

Chapter 3 - Land Use Plan



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Land Use Plan

A. Introduction

Land use is only one aspect of planning; however it is an extremely important one. Land use is the alteration of the natural environment into a man-made or built environment and includes lands which are undisturbed by man. Development regulations, physical constraints and highway networks all contribute to the land use patterns within a region. Land use is used as a tool for evaluating current zoning and subdivision and land development policies as well as provides guidance for future development. Land use helps evaluate public service needs, potential environmental impacts as well as prevents potential conflicts. Municipalities utilize land use planning to balance development and preserve natural resources. It serves to guide official decisions regarding the distribution and intensity of private development, reinvestment in urban centers and capital improvement programs.

The following discussions will analyze the existing land use of the County as well as determine a plan for future land use and how that plan will be implemented through various goals and policies.

To ease analysis of land use data electronically and to maintain consistency throughout County planning documents, the County is divided into five planning regions. The five regions are as follows and are shown on Figure 3.2.

- Hawk Mountain
- Oley Hills
- Southern Highlands
- Tulpehocken
- Metro

B. Existing Land Use Patterns

Berks County encompasses a total area of 554,605 acres. Agriculture is largely represented in the northern and western regions of the County as well as in the Oley Valley and East Penn Valley. There are smaller pockets of agriculture throughout the County. Open Space is concentrated in the Oley Hills, Hawk Mountain, and Southern Highlands Regions.

Historically, the developed land uses typically have been a function of the road network and natural features throughout the County. Most of the more intensive land uses are found close to transportation facilities and public infrastructure. Commercial development typically follows the residential population.

The Existing Land Use Map shows the depth of development radiating from the Reading Metro area along our major highway corridors. The expense and difficulty of building new infrastructure highlights the importance of in-fill development and redevelopment of existing developed areas. There has been continued residential development and clustering throughout the rural areas of Berks County particularly the Oley Hills and Southern Highlands.

C. Existing Land Use Analysis

1. Methodology

The Existing Land Use Map was created digitally using a geographic information system (GIS). The Berks County GIS tax parcel data was modified to include a specific land use designation for each parcel. Land use assessment codes, aerial imagery, information from the Act 167 stormwater plans, and other GIS data related to land use were also used in the analysis.

The following existing land use categories are shown on Figures 3.3 through 3.8.

2. Residential Land

The Existing Land Use Map divides residential lands into two categories according to density: Residential Low and Residential High. Together, the Residential High and Residential Low categories comprise 16% of the County's land area or 88,726 acres.

The Residential High category is characterized by a variety of dwelling unit types, including single-family detached, semi-detached, row homes and townhouses, apartments, and mobile homes within parks, at densities that exceed one unit per acre. While only 5% of the total lands in the County or 25,448 acres are "high density residential", they do account for the majority of the County's housing stock. Residential High land is concentrated in the Reading Urban Area extending outward from the City of Reading along the major road corridors, including U.S. 422 and U.S. 222. Row homes, semi-detached, as well as low and high-rise apartment complexes are common in the older neighborhoods. As one moves toward the periphery of the urban area, neighborhoods take on a suburban character consisting primarily of single-family detached dwellings interspersed with semi-detached and townhouse developments. Additionally, smaller versions of this type of high density residential development exist in the outlying Boroughs, including Hamburg, Kutztown, Topton, Boyertown, Bally, Bechtelsville, Robesonia and Womelsdorf, as well as villages, such as Morgantown, Oley and Shartlesville. Mobile home park communities are located throughout the County, with large developments occurring in Tilden, Longswamp, Greenwich and Hereford Townships.

The Residential Low category consists of primarily single-family detached dwelling units on one to five acre lots. A lot size larger than five acres was subject to more than one existing land use designation, as the residue land was typically designated as Open Space. Residential Low land is the third largest existing land use category, comprising 11% of the County's land area or 63,278 acres. Due to the large lot sizes, the Residential Low category consumes more acreage than the Residential High category and accommodates fewer dwelling units. The impact of this inefficient pattern of land development affects the economics of municipal and school district operations. The rural areas of the County, particularly the Oley Hills (18,913 acres) and Southern Highlands Regions (16,033 acres) are dominated by this type of residential development, characterized by low density subdivisions and large lot road frontage development. The agricultural areas are among those with the lowest residential density figures in the County. This indicates that the County's agricultural land preservation strategy, including the Agricultural Conservation Easement and Agricultural Zoning Incentive programs, has significantly reduced the amount of residential development that potentially could have occurred within these agricultural areas. One can deduce that the consequence of this strategy is additional development pressure in our rural areas characterized by rolling woodland.

From 2001 to 2010, 16,375 new housing units were constructed. After a high of 2,787 units constructed in 2001 there was a steady annual decline to a low of 539 units built in 2010, the fewest number of dwelling units constructed in a single year since the early 1980's. This decline is a result of the economic downturn and the national mortgage crisis. Throughout the County several residential subdivisions have stalled either in the approval process or in mid-construction. Foreclosures on homes escalated during the second half of the decade which is resulting in an increase in household size as families move in together to share costs, and an increase in the number of renters. Construction activity will most likely remain sluggish for a period until this excess inventory clears the market.

During the 2001-2010 period 29% and 27% of the new units built were located in the Metro Region and the Southern Highlands Region, respectively. Activity in the Metro Region was in-fill development, as well as peripheral expansion of the urban core. The majority of the new construction in the Southern Highlands was concentrated along the U.S. 422 East corridor and the Pennsylvania Turnpike area. These areas are considered to be bedroom communities for the Philadelphia region. The municipalities with the most activity were the Townships of Exeter, Amity, Spring, Maiden creek, and Muhlenberg which accounted for nearly 40% of the new units constructed. The Borough with the most activity was Sinking Spring (405 units). Thirty-four percent of the new units were constructed in three school districts: Wilson, Exeter, and Daniel Boone. While not specifically tracked, it is estimated that approximately 70% of the new housing units built during this ten year period were constructed within Growth Areas or the Existing Development Areas of Berks Vision 2020. The dominant type of dwelling unit construction continued to be the single-family detached unit, as over 70% of all homes constructed were of this type. Age-restricted housing developments only available to seniors, as well as assisted living facilities were also popular developments constructed in the last decade reflecting an aging population. This has resulted in a greater choice of living arrangements for our senior population. Another trend was the construction of student housing associated with our universities/colleges.

3. Commercial Land

Land in this category contains such uses as retail, offices, utilities and personal, professional and business services. Over the last ten years the commercial land use sector has expanded along such major transportation routes as U.S. 422, U.S. 222 and PA 61. The expansion of commercial uses along these transportation networks correlates to the expanding residential corridors as well as expansion of utilities such as public sewer and water services.

Commercial uses comprise only 2% of the County's total land area or 10,095 acres. However, being one of the smaller existing land use categories, approximately 6.6 million square feet of commercial development has been constructed in the last decade. The majority of the commercial square footage that has been developed is strip shopping centers. Some of the large shopping centers are located in the Metro Region but centers have also been built in outlying areas such as Colebrookdale, Hamburg and Morgantown. The shopping centers include grocery retailers, big box stores such as Wal-Mart, as well as restaurant chains and service oriented businesses. The development of these commercial centers provides services on more of a local regional basis rather than the larger County basis.

The majority of these commercial uses can be found in the Metro Region and account for 44% of the commercial land use within the County. The presence of commercial uses within the core metropolitan region of the County signifies that commerce and service oriented businesses are still economically thriving in an economic downturn which the nation has been facing for some time.

Of the 35 office uses developed in the last ten years, 17 are medical offices including 2 surgical centers. The construction of these satellite medical centers at various regional locations provides residents within the County and beyond various medical services which are more accessible than the central locations.

An increasing trend within the last 10 years has been the construction of self storage facilities. Approximately 35 mini-warehouse storage units have been constructed since 2001.

4. Industrial Land

Industrial land uses include processing, fabrication or assembly of raw materials or component parts, wholesale trade and warehousing. Landfills, junk yards, and quarries are also included within this designation.

Approximately 11,059 acres or 2% of land in Berks County are industrial uses. Quarries and landfills account for a majority of the acreage. Lands occupied by quarry operations are abundant throughout the County as shown on Figure 2.6. The various quarry operations provide a readily available mineral resource for the agricultural, industrial and construction markets. Appendix C provides information on the various resources which are quarried. Landfill areas within the County are divided among five facilities as shown in Figure 2.10.

Industrial uses within the County are primarily located in the Metro Region. Traditionally, concentrations of industrial development have located along the Schuylkill River and PA 61 corridor.

Existing large industrial facilities that have expanded within the last ten years include Carpenter Technology and East Penn Manufacturing. Expansion of such large industrial uses indicates that the County has retained some of their largest employment units. However, in the last ten years the County has lost several significant industrial employers.

Since 2001, several new industrial uses have located within the City of Reading including Sun Rich Foods, Unichain, Rose Corp., Hydro Jet and KVP. These new industrial uses provide solid evidence that industrial land areas are still available within the County and that redevelopment of past industrial sites are a viable option within the core industrial and commercial sector.

As the population grows and expansion of development occurs the need for energy supply also grows. Three power plants-Ontelaunee Energy Station, Granger Energy and United Corrstack-have been constructed since 2001. The power plants provide both energy and work force opportunities.

5. Institutional Land

Institutional lands are used for public services such as governmental and public safety facilities, educational facilities (including athletic fields owned by educational institutions), hospitals, cemeteries and religious institutions. These land uses occupy 9,138 acres or approximately 2% of the County land area. Nearly 42% of the institutional land is located within the Metro Region, with the remaining acreage evenly distributed throughout the other four regions. Significant new construction occurred from 2001 to 2010 including:

- The Reading Hospital for Post Acute Rehabilitation and the relocated St. Joseph Medical Center
- 14 new churches
- over a dozen new education facilities affiliated with our public school districts, institutions of higher education, and the Reading Hospital
- 4 new ambulance and fire company facilities
- Several municipal office and maintenance buildings.

These major construction investments indicated the need to keep pace with population increases.

6. Agricultural Land

The rich soil, aided by a favorable climate and centralized Mid-Atlantic location, has contributed to a strong agricultural tradition. Over 65% of the soils in the County are Classes I-IV. These productive soils provide the base for our agriculture industry. The 2007 Census of Agriculture reported that Berks County annually ranks among the State's leading producers of agricultural products, including mushrooms, dairy products, poultry products, corn for grain, alfalfa, wheat, soybeans, barley, apples and peaches.

Agriculture is the most extensive land use in Berks County, occupying 201,712 acres or approximately 36% of the County's total land area. These lands are used for pasture, the growing of crops, and the raising of livestock, farmsteads, barns, silos, mushroom farms, and the fields where trees and plants are harvested for nurseries. Agriculture, to some degree, is found in each of the Townships in Berks County. Over 70% of the agricultural land is located within the Hawk Mountain and Tulpehocken Regions. This large concentration of farmland is generally bounded by the Blue Mountains to the north, the Reading Prong to the east, U.S. 422 West and the Reading Urban Area to the south. Another significant area of agricultural land is the Oley Valley which contains a concentration of productive soils. A smaller band of concentrated farmland is located along the PA 100 corridor through Hereford and Washington Townships. The agricultural activity of these areas extends into counties adjacent to Berks, especially Lancaster, Lebanon, Montgomery and Lehigh.

In 2007, the Census of Agriculture reported that Berks County ranked fourth in the state for the total number of farms and ranked sixth in the state for the amount of land in farms. While the number of farms in Berks County is increasing, the size of farms is decreasing. The Census identified 1,980 farms in 2007 compared to 1,586 farms in 1997. The average farm size in 2007 was reported as 112 acres which decreased from 140 acres in 1997. A major concern over the years has been the continual loss of farmland, as the Census reported that the County lost 100,000 acres of farmland between 1959 and 1992. Most of this loss is attributed to the change in land use patterns as growth shifted from urban centers to suburban and rural communities. However, the Census of Agriculture indicates that this loss of farmland has begun to stabilize.

Berks County has made a commitment to preserve its farmland based on the recognition that agriculture is an important component of the County's economy. The County and its municipalities have utilized several tools available in Pennsylvania to protect the County's farmland and maintain our agricultural industry's viability. These tools include the establishment of the Clean and Green program and Agricultural Security Areas, the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, and effective agricultural zoning. Together, these programs form an agricultural preservation strategy that strives to protect productive soils from non-farm related development, minimizes conflicting land uses detrimental to agricultural enterprises, and retains a critical mass of clustered agricultural land so that a sufficient market remains for agricultural support services and businesses.

Clean and Green (PA Act 319) creates an incentive for landowners to devote their land to agricultural use, agricultural reserve or forest reserve use by lowering the property tax rates for those who enroll in this voluntary program. The program establishes the preferential assessment value, and enrolled land is taxed at the use value of the land rather than fair market value. Land removed from the program is subject to a roll-back tax, imposed for up to seven years. The total amount of land under Clean and Green, as of May 2013, is over 270,700 acres or nearly 49% of the total land area of the County.

Under Pennsylvania Act 43 of 1981, Berks County municipalities and landowners have collaboratively created over 158,700 acres (May 2013) of Agricultural Security Areas. Involvement in this program is voluntary and represents a public expression of support for the land to remain in agricultural use. However, landowners may develop their land for non-agricultural use at any time without penalty. Benefits to participation in this program include limited protection against local nuisance regulations and from condemnation of land, and eligibility to participate in the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

The County established its Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) program in 1989. The goal of this voluntary program is to preserve large clusters of farms to ensure the future of agriculture in the County. Agricultural easements limit the activity to agriculture and remain with the property in perpetuity. The program is one of the largest programs in the nation for farmland preservation. As of May 2013, Berks County has purchased ACE on 654 farms comprising 64,350 acres. This equates to nearly 12% of the County's total land area or 32% of the County's total agriculture lands. Funding for easement purchases is provided annually by both Berks County and the State. While the public has invested a large sum of money in this program, applications to the program continue to exceed the amount of funding available each year. In addition to the County's program, the Centre Township Municipal Land Protection Program has purchased ACE on 15 farms totaling approximately 2,041 acres, the Berks County Conservancy holds agriculture easements on 44 farms totaling approximately 3,302 acres, and other municipalities and non-profit organizations such as Adopt An Acre, hold easements on 17 farms totaling approximately 924 acres. Combined, these programs have preserved more than one-third of the County's farmland through agricultural conservation easements. See Figure 3.9 for the location of the easements.

In an effort to keep large agricultural areas relatively free of non-farm development, municipalities can adopt Effective Agricultural Zoning (EAZ). Permitted uses generally are

limited to “normal agricultural operations” that are consistent with the practices and technological developments within the agricultural industry, as well as those uses that compliment and support agriculture. Non-farm uses that would be disruptive to agricultural activities are not allowed, such as uses that would generate excessive traffic, consume significant areas of farmland, induce capital facility growth, and uses that would have the effect of altering the essential character of the district. Non-farm dwellings are generally permitted, but their number and associated acreage are stringently limited. Although Lower Heidelberg Township adopted the first agriculturally protective zoning ordinance in the State in 1973, growth of such ordinances was slow. The use of EAZ increased when the Berks County Planning Commission introduced its Agricultural Zoning Incentive Program (AZIP) in the mid-1990’s. The primary purpose of the program was to implement the agricultural element of the County Comprehensive Plan. In return for the successful adoption of effective agricultural zoning, the County paid for the costs associated with amending the municipality’s zoning ordinance. Currently, over 164,000 acres in 27 townships have effective agricultural zoning in place.

7. Recreation Land

Recreation land provides space and facilities for people to engage in active and passive recreation activities. These include playgrounds, parkland, state gamelands/forests, as well as recreation land owned by non-profit recreational groups (i.e. homeowners associations, sportsman clubs, and little league organizations) and commercial recreation (i.e. golf courses, miniature golf courses, campgrounds, ski areas). Recreation lands occupy 47,169 acres or over 8% of the County’s total land area.

The largest landowner of recreation land within Berks County is the State with over 30,000 acres of gamelands, state parks, and state forests. Berks County is fortunate to have a wide range of public park and recreation assets, as well as many of our unique natural and historic resources protected by public entities. Despite the vast inventory of public resources, much of the federal and state land is located along the periphery of the County. In some cases municipal recreation is not evenly distributed among neighborhoods, making accessibility problematic for many Berks County residents. The non-profit and private sectors play a significant role in providing recreation and leisure opportunities. They supplement public resources by providing capacity and resources that are beyond the realm of the public sector. A specific recreation land inventory is available in the Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan.

The Hawk Mountain Region contains 42% of the total recreation land in the County. The majority of this land consists of state and federal land holdings associated with the Kittatinny Ridge/Appalachian Trail, which runs along the County’s northern boundary in the Blue Mountains. Significant regional recreation acreage located in other regions are the lands associated with Blue Marsh Lake; French Creek State Park; and Mount Penn which is a combination of City and County parkland. The Oley Hills Region contains the least amount of recreation acreage (2%) of all the regions in the County.

Besides the Appalachian Trail, other regional trails include the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT), the Horse-Shoe Trail and the Union Canal Trail. The SRT is a multi-use trail in southeastern Pennsylvania that will eventually extend the entire length of the Schuylkill River from Pottsville to Philadelphia, traversing five counties. Two sections of the SRT are open in Berks County; the

SRT-Thun Section is a 19 mile stretch from Pottstown to Reading, and the SRT-Bartram Section starts in Hamburg and travels north 7 miles into Schuylkill County. A temporary trail alignment from Reading to Hamburg has been designated; however, most of this section is on-road until a permanent location is secured. The Horse-Shoe Trail is a 141 mile bridle and hiking trail connecting the SRT in Valley Forge National Historic Park and the Appalachian Trail north of Harrisburg, traversing Chester, Berks, Lancaster, Lebanon, and Dauphin Counties. Approximately 29 miles of the Horse-Shoe Trail are in Berks County (Brecknock, Robeson, Spring, and Union Townships) where it connects with existing trail networks in French Creek State Park, Birdsboro Waters, and Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site. Most of the trail is on private land without permanent legal protection making its location vulnerable and ever-changing. In Berks County, only 11.5 miles of the trail are protected and nearly 4 miles have been forced on to roads. The Union Canal Trail winds along the Tulpehocken Creek for 6.5 miles connecting the City of Reading to the Blue Marsh Lake trail network.

Since 2001, notable changes to the recreation network include:

- Two properties, totaling nearly 269 acres, were added to French Creek State Park providing a connection between the park and Schuylkill River Trail
- The County added Antietam Lake Park to its parkland
- A USDA Forest Legacy Conservation Easement was placed on Birdsboro Waters (1,764 acres of Birdsboro Municipal Authority's watershed)
- Neighborhood parkland grew primarily through the subdivision and land development process
- Spring Township and Muhlenberg Township added large community parks
- Several local trails in the Greater Reading area were constructed filling gaps in the trail network and connecting resources, including the Angelica Creek Trail, Wyomissing Creek Trail, Union Canal Connector Trail, and the Muhlenberg Rail Trail
- Three golf courses opened and Blue Marsh Ski area closed.

8. Open Space Land

The Open Space category contains land that is predominantly wooded or vacant that does not include a structure. Examples are meadows and fields (not farmland). Residue land associated with large residential lots over 5 acres, as well as forested land on farmland is also included in the category. The majority of this land is privately owned, except for municipal watershed lands.

Open Space is the second largest use of land at 153,131 acres or approximately 28% of the County's total land area. The Oley Hills Region contains 28% of the total open space in the County. Other areas of the County containing significant amounts of open space include the slope of the Blue Mountains and the South Mountain area. Low density residential development has continued to fragment these rural areas.

9. Transportation

Land in this category contains roads and railroads. While the network of transportation modes that serves Berks County also includes air service, bus and motor freight services, these land uses, as well as parking garages are included in the commercial category.

While many factors can influence growth and development patterns, the existing transportation network has always been prominent in shaping Berks County. Development has concentrated near the major transportation facilities to take advantage of their accessibility. The amount of land area consumed by such a network is 27,108 acres or approximately 5% of the total County land area. As of January 2009, there were 3,313 miles of state and local roads in Berks County. This is an increase of 255 miles since 2001. Recent upgrades to the highway network include U.S. 222 South. There is a total of approximately 125 miles of operational railroad line in the County. The amount of land actively used for rail-related activities in the central railroad yards located in the City of Reading has decreased significantly. Further discussion of the transportation network within the County can be found in Chapter 5 of this plan.

10. Water

Surface water is comprised of rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes. These waterways and surface impoundments provide for water withdrawals which are used for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes. Surface water also provides habitat for aquatic plant and animal life; sustains wildlife and attract migratory waterfowl; provides recreation in the forms of boating, fishing, swimming and aesthetic appreciation of nature; and the assimilation of treated waste water effluent. Surface water occupies 6,467 acres or approximately 1% of the County's total land area.

The County is drained by a network of streams, the majority of which empty into the Schuylkill River and eventually drain to the Delaware River. In addition to the Schuylkill River Watershed, two and one-half percent of the County land area also drains to the Delaware River, but via the Little Lehigh Watershed and Lehigh River. The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) manages the water resources within these two sub-watersheds. DRBC programs include water quality protection, water supply allocation, regulatory review, water conservation initiatives, watershed planning, drought management, flood loss reduction, and recreation. Approximately 10% of the County land area drains into the Susquehanna River, and eventually the Chesapeake Bay, through the Swatara, Conestoga and Cocalico Watersheds. The Susquehanna River Basin Commission manages the water resources in these watersheds much like DRBC. Additionally, land use activities in these three watersheds are subject to the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The TMDL was established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to restore clean water in the Chesapeake Bay and throughout its basin. The Bay TMDL identifies pollution reductions from major sources of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment across the basin and sets pollution limits necessary to meet water quality standards. The pollution limits are divided by jurisdiction and major river basin, and are designed to ensure that all pollution control measures needed to fully restore the Bay and its tidal rivers are in place by 2025, with at least 60% of the actions completed by 2017. Land use within Berks County's portion of the Swatara, Conestoga and Cocalico Watersheds will have to adhere to the Watershed Implementation Plans. These plans, currently being prepared, will detail how and when the jurisdictions will meet pollution allocations. This project emphasizes the vulnerability of our surface water resources, as well as the need for their proper management.

The major watercourse in the County is the Schuylkill River. The Schuylkill River enters Berks County through the Blue Mountain Gap near Hamburg Borough and traverses centrally through the County in a south and southeasterly direction before exiting the County near Douglassville.

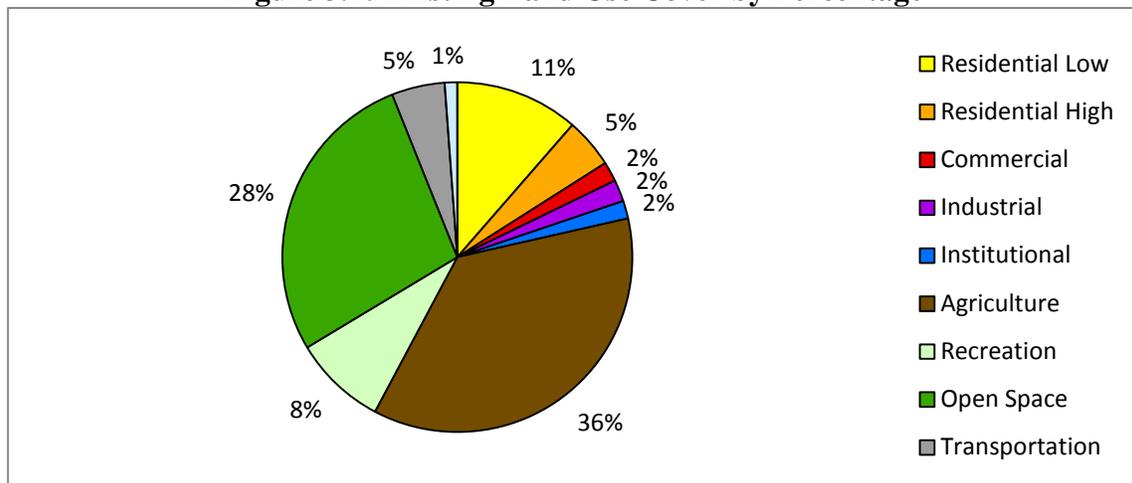
Two major tributaries to the Schuylkill River-the Tulpehocken Creek and the Maiden Creek-are dammed and used as public water supplies. The Tulpehocken Creek Watershed drains over 140,000 acres and has 19 named streams which contribute water flow to the Schuylkill River.

The largest reservoir in the County is Blue Marsh Lake, located on the Tulpehocken Creek. Completed in 1979, Blue Marsh is a 1,150 acre lake built and maintained by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. The dam was authorized by Congress for flood control, water supply, water quality and recreation. Blue Marsh Lake is the major water supply for the suburbs located west of the City of Reading. The reservoirs’ water control practices benefit downstream communities including Reading, Birdsboro, Pottstown and Philadelphia. The Maiden Creek Watershed drains over 138,000 acres and also has numerous named streams which contribute water flow to the Schuylkill River. Lake Ontelaunee, located on the Maiden Creek is a 1,082 acre man-made lake. This reservoir was developed in 1926 by the City of Reading for water supply, but is also a popular venue for fishing and hiking. Other major tributaries to the Schuylkill River include the Allegheny, Hay, Antietam, Irish and Monocacy Creeks. Numerous farm and former mill ponds are scattered throughout the rural areas of the County and range in size.

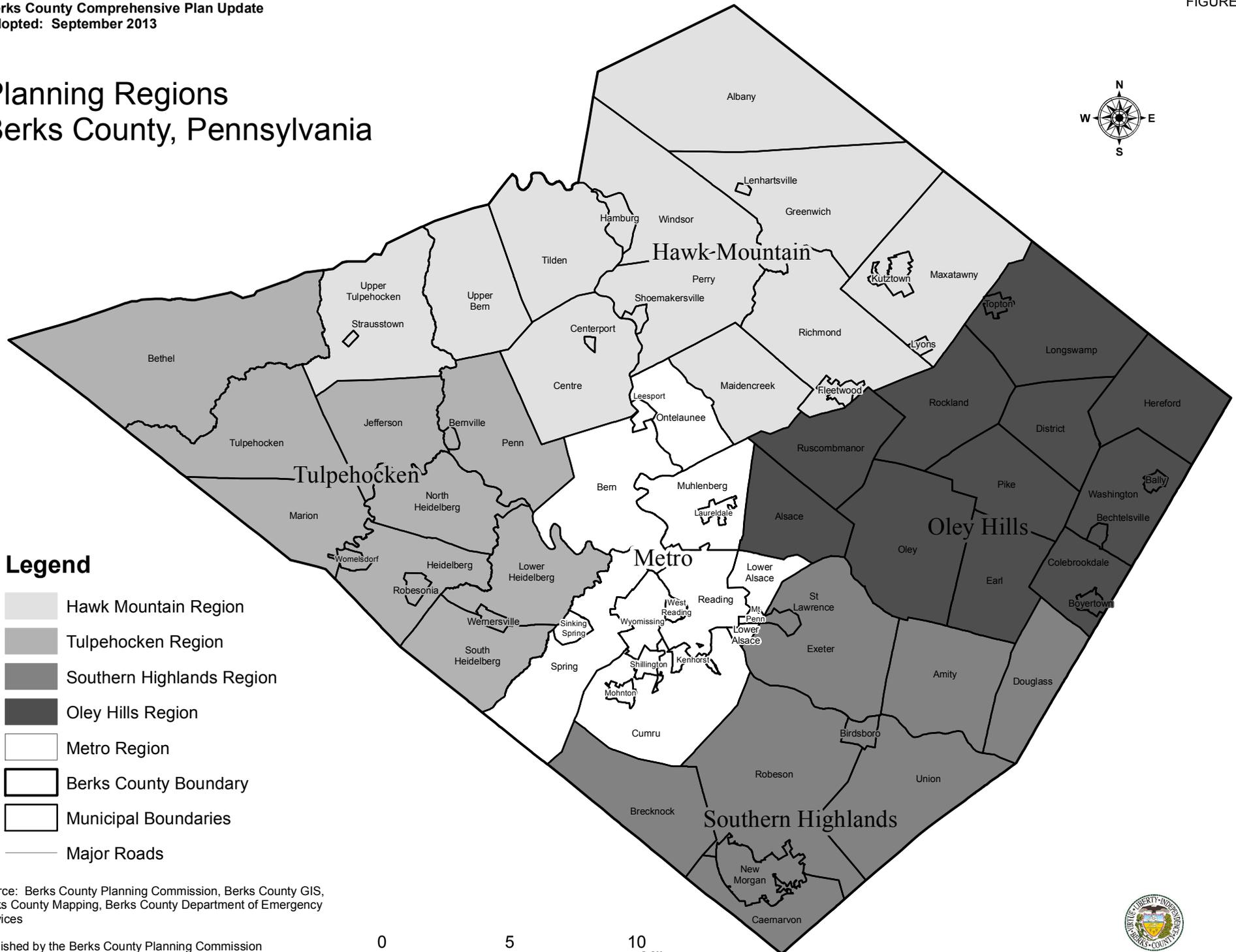
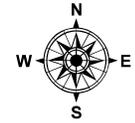
Table 3.1: Existing Land Use Cover by Region

Land Use	Hawk Mountain	Oley Hills	Southern Highlands	Tulpehocken	Metro	County
Residential Low	10,878	18,913	16,033	9,498	7,956	63,278
Residential High	4,289	3,253	5,674	2,396	9,836	25,448
Commercial	1,507	1,264	1,886	1,042	4,396	10,095
Industrial	2,030	2,147	2,584	695	3,603	11,059
Institutional	1,480	1,066	1,461	1,303	3,828	9,138
Agriculture	85,237	32,737	18,301	57,221	8,216	201,712
Recreation	19,887	1,025	9,957	9,685	6,615	47,169
Open Space	36,088	43,718	33,092	25,866	14,367	153,131
Transportation	6,604	4,042	4,786	3,992	7,684	27,108
Water	1,709	569	1,178	1,468	1,543	6,467
Region Total	169,709	108,734	94,952	113,166	68,044	554,605

Figure 3.1: Existing Land Use Cover by Percentage



Planning Regions Berks County, Pennsylvania

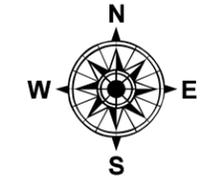


Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services

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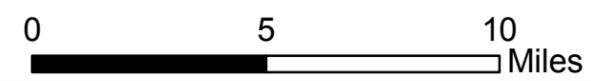
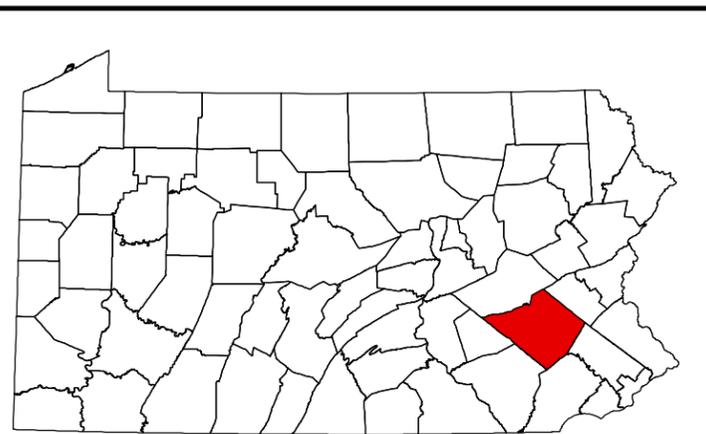
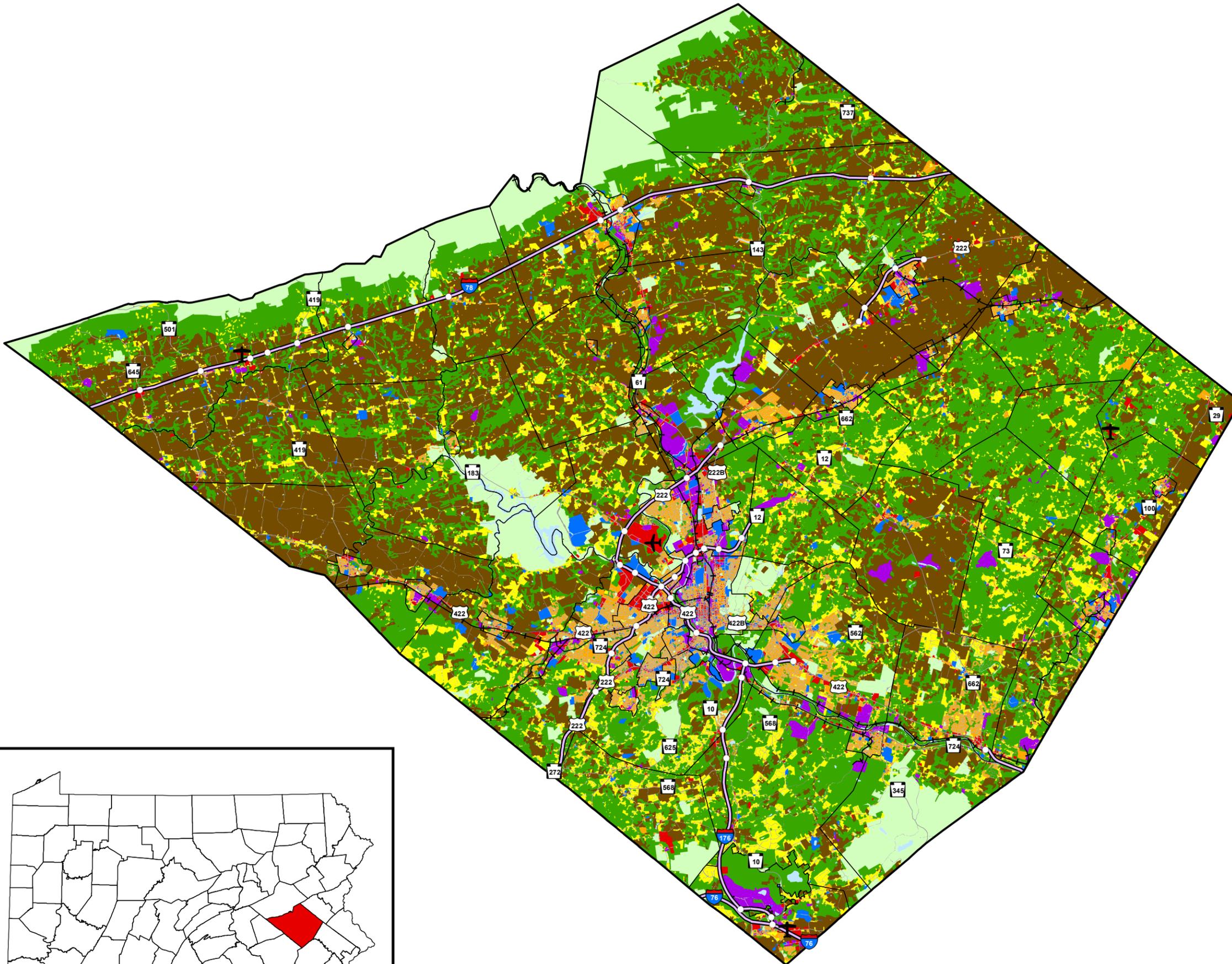


Existing Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



Legend

- Residential Low
- Residential High
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Recreation
- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water
- Transportation
- Berks County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- ✈ Major Airport
- ✈ Other Airports



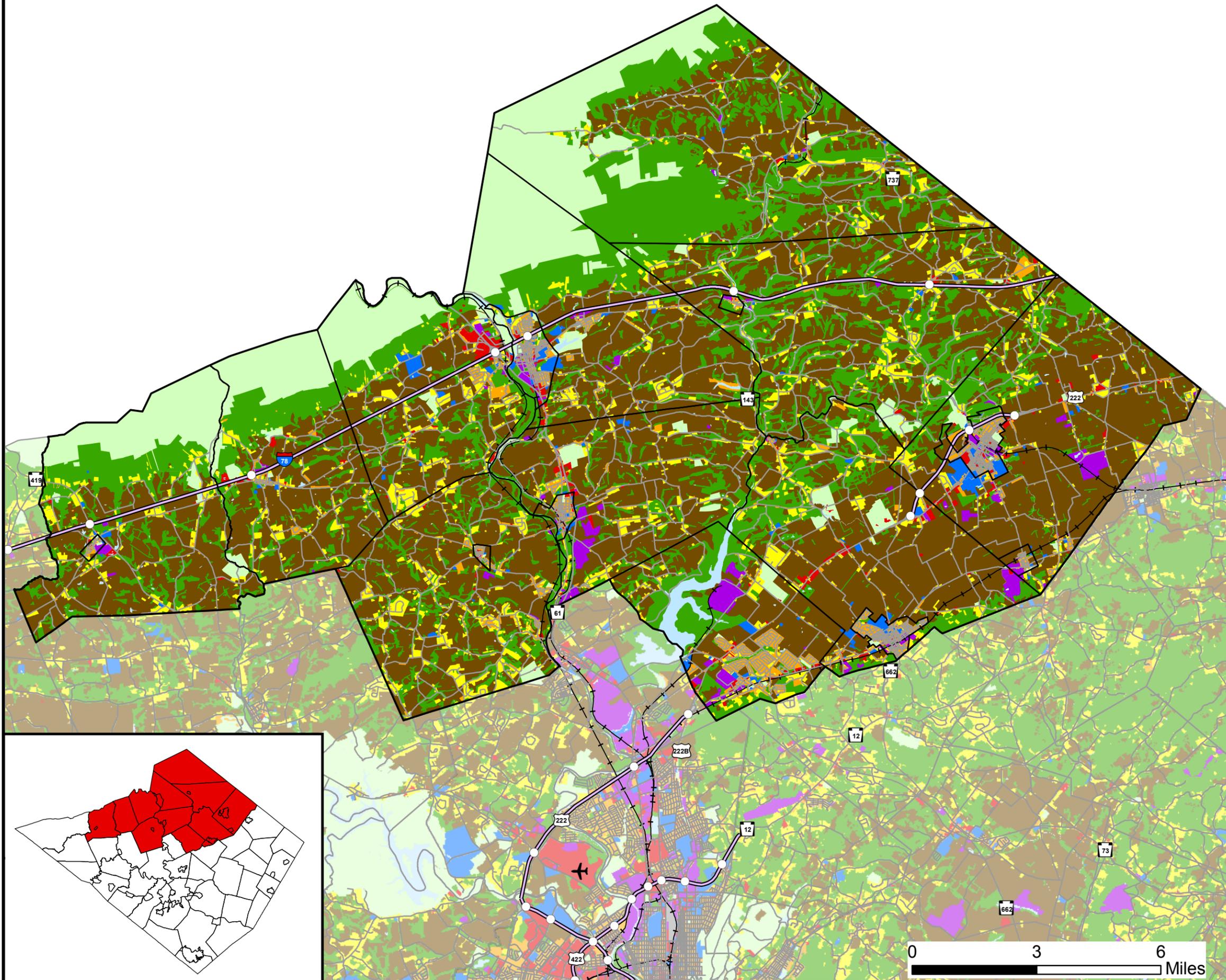
Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services
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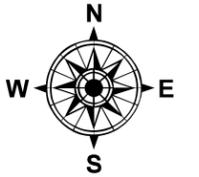
Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update
Adopted: September 2013

Hawk Mountain Region Existing Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



Legend

- Residential Low
- Residential High
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Recreation
- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water
- Transportation
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- ✈ Major Airport
- ✈ Other Airports



Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services

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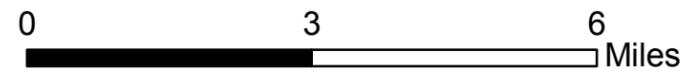
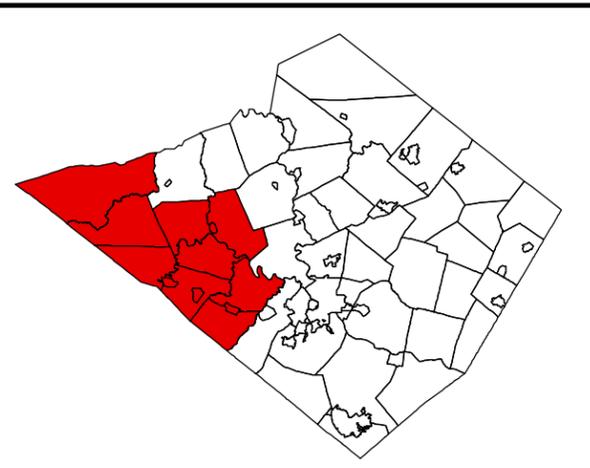
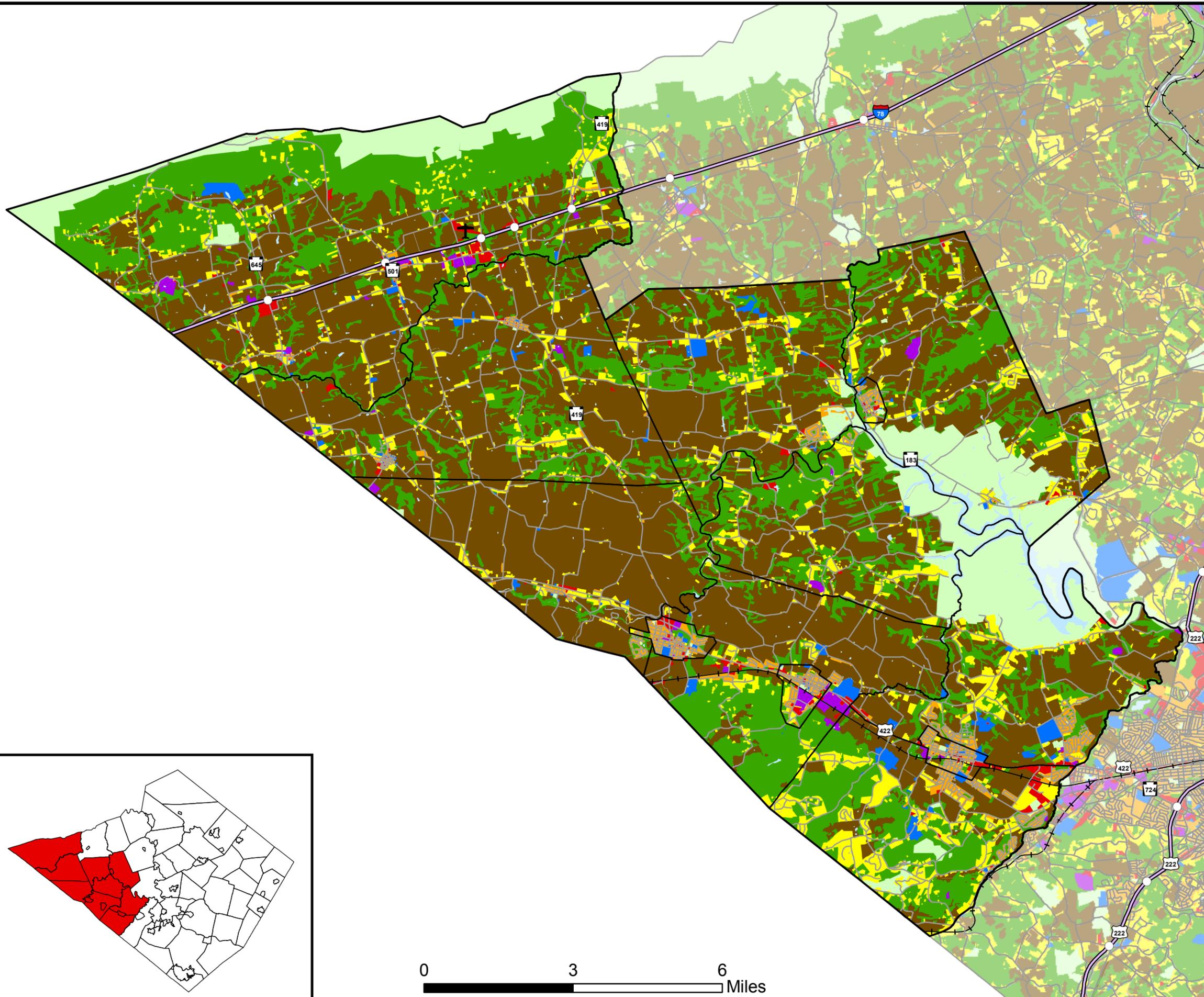
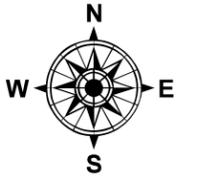


Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update
Adopted: September 2013

Tulpehocken Region Existing Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania

Legend

- Residential Low
- Residential High
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Recreation
- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water
- Transportation
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- ✈ Major Airport
- ✈ Other Airports



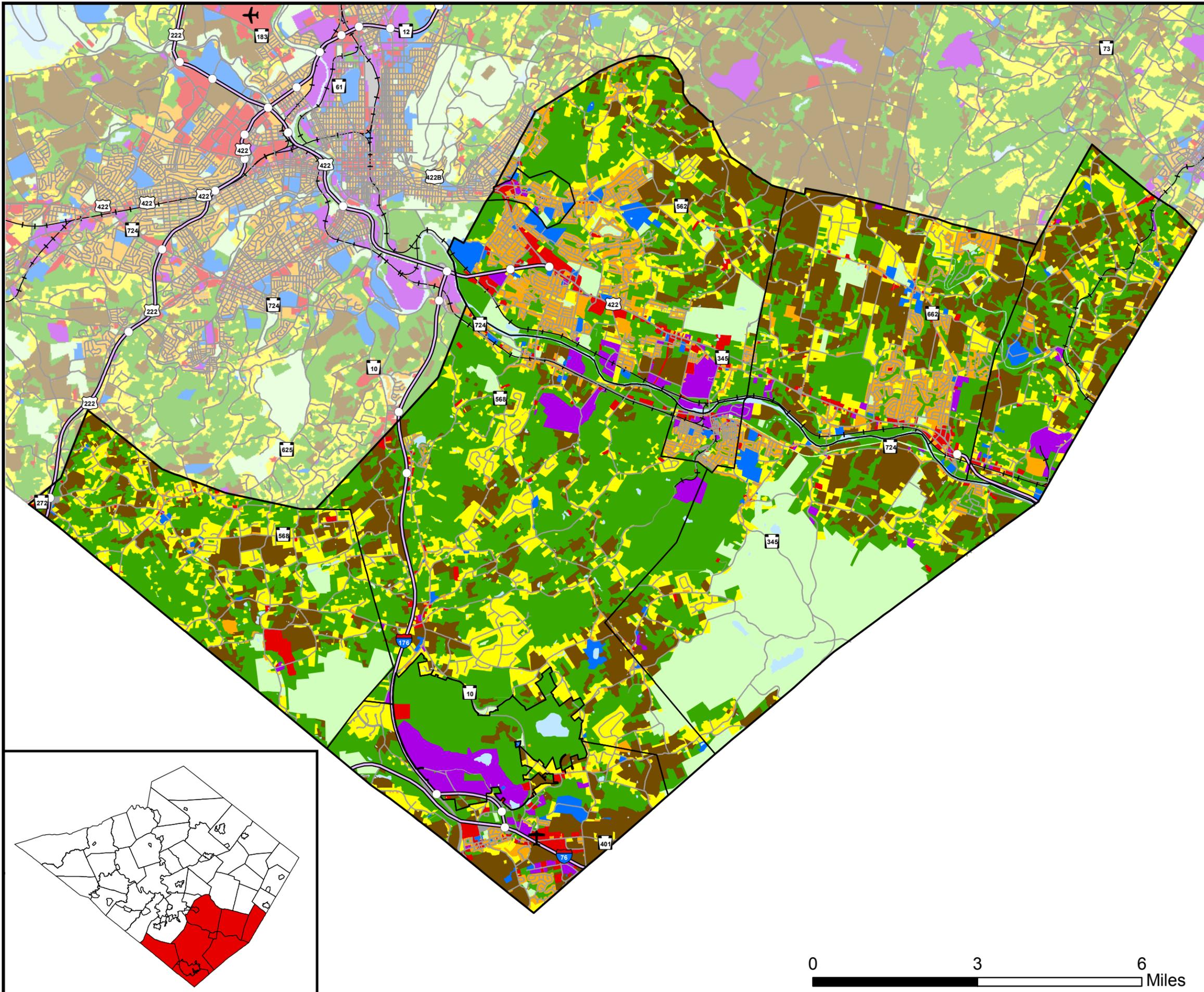
Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS,
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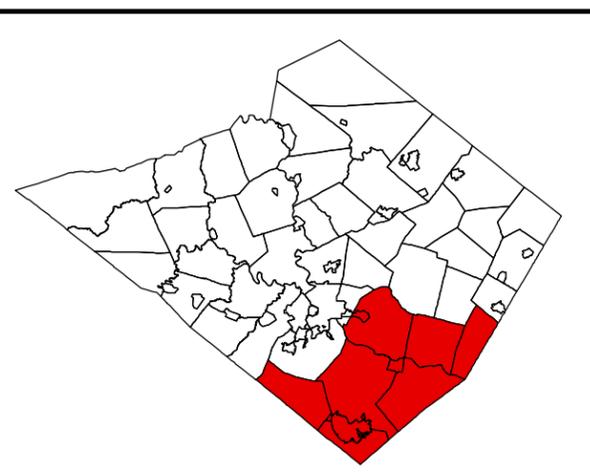
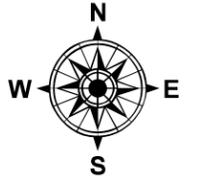
Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update
Adopted: September 2013

Southern Highlands Region Existing Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



Legend

- Residential Low
- Residential High
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Recreation
- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water
- Transportation
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- ✈ Major Airport
- ✈ Other Airports



Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services

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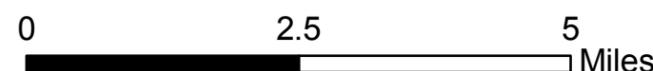
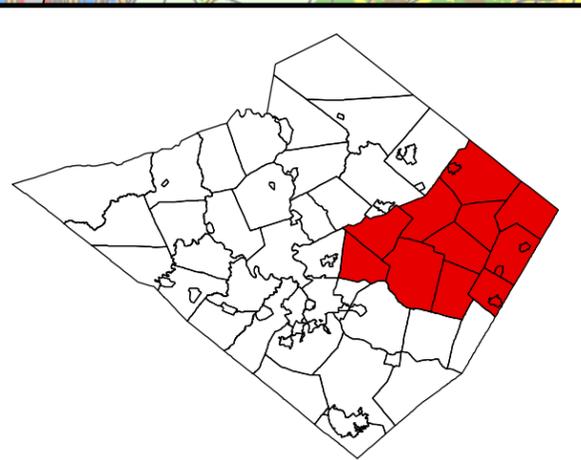
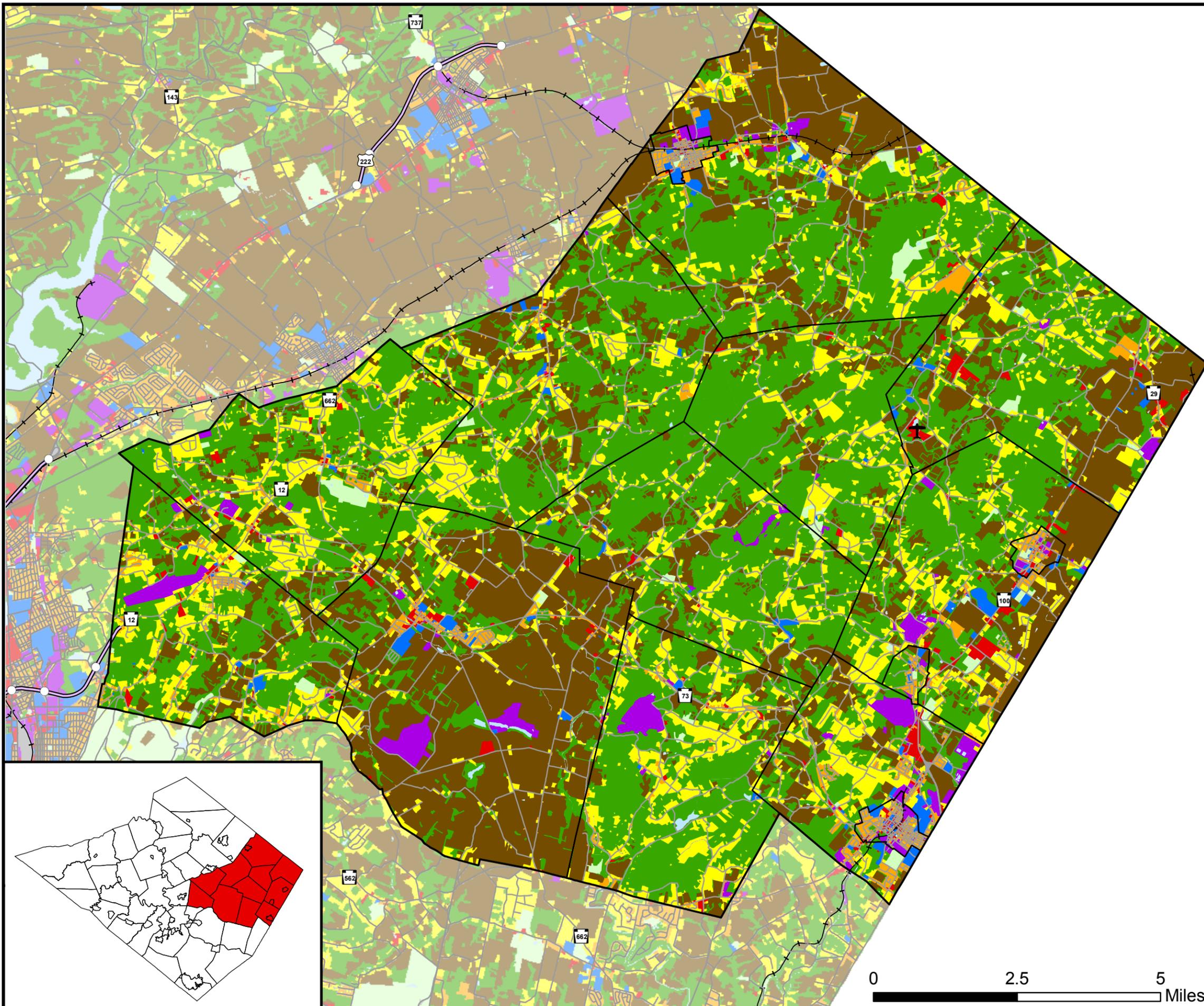
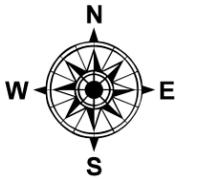


Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update
Adopted: September 2013

Oley Hills Region Existing Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania

Legend

- Residential Low
- Residential High
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Recreation
- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water
- Transportation
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- ✈ Major Airport
- ✈ Other Airports



Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services
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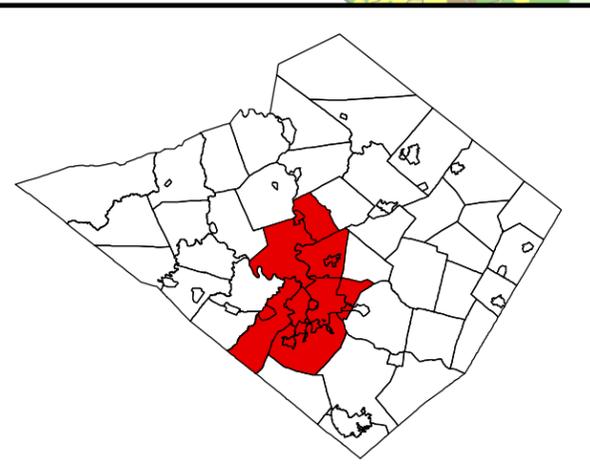
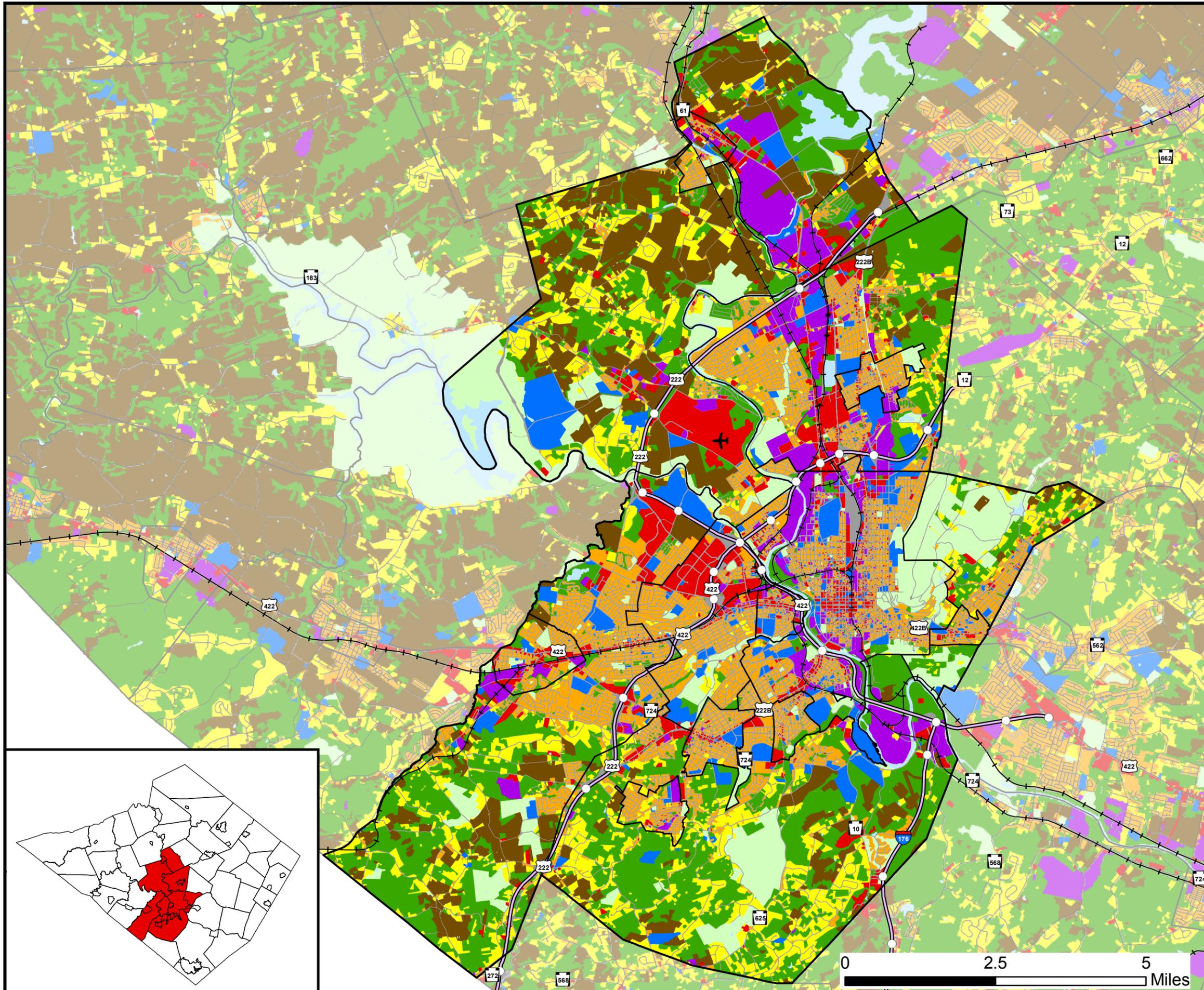
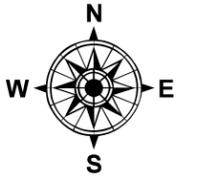


Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update
Adopted: September 2013

Metro Region Existing Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania

Legend

- Residential Low
- Residential High
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Recreation
- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water
- Transportation
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- ✈ Major Airport
- ✈ Other Airports

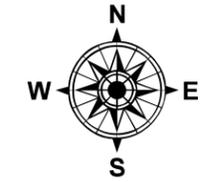
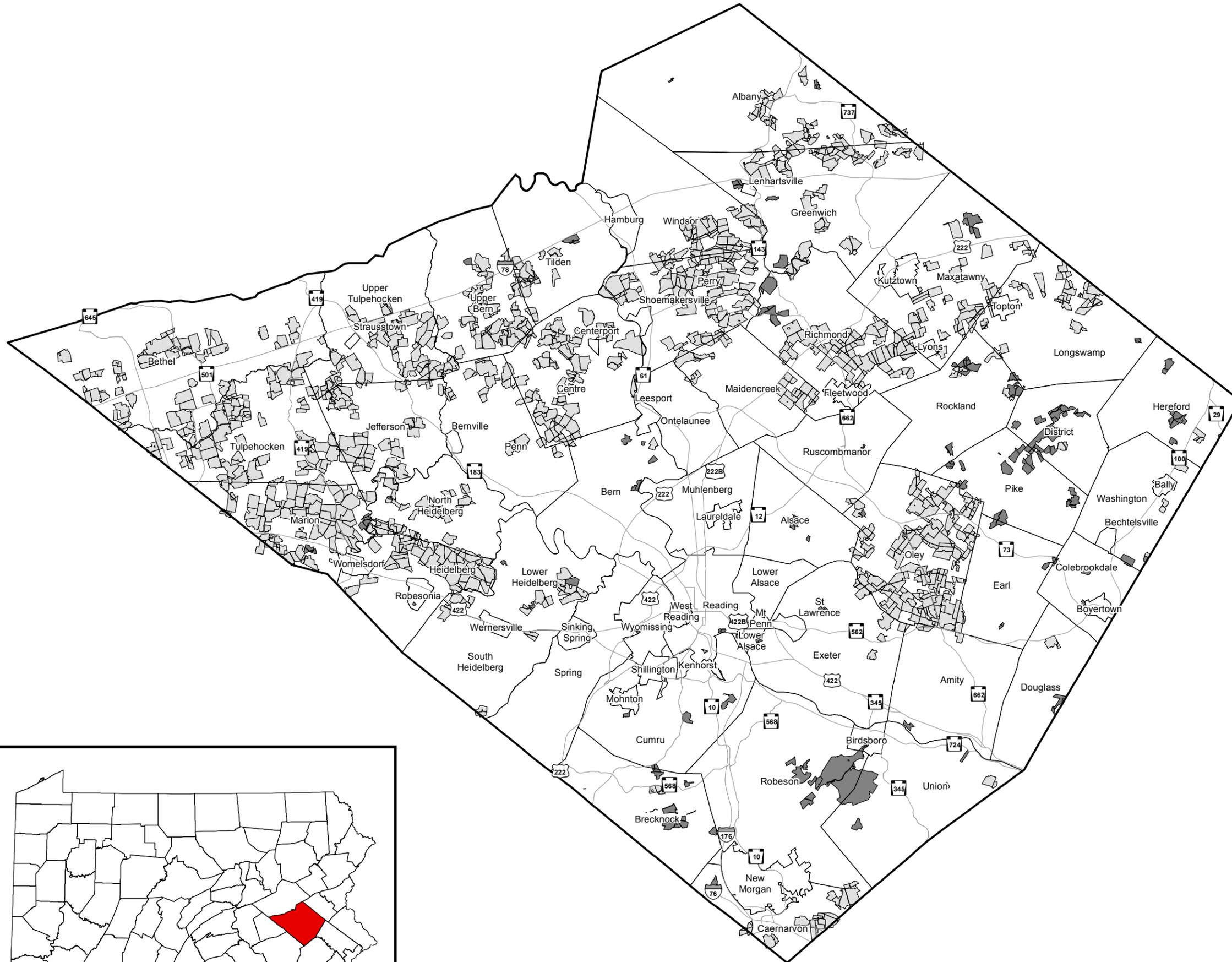


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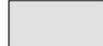
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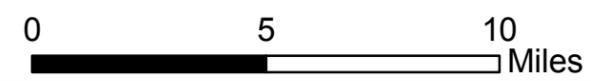
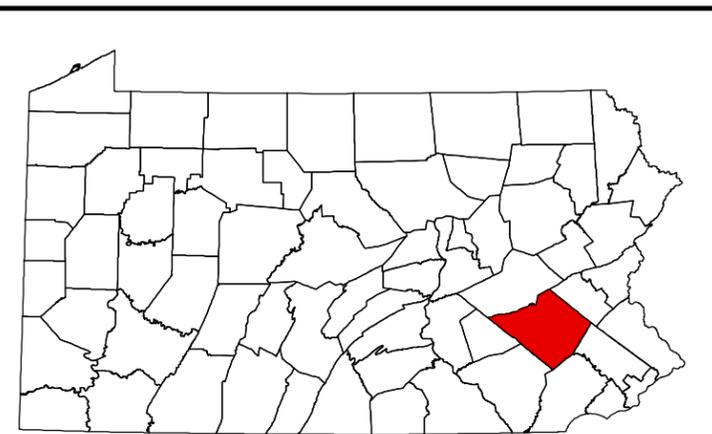


Easements Berks County, Pennsylvania



Legend

-  Agricultural Easements
-  Conservation Easements
-  Berks County Boundary
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Major Roads



Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services
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D. Development of Regional Significance and Impact

The Commonwealth defines “development of regional significance and impact” as any land development that, because of its character, magnitude, or location will have substantial effect upon the health, safety, or welfare of citizens in more than one municipality. The land uses in Berks County that have regional impact and significance include large shopping centers, major employers, commercial corridors, major office and industrial areas, regional entertainment and recreation complexes, hospitals, the government center, colleges and other large school campuses, large quarry operations, landfills, superfund sites, petroleum storage areas, commercial solar and wind farms, large mixed use developments, multiple auto dealers in close proximity, hotels, convention centers, prisons and airports. The County recognizes that there may be other lists developed by municipalities containing developments that are significant on a regional scale versus the list above which are at a countywide scale.

Thresholds to determine if a development is of regional significance or impact are as follows:

- Regional shopping center with more than 300,000 gross square feet of retail or office space
- Individual industrial or commercial office facility, or a planned industrial or office park with more than 500 employees
- Petroleum or highly flammable or explosive material refining, processing, or storage area
- Warehouse complex with more than 500,000 gross square feet, or trucking terminal averaging more than 250 container or trailer loads per day
- Regional entertainment and recreational complex, including theaters or centers for the performing arts, stadiums for competitive sports (totaling more than 2,000 seats), amusement parks, downhill ski areas, horse and dog racing tracks, drag strips and automobile raceways, and similar facilities
- Hospital and medical center offering inpatient care facilities
- Scheduled service airports
- Institutions of higher education, such as a college, university or technical school, and other school campuses on tracts of land ten acres or more
- Commercial corridors combining retail, office, industrial, or warehousing uses on contiguous tracts of land fronting on a highway with more than 500 employees
- EPA designated superfund sites
- Municipal and hazardous waste disposal facilities
- Quarrying, mining, or other extractive operations removing 50,000 tons or more per year
- CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation with either more than 1,000 animal equivalent units, or operations with 301 to 1,000 AEU's that are CAOs)
- Developments that are expected to increase the volume of traffic on adjacent public roads by more than 15%, or which shall cause a “D” level of service or worse on adjacent public roads

The County Planning Commission can aid the municipalities by assessing the impacts of these developments and providing development reviews that identify regional implications and solutions. It is important to realize that the aforementioned developments can have effects that are felt beyond the County borders. Therefore, efforts should be made to work with adjoining municipalities that will be affected by these developments of regional significance.

E. Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan depicts the pattern of projected land use, targeting areas that are appropriate for urban growth and reinvestment, as well as areas that should be preserved/conserved for their agricultural, recreational or natural resource assets. The core purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to manage the amount, intensity and character of the different land uses throughout the County.

1. Methodology

The 2013 Future Land Use Plan was created digitally using a geographic information system (GIS). The existing land use GIS data was used as the foundation to create the future land use. Additional GIS data such as zoning, sewer service areas from municipal Act 537 Plans, soils, slopes, floodplains, tax parcels, aerial photography and conservation easements were overlaid onto the existing land use. The combination of all the different GIS data, as well as local comprehensive plans and the transportation network allowed an analysis to be performed which determined areas that are currently developed, areas where growth should occur at different densities, the location of agricultural preservation and permanent open space, as well as areas where development should not occur due to environmental hazards. In areas where local comprehensive plans were more recent than zoning ordinances, the comprehensive plan was given more weight in making land use decisions.

Since the Future Land Use Plan is intended to act as a regional guide for municipal land use decisions, the Planning Commission invested a great deal of effort towards coordinating the local plans and regulations of each local government with the County's land use version. The municipalities were given the opportunity to review and comment on the draft future land use plan in the spring of 2011. Concurrently, the Commission held a meeting in each region for municipal officials in which the land use pattern for each region was explained. Where warranted, the Future Land Use Plan was edited to reflect changes resulting from the meetings and municipal review prior to the official Act 247 Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code review process.

The following section describes the seven land use categories portrayed on the Future Land Use Plan. The pattern of projected land use is depicted on Figure 3.11 for the County and Figures 3.12 to 3.16 for each region. Table 3.2 shows the acreage for each Future Land Use category for the Regions and the County as a whole.

2. Agricultural Preservation

Land within this designation includes areas with existing agricultural productivity that are part of a large contiguous land area with suitable soils predominantly devoted to agricultural operations. An Agricultural Operation as defined by Act 247 is an enterprise that is actively engaged in the commercial production and preparation for market of crops, livestock and livestock product and in the production, harvesting and preparation for market or use of agricultural, agronomic, horticultural, silvacultural and aquacultural crops and commodities. The term includes an enterprise that implements changes in production practices and procedures or types of crops, livestock, livestock products or commodities produced consistent with practices and procedures that are normally engaged by farmers or are consistent with technological development within that agricultural industry. Farms preserved by agricultural conservation easements, regardless of

the location, and/or size of the agricultural area, are also depicted. Other features taken into account when classifying this category were; land located within an area designated for agricultural use by local comprehensive plans; a zoning district that contains effective agricultural preservation techniques; lands that border an area of an adjacent county that is predominately agricultural; land that is composed of soil capability classes I, II, III or IV; land that is included within an approved Agricultural Security Area.

The objectives of this category are to strengthen the farm industry, promote the long-term viability of the agricultural economy, protect the agricultural land resource base, minimize land use conflicts in agricultural areas, and protect enough farmland so that a sufficient market remains for agricultural support businesses. Areas should be reserved primarily for agricultural purposes, and are inappropriate for infrastructure extension and conversion to incompatible non-farm development. A variety of programs and tools can be used, including but not limited to: tax reduction programs, establishment of agricultural security areas, purchase or donation of agricultural conservation easements, and enactment of effective agricultural zoning. Effective agricultural zoning focuses on agriculture by permitting a wide variety of farm-related uses, including supplemental farm businesses and other uses that complement and further the objectives of agricultural land protection, and by restricting non-farm activities that are disruptive to agricultural activities. Non-farm dwelling unit density is stringently limited; typically one dwelling per 20 to 50 acres, while homes are required to be built on small lots (one to two acres). The division of land into parcels too small to be farmed is typically restricted.

Intensive animal operations, including Concentrated Animal Operations (CAO's) and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's) as defined by state statute, and other intensive agricultural uses, such as mushroom operations, are an important part of our agricultural economy and are becoming more accepted as normal agriculture. As the livestock industry experienced a trend towards larger and more concentrated operations, the state and federal governments enacted a number of statutes and regulations governing intensive agricultural operations. Some of these statutes limit the authority of local municipalities to address such issues, and therefore, local comprehensive plans and zoning provisions addressing intensive animal operations should be compliant with applicable state laws and regulations.

3. Existing Development

This category consists of commercial, industrial, and institutional development, as well as residential development at a range of densities. A variety of reinvestment, rehabilitation, and revitalization efforts will be promoted to take advantage of the extensive infrastructure network, and to improve the tax base of the urban centers. These areas should function as multi-purpose centers providing for livable communities. Strategies should enhance the character of the existing community and be consistent with the historical heritage, scale and density of the area. Mining/quarry operations and landfills are also included in this category. Reasonable expansion of mining/quarry operations reflecting current production levels will be supported provided the expansion does not infringe on eased agricultural land.

4. Designated Growth and Future Growth

Vacant land that is appropriate for future urban high density and suburban median density development requiring a full range of public services and facilities and including a balance of

residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational uses. These multi-purpose areas are expected to accommodate the majority of the growth anticipated to occur in Berks County over the next two decades. Typically, growth areas are contiguous to existing developed areas where they can maximize existing investment in public sewer and water systems, transportation networks, and other public facilities and services or where public sewer is anticipated in the near future for health and safety reasons. A full range of public infrastructure services including sanitary sewer, water, storm sewer, highways and other transportation modes, police and fire protection, schools, parks, and other services should be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate the growth as it occurs. Residential development should not be allowed to occur at rural low densities (one unit per acre or less) that would increase land consumption and prevent a compact level of development. Land for commercial, industrial and institutional uses must be planned for to provide for the economic and employment needs of the area and to ensure that the area has an adequate tax base. Methods for determining adequate parkland acreage or fees in lieu thereof, and transportation capital improvements attributable to new development should be established. Compact mixed-use communities that promote quality of life opportunities, pedestrian friendly design and alternative means of transportation are encouraged. These livable communities should provide for the everyday needs of the residents, promote a sense of community, and respect the natural, historic and cultural heritage of the area. Important natural resources within Growth Areas should be protected.

Designated Growth and Future Growth Areas are intended to be multi-purpose activity areas characterized by concentrated density and suburban/urban development. Designated Growth Areas encompass the regions that surround Existing Development Areas. These areas are currently suitable for medium/high density development due to the presence of the necessary public infrastructure services in place. Future Growth Areas are suitable for medium/high density development in the future as planned public infrastructure expands or becomes available. These areas are typically located adjacent to Existing Development Areas or Designated Growth Areas, but can be located in rural areas if other growth factors are present, such as an interchange. Development within Designated Growth and Future Growth Areas should be planned for densities that exceed one unit per acre. While the Plan refers to such densities as compact, concentrated, medium, high, suburban and urban it deliberately does not define them. By not specifying densities and land use type, the Plan remains flexible to allow municipalities to determine the range and mix of densities, land use types, and character they envision for their communities. However, the Commission advises that such densities increase proportionate to the level of public infrastructure and services available.

Growing the job base and expanding the tax base are important to the economic health of Berks County. Since competition for new business recruitment is keen, making Berks County a more competitive place for attracting new firms and retaining/expanding existing businesses is crucial. With roots in an industrial past, Berks County looks to retain the best of these traditional economic drivers while positioning ourselves for new opportunities. Business development should consist primarily of industrial and office growth. Focus on the provision of high quality, living wage industries should prevail over expansion of low-wage retail development. The development of large scale retail should not be the primary type of economic development pursued. Such development provides few living wage jobs, limits employee benefits, and creates part-time jobs that are not sustainable for the livelihood of employees.

The Industrial Site Assessment for Berks County prepared in 2001 by The Leak-Goforth Company and URBANOMICS, Inc. suggested that a countywide economic development strategy be based on the goal of developing approximately 2,500 acres of new business and industrial parks and sites over a 15 year period. Development of an average of 150-200 acres of new inventory per year was and continues to be an annual goal. This acreage would accommodate about 20 million square feet of industrial and office uses and 20,000 workers. Preferred target industry clusters and general locations for these clusters, as well as our strengths and weaknesses to attract business development are outlined in the Industrial Site Assessment.

As part of this Comprehensive Plan update, the Berks County Planning Commission performed a general analysis of several site selection factors to assess the range of siting options suitable for Berks County. Business siting needs and preferences are varied and extensive. While this assessment did not take into account all factors affecting site selection, it did place a high value on infrastructure assets such as highway access and public sewer/water service. Factors evaluated included:

- vacant land;
- highway access, land located within one-half mile of an interstate or other major arterials;
- existing and future public sewer service areas;
- existing water service areas
- rail service;
- agricultural and conservation easements;
- parkland;
- steep slopes;
- zoning;
- sites larger than five acres

In addition, major brownfield sites, and other large abandoned, vacant, or underutilized commercial/industrial buildings with a potential for redevelopment were included.

The assessment identified 153 areas, consisting of approximately 9,993 acres, suitable for business development in Berks County and 1,314 acres with the potential for redevelopment. Figures 3.17 to 3.22 illustrate these general locations by size. The majority of the sites are located within one of the Growth Areas or the Existing Development category as designated on the County Future Land Use Plan. Most of these sites are composed of several properties and would have to be assembled. The availability of public sewer, water service, business-oriented zoning, rail access, and the quality of highway access varies from site to site. Additional technical evaluation is needed to fully determine a site's suitability. The potential locations shown should not be construed as limiting other locations in the County.

Identified suitable locations for business development can be categorized by general location:

- I-78 Corridor: Interstate along the northern boundary of Berks which provides express highway linkages west to Harrisburg and the Baltimore-Washington area, and east to New York City and the New England region. This corridor is regarded as a key area for distribution and warehousing. The I-78 corridor has ample flat land for development, however, the corridor is also a prime agricultural area and requires careful planning to

minimize impacts to the farming industry. Potential business sites were identified at eight of the eleven interchanges. Six of the interchanges (Frystown, Bethel, Strausstown, Shartlesville, PA 61, and Lenhartsville) have public sewer service or service is nearby and could be extended. The Hamburg area interchanges (PA 61, Hamburg) have existing water service. While there is a perceived distance from the Reading area labor force, PA 183 and PA 61 provide direct links to the Greater Reading Area. Transit service is available between Reading and Hamburg with the potential for expansion. There is no rail service in this corridor, except between Reading and Hamburg.

- I -76 Corridor: The Pennsylvania Turnpike passes through Berks southern tip with an interchange in Morgantown. It provides express highway linkages east to Philadelphia and west to Harrisburg, Baltimore-Washington area, and Pittsburgh. Several potential small business sites were identified in the Morgantown area along with a mega site in New Morgan Borough. Sewer service and existing water service is available in the Morgantown area. I-176 provides a direct link to the Greater Reading Area. Transit service is available between Reading and Morgantown.
- Greater Reading Area: The urbanized core and associated metro area transportation corridors provide the opportunity for a variety of urban and suburban settings. Several brownfield sites were identified for re-development. These sites take advantage of infrastructure and population, while reclaiming abandoned or underutilized areas. Most of the suburban sites are located north of Reading along U.S. 222 North, PA 61, PA 183; except for the Sinking Spring/Wernersville sites which are located near U.S. 422 West. Water and sewer service are generally available throughout the Greater Reading Area. Rail service is provided in Reading and along the U.S. 422 West and PA 61 corridors. The PA 183 sites are in close proximity to the Reading Regional Airport. Transit service is available throughout the Greater Reading Area.
- U.S. 422 East, PA 724 Corridor: Suitable sites ranging in a variety of sizes were identified in this suburban corridor. Water and sewer service are generally available. Rail service and highway linkages are provided to the Philadelphia region. Transit service is available between Reading and Birdsboro.
- Other locations suitable for business development include the PA 100 Corridor from Boyertown to Bally, and the Kutztown region. Water and sewer service are generally available or are nearby and could be extended. Rail service is provided to Kutztown and Boyertown.

While there appears to be a sufficient amount of sites suitable for business development there are few sites with all of the qualities desired. The supply of sites in choice locations is decreasing as prime sites are being converted to locations for homes and shopping centers for which there is a greater immediate return on their investment.

Berks County and its municipalities need to facilitate the provision of adequate locations by providing consistent land use planning, business-oriented zoning and to the greatest degree possible utility and transportation infrastructure. This will minimize the task developers have in assembling and developing business sites. Declining economic competitiveness is partially attributable to traffic congestion, and gaps in the highway network which leave the Greater Reading Area somewhat isolated from regional markets. Completion of improvements between Reading and I-78, as well as to U.S. 422 and U.S. 222 are crucial. Policies regarding the

purchase of agricultural conservation easements should be reviewed as they impact potential business development opportunities near major highways, rail facilities, and existing utilities. Also, it is key to foster a business-friendly environment that provides incentives, and improves quality of life components (housing availability and cost, quality health facilities, schools, recreation and cultural facilities, low crime rate). Our economic development agencies and educational facilities should continue to focus on marketing the region and preparing a skilled labor force.

5. Permanent Open Space and Recreation

Lands within this designation include federal, state, county, and municipal parkland, recreation facilities, open space areas, as well as municipal water supply watersheds; permanent holdings of conservancies and other similar non-profit organizations for the purpose of conservation; and potential natural areas, parks, greenway and linear stream protection corridors. These areas should create a permanent network of adequate and diverse open space, park and recreational resources for the use of all County residents. A wide range of recreational experiences should be provided, which consist of active recreation, passive park opportunities, and natural open space and conservation environments that secure irreplaceable, unique, or threatened natural features and resources. A countywide greenway system interconnecting the County's major park, recreation and open space resources through a network of open space corridors and linear parks and trails is advocated. Privately owned commercial recreation facilities such as fitness centers, bowling alleys, miniature golf, golf courses, and similar uses are not included in this category.

6. Rural Conservation

These lands are characterized by low density development, prominent forest cover, and may contain slopes greater than 15%, as well as fragmented areas of farmland and land eased for open space, natural resource or woodland conservation. Development should be subject to flexible siting standards, conservation design standards, and disturbance limitations designed to avoid the most critical environmental constraints, and allow land to be developed efficiently with the least degree of environmental impact. Rural development density depends on the environmental constraints present, and the area necessary to accommodate on-lot sewage disposal and water supply, but is less than or equal to one dwelling unit per acre. Village expansion, consisting of residential and locally oriented retail use and community service uses, will be encouraged to reflect the historical pattern of growth, scale and character of the area. Due to the scattered nature of the agricultural activity, aggressive agricultural preservation techniques are typically not practical.

7. Environmental Hazard

Lands in this category consist of floodplains, watercourses, and water bodies. The primary purpose of this designation is to encourage their proper management and sustain their natural functions and values. In most cases, these areas should not be disturbed, nor developed, because of their natural environmental importance, the associated environmental constraints, and the substantial public interest in preventing damage due to floods, minimizing sedimentation and erosion, and enhancing water quality. The exception would be for the development of properly elevated/floodproofed buildings within redevelopment areas that are part of an economic revitalization initiative. Such redevelopment should be designed, located and constructed to have a minimal effect upon the flow and height of flood waters and does not increase the flood hazard to properties located upstream or

downstream of the redevelopment site. Floodplains were delineated using FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) issued on July 3, 2012.

F. Future Land Use Analysis

Recognizing agriculture's contribution to the local economy and the County's investment in our agricultural preservation program, the largest use of land in the County is projected to be agriculture. Approximately 28% of the total County land area is designated as Agricultural Preservation. While this is a significant reduction from the amount of acreage recorded as existing agriculture lands, additional farmland acreage is located within the Rural Conservation, Environmental Hazard, and Permanent Open Space and Recreation categories.

The third largest category, covering 24% of the County, is Rural Conservation. Over 76% of the Rural Conservation land is located within the Oley Hills, Hawk Mountain and Southern Highland regions. The Permanent Open Space and Recreation, and the Environmental Hazard categories comprise 10% and 6% of the County land, respectively. Together, these four conservation oriented categories represent nearly 68% of the total County land area.

Approximately 26% of the County is considered Developed. These areas are not stagnant, as they are continually evolving. Revitalizing our urban centers, including the adaptive reuse of our older buildings, and brownfield reclamation, is a key factor in the reduction of the amount of sprawl and the continued healthy growth of the County.

The plan for future development of Berks County envisions the addition of 32,594 acres of urban land to accommodate the majority of the new residences, businesses, and institutional uses. This projected development pattern continues the trend of growth along major road corridors and at interchanges of the inter-state highways. The anticipated development is spread somewhat unequally among the regions. Certain areas have more potential to accommodate growth than others based upon environmental and infrastructure constraints, the location of conservation easements, as well as local land development regulations.

The Southern Highlands Region has the highest amount of acreage projected for urban growth with 9,525 acres or 10% of the region's total land area. Most of the growth in this region is projected along the U.S. 422 corridor, and in the Borough of New Morgan. A major development known as the Town of Bryn Eyre, in the tradition of New Town planning, has been proposed to be constructed within the Borough on 3,200 acres adjacent to the Morgantown exit of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The Town of Bryn Eyre's vision is "To create a distinctive, exceptionally livable town where a variety of homes, shops and offices radiate from parks and plazas and where pedestrian connections and amenities abound."

The region with the least amount of acreage projected for urban growth is the Oley Hills with 3,874 acres or less than 4% of the regions total land area. The majority of this growth is located along the PA 100 corridor.

The Commission performed an analysis to assure that the population projection for 2030 could be accommodated by the Vision 2030 Plan. The focus of this evaluation was on the Growth Areas (Future and Designated), since the majority of our future development is intended to occur in these

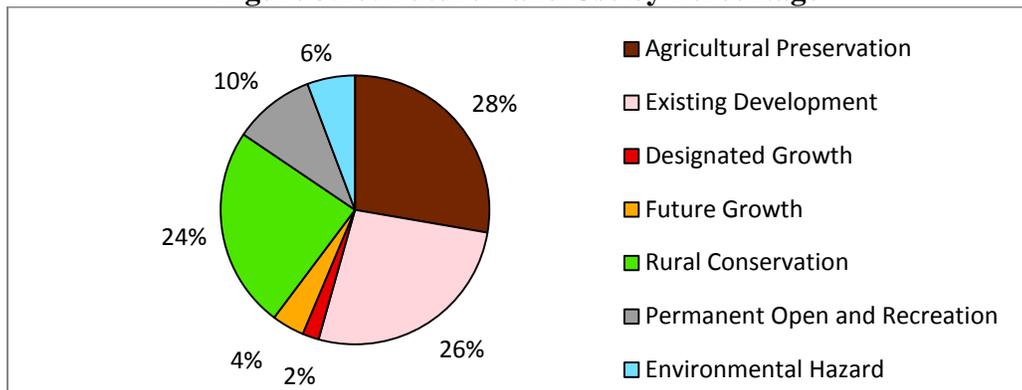
two areas. In order to achieve a balanced mix of land use, 45% of the growth area was reserved for non-residential uses. This acreage is provided to accommodate the necessary services, employment opportunities, and tax base to complement population growth.

Applying average suburban residential densities, the current mix of housing types being constructed in Berks County, and an infrastructure factor, it was determined that the Growth Areas can yield a total of 49,091 dwelling units. Multiplying this number of units by the average household size for Berks County (2.59 persons/du), 127,146 persons can be accommodated in the Growth Area alone. It is noted that additional growth will occur in the other land use categories and therefore, this is considered a conservative approach. Berks County’s population projection for the year 2030 is 491,914 persons, which amounts to a population increase of 80,472 persons. Therefore, ample room is available to accommodate the population increase projected during the life of this Plan, provided mixed use and high density development occurs.

Table 3.2: Future Land Use Acreage

	Hawk Mountain	Oley Hills	Southern Highlands	Tulpehocken	Metro	County Total
Agricultural Preservation	72,229	19,430	8,810	53,080	201	153,750
Existing Development	20,934	27,881	27,866	14,762	30,238	121,681
Designated Growth	1,683	2,380	3,528	1,053	2,339	10,983
Future Growth	6,130	1,494	5,997	5,552	2,438	21,611
Rural Conservation	31,217	46,297	25,267	17,535	14,043	134,359
Permanent Open Space and Recreation	22,286	1,827	12,376	10,901	6,906	54,296
Transportation Network	6,279	3,903	4,569	3,889	7,473	26,113
Environmental Hazard	8,948	5,519	6,538	6,396	4,406	31,807
Region Total	169,706	108,731	94,951	113,168	68,044	554,600

Figure 3.10: Future Land Use by Percentage



G. Adjoining County Land Use Relationships

The purpose of this section is to consider regional land use patterns along county borders. The bordering counties surrounding Berks County include Chester, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery and Schuylkill.

The regional growth trends of the surrounding counties have influenced Berks County's development pattern. The rapid growth experienced in these adjacent regions has increased residential development and the resultant commercial development in some of Berks County's eastern and southern municipalities. Additionally, Berks County's development pattern has been strongly influenced by the region's transportation network. Our growth, due in part to immigration, has been accelerated as a result of the U.S. 422 Expressway in Montgomery and Chester Counties. This expressway has reduced travel time and created a direct corridor to Philadelphia causing sections of southeastern Berks County to serve as bedroom communities for the Philadelphia region. Furthermore, growth in the Allentown area is also having an impact in Berks County. Maxatawny, Longswamp, Hereford, and Washington Townships all show increased residential and commercial development pressure. The opening of the U.S. 222 expressway extension southern section joining to Lancaster County in 2006 has also contributed to growth pressure. Generally, each of the counties' Comprehensive Plans encourage compact, consolidated development adjacent to existing urban areas where public sewer and water facilities are available or could be easily extended. The planning strategies also restrict development on environmentally sensitive land, in order to protect natural resources and preserve critical open space. Since the majority of land along the County's border, both within Berks County and in the adjacent counties, is designated by future land use plans for low density residential, agriculture, or conservation, there are no major conflicts. A brief discussion of each adjoining County's future land use follows.

1. Chester County

Chester County, encompassing 758 square miles, forms the southeastern boundary of Berks County. Since 1996, Chester County has been the fastest growing county in Pennsylvania, adding nearly 70,000 people between 1996 and 2007. According to the 2010 US census, the population was 498,886 people. Connecting Berks County to the Philadelphia region is U.S. 422, which has expressway status in Chester and Montgomery Counties and arterial status in Berks County. Chester County is characterized by urban centers spread throughout the County with connecting suburban areas in-between. The remainder of the County is rural with areas of agriculture mixed in.

The majority of the existing land use along the Chester County/Berks County boundary is open space consisting of large areas of woodland known as the Hopewell Big Woods. *Landscapes 2*, envisions an urban landscape in the Elverson area along Route 23. However, the majority of the border between the two counties is designated as Rural with some Agriculture. This also includes the French Creek State Park area as well. Therefore, there is general consistency at the border.

Source: *Landscapes 2 Chester County Comprehensive Plan 2009*.

2. Lancaster County

Lancaster County, composed of 952 square miles, forms the southwestern boundary of Berks County. It had a population of 514,445 people according to the 2010 US Census. Agriculture in

Lancaster County has historically played a major role in the development of the County's economy and influenced the County's culture. Lancaster County ranked first in the state in 2010, with a total number of 5,293 farms and approximately 463,000 acres in farmland. U.S. 222 is a limited-access expressway in Lancaster County connecting the City of Reading and the City of Lancaster.

The existing land uses along the Berks/Lancaster boundary are primarily open space and agriculture with scattered residential uses. Concentrated development occurs in the Borough of Adamstown, of which the majority of its land area is located in Lancaster County. Berks County is expecting residential growth along the Route 222 corridor around the border with Lancaster County. This localized growth in this area is generally consistent with Berks County.

Source: *Policy Plan of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, 1999.*

3. Lebanon County

Lebanon County, covering 363.9 square miles, borders the northern portion of Berks County's western boundary. From the time of its formation, Lebanon County's economy has revolved around its farmland. Residential, commercial and industrial sectors of the County have been growing at a moderate rate and encompassing larger land areas. Population has steadily increased to 133,568 people according to the 2010 US Census.

There is a central corridor of commercial, industrial and residential development following U.S. 422. The remainder of the County is served by scattered commercial service areas, institutional uses, recreational facilities and open space lands throughout the residential community. A generalized description of the future land use plan illustrates conservation/recreation areas along both the north and south mountain ranges that border Berks County. The Lebanon Future Land Use Plan calls for mainly rural and natural areas throughout most of the border with Berks County, with the following exceptions: Along the 422 and 419 corridors near Myerstown, Newmanstown and Richland, the plan calls for mostly Suburban Business. Although there are pockets of Agricultural Preservation within this area of Berks County, this area is generally consistent. The Route 22 and 78 corridor in Lebanon County calls for Suburban Business and Suburban Neighborhoods. According to the Berks County Future Land Use Plan, this area calls for Agricultural Preservation. The other area of inconsistency is the Mt. Aetna area in Berks County. Berks County calls for Future Growth due to the placement of infrastructure, whereas Lebanon County calls for Agricultural Preservation.

Source: *Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan, 2007*

4. Lehigh County

Lehigh County is composed of 348 square miles. According to the 2010 US Census, the population is 349,497 people. Lehigh borders Berks County's northeastern boundary. A large portion from northeast to southwest of the Lehigh Valley is dominated by Urban Development. This is concentrated along the Route 22 and Route 78 corridors. The outlying areas of the County are mainly rural with agriculture throughout.

The Berks/Lehigh County border is primarily rural, dominated by Farmland Preservation and Natural Resource areas. Development pressures are creeping westward toward the Berks County border along the Route 22/78 corridor and also the Route 222 corridor. There is limited development around Alburdis. The balance of the border between Berks and Lehigh especially in

the northern area does not illustrate any notable development pressures in the near future. These factors make the border land uses between Berks and Lehigh County consistent.

Source: *Comprehensive Plan for Lehigh-Northampton Counties, 2005 (Updated 2010)*.

5. Montgomery County

Montgomery County consists of 486 square miles. It borders Berks County's eastern boundary. Montgomery County is thriving with over 799,874 people (2010 US Census) and a half million jobs. The majority of this population resides in the southern portion of the County as growth has radiated from Philadelphia. They have a variety of recreational, cultural, and community amenities. By 2025, the County is expected to grow by 107,000 people, 49,000 homes, and 77,000 jobs. Suburban/urban residential development clustered around important transportation routes and retail/office complexes characterize this area.

New residential development has been particularly dispersed, with the North Penn area and nearby communities receiving the most new growth. Retail commercial growth has taken two primary forms: concentrations of centers in shopping hubs and neighborhood and community centers designed to meet local needs. The major shopping hubs include King of Prussia, Plymouth Meeting, Montgomeryville, East Norriton, and Willow Grove. Centers designed to meet local needs have been located on principal arterials in local municipalities. Meanwhile, many boroughs have lost retail establishments. Office commercial growth has primarily occurred near highway interchanges, most notably in King of Prussia, Upper Providence, Plymouth Meeting/Blue Bell, Conshohocken, Fort Washington, Spring House, and Horsham. In addition, the area between Lansdale and West Point has seen significant office development.

The Berks/Montgomery border is characterized by Open Space and Agriculture to the north of Boyertown. Montgomery County has purchased a number of agricultural easements along this border. Concentrated suburban is present in the Boyertown and Pottstown area along PA 100. There are also areas shown as residential uses as well as employment centers in Montgomery County in the Pottstown / Stowe area. This contributes to general consistency at the border between the two Counties

Source: *Montgomery County Land Use Plan, 2004*.

6. Schuylkill County

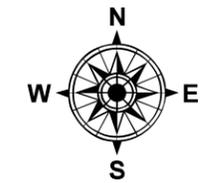
Schuylkill County encompasses a physical area of 780 square miles. It is located in the Appalachian Mountains in the Ridge and Valley Region just north of the Piedmont Plateau. The landscape of Schuylkill County is characterized by alternating mountain ridges and lowland valleys running in a northeast-southwest direction. Woodlands comprise approximately 45% of the land area of the county, with agriculture encompassing about 30%. According to the 2010 U.S. census, the total population in the County was 148,289 persons. A prominent feature in both the County's history and landscape is the presence of two large anthracite coal belts which are located northeast to southwest through the center of the county. Many of the County's existing villages and boroughs were developed around mining centers to house workers and their families. Mining as a land use currently represents 10% of the total area of the County.

Schuylkill County borders the north side of Berks County. The Blue Mountain is the dividing feature between the two counties. It is comprised of State Game Lands and a State Forest traversed by the Appalachian Trail. The two main thoroughfares into Berks County are Route

183 and Route 61. The land surrounding these main routes is shown as Permanent Open Space, Resource Conservation and Preserved / Very Low Density Residential. The Cabela's retail complex is located along Route 61 at the interchange of Route 78 just a few miles south of the Berks / Schuylkill border. This has brought significant commercial growth to the area. However, growth has not expanded much beyond the Route 78 interchange. Due to the types of terrain in this area, there will be very limited development pressures. Both Schuylkill and Berks County Future Land Use Plans call for conservation type land uses making this border consistent.

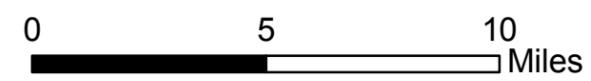
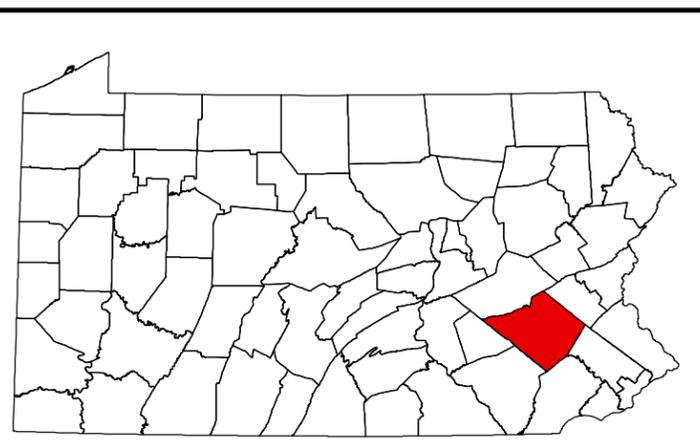
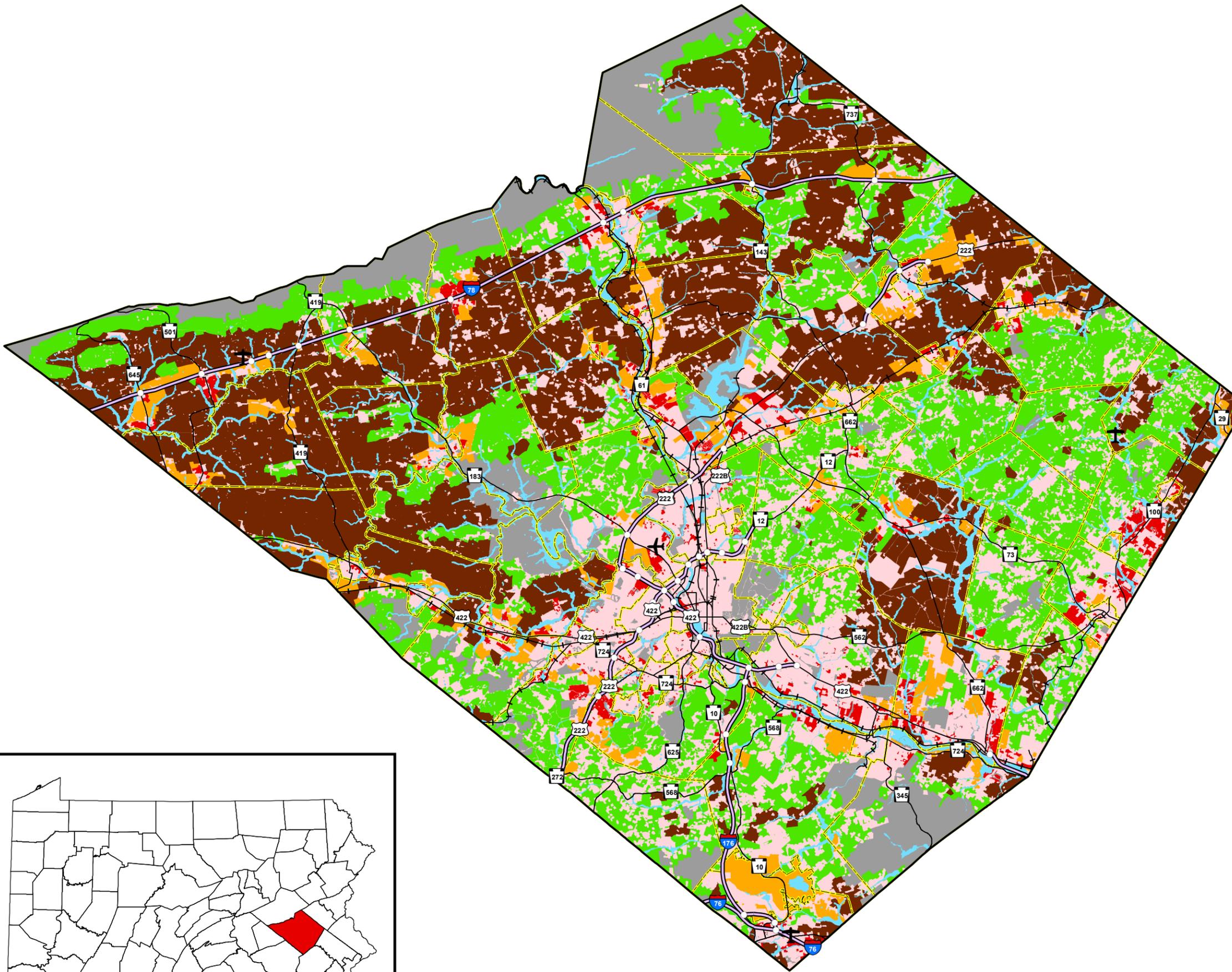
Source: *Schuylkill County Comprehensive Plan*, 2006.

Future Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



Legend

- Existing Development
- Designated Growth
- Future Growth
- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Conservation
- Environmental Hazard
- Permanent Open Space and Rec.
- Transportation Network
- Berks County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Major Roads
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- Major Airport
- Other Airports



Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services, FEMA (Effective Date: July 3, 2012)

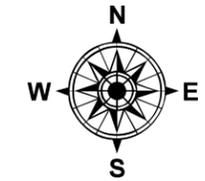
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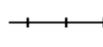


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Adopted: September 2013

Hawk Mountain Region Future Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



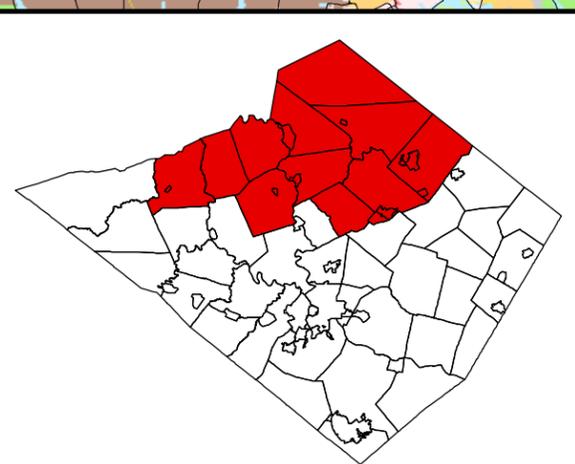
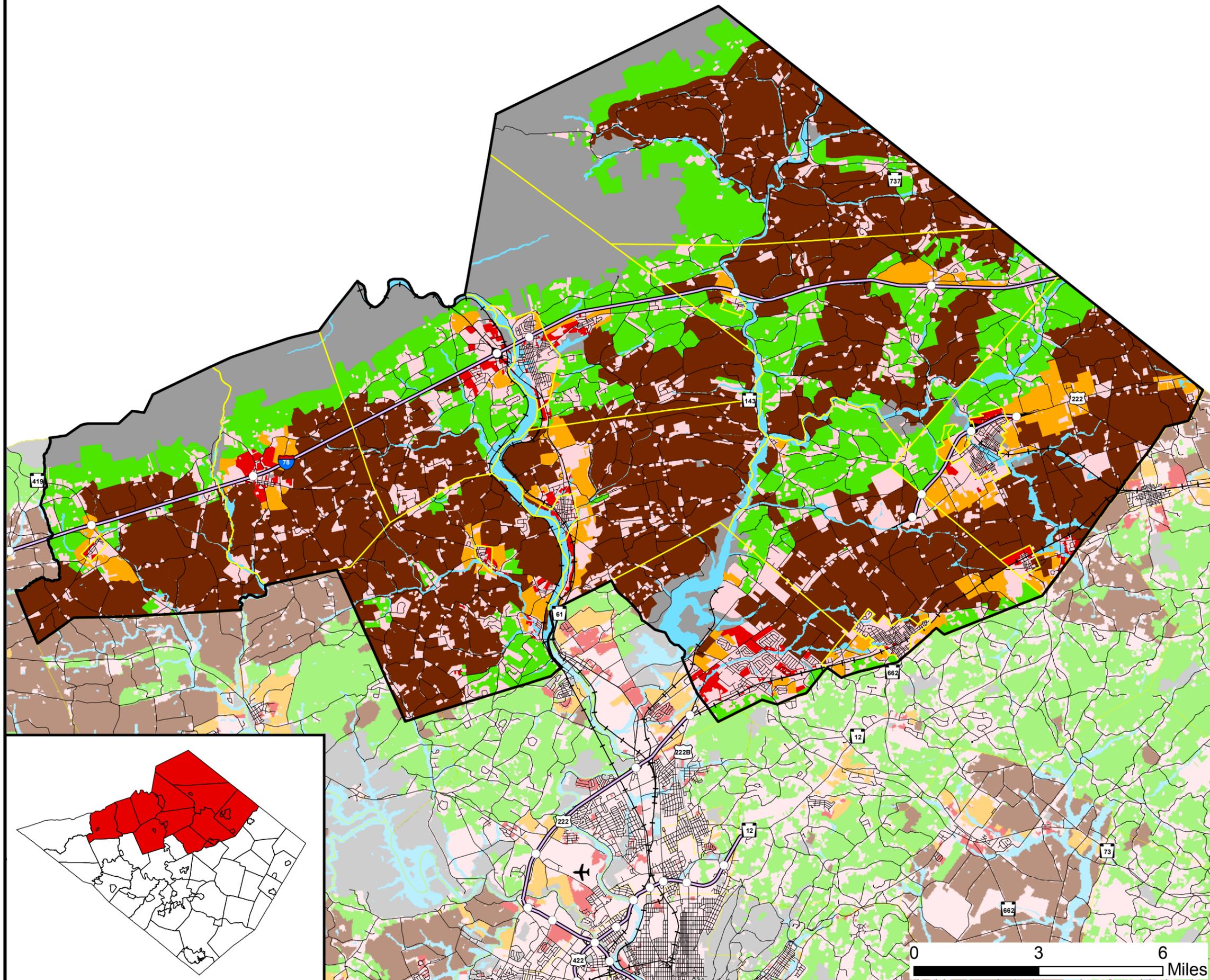
Legend

-  Existing Development
-  Designated Growth
-  Future Growth
-  Agricultural Preservation
-  Rural Conservation
-  Environmental Hazard
-  Permanent Open Space and Rec.
-  Transportation Network
-  Planning Region Boundary
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Limited Access Highway
-  Railroads
-  Interchanges
-  Major Airport
-  Other Airports

Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services, FEMA (Effective Date: July 3, 2012)

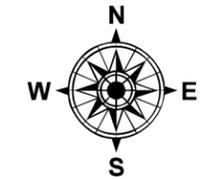
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Tulpehocken Region Future Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



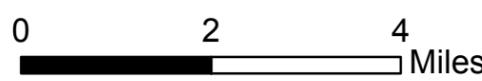
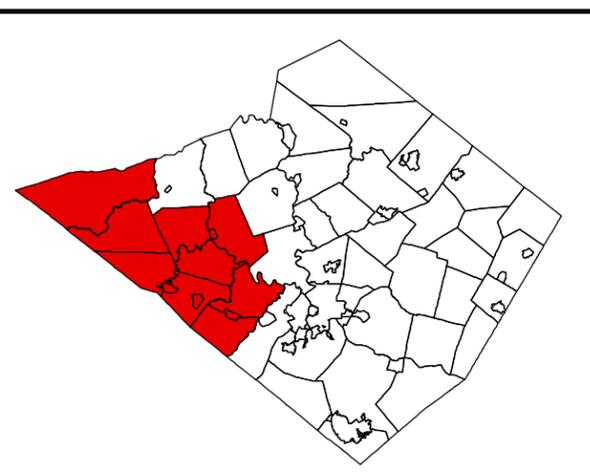
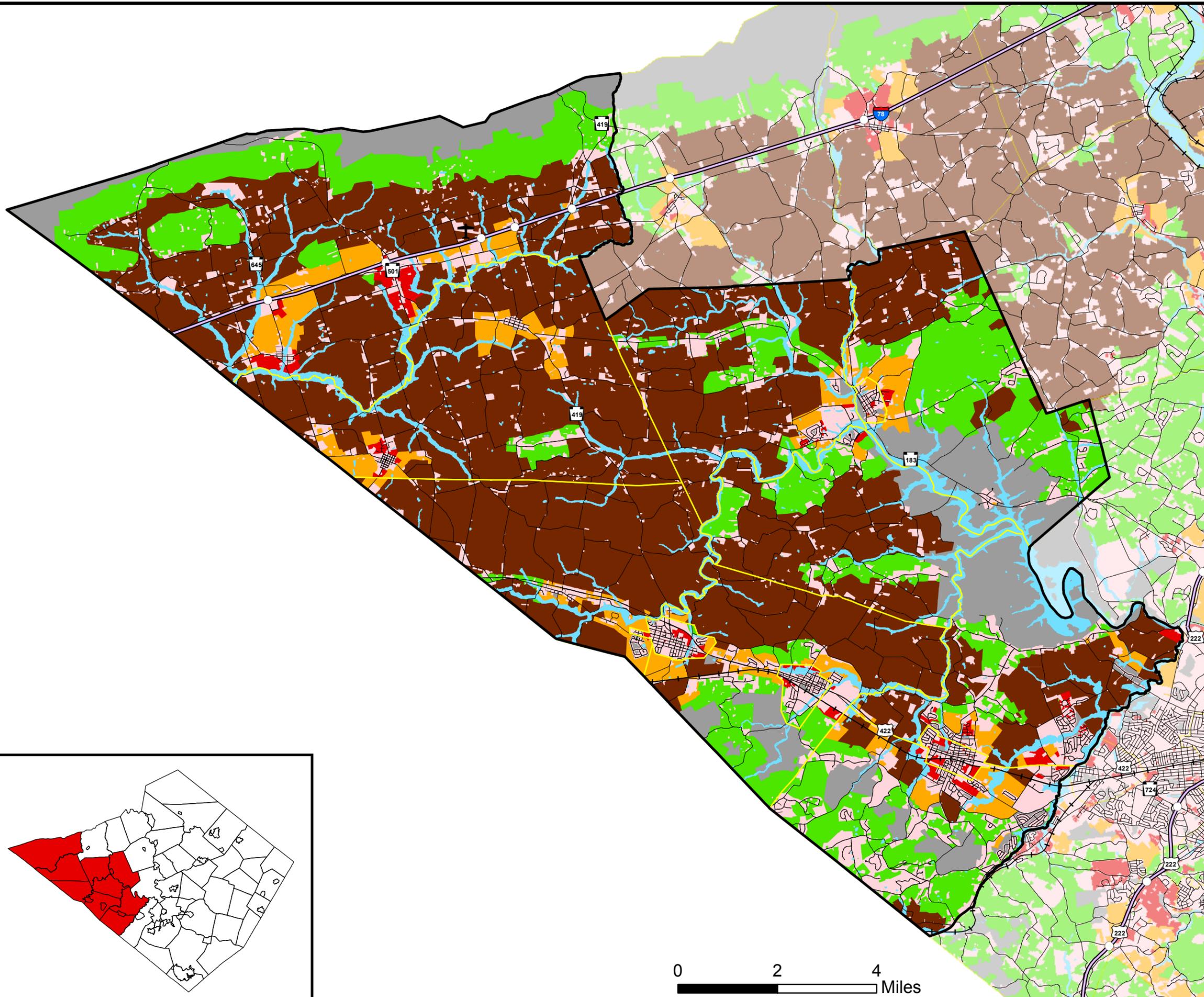
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- Existing Development
- Designated Growth
- Future Growth
- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Conservation
- Environmental Hazard
- Permanent Open Space and Rec.
- Transportation Network
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- Major Airport
- Other Airports

Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services, FEMA (Effective Date: July 3, 2012)

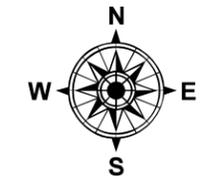
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Southern Highlands Region Future Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



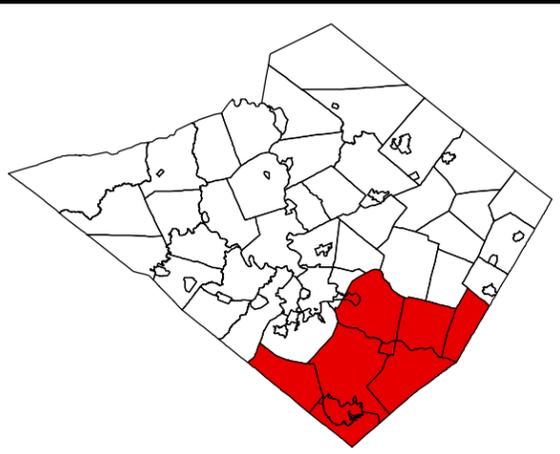
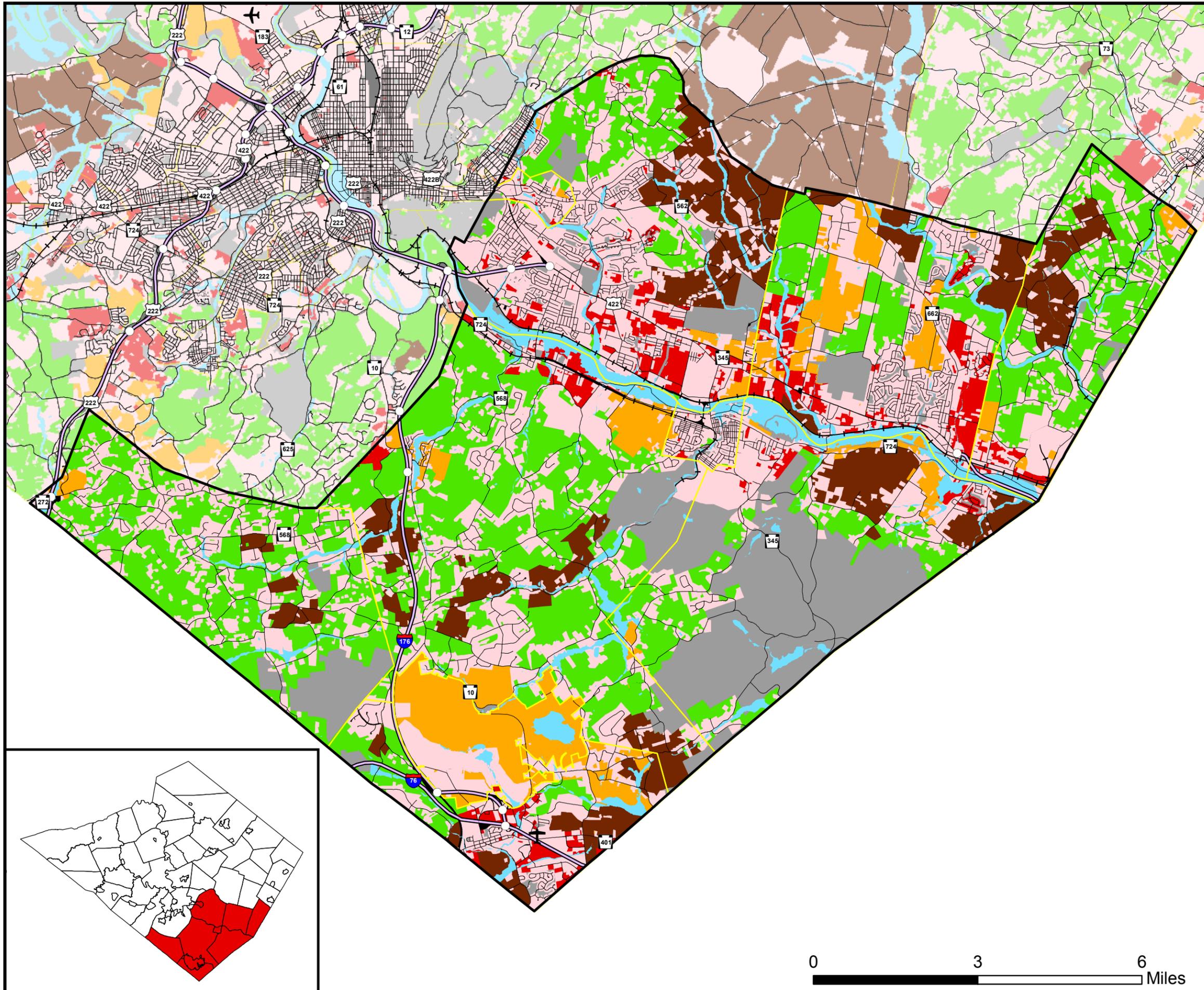
Legend

- Existing Development
- Designated Growth
- Future Growth
- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Conservation
- Environmental Hazard
- Permanent Open Space and Rec.
- Transportation Network
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- Major Airport
- Other Airports

Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services, FEMA (Effective Date: July 3, 2012)

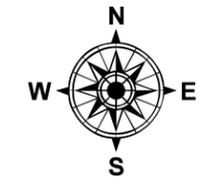
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Oley Hills Region Future Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



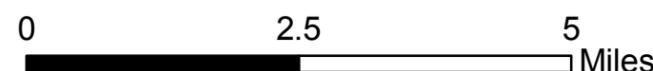
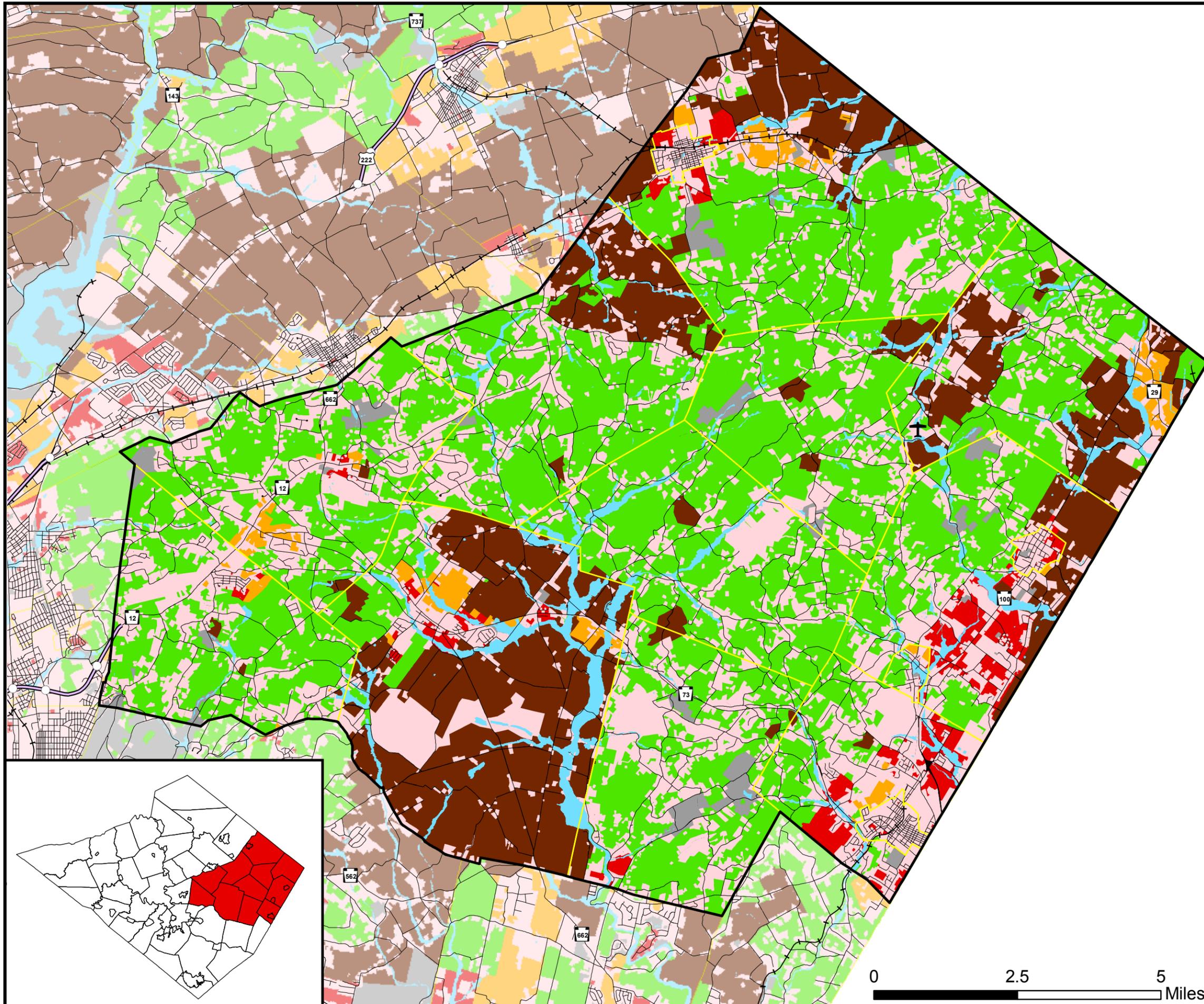
Legend

- Existing Development
- Designated Growth
- Future Growth
- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Conservation
- Environmental Hazard
- Permanent Open Space and Rec.
- Transportation Network
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- Major Airport
- Other Airports

Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services, FEMA (Effective Date: July 3, 2012)

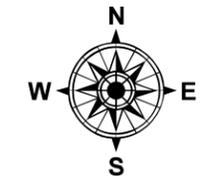
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Metro Region Future Land Use Berks County, Pennsylvania



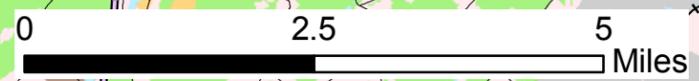
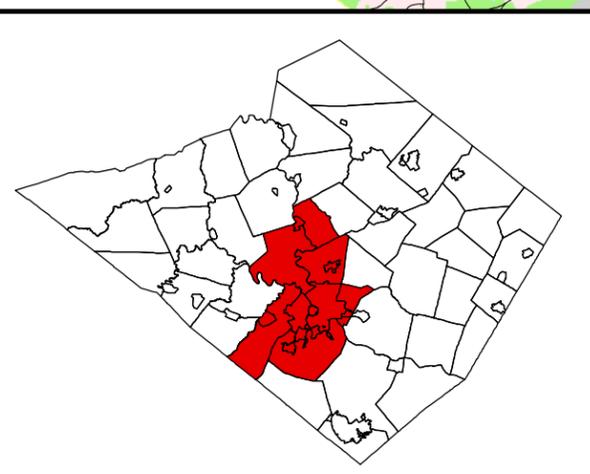
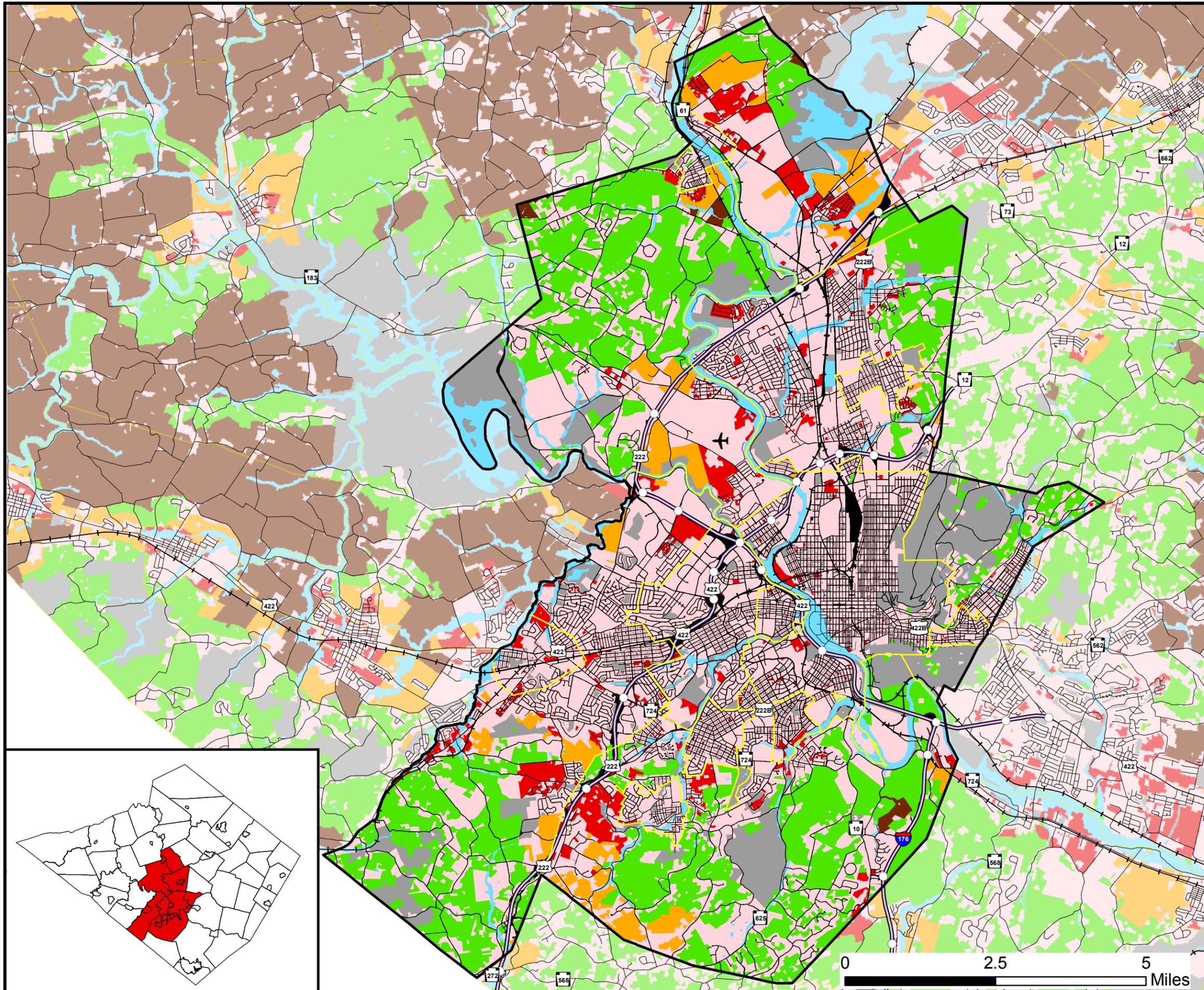
Legend

- Existing Development
- Designated Growth
- Future Growth
- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Conservation
- Environmental Hazard
- Permanent Open Space and Rec.
- Transportation Network
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Limited Access Highway
- Railroads
- Interchanges
- ✈ Major Airport
- ✈ Other Airports

Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County Department of Emergency Services, FEMA (Effective Date: July 3, 2012)

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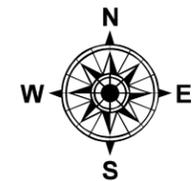
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Areas Suitable for Commercial / Industrial Growth

Berks County, Pennsylvania



Acreage of Suitable Areas

- 300.01 - 768.96 (10 areas)
- 150.01 - 300.00 (8 areas)
- 50.01 - 150.00 (29 areas)
- 5.01 - 50.00 (94 areas)
- 1.44 - 5.00 (12 areas)
- Redevelopment Areas
- Berks County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roads

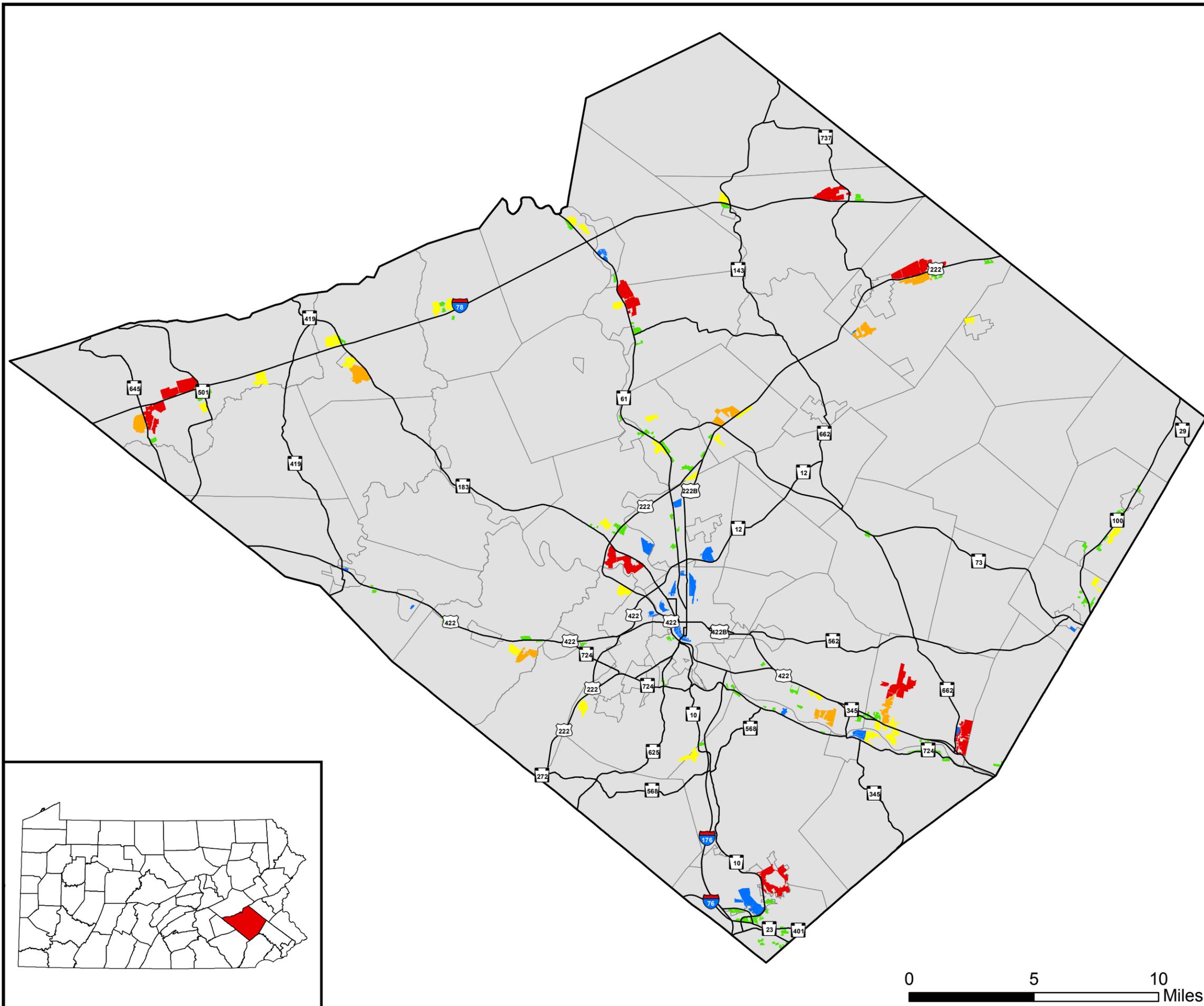
Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County
Department of Emergency Services

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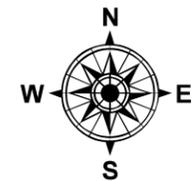
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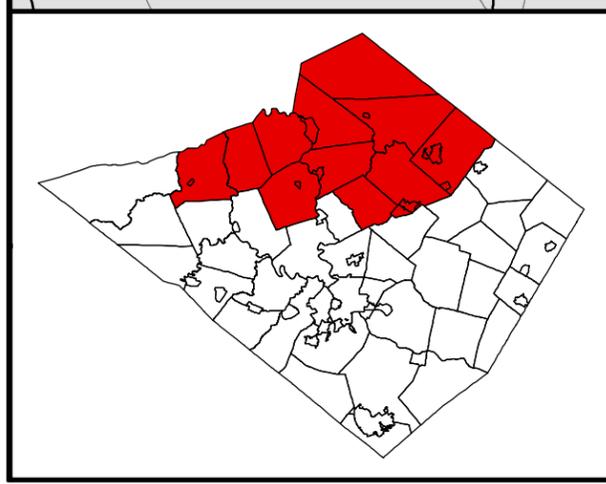
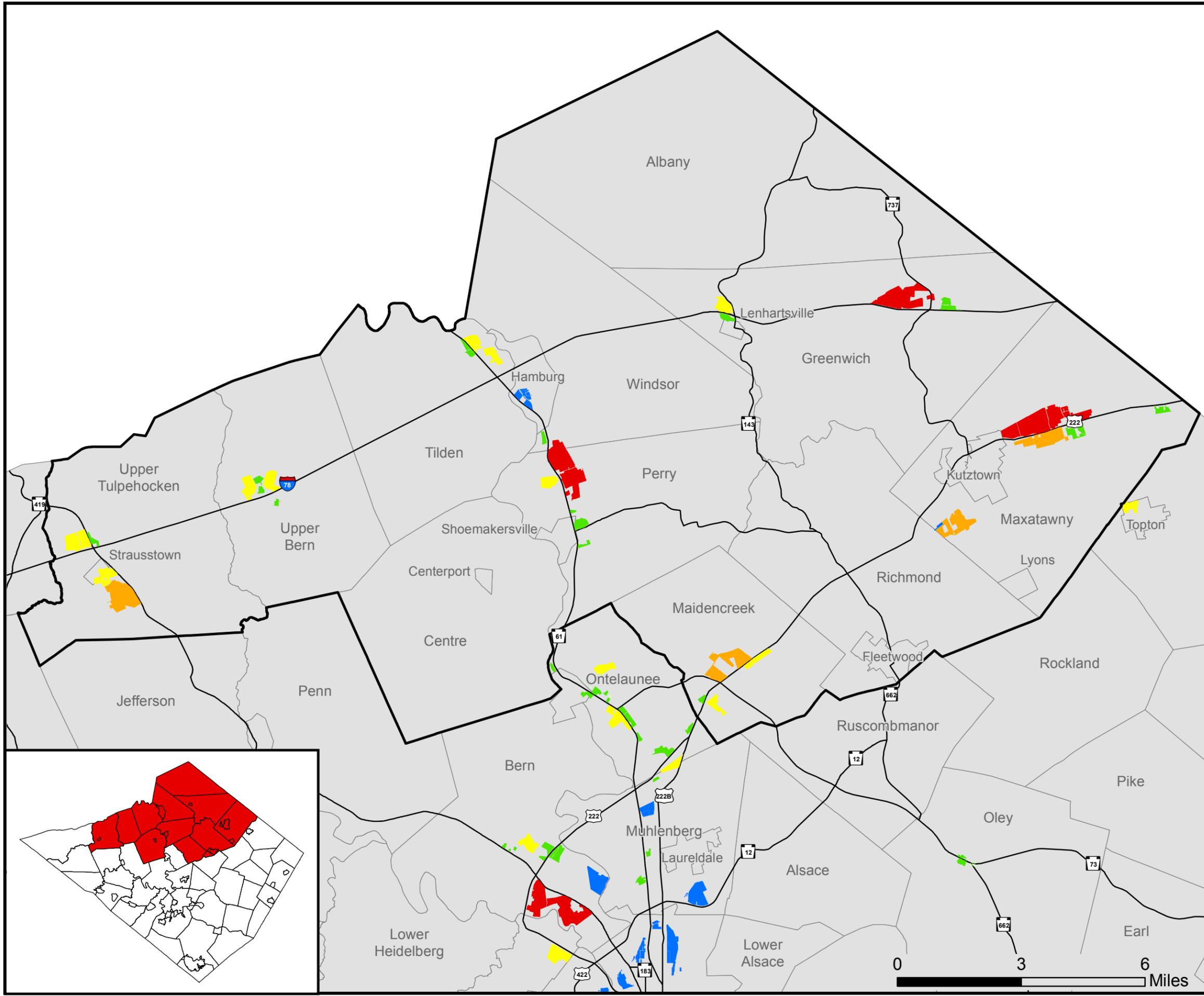
Hawk Mountain Region Areas Suitable for Commercial / Industrial Growth

Berks County, Pennsylvania



Acreage of Suitable Areas

- 300.01 - 768.96
- 150.01 - 300.00
- 50.01 - 150.00
- 5.01 - 50.00
- 1.44 - 5.00
- Redevelopment Areas
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roads



Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County Department of Emergency Services

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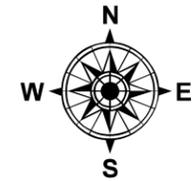
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Tulpehocken Region Areas Suitable for Commercial / Industrial Growth

Berks County, Pennsylvania



Acreage of Suitable Areas

- 300.01 - 768.96
- 150.01 - 300.00
- 50.01 - 150.00
- 5.01 - 50.00
- 1.44 - 5.00
- Redevelopment Areas
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roads

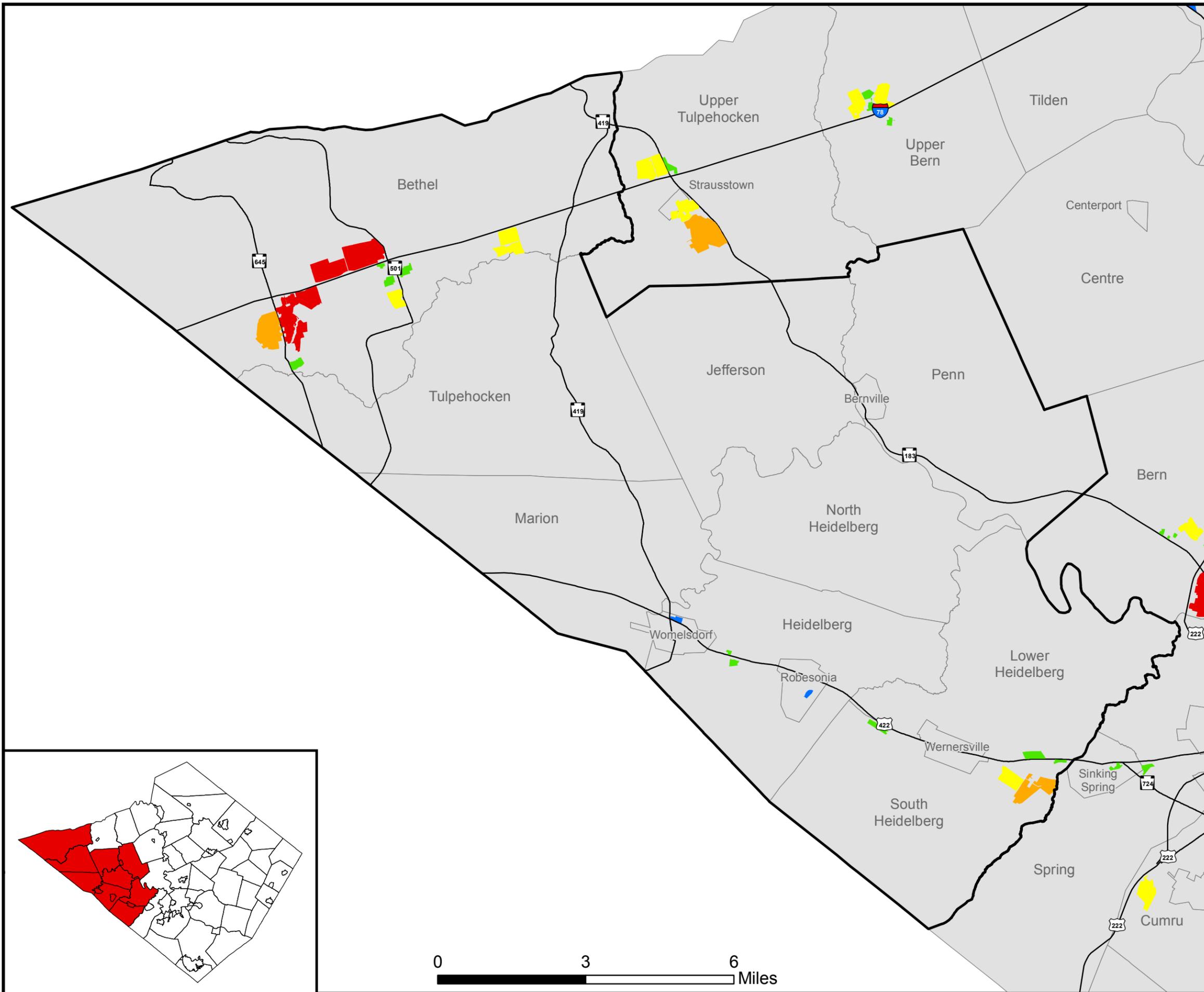
Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County
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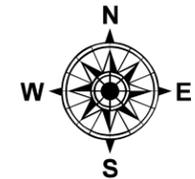
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Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update
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Southern Highlands Region Areas Suitable for Commercial / Industrial Growth

Berks County, Pennsylvania



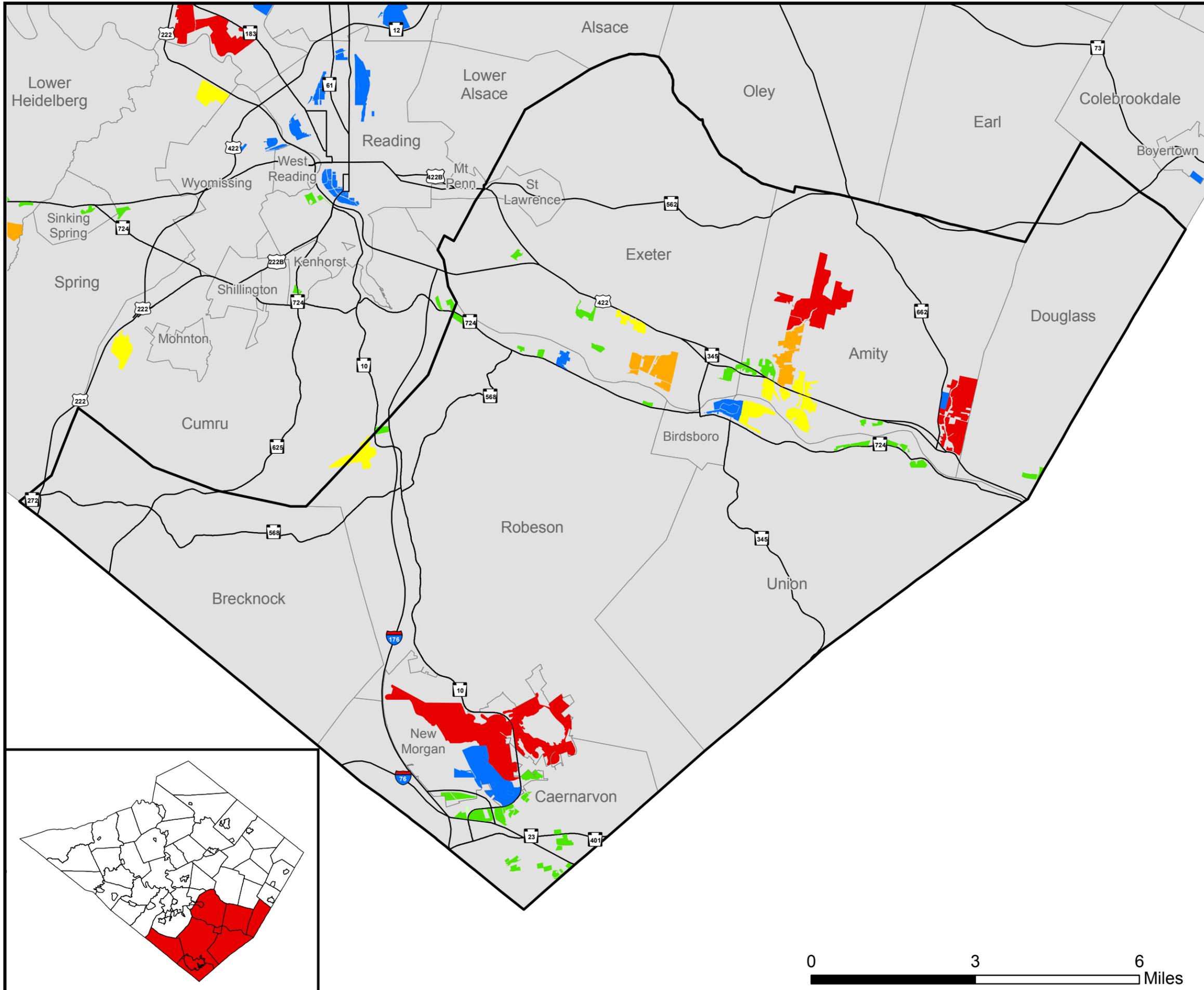
Acreage of Suitable Areas

- 300.01 - 768.96
- 150.01 - 300.00
- 50.01 - 150.00
- 5.01 - 50.00
- 1.44 - 5.00
- Redevelopment Areas
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roads

Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County
Department of Emergency Services

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

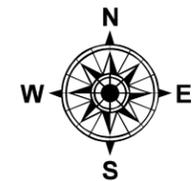
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Adopted: September 2013

Oley Hills Region Areas Suitable for Commercial / Industrial Growth

Berks County, Pennsylvania



Acreage of Suitable Areas

- 300.01 - 768.96
- 150.01 - 300.00
- 50.01 - 150.00
- 5.01 - 50.00
- 1.44 - 5.00
- Redevelopment Areas
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roads

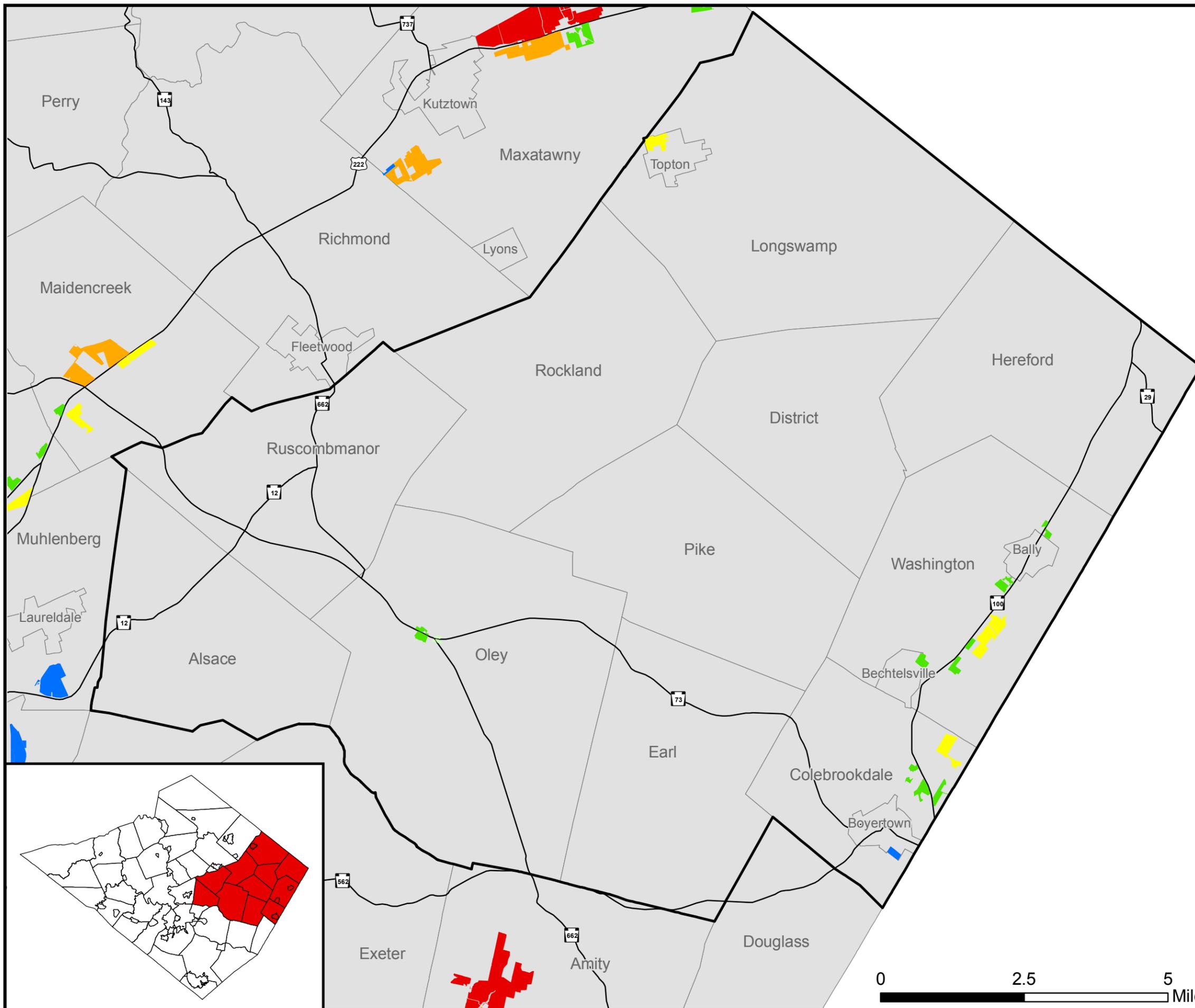
Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County
Department of Emergency Services

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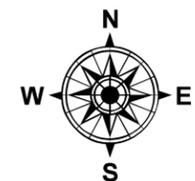
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Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update
Adopted: September 2013

Metro Region Areas Suitable for Commercial / Industrial Growth

Berks County, Pennsylvania



Acreage of Suitable Areas

- 300.01 - 768.96
- 150.01 - 300.00
- 50.01 - 150.00
- 5.01 - 50.00
- 1.44 - 5.00
- Redevelopment Areas
- Planning Region Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roads

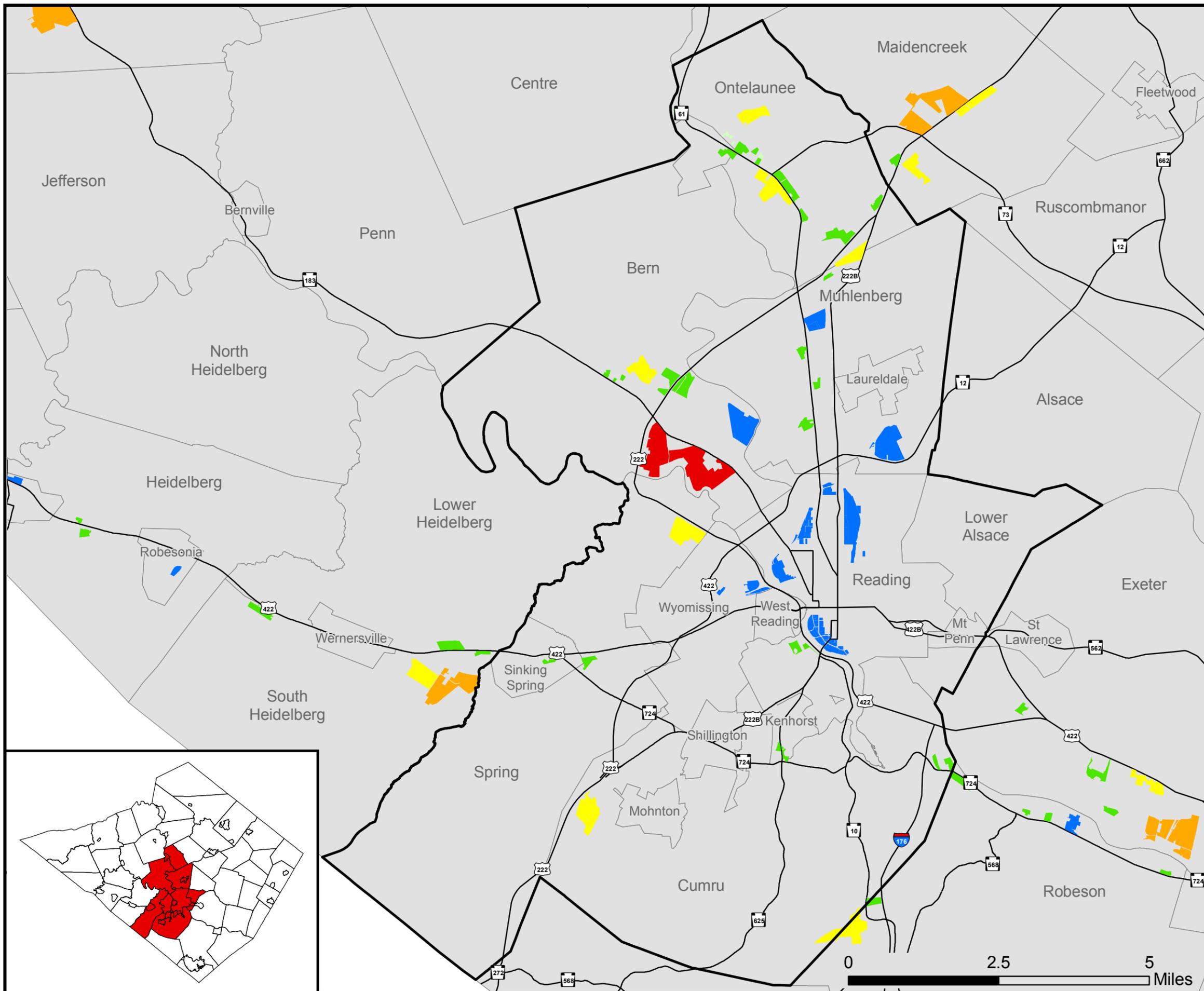
Source: Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County
Department of Emergency Services

Published by the Berks County Planning Commission

BAB 9/13



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Land Use Policies**Land Use Goal:**

To create and adhere to a logical, coordinated land use pattern that provides for a variety of appropriate types of development, while recognizing land and infrastructure capabilities in relation to natural features and environmental and physical factors.

a. Agricultural Preservation Areas**Goal:**

To preserve the agricultural land base, while promoting the agribusiness system and its long-term viability.

Policies:

- (1) The County will identify, maintain, and preserve the most viable agricultural land for agricultural use, and support agriculture as a primary land use and a valued element of the County's economy.
- (2) The County will continue to administer the Agricultural Conservation Easements (ACE) Program through its Agricultural Land Preservation Board. It will concentrate on purchasing easements of contiguous parcels of suitable farmland, giving priority to parcels located in Agricultural Preservation areas.
- (3) Agricultural Conservation Easements should not be purchased in growth areas.
- (4) The County will promote the Best Management Practices (BMP's), Conservation Plans, and nutrient management plans to promote good stewardship of the soil and water resources through the Berks County Conservation District, Berks Conservancy, Natural Resource Conservation Service, or other appropriate agency.
- (5) The County will give local municipalities assistance to encourage them to enact Effective Agricultural Zoning regulations in Agricultural Preservation areas.
- (6) The County will promote agricultural activities and agricultural businesses such as farm equipment sales and service, farm supply stores, and businesses which market or process farm products while maintaining prime agricultural soils.
- (7) The County will encourage its municipalities to provide for intensive animal operations and other intensive agricultural uses.
- (8) The County supports the establishment and continuance of adequate farm-related programs and organizations, including the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, County Conservation District, and Penn State Cooperative Extension in Berks County, Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, Berks County Conservancy, Berks County Farm Bureau, and Berks County Grange.
- (9) The County will strongly discourage construction of new local access roads through agricultural areas.
- (10) Agricultural Preservation areas should contain at least 500 acres of contiguous farmland, with the exception of Agricultural Easements, which do not have a minimum acreage requirement.
- (11) The County supports the use of natural buffers, such as stream corridors, woodland, and hedgerows to buffer residential development from agricultural uses.

b. Designated and Future Growth Areas**Goal:**

To direct smart, concentrated growth to appropriate areas.

Policies:

- (1) The County should support a land use pattern that allows a wide variety of interrelated suburban/urban land uses consistent with sound planning principles.
- (2) The County will encourage municipalities to enact land use regulations that promote smart growth principles, including higher density development, and Traditional Neighborhood Design.
- (3) The County supports a fiscally-efficient, and environmentally-sensible orderly expansion of infrastructure with respect to land capabilities, higher density zoning, and quality of life in Future Growth Areas.
- (4) The County should focus its most intensive population growth, employment, financial and infrastructure investments in the Existing Developed, Future and Designated Growth Areas. Development should be compatible with the character of the community.
- (5) The County will facilitate intermunicipal cooperation and coordination of planning activities.
- (6) The County should focus a portion of its funding for highway projects that add capacity, infrastructure expansion, and development in Designated Growth, Future Growth and Existing Developed Areas.
- (7) The County should enhance and diversify its economic base and provide maximum employment opportunities in these areas.
- (8) The County will take an active role in coordinating the review process for the above mentioned development types if it is determined that these developments have regional impacts on municipalities throughout the County.

c. Existing Developed Areas**Goal:**

To maintain and revitalize areas with established development through in-fill development and rehabilitation.

Policies:

- (1) The County should develop programs to strengthen the built environment as multi-purpose centers to maintain and restore them as attractive, efficient, and desirable places to live, work, and enjoy recreation.
- (2) The County should support efforts to revitalize existing developed areas that have changing functions or are currently under-utilized.
- (3) The County supports efforts to preserve historic districts, sites, and structures.
- (4) The County promotes in-fill development, compatible in scale, style, and character to the surrounding land uses and infrastructure capabilities.
- (5) The County encourages the acquisition and redevelopment of Brownfield Sites.
- (6) The County believes that our existing permitted quarries, with reasonable expansion, can provide the necessary quantity of standard materials to meet our construction needs during the term of this plan. Existing quarrying operations and any expansion of these facilities should comply with state statutes governing mineral extraction.

d. Permanent Open Space and Recreation**Goal:**

To preserve, protect, and create a diverse open space network and provide adequate recreational opportunities for County residents.

Policies:

- (1) The County should continue to support and direct open space preservation and recreation projects that are underway.
- (2) The County and its stakeholders should pursue the open space network of interconnecting greenways, trails, and parks, as recommended by the 2007 Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan.
- (3) The County should acquire open space for future parkland. Highest priority should be given to open space identified in the 2007 Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan that is vulnerable to development.
- (4) The County will use grant programs to plan and finance open space and recreation investments.
- (5) The County will support municipal and non-profit organizations in their efforts to obtain funding to maintain, acquire, expand, preserve and develop local open space and recreation resources.
- (6) The County will encourage municipalities to preserve open space through innovative subdivision and land development techniques.
- (7) The County will support improvement of park, recreation, and open space facilities to accommodate special needs populations.

e. Rural Conservation Areas**Goal:**

To use development techniques that will conserve natural resources while not conflicting with rural environments.

Policies:

- (1) The County will encourage municipalities to enact land use regulations that promote sensitive and flexible design principles and techniques allowing land to be developed efficiently with the least degree of environmental impact.
- (2) The County encourages the use of sensitive site design that preserves the natural hydrologic conditions including, but not limited to, the preservation of natural drainage features, the reduction of the amount of impervious surfaces and the implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP's).
- (3) The County will support expansion of public sewer and water in Rural Conservation Areas only to rectify public health problems, and without impacting the land use patterns of adjacent areas.
- (4) The County will support community or alternative technology for sewage facilities that are acceptable to the Commonwealth, in order to encourage innovative and affordable environmentally sensitive site designs.
- (5) The County will encourage agricultural uses as an appropriate land use in Rural Conservation Areas.

- (6) The County will support taxation and assessment policies that help preserve critical natural resource areas.
- (7) The County will continue to promote the wise management and use of our forest resources to ensure their long-term health and productivity, and encourage landowners of forested land to participate in the State’s Forestry Stewardship Program.
- (8) The County supports strict disturbance standards on slopes of 15% or greater, wetland fringe areas and large stands of woodland.

f. Environmental Hazard Areas

Goal:

To protect water resources and restore degraded hydrological systems.

Policies:

- (1) The County will strongly discourage development within floodplain areas.
- (2) The County will encourage municipalities to establish a floodplain management program with measures that rectify existing problems, prevent new problems from occurring, and enact floodplain management regulations that exceed the minimum state and federal requirements.
- (3) The County will support the protection of wetlands and wetland fringe areas from encroachment and unregulated development activities.
- (4) The County will support the enactment of riparian buffer zone requirements in zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- (5) The County will support protecting the character of streams and watersheds that have High Quality and Exceptional Value designations.
- (6) The County will support the protection and preservation of the quality of stream environments associated with designated Scenic Rivers.
- (7) The County encourages the use of Erosion and Sediment Control Programs by requiring erosion and sediment plan approval by the County Conservation District and providing for inspection, compliance and enforcement measures.
- (8) The County will support the preparation of watershed protection plans and environmental assessments by qualified organizations and agencies.
- (9) The County will prepare Stormwater Management Plans and updates consistent with Pennsylvania Act 167 for the state designated watersheds in Berks County as state funding becomes available.
- (10) The County will encourage municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances to safeguard wellhead protection areas.
- (11) The County will promote water conservation measures to ensure the future availability of water resources, and encourage green building techniques.
- (12) The County will assist in planning and coordinating highway projects as well as other necessary infrastructure improvements that minimize the impact on Environmental Hazard Areas.
- (13) The County supports stream valley floodplains as trail connector elements that link major open spaces and parks, while concurrently acting as open spaces and/or buffers themselves.
- (14) The County will support the relocation and/or acquisition of known flood-prone structures with repetitive losses to reduce hazard losses within floodplains.