

# Guide to the Landscape Character Sectors of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

February 2025

# Acknowledgments



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# **INTRODUCTION & MAPPING**



Natural Spaces

Agricultural Areas

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## Identifying Landscape Character Sectors

*Places2040*, the comprehensive plan for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, included a planning tool known as a ‘transect’ – basically, a framework used to organize all land within our county’s borders into seven distinct sectors. As depicted above, these sectors range from Lancaster County’s renowned natural and rural areas at one transect end, to more densely populated urban cores at its opposite end. Customary land use patterns, dominant building types, typical streetscapes, parking arrangements, and common outdoor gathering spaces help to distinguish each sector from the others. This *Guide to the Landscape Character Sectors of Lancaster County* provides general mapping of sector locations, brief overviews of each sector type, and a summary of place-based planning goals to reinforce our county’s distinctive identity.

## Character Sector Usefulness

A basic understanding of these seven Character Sectors is essential for the preservation and conservation of our most beloved landscapes. As we collectively plan for new or redeveloped places needed to house and employ Lancaster County residents, such understanding is also critical. This Guide is primarily intended for those who are tasked with balancing preservation and growth strategies, but it is also relevant to all who seek more livable and sustainable built environments surrounded by the natural and agricultural areas for which our county is best known.

Lancaster County contains 60 municipalities, and each municipality has its own Zoning Ordinance. Cumulatively, approximately 540 separate zoning districts form a complex and often inconsistent muddle of regulations to be navigated by property owners, developers, design consultants, and business entrepreneurs who want to invest in Lancaster County’s growth. As proposed

in *places2040*, municipal leaders could shift their focus from conventional zoning districts to **places defined by shared natural and cultural patterns**. After all, our county’s economic markets, natural systems, and infrastructure networks are not typically limited by zoning district boundaries and municipal borders. There are, however, some regional differences that must be respected and celebrated despite Character Sector classification. For example, all boroughs have an urban core, but each also has key differences that must be recognized via any place-based planning efforts. This guide simply highlights the **typically shared characteristics** of each sector.

Whether classified here as preserved natural spaces, agricultural areas, rural or suburban communities, urban perimeters, downtown cores, or special districts, e.g., college campuses and office parks, all common transect areas should have somewhat similar zoning requirements regardless of their location within the county. For example, all rural communities should apply consistent policies to effectively manage dwelling unit types, building setbacks, streetscape requirements, and redevelopment densities to preserve landscape character. The same is true for all other Character Sectors.

## Guide Format

Following its Landscape Character Sector maps, this guide provides general observations regarding the land use patterns typically found in each of the seven transect areas. It then offers ‘bite-sized’ *places2040* recommendations for each sector, and it summarizes all such recommendations for easy sector comparison. When used in conjunction with our forthcoming *Simplified Zoning* document, this guide will assist those evaluating future proposals for place-based land development, redevelopment, conservation, and preservation. Note that *places2040* uses the term ‘zone’ instead of ‘sector’, but this terminology has been updated to avoid potential confusion with zoning practices.

## OVERVIEW OF ALL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SECTORS

This matrix introduces basic patterns found in each of Lancaster County’s seven Character Sectors, while more specific information is provided on the following pages of this guide.

Natural Spaces and Agricultural Areas include sub-sections due to their slightly different preservation and conservation components. Similarly, Rural Communities are separated by their traditional core areas and other developed lands surrounding them. Lastly, Urban Core sub-sections separate Lancaster City from the county’s 18 Boroughs.

### Natural Spaces

#### Preservation Areas:

- Encompass large contiguous areas of exceptional natural lands, including woodlands and wetlands. They also include natural resource-based industries such as quarries and sustainable timbering.
- Provide ecological benefits such as improved air and water quality and habitat protection. They may also provide scenic and recreational value.

#### Conservation Areas:

- Comprised of important natural lands that are smaller and more fragmented than those within Natural Preservation sectors. They include some low-density uses and natural resource-based industries such as quarries and sustainable timbering.
- Buffer and enhance the ecological benefits of Natural Preservation Areas. May also provide scenic and recreational value.



### Agricultural Areas

#### Preservation Areas:

- Made up of large contiguous areas of farmland with fewer incompatible land-use and utility intrusions. Include natural resource-based industries such as quarries and sustainable timbering.
- Contain the best combination of prime soils, aquifer recharge areas, and other physical characteristics that produce economically sustainable yields.

#### Conservation Areas:

- Consist of smaller, more fragmented areas of farmland with some incompatible land-use and utility intrusions. They include some other low-density uses and natural resource-based industries such as quarries and sustainable timbering.
- Contain a patchwork of prime soils combined with lesser quality soils that are vital to sustaining the rural economy.



### Rural Communities

#### Core Areas:

- Identified by moderate to higher density uses with traditional village scale and character.
- Often comprised of detached residential dwelling units on smaller lots, mixed with small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

#### Other Developed Lands:

- Typically, defined by low to moderate density uses with automobile-oriented patterns. They often lack traditional village scale and character.
- Characterized by single-family detached residential dwelling units on larger lots, sometimes mixed with small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.



## Suburban Communities

- Typically identified by low to moderate density and automobile-oriented land uses separated from one another.
- Primarily comprised of single-family detached residential dwellings on larger lots, with commercial uses typically located in strip centers, big-box stores, and shopping malls.
- Have transportation networks with minimal street connectivity and limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.



## Urban Perimeters

- Often have higher density and traditional urban patterns within walking distance of Urban Cores. They may include some villages and Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs).
- Comprised of attached and detached residential dwellings on smaller lots, mixed with small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.
- Include a more connected transportation network with some pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.



## Urban Cores

### City:

- Include the Central Business District and adjacent areas of downtown Lancaster City with the highest density and traditional urban scale.
- Primarily made up of mixed-use 3- to 5-story buildings, with a few structures approaching 20 stories. Residential dwellings often exist above commercial uses.
- Has a highly connected transportation network and includes extensive pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

### Boroughs:

- Include Central Business Districts and adjacent areas of borough downtowns with higher densities and traditional urban scale.
- Primarily comprised of mixed-use 2- to 3-story buildings, with a few structures approaching 10 stories. Some residential dwellings exist above ground-floor commercial uses.
- Have highly connected transportation networks and include some pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.



## Special Districts

- Typically contain a single large-scale commercial, office, industrial, or institutional use, often in a campus-like setting. Uses may include, but are not limited to, business parks, airports, school campuses, municipal facilities, and natural resource-based industries such as quarries.
- With the exception of college campuses, transportation networks typically have limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along with minimal street connectivity.

### Notes:

1. *Special Districts are also found in rural areas, but these were not identified as part of the places2040 planning process. In the future, the Lancaster County Planning Department will identify these areas in the context of place-based planning and analysis to implement places2040.*
2. *In this plan, the term “Special District” does not refer to a governing or taxing entity. Instead, it applies to certain land uses and patterns that do not fit easily into other Landscape Character Sectors. It’s a term commonly used in transect-based planning.*



# OVERVIEW MAP OF ALL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SECTORS

Please see pages 10–13 for map enlargements

## Character Sectors

### Natural Spaces

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Agricultural Areas

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Rural Communities

- Cores
- Other Developed Areas

### Suburban Communities

- 

### Urban Perimeters

- 

### Urban Cores

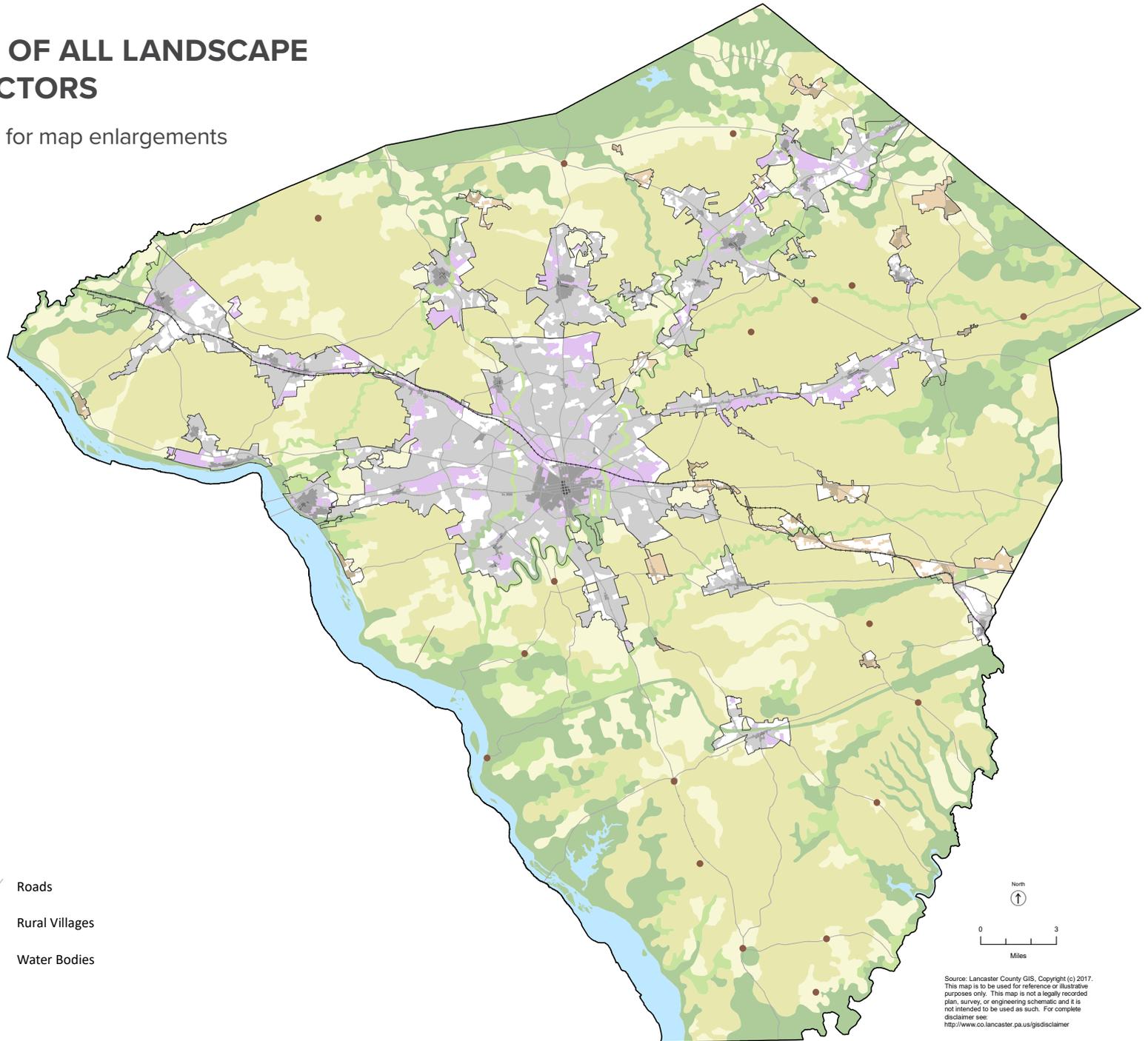
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### Special Districts

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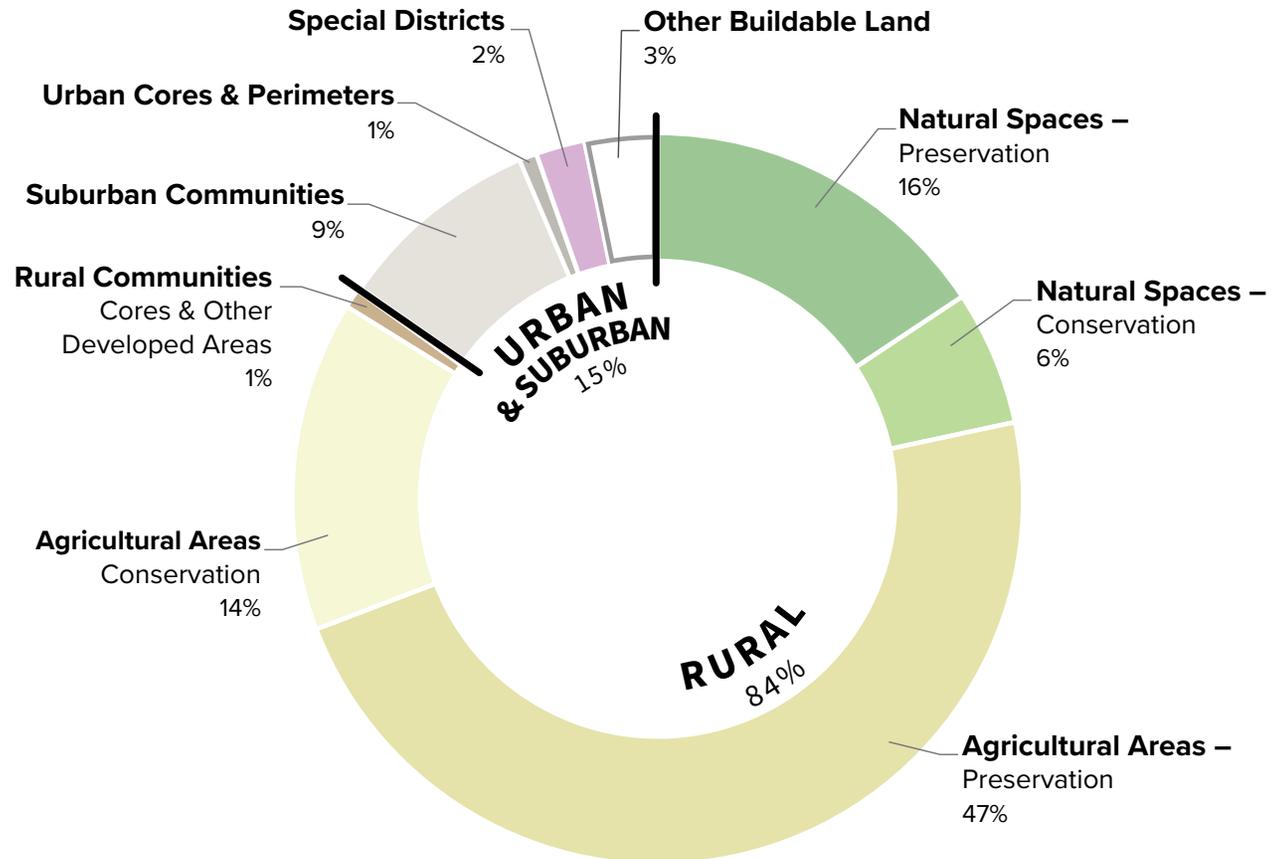
## Other Elements

- Growth Areas
- Roads
- Buildable Land
- Rural Villages
- Amtrak Line
- Water Bodies



Source: Lancaster County GIS. Copyright (c) 2017.  
 This map is to be used for reference or illustrative purposes only. This map is not a legally recorded plan, survey, or engineering schematic and it is not intended to be used as such. For complete disclaimer see: <http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/gisdisclaimer>

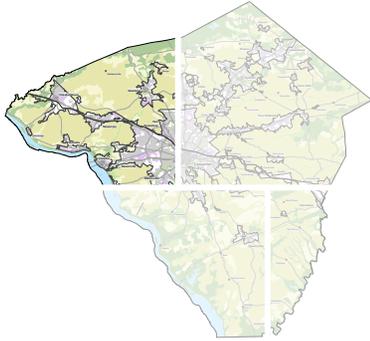
# PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL COUNTY LAND AREA ATTRIBUTED TO EACH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SECTOR



Notes:

- Due to mathematical rounding, whole number percentages only equate to 99%.
- 'Other Buildable Land' is defined as generally undeveloped sites located within established Growth Areas.

# NORTHWEST QUADRANT ENLARGEMENT



## Character Sectors

### Natural Spaces

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Agricultural Areas

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Rural Communities

- Cores
- Other Developed Areas

### Suburban Communities

- 

### Urban Perimeters

- 

### Urban Cores

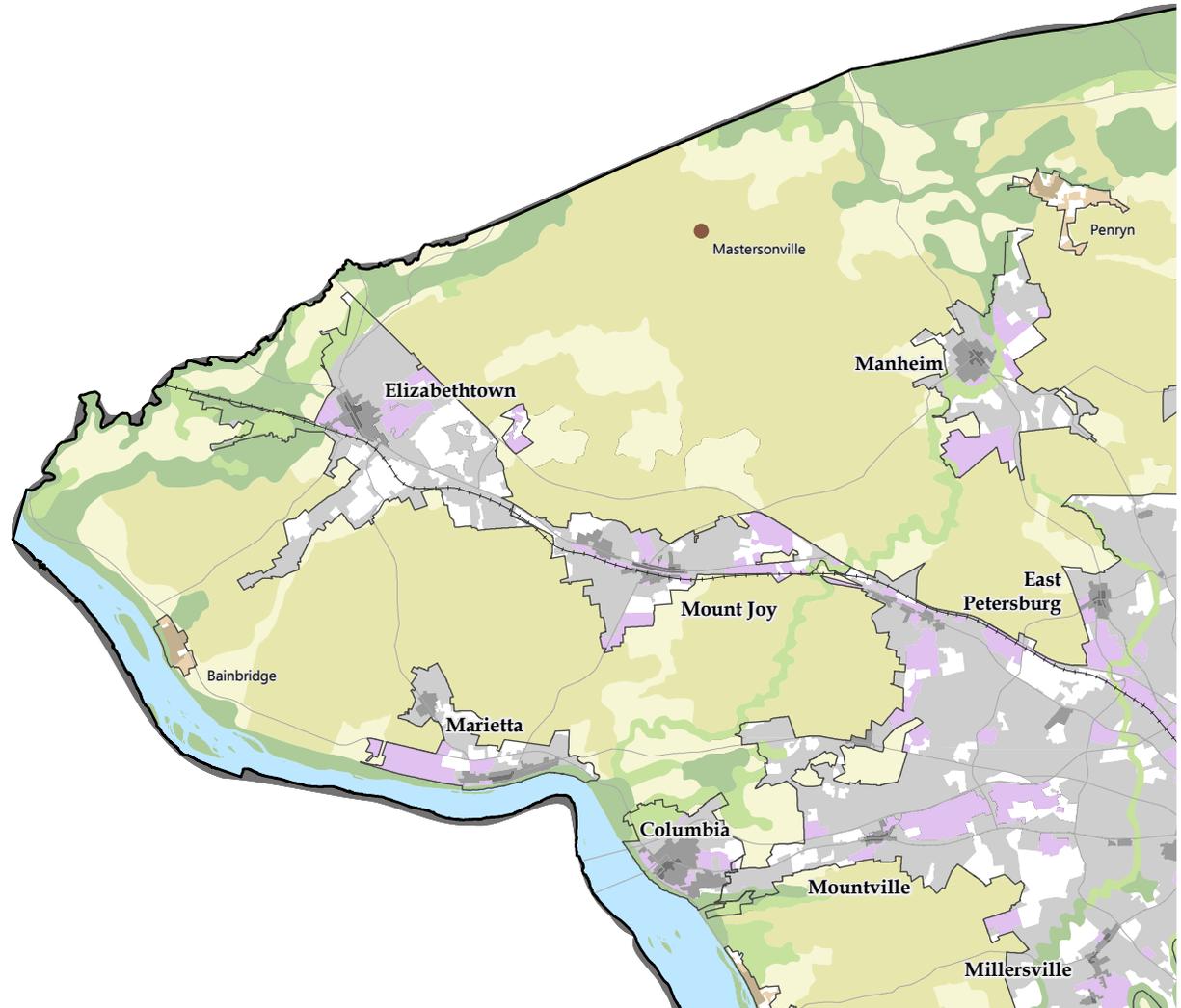
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### Special Districts

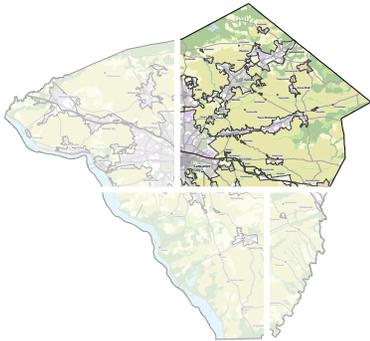
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## Other Elements

- Growth Areas
- Roads
- Buildable Land
- Rural Villages
- Amtrak Line
- Water Bodies



# NORTHEAST QUADRANT ENLARGEMENT



## Character Sectors

### Natural Spaces

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Agricultural Areas

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Rural Communities

- Cores
- Other Developed Areas

### Suburban Communities

- 

### Urban Perimeters

- 

### Urban Cores

- 

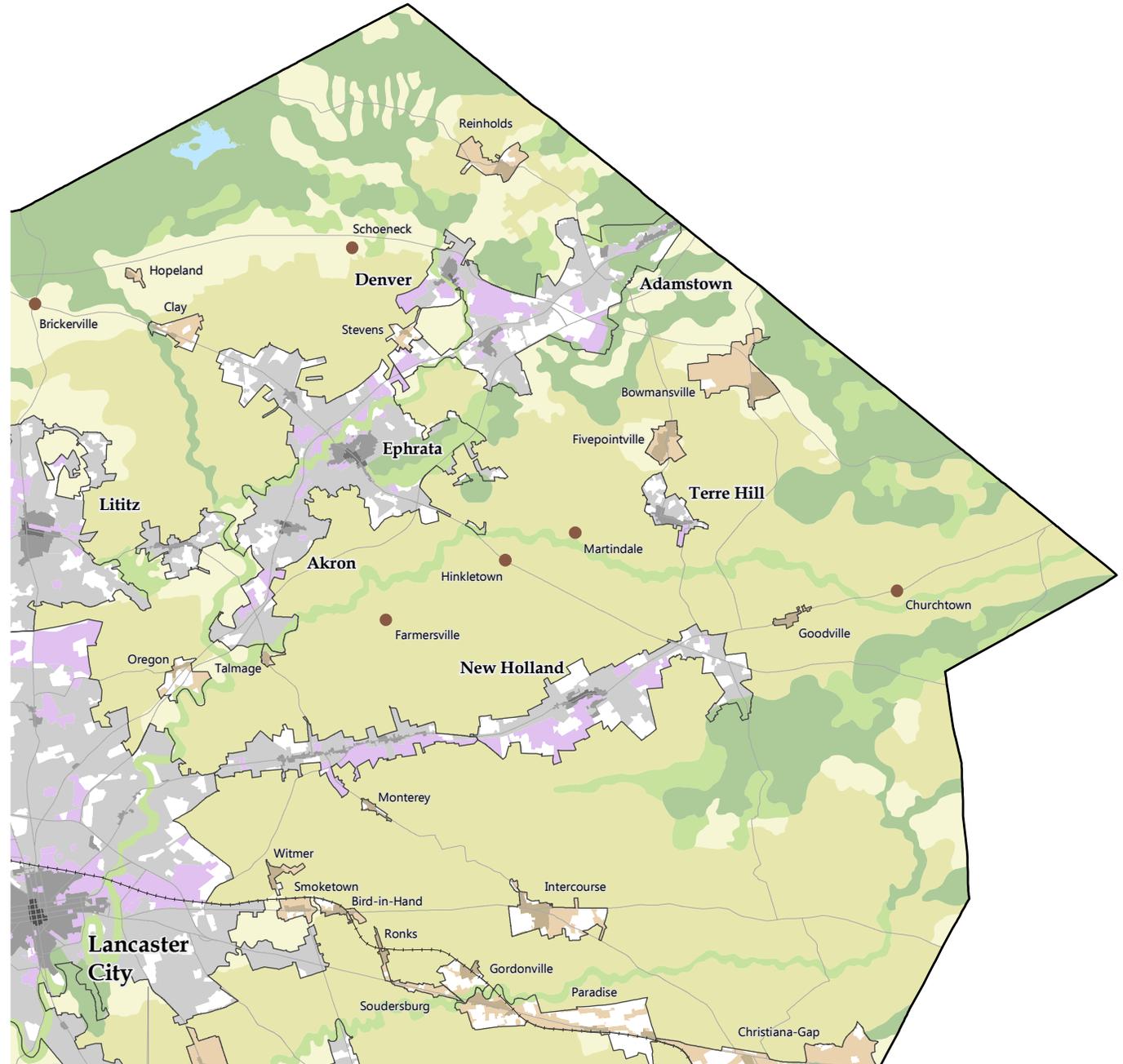
### Special Districts

- 

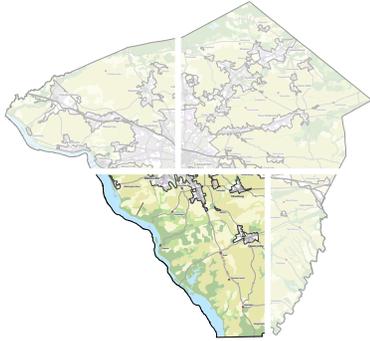
## Other Elements

- Growth Areas
- Buildable Land
- Amtrak Line

- Roads
- Rural Villages
- Water Bodies



# SOUTHWEST QUADRANT ENLARGEMENT



## Character Sectors

### Natural Spaces

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Agricultural Areas

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Rural Communities

- Cores
- Other Developed Areas

### Suburban Communities

- 

### Urban Perimeters

- 

### Urban Cores

- 

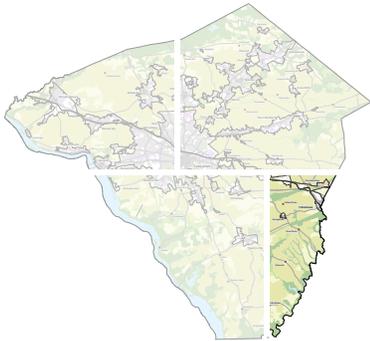
### Special Districts

- 

## Other Elements

- Growth Areas
- Roads
- Buildable Land
- Rural Villages
- Amtrak Line
- Water Bodies

# SOUTHEAST QUADRANT ENLARGEMENT



## Character Sectors

### Natural Spaces

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Agricultural Areas

- Preservation
- Conservation

### Rural Communities

- Cores
- Other Developed Areas

### Suburban Communities

- 

### Urban Perimeters

- 

### Urban Cores

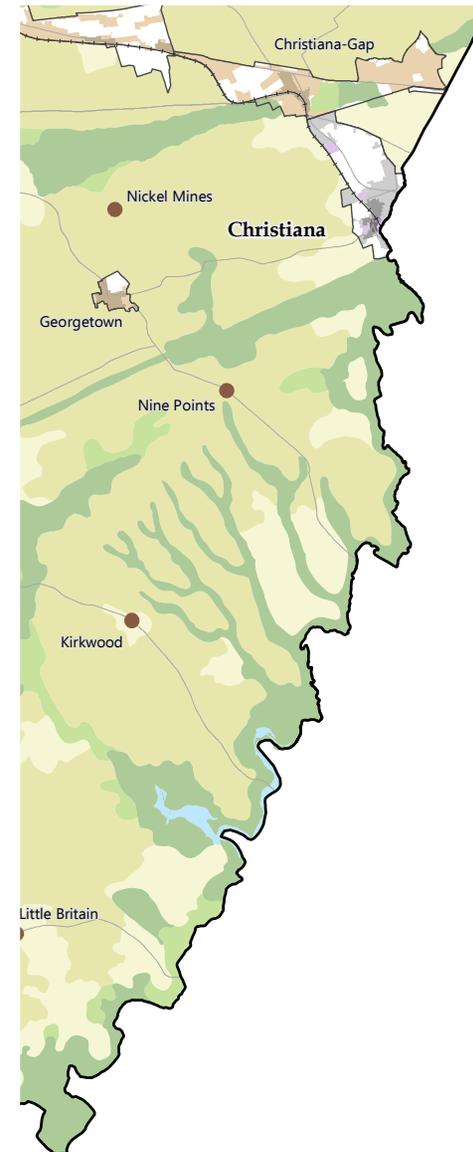
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### Special Districts

- 

## Other Elements

- Growth Areas
- Roads
- Buildable Land
- Rural Villages
- Amtrak Line
- Water Bodies



**SPECIFIC DETAILS OF  
EACH LANDSCAPE  
CHARACTER SECTOR**

# NATURAL SPACES

*Preservation & Conservation*



Forested hills along the Susquehanna River are an example of the type of Natural Areas that should be preserved.



Multi-modal routes like the Enola Low Grade Trail in Manor Township effectively link Natural Areas to nearby communities.



Wild azaleas bloom along one of several trails in the Welsh Mountain Nature Preserve.



Riparian buffers flank the Pequea Creek.



# NATURAL SPACES

## *Preservation & Conservation*

### TYPICAL SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

	Natural Preservation Areas	Natural Conservation Areas
<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	Large, contiguous landscapes are preserved for ecological purposes and recreational value. In addition to preserved woodlands and wetlands, such areas include a few natural resource-based industries.	These areas are typically more fragmented than their adjoining Natural Preservation Areas, but they also provide ecological, recreational, and economic benefits via preserved open space and some natural resource-based industries.
<b>Building Types</b>	Because these areas are generally undeveloped, there are relatively few structures. These include park pavilions, cabins, and a few single-family homes on large lots.	Scattered, single-family homes typically exist on large lots.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Approximately 540 miles of scenic state and local roadways link destinations within the Natural Spaces Character Sector. These destinations are typically served by paved or unpaved parking lots.	As within adjoining Natural Preservation Areas, rural roadways link local destinations that typically include paved or unpaved off-street parking areas.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Large public parks and greenways provide abundant recreational opportunities.	Large public parks and greenways exist within these areas.

A former barn is adaptively reused as a Nature Center at Climbers Run.



## SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *PLACES2040*

	Natural Preservation Areas	Natural Conservation Areas
<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	Continue to preserve these landscapes for ecological and recreational purposes via Conservation Easements and fee-simple ownership. Create new linkages between these preserved open spaces via greenways such as the Enola Low Grade Trail. Discourage non-recreational development but permit some expansion of natural resource-based industries such as sustainable timbering and quarrying.	Work with private and public landowners to employ additional conservation practices such as woodland management, floodplain restoration, and riparian buffer creation on lands set aside for passive recreation. Permit some expansion of natural resource-based industries such as sustainable timbering and quarrying.
<b>Building Types</b>	Permit structures that support recreational uses, e.g., pavilions, education centers, and maintenance facilities.	To preserve surrounding environmental features, utilize Cluster Development and Conservation Subdivision strategies when permitting and siting new structures.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Protect the scenic rural character indicative to this sector’s 540 miles of roadways.	As within the Natural Preservation zone, protect scenic rural roadways.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Support efforts of the Lancaster County Conservancy and other groups seeking to acquire and preserve additional land within Natural Preservation Areas.	Support efforts of the Lancaster County Conservancy and other groups seeking to acquire and preserve additional land within Natural Conservation Areas.



# AGRICULTURAL AREAS

## *Preservation & Conservation*

### TYPICAL SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

	<b>Agricultural Preservation Areas</b>	<b>Agricultural Conservation Areas</b>
<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	Large, contiguous agricultural landscapes are preserved due to their prime soil conditions, aquifer recharge capabilities, and other physical characteristics that produce economically sustainable farm yields.	These landscapes are typically more fragmented, but they include dominant agricultural uses mixed with some low-density residential areas and natural resource-based industries. Combined with Agricultural Preservation Areas, this Character Sector comprises approximately 60% of Lancaster County’s total land mass.
<b>Building Types</b>	These agricultural lands are punctuated with scattered farmsteads and supporting buildings.	Scattered farmsteads and some single-family homes typically exist within this area.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Approximately 1,910 miles of scenic state and local roadways, or nearly half of all state and local roadways within the entire county, link destinations within the Agricultural Areas Character Sector. These destinations are typically served by paved or unpaved parking lots.	As within the Agricultural Preservation Area, rural roadways link local destinations that typically include off-street parking areas to serve residents, employees, customers, and other guests.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Publicly accessible open space is usually comprised of rural churchyards, schoolyards, and road rights-of-way, but a few greenways such as the Enola Low Grade Trail also exist here.	Rural road rights-of-way with limited vehicular traffic often accommodate biking, walking, and horse-drawn transportation between some recreation destinations.



## SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *PLACES2040*

	Agricultural Preservation Areas	Agricultural Conservation Areas
<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	Continue to preserve and manage these agricultural landscapes in perpetuity. To protect this well-known and much celebrated Character Sector, discourage non-agricultural development but permit some expansion of farm-based and natural resource-based industries.	To buffer adjoining Agricultural Preservation Areas, limit new development to agricultural operations and some farm-based and/or natural resource-based industries.
<b>Building Types</b>	Permit some new structures to accommodate agricultural uses while protecting historically significant farmstead buildings indicative of Lancaster County's agricultural heritage. To promote economic viability of farming operations, discourage farm subdivisions for new, non-agricultural development intermixed with smaller residual tracts of farmland.	As with the Agricultural Preservation Area, permit some new structures for agricultural uses while protecting historically significant farmsteads.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Protect scenic rural roadways and discourage the creation of non-agricultural lots along these rural corridors. Site any parking areas behind, or to the sides of, structures served by them.	Protect scenic rural roadways and discourage the creation of non-agricultural lots along these corridors. Site any parking areas behind, or to the sides of, structures served by them.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Support efforts to create additional greenway linkages and safer, multi-modal use of rural roadways for general travel and recreational purposes.	Support efforts to create additional greenway linkages and safer, multi-modal use of rural roadways for both travel and recreation.

# AGRICULTURAL AREAS

*Preservation & Conservation*



Indicative of land use patterns that comprise 60% of all county areas, farmland surrounds homes in Drumore Township.



Rural road rights-of-way comprise much of this Character Sector's recreational area.



Nearly half of all county roadways link rural destinations while accommodating farm equipment, horse-drawn transportation, cyclists, pedestrians, and others.



Farm stands punctuate rural roadways, and they serve as seasonal sources of fresh produce, canned items, baked goods, eggs, and other farm-to-table products.



Weaver Toasted Grains is a farm-based industry located in Earl Township.



Located in West Earl Township, Leola Produce Auction is another farm-based industry.



Some Agricultural Areas include on-the-farm businesses such as nurseries and small manufacturing/repair facilities needed for economic viability, but agricultural fields and farmsteads visually dominate this sector's land use patterns.



# RURAL COMMUNITIES

## Core Areas & Other Lands

### TYPICAL SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

	Core Areas	Other Developed Lands
<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	These moderate density to high-density areas often include some commercial and/or institutional uses interspersed among predominantly residential uses.	Typically located on larger lots, this area's single-family, detached dwellings are interspersed with other properties containing small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Significant land area is often allocated to lawns and conventional stormwater detention basins.
<b>Building Types</b>	One- to 3-story structures typically include detached, semi-detached, live-work, and accessory dwelling units on smaller lots.	These buildings are often one- or 2-stories in height and setback farther from streets than their Core Area counterparts.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Predating the automobile era, most streets are relatively compact and part of an interconnected transportation network. Often located behind primary structures, off-street parking exists in private garages, along alleys, and within rear parking lots.	These streets, including cul-de-sacs, are typically wider than those within Rural Community Core Areas. In addition, they are less connected with surrounding street networks and frequently lack sidewalk connectivity to nearby destinations. Parking lots, private garages, and driveways are frequently located in front of primary structures where they diminish streetscape walkability.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Village squares, streetscapes, and small community parks provide spaces for social interaction and recreation.	Some small community parks exist, but few are effectively linked to Rural Community Core Areas due to missing sidewalk infrastructure.

Shops and homes in the Village of Penryn are often two to three stories.



## SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *PLACES2040*

	Core Areas	Other Developed Lands
<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	Preserve the compact scale, mixed land uses, diverse housing types, and historic structures of these rural communities. Where infill redevelopment occurs, replicate existing neighborhood characteristics and, where geologically feasible, utilize sub-surface stormwater management or other green infrastructure in place of conventional stormwater basins to retain compact landscape patterns.	Improve the form and walkability of these areas via new infill and redevelopment designed to replicate nearby Rural Community Core Areas.
<b>Building Types</b>	Replicate existing building setbacks, heights, and materials with new architectural infill.	Without further encroachment into nearby agricultural areas, increase housing opportunities by permitting accessory dwelling units as either additions to primary buildings, or as outbuilding conversions. Via new, infill construction on existing, over-sized parking lots or other underutilized spaces, create additional places for rural living and working.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	If new streets are proposed, replicate traditional street and sidewalk widths of established Core Areas while providing connectivity to existing transportation networks where physically feasible. Require the construction of all new parking areas to be located behind and/or beside primary structures. Fill gaps in sidewalk networks to make these communities safer, more walkable, and accessible to all.	Reduce vehicular traffic congestion by requiring street and sidewalk connectivity between proposed development/redevelopment and existing rural places. Require new parking areas to be constructed behind and/or beside primary structures. Fill gaps in sidewalk networks.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Where few exist, create successful public spaces for outdoor events, social interaction, and recreation. Enhance existing streetscapes and village squares with additional tree plantings, appropriately scaled lighting, and ADA-compliant paving.	Add public spaces for outdoor gatherings and active recreation.

# RURAL COMMUNITIES

*Core Areas & Other Lands*



Located in Conoy Township, Bainbridge has a dense, traditional village character within its Rural Community Core.



A conventional stormwater detention basin in the Village of Intercourse could potentially be redeveloped with mixed-uses to replicate the surrounding Rural Community Core landscape.



This Reinholds neighborhood consists of low to moderate density homes and wider streets (without sidewalks) adjacent to agricultural areas and Swamp Lutheran Church.



The Rural Community Core of Intercourse contains a mix of land uses and compact development patterns.



A Core Area site in the Village of Lampeter is adaptively reused for indoor and outdoor gathering.



The Lancaster Junction Trail provides recreational opportunities in Penn Township.



# SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

## TYPICAL SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

### Land Use Patterns

This sector includes residential, commercial, office, and institutional uses that are typically separated via required vegetative buffers and disconnected street patterns. A significant amount of land is dedicated to conventional stormwater detention basins and parking lots. Open spaces are often intended only for passive viewing rather than actual utilization.

### Building Types

While some housing diversity exists, this area is typically dominated by single-family, detached residences on larger lots. Commercial strip centers, 'big box' stores, and shopping malls are also commonly located here.

### Streetscapes & Parking

Neighborhood blocks are comparatively large and less conducive to walking due to limited sidewalk infrastructure and less street connectivity. Too few useful destinations such as commercial centers and residential neighborhoods are located within actual walking distance. Most residential parking occurs within garages, driveways, and along the edges of over-sized streets. Commercial, office, and institutional centers typically have large, street-fronting parking lots that are rarely, if ever, filled to the capacities dictated by outdated ordinances.

### Parks & Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces

Recreational activities and outdoor gatherings often occur at large community parks and school campuses which are typically accessed via motor vehicles rather than by walking or cycling.

This sector is dominated by single-family detached residential dwellings on larger lots and wider streets.



## SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *PLACES2040*

<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	<p>While acknowledging that suburban land use patterns are preferred by many, encourage more efficient utilization of remaining buildable land within designated Growth Areas. Permit flexible, mixed land uses and varied housing types. Promote more compact and walkable communities via residential infill and redevelopment of underutilized commercial areas. Where appropriate due to existing transportation infrastructure, create Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) and expand public transportation availability. Where geologically feasible, utilize sub-surface stormwater infrastructure in place of conventionally expansive stormwater basins.</p>
<b>Building Types</b>	<p>In addition to expanding housing options beyond typical single-family, detached homes, retrofit failing commercial centers with mixed-use structures and usable green spaces. Permit accessory dwelling units to be constructed as additions to existing homes, as entirely new structures, and as converted outbuildings.</p>
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	<p>Rather than directing most vehicular traffic to a few, frequently clogged corridors designed primarily for motorists, make new street connections that safely accommodate motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Fill existing gaps in sidewalk and trail networks. Implement traffic-calming improvements such as 'right-sizing' travel lane quantities and widths. Accommodate on-street parking, permit private garages accessible from rear alleys, and require off-street parking to be located behind or beside commercial uses. Eliminate minimum parking requirements and/or update ordinances to reflect current on-line retail and work-from-home trends. Minimize building setbacks to improve walkability, and seek opportunities to redevelop priority corridors as identified on Lancaster County's Future Land Use and Transportation Map.</p>
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	<p>Create additional parks and other usable open spaces to reach established goals of 15 parkland acres for each 1,000 county residents. Link such places to neighborhoods and commercial centers via pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure. Utilize green infrastructure to address stormwater more efficiently and sustainably. Plant abundant street trees to assist with these same stormwater initiatives while also improving walkability, decreasing air pollution, lowering heating/cooling costs, slowing motorists' travel speed, and elevating property values.</p>

# SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES



Low-density residential subdivisions such as this Manor Township community typically have limited street connections and missing sidewalk infrastructure.



Because many streets lack connectivity to the broader transportation network, main corridors are frequently congested at peak travel times.



Commercial uses in strip centers, 'big box' stores, and shopping malls often adjoin large, underutilized parking lots that present redevelopment opportunities.



Overlook Community Campus in Manheim Township includes a variety of recreational opportunities and gathering spaces.



Large, conventional stormwater detention basins and oversized parking lots dominate many suburban landscapes that are exclusively dedicated to commercial uses and vehicular transportation.



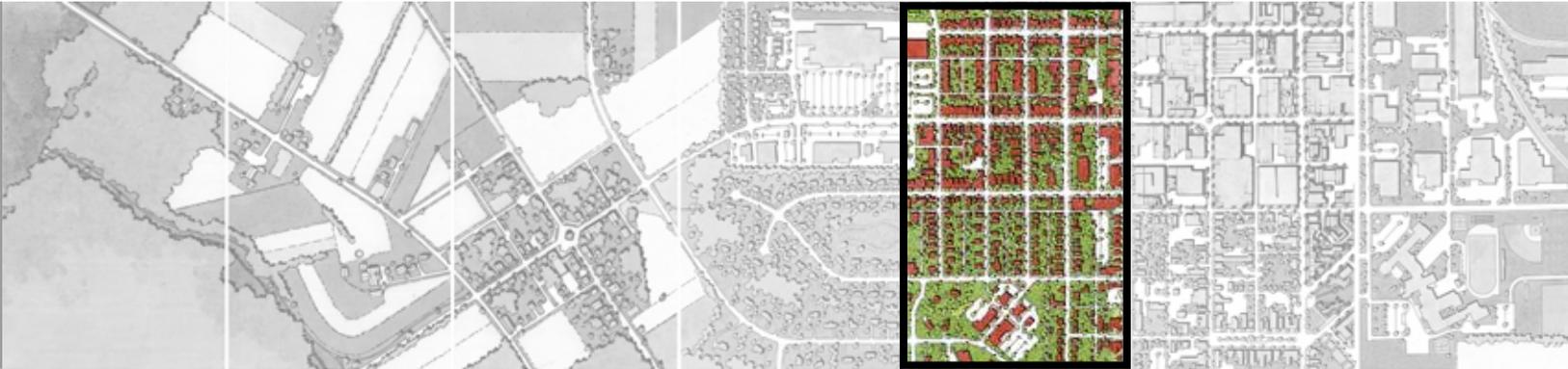
Manor Heights in Manor Township is a high density residential community with both townhomes and apartments within a short walk of a nearby shopping plaza.



Many suburban neighborhoods are exclusively comprised of single-family detached homes, and their streets often lack sidewalk connectivity to nearby areas.



Alleys and garages are located behind residential units in Manheim Township's Brighton community.



# URBAN PERIMETERS

## TYPICAL SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	This sector is often comprised of residential dwellings mixed with small-scale commercial, office, industrial, and institutional land uses.
<b>Building Types</b>	Attached and detached dwellings are typically two- or 3-stories and built near sidewalk locations due to shallow building setback requirements.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Neighborhood blocks are usually compact and very walkable due to connected street/sidewalk networks, street tree plantings and architectural features. Parking spaces are often available within street rights-of-way and/or behind buildings where they are accessible via rear alleys.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Pocket parks, neighborhood play areas, churchyards, and school grounds support recreational and community gathering needs.

Buildings, such as these structures at Mount Joy Borough's Florin Hill, are typically built near sidewalk edges where they effectively frame comfortable, interconnected streetscapes. Because they include prominent front doors, porches, and stoops in proximity to neighboring residences, streetscapes within the Urban Perimeter are often favored for community events such as Trick-or-Treating.



## SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *PLACES2040*

<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	Encourage infill and redevelopment patterns comprised of mixed uses and diverse housing types that complement the form, scale, and character of existing Urban Perimeter neighborhoods. Where appropriate due to existing transportation infrastructure, create Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) and expand public transportation availability.
<b>Building Types</b>	When permitting and constructing new, infill buildings, replicate building setbacks of neighboring structures. Require functional, street-oriented building entrances and permit some building-related extensions, e.g., awnings, appropriately scaled signs, and public seating, into adjoining rights-of-way while retaining ADA-compliant sidewalk clearances. Evaluate building height increases to efficiently utilize limited land area while accommodating necessary growth. Preserve historically significant buildings.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Where needed, implement traffic-calming improvements to make streets safer for all users. Specifically, consider converting one-way streets to two-way travel, reducing travel lane widths, and adding pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure where none presently exists. Eliminate minimum requirements for parking space quantities, and encourage shared parking arrangements for nearby uses with complementary parking needs. If new parking structures are necessary, utilize ground-level, mixed-use spaces to line all primary streets frontage. Preserve and increase street tree plantings.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	Expand the existing parks system by creating flexible and sustainable urban green spaces with multi-functional spaces designed for recreation, civic engagement, community celebrations, and/or environmental benefits.

# URBAN PERIMETERS



Veranda in East Hempfield Township is a compact, walkable, Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) with a mix of housing types, street connectivity, and outdoor gathering spaces.



Porches enhance the walkability of residential streets such as this neighborhood in Manheim Borough.



St. Joseph Street in Lancaster City's SoWe community is comprised of a mix of residential and non-residential land uses.



Lancaster City's Long Crest is a good example of infill redevelopment that complements the form, scale, and character of its neighborhood context.



Ephrata Borough’s walkable Urban Perimeter is comprised of mixed land uses, buildings with shallow street setbacks, and rear parking areas accessible via alley networks.



Where infill redevelopment is proposed, require functional sidewalk-facing building entrances, and permit certain encroachments (awnings, signage, and public seating) into pedestrian corridors while ensuring ADA compliance.



Where feasible, add bicycle infrastructure to encourage non-motorized transportation options.



# URBAN CORES

*City & Boroughs*

## TYPICAL SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

### Land Use Patterns

This sector contains the most compact and diverse mix of civic, commercial, business, entertainment, religious, social service, educational, and residential uses. In places such as Lancaster City’s N. Duke Street and Columbia Borough’s Locust Street, many of these land uses coexist within a single block.

### Building Types

An equally diverse mix of building types also exists in this sector, and it often includes townhouses, apartments, live-work units and office/commercial structures. They either adjoin public sidewalks or have very shallow building setbacks. While three- to 5-story structures are most common, building heights extend to 10-stories in some boroughs and 20-stories in Lancaster City.

### Streetscapes & Parking

Neighborhood blocks are compact and typically include extensive infrastructure for multi-modal transportation. Alleys and other secondary streets provide service access to the side or rear of most buildings, while main building entrances are oriented toward primary streets. Parking spaces exist on-street, at surface parking lots, and within parking structures.

### Parks & Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces

Pocket parks, plazas, and squares combine with public sidewalks to accommodate spaces for gathering, relaxing, celebrating, socializing, and participating in community life.

Lancaster City's 100 Block of N. Duke Street has a mix of civic, commercial, office, residential, and social service uses.



## SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *PLACES2040*

<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	Encourage flexible, mixed-use infill and redevelopment opportunities on underutilized properties such as surface parking lots. Ensure compatibility of new uses with existing neighborhood development patterns. Promote vibrant, safe, walkable, and attractive regional hubs to serve surrounding Character Sectors. Ensure that all Boroughs are served by public transportation.
<b>Building Types</b>	At primary street frontages, require a 50% minimum ground-floor transparency via building fenestration and functional entrances oriented toward adjacent sidewalks. Permit some building-related extensions, e.g. awnings, appropriately scaled signs, and public seating, into adjoining rights-of-way while retaining ADA-compliant sidewalk clearances. Evaluate building height increases to efficiently utilize limited land area while accommodating necessary growth. Preserve historically significant buildings.
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	Implement traffic-calming improvements to make streets safer for all users. Specifically, consider converting one-way streets to two-way travel, reducing travel lane widths, and adding pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure where none presently exists. Eliminate minimum parking space requirements and encourage shared parking arrangements for nearby uses with complementary parking needs. Where new parking structures are necessary, utilize ground-level, mixed-use spaces to line all primary streets frontages. Preserve and increase street tree plantings.
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	To promote accessibility, visual cohesiveness, appropriately scaled lighting, sustainable plantings and durable materials/furnishings within Urban Cores, adopt design standards for parks and streetscapes. While fully addressing present open space needs, preserve a distinctive sense of place based upon the unique community history of each Urban Core area.

# URBAN CORES

*City & Boroughs*



The central business districts of boroughs such as Marietta have a traditional urban scale and compact development patterns.



Strasburg Borough could be further enhanced with streetscape design guidelines that promote accessibility, safety, and aesthetics.



Ephrata Borough's East Main Street is a vibrant regional hub that serves surrounding Character Sectors while affording future opportunities for continued growth and redevelopment.



The Wilbur in Lititz Borough serves as an example of successful redevelopment within an Urban Core.



Columbia Borough embraces its Susquehanna River frontage as a key asset for redevelopment strategies.



Stadium Row was the first new multifamily residential infill project to occur in Lancaster City since the mid-20th century.



A 2023 plan for this Lancaster Train Station Area proposed a mix of residential and non-residential uses combined with new outdoor gathering spaces to create an effective Transit Oriented Development (TOD).



# SPECIAL DISTRICTS

## TYPICAL SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS

<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	<p>This sector is comprised of all other industrial, institutional, business, and transportation hubs that do not fit into one of the previously noted transect areas. Their land uses are, however, significant contributors to local employment, education, and economic growth. Their large buildings, parking lots, and conventional stormwater basins usually occupy substantial land areas within industrial parks, office parks, college/school/medical campuses, and airports.</p>
<b>Building Types</b>	<p>With some exceptions, large buildings are set relatively far from public streets, and they are frequently quite different from the architectural scale and form of structures located in neighboring Character Sectors.</p>
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	<p>Excluding college campuses, streets within this sector are typically extra wide to accommodate large trucks. They often lack sidewalks and connections to nearby neighborhoods where students, employees, patients, and/or other campus users might live. Off-street parking is typically located within large surface parking lots visible from public rights-of-way.</p>
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	<p>While some places within this sector do not include significant outdoor gathering spaces, many Special District campuses include extensive quads, trail/walkway networks, and other recreational amenities.</p>



Lancaster Airport in Manheim Township serves as a unique Special District surrounded by other Character Sectors..

## SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *PLACES2040*

<b>Land Use Patterns</b>	<p>Where compatible with existing land uses, seek opportunities for residential and commercial infill development to improve overall land use efficiency while creating more walkable places that remain active and vibrant beyond traditional-business hours. Such high-quality, innovative, live-work places are often attractive to prospective employees. Increase buildable land area while more efficiently addressing stormwater management requirements via green infrastructure, smaller detention basins, and/or permeable/porous paving.</p>
<b>Building Types</b>	<p>To create walkable streetscapes, set new infill structures closer to existing roadways. Ensure that such placement creates more compact development patterns and provides architecturally rich delineation of adjoining streetscapes.</p>
<b>Streetscapes &amp; Parking</b>	<p>Require complete streets with sidewalks. Where feasible, reduce street widths to lower vehicular travel speeds without adversely impacting truck circulation where such vehicles are frequent and essential parts of daily operations. Require most off-street parking to be located behind or beside primary structures. Eliminate minimum parking space requirements and encourage shared parking arrangements for nearby uses with compatibly timed parking needs.</p>
<b>Parks &amp; Other Outdoor Gathering Spaces</b>	<p>Where few presently exist, create usable open spaces, and link such places to neighborhoods and commercial centers via pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure.</p>

# SPECIAL DISTRICTS



Pictometry International



The Penn State Health Lancaster Medical Center campus in East Hempfield is a relatively new Special District.



Pictometry International

Special districts include large-scale industrial facilities and college campuses such as these located in Manheim Township and Lancaster City.



Parking is typically accommodated in large surface lots where unused spaces could present opportunities for infill development.



The high school campus of Solanco School District is a Special District.



Walking paths and open space define Greenfield campus in East Lampeter Township.



The Manheim Auto Auction, a Special District in Penn Township, is surrounded by other Character Sectors.



Many streets within this sector are extra wide, disconnected from surrounding development, and lack sidewalks.

# SUMMARY



Because Character Sectors transcend municipal boundaries, they warrant effective place-based planning at a **regional level**. This *Character Sector Guide* attempts to first identify countywide challenges, and then emphasize opportunities for, rather than barriers to, the balancing act of character preservation with necessary growth accommodation. It expands upon the *places2040* Comprehensive Plan with its 'big picture' view now presented here in more 'bite-size' formats. This guide is intended to be an effective catalyst and resource for innovative placemaking throughout Lancaster County. It will continue to inform Lancaster County Planning reviews of all submitted Subdivision and/or Land Development Plans, Community Plans, Official Maps, and Ordinance Amendments.

As a companion to this guide, the Lancaster County Planning Department's forthcoming *Simplified Zoning* report will include a model ordinance for municipal leaders and others as they work to implement these Character Sector

recommendations. It will propose a shift from zoning regulations based on land uses to more impactful ordinances based on character impacts.

In summary, municipal leaders along with Lancaster County Planning's Partners for Place, and others can further enrich our county's physical form while preserving its distinctive identity. We must collaborate, ask questions, seize redevelopment opportunities, shape future outcomes, and then celebrate our successes. Let's seek ways to implement these Character Sector recommendations while leveraging previous infrastructure investments for a more livable and sustainable Lancaster County.

## Language Access Taglines

<p><b>English</b> Hello! We provide translation and interpretation services. You can leave a request by calling our inbox at 717-299-8333 and pressing "7," or sending us an email at <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. All document requests must include a return email or mailing address. For meetings, you must leave an interpretation request at least five business days before the intended meeting date.</p>	<p><b>Español (Spanish)</b> ¡Hola! Ofrecemos servicios de traducción e interpretación. Puede dejar su solicitud llamando a nuestro buzón de entrada al 717-299-8333 y pulsando "7", o enviándonos un correo electrónico a <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. Todas las solicitudes de documentos deben incluir una dirección de correo electrónico o postal para la devolución. Para las reuniones, debe dejar su solicitud de interpretación al menos cinco días hábiles antes de la fecha prevista de la reunión.</p>	<p><b>tiếng Việt (Vietnamese)</b> Xin chào quý vị! Chúng tôi cung cấp các dịch vụ biên dịch và phiên dịch. Quý vị có thể để lại yêu cầu bằng cách gọi đến hộp thư của chúng tôi theo số 717-299-8333 và nhấn phím "7" hoặc gửi email cho chúng tôi theo địa chỉ <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. Tất cả các yêu cầu về tài liệu phải bao gồm email gửi lại hoặc địa chỉ gửi thư. Đối với các cuộc họp, quý vị phải để lại yêu cầu thông dịch tối thiểu 5 ngày làm việc trước ngày họp dự kiến.</p>	<p><b>Українська мова (Ukrainian)</b> Доброго дня! Ми надаємо послуги письмового та усного перекладу. Ви можете залишити запит, зателефонувавши на наш номер для вхідних дзвінків 717-299-8333 та натиснувши «7», або надішліть нам електронного листа на адресу <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. Усі запити стосовно документів повинні включати зворотну адресу електронної або фізичної пошти. Стосовно зустрічей, ви можете залишити запит на усний переклад щонайменше за п'ять робочих днів до цільової дати зустрічі.</p>
<p><b>Deutsch (German)</b> Hallo! Wir bieten Übersetzungs- und Dolmetscherdienste an. Sie können Ihre Anfrage telefonisch unter der Nummer 717-299-8333 stellen und die "7" drücken, oder Sie können uns eine E-Mail schicken an <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. Jede Anforderung von Dokumenten muss eine Rücksende-E-Mail oder eine Postanschrift enthalten. Anträge auf Verdolmetschung für Sitzungen müssen mindestens fünf Arbeitstage vor dem geplanten Sitzungstermin eingereicht werden.</p>	<p><b>Français (French)</b> Bonjour ! Nous fournissons des services de traduction et d'interprétation. Vous pouvez déposer une demande en appelant notre boîte de réception au 717-299-8333 et en appuyant sur « 7 », ou en nous envoyant un e-mail à <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. Toutes les demandes de documents doivent inclure un e-mail de retour ou une adresse postale. Pour les réunions, vous devez déposer une demande d'interprétation au moins cinq jours ouvrables avant la date prévue de la réunion.</p>	<p><b>မြန်မာ (Burmese)</b> မင်္ဂလာပါ။ ကျွန်ုပ်တို့သည် ဘာသာပြန်ခြင်းနှင့် စကားပြန်ခြင်းဝန်ဆောင်မှုများကို ဆောင်ရွက်ပေးပါသည်။ ကျွန်ုပ်တို့၏ 717-299-8333 သို့ခေါ်ဆိုပြီး "7" ကိုနှိပ်ခြင်းဖြင့် သို့မဟုတ် <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a> သို့ အီးမေးလ်တစ်စောင်ပေးပို့ခြင်းဖြင့် တောင်းဆိုမှုတစ်ခုချန်ထားခဲ့နိုင်ပါသည်။ စာရွက်စာတမ်း တောင်းဆိုမှုအားလုံးတွင် ပြန်ပို့ရမည့် အီးမေးလ် သို့မဟုတ် စာပို့လိပ်စာ ပါဝင်ရပါမည်။ အစည်းအဝေးများအတွက် သင်သည် စီစဉ်ထားသည့် အစည်းအဝေးရက်မတိုင်မီ အနည်းဆုံး ရုံးဖွင့်ရက် ငါးရက်အလိုတွင် စကားပြန်တောင်းဆိုချက်ကို ချန်ထားရပါမည်။</p>	<p><b>Kinyarwanda (Kinyarwanda)</b> Muraho! Dutanga serivisi zo guhindura indimi no gusemura. Niba ushaka gusoma iyi inyandiko muri rurimi runaka, nyamuneka tugezeho icyifuzo uhamagara kuri 717-299-8333 maze ukande "7," cyangwa utwoherereze imeri kuri <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. Ubusabe bwose bugomba kuba bufite imeri tuzagusubirizaho. Ku nama, ugomba gusaba gusemurirwa byibuze iminsi itanu yakazi mbere y'itariki inama izaberaho.</p>
<p><b>नेपाली (Nepali)</b> नमस्कार! हामी दोभासे तथा अनुवादन सेवा प्रदान गर्छौं। तपाईं हाम्रो फोन नम्बर 717-299-8333 मा फोन गरेर र "7" थिचेर वा हामीलाई <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a> मा इमेल पठाएर अनुरोध छोड्न सक्नुहुन्छ। सबै कागजातहरूमा अनिवार्य रूपमा फिर्ती इमेल वा पत्राचार ठेगाना उल्लेख गर्नु पर्दछ। बैठकहरूका लागि, तपाईंले अनिवार्य रूपमा अपेक्षित बैठक मितिभन्दा कम्तीमा पाँच कारोबार दिनअघि दोभासे सेवा अनुरोध गर्नु पर्दछ।</p>	<p><b>한국인 (Korean)</b> 안녕하세요! 현재 다양한 언어로 번역 및 통역 서비스를 제공하고 있습니다. 717-299-8333번으로 전화 후 "7"을 누르거나 <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>로 이메일을 보내 요청을 남길 수 있습니다. 모든 서면 요청에는 회신 이메일이나 우편 주소가 포함되어야 합니다. 회의 통역의 경우, 예정된 회의 날짜로부터 근무일 기준 최소 5일 전에 통역 요청을 남겨야 합니다.</p>	<p><b>Kiswahili (Swahili)</b> Hujambo! Tunatoa huduma za tafsiri na ukalimani. Unaweza kuwasilisha ombi kwa kupigia kisanduku pokezi chetu simu katika 717-299-8333 na kubonyeza "7," au kututumia barua pepe katika <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a> Lazima maombi yote ya hati yajumishe barua pepe ya au anwani ya kutuma barua. Kwa mikutano, ni lazima uwasilishe ombi la tafsiri angalau siku tano za kazi kabla ya tarehe ya mkutano iliyokusudiwa.</p>	<p><b>اللغة العربية (Arabic)</b> مرحبًا! إنحن نقدم خدمات الترجمة التحريرية والفورية. يُرجى تقديم الطلب من خلال الاتصال بصندوق بريدنا الصوتي على الرقم 717-299-8333 واختيار الرقم "7" أو من خلال إرسال رسالة إلكترونية إلى البريد الإلكتروني <a href="mailto:planning@lancastercountypa.gov">planning@lancastercountypa.gov</a>. يجب ذكر عنوان بريد إلكتروني أو عنوان مراسلات في جميع طلبات خدمة الترجمة التحريرية لاستلام النسخة المترجمة من المستند. ويجب تقديم طلبات خدمة الترجمة الفورية قبل تاريخ الاجتماع بخمسة أيام عمل على الأقل.</p>

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GUIDE TO THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SECTORS  
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