissions.

Finally, with increasing fiscal pressure on both the local and state levels, capital intensive solutions such as widening a roadway may not always be possible. The more proactive communities can be in addressing this issue, the greater the likelihood a community will have of preserving its character and quality of life.

*PennDOT Access Management Handbook*

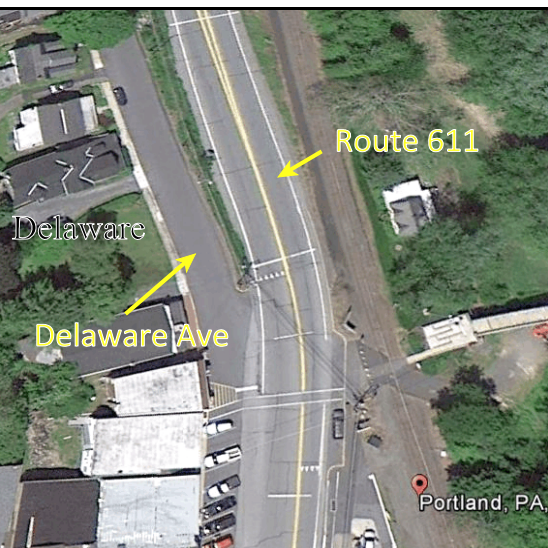
- In the case of PennDOT roads, make the zoning use permit contingent on the installation of all required improvements in accord with PennDOT requirements.
- Require a permit prior to the installation of a driveway to access any PennDOT or local municipal road.
- Review street construction standards to ensure adequacy for public safety and eliminate excessive requirements to minimize the consumption of resources for construction and long term maintenance.
- Establish procedures for dedication of development streets to the Borough and carefully weigh the costs and benefits of accepting private roads for dedication.
- Require commercial and residential development plans to design for pedestrian bicyclist access and safety.
- In the case of Borough roads, include standards for sight distance, intersection separation, spacing, grade, width, turning radii and stormwater management.
- Provide for joint driveways and cross accesses for adjoining commercial parking lots.
- Reserve rights-of-way at logical locations in residential subdivisions to provide for interconnection of roads to adjoining parcels at the time of development.

**Actions: Intersection Safety**

No intersection improvements are proposed. The Borough will monitor intersection safety and condition and consider improvements as safety dictates. Although less than ideal in its configuration, the Delaware Avenue and Route 611 intersection has not been the cause of accidents. In anticipation of increasing traffic, the Borough will work with the Slate Belt COG to acquire a portable speed sign to be used by participating municipalities to control speed in such situations.

**Actions: Signals/Signal Systems**

No new traffic signals are proposed. The Borough will continue to work with PennDOT to ensure optimum timing of the signal at the Route 611 and State Street intersection.



**Actions: Geometric and Capacity Improvements**

No geometric or capacity improvements are proposed. The Borough will monitor street and traffic conditions and consider improvements as safety dictates and capacity problems are anticipated.



**Actions: Bridges** All bridges in the borough are owned by PennDOT with the State Street Bridge crossing Jacoby Creek closed. The Borough will work with the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study and PennDOT to effect its replacement as soon as possible and to address the height limitation of the railroad bridge.

**Actions: Public Transp.** No local municipal action is planned for public transportation.

**Actions: Pedestrians and Bicyclists** Construction of sidewalks in developed areas of the Borough is not a priority given the high cost and disruption of private property. Bicycle travel is a regional and PennDOT issue and no Borough action is proposed along Borough streets.

- In the long term, a sidewalk inventory should be developed by the Borough to map the sidewalk network, identify strengths and deficiencies, and prioritize improvements.
- Include requirements in the subdivision and land development ordinance for sidewalks.
- Require commercial and residential development plans to design for pedestrian and bicyclist access and safety.
- Limit obstructions on business district sidewalks such as retail displays and restaurant seating.

**Actions: Parking** Parking for the business district is not a critical issue at this time. However, when the commercial activity in the Borough increases it will be and the Borough will:

- Consider the use of parking meters to limit long term parking, particularly by occupants of dwellings above business establishment.
- Include off-street parking requirements for any dwellings proposed in the Business District.
- Investigate the development of additional Borough-owned parking lots for business patrons to supplement the existing lot on Delaware Avenue.
- Include adequate parking in any plans for the development of a River access to serve boaters.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Overview

Historic resources provide a sense of place that fosters a connection to the community and a sense of pride among its residents. The aim of historic resource protection is to retain the heritage and identity of a community or region as reflected in its natural and built environment and to ensure that the community's history and unique character are preserved for future generations. Preserving historic buildings, structures, sites, and landscapes, and encouraging new development to be consistent with existing historic character are critical to the future of the Borough.

### Historic Resources Inventory

Before protection of the Borough's historic resources can begin, the resources must first be inventoried and documented. This can be accomplished via the creation of a Borough historical commission or local historical society charged with preparing the inventory and accompanying documentation. Resources should be identified and inventoried according to a set of criteria that determine whether they should be considered significant. They can be further evaluated to determine whether they are locally or nationally significant. The Borough can seek technical assistance for this effort from organizations such as the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and Preservation Pennsylvania.

### Locally Significant Resources

Locally significant historic resources can be defined as resources that are important to the history and culture of Portland, the region, the Commonwealth, or the nation, but that are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They can be districts, historical and archaeological sites, buildings, structures, objects, or landscapes. According to the general standard, a resource must have been in place for at least 50 years to be considered historic. In addition to the longevity requirement, possible criteria for eligibility for listing as a locally significant historic resource are (the resource must exhibit at least one of the criteria):

#### **Historic Preservation Planning** - *A well-conceived preservation planning process serves to:*

- *Establish a basis of public policy about historic resources;*
- *Educate and inform residents and others about their community's heritage and its value;*
- *Identify opportunities for economic growth based on the community's historic and architectural character.*
- *Ensure consistency among various local government policies that affect the community's historic resources;*
- *Lay the groundwork for adopting a local historic preservation ordinance or strengthening an existing one;*
- *Eliminate uncertainty or confusion about the purpose, meaning, and content of a community's preservation ordinance;*
- *Inform existing and potential property owners, investors, and developers about what historic resources the community wants to protect as it grows;*
- *Create an agenda for future preservation activities; and*
- *Facilitate compliance with federal and state historic preservation and environmental quality laws.*

#### *Preservation plans serve several purposes:*

- *educating elected and appointed officials, municipal staff, property owners, investors, and others about the status of historic resources within the community and the economic benefits of preservation;*
- *formally documenting existing conditions, issues, opportunities, and challenges;*
- *providing information on tax and other incentives for preservation;*
- *offering discussion and analysis regarding preservation of historic resources, and establishing a roadmap for future efforts;*
- *setting out the roles and responsibilities of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with regard to the preservation of historic resources.* (Source: *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 6.)

### Brief History of Portland Borough

*The initial development of Portland was undoubtedly spurred by its proximity to a major waterway, the Delaware river, and to the Delaware water gap as a passage through the Blue Mountain. Its location was a significant point of convergence and interchange between overland and water trade routs. The major road leading to the community was present U.S. 611, which provided access from outside areas to Portland where a ferry service across the Delaware River was established. The community developed around a tavern and the ferry service operated by Henry Dill in 1817. Consequently, Dill's Ferry was the first name given to the community.*

*In the mid-nineteenth century, the location was known as Columbia Station and became part of Upper Mount Bethal Township. Although the community made application for a borough charter in 1870, it was not incorporated as the Borough of Portland until 1876. At the period in history, there were approximately 550 inhabitants of the Borough. (See Map I-B.) by 1876, the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad served the community and was located parallel to the Delaware River. The introduction of the railroad, in addition to the community's existing trade route location, activated construction of two inns to accommodate weary travelers. Portland gradually became a place where people not only passed through, but settled and established roots.*

*The townspeople erected a church and a school, and made these institutions the focal points of the community's social activity. In fact, throughout Portland's history, its active church and school life has been looked upon with pride. Also, by 1876 a number of people were employed in productive mills located along Jacoby Creek, which traverses the southern portion of the Borough. These saw mills, grist mills, and plaster mills were purposely located along this creek to take advantage of the power generated by the flow of its waters. Many people worked at the lime kilns which were located near the natural resource deposits of limestone. Other people in the community were employed as workers in the marble yard, in the cigar factory, or as merchants, tailors, barbers and doctors who directly served the daily needs of the people.*

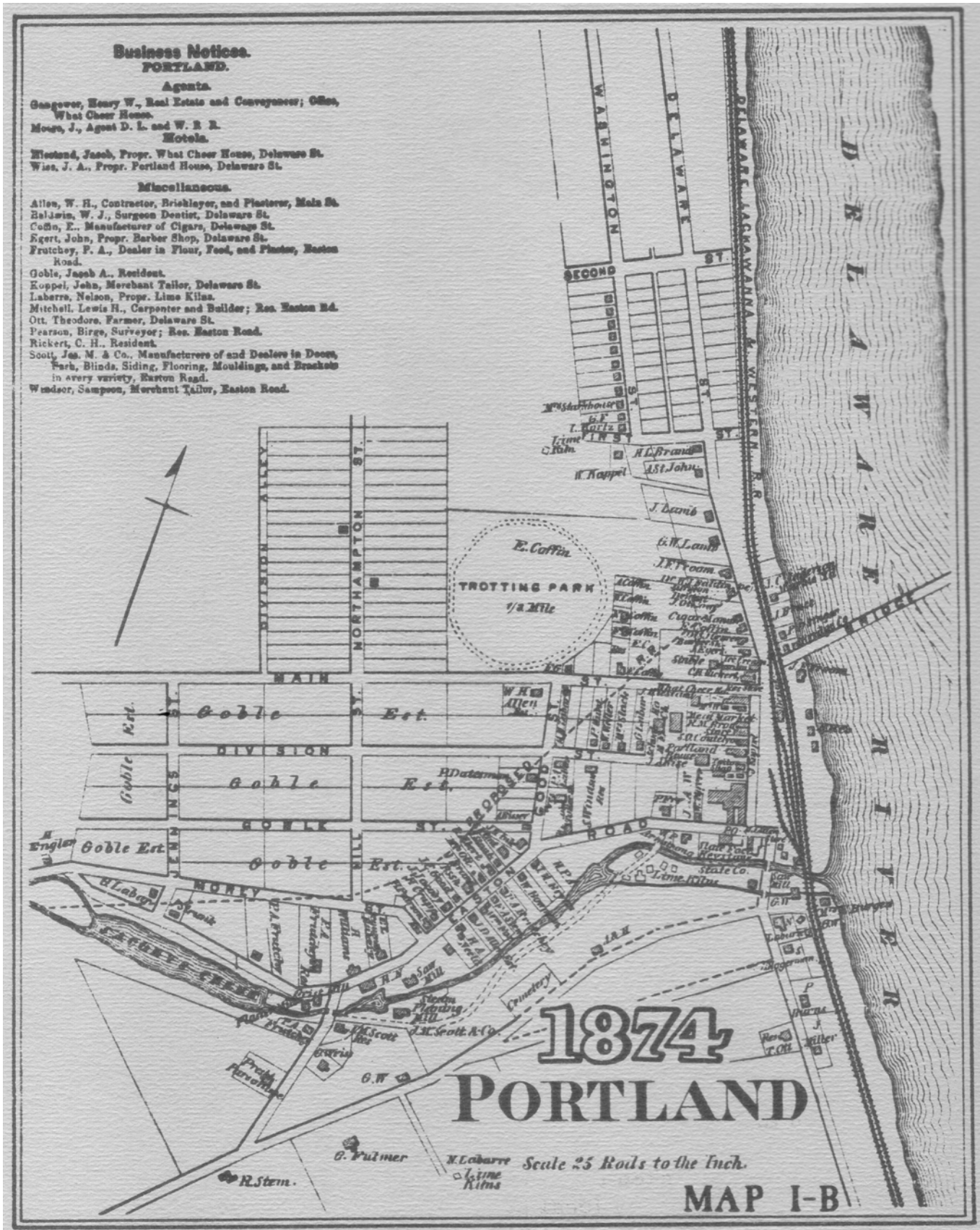
*During the period from 1876 to 1920, the total population of the Borough fluctuated in the range of 550 to 676. However, in the long-run, the total population had shown a net decrease of 5 people from the date the Borough was incorporated (1876) to the year 1920. In spite of Portland's lack of growth, by 1920, it exhibited a degree of maturity and stability. At this time, the manufacturing of apparel and textile products became an important "Slate Belt" industry. A glove mill, operating under the supervision of the Sterling Silk Glove Company of Bangor, was located in Portland and engaged in the production of hosiery, underwear, and gloves. The commercial printing industry also became a significant activity through the establishment of the Enterprise Printing Office in Portland. In addition to the usual mercantile establishments, Portland boasted a bank, three churches, and the "Portland Enterprise," a weekly newspaper. Although the mills gradually decreased in importance in the 1920's, the manufacturing of fertilizer at the limestone quarry continued to be a vital industry.*

*Undoubtedly, the construction of automobile and railroad bridges across the Delaware River, and the location of U. S. 611 through the Borough, were important factors in the success of business and industry. The bridges linked Pennsylvania to New Jersey via Portland, and U. S. 611 linked Portland to the Allentown -Bethlehem-Easton and Stroudsburg areas. An historic covered bridge spanned the Delaware River at Portland and became a tourist attraction held in high esteem as a community focal point by the residents of Portland. The bridge was destroyed by a flood in 1955, and has not been reconstructed.*

*Between 1950 and 1960, the population increased from 551 to 589, and some new homes were constructed in the northern part of the Borough. However, the population growth trend shows that Portland continues to exhibit only a slight increase in population over the 550 inhabitants at the time the Borough was incorporated.*

*Today, Portland is basically a residential community with a limited amount of economic activity. Businesses continue, but have difficulty in competing with commercial establishments in larger urban areas. Most of the business continues to be oriented toward serving the daily needs of Borough residents by offering convenience shopping goods.*

(Comprehensive Development Plan, Borough of Portland, December 1966, p. I-3.)



Source: Comprehensive Development Plan, Borough of Portland, December 1966, p. I-2.



Portland Pokey (www.lehivallive.com)  
(Express -Times Photo, Bill Adams)



Stone Arch Bridge

- Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Borough, region, Commonwealth or nation; or
- Is associated with the life of a significant person in the past; or,
- Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the Borough, region, Commonwealth or nation; or,
- Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the Borough, region, Commonwealth or nation; or,
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant innovation; or,
- Is part of or related to a distinctive area which should be preserved according to a historic, cultural or architectural motif; or
- Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community; or,
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or,
- Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Potential candidates for recognition as a locally significant historic resource include:

- Borough Building
- Railroad Depot
- 1877 Portland Council Chambers and Pokey

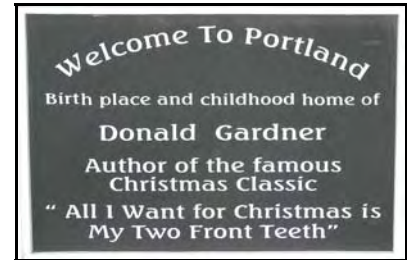
Railroad Depot







- Frederick Duckloe & Brothers, Inc., building
- Victorian homes on Delaware Avenue
- Legacy of *last covered bridge*
- Stone arch bridge across Jacoby Creek (adjacent to Route 611 bridge)
- Local notables such as Edward Marshall and Donald Gardner
- churches
- cemeteries



**National Register of Historic Places**

The only structure in Portland listed on the National Register of Historic Places is County Bridge No. 36 which carries Route 611 across Jacoby Creek. Constructed in 1907, the small, single arched bridge with a span measuring 28 feet features an incised keystone and a simply ornamented, continuous concrete parapet.



County Bridge No. 36 (PennDOT photo.)

The National Register was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In Pennsylvania, the program is managed by the Bureau for Historic Preservation (BHP), a department within the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The program is designed to assist state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological resources worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions. Properties listed on the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. To be eligible for listing on the National Register, a property must meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. These Criteria require that a property be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and that it still look much the same way as it was in the past. In addition, the property must meet one of the following criteria<sup>1</sup>:



- Be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a building type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, *National Register of Historic Places Fact Sheet*.

- A committee of BHP staff review information submitted to the BHP to determine whether a resource is eligible for the National Register (using the criteria above). If found eligible, the resource is given a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) and the nomination process can begin. The State Historic Preservation Board reviews all nominations to the National Register. Upon determination of its level of significance and that the resource meets the Criteria for Evaluation, the nomination is sent to the National Park Service (NPS), which either approves or denies the nomination. If approved by the NPS, the resource is entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

Listing on the National Register does the following<sup>2</sup>:

- Honors a historic property by recognizing its importance to its local community, state or the nation;
- Encourages the preservation of historic properties by documenting their significance;
- Facilitates the review of federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects to determine their effects on historic properties;
- Provides an opportunity to consult with government agencies to mitigate projects that will adversely affect historic properties;
- Provides information about historic resources for planning purposes;
- Offers federal tax benefits to owners of income producing (depreciable) historic properties if they rehabilitate their properties according to preservation standards.

Listing on the National Register does not<sup>3</sup>:

- Restrict the rights of property owners;
- Require that properties be maintained, repaired, or restored;
- Prevent destruction of a resource by federal, state, local, or private development;
- Guarantee that grant funds will be available for projects;
- Require property owners to follow preservation standards on their properties (unless they wish to apply for tax benefits)

### Legal Framework

Once inventoried the Borough's historic resources can receive formal protection through measures enabled by the PA Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961) and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. This adds a level of protection to identified

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

historic resources by providing a means to review activities that could lead to the alternation or destruction of resources.

**Pennsylvania  
Historic District Act**

The Pennsylvania Local Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961) *authorizes counties, cities, boroughs, incorporated towns and townships to create historic districts within their boundaries providing for the appointment of Boards of Historical Architectural Review; empowering governing bodies to protect the distinctive historical character of these districts and to regulate the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings within the historic districts.*

Historic districts established by local ordinance under the Local Historic District Act must be *certified* by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Certification means that the district has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and authorization has been given to protect the character of the district through regulatory means. The Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB) must contain at least five members comprised of a registered architect, licensed real estate broker, the municipal building inspector and at least two others with interest or knowledge of local history or historic preservation. The HARB advises the governing body whether to issue permits for work proposed on buildings within the district.

**Portland Historic District**

Designation of an Act 167 Certified Historic District might be an option for the Borough if an area can be determined be nationally significance and be eligible for the National Register; and, more importantly, if property owners support the certification and are willing to adhere to the district's regulations. The Victorian homes Delaware avenue may hold potential. Historic district designation is a difficult and time consuming task that would have to be undertaken by an ambitious Borough resident or community organization. Once listed on the National register, Borough Council would have the option of adopting an historic district ordinance.

**Pennsylvania  
Municipalities  
Planning Code**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code enables municipalities to plan for and act to preserve and protect historic resources. *Preservation or protection, when used in connection with . . . historic resources, shall include means to conserve and safeguard these resources from wasteful or destructive use.* The MPC also states *where zoning districts are created, all provisions shall be uniform for each class of uses or structures, within each district, except that additional classifications may be made within any district for places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value* Although not having the force of provisions under the Historic District Act of regulating with specific design standards, a municipally organized historic review commission could act in a support capacity by conducting research, providing data on historic resources and making recommendations for historically sensitive development. The zoning ordinance could formalize the review process for locally significant structures and include incentives such as increased lot coverage or reduced building setbacks to support such sensitive development. The Borough currently has no zoning provisions for historic resource protection under the MPC; therefore, historic resources are left virtually unprotected.



**Benefits of Historic Preservation** (Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 4.)

*Since the 1970s, mounting evidence has shown that historic preservation can be a powerful community and economic development strategy. Evidence includes statistics compiled from annual surveys conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and statewide Main Street programs, state-level tourism and economic impact studies, and studies that have analyzed the impact of specific actions such as historic designation, tax credits, and revolving loan funds. Among the findings:*

- *Creation of local historic districts stabilizes, and often increases residential and commercial property values.*
- *Increases in property values in historic districts are typically greater than increases in the community at large.*
- *Historic building rehabilitation, which is more labor intensive and requires greater specialization and higher skill levels, creates more jobs and results in more local business than does new construction.*
- *Heritage tourism provides substantial economic benefits. Tourists drawn by a community's (or region's) historic character typically stay longer and spend more during their visit than other tourists.*
- *Historic rehabilitation encourages additional neighborhood investment and produces a high return for municipal dollars spent.*
- *Use of a city or town's existing, historic building stock can support growth management policies by increasing the supply of centrally located housing.*

**Planning Policies**

Future planning policies are intended to promote the Borough's historic resource protection goals by guiding future decisions and actions related to historic resource protection. The following policies are intended to preserve Portland's historic resources, which contribute to the community's identity and character:

- Inventory and document the Borough's historic and archaeological resources and pursue National Register listing where appropriate.
- Pursue technical and financial assistance for historic resource identification and preservation.
- Promote public education to raise awareness of Portland's history and historic resources.
- Establish protection measures enabled by the Municipalities Planning Code and the Local Historic District Act.
- Promote preservation of historic buildings and structures during the land development process.
- Preserve historic resources by promotion as recreational or tourist destinations.

**Actions:  
Historic Resources**

The specific means by which Portland Borough can execute the future planning policies include regulatory provisions included in the zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance, and other ordinances, as well as non-regulatory initiatives.

<b>Historic Resource Inventory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organize a Borough Historical Commission or Historical Society charged with the task of creating a historic resource inventory.</li><li>• Develop a local historic register program aimed at identifying properties eligible for state and national recognition, and encourage and support efforts to list and preserve such properties.</li><li>• Create a system for efficient storage, mapping, and retrieval of historic resource data and maintain a historic resources database.</li><li>• Seek technical assistance from historic preservation organizations, such as the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Preservation Pennsylvania and the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society for inventorying and documenting resources and nominating resources for the National Register.</li><li>• Seek funding from organizations such as the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and natural resources, and programs such as the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.</li></ul>
<b>Education and Outreach</b>	Conduct a public outreach program, perhaps through a newsletter or web site, to provide educational materials on the Borough's history and historic resources.
<b>Recreation and Trails</b>	Incorporate historic resources into recreation and trail planning.
<b>Ordinances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Once historic resources are inventoried, adopt historic resource protection provisions that will:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prohibit demolition by neglect.</li><li>• Facilitate the adaptive re-use of historic resources.</li><li>• Provide incentives for rehabilitation of historic resources.</li><li>• Require a historic resources impact assessment for development in proximity to a historic resource.</li></ul></li><li>• Require review of demolition, alteration, erection, reconstruction, and restoration of historic resources.</li><li>• Allow home occupations in all zoning districts as a means of encouraging productive use of historic structures which tend to be larger and more difficult to maintain.</li></ul>
<b>Site and Sign Design Guidelines</b>	Prepare design guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development to encourage the most efficient use of land and development consistent with community character. As part of a continuing commitment to the historic character of a community, some municipalities and historical societies provide site and sign design guidelines to encourage commercial establishments and signs to be consistent with the community's heritage. The guidelines would not be mandatory absent a historic district listed on the National Register. Such a community based effort would be invaluable to preserving the overall character of the Borough.

**NPS Certified Program**      Consider participation in the Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Program of the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Historic Preservation.

**Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Program** ([www.nps.gov/history/hps/clg/](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/clg/))

*The Certified Local Government Program is a preservation partnership between local, state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in each state, with each local community working through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). CLGs then become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program and the opportunities it provides.*

*Why become a CLG? The key reason is the access certification provides to the expert technical advice of the State Offices as well as the NPS. Partnerships with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, Preserve America, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Main Street Center are also networks that CLGs have an opportunity to tap into. Of course, access to Federal funding is another benefit, making certified communities able to access the portion of Federal funds set aside by each SHPO for just CLGs annually. Being a CLG also shows your community's commitment to keeping what is significant from the past for future generations. As a certified town, city, or county seeking other opportunities, it becomes easy to demonstrate a readiness to take on a preservation project and be successful.*

What is a CLG required to do?

*A community must show both the state and NPS that they are committed to historic preservation. They can do this by addressing the following minimum goals.*

- \* Establish a Preservation Commission*
- \* Establish an ordinance*
- \* Maintain an active survey of local historic resources*
- \* Participate in the National Register process*

**KEY DEMOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS**

<b>BOROUGH OF PORTLAND POPULATION</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b># Persons</b>
1870	550
1880	608
1890	676
1900	490
1910	649
1920	545
1930	551
1940	427
1950	551
1960	589
1970	612
1980	540
1990	516
2000	579
2010	519
2020	643*
2030	793*
U.S. Census; *LVPC	

**Demographic Composition**

The demographic composition of a community is affected by its geographic, physical and economic character. At the same time, the demographic composition is largely responsible for the manner in which a community develops and grows (or declines) in terms of demand for community facilities and services to meet the specific needs of the changing population, thereby altering the very character of the community. Understanding the demographic character of a community and forecasting changes enables local officials to assess the need for additional or different types of public and private facilities and services required to meet the demands of the changing population.

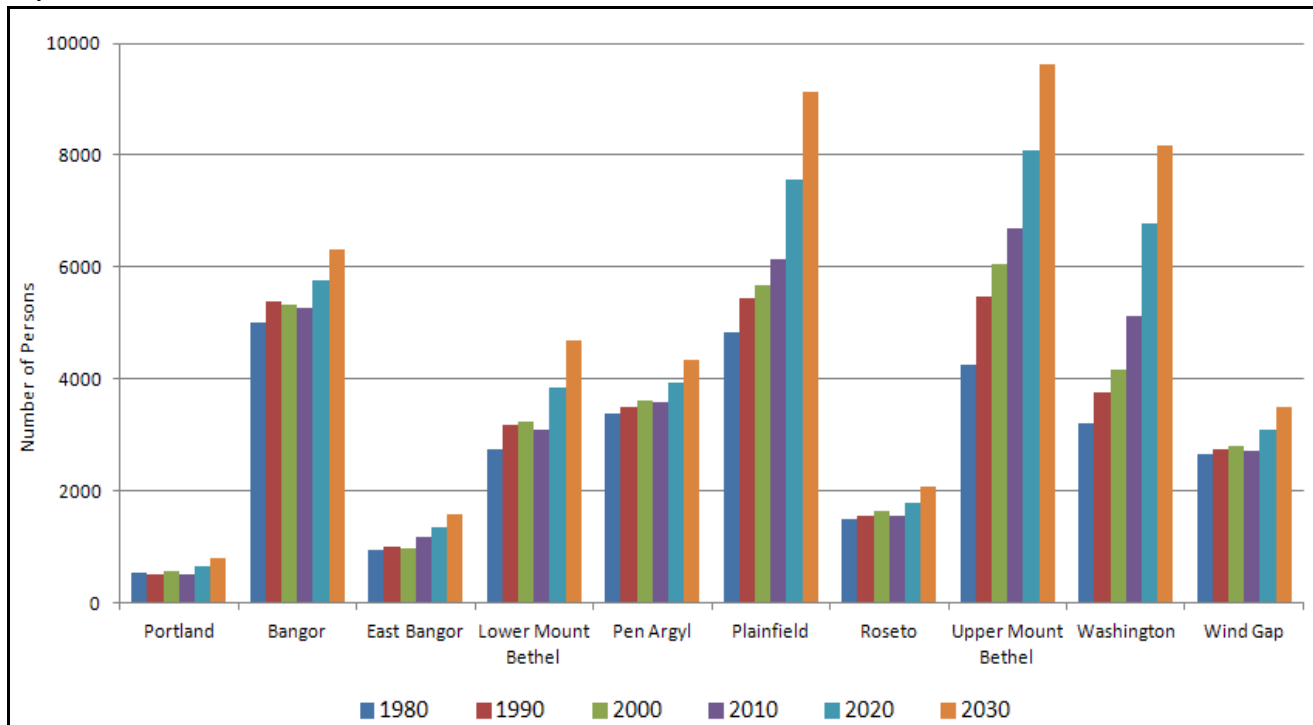
The following sections report and evaluate Portland’s population, housing, education and economic trends. Data for the Slate Belt Area municipalities, Northampton County and selected *benchmark* communities is included to provide a regional context.

**Population**

The number of people living in Portland has changed little since 1870 despite the dramatic social, economic and land use changes that have occurred in the region. Since 1980 the Slate Belt Area population increased by 24% and Northampton County by 32%, but, owing in part to its small land area and lack of central sewage, Portland experienced almost no change in population. Concurrently, the other Boroughs in the Slate belt increased in population somewhat and the Townships, with open land for development, showed strong growth.

<b>POPULATION</b>						
<b>U. S. Census; LVPC Projections</b>						
<b>Community</b>	<b>Total Persons</b>					
	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020*</b>	<b>2030*</b>
Portland	540	516	579	519	643	793
Bangor	5,006	5,383	5,319	5,273	5,765	6,310
East Bangor	955	1,006	979	1,172	1,359	1,570
Lower Mount Bethel	2,745	3,187	3,228	3,101	3,845	4,691
Pen Argyl	3,388	3,492	3,615	3,595	3,938	4,327
Plainfield	4,833	5,444	5,668	6,138	7,563	9,120
Roseto	1,484	1,555	1,653	1,567	1,798	2,064
Upper Mount Bethel	4,247	5,476	6,063	6,706	8,083	9,612
Washington	3,205	3,759	4,152	5,122	6,769	8,159
Wind Gap	2,651	2,741	2,812	2,720	3,082	3,492
Slate Belt	29,054	32,559	34,068	35,913	42,845	50,138
Bethlehem City	70,419	71,428	71,329	74,982	77,850	83,189
Easton City	26,027	26,276	26,263	26,800	28,295	30,801
Northampton County	225,418	247,105	267,066	297,735	329,516	365,766
Lehigh Valley	497,767	538,235	579,156	647,232	715,226	792,928

Population 1980 - 2030



Population Forecast

Estimating a municipality’s future population is a good way to anticipate the changing demand for community facilities and services and to assess the demand for land and the effect on such community characteristics as open space and housing affordability. In the case of the Borough, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission projects the population to

increase to almost 800 by 2030, a growth rate of more than 50%. The Slate Belt is projected to grow at a rate of 40% to more than 50,000 people.

PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION U. S. Census; LVPC Projections					
Community	Percent Change				
	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	1980-2010	2010-2030
Portland	-4.4%	12.2%	-10.4%	-3.9%	52.8%
Bangor	7.5%	-1.2%	-0.9%	5.3%	19.7%
East Bangor	5.3%	-2.7%	19.7%	22.7%	34.0%
Lower Mount Bethel	16.1%	1.3%	-3.9%	13.0%	51.3%
Pen Argyl	3.1%	3.5%	-0.6%	6.1%	20.4%
Plainfield	12.6%	4.1%	8.3%	27.0%	48.6%
Roseto	4.8%	6.3%	-5.2%	5.6%	31.7%
Upper Mount Bethel	28.9%	10.7%	10.6%	57.9%	43.3%
Washington	17.3%	10.5%	23.4%	59.8%	59.3%
Wind Gap	3.4%	2.6%	-3.3%	2.6%	28.4%
Slate Belt	12.1%	4.6%	5.4%	23.6%	39.6%
Bethlehem City	1.4%	0.0%	5.1%	6.5%	10.9%
Easton City	1.0%	0.0%	2.0%	3.0%	14.9%
Northampton County	9.6%	8.1%	11.5%	32.1%	22.9%
Lehigh Valley	8.1%	7.6%	11.8%	30.0%	22.5%

The migration from the greater New Jersey and New York metropolitan area which has been so volatile over the past thirty years and changing economic conditions make accurate projection difficult. Nevertheless, it appears that population in the Borough and the Slate Belt will continue to increase over the next ten to fifteen years. The recent completion of the Borough central sewage system, with changes to the zoning density limits, would provide the opportunity for increased residential density, redevelopment of excising lots, and more commercial development. This would be tempered by limited open land and flooding concerns. In any case, the Borough will remain a small, rural community over the long run. The Slate Belt as a whole has ample open land to accommodate the projected growth.

<b>POPULATION DENSITY</b> U. S. Census 2010		
<b>Community</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Persons per Sq. Mile</b>
Portland	0.5	1,058
Bangor	1.5	3,505
East Bangor	0.8	1,431
Lower Mount Bethel	23.8	130
Pen Argyl	1.3	2,678
Plainfield	24.8	248
Roseto	0.6	2,552
Upper Mount Bethel	42.4	158
Washington	17.8	288
Wind Gap	1.3	2,034
Slate Belt	114.9	313
Bethlehem City	19.1	3,925
Easton City	4.1	6,582
Northampton County	369.7	805

**Population Density**

Population density in the Slate Belt varies widely as would be expected when comparing older more developed boroughs to rural townships. Although Portland Borough is the smallest municipality in land area, at 1,058 persons per square mile, it has a substantially lower population density than the other Slate Belt Boroughs. This is likely due in part to the historic reliance on on-lot sewage disposal compared to the availability of central sewage in the other Boroughs.

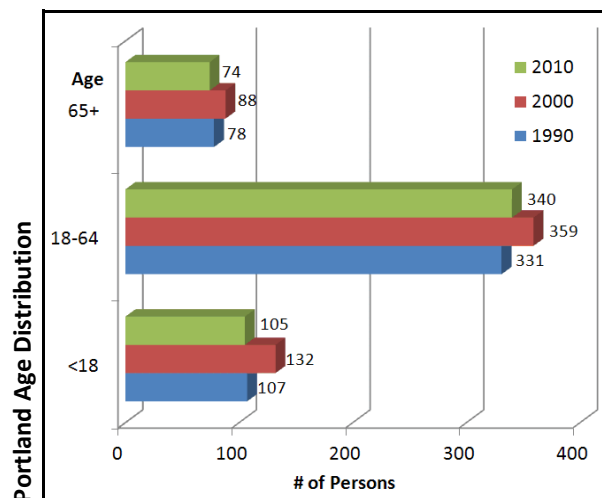
**Age of Population**

The age of a community's population is important in terms of the types of community facilities and services which must be provided. Many of the services which are age dependant are provided by public entities other than the Borough. For example, the number of children determines the size and type of educational facilities and services provided by the school district, while an aging population will require more social services from county and state agencies. An aging population might also influence the type of housing in a community, brining about the construction of age-qualified and continuing care retirement communities.

<b>PORTLAND AGE GROUPS</b> U. S. Census			
<b>Age</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
< 18 years #	107	132	105
%	20.7%	22.8%	20.2%
18-64 #	331	359	340
%	64.1%	62.0%	65.5%
65+ #	78	88	74
%	15.1%	15.2%	14.3%

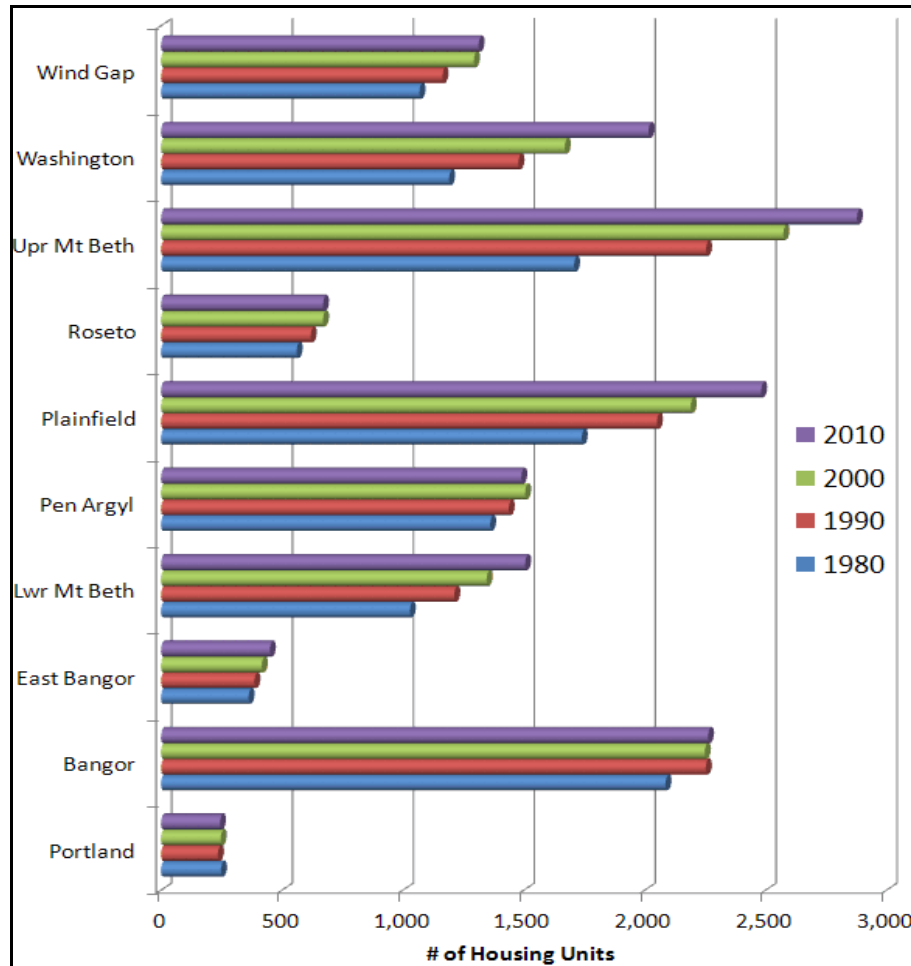
The Borough's younger population increased somewhat between 1990 and 2000, but declined over the next ten years to a lower proportion than in 1990. The change in age structure in the Borough is not significant in terms of the need for additional or different community facilities and services, and given the anticipated nominal increase in the number of residents through 2030 a major change in the need for age-related facilities and service is not anticipated. Portland age distribution is about in the middle range of the Slate Belt communities. Portland's median age increased by almost six years between 2000 and 2010 to 44.6 years, one of the greatest changes in the Slate Belt area, and almost four years higher than the County's 40.9 median age. The emigration of high school and college graduates to find employment may be a partial explanation.

<b>MEDIAN AGE</b> U. S. Census			
<b>Community</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Portland	34.2	39.0	44.6
Bangor	34.3	36.0	36.9
East Bangor	32.5	36.0	35.9
Lower Mount Bethel	34.0	40.3	46.1
Pen Argyl	34.6	36.0	37.6
Plainfield	36.1	42.1	45.5
Roseto	37.3	38.0	41.6
Upper Mount Bethel	36.7	41.1	45.4
Washington	39.9	42.4	45.1
Wind Gap	33.7	39.0	42.7



AGE OF POPULATION U. S. Census									
Community	Percent of Total Population								
	1990			2000			2010		
	<18	18-64	65+	<18	18-64	65+	<18	18-64	65+
Portland	20.7%	64.1%	15.1%	22.8%	62.0%	15.2%	20.2%	65.5%	14.3%
Bangor	24.6%	56.0%	19.4%	27.7%	55.9%	16.4%	26.1%	60.9%	13.0%
East Bangor	27.1%	61.6%	11.2%	24.8%	62.1%	13.1%	26.8%	62.5%	10.8%
Lower Mount Bethel	26.6%	62.0%	11.4%	24.3%	62.3%	13.4%	18.3%	65.2%	16.4%
Pen Argyl	24.3%	59.6%	16.1%	26.7%	58.1%	15.2%	25.2%	61.8%	13.0%
Plainfield	24.4%	63.3%	12.3%	22.2%	61.0%	16.7%	20.8%	61.7%	17.5%
Roseto	21.3%	57.4%	21.3%	25.2%	55.2%	19.5%	21.5%	60.4%	18.1%
Upper Mount Bethel	23.3%	65.5%	14.1%	22.8%	61.3%	15.9%	20.6%	63.8%	15.6%
Washington	21.6%	58.1%	20.3%	22.4%	58.4%	19.2%	21.3%	60.0%	18.7%
Wind Gap	22.4%	62.1%	15.1%	20.8%	59.9%	19.2%	19.9%	61.2%	18.9%
Slate Belt	23.9%	60.4%	15.7%	24.0%	59.4%	16.6%	22.0%	62.0%	16.0%
Bethlehem City	20.7%	62.0%	17.2%	21.0%	61.1%	17.9%	19.9%	63.9%	16.2%
Easton City	23.1%	62.7%	14.2%	23.3%	64.8%	11.9%	22.4%	67.3%	10.3%
Northampton County	23.2%	61.8%	15.0%	23.3%	60.9%	15.7%	21.9%	62.5%	15.7%

**Housing Units**



<b>HOUSING UNITS</b> U. S. Census				
<b>Community</b>	<b>Total Housing Units</b>			
	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Portland	248	235	247	244
Bangor	2,086	2,253	2,249	2,262
East Bangor	362	386	417	450
Lower Mount Bethel	1,029	1,213	1,347	1,506
Pen Argyl	1,361	1,438	1,506	1,490
Plainfield	1,740	2,051	2,191	2,482
Roseto	561	619	670	670
Upper Mount Bethel	1,708	2,254	2,574	2,878
Washington	1,191	1,478	1,670	2,016
Wind Gap	1,069	1,164	1,294	1,313
Slate Belt	11,355	13,091	14,165	15,184
Bethlehem City	27,368	28,486	29,631	31,221
Easton City	10,077	10,309	10,545	10,365
Northampton County	84,265	95,345	106,710	120,363

<b>HOUSING UNIT DENSITY</b> U. S. Census 2010		
<b>Community</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Units per Sq. Mile</b>
Portland	0.5	488
Bangor	1.5	1,508
East Bangor	0.8	563
Lower Mount Bethel	23.8	63
Pen Argyl	1.3	1,146
Plainfield	24.8	100
Roseto	0.6	1,117
Upper Mount Bethel	42.4	68
Washington	17.8	113
Wind Gap	1.3	1,010
Slate Belt	114.9	132
Bethlehem City	19.1	1,635
Easton City	4.1	2,528
Northampton County	369.7	326

<b>AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b> U. S. Census		
<b>Community</b>	<b># of Persons per Household</b>	
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Portland	2.45	2.33
Bangor	2.52	2.54
East Bangor	2.53	2.76
Lower Mount Bethel	2.63	2.47
Pen Argyl	2.52	2.56
Plainfield	2.62	2.61
Roseto	2.58	2.46
Upper Mount Bethel	2.56	2.60
Washington	2.52	2.61
Wind Gap	2.25	2.21
Slate Belt	2.56	2.57
Bethlehem City	2.34	2.34
Easton City	2.46	2.55
Northampton County	2.53	2.53

**Housing Units**

Over the past 30 years, the decade from 1980 to 1990 witnessed the greatest housing unit increase in the Slate Belt Area, and as would be expected, the greatest increases occurred in the Townships. In Portland, the number of units actually declined between 1980 and 1990 and between 2000 and 2010, with 244 units reported by the 2010 Census, almost equal to the 1980 number. Most of the units in the Borough are occupied, 223 of 244 in 2010, with most vacant units for rent or sale.

Housing unit density in the Borough is much lower than the other Slate Belt Boroughs with the exception of East Bangor, yet much higher than the Townships. In short, while significant growth occurred in the Slate Belt, housing unit numbers in the Borough have followed the path similar to the Borough population of little change. As is the case with its population, the new central sewage system, if accompanied by zoning residential density increases, will provide the possibility of increased housing unit construction in the Borough. Had a central sewage system been in place during the Portland’s development history, the character of the Borough would be very different.

**Households**

Portland’s household size decreased between 2000 and 2010, as in most other municipalities in the Commonwealth and the nation. The number of households in the Borough decreased from 236 in 2000 to 223 and the number of families decreased from 153 to 138. Households with children decreased from 71 to 54, clearly showing a key factor in the increase of the median age of the Borough. The number of households with individuals 65

**NOTE:**  
Additional housing details are included in *Housing Section*.



<b>TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS</b> U. S. Census		
	number	
	2000	2010
Total households	236	223
Families	153	138
with own children <18	68	49
Husband and wife family	115	94
with own children <18	50	28
Female householder only	22	30
with own children <18	10	15
Non-family households	83	85
Householder living alone	65	63
65 or older	25	19
Households with individuals <18	71	54
Households with individuals 65+	64	56
Average household size	2.45	2.33
Average family size	2.99	2.84

years and older also decreased, from 64 to 56, but did not offset the lower number of children. Average household and family size, and the age of population as discussed earlier, is clearly related to the decrease in the number of families with children and the increase in single-parent households.

**Higher Education**

The residents of Portland Borough and all Slate Belt municipalities have attained higher levels of education since 2000, with Portland showing both the highest level reported in the 2007-11 Census American Community Survey and the greatest gain since 2000. The proportions in the Higher Education Table include residents over the age of 25 with some formal college education, associate degrees, bachelor’s degrees or advanced degrees.

**Income**

Median household income provides an indication of the economic status of the Borough when compared to the Slate Belt Area and the larger region. Median household income in Portland decreased substantially between 2000 and 2011 and is the lowest of all Slate Belt municipalities. Many of the Boroughs households are obviously feeling the effects of the lagging economy and this is reflected in housing affordability as discussed in the *Housing Section*.

<b>HIGHER EDUCATION</b> U.S. CENSUS		
Community	Population with Some Higher Education	
	2000 Census	2007-11 ACS*
Portland	34.2%	51.2%
Bangor	31.4%	37.2%
East Bangor	27.0%	39.6%
Lower Mount Bethel	37.8%	42.8%
Pen Argyl	39.8%	42.9%
Plainfield	35.7%	49.6%
Roseto	31.3%	43.1%
Upper Mount Bethel	39.6%	42.1%
Washington	36.9%	44.7%
Wind Gap	28.1%	39.8%
Slate Belt	35.4%	43.0%
Bethlehem City	45.2%	51.9%
Easton City	35.2%	41.9%
Northampton County	44.2%	52.0%

\*2007-11 American Community Survey, U.S. Census

<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b> U.S. CENSUS			
Community	2000 Adjusted*	2007-11 ACS**	Change
Portland	\$48,106	\$39,625	-17.6%
Bangor	\$47,525	\$51,507	8.4%
East Bangor	\$47,586	\$61,250	28.7%
Lower Mount Bethel	\$67,632	\$64,672	-4.4%
Pen Argyl	\$52,337	\$50,156	-4.2%
Plainfield	\$64,032	\$65,870	2.9%
Roseto	\$52,005	\$51,250	-1.5%
Upper Mount Bethel	\$59,588	\$60,065	0.8%
Washington	\$63,562	\$61,750	-2.9%
Wind Gap	\$45,758	\$48,238	5.4%
Slate Belt	not avail.	not avail.	not avail.
Bethlehem City	not avail.	not avail.	not avail.
Easton City	\$43,318	\$39,488	-8.8%
Northampton County	\$59,008	\$60,540	2.6%

\*2000 Census adjusted to 2011 per Consumer Price Index.  
\*\*2007-11 American Community Survey, U.S. Census

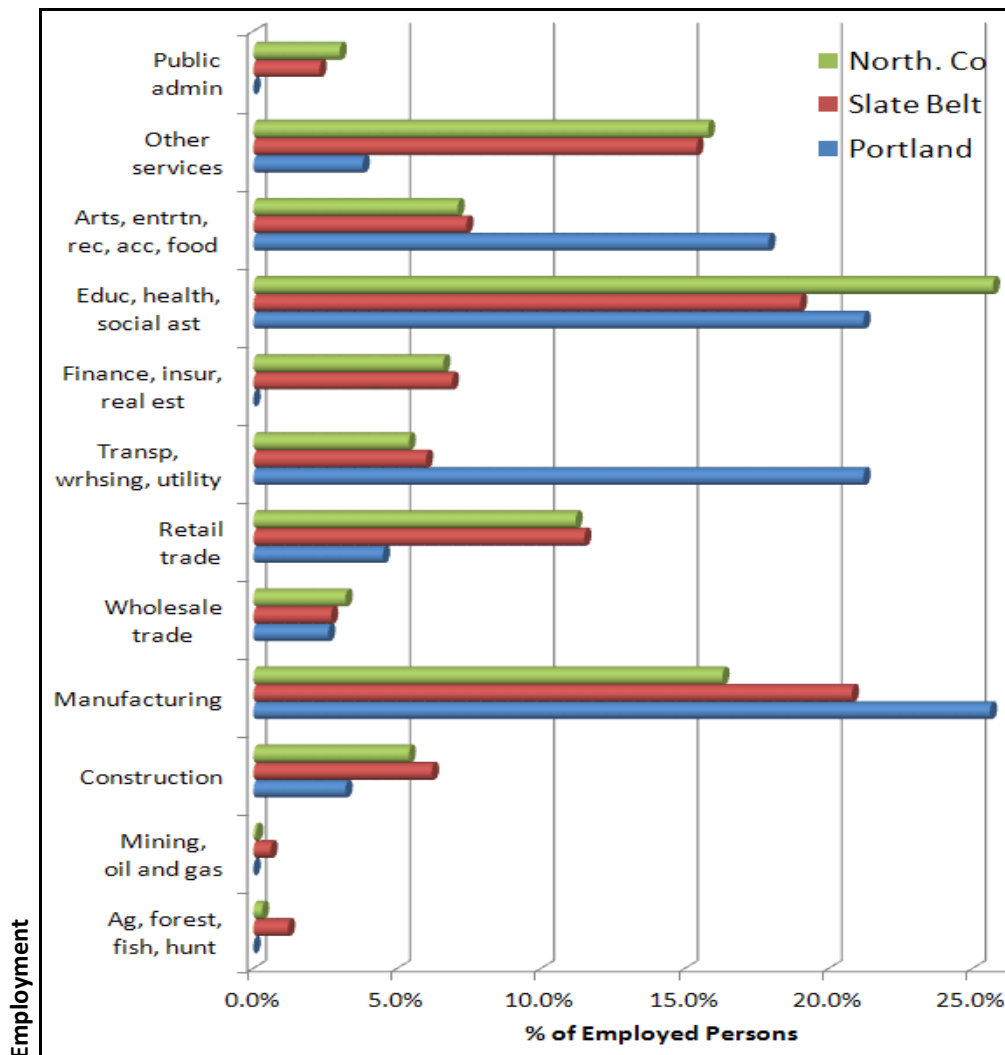
**American Community Survey:** After the 2000 Census, the Census long form became the American Community Survey which collects long-form-type information throughout the decade. The ACS includes the basic short-form questions and detailed questions about population and housing. ACS is a nationwide, continuous survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, housing, social, and economic data every year.

**Poverty**

Poverty status is another indicator of a community’s economic well-being. The number of Portland residents below the poverty level increased substantially between 2000 and 2007-2011, from 35 to 83 persons, while the Slate Belt rate increased minimally. The increase puts the Borough’s rate on par with Bethlehem City’s rate and suggests an increase in the Borough of unemployed persons or families on public assistance or fixed incomes.

POVERTY RATE U.S. CENSUS				
Community	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2007-11 ACS*
Portland	8.0%	5.4%	6.0%	16.6%
Slate Belt	7.2%	5.4%	7.4%	7.6%
Bethlehem City	11.1%	13.0%	15.0%	17.6%
Easton City	15.6%	13.7%	16.0%	22.4%
Northampton County	7.8%	7.3%	7.9%	9.1%

\*2007-11 American Community Survey, U.S. Census



<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>						
<b>2007-11 American Community Survey, U.S. Census</b>						
	<b>Portland</b>		<b>Slate Belt</b>	<b>Beth. City</b>	<b>Easton City</b>	<b>North. County</b>
# employed persons 16 years +	156		17,781	33,444	11,018	141,99
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	0	0.0%	1.2%	2.0%	0.9%	0.3%
Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction	0	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Construction	5	3.2%	6.2%	4.9%	6.0%	5.4%
Manufacturing	40	25.6%	20.8%	12.5%	16.6%	16.3%
Wholesale trade	4	2.6%	2.7%	3.6%	2.0%	3.2%
Retail trade	7	4.5%	11.5%	10.7%	11.8%	11.2%
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	33	21.2%	6.0%	4.6%	4.0%	5.4%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental/leasing	0	0.0%	6.9%	5.4%	5.2%	6.6%
Educational services, health care, social assistance	33	21.2%	19.0%	29.8%	23.9%	25.7%
Arts, entertain, recreation, accommodations, food	28	17.9%	7.4%	9.0%	9.7%	7.1%
Other services	6	3.8%	15.4%	16.8%	16.3%	15.8%
Public administration	0	0.0%	2.3%	2.5%	3.6%	3.0%
<b>OCCUPATION</b>						
Management, business, financial	20	12.8%	10.9%	11.1%	8.4%	13.4%
Computer, engineering, science	2	1.3%	4.0%	5.3%	2.8%	5.0%
Education, legal, community service, arts, media	21	13.5%	7.4%	12.3%	10.7%	10.5%
Health care practitioners and technical	0	0.0%	3.9%	5.4%	2.9%	5.7%
Service	28	17.9%	16.7%	19.0%	22.0%	16.0%
Sales and office	34	21.8%	24.8%	25.6%	22.0%	25.4%
Natural resources, construction, maintenance	3	1.9%	12.2%	6.9%	10.3%	8.9%
Production, transportation, material moving	48	30.8%	20.0%	14.4%	20.9%	15.1%
<b>SECTOR</b>						
Private company	119	76.3%	75.6%	69.5%	71.4%	70.8%
Private not-for-profit	7	4.5%	6.4%	14.5%	11.4%	10.2%
Government	17	10.9%	8.9%	10.3%	11.1%	11.2%
Employed in own business	10	6.4%	8.9%	5.8%	6.0%	7.7%
Unpaid family workers	3	1.9%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%

**Employment**

Working age residents of Portland Borough are employed at a variety of activities as reported by the Census as industry of employment. One-fourth of Borough working residents are employed in manufacturing, which is somewhat higher than the Slate Belt but significantly higher than Northampton County; likely due to nearby industrial plants and easy access to similar areas in New Jersey. The transportation and warehousing and utility industries are also important and with manufacturing account for almost half of the employment for Portland’s households. This is also reflected in the occupation data which shows 31% production, transportation and material moving workers. Sales and office and service occupations account for another 39% of workers.

Most of the Borough’s employed residents work for private companies, which is on par with the Slate Belt and somewhat higher than the County. Another 10% are employed by government which includes school district employees.

**Travel Time to Work**

The average travel time to work for Borough residents increased significantly between 1990 and 2000, but remain fairly stable over the next ten years. The data also show that many residents travel well beyond the Slate belt area to their place of employment.

<b>TRAVEL TIME TO WORK</b>			
<b>U.S. CENSUS</b>			
<b>Community</b>	<b>1990 Census</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2007-11 ACS*</b>
	minutes		
Portland	20.0	33.2	32.3
Slate Belt	22.2	26.0	30.4
Bethlehem City	18.0	19.7	21.8
Easton City	19.4	26.2	28.6
Northampton County	20.5	22.3	27.5
*2007-11 American Community Survey, U.S. Census			

**PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- It is clear that Portland Borough’s population has remained relatively stable over the past 30 years.
- The lack of a central sewage disposal system is a key factor. The platting of larger lots to accommodate on-site sewage disposal systems resulted in a lower housing density and used more of the available land.
- The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission population projections for the Borough appear optimistic. However, the new central sewage system does provide an opportunity for higher density development on the remaining vacant land, redevelopment of existing platted lots, and additional housing units above commercial buildings.
- Even if the Borough population increases somewhat, the relatively small number of new residents should not dictate the expansion of any Borough facilities and services.
- The Borough’s population is aging and incomes are lower than other Slate Belt communities. The Borough must carefully assess the cost of new or expanded services in terms of the effect on taxes.
- The vast majority of Portland residents are employed outside of the Borough requiring relatively long commutes. The Borough will continue to work with area organizations to promote local business development.

# APPENDIX

# STREET INVENTORY and EVALUATION

Street Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Inspection: \_\_\_\_\_

**SEGMENT** Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning: \_\_\_\_\_ End: \_\_\_\_\_

## WIDTH

Travelway: \_\_\_\_\_ feet Notes:

Shoulders: \_\_\_\_\_ feet Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes:

## PAVEMENT

### Paved Street Problem Severity:

- Low** - Good crown, little water ponding or evidence of the same; few if any pot holes; little or no alligator, block or transverse cracking; little or no noticeable tire wear rutting; little or no asphalt bleeding; few patches.
- Medium** - Little crown or a bowl shaped surface, moderate water ponding or evidence of the same; pot holes less than 2 inches deep and 1 foot in diameter; some alligator, block or random cracking which can be corrected with normal crack sealing; deteriorated crack sealing; some tire wear rutting; minor asphalt bleeding; some, but not extensive patching.
- High** - Large amounts of water ponding or evidence of the same; pot holes more than 2 inches deep and 1 foot in diameter; alligator, block or random cracking which cannot be corrected with normal crack sealing; severely deteriorated crack sealing; significant tire wear rutting; large areas of asphalt bleeding; extensive patching.

Major Problems / Corrective Actions:

## PARALLEL DRAINAGE

### Problem Severity

- Low** - Small amount of ponding water or evidence of the same; little or no vegetation or debris.
- Medium** - Moderate amount of ponding water or evidence of the same; some vegetation or debris; erosion of ditches into shoulders or roadway
- High** - Large amounts of ponding water or evidences of the same; water running across or down street; a large amount of vegetation or debris; significant erosion of ditches into shoulder or roadway.
- Severe** - No parallel ditches along street; erosion has created ditches

Major Problems / Corrective Actions:

**CULVERTS, DRAINAGE STRUCTURES and TAIL DITCHES**

Note location, size and condition of problem culverts, drainage structures and/or tail ditches.

**OVERALL CONDITION RATING**

- 5/excellent** - A newly constructed street. Excellent crown, drainage and surface.
- 4/good** - Recently regraded or paved, good crown and drainage and adequate surface layer.
- 3/fair** - Needs routine regrading, patching or crack sealing; or minor ditch maintenance.
- 2/poor** - Needs additional aggregate, chipping or pave; or major drainage maintenance.
- 1/failed** - Complete rebuilding required.

**ALIGNMENT - HORIZONTAL and VERTICAL**Problem Severity

- Low** - Few if any sharp curves; no grades in excess of 5 percent.
- Medium** - Some sharp curves; some grades in excess of 5 percent, but no severe grades in excess of 10 percent..
- High** - A combination of sharp curves and grades over 10 percent.

**TRAFFIC VOLUME**

- Low** - Serves less than ten dwellings with little through truck traffic.
- Medium** - Serves between ten and fifty dwellings with little through truck traffic.
- High** - Serves more than fifty dwellings, or carries more through truck traffic .

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

Notes on any special features such as guiderails, signs, utility poles, etc. which need attention or which are required.

**OTHER COMMENTS**