



AGENDA

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – COMMITTEE WORKSHOP PRPC-3 March 29, 2017

1. Phoenixville Region Multi-modal Plan – Bill Deguffroy, AICP, Chester County Planning Commission (15 minutes)
2. Current Trends – Member discussion on topical areas (15 minutes)
 - a. Commercial activity by type/sector – e.g. retail, corporate, health care, professional, trades
 - b. Vacancy/turnover rates
 - c. Status of supporting services/attributes – e.g. infrastructure, transportation, sewer/water, education/workforce, housing
 - d. Attracting jobs that match workforce attributes
 - e. Key person input for future policy – real estate, business, development
3. Public Outreach – (30 minutes)
 - a. Questionnaire - Finalize at April workshop
 - b. PRPC web page – Updates, meeting materials posted
 - c. Web Survey Link – Municipal and PRPC websites
 - d. Survey at May-June First Fridays, Dogwood Fest, Farmers Market, Local Businesses
 - e. Date/Venue for PPW-1 – June (special date?)/PAHS, PAMS, KVFC, other
 - f. Advertise in municipal newsletters/mailings/websites
 - g. Notice in “In Phoenixville” magazine on each municipality’s pages – Deadline 4-19
 - h. Postcards w Comp Plan description, request for public input, Public Workshop info, survey link, PRPC web link
4. Regional Policy narrative summary – Member comments on initial draft (5 minutes)
5. Existing Conditions Mapping Revisions and Narrative Summary (5 minutes)
 - a. Existing Land Use – Field verification of DVRPC data
 - b. Forest Cover/Prime Agricultural Soils – Clarifying distinction from land use
 - c. Narrative Summary – Member comments on initial draft
6. Demographic and Housing Analysis Revisions and Narrative Summary (5 minutes)
 - a. Regional data for Household Income, Households Below Poverty, Housing Unit Types
 - b. Employment by Sector
 - c. Educational Attainment – Some College/Associates Degree
 - d. Narrative Summary – Member comments on initial draft



PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Phoenixville Borough, Charlestown Township, East Pikeland Township, Schuylkill Township, West Vincent Township

DRAFT REGIONAL COMMUNITY VALUES SURVEY

March 29, 2017

The Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan is being updated to re-establish policies for environmental protection, open space, housing, economic development, infrastructure, and community resources. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help define community values and establish priorities for the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Results of the survey will be discussed at a public workshop in June and be used to formulate the goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan. The workshop date and location will be announced shortly, and all residents are encouraged to attend.

Values Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Conservation of natural resources and the rural/scenic character should remain a regional priority.					
Conservation is less important than allowing property owners to maximize development potential.					
Historical buildings and sites are important to the identity of the Region.					
The Region should direct new development to Phoenixville, established villages, and defined development corridors.					
Don't change anything. I like the Phoenixville Region the way it is.					

What are the major challenges facing the Phoenixville Region? Please check all that apply:

- Traffic & Congestion
- Unemployment
- Lack of Diverse Opportunities
- Open Space Preservation
- Lifestyle and/or Culture Conflicts
- Lack of Affordable Housing

Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan

Draft Community Values Survey

March 29, 2017

- Crime & Drug Abuse
- Homelessness
- Urbanization of Rural Areas
- Development Pressures
- Land Use Conflicts
- Increasing Population
- Other _____

The region should prioritize the following type of development:

- Office
- Manufacturing/Industry
- Healthcare
- Incubator/start-up businesses
- Retail
- Restaurants
- High-density housing (apartments)
- Medium-density housing- (townhomes)
- Low-density housing (single-family detached)
- Other _____

The region should prioritize expansion of the following recreational facilities.

- Playgrounds
- Paved multi-purpose trails
- hiking trails
- athletic fields
- Other _____
-

Select the three issues that are most important to you.

1. Healthy environment
2. Vibrant sustainable economy
3. Access to quality of life amenities
4. Safe and prepared community
5. Sense of place

Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan

Draft Community Values Survey

March 29, 2017

6. Equity and social justice
7. Quality, responsive city services
8. Mobility and connectivity options

Tell us one of your favorite things about the Phoenixville Region

1. Recreational opportunities
2. Sense of Place
3. Natural environment
4. Quality of life
5. Transportation
6. Size
7. Local economy
8. Location
9. Equity/social justice
10. Other _____

What's one thing you would change about the Phoenixville Region?

1. Planning and land uses
2. Transportation
3. Crime and vagrancy
4. Local economy
5. Public utilities and services
6. Natural environment
7. Cost of living
8. Collaboration and diversity
9. Recreational opportunities
10. Other

How long have you lived in the Phoenixville Region?

In which municipality do you live?

Do you rent or own the place where you live?

In what town/municipality do you work?

What is your age?

Do you have other comments?



Existing Regional Policies and Housing, Demographic & Natural Resource Inventory

Committee Workshop 3
March 22, 2017

Review of Existing Regional Policies

The 2008 Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan, the constituent municipalities' Comprehensive Plans and additional policies from Chester County and other regional organizations were analyzed for shared goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. By synthesizing the fundamentals of Regional policies, a picture of common Regional priorities can be established.



The PRPC region represents a mixture of rural, suburban, and urban areas, creating an inherent tension in the patterns of development. By concentrating growth within established economic development zones and emphasizing the reuse and revitalization of existing neighborhoods, the region's municipalities may cooperate to promote vibrant and sustainable land use patterns that counteract the various pathologies of sprawl.

Existing Regional Policies:

- The 2008 PRPC Comprehensive Plan provides calls for the revitalization of Phoenixville, the development of walkable, mixed-use villages, context-appropriate infill, and the creation of a network of greenbelts and open space. The Plan proposes to achieve those goals by promoting regional Transferable Development Rights (TDRs), establishing design guidelines for new developments, and regulating large buildings which generate a high volume of traffic.
- Landscapes2, Chester County's Comprehensive Plan, calls for reinvestment in urban centers, echoing the PRPC goal of revitalizing Phoenixville. Landscapes2 also promotes the preservation of the character of Chester County by concentrating growth in the most appropriate areas and a diversified mix of land uses in order to maintain a balance between growth and preservation. This will be achieved through building sustainable communities within designated growth areas and preserving large amounts of open space.
- The 2001 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan calls for a reduction of sprawl development patterns through a mix of dwelling types, adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and Traditional Neighborhood Development practices, which supports the PRPC's goal of walkable, mixed-use villages.
- The 2001 East Pikeland Comprehensive Plan, however, is not entirely consistent with the PRPC: the growth boundaries proposed in 2001 are less extensive than those put forth in the 2008 PRPC plan, while the proposed growth areas do not fully accord with those established by the PRPC. Since the Regional Plan was adopted after the municipal plan, and with Township review and adoption, these minor inconsistencies are not viewed as significant
- The 2011 Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan Update addresses the location, design, and density of development within the Borough. In addition, it advocates coordination of TDRs by Regional Planning and the establishment of a regional financial and administrative entity to facilitate the purchase and sale of development rights.
The 2011 map shows an expanded mixed-use growth along French Creek continuing into the Cromby Road area and a neighborhood center in the North Hill area just north of Andre Thornton Park. The 2011 map also indicates an expansion of industrial uses in the vicinity of the Kindergarten Center along the Schuylkill River and between the Phoenixville Shopping Center and French Creek

Aside from minor mapping inconsistencies, the policies of the constituent municipalities and other regional organizations support the land use goals and objectives of the 2008 PRPC. Through enhanced coordination on goals, objectives, and policy proposals, the member entities can establish directions in future land use that will benefit the entire region.

Natural Resources

The PRPC region possesses a wide variety of valuable natural resources, each of which poses preservation and regulatory challenges. By regulating natural resources in a coordinated manner, the municipalities of the region can protect the function of natural systems which in turn positively affects quality of life in the region.

Existing Regional Policies:

- The 2008 PRPC Regional Comprehensive Plan calls for regionally consistent resource protection standards and the creation of integrated open spaces and greenways. Policies to support these goals include the maximizing of open space protections, the implementation of stormwater best management practices (BMPs), the mapping of all flood areas, the development of water conservation programs, the regulation of riparian buffers, and the implementation of a reforestation program.
- Landscapes2 proposes a county-wide policy of maintaining a network of natural resources integrated into the built environment.
- The County Watersheds Plan establishes a range of goals focused on preserving and/or enhancing water quality in the region. By reducing stormwater runoff, promoting water-based recreational and cultural resources, and integrating utility and municipal planning to meet future water supply and wastewater needs, existing water resources will not only serve the region's existing needs, but be safeguarded for the future.
- The 2001 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan calls for the protection of water resources.
- The 2013 East Pikeland Plan for Open Space and Economic Development seeks to preserve natural resources through the establishment of open space and greenway corridors, the promotion of healthy forest ecosystems, the maximization of groundwater recharge, and the promotion of energy conservation and environmentally sound design.
- Phoenixville's 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update recommends that new development and zoning incorporate significant environmental features into their designs while limiting stormwater runoff. It further calls for a 35' wide riparian buffer along French Creek.
Riparian buffers are critical tools for protecting the integrity of the region's waterways. There is a lack of consistency among the ordinances of the constituent municipalities, which prevents the establishment of the most robust protections for the region's waterways. Of the four watersheds within the PRPC region, three are designated as either High Quality or Exceptional Value by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (see Map X.X). As such, the waterways within those watersheds are subject to statewide regulatory standards.

While the natural resource protection goals of the region's municipalities are largely consistent, the regulations designed to achieve those goals are not. By establishing a consistent vision and a regional regulatory framework through the PRPC, the region's townships are more likely to achieve those goals and thereby safeguard the region's natural resources. Indeed, because the functional limits of natural systems rarely accord with political boundaries, they are best suited for management on a broader scale.

The existing goals and policies of the region all generally agree: promotion of mixed-use development, discouragement of sprawl, and the reuse of historic structures should guide the region's planning for its residents' housing needs.

Existing Regional Policies:

- The 2008 PRPC Regional Comprehensive Plan's stated goal for housing is meeting the needs of all household sizes, ages, and/or incomes. The Plan calls for this to be achieved through a balanced pattern of development that enhances existing communities and the natural scenic landscapes of the region. The plan encourages village-style mixed-use development and discourages sprawling development patterns. A diversity of housing options facilitated through the creation of new residential opportunities and the stabilization of existing residential areas in older communities and neighborhoods is proposed to meet the region's housing needs.

The plan further recommends targeting new residential development in existing residential and mixed-use areas and encouraging innovation and diversity in site design, thus resulting in a diversity of housing types.

- Landscapes2 calls for providing diverse and affordable housing options consistent with the principles of smart growth and sustainability.
- The 2001 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan aims to reduce sprawl development patterns with a mix of dwelling types, the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and Traditional Neighborhood Development..
- Phoenixville's 2001 Comprehensive Plan Update promotes mixed-use new and infill development, including a wide variety of housing types, and the preservation of existing housing stock.

The existing policies largely agree on strategies for approaching housing needs in the region. By codifying these shared goals and policies, the region as a whole has a greater opportunity to address the housing needs of its residents in both urban and rural/village settings.

Community Facilities

While the existing regional plans and policies do not all address the same categories of community facilities, they do agree that regional coordination is the key to implementing a comprehensive vision for providing services to the region's residents.

Existing Regional Policies:

- The community facility goals of the 2008 PRPC Regional Comprehensive Plan consist of coordinating sewer and water systems with overall land use goals and existing infrastructure. The plan further calls for regional coordination of recreational facilities and programs.
- Landscapes2 broadly advocates for providing accessible community services and facilities.
- The 2001 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan's Community Facilities Plan aims to provide the community with integrated open space by linking them together with regional trail systems.
- The 2001 update to the Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan notes that the region should cooperatively address any modifications to the PA DEP's Act 537 Wastewater Facilities Plan. It further recommends adoption and implementation of stormwater management regulations. This echoes the need for regional coordination on the protection of regulated natural resources.

All in all, the regional policies that address community facilities all call for coordination between regional governments, across a variety of municipal systems, to achieve goals.

Community Facility systems such as sewer and water are complex and dependent on coordination, while regional systems such as recreation and open space benefit greatly from a broad, regionally-based perspective.

Economic Development

Planning for regional economic development is focused mostly on the utilization of existing business districts, both in more developed, suburban settings, and in village settings. By utilizing infill and reuse, the region will promote economic growth while retaining the rural character of the region.

Existing Regional Policies:

- The PRPC 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan recognizes Phoenixville Borough as the economic center of the region. The plan further proposes a concentration of other commercial, office, and industrial activity in designated areas of the region while maintaining the economic viability of existing commercial districts.

The plan recommends a path to achieve these goals through the promotion of cultural tourism in the region, the development of the French Creek Center as a mixed-use economic hub and the expansion of commercial services in mixed-use village settings. It further calls for a diversity of housing types, which echoes regional housing goals.

By seeking to utilize infill development and adaptive reuse in the revitalization of downtown Phoenixville, economic development will be further concentrated in existing business districts. This also supports regional goals addressing the preservation of historical and cultural resources through reuse.

Finally, the plan calls for the creation of a new retail village at the location of the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro Station and the promotion of compatible pedestrian-oriented retail environments in existing villages.

- Landscapes2 promotes a reinvestment in urban centers, which supports the idea of targeting Phoenixville for reuse and development. The plan further advocates the support of a strong and diverse economy through sustainable development practices.
- The East Pikeland 2013 Plan for Open Space and Economic Development encourages context appropriate economic development through the extension of public infrastructure along Routes 23 and 724, the development of zoning incentives for revitalization, the establishment of appropriate zoning and pedestrian accessibility in Kimberton, and the promotion of cultural heritage and tourism.
- The 2001 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan aims to reduce sprawl patterns while the Phoenixville 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update directs development to the Centre at French Creek shopping development and promotes the continued revitalization of the downtown area.

In sum, the region has approached economic development mostly in concert, envisioning economic growth occurring around established commercial districts, both in urban/suburban retail developments and in context-appropriate village settings. By focusing economic development in appropriate areas, systems of transportation and facilities may also be coordinated to create complementary region-wide systems.

Transportation

Transportation is a vital planning area for a region largely characterized by single passenger car commuting. Regional policies are largely in agreement about the importance of facilitating expanded public transportation options in conjunction with pedestrian, bicycle, and parking planning to create a multimodal transportation system.

Existing Regional Policies:

- The 2008 PRPC Regional Comp Plan aims to develop regional roadway design standards, preserve scenic roadways, villages, and historic resources, and coordinate safety, operational and capacity improvements across the region. Through the development of additional public transportation services, including more pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the region. These non-automobile based transportation systems should be supported by safe pedestrian links and a sufficient parking supply, and coordinated through a regional implementation plan.
- Landscapes2 envisions an intermodal county-wide transportation system that sustains quality of life, strengthens the economy, and protects the environment.
- The Chester County 2014 Public Transportation Plan proposes the development of a reliable, consistent, flexible, and efficient system to maximize transit service coverage and provide practical transit options. By providing a barrier-free and multimodal means of transport, the county hopes to improve the convenience, reliability, and safety of transit.
- The Charlestown 2001 Comprehensive Plan aims to reduce traffic congestion while promoting trails and walkability through a circulation plan supporting scenic roads and local and regional bikeways.
- The 2013 East Pikeland Comprehensive Plan Supplement promotes the use of public transportation and multi-modal accessibility through complete streets and coordination of development and open space with a regional system of trails.
- The 2011 Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan Update establishes a transportation and circulation plan which identifies a site for a SEPTA rail station, recommends sidewalks be provided by new development and that a public parking program be implemented. New developments should further provide a parking plan to show how parking needs will be addressed. It calls for studies on pedestrian circulation studies and parking supply and demand.

The overall goals of the region's constituent municipalities are generally in accord. By providing accessible public transportation options, particularly to areas targeted for revitalization and/or growth, quality of life and economic development may both be augmented. The development and support of a regional bicycle and pedestrian trail network will further promote quality of life and public health while linking open space recreational opportunities in the region.

Cultural Resources

There is an agreement among existing regional policies: the PRPC region possesses an abundance of cultural resources, including historical buildings and scenic rural landscapes. By creating a regional inventory and a program of reuse in development planning, these assets will not only be protected, but will help enhance complementary economic development and housing goals.

Existing Regional Policies:

- The 2008 PRPC Regional Comprehensive Plan proposes the conservation of historic resources and the protection of their settings through mapping, implementation of zoning protections, context-sensitive infill, and the promotion of cultural tourism.
- Landscapes2 promotes the concentration of growth in the most appropriate areas in order to protect and maintain Chester County's fabric of history, archeological resources, and cultural landscapes.
- Watersheds calls for an enhancement of water-based recreational and cultural resources
- The 2001 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan emphasizes visual quality, scenic viewsheds, heritage, and agricultural landscapes.
- The 2001 East Pikeland Comprehensive Plan emphasizes visual quality, vistas, and scenic roadways, the preservation of rural character and the preservation of agriculture.
- The 2013 East Pikeland Plan for Open Space and Economic Development calls for the preservation of township heritage and character through the creation of a comprehensive open space network, an open space requirement for all new development, the protection of the visual quality of scenic roads, and the improvement of the appearance of the 23/724 corridor.
- Finally, the 2011 Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan Update recommends that all new infill development conform to and enhance the historic streetscape and that development in the Local Historic District (HARB District) conform to the Borough Guidelines for Storefronts.

By working in unison to inventory and positively repurpose existing cultural resources, the region as a whole may reap the tourism and economic revitalization benefits.

Open Space

The PRPC region includes a variety of high quality open spaces, providing active and passive recreational opportunities and allowing for the enjoyment of the region's natural, cultural, and historical resources.

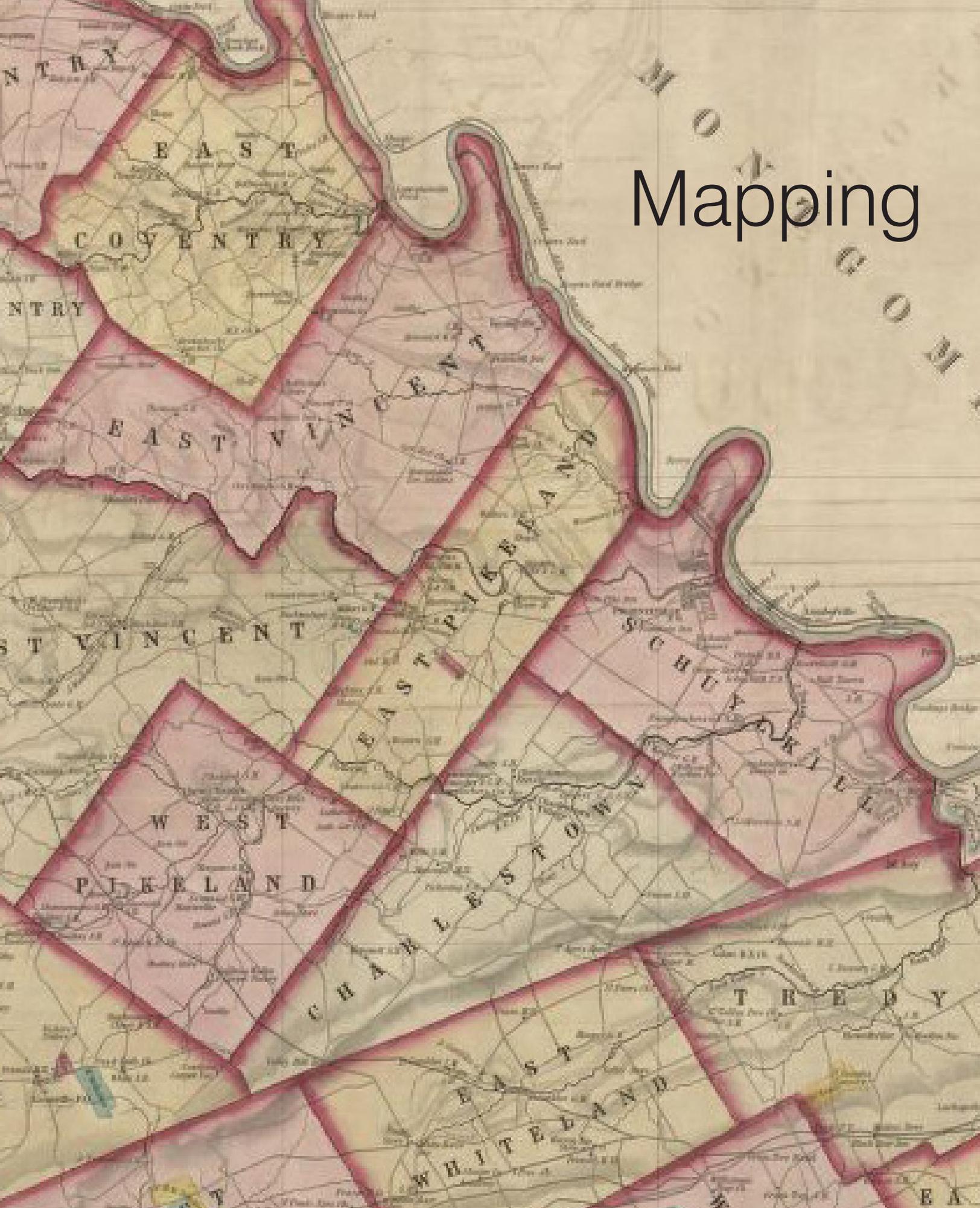
Existing Regional Policies:

- Landscapes2 calls for the development of an integrated network of protected open spaces linked together by greenways or trail corridors.
- Linking Landscapes promotes an inventory of open space features and the creation of a county-wide vision for protected open space.
- Watersheds calls for the enhancement of water-based recreational resources.
- The Northern Federation PROS Plan seeks to establish a premier park, recreation, and open space system that connects historic, cultural, recreational, natural, and scenic resources to public health. It proposes policies aimed at acquiring and developing additional park land for sports fields through mandatory dedication of fees-in-lieu. A master plan for future parks should be developed while planned regional trail networks should be completed, improved, and expanded.
- The 2001 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan calls for enhancing recreation opportunities and promoting trails and walkability. The plan further calls for a reduction in traffic volume and the creation and/or enhancement of local and regional bikeways.
- The 2013 East Pikeland Plan for Open Space and Economic Development calls for the development of a comprehensive and accessible recreation system, to be realized through the implementation of a Township Plan for an interconnected local and regional trail network. Open space should be coordinated with trail development and neighborhood parks should be created where needed. Local and regional bike routes should be developed and a Complete Streets approach to planning should be promoted.
- The 2011 Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan Update includes all proposed regional trail systems.

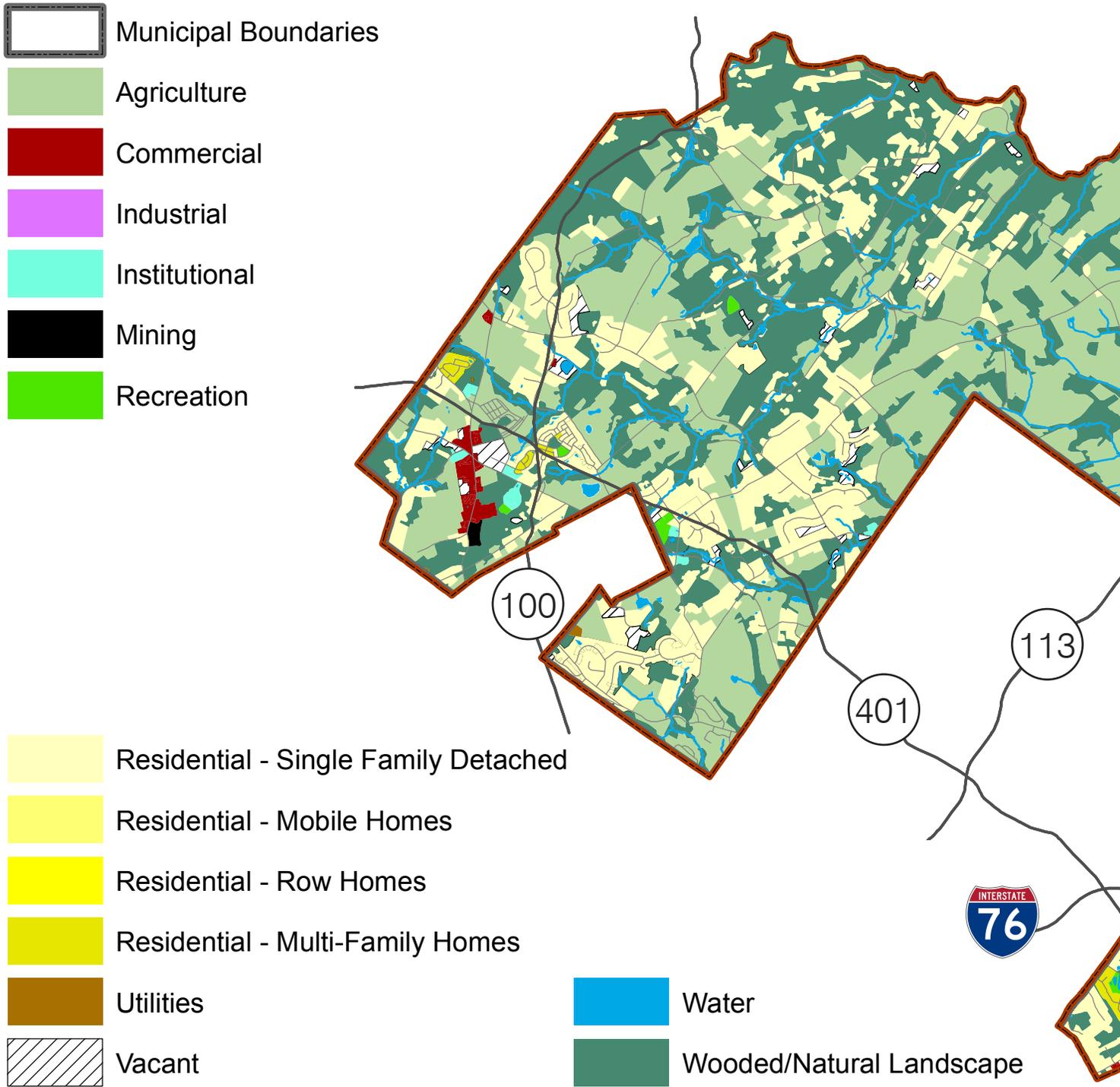
The existing regional policies addressing open space agree on key initiatives: the preservation and enhancement of existing open spaces and the linking of those spaces through the continued implementation of plans for regional and county-wide trail networks. These goals mesh well with transportation, cultural resource, and natural resource preservation goals. When planned cooperatively, a regional open space and trail network will help realize a public health benefit as well as opportunities to enjoy the region's cultural heritage.

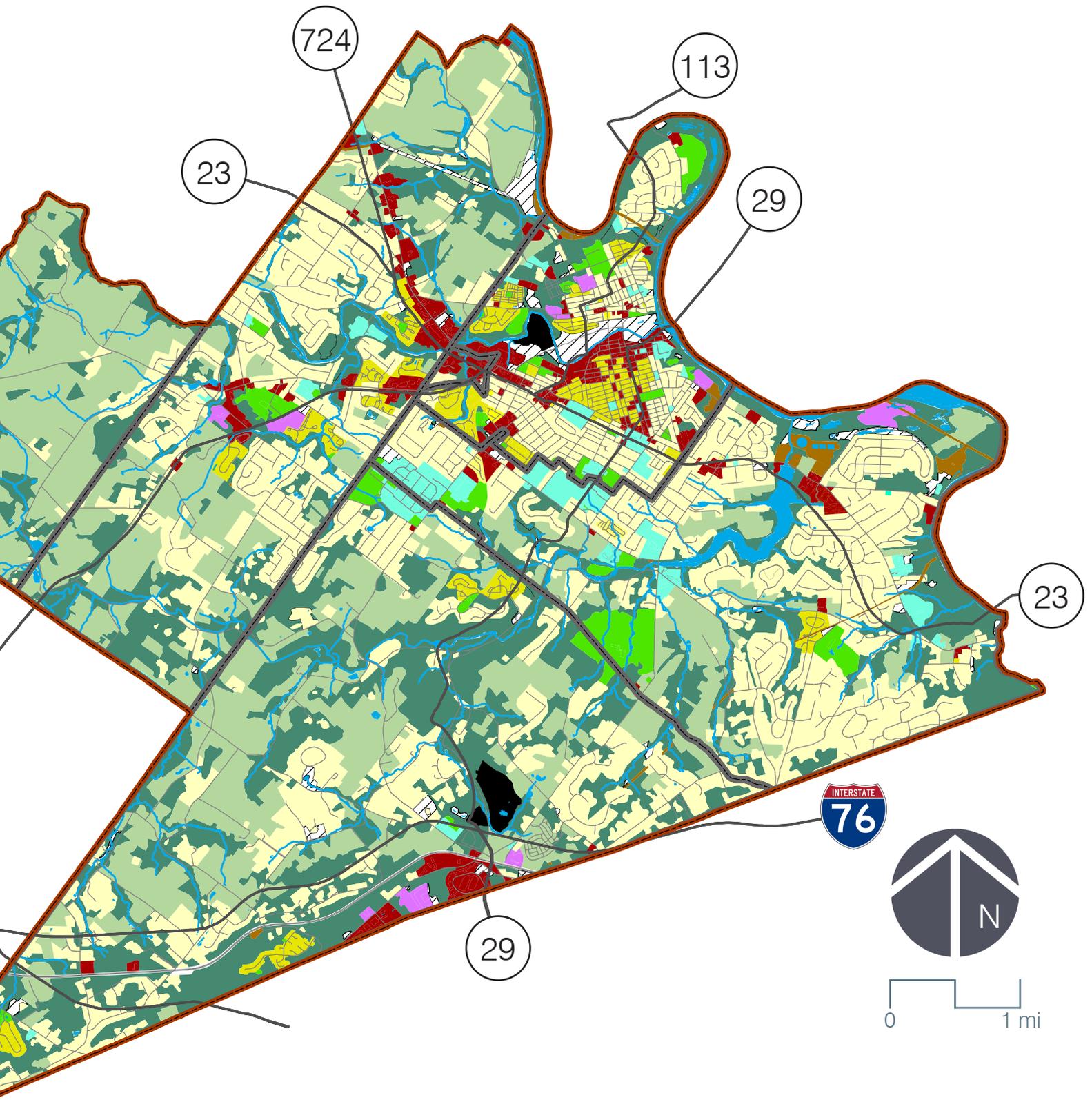


Mapping



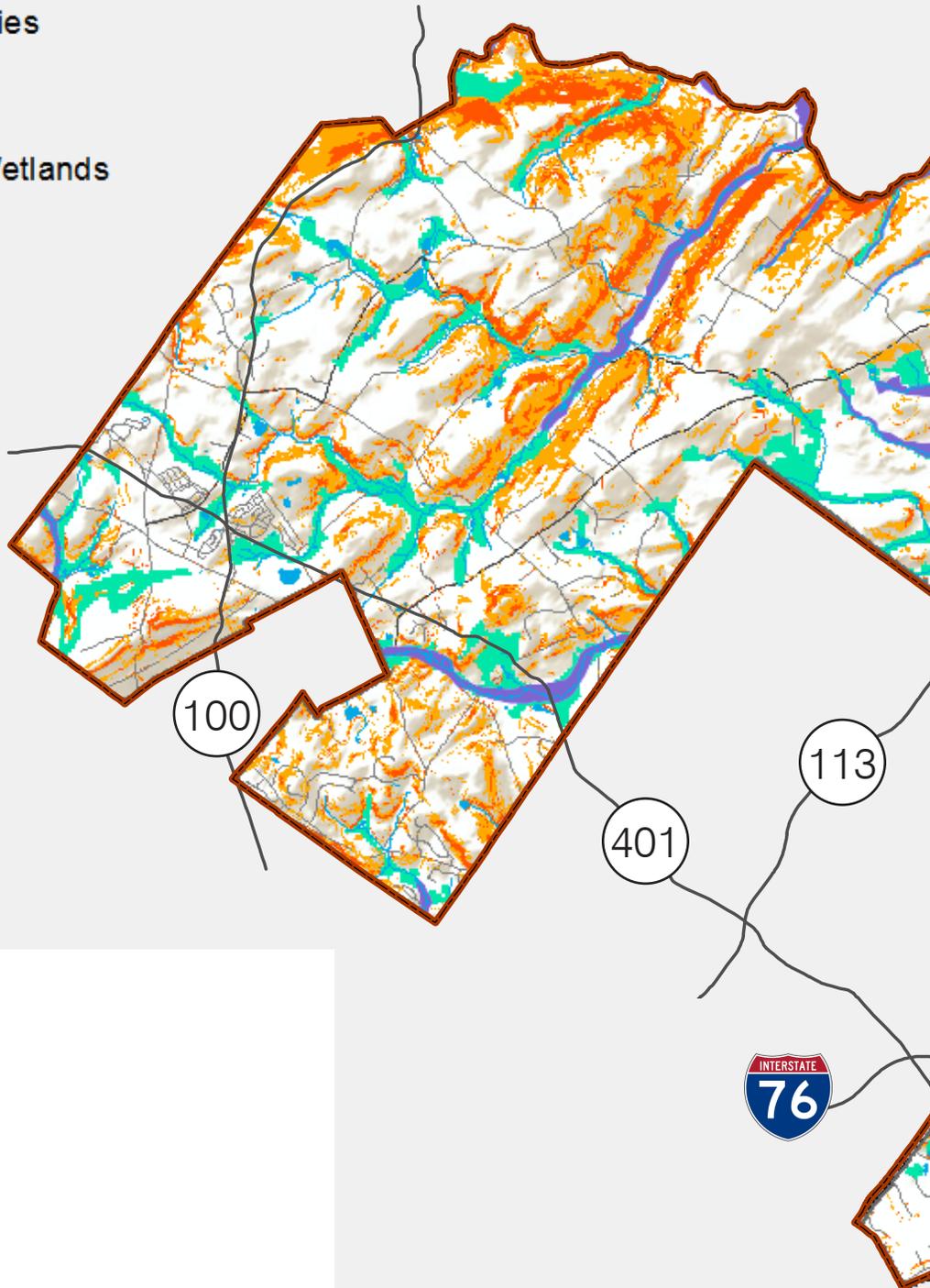
Existing Land Use

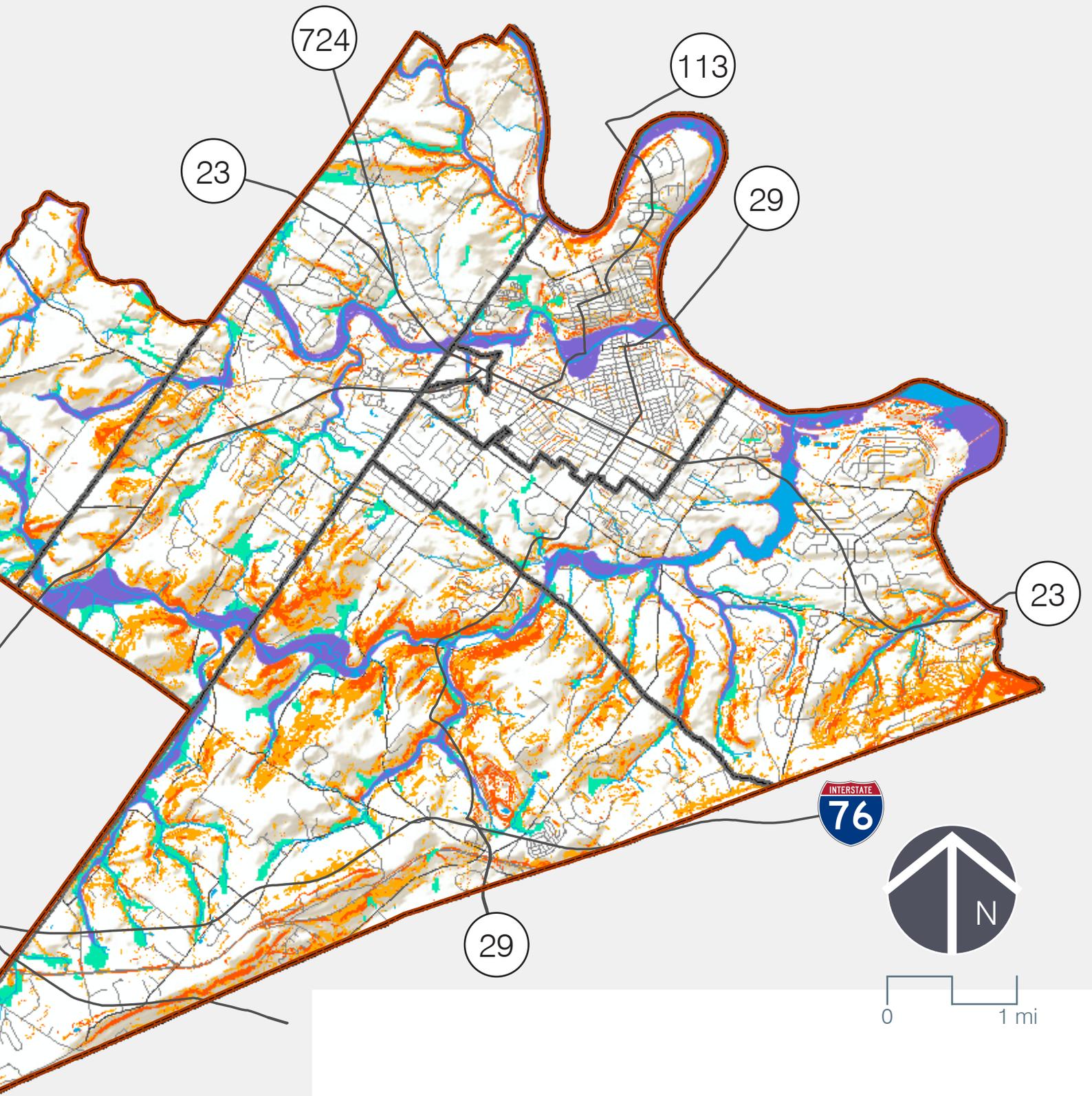




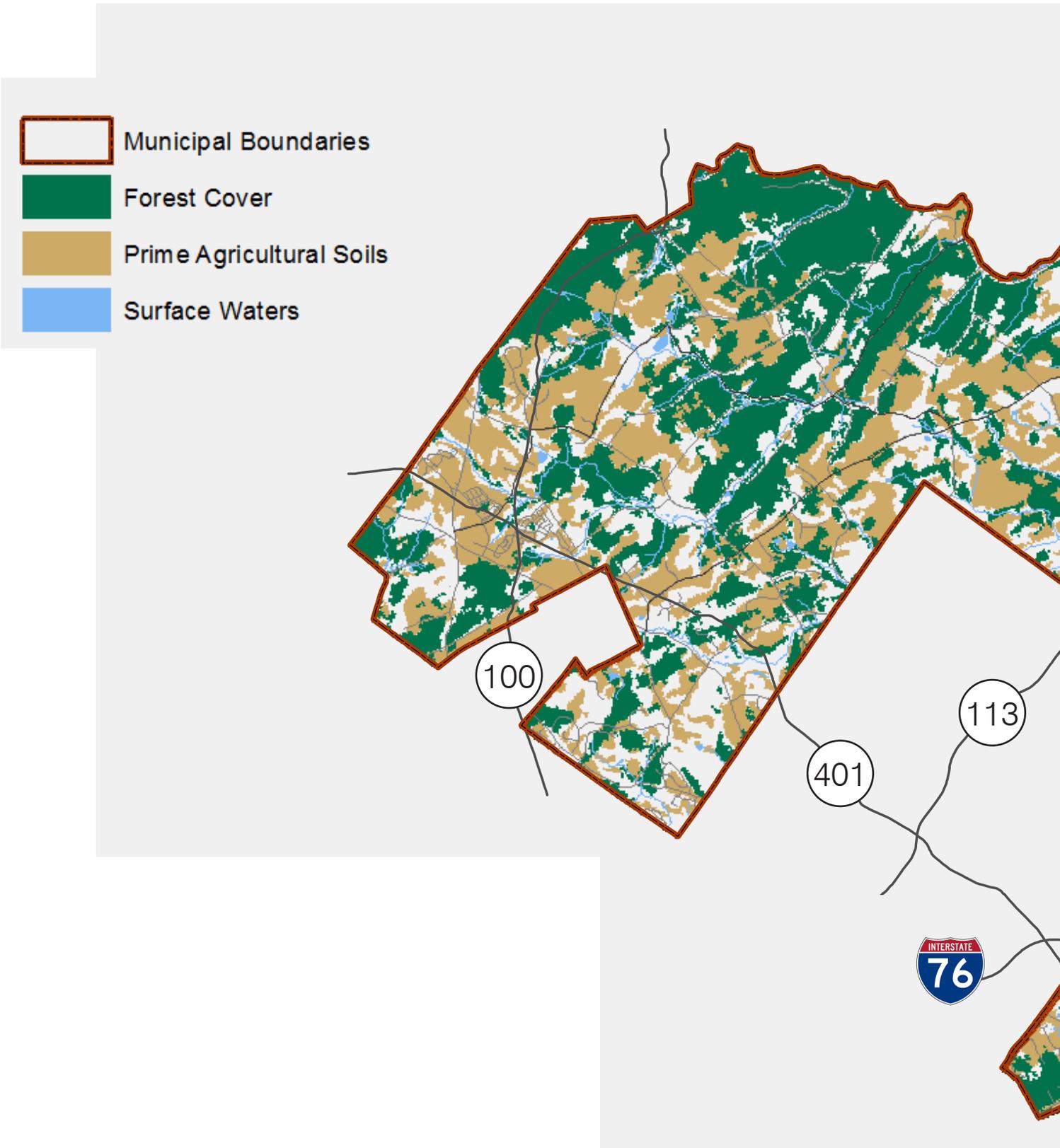
Regulated Natural Resources

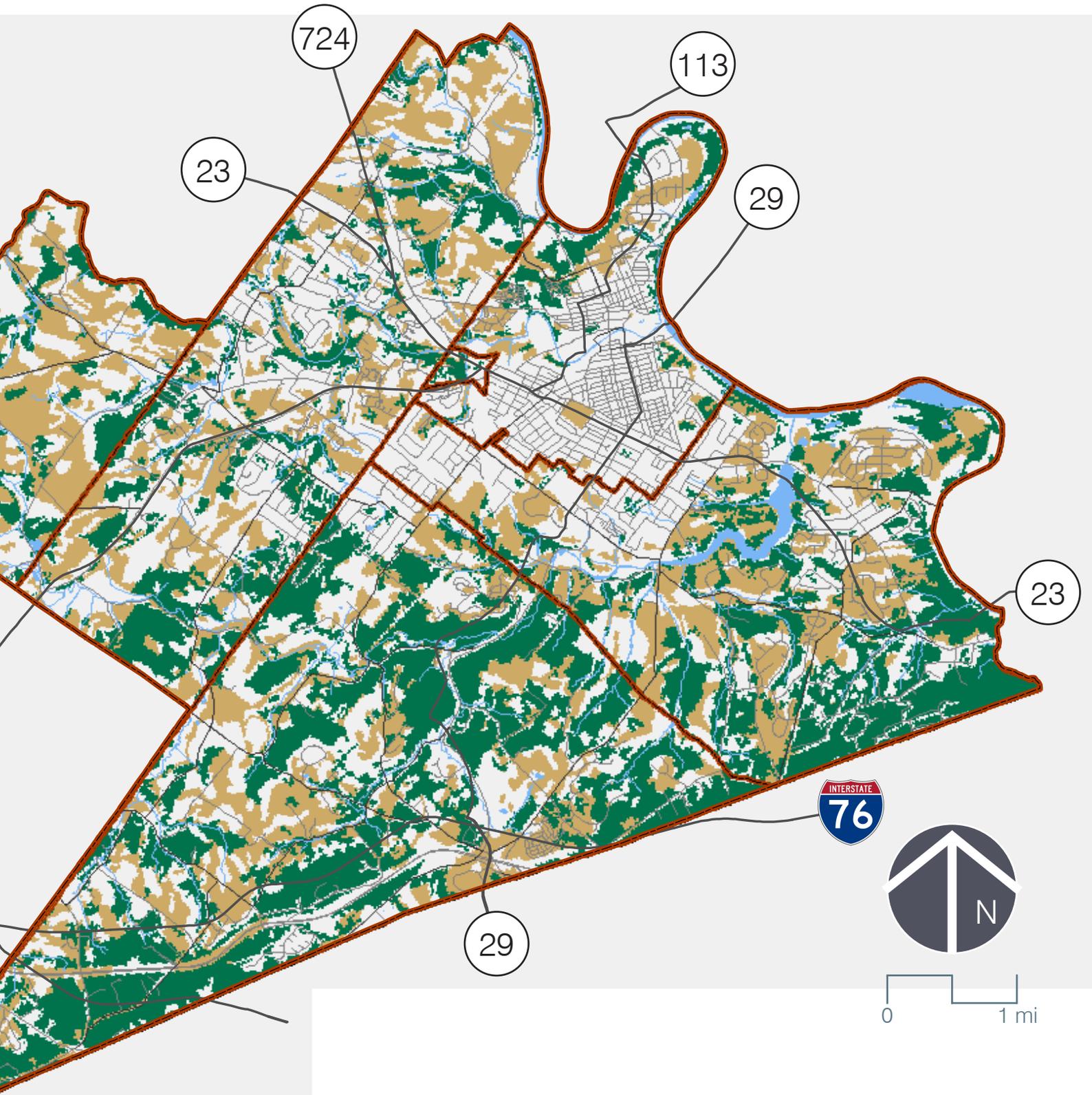
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Surface Waters
-  Hydric Soils and Wetlands
-  15% - 25% Slopes
-  > 25% Slopes





Forest Cover & Prime Agricultural Soils









Natural Resources

Natural Resources

Located in the Piedmont physiographic region in northeastern Chester County, Pennsylvania, the municipalities of the Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) region cover 52 square miles (33,280 acres). More than 100 miles of rivers and streams flow through the region's high quality and exceptional value watersheds. XX acres of mature woodlands cover the land, providing habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, while XX acres of prime agricultural farmland are present within the region, serving as the basis for land use in the region since European settlement.



Schuylkill River - Phoenixville Borough

By preserving these resources through a sustainable approach to future development, the municipalities of the PRPC region will safeguard important quality of life factors for their residents and enhance the quality for the benefit of future generations. Because these systems do not coincide with political boundaries, they are best managed on a larger scale. By working together through the PRPC, the constituent municipalities can realize a greater benefit from these resources than they would by managing them in isolation.

Goals

- Enable a regional approach to sustainable development.
- Limit fragmentation and degradation of existing mature woodlands.
- Maintain the quality of the area's special protection waters and watersheds.
- Preserve and enhance open space
- Protect wildlife habitat.
- Promote regional coordination on ordinances governing natural resources.
- Manage invasive species pressures on native plant communities.
- Protect sensitive natural areas e.g wetlands and steep slopes.
- Preserve the scenic natural beauty of the region.

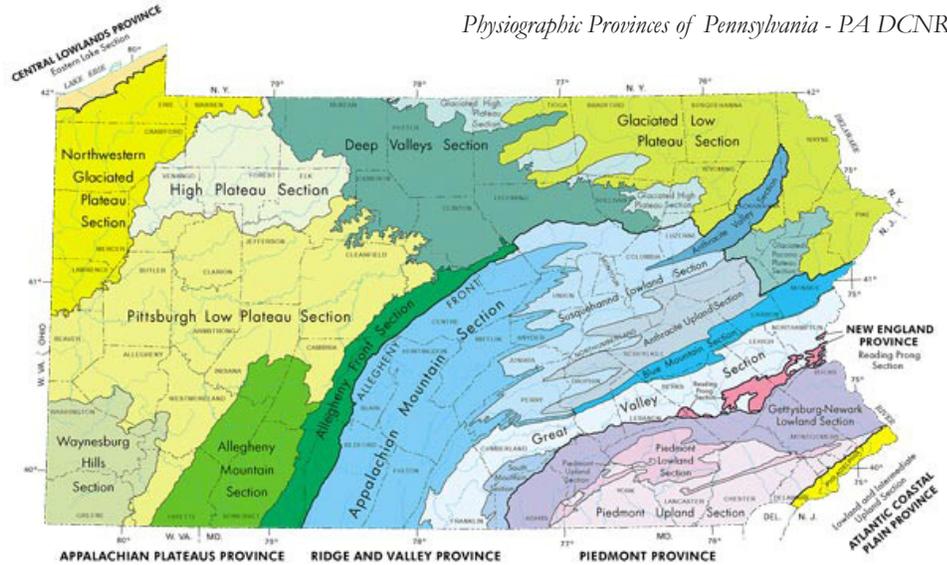
The underlying geology of the region informs the character of the landscape in a variety of ways. Geology and weathering dictate topography and hydrology. The underlying bedrock will also serve as the parent material for the region’s soils, which in turn determines the type of native plant communities that populate woodlands and other natural areas.

These different geological bedrock groups dictate not only the slope but the type of soils present. The weathering of the underlying bedrock, through climate (e.g. precipitation, wind, and solar radiation) and the biological processes of subsurface organisms such as bacteria and invertebrate insects >>>?

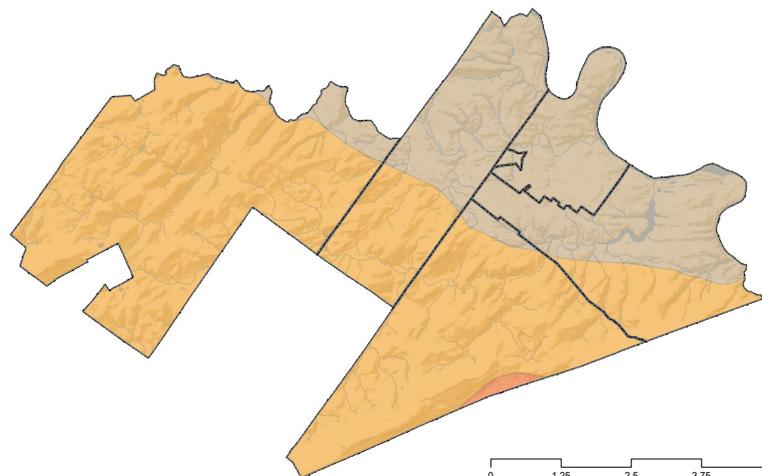
The entirety of the PRPC study area is located within the Piedmont physiographic province. Characterized by rolling hills, the Piedmont (French for “foothills”) is so named for its location relative to the Appalachian Mountains. The region stretches from New York City to Birmingham, Alabama and is home to both a massive human population and diverse wildlife populations.

Within the PRPC region, there are three separate geological sub-provinces: the Piedmont Uplands (approximately 22,400 acres in the southern portion of the region), the Gettysburg- Newark Lowland (nearly 10,624 acres along the Schuylkill River), and the Piedmont Lowland (a small 211 acre sliver to the south of Route 76).

Physiographic Provinces of Pennsylvania - PA DCNR



- Legend**
- Municipal Boundaries
 - Gettysburg-Newark Lowland
 - Piedmont Lowland
 - Piedmont Upland

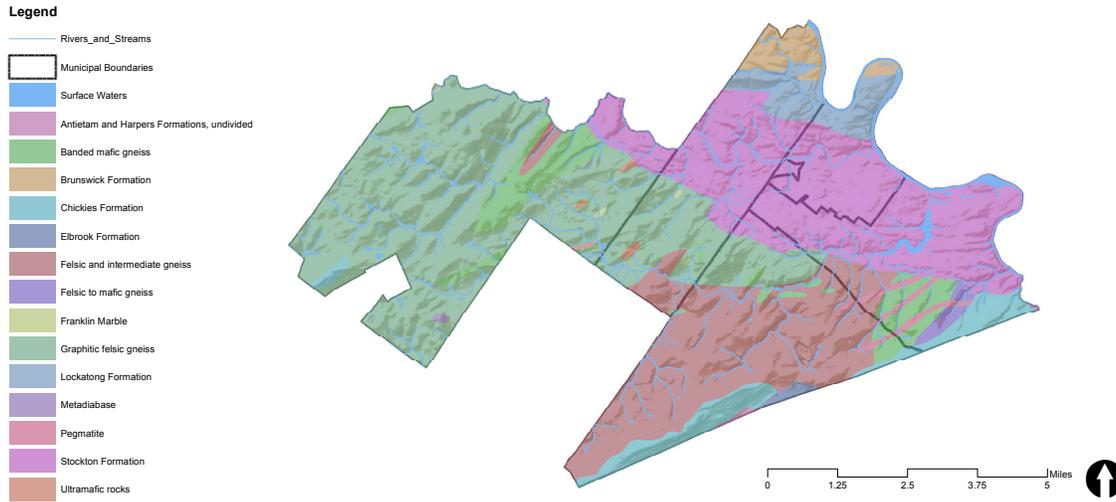


Physiographic Sub-Provinces of the PCPR Study Area



Geology

Bedrock formations within the PCPR Region



Corresponding to the division between the Piedmont Upland and the Gettysburg-Newark lowland, the geology of the region is divided between the harder gneiss rock to the west and south, and several softer formations of sandstone, mudstone and quartz. These softer rocks, formed from river mud, permit for more even erosion, resulting in a more gradual, gently sloping terrain. The bedrocks associated with the Piedmont lowland are also more porous than gneiss, allowing for greater recharge of the aquifer as water percolates through the sandstone.

The Piedmont Upland’s underlying bedrock consists of gneiss (felsic gneiss & graphitic felsic gneiss), a relatively hard rock somewhat resistant to erosion. This leads to the rolling hill character of the area. In contrast to the Piedmont Upland, the Gettysburg-Newark Lowland is underlain by a variety of bedrock types. Generally softer than the Piedmont Upland, the bedrock of the Gettysburg-Newark Lowland is more susceptible to erosion, meaning this portion of the study area is flatter, though areas of erosion-resistant diabase rock has left hills and small elevated regions. The Piedmont Lowlands are comprised of even softer rock, such as limestone, dolostone, and phyllite, and is geologically younger than the surrounding uplands.

In the lowland, Stockton, Lockatong, Brunswick and Chickies Formations are prevalent. Each formation is a mixture of rock types: argillite, sandstone, mudstone & quartzite. Argillite and mudstone are formed from lithified mud, while quartzite, a sandstone, is formed from sand. These bedrocks are relatively porous and allow for greater percolation of water into the aquifer.

As a group, they are softer than the gneiss, meaning that erosion is more uniform and the character of the slope is less undulating. In fact, much of the lowland is relatively flat, especially as it nears the floodplain of the Schuylkill.

The overall topography of the region is characterized by a relatively gentle slope, punctuated by prominent ridges and valleys. Elevations in the region range from a highpoint of more than 810' in the gneiss hills of southern West Vincent Township, to a low point of less than 60' in the floodplain of the Schuylkill River in the west of Schuylkill Township.

There are areas of relatively steep slope, classified as moderate (15-25% grade) or steep (over 25% grade), particularly along Pickering Creek in Charlestown Township and to the western side of West Vincent Township where steep valley walls and stream banks are found (see Regulated Natural Resources Map). Consistent with patterns of land use, areas of steep slopes most often coincide with mature forest cover. Since the land is unsuitable for development, woodlands have been allowed to remain on these sloped areas. The woodlands are valuable for habitat, but they also provide a synergistic effect in preventing erosion on these sloped areas. The root systems of the native plant communities found on steep slopes hold soil in place, thereby limiting erosion and subsequent sediments into the region's water bodies. The shade provided by canopy cover also contributes to cooling streams, thus helping promote a balanced ecosystem that allows for a variety of aquatic wildlife to flourish.

Disturbance of steep slopes and vegetation alters topography and drainage, contributes to slope instability and erosion, and diminishes the quality of groundwater supplies and surface water. It is important that natural vegetative cover be retained on steep slopes and adjacent to streams and wetlands.

Soils

The preservation of healthy soils in the region is crucial for the protection of the region's waterways, agriculture, and ecology. By delineating sensitive soils groups and directing future development in consideration of those soils, the region will achieve a balanced growth which maintains the valuable characteristics of the region's soils.

There are two main soil associations within the region, Penn silt loam and Gladstone gravelly loam. Penn silt loam is the major soil type found in the Gettysburg-Newark Lowland. It is formed from the weathering of shale, siltstone, and sandstone, which are the major bedrock types found within the Gettysburg-Newark Lowland. Penn silt loam is a moderately deep, well-drained soil. Gladstone gravelly loam, the major soil group within the Piedmont Upland, is formed from the weathering of gneiss bedrock, the predominant bedrock type in the upland. It is a very deep, well-drained soil particularly suited to cultivation.

Beyond soil associations, soils in the region may be classified according to the regulatory framework governing their uses. These regulated soils, which are of particular concern in creating land use and development plans are prime agricultural soils, hydric soils, and soils located on steep slopes.

Prime agricultural soils, identified as Classes I and II by the USDA, are soils whose chemistry, access to water, and exposure to sunlight make them particularly suited to cultivation. These soils, found in regions of relatively flat topography, are often desirable to developers for some of these same characteristics. However, they should be protected in order to maintain the viability of farming in the region, which in turn is responsible for much of the appealing visual character of the region.

Hydric soils, found in proximity to waterways and indicative of wetlands, are not suited to development. Particularly in proximity to the region's special protection waterways, hydric soils should be accurately mapped and protected through the regulation of riparian buffer zones. In addition to wetlands subject to regulatory protection, hydric soils are also indicative of areas of groundwater recharge. There is therefore an interest in water quality protection associated with hydric soils. Where wetlands are not mapped, the presence of hydric soils can indicate a good potential for the presence of wetlands.

Finally, soils located on steep slopes should be considered in planning for future development. Soils on steep slopes are not only unstable and prone to erosion, they are also home to native plant communities in the form of mature woodlands and should therefore be of particular consideration for protection through regulatory action. Two problems associated with soil are erosion and sedimentation, which in turn have a deleterious effect on water quality. When development is permitted without sufficient regard for soil quality, stormwater runoff can cause erosion of steep slopes, loss of vegetation on those slopes and the deposit of sediment into the region's waterways, thus adversely impacting their quality. By protecting forest cover on steep slopes, water quality and wildlife habitat are both safeguarded.

There is a general overlap between soils unsuited to development and other natural resources to be protected. For example, soils on steep slopes often overlap with areas of preserved mature woodlands. By protecting those woodlands from clearing through development, the soils are also protected from erosion due to stormwater runoff. As noted above, the protection of hydric soils from development as protects the quality of water present in those areas. And the preservation of farmland provides not only economic activity, but helps retain the bucolic character of the PRPC region.

In order to pursue a sustainable approach to development, areas of hydric soil, steep slopes and prime agricultural soils should be preserved, with development planned for in areas that do not intersect with these types of soils.

Forests & Vegetative Cover

Forest cover represents an important natural resource in several regards. When functioning properly, mature woodlands help provide a range of ecological services that benefit the region as a whole. Large stands of woodland provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. They clean the air through the process of photosynthesis and regulate climate by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. They protect water quality through infiltration and the structural integrity of waterways from impacts due to sedimentation and erosion by stabilizing soil and slowing stormwater runoff.

The woodland found in the PRPC region is mostly categorized as Oak/Chestnut. While the American Chestnut has faced a calamitous decline in the first half of the 20th century, the oaks remain. Red, white and black oaks are the main species found in the region's woodlands. They are joined by tulip poplars, red maples, hickories, and beeches.



While any size woodland can have a positive effect on the environment, these functions are best realized when woodland is allowed to remain unfragmented. This means that large stretches of woodland are kept intact, with as large an area of undisturbed woodland as possible remaining on the interior of any given stand. While much of the mature woodland once present was cleared for agriculture or other development, large unfragmented stands of woods remain in the region. In West Vincent Township, around French Creek, and in Charlestown Township, along Pickering Creek, there are particularly large areas of relatively undisturbed woodland.



Since woodlands coincide with other important ecological systems, they should be managed within the larger natural resource context of the region. By promoting land use patterns that allow for the preservation and enhancement of mature woodlands, an ecological balance is more likely to be struck. The region's forests should be managed in light of adverse impacts from pollution, clearing, invasive species, and stormwater runoff.

Hydrology

The hydrological system is one of the most valuable natural resources of the PRPC region. It includes waterways, wetlands, floodplains, and groundwater. Each of these elements contributes to the overall health of the hydrological system and impacts on any part of the system will have an effect on the overall function. As a natural system that corresponds to geology, topography, soils, and vegetation, the hydrological function of the region should be a major consideration in all future land use and development planning.

Negative impacts to the function of the hydrological system are posed by intensive development (particularly impervious surfaces) and associated concerns, such as stormwater runoff and wastewater systems. These impacts will be felt in the form of pollution, sedimentation, and erosion in the waterways.

Stormwater best management practices, the preservation of naturally vegetated areas and development which is responsive to the hydrological patterns of the region's waterways will not only safeguard water quality but help mitigate flood damage and enhance the natural beauty of the region.

Waterways

Waterways are categorized by stream order, as they run from the smallest headwaters eventually out to the ocean. The Schuylkill River, which is a 6th order stream, the highest classification in the region, borders the region to the east and flows north to south on its way to join the Delaware River in Philadelphia. French and Pickering Creeks, 5th order streams, bisect the region, flowing from west to east towards their confluences with the Schuylkill River, in Phoenixville Borough and Schuylkill Township, respectively. Lesser order waterways of the region include Birch Run, Valley Creek, Pigeon Run, Bull Run, and Black Horse Creek, which are all 4th order streams. Jug Hollow and Stoney Run, 3rd order streams, flow directly into the Schuylkill.

Stream orders begin with the smallest headwaters in the region, the 1st order streams. Though they may seem less significant than larger waterbodies, it is imperative to afford protections to these smaller waterways. Any deleterious effects suffered by headwaters are compounded as water flows successively from 1st order streams, through 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th orders, on its way to the Schuylkill.

Watersheds of the PRPC Region:

East Branch Brandywine Creek (HQ)	[553.3 acres]
French Creek (EV)	[12227.8 acres]
Pickering Creek (HQ)	[14928.4 acres]
Schuylkill River (HQ)	[4646.6 acres]
Valley Creek (EV)	[847.1 acres]

Watersheds

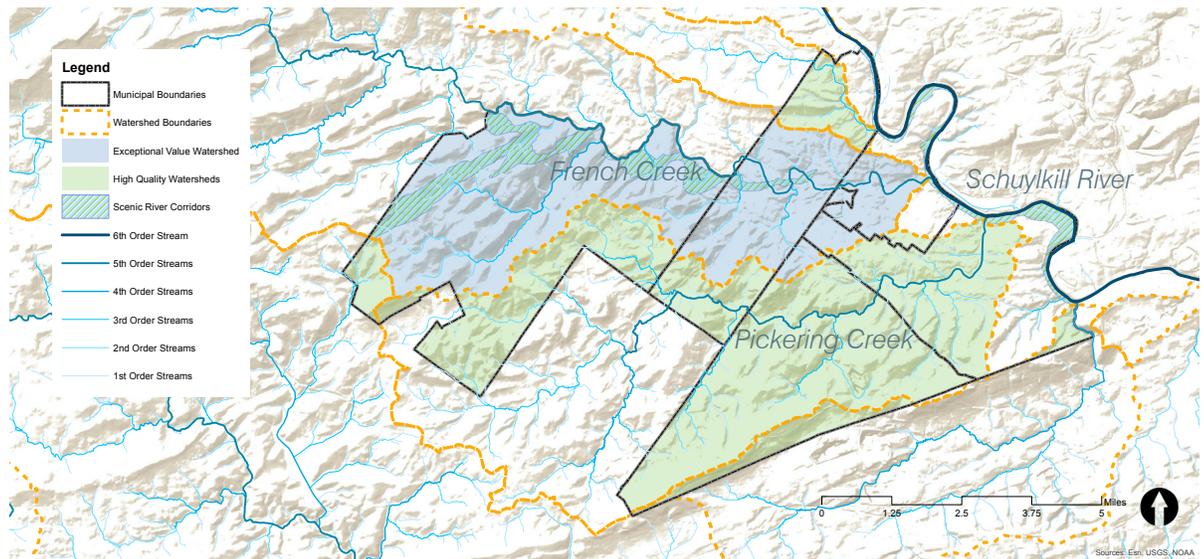
The waterways of the region are all associated with a particular watershed, or drainage basin. These basins are defined by the topography of the land, which dictates the direction in which water will flow. Generally speaking, the more prominent ridgelines in the topography will determine the outline of a watershed. Within each watershed, precipitation will run downhill into a waterbody, will evaporate, or will infiltrate into the soil and back into the aquifer, where groundwater is stored.

Wetlands

Wetlands (see Regulated Natural Resources Map) are areas of water at or near the surface. They are generally found in proximity to waterways and are delineated by the type of vegetation and soils found there. They play an important role in allowing for groundwater recharge, while simultaneously providing habitat for particular plant and animal species. Wetlands are regulated by the state and the federal government, as well as by each municipality individually.

A strategy for wetland, and waterway protection, is the implementation of riparian buffer ordinances. While all of the constituent municipalities of the PRPC have regulations regarding riparian buffers, these regulations should be standardized in order to provide a uniform framework for protection the region's waterways and wetlands.

Stream orders and watersheds within the PCPR Region



Floodplains

Floodplains are areas in proximity to waterways and are formed by the movement of water channels. Though rivers may appear to be static shapes, they in fact meander and drift over time, thereby creating flat areas of alluvial soil known as floodplains. These areas, when uncompromised by development, allow for the containment of flood events and thus help to limit damage to life and property posed by periodic flooding during storm events.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which delineates floodplains, encourages municipalities to regulate development impacts in order to preserve their function. In order for municipalities to participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program, they must delineate 100 year floodplains and limit development impacts to those areas. This means not only limiting development but promoting stormwater best management practices to manage the amount of stormwater runoff reaching the floodplain.

Floodplains along the Schuylkill River, as well as French and Pickering Creeks, should be protected through a coordinated effort from the PRPC. As with most initiatives to protect natural resources, there is a positive knock-on effect on native plant communities, air, and soil quality.

Regulatory Framework

Waterways in the region are already subject to regulation at the state and federal levels. The majority of the region falls within watersheds designated by the state as either High Quality or Exceptional Value. The High Quality (HQ) designation protects surface waters "having quality which exceeds levels necessary to support propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water by satisfying Water Quality Standards of the PA Code." The Exceptional Value (EV) designation goes a step further, protecting waters which not only satisfy the quality standards of the PA Code 93.4b, but are "of exceptional recreational significance, of exceptional ecological significance, or [are] located within a protected zone e.g. State Park." These designations are designed to maintain water quality already present by protecting from harmful effects associated with intensive development e.g. unrestricted stormwater runoff. The EV and HQ designations should be considered in planning for a regional approach to water management.



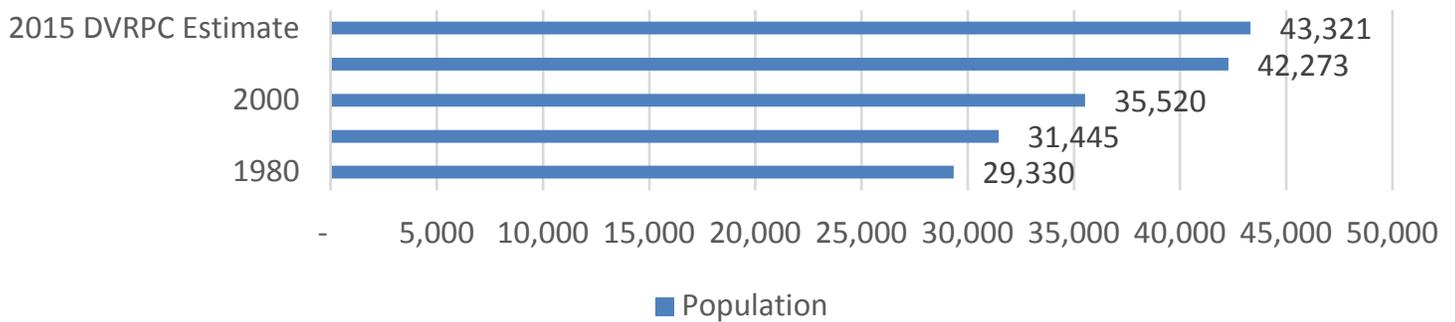
Demographics & Housing



Demographics - Population

Population in the Phoenixville Region continued to grow from 2000 to 2010 at a rate higher than Chester County, the State of Pennsylvania and the United States. The growth rate estimated from 2010 to 2015 by the ACS shows a significant slow-down in the rate of growth within the Phoenixville Region, which is likely a carry-over from the 2008 recession. The Regional growth rate from 2010 to 2015 was lower than Chester County, comparable to the National growth rate, and higher than the State of Pennsylvania. Chart 1 illustrates the Regional population growth and the Population Growth table shows the population growth from 1980 through 2015 for the municipalities of the Region, the Region as a whole, as well as County, State and US growth rates.

Chart 1: Regional Population Growth 1980-2015



The DVRPC Population Forecast Table shows the population forecast for the Phoenixville Region and the individual municipalities of the Region. The projections show a continued high rate of growth for the individual municipalities and the Region through 2045. As part of the Regional Comprehensive Plan update consideration may be given to development capacity of the individual municipalities of the Region relative to the DVRPC projections.

Demographics - Population

Population Growth 1980-2015

Municipality	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010		2010-2015	
							2015 DVRPC Estimate	
Charlestown Township	2,770	2,754	4,051	5,671	40.0%	5,690	0.3%	
East Pikeland Township	4,410	5,825	6,551	7,079	8.1%	7,359	4.0%	
Phoenixville Borough	14,165	15,066	14,788	16,440	11.2%	16,658	1.3%	
Schuylkill Township	5,993	5,538	6,960	8,516	22.4%	8,576	0.7%	
West Vincent Township	1,992	2,262	3,170	4,567	44.1%	5,038	10.3%	
Regional Total	29,330	31,445	35,520	42,273	19.0%	43,321	2.5%	
Chester County	316,660	376,396	433,501	498,886	15.1%	515,939	3.4%	
Pennsylvania	11,863,895	11,881,643	12,281,054	12,702,379	3.4%	12,779,559	0.6%	
United States	226,545,805	248,709,873	281,421,906	308,745,538	9.7%	316,515,021	2.5%	

*2011-2015 ACS Population Estimates

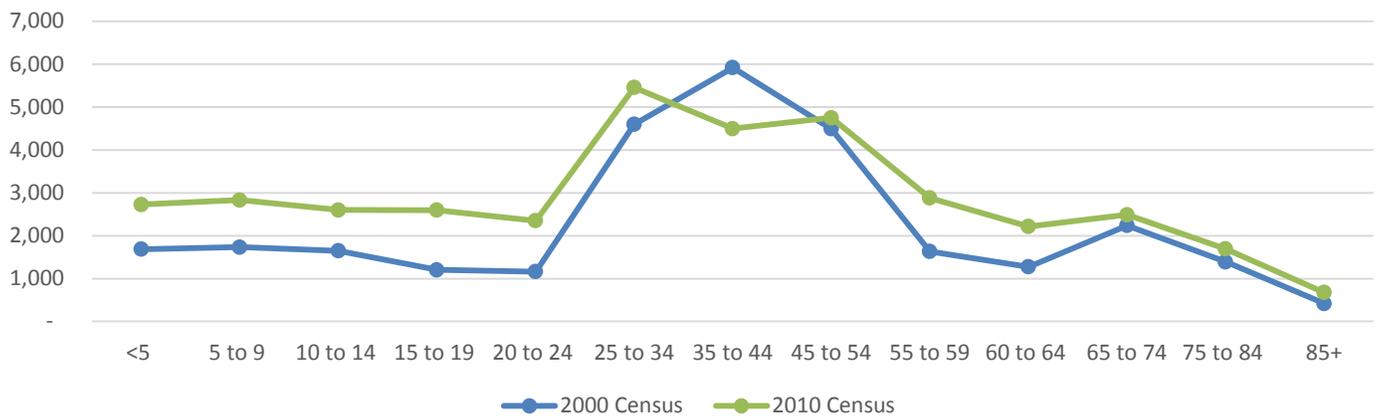
DVRPC Population Forecast

Municipality	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2015 - 2045	2015 - 2045
	Census	Census	DVRPC Estimate	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Absolute Change	Percent (%) Change
Charlestown Township	4,051	5,671	5,690	6,198	6,703	7,217	7,661	8,026	8,336	2,646	46.50%
East Pikeland Township	6,551	7,079	7,359	7,932	8,502	9,081	9,583	9,995	10,344	2,985	40.56%
Phoenixville Borough	14,788	16,440	16,658	18,696	20,725	22,481	24,002	25,051	25,710	9,052	54.34%
Schuylkill Township	6,960	8,516	8,576	8,922	9,265	9,615	9,917	10,165	10,376	1,800	20.99%
West Vincent Township	3,170	4,567	5,038	5,230	5,422	5,616	5,784	5,923	6,040	1,002	19.89%
Regional Total	35,520	42,273	43,321	46,978	50,617	54,010	56,947	59,160	60,806	17,485	40.36%

Demographics - Age

The Regional age breakdown of 2000 and 2010 is shown in Chart 2 and the Regional Age Breakdown table. It is worth noting that the population over this time period tended to follow a consistent distribution pattern with the exception of the age group between 25 and 44. For these age categories, the population actually decreased from 2000 to 2010. As we move forward with the preparation of the Regional Comprehensive Plan this may be explored further to determine if there are any obvious factors contributing to this irregularity.

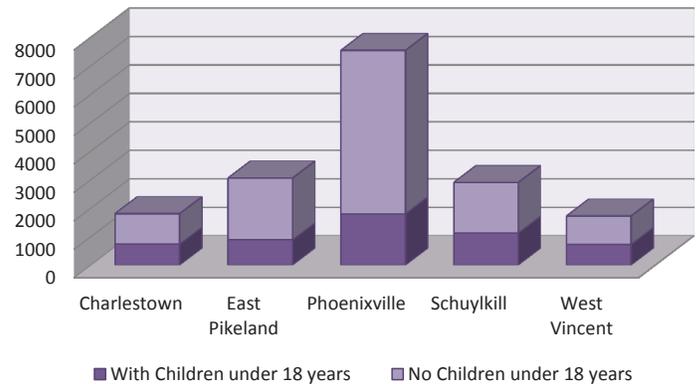
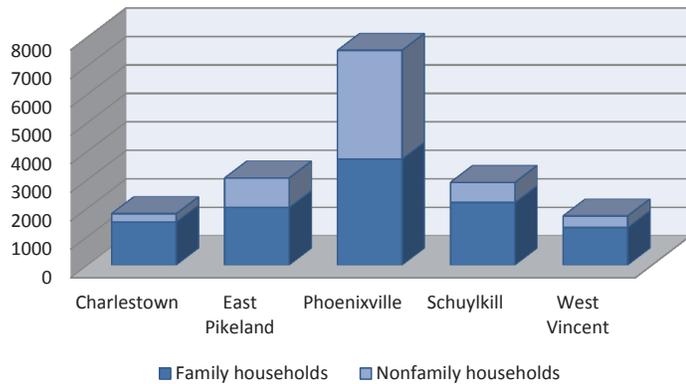
Chart 2: Regional Age Breakdown 2000-2010



Regional Age Breakdown

		2000 Census		2010 Census	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population		31,469		42,273	
<5	years	1,686	5.4%	2,727	6.5%
5 to 9	years	1,735	5.5%	2,833	6.7%
10 to 14	years	1,648	5.2%	2,599	6.1%
15 to 19	years	1,205	3.8%	2,596	6.1%
20 to 24	years	1,164	3.7%	2,351	5.6%
25 to 34	years	4,597	14.6%	5,454	12.9%
35 to 44	years	5,919	18.8%	4,496	14.7%
45 to 54	years	4,494	14.3%	4,750	16.9%
55 to 59	years	1,634	5.2%	2,880	6.8%
60 to 64	years	1,275	4.1%	2,215	5.2%
65 to 74	years	2,238	7.1%	2,489	6.8%
75 to 84	years	1,389	4.4%	1,693	4.0%
85+	years	418	1.3%	676	1.6%

Demographics - Household Composition



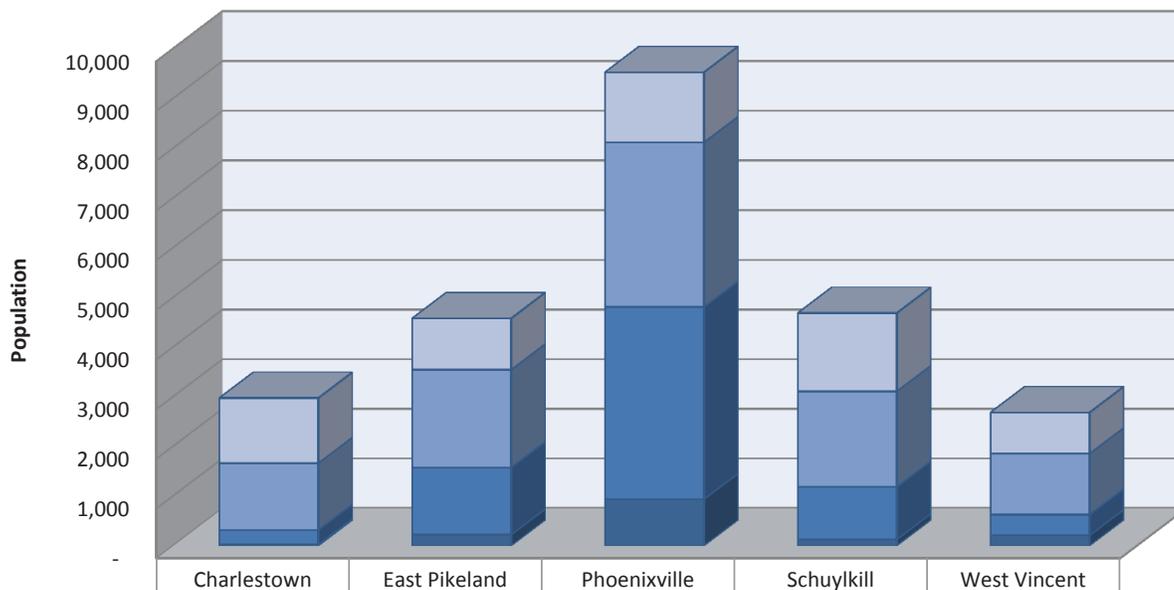
An examination of the composition of households in the region reveals greater numbers of families in the more sparsely populated townships and greater numbers of non-family households concentrated in Phoenixville Borough. This accords with the number of children present in these households, indicating that the population of Phoenixville, in comparison to the other constituent municipalities, consists of more individuals or non-family cohabitation arrangements.

Demographics - Education

The following table shows the educational attainment of the regional population 25 years and older. It is noted that more than 50 percent of the identified regional population has a bachelor's degree or graduate degree and approximately 5 percent of the identified regional population has less than a high school diploma.

2011-2015 ACS Educational Attainment

Municipality	Population = /> 25 years	Less than 9th grade	9th-12th- no diploma	HS Grad (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bach's Degree	Grad or Prof Degree
Charlestown Township	3,437	4	24	293	289	169	1,346	1,312
East Pikeland Township	5,443	74	153	1,354	614	246	1,969	1,033
Phoenixville Borough	11,911	335	605	3,874	1,615	764	3,310	1,408
Schuylkill Township	5,639	39	91	1,059	564	385	1,924	1,577
West Vincent Township	3,358	92	120	418	483	188	1,229	828
Regional Total	29,788	544	993	6,998	3,565	1,752	9,778	6,158



Data Source:
2015 American
Community Survey/
U.S. Census Bureau

- Graduate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- High School Diploma
- No High School Diploma

Demographics - Employment Status

The following table provides an overview of the employment status within the individual municipalities and the Region.

Municipality	Male in armed force	Male employed	Male unemployed	Male not in labor force	Female in armed force	Female employed	Female unemployed	Female not in labor force
Charlestown Township	-	1,449	94	500	-	1,370	38	755
East Pikeland Township	-	1,974	149	774	-	2,032	120	930
Phoenixville Borough	19	4,902	339	1,272	-	4,621	355	1,924
Schuylkill Township	-	2,187	120	948	-	2,130	79	1,090
West Vincent Township	-	1,493	33	445	-	1,001	76	712
Regional Total	19	12,005	735	3,939	-	11,154	668	5,411

According to the 2014 DVRPC Analytical Data Report titled Regional Employment Centers and Sites, 2010 the Route 23/Phoenixville/Oaks area is identified as an Employment Center within the DVRPC Region. Employment centers are defined as areas where a number of employers together employ at least 500 employees and have an employment density of at least 2.0 employees per acre. While the Employment Center associated with the Phoenixville Region extends into Oaks, Montgomery County, it provides a more detailed look at this area than general information might. The following table provides a breakdown of employment by sector in the Phoenixville Area Employment Center as reported in the 2014 DVRPC Analytical Data Report titled Regional Employment Centers and Sites, 2010.

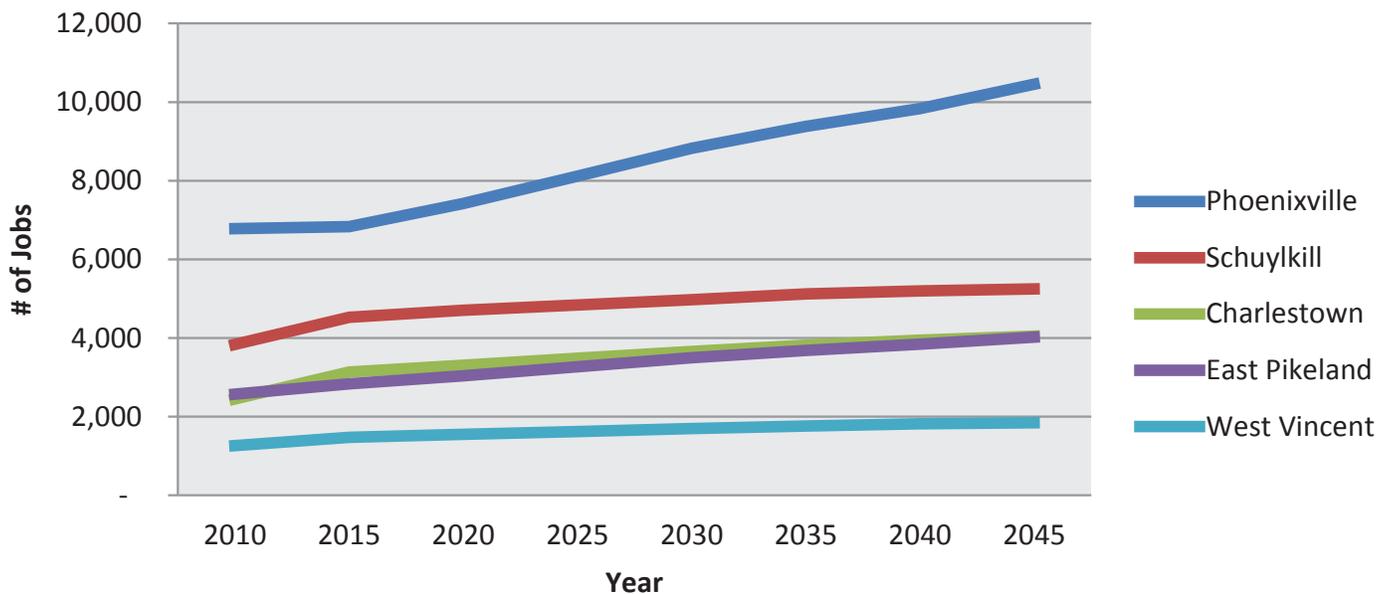
Employment in Centers by Sector, 2010*												
Employment Center	Total County Employment	Employment in Centers	Land Area in Centers (Acres)	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting/ Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation and Warehousing/ Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance and Insurance/ Real Estate	Services (except Public Admin)	Public Admin/ Military
Chester County	292,015	212,951	32,028	2,417	8,138	28,242	5,640	14,557	27,864	27,121	94,549	4,423
Route 23/ Phoenixville Oaks		9,835	3,183	5	417	748	189	467	1,666	646	5,593	104

*May 2014 DVRPC Analytical Data Report Regional Employment Centers and Sites, 2010

Demographics - Employment Forecast

The following Employment Forecast table indicates an expectation that the overall employment within the Phoenixville Region is forecasted to increase relatively significantly through 2045. As work on the Regional Comprehensive Plan Update continues additional research will be conducted to determine the feasibility of such projections within the Phoenixville Region.

2011-2015 ACS Employment Forecast										
Municipality	Emp 2010	2015 Estimate	2020 Estimate	2025 Estimate	2030 Estimate	2035 Estimate	2040 Estimate	2045 Estimate	Absolute Change 2015 - 2045	% Change 2015 - 2045
Charlestown Township	2,454	3,134	3,309	3,483	3,661	3,818	3,947	4,050	916	29.23%
East Pikeland Township	2,570	2,836	3,040	3,268	3,499	3,687	3,845	4,025	1,189	41.93%
Phoenixville Borough	6,781	6,835	7,419	8,119	8,823	9,378	9,835	10,456	3,621	52.98%
Schuylkill Township	3,837	4,530	4,706	4,840	4,977	5,124	5,197	5,247	717	15.83%
West Vincent Township	1,263	1,476	1,552	1,623	1,695	1,759	1,816	1,846	370	25.07%
Regional Total	16,905	18,811	20,026	21,333	22,655	23,766	24,640	25,624	6,813	36.22%



Demographics -Income

The following chart and table show estimated household income for the Region and the individual municipalities within the Region for the period ending 2015. Concentrations of wealth are evident in the high income households present in Charlestown, Schuylkill, and West Vincent Townships in particular. In contrast, nearly half of households in Phoenixville earn less than \$50,000 per year.

2011-2015 ACS Household Income

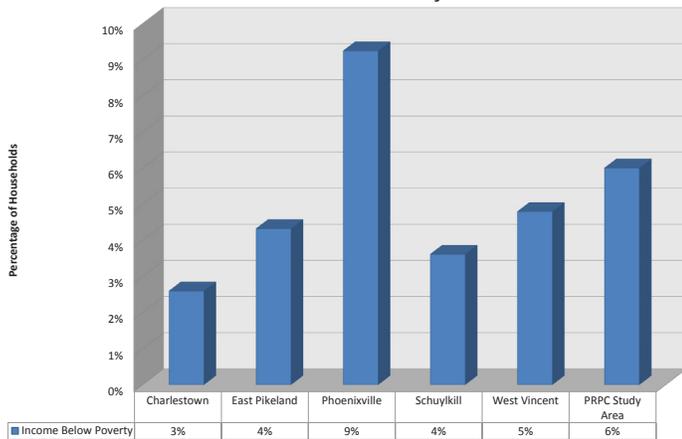


Municipality	< \$10K	\$10,000-\$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$75,000	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$100,000-\$125,000	\$125,000-\$150,000	\$150,000-\$200,000	> \$200K
Charlestown Township	34	9	53	65	64	181	114	246	191	197	652
East Pikeland Township	65	165	227	160	251	455	434	432	352	258	259
Phoenixville Borough	405	676	504	978	801	1,576	1,034	843	242	245	239
Schuylkill Township	81	75	122	149	57	305	359	241	246	503	764
West Vincent Township	33	53	131	47	48	225	211	115	168	122	573
Regional Total	618	978	1,037	1,399	1,221	2,742	2,152	1,877	1,199	1,325	2,487
Percent of Regional Households	3.6%	5.7%	6.1%	8.2%	7.2%	16.1%	12.6%	11.0%	7.0%	7.8%	14.6%

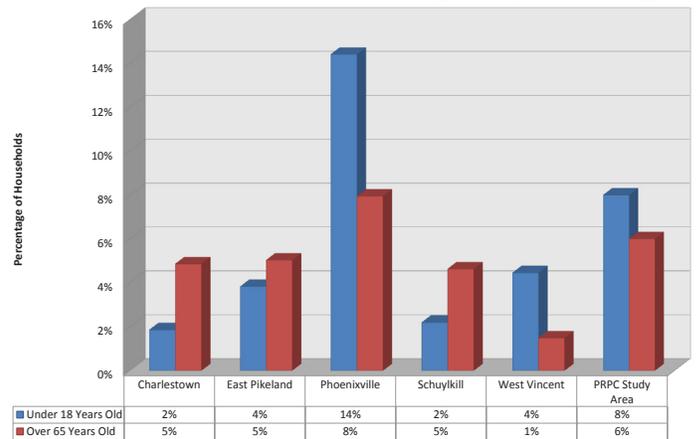
Demographics - Poverty

Despite the relative overall prosperity of the region, significant numbers of residents are living in poverty. 6% of residents over all, or 1,022 people, are living in below the poverty line (\$24,600 annual income for a family of four). This includes 8% of the children in the region.

Household Incomes Below Poverty



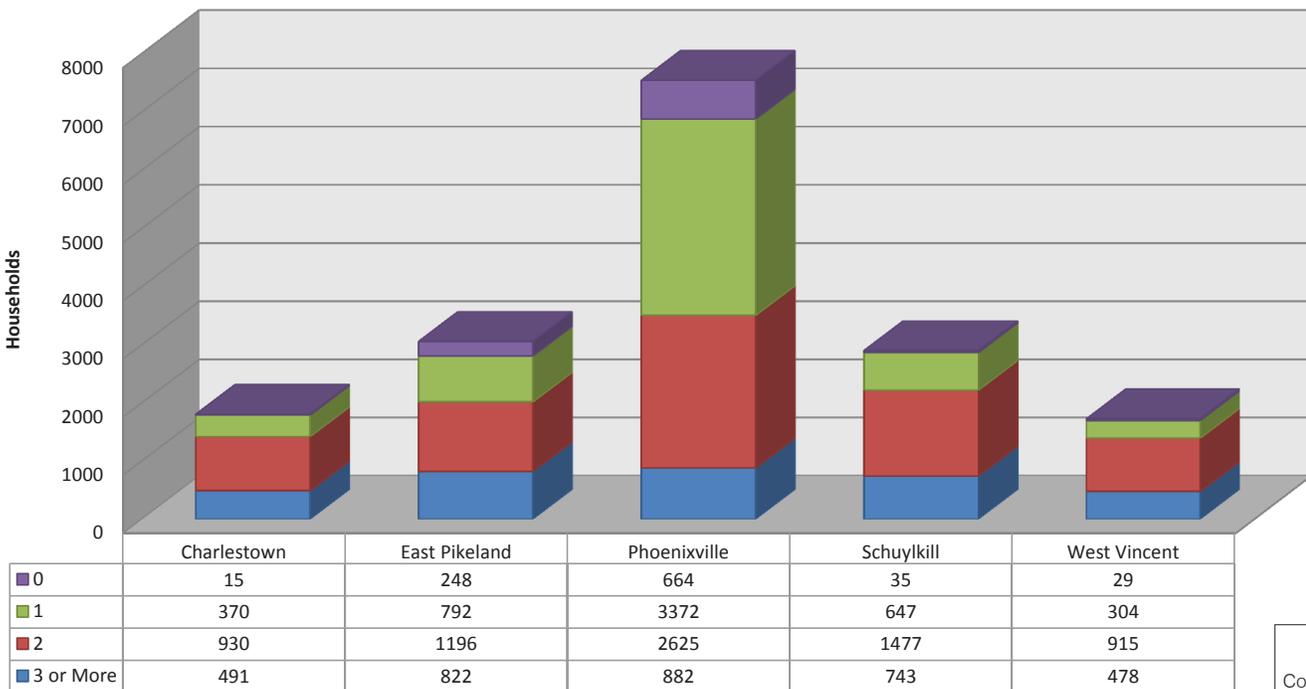
Household Incomes Below Poverty - Population Ages



Data Source:
2015 American
Community Survey/
U.S. Census Bureau

Demographics - Vehicular Access

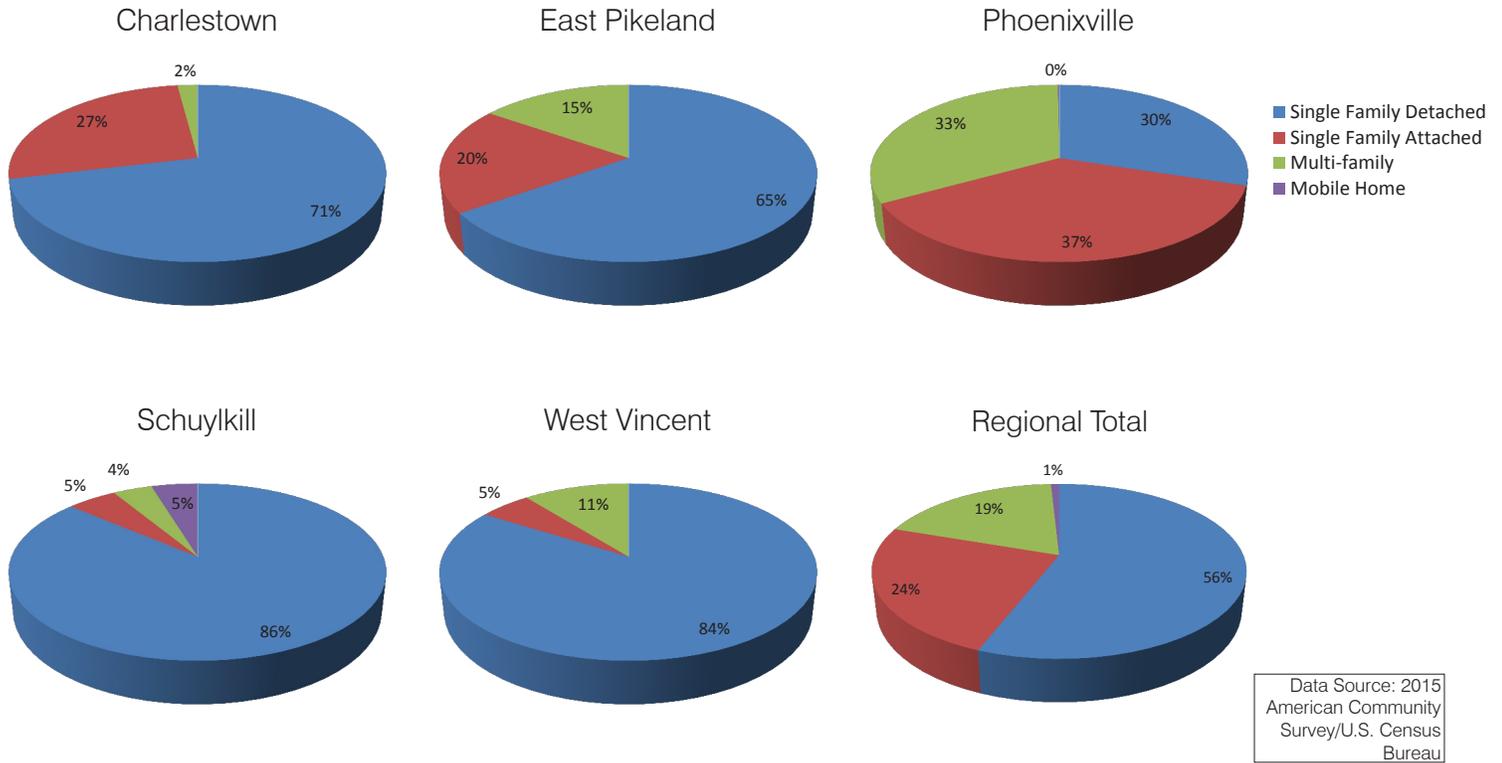
Access to vehicular transportation is an important issue for assessing economic growth opportunities. While the majority of households in region possess at least one automobile, 5.8% of residents do not have access to personal motorized transportation, which may impact their access to employment opportunities. In planning for future public transit infrastructure, this segment of the population and their location should be considered. Lack of access should not be considered a detriment to participation in the job market per se, and indeed in the more densely populated parts of the region, such as Phoenixville, it may be desirable to create a transportation network that precludes the need for personal automobile transport.



Data Source:
2015 American
Community Survey/
U.S. Census Bureau

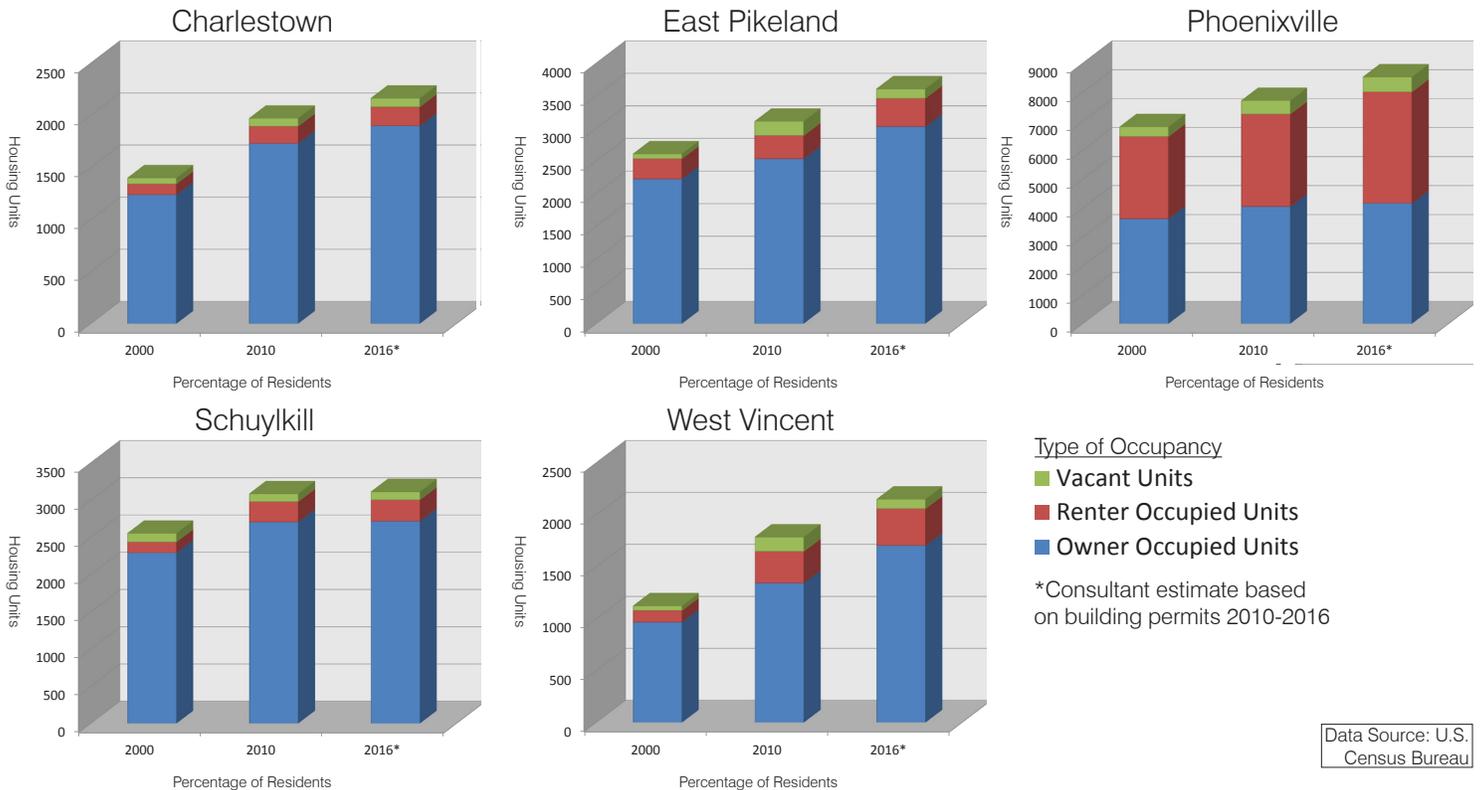
Housing - Unit Types

The majority of housing units in the region, 56%, are single family detached homes. When taken in a group with single family attached homes, these units account for 80% of housing in the region. These single family units may indicate areas of greater sprawl, as opposed to multi-family units, i.e. apartment buildings, which are indicative of a greater density. The location of multi-family units may help identify areas needing expanded transportation choices, or planning for mixed-use development.



Housing - Occupancy Type

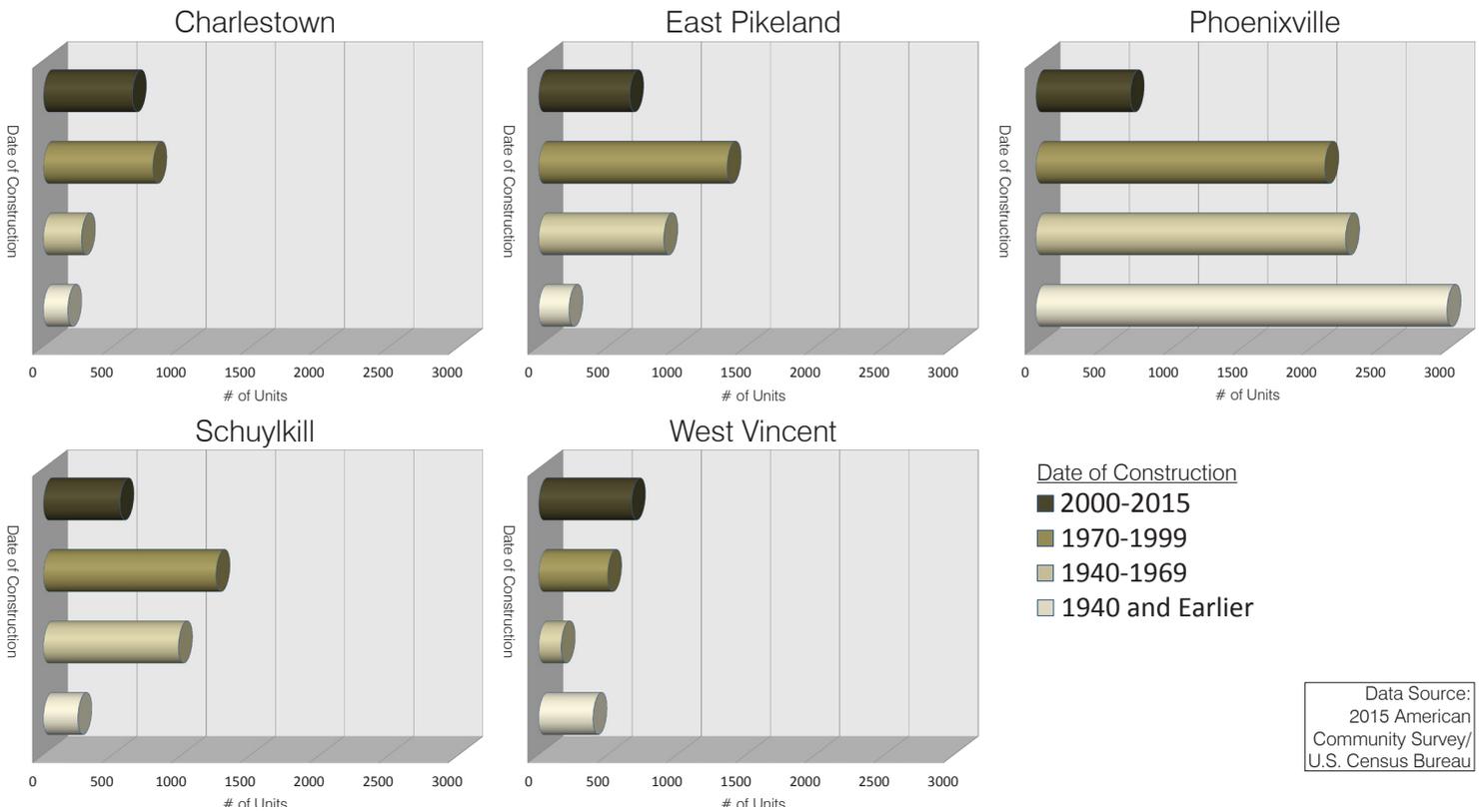
A preponderance of vacant units may be seen as signs of a housing market glut, or an opportunity for growth. Particularly in Phoenixville, where vacancy rates are highest, there may be opportunities for reuse of existing housing in planning for growth.



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Housing - Date of Construction

Dates of construction for housing units in the region may correspond with periods of greater economic development. The majority of housing units in Phoenixville are pre-war, which accords with a period of greater growth in the borough due to widespread employment in the steel industry. In comparison, the relatively smaller number of units built since 2000 will partially reflect a slowdown in growth in response to recession following the 2008 financial crisis.

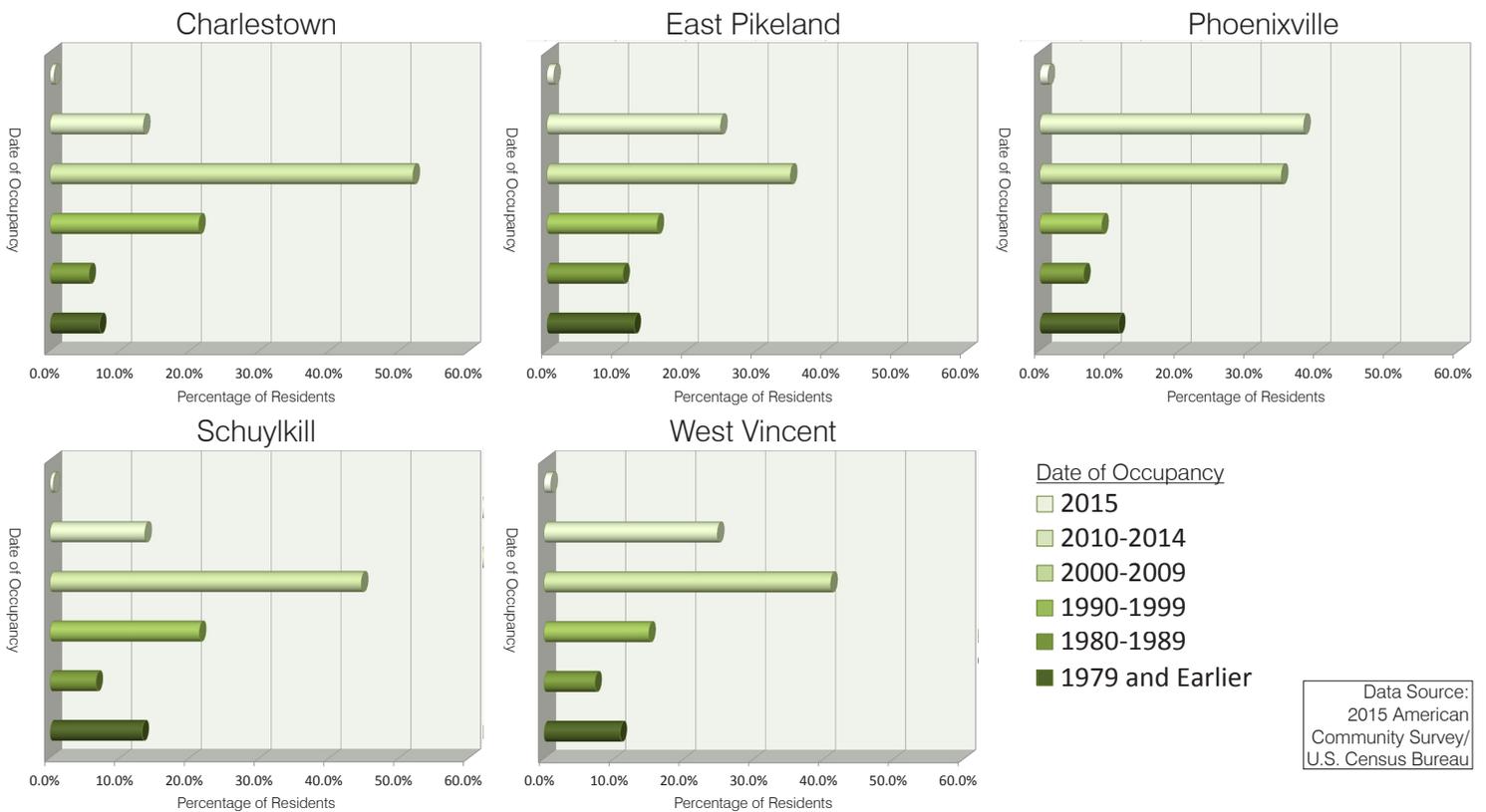


Data Source:
2015 American
Community Survey/
U.S. Census Bureau

Housing - Date of Occupancy

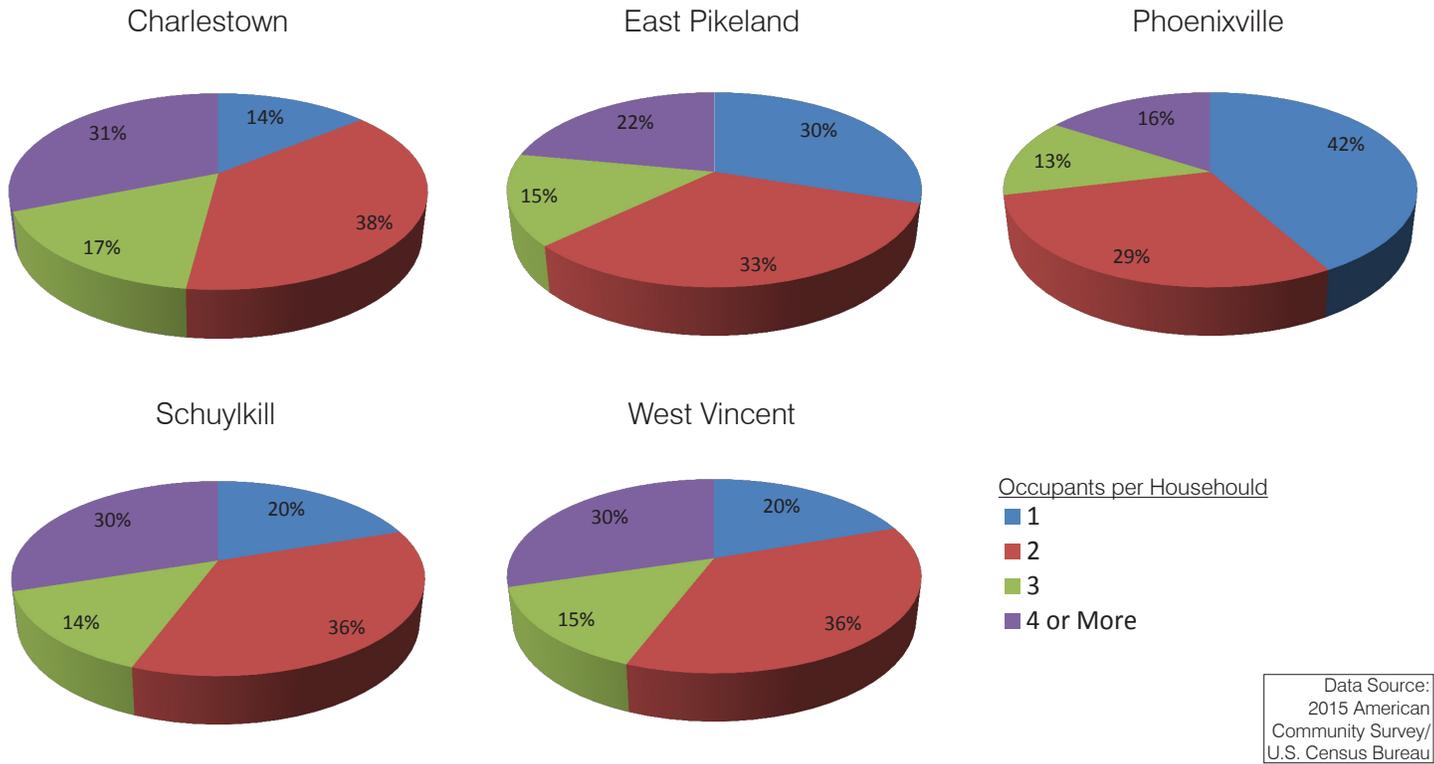
Dates of occupancy in the region do not conform directly to dates of construction but may similarly give some insight into the economic conditions of a given time period.

As is the case with vacant unit in general, the preponderance of older housing units in Phoenixville should be considered both an opportunity and cause for some concern. Older units help lend a historic character to the town and should be reused whenever possible. However, degradation or abandonment of units, as well as concerns about hazardous materials such as lead paint and asbestos, should be taken into account when planning for reuse.



Housing - Occupants per Household

As is the case with family composition numbers discussed in the demographics section of this report, the number of occupants per household gives some indication of patterns of residential density and may be used to help direct planning for transportation and general economic growth.



Housing - Household Incomes

Household incomes relative to renting vs. owning types occupancy help provide a picture of residents' ability to purchase homes and where rental markets should be concentrated.

