

GROWING TOGETHER

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR CENTRAL LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

PLANNING THE FUTURE • PRESERVING THE PAST

3. The Region



3. The Region

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Above
Photographs show key aspects of the region's character. Clockwise from the top left – an active farm, a walkable street in Lancaster City, and aerial views of downtown Lancaster City and of pristine farmland.

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part 1: The Place and Its History describes Central Lancaster County's unique history and physical landscape. Part 2: Population and Employment provides a statistical snapshot of the area's population, social characteristics, and employment. Part 3: Planning Context reviews the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, as well as a number of recent studies and reports relevant to *Growing Together*.

The data used in this chapter come from many sources. A complete list of resources used in the preparation of this chapter and the rest of the plan is included in Chapter 17 – County and Municipal Source Information. Facts and figures used in Part 2: Population and Employment have been provided by the Lancaster Inter-Municipal Committee (LIMC), the Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC), and collected from outside sources including the US Census Bureau, among others.

PART 1: The Place and Its History

The Place

Central Lancaster County, also referred to in this plan as “the study area,” is comprised of eleven municipalities located in the central portion of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The study area is approximately 169 square miles and in 2000 had a population of 193,383.

Local Governments Participating in the Comprehensive Plan for Central Lancaster County:

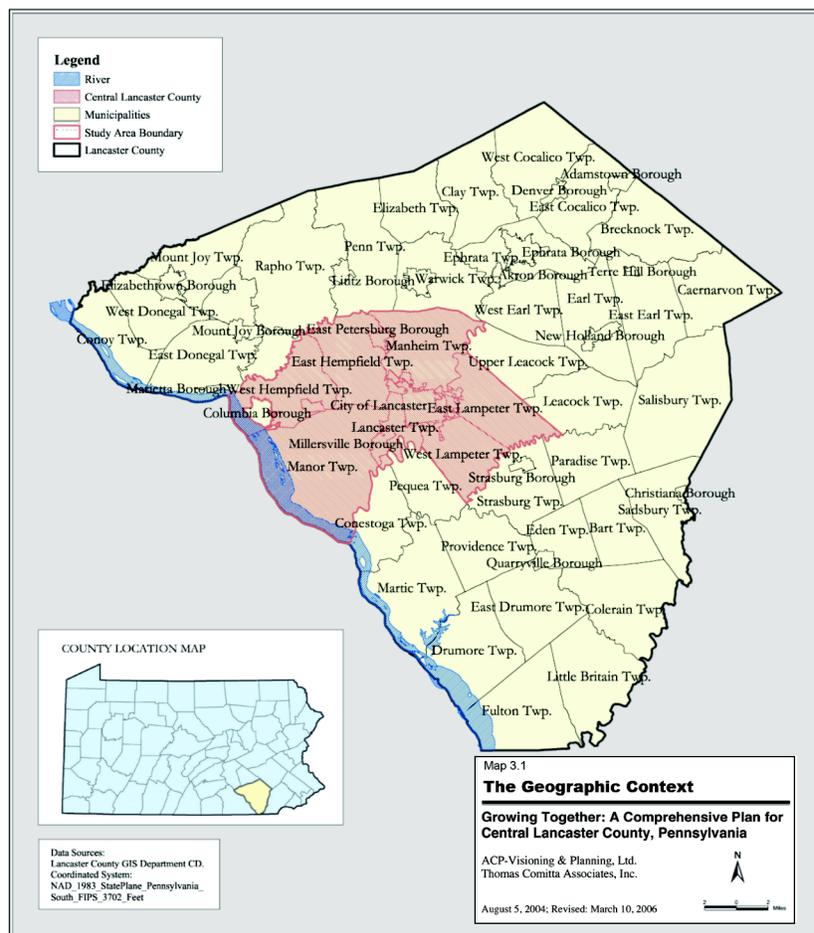
- East Hempfield Township
- East Lampeter Township
- East Petersburg Borough
- Lancaster City
- Lancaster Township
- Manheim Township
- Manor Township
- Millersville Borough
- Mountville Borough
- West Hempfield Township
- West Lampeter Township

Lancaster County, also referred to as “the county,” is located in south-central Pennsylvania and is comprised of 60 independent municipalities that cover 946 square miles and serve as home to over 470,000 residents. Throughout this chapter comparisons are made between Central Lancaster County and Lancaster County to see how the study area compares with the county as a whole. Map 3.1 - The Geographic Context shows Central Lancaster County in the context of Lancaster County and its 60 municipalities.

MAP 3.1 – THE GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

"As we traveled around Lancaster County over the last twenty-five years, we talked with farmers, shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, and Old Order people. In different ways, they would all say the same thing: Lancaster County is blessed. Blessed with good land. Blessed with an abiding religious heritage. Blessed with natural beauty. Blessed with good people."

Lancaster County, text by Ed Klimuska and photos by Keith Baum and Jerry Irwin, Voyager Press, 1998



Central Lancaster County occupies the western edge of Lancaster County with the Susquehanna River marking its westernmost boundary. Most of the study area is relatively flat, making it an ideal place for farming. Farms are, perhaps, the most distinctive element of the region’s landscape and are a magnet for tourism, which generates millions of dollars in annual revenue and is key to the area’s economic vitality. For visitors arriving by train or by car, these farms shape their first impressions of Central Lancaster County.

Besides attracting tourists, these agricultural lands are home to active, highly productive farms. The rich soils of the region facilitate widespread



A horse-drawn buggy.



Downtown Lancaster City.



Commercial development along Route 30.

cultivation of crops like corn and soybeans, as well as the production of dairy and animal products. Modern farms and farms owned by Plain Sect families function side by side, contributing to the region's distinctive agricultural landscape.

Plain Sect culture represents a significant element of agrarian life throughout the county. Amish, Mennonite, and other traditional communities have resided in the region since the early 1700s. The presence of Plain Sect communities further adds to the sights for which the region is best known – historic farmsteads, covered bridges, and horse-drawn buggies.

The uniqueness of the region, however, goes well beyond its rural landscapes and agrarian lifestyles. Central Lancaster County is a place rich in architectural treasures and distinctive historic communities. Lancaster City is the oldest inland city in the United States. Its neighborhoods and downtown (as well as the neighborhoods and central cores of the area's boroughs) are compact and walkable. These urban areas are culturally diverse, historically notable, and host a significant percentage of residents in addition to a number of thriving businesses, shops, and industries that play an important role in making Central Lancaster County the economic engine of Lancaster County and surrounding region.

Historically, the transition between these urban and rural areas has been graceful. However, like many other areas throughout the United States, the region's most recent development has not been in harmony with its celebrated landscapes. Sprawling, low-density residential suburbs and low-density commercial development have begun to detract from the unique landscapes that define the region. Municipalities and residents alike have become increasingly uneasy with this type of development pattern. They are seeking a new approach that balances the old and the new, that preserves and enhances the assets that make Central Lancaster County special, and that sustains growth and prosperity for the future while preserving those qualities from its past that make the place so unique.

History of Lancaster County

Central Lancaster County and the surrounding townships and boroughs that together comprise Lancaster County have a long and rich history.

The original inhabitants in the area that eventually became Lancaster County were Native Americans (Susquehannock, Conestoga, Shawnee and Delaware tribes). William Penn, Pennsylvania's founder, left a legacy of religious tolerance and the area became a haven for those seeking religious freedom. The first European settlers were Mennonites who came in 1710 to occupy approximately 10,000 acres around present-day Willow Street.

Amish, German, and English settlers soon followed. This tolerance continues today and the county is home to hundreds of churches of all denominations, three synagogues, and an Islamic center.

Lancaster County, established in 1729, was originally carved from neighboring Chester County and spread over a large area of central

Pennsylvania to include present-day York and Cumberland Counties and parts of Berks, Lebanon, and Northumberland Counties. The City of Lancaster is the oldest inland city in America, as previously mentioned. It was mapped out as a town in 1730, chartered as a borough in 1742, and incorporated as a city in 1818. It took its name and symbol, the red rose, from Lancashire, England. The City of Lancaster has played a prominent role in the history of the nation – it was the capital of the U.S. for a day in 1777 and during the Revolutionary War, the City of Lancaster was home to military stables and barracks where British and Hessian soldiers were imprisoned.

Lancaster County’s Noteworthy Residents:

James Buchanan, 15th President of the United States; Milton Hershey, the famous chocolate magnate; General Edward Hand, who served with George Washington in the Continental Army; and Thaddeus Stevens, a prominent 19th century congressman and abolitionist who authored the 14th amendment, which gave former slaves citizenship and the right to vote.

The infamous "widow-maker" long-muzzled Pennsylvania rifle that helped the colonists win the war (later called the Kentucky Rifle) was manufactured in southern Lancaster County. Furthermore, Lancaster County was an important line along the Underground Railroad for escaped slaves seeking freedom. Southern Lancaster County served as a popular conduit on the way to Philadelphia. Columbia attracted escaped slaves with the rare promise of economic stability for an emerging black middle class and the nationally significant Christiana Resistance took place there in 1851.

In addition to its historical significance, the county has been home to many internationally recognized businesses. Hershey's Chocolate was founded in Lancaster in 1894, F.W. Woolworth established the country's first "5 & 10 cent" store in Lancaster in 1879, and the Hamilton Watch Company manufactured some of the world's most accurate and innovative timepieces – including the first battery-operated wrist watch and digital watch – in Lancaster for much of the 20th century.

PART 2: Population and Employment

Part 2: People and Employment focuses on three areas: population, social characteristics of the population, and employment.

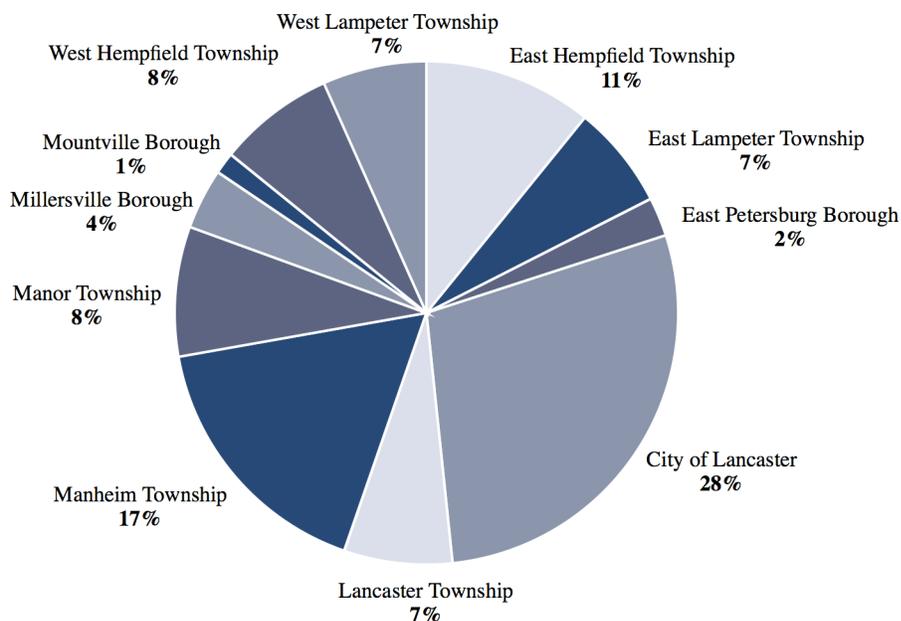
A. Population

In 2000, with a population of 198,383, Central Lancaster County accounted for 42 percent of Lancaster County’s total population of 470,700. The population of Central Lancaster County grew by 42,559 residents between 1980 and 2000, an increase of 27 percent. The greatest increase in population was felt between 1980 and 1990, a change of 15 percent. Growth slowed to 10 percent between 1990 and 2000. The population is projected to continue to grow in the future but slower than in the past. According to the LCPC projections, the population of Central Lancaster County will grow by 42,000 people between 2000 and 2030 for a total population of about 240,000.

Lancaster City is by far the largest municipality, more than one and a half times the size of the next most populous municipality, Manheim Township. Manheim Township, in turn, has more than one and a half times the population of East Hempfield Township. According to Lancaster County

Planning Commission projections (as discussed in the Summer 2003 issue of *FYI*, official newsletter of the LCPC), Lancaster City will retain its position as the most populous municipality, but its share of the study area’s total population will decline in the coming years from 28 percent in 2000 to 23 percent in 2030. Figure 3.2 shows the percent share of population by municipality for the year 2000.

FIGURE 3.2 – PERCENT SHARE OF POPULATION BY MUNICIPALITY, 2000

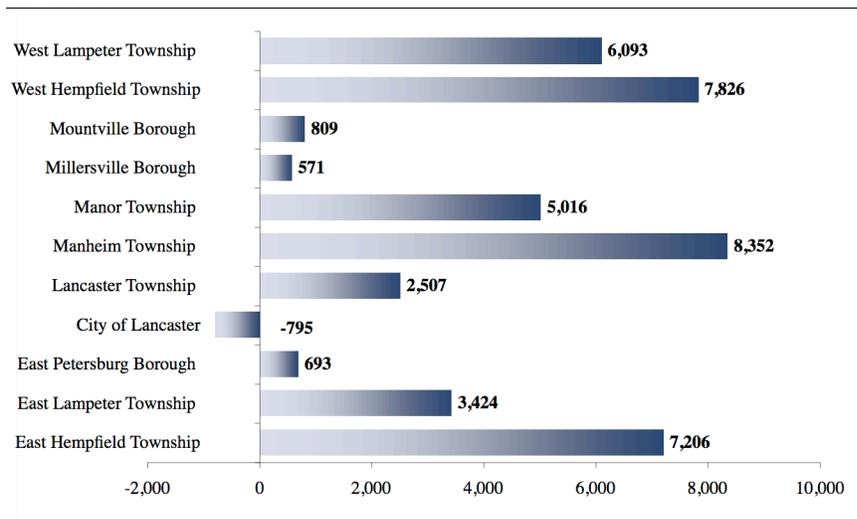


Source: US Census Bureau

Manheim Township and West Lampeter Township have been the fastest growing municipalities in Lancaster County. Between 1990 and 2000, Manheim Township added over 4,800 new residents, the highest increase of any municipality in Lancaster County.

Between 1990 and 2000, four municipalities accounted for 70 percent of the population growth in the area: Manheim Township, West Lampeter Township, East Hempfield Township, and Manor Township accommodated a total of 13,300 new residents. This trend will continue in the future, but West Hempfield Township will replace Manor Township as one of the top four growth municipalities. According to Lancaster County Planning Commission projections, Manheim Township, West Hempfield Township, East Hempfield Township, and West Lampeter Township will accommodate 69 percent of the total population growth in Central Lancaster County between 2000 and 2030. See Figure 3.3.

FIGURE 3.3 – PROJECTED POPULATION CHANGE BY MUNICIPALITY, 2000-2030



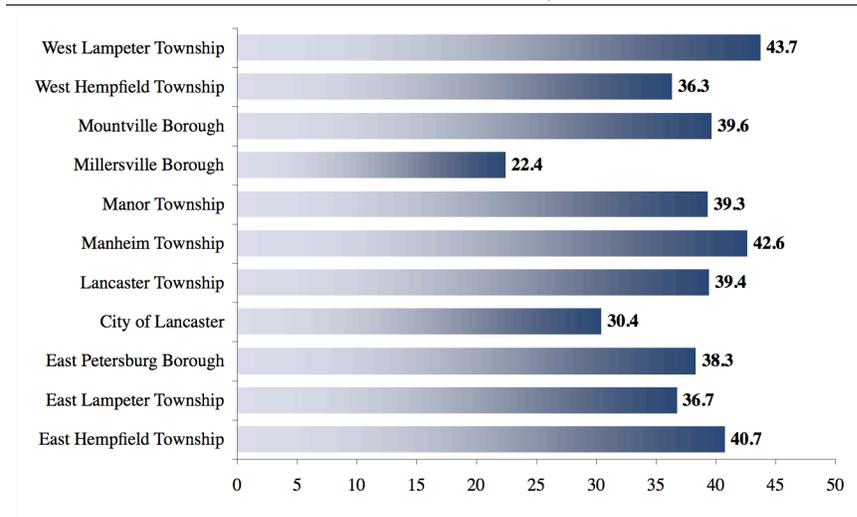
Source: Lancaster County Planning Commission

B. Social Characteristics

Age

Median age in Central Lancaster County varies dramatically among municipalities, from a low of 22.4 years in Millersville Borough (likely due to the presence of Millersville University) to a high of 43.7 years in West Lampeter Township (likely due to the presence of the Willow Valley Retirement Communities). In general, the median age of Central Lancaster County municipalities tends to exceed state and national medians of 38 years and 35 years, respectively. Figure 3.4 below shows the median age for each municipality.

FIGURE 3.4 – MEDIAN AGE BY MUNICIPALITY, 2000



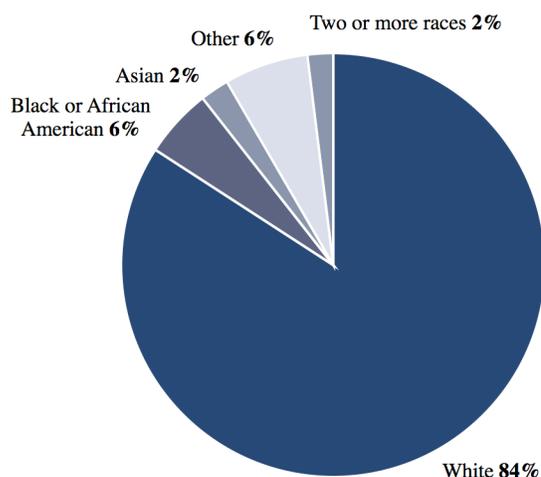
Source: US Census Bureau

Race and Immigration

As depicted in Figure 3.5 below, Central Lancaster County is 84 percent white. Among non-white residents, six percent are Black or African American and two percent are Asian. As a whole, this composition represents greater racial diversity than the county (92 percent white) or the state (85 percent white). However, it does not reflect an even distribution of non-white residents. The vast majority (68 percent) of non-white residents reside in Lancaster City.

The Hispanic or Latino population is growing quickly. In 1990, the Hispanic or Latino population of any race was 13,400. In 2000 it was 22,400, an increase of 68 percent. The Hispanic or Latino population of any race accounted for 11 percent of the study area's total population. Lancaster City was home to 77 percent of the study area's total Hispanic population.

FIGURE 3.5 – RACIAL COMPOSITION, 2000

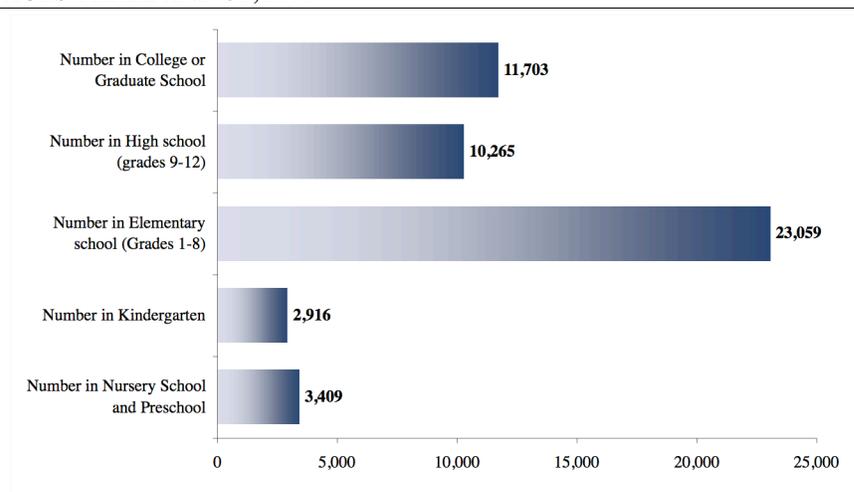


Source: US Census Bureau

According to 2000 census data, approximately nine percent or 8,700 residents in Central Lancaster County are foreign-born. Among these residents, 38 percent are from Asia, 28 percent are from Latin America, and 26 percent are from Europe. Seventy-eight percent reside in Lancaster City, and 19 percent reside in Manheim Township. Those of Asian and European descent are relatively evenly dispersed throughout the region, whereas those of Latin American descent are concentrated in Lancaster City. About half of foreign-born residents are naturalized citizens.

School Enrollment

The composition of the student enrollment for Central Lancaster County mirrors the composition for the state of Pennsylvania and the United States. Figure 3.6 shows the total number of enrolled students in the study area in 2000.

FIGURE 3.6 – SCHOOL ENROLLMENT POPULATION, AGES THREE AND UP, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau

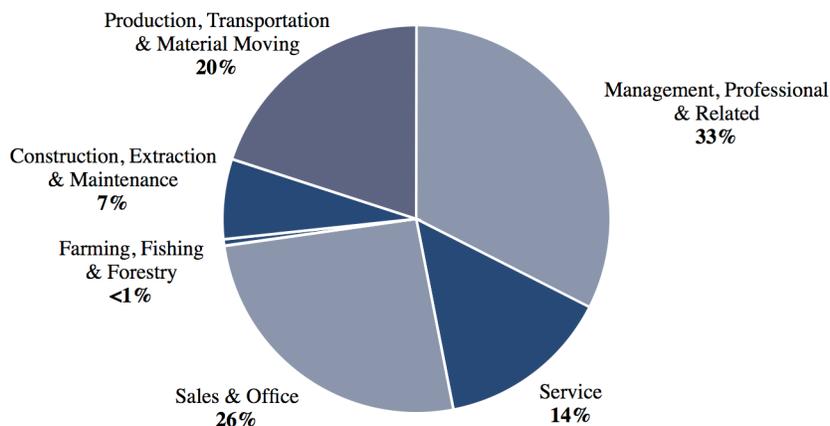
School enrollment trends have been outpacing general population growth. In 1990, the student enrollment for elementary and high school was 27,000. By 2000, that figure reached 33,300, an increase of 23 percent. The total population of Central Lancaster County only increased by 11 percent during the same period. This may indicate a growing school age population and associated increases in demand for educational services.

C. Employment

According to 2000 Census data, Central Lancaster County has a labor force of over 100,000, accounting for 67 percent of the population aged 16 and older, and reflecting a higher participation in the labor force as compared to state and national averages. Unemployment rates are correspondingly lower. In 2000, Central Lancaster County's unemployment rate was 2.7 percent, as opposed to 3.5 percent for Pennsylvania, and 3.7 percent for the U.S. Unemployment in Central Lancaster County tends to be concentrated in Lancaster City, which has a five percent unemployment rate and over 50 percent of the total unemployed population in the study area.

About one-third (33%) of the population in Central Lancaster County works in management, professional, and related occupations. Other significant reported occupations include sales and office (26%), and production, transportation, and material moving (20%). A breakdown of occupation distribution can be seen in Figure 3.7.

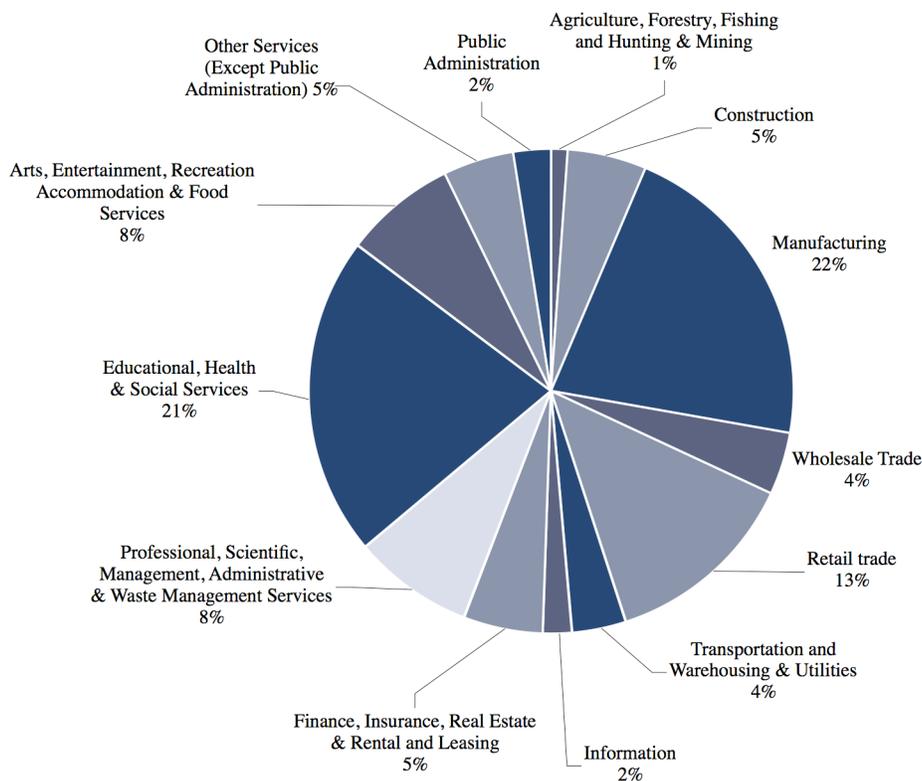
FIGURE 3.7 – PERCENT SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, 2000



Source: US Census Bureau

Central Lancaster County’s largest industries in terms of employment are manufacturing, education, health and social services, and retail trade. Figure 3.8 below provides details on the share of employment by industry.

FIGURE 3.8 – PERCENT SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 2000



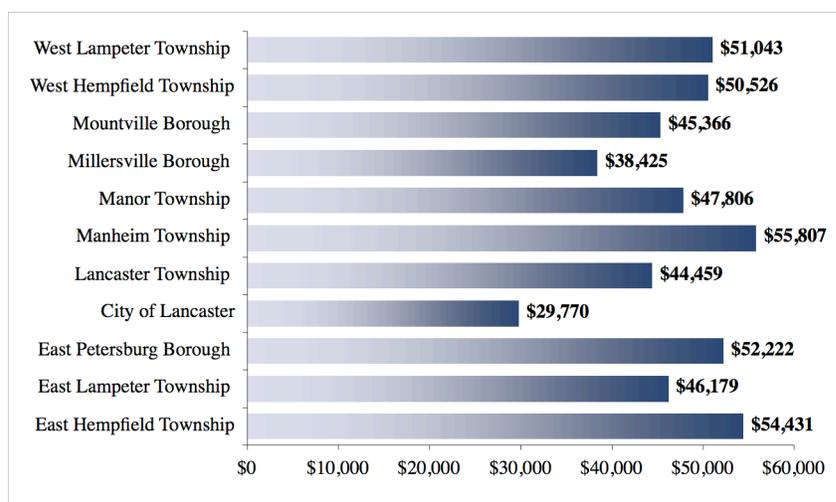
Source: US Census Bureau

The largest proportion of the population involved in manufacturing, education, health and social services, and retail trade is concentrated in Lancaster City, where 22 percent are in the manufacturing industry and 21 percent are in the educational, health, and social services industry.

Income

While income in Central Lancaster County tends to be relatively high compared to state and national averages, it varies considerably by municipality. According to 2000 data, the median incomes for the area range from \$29,770 in Lancaster City to \$55,807 in Manor Township. Figure 3.9 shows the median household income for each municipality.

FIGURE 3.9 – MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY MUNICIPALITY, 1999



Source: US Census Bureau

In 1999 nearly 3,500 families (7%) in Central Lancaster County were below the poverty level. Poverty levels are higher than Lancaster County (5%), but lower than the state (8%) and nation (9%). Sixty-four percent of the total study area population below the poverty level resides in Lancaster City. Sixty-one percent of families below the poverty level were female-headed households with no husband present, and 70 percent of this population was in Lancaster City. Thirty-four percent of the elderly in poverty resided in Lancaster City and 18 percent resided in Manor Township. Those aged 18 and under account for 25 percent of individuals in poverty.

PART 3: Planning Context

This section provides an overview of the planning context for *Growing Together*. Specifically, the chapter deals with *Growing Together's* relationship to the Policy and Growth Management elements of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. The chapter also addresses *Growing Together's* relevance in light of recent regional studies.

A. The Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan

Lancaster County has a long and rich history of innovative comprehensive planning. The County's existing Comprehensive Plan contains these elements: *ReVisions*, the Policy Element adopted in 1999; *Balance*, the Growth Management Element; *Choices*, the Housing Element; *Heritage*, the Cultural Heritage Element; the Tourism Element, adopted in 2005; the Transportation Element consisting of the long-range transportation plan, a biennially adopted transportation improvement plan, and special plans for non-motorized transportation; the Open Space Element adopted in 1992 and scheduled for update and inclusion in a larger Lancaster County Green Infrastructure Plan during 2006; and the Water Resources Element, adopted in 1997 and scheduled for update in 2006.

Growing Together was developed concurrently with three major updates to the County Comprehensive Plan. These Elements are expected to be adopted during 2006 – *Balance*, *Heritage*, and *Choices*. They are described below along with *ReVisions*, the Policy Element.

ReVisions

ReVisions is the Policy Element of the Comprehensive Plan. *ReVisions* identifies the following six key principles for enhancing and maintaining Lancaster County's unique sense of place and quality of life:

- Preserving and Protecting our Heritage;
- Revitalizing our Urban Communities;
- Developing Livable Communities;
- Creating a Sustainable Economy;
- Investing in our Human Resources; and
- Promoting Strong Leadership.

The goals, objectives, and strategies of *Growing Together* are consistent with these six principles.

Balance

Balance, the update to the Growth Management Element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, 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. The Growth Management Element establishes the overall direction, tools, and an agenda for action by municipalities and the County to work together to realize the future to which Lancasterians aspire.

The 1993 Growth Management Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan set the policy framework for future land use. The Growth Management Element recommended the creation of Urban and Village Growth Areas as its policy centerpiece. Designed to attract growth around Lancaster City, the boroughs, and urbanized parts of townships,

Urban and Village Growth Areas help to ensure residents' ready access to needed services, while protecting and preserving agricultural and natural areas. Today, Lancaster County has 44 Growth Areas; they include 13 Urban Growth Areas (UGA) and 31 Village Growth Areas (VGA). In the Central Lancaster County area, UGAs and VGAs represent a combined total of 50,587 acres of land.

Within the study area for *Growing Together* there are five existing Urban and Village Growth Areas. These are:

1. The Central Lancaster County UGA
2. The Columbia Marietta Area UGA
3. The Lampeter VGA
4. The Oregon VGA
5. The Washington Borough VGA

In addition to these existing Growth Areas, two additional Village Growth Areas are proposed for the study area – one is an extension of the Lampeter VGA, and the other is an East Lampeter Township VGA near Smoketown. When discussing UGAs and VGAs, *Growing Together* accounts for all existing and proposed Growth Areas.

The 1997 Growth Management Element set a target of directing 80 percent of new residential growth to Urban and Village Growth Areas. An average density of 5.5 units per acre was set for Urban Growth Areas, with a lower density set for Village Growth Areas in accordance with their lower infrastructure capacities.

Balance is setting new growth management targets that are designed to promote more intensive, compact development in Urban Growth Areas and to better manage growth in rural areas. The new targets are as follows:

- 85 percent of new growth will be targeted to Urban Growth Areas;
- 15 percent of new growth will be targeted to Village Growth Areas, Crossroad Communities, and Rural Neighborhoods to minimize sprawl;
- An average density of 7.5 net dwelling units per acre will be set for Urban Growth Areas; and
- An average density of 2.5 net dwelling units per acre will be set for Village Growth Areas.

Balance has identified approximately 31,000 acres of buildable land within existing Urban and Village Growth Areas. With these new targets for growth and density, along with a renewed emphasis on redevelopment as outlined in the Update, only 15,000 acres will be needed to accommodate growth for the next 25 years.

The Growth Management Element Update includes a Smart Growth Toolbox to provide municipalities in Urban Growth Areas with technical, regulatory, and financial assistance tools that can help them attract and manage more intensive growth during the 25-year time horizon of the Update. The toolbox also includes tools to help rural areas absorb and manage smaller amounts of growth in villages, crossroads communities, and

rural neighborhoods, while preserving farmland and natural areas and strengthening and sustaining the rural economy.

For additional information, a draft summary of the Growth Management Element Update can be found on the website of the Lancaster County Planning Commission at

http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning/lib/planning/Summary_Draft_GMP_web.pdf.

Choices

Choices is an update to the Housing Element. This update represents a substantial re-writing of the 1995 Housing Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The 1995 Housing Element focused primarily on fair housing issues. This update is written in conformance with later amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code which require a Housing Element to plan for the housing needs of current and future residents of all incomes through a variety of housing activities including new construction, conservation, and rehabilitation of housing in older communities.

The key message for *Choices* is its vision. The vision for *Choices* states that an adequate supply and diversity of housing opportunities will be available in Lancaster County to give current and future residents greater choice in housing type and tenure (rental and ownership), location, and price for a place to call home.

Heritage

Heritage is a completely new element in the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Cultural Heritage Element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan is designed to assist Lancastrians in discovering, conserving, preserving, and celebrating the rich cultural heritage resources of the county. The Cultural Heritage Element provides the overall direction, specific strategies, and an action plan for the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to work together to protect the county's unique sense of place.

Through an extensive public involvement process, the public clearly voiced its approval for preserving the county's agricultural landscapes, historic architecture, and crossroads communities and villages. Additionally, residents spoke in favor of protecting the intangible aspects of heritage including traditional crafts, foods, music, and stories that have been passed down from generation to generation.

In Summary

Growing Together relies on and is consistent with the vision, goals, and principals of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan as it is amended by the current updates. After adoption of *Growing Together* by the member municipalities of the LIMC, this plan will be offered for adoption by Lancaster County as an additional element of the County Comprehensive Plan.

B. Other Relevant Regional Initiatives

The following regional initiatives also help to define the regional context of *Growing Together*:

- The Growth Tracking Report;
- The Zoning Lexicon;
- “Measure Up Lancaster!;” and
- “Back to Prosperity, A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania.”

The Growth Tracking Report

In an effort to monitor the impact of the Growth Areas, the County initiated a Growth Tracking Report in 1994. The Growth Tracking Report is a key source of information for understanding the dynamics of development patterns.

According to the most recent edition of the Growth Tracking Report, the 17,869 housing units developed in Lancaster County between 1994 and 2002 utilized 8,157 acres of buildable land. Of these buildable acres, 2,996 (37 percent) were located inside Growth Areas and accounted for 76 percent of the total number of units built during that time. Meanwhile, 5,161 acres (63 percent) of buildable land developed between 1994 and 2002 were outside the Growth Areas, and accommodated only 24 percent of the total number of units built. These figures indicate that Lancaster County must step up its efforts to manage future growth more effectively.

Zoning Lexicon, 2003

The Zoning Lexicon focuses on categorizing and grouping together similar types of zoning districts within the 60 municipalities of Lancaster County in order to establish common definitions that will facilitate future planning efforts. Where currently there are 550 different zoning districts in the county, the Zoning Lexicon replaces them with 39 common zoning districts. *Growing Together* uses the Zoning Lexicon as a guide for its future land use plan.

“Measure Up Lancaster!”

The Lancaster Community Indicators Project was initiated in 1998 by several organizations that recognized the importance of establishing specific community goals and a valid, reliable method to measure progress towards those goals. It is a collaborative effort of educational, service, and government organizations from throughout the county. “Measure Up Lancaster!” is a publication of the Lancaster Community Indicators Project that provides data on over 60 community indicators. These indicators are organized into a number of categories, including:

- Protection and Preservation of Open Space;
- Historic Resource Preservation;

- Farmland Preservation;
- Agricultural Heritage;
- Economic Stability;
- Growth Management;
- Housing Affordability;
- Transportation and Traffic Congestion;
- Alternative Forms of Transportation;
- Leadership and Involvement;
- Public Participation; and
- Regional Cooperation.

These themes are central to the *Growing Together* plan, and “Measure Up Lancaster!” serves as an important resource for understanding the countywide perspective relating to each theme. First published in August 2000, “Measure Up Lancaster!” was updated in 2003. The full report is available from the Lancaster County Planning Commission at www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning/lib/planning/pdfs/indicators_report.pdf.

“Back to Prosperity, A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania”

Funded by The Heinz Endowments and the William Penn Foundation and prepared by the Brookings Institution, “Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania” provides an extensive statewide examination of the interrelated growth and economic challenges facing the state. The report focuses on Lancaster among eight metropolitan regions. It contains demographic and socio-economic data on the Lancaster region and provides recommendations for the region’s future based on an examination of the data from a statewide perspective. While the area covered by “Back to Prosperity” is not precisely the same as the geography addressed in *Growing Together*, the findings in both reports reveal a good level of consistency. For more information, the full report can be found on the Brookings Institution website, at www.brookings.edu/es/urban/pa/Lancaster.pdf.