

GROWING TOGETHER

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR CENTRAL LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

PLANNING THE FUTURE • PRESERVING THE PAST

2. Executive Summary



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Above

Development encroaches on farmland. A key challenge of *Growing Together* is to balance future growth with the preservation of those aspects that make Central Lancaster County unique, for example the rural landscapes and way of life.

A. Overview

Growing Together portrays a vision of how Central Lancaster County can grow, prosper, and enhance the quality of life of all residents in the next 25 years. It is a bold vision that reflects the ideas and aspirations of residents, stakeholders, municipal officials, and Steering Committee members.

Growing Together is an official policy document for the 11 participating municipalities of Central Lancaster County. It establishes a vast and comprehensive framework to guide decision-making. It reflects the best available information on specific conditions that exist in the planning area as well as best practices found locally and in the region, the state, and the nation. With its emphasis on intermunicipal collaboration, *Growing Together* points to a new way to conduct business in Central Lancaster County, not just for the local municipalities but for businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and special interest groups.

This chapter summarizes the process followed in developing *Growing Together* and provides an overview of key directions of the plan, making reference to the chapters where more information on a topic can be found.

Public Meetings Schedule

August 2003 – The process kick-off offered an opportunity for participants to hear about the plan and to express preliminary ideas and concerns about the future of Central Lancaster County.

January 2004 – The stakeholder workshop gathered municipal officials, special interest groups, planning staff, and citizens to address critical questions related to the specific elements of the plan.

January and February 2004 – Four public meetings, four classroom workshops in urban and suburban schools, and a focus group with African American and Latino participants were facilitated in various parts of Central Lancaster.

September 2004 – At the Community Vision Summit participants received an update on the *Growing Together* project and a report on the results of the “Strong Places, Weak Places” mapping exercise. They reviewed goals and objectives drafted from the ideas collected in the public meetings and engaged in small group discussions designed to address future development patterns for the area.

March 2005 – Three public forums offered an opportunity to review goals, objectives, and strategies and to recommend priorities for the strategies.

December 2005 – A final public forum was used to present the complete draft of the plan.

B. The Planning Process

The planning process of *Growing Together* consisted of three major components: public participation, technical analysis, and plan development. The *Growing Together* Steering Committee played a key role in all three process components.

The Committee met monthly for over two years, guiding all steps of the process and helping to develop the plan’s recommendations. The Steering Committee helped design public outreach and reviewed all the ideas gathered through the public participation process. It transformed those ideas into goals, identified objectives to achieve those goals, and developed specific strategies for each objective. The Steering Committee provided invaluable assistance in reviewing technical information and ensuring the completeness of the physical inventories for each element of the plan. In addition to guiding the process and assisting with the gathering of information, the Steering Committee ensured that the planning commissions and governing bodies of the eleven municipalities were informed about the progress of the plan at critical milestones. Municipal reviews were conducted in the spring of 2004 and in the winter and summer of 2005 to provide feedback on the draft goals, objectives, and strategies.

The three major components of the planning process are briefly described below.

Public Participation

The planning process for *Growing Together* provided numerous opportunities for anyone who lived or worked in the Central Lancaster County area to participate in public events. (See the Public Meetings Schedule in the sidebar at left.) Input provided through public meetings became the foundation for the policies of the plan.

Residents, municipal officials, businesses, and other stakeholders suggested ideas, identified strengths and weaknesses of the area, addressed critical questions focused on all elements of the plan, and commented on the plan’s numerous strategies. A more detailed description of the public process steps can be found in Chapter 4 - Public Process: An Overview.

Technical Analysis

The second major component of the planning process focused on the technical aspects of the plan. This included an analysis of conditions and trends existing in Central Lancaster County, a review of existing plans and regulations, and an inventory of conditions specific to each element of the plan.

The analysis of existing conditions and trends provided a foundation for recommendations discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 to 13 of this volume. They are addressed in the Overview and Existing Conditions sections at the beginning of each of those chapters. The analysis of existing conditions and trends was completed early on in the process and was

conducted simultaneously with the gathering of public input. It provided a baseline understanding of key demographic, social, economic, and physical characteristics of Central Lancaster County. It also provided data on the area's land use and transportation patterns and a comparative analysis of the comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances of the 11 municipalities.

Plan Development

The third component of the planning process for *Growing Together* was the development of recommendations for each element of the plan according to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). To accomplish this, the Steering Committee integrated public input and technical analysis. The recommendations were then adjusted to deliberately place them within a multimunicipal context.

C. The Growing Together Plan: Key Directions and Goals

Growing Together contains 18 goals, 115 objectives, and over 300 strategies. The key directions for Central Lancaster County and the focus of each of the plan's goals are summarized below.

Key Directions for Central Lancaster County

The key directions of *Growing Together* include:

1. Expand regional cooperation;
2. Use land resources more efficiently;
3. Enhance the support role of LIMC; and
4. Strengthen the role of Central Lancaster County as the economic engine of the county.

These four key directions are described in further detail below.

- 1. Expand regional cooperation** – The process of creating this plan is a demonstration of the high level of cooperation that already exists in the LIMC area. This historic undertaking sets a stronger agenda for continued and expanded cooperation among the 11 participating municipalities. The plan recognizes that cooperation among municipalities is a precondition to its success. Furthermore, implementation of a great majority of the objectives and strategies of the plan will require forming strong partnerships among municipalities, public agencies, special interest groups, businesses, and the public. *Growing Together* recommends that expanding regional cooperation should be approached in a flexible manner at either the regional or sub-regional level. It recommends that municipalities should seek cooperation on issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries and when the implementation of cooperative strategies can lead to more effective solutions. Cooperation will play a critical role in the following two areas:

- **Cooperative funding** – In pursuing initiatives of regional impact, *Growing Together* recognizes that it may be necessary to identify cooperative funding strategies. These can take several forms. They can be in the form of a broad “cooperative agreement for the sharing of tax revenues and fees by municipalities,” as enabled through the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Section 1105(b)(1), or they can be ad-hoc and time limited cooperative funding agreements to deal with specific initiatives.
 - **Shared regulations** – *Growing Together* recognizes that each jurisdiction in Central Lancaster County makes its own decisions regarding land use. Nevertheless, the plan recommends that municipalities explore ways to cooperate in the development of land use regulations that encompass all 11 municipalities to accomplish the goal of growing harmoniously in a spirit of cooperation.
- 2. Use land resources more efficiently** – After the Community Vision Summit, held in September 2004, the Steering Committee focused on how the plan should accommodate future growth through the year 2030 in ways that use land resources more efficiently. *Growing Together* addresses future growth issues in the following ways:
- **All future growth should occur inside the Designated Growth Area** – The Designated Growth Area (DGA) includes the Urban and Village Growth Areas adopted by the 11 municipalities following the directives of the County’s comprehensive plan. *Growing Together* recommends that 100 percent of future growth in the next 25 years should occur inside the DGA. This firm recommendation is intended to stem development occurring outside the DGA and to reaffirm the special character and economic value of the agricultural land outside the DGA.
 - **Future growth should occur in the form of integrated, mixed use development** – The overwhelming majority of development in Central Lancaster County in the past 20 years has been in the form of development that segregates land uses. *Growing Together* recommends that future development should strive to integrate land uses as much as possible. Evidence from local and national examples shows that integrating land uses creates a more efficient use of the land, helps improve mobility, and reduces the number of trips necessary to conduct basic daily activities.
 - **Future growth should occur in Growth Opportunity Areas** – *Growing Together* identifies 35 areas within the Designated Growth Area that have similar characteristics, entitled Growth

Opportunity Areas. They are undeveloped, within sewer and water service areas, next to major roads and bordered by development. *Growing Together* recommends that growth for the next 25 years should be directed toward those 35 areas when possible. It also recommends that municipalities endorse the proposed Growth Opportunity Areas and create the tools to facilitate development in these areas.

- 3. Enhance the support role of LIMC** – Many of the objectives and strategies in *Growing Together* suggest a leading role for LIMC in their implementation. LIMC is positioned as a broker and convener of municipalities and organizations around issues, as an awareness builder and communicator, and, selectively, as a facilitator in the implementation of specific strategies under the direction of the 11 municipalities. This increased role and visibility of LIMC in the region will require changes to its funding and organizational structure.
- 4. Strengthen the economic role of Central Lancaster County** – The economic activity within the LIMC municipalities drives the whole county’s economy. Based on this premise, several of the goals, objectives, and strategies in *Growing Together* aim at ensuring that Central Lancaster County maintains its economic competitiveness and continues to drive the county’s economy. Specifically, objectives and strategies in the Land Use element of the plan recommend providing an adequate supply of land – as new development, redevelopment, and infill – to accommodate future economic growth, particularly in those areas that have been identified as priority areas by the Lancaster County Planning Commission.

These four key directions identified by the plan provide the context in which local and regional decisions can be made that balance population, housing, and economic growth with the preservation of the unique character of the region, while providing more choices and opportunities for all residents. They represent the policy framework for the plan.

D. Overview of Plan Elements

This section briefly summarizes the main focus of the recommendations for each element of the multimunicipal plan. In the individual chapters, the goal for each element has a related set of objectives and strategies. Each objective and strategy includes a narrative text that provides background information.

Land Use (Chapter 6)

The Land Use element of the plan contains six sections, each with a separate goal and related objectives and strategies. Each section is briefly summarized below.

- The **Agricultural Preservation** section focuses on the preservation of agricultural land outside the DGA. It suggests that preservation can be achieved through better management of the developable land inside the growth areas and by encouraging agriculture and removing obstacles to farm profitability.
- The **Growth Management** section strongly endorses cooperative planning coordinated through LIMC. The plan recommends the creation of a Land Use Advisory Board to prioritize the implementation and development of proposed Growth Opportunity Areas and to monitor, on a voluntary basis, plans and land uses of regional impact.
- The **Redevelopment and Infill** section focuses on ways to stimulate the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of vacant buildings, brownfields, and greyfields as another way to keep future growth within the DGA and to reduce development pressure on farmland.
- The **Development Patterns** section recommends ways to develop integrated mixed use development patterns that offer a range of housing choices and transportation options and that reinforce the traditional character of Central Lancaster County.
- The **Urban Core** section focuses on the revitalization of Lancaster City and the boroughs. It recognizes the urban core's vital role in the region and focuses on ways to improve their safety and commercial and cultural vitality. It also recommends that the region as a whole should support such an effort.
- The **Community Character** section recommends strategies for the creation of walkable, mixed use communities that promote neighborhood-based social activities and businesses.

Housing (Chapter 7)

The Housing chapter recommends policies and strategies designed to provide diverse housing choices in terms of owning and renting throughout the region and for all income levels. Recommendations focus on incentives and programs and on the implementation of regulatory tools to enhance the availability of diverse housing options.

Transportation (Chapter 8)

The Transportation element of *Growing Together* focuses on increasing mobility throughout Central Lancaster County through the implementation of new and often small relief routes connecting parts of the existing system. The chapter contains three sections, each with a separate goal and related objectives and strategies.

- The **Vehicular Transportation** section focuses on a system that provides access and mobility for all types of motorized and

non-motorized vehicles through improved maintenance of existing roads and the creation of new roads as local relief routes.

- The **Public Transportation** section focuses on accessibility of an affordable public transportation system throughout the region.
- The **Alternative Transportation** section aims at the creation of an interconnected network of greenways, paths, and streets for pedestrians and cyclists.

Community Facilities (Chapter 9)

The Community Facilities chapter aims at a balanced distribution of facilities throughout the region to meet the needs of all residents in coordinated and efficient ways.

Park and Open Space (Chapter 10)

The Park and Open Space element recognizes that the community is well served by its municipal and intermunicipal park system and focuses on greenways, recreation along waterways, and a balanced distribution of community, neighborhood, and mini parks. This chapter serves as an update to the 1993 Regional Park and Open Space Plan.

Natural Resource Protection (Chapter 11)

The Natural Resource Protection element of *Growing Together* deals with the topographic, soil, vegetation, and water characteristics of Central Lancaster County and recommends ways to manage and protect those resources.

Historic Resource Protection (Chapter 12)

The Historic Resource Protection element addresses the protection and management of the great wealth of historic buildings, sites, and districts within the region.

Utilities: Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, and Stormwater Management (Chapter 13)

The Utilities element aims to provide water and manage sewage, solid waste, and stormwater for current and future residents of the region.

Implementation (Chapter 15)

The Implementation element of *Growing Together* focuses on three areas: general implementation strategies, ways to enhance intergovernmental cooperation, and the role of shared regulatory techniques. It also includes a matrix that summarizes the time frame and responsible parties for each of the strategies. The timeframe for implementation uses the following benchmarks:

- Immediate: recommendations of the highest priority for immediate implementation.
- Short-Term: 2007-2008
- Medium-Term: 2009-2012
- Long-Term: 2013-2030
- Ongoing: Currently in progress and/or to be continued once initiated.

E. Interrelationship of Plan Components

The goals, objectives, and strategies in *Growing Together* meet all of the requirements of a multimunicipal plan as established by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, as amended. Furthermore, the public involvement review process and the extensive and lengthy review of the plan by the Steering Committee have ensured that the recommendations contained in the plan are interrelated and consistent from a policy perspective. The Future Land Use Policy Framework Plan (Map 6.14) and the Future Land Use Plan (Map 6.15) found in Chapter 6 - Land Use define a policy context that brings together the recommendations found throughout the other elements of the plan.

The major themes of *Growing Together* – including an emphasis on accommodating all development for the next 25 years inside the DGA, the commitment to preserving the farmland and the farming economy outside the DGA, the provision of affordable housing for all income levels, the protection of natural and historic resources, the provision of adequate community facilities and infrastructure, and the focus on mixing and integrating uses whenever redevelopment and new development occurs – strongly complement one another and will impact positively on the environmental, energy conservation, economic development, and social aspects of Central Lancaster County. They will make the area a desirable place to live, work, conduct business, and recreate.

Overall, the goals and objectives of this plan are intended to promote and protect the public’s health, safety, and welfare in Central Lancaster County.

F. In Summary

The goals, objectives, and strategies of *Growing Together* embody a bold vision for the future of Central Lancaster County. They require bold action and serious commitment to upholding effective public policies, adjusting the regional direction where needed, and showing an entrepreneurial attitude toward the creation of new programs and the development of strong regional cooperation. The rewards of such efforts can be great. The regional approach, set forth by *Growing Together* and made possible through local commitment and actions, will make a significant difference in the quality of life for generations to come.