

# Balance

The Growth Management Element



## Urban Growth Area Strategy

The Urban Growth Area (UGA) Strategy builds on Lancaster County's present growth management program, which has resulted in adoption of 13 Urban Growth Areas involving 43 municipalities within the County. These UGAs focus growth where services currently exist or are anticipated in the future. Existing policy states that two times the amount of Buildable Land needed for the next 5- and 10-year periods should be provided within Urban Growth Areas as well as the infrastructure to support projected land development.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

**1. Increase the proportion, density, and intensity of development in UGAs** by achieving the following countywide targets for development by 2030:

- Residential Dwellings:** Accommodate 85% of the total increase in dwelling units in UGAs.
- Residential Density:** Achieve an average density of 7.5 dwelling units per net acre on Buildable Land in UGAs.
- Employment:** Accommodate 66% of the total increase in employment acreage within UGAs. (This is a preliminary target pending confirmation through development of an Economic Development Element recommended by this Update as a seventh Functional Element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan).
- Reinvestment:** Accommodate 12% of new dwelling units and 55% of new jobs in Reinvestment Areas: Lancaster City, the Boroughs, and developed land in Townships' UGAs.



Lancaster County's new communities, such as Veranda in East Hempfield Township, should reflect the character of the County's traditional development patterns and styles, while providing pedestrian-friendly environments and open space.

**3. Improve the character of new development in UGAs** in order to enhance residents' quality of life:

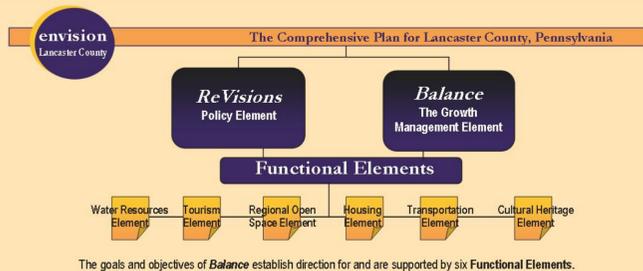
- Mixed-Use Centers:** Focus new development in Mixed-Use Centers (housing, retail, and commercial Mixed-Use Centers). A Mixed-Use Center is a concentrated area of development within an Urban Growth Area that has a designated primary use (housing, employment, or retail), while permitting and encouraging a range of other complementary uses.
- Provide compact, pedestrian-friendly environments:** open space, and natural and historic resources integrated into development patterns, as well as opportunities for walking, biking, and transit use.

### Key Strategies & Targets

On a countywide basis, existing Urban Growth Areas contain sufficient land to accommodate new growth through 2030, if **Balance** is fully implemented.

- An Enhanced Urban Growth Area Strategy**, including a redevelopment strategy for Lancaster City, the Boroughs, and urbanized areas of Townships.
- A Rural Strategy** to reduce sprawl; maintain and enhance agriculture; and protect natural, cultural, historic, and architectural resources.
- An Implementation Strategy** designed to provide the County and municipalities with tools to implement the Urban Growth Area and Rural Strategies.
- Targets for achieving Implementation:**
  - Direct 85% of new growth (dwelling units) to Urban Growth Areas.
  - Limit new growth (dwelling units) in Rural Areas to 15% of County total.
  - Net average of 7.5 dwelling units per acre in Urban Growth Areas.
  - Net average of 2.5 dwelling units per acre in Village Growth Areas.

The Growth Management Element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, entitled **Balance**, is designed to help achieve and sustain Lancasterians' Vision of a Balanced community, where urban centers prosper, natural landscapes flourish, and farming is strengthened as an integral component of our diverse economy and cultural heritage. **Balance** reaffirms the validity of the Growth Area concept implemented under the previous Growth Management Element, while placing equal emphasis on designating Rural Areas.



**Envision Lancaster County** is Lancaster County's Comprehensive Plan, which consists of three major components:

- The Growth Management Element Update (Balance - 2006)**
- The Policy Element (ReVisions - 1999)**
- The Functional Elements:**
  - Cultural Heritage Element (Heritage - 2006)
  - Housing Element Update (Choices - 2006)
  - Regional Open Space (1992)
  - Strategic Tourism Development (Tourism - 2005)
  - Transportation (2005)
  - Water Resources (1997)

**Balance** establishes a framework for future land use and development consistent with the Vision and Key Focus Areas in **ReVisions** and identifies:

- Areas appropriate for urban growth and reinvestment.
- Areas to maintain for agriculture, natural resources, and similar uses.
- Strategies and tools to shape growth.

**Balance** builds on previous plans, while setting new direction for 2030:

- Reaffirms Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)**, while setting new targets for density and intensity.
- Proposes Designated Rural Areas** where agricultural, natural, historic, architectural, and scenic resources are protected.
- Includes targets to reduce growth in rural Lancaster County**, while designating Rural Centers for development that would otherwise lead to rural sprawl.
- Provides a comprehensive action strategy, including a Smart Growth Toolbox**, with policy, regulatory, and financial tools for plan implementation.

**Planning and Community Participation Process**

A 60-person Task Force, appointed by the Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC) in December 2003, led the Update of the Growth Management Element. A Steering Committee and subcommittees were established to address specific topics, and a consultant team led by Wallace, Roberts & Todd, LLC assisted with the Update.

**Several thousand people provided input to the Update through the Community Participation Process, which included:**

- Meetings with all 60 municipal managers/secretaries.
- Task Force tours/workshops in all regions of the County.
- A telephone survey conducted by Franklin & Marshall College's Floyd Institute.
- A three-part public meeting series.
- Six presentations to organizations and municipal groups.
- Circulation of a Summary Draft Update for public input.
- Circulation of a Full Draft Update for public input.
- Progress reports in LCPC's *FYI* newsletter and on the LCPC website.
- Three **Lancaster New Era** Citizen Guides.
- Extensive media coverage of Task Force activities.

**Major Areas of Public Consensus**

- Preserve farmland and rural character.
- Guide new development to areas where services are located.
- Enhance the livability and sustainability of the City, Boroughs, and urbanized areas of Townships.
- Increase housing choice and affordability, i.e., mixture of single family homes, condos, and town homes (rental and ownership) at various price ranges.
- Balance is important.

## Rural Strategy

The new Rural Strategy is designed to maintain the resources and traditional ties to the land that define Lancaster County's rural character. Consistent with citizen input, the intent is to eliminate any perception of Designated Rural Areas as holding areas for future development. Rather, Lancaster County in cooperation with regional and local planning and regulatory agencies should seek to maintain rural resources and uses within them and preclude urban development.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

**1. Establish Designated Rural Areas** to sustain rural resources, character, and way-of-life and preclude incompatible development. Four types of Rural Area designations are proposed: Agricultural Areas, Agricultural with Natural Areas, Natural Areas, and Rural Centers.

- Designated Agricultural Areas** contain the greatest intensity of agricultural resources and uses, and should be managed to preserve productive farmland, promote a healthy agricultural industry, and maintain scenic and historic rural landscapes.
- Designated Agricultural with Natural Areas** contain agricultural resources and uses mixed with a significant proportion of environmentally sensitive resources and should be managed to preserve productive farmland and sensitive natural features.
- Designated Natural Areas** have high scenic, recreational, and natural resource value and should be managed to protect these resources.
- Rural Centers** are areas of existing development to which rural development is to be guided. Rural Centers will accommodate development that would otherwise occur as scattered sprawl.



Lancaster County's Agricultural Industry is the linchpin of its rural economy. There are approximately 10,500 farmers/farm employees and almost 16,000 employees in the food processing industry in the County.



Agriculture creates approximately one in five (51289) jobs in the County through direct farm employment and impacts related industries such as tourism, hospitality, agricultural support services, and food processing.

### Types of Proposed Rural Centers:

- Village Growth Areas**  
Existing areas of 50 or more dwelling units as presently designated through municipal and multi-municipal planning processes.
- Crossroads Communities**  
Existing communities of 20-50 dwelling units.
- Rural Business Areas**  
Existing developed areas with the potential for additional development.
- Rural Neighborhoods**  
Areas of existing residential development with potential for additional development.

Three additional types to be identified on a case by case basis by municipal officials:

**2. Reduce nonrural development outside of Urban Growth Areas** and direct it to areas of existing development (**Rural Centers**) to maintain the integrity of Designated Rural Areas and the character of traditional, small-scale settlements.

**3. Maintain the viability of the rural economy**, including agriculture and other economic activities that depend on rural resources or a rural location:

- Building on the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Lancaster County Agriculture, implement a comprehensive strategy to sustain a viable agricultural industry and preserve farmland.
- Address the needs of the rural economy in an Economic Development Element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.

**Rural Economy**  
The Rural Economy refers to the economic and business activities supported by Lancaster County's rural resource base. The **agricultural industry** is the largest sector of the rural economy. It includes both farming and the farm-support businesses and related infrastructure that are necessary to maintain a viable agricultural base. Other components of the Rural Economy include:

- Rural enterprises (light manufacturing of products such as furniture, which takes place both on and off farms in rural parts of the County).
- Local retail uses that cater to the needs of rural residents.
- Home-based businesses.
- Rural resource-based industries and tourism.

## Implementation Strategy

The Implementation Strategy is designed to provide municipalities and the County with the tools needed to effectively implement the Urban Growth Area and Rural Strategies.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

**1. County Action Program** to facilitate collaboration with municipalities, communities, and nonprofit groups for implementation of **Balance**.

Key Early Actions include:

- A cross-acceptance process with local officials for implementing rural land use designations.
- Development of the Smart Growth Toolbox as a web-based resource.

Longer-range/ongoing programs:

- Education, outreach, and technical assistance to municipalities.
- Development of updates to the Open Space and the Water Resources Elements, and the creation of a new Economic Development Element.
- A review process to ensure consistency between County and local plans, ordinances, and projects.
- Monitor legislative issues relevant to implementation.

**2. Smart Growth Funding Program** for implementation, including:

- Development of a new Lancaster County Smart Growth Grant Program, which would combine existing grant programs with new ones to help with implementation.
- Targeting of funding to support **Balance** and other elements of the County Comprehensive Plan.
- Leverage other available funding.

**3. Availability of a Smart Growth Toolbox** that describes the most innovative and effective policy, regulatory, and capital investment tools to help municipalities and the County implement **Balance**.

**4. Monitoring Program** for measuring the progress of implementation. This program includes upgrading LCPC's **Growth Tracking System** to monitor progress in achieving the targets set by **Balance** and the availability of land within Urban Growth Areas to meet projected demand. It also includes a set of **Growth Management Indicators** for measuring progress on meeting strategies and objectives, and for determining future changes needed to improve the County's growth management program.

Several ideas are critical to the success of Implementation:

- Municipalities, the County, and public infrastructure and service providers must coordinate their policies, regulations, and investments to achieve the Urban Growth Area and Rural Strategies.
- The County must provide on-going assistance and support to municipalities and others involved in implementation.
- Funding commitments at multiple levels, including county, local, and outside sources, are needed for implementation.
- Ongoing review, monitoring, and updating of **Balance** will be required for successful implementation.

## CONCLUSION

Full implementation of **Balance** is necessary if we are to preserve Lancaster County's treasured resources and enhance our quality of life, while accommodating projected growth and growing the local economy.

**Balance** lays out comprehensive strategies and tools that can be used to:

- Preserve treasured natural, cultural, historic, and architectural resources.
- Promote reinvestment in Lancaster City, the Boroughs, and developed areas in Townships' Urban Growth Areas.
- Expand housing choices and affordability in Growth Areas.
- Enhance character and form of development.
- Support conditions for a sustainable economy and agricultural industry.



The time for **Balance** is now.

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The complete document for **Balance**, The Growth Management Element, adopted in April 2006, is available at: [www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning/growthmanagement](http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning/growthmanagement)



The Comprehensive Plan for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

The GROWTH MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK MAP provides a generalized representation of the Countywide Vision as expressed in the Urban Growth Area Strategy and the Rural Strategy. This map is intended for use as a guide for more detailed planning and implementation efforts. Further analysis of local conditions through municipal and multi-municipal planning efforts is needed to define how and where the categories shown on the map and the associated recommendations and tools contained in **Balance** apply at the local level.

