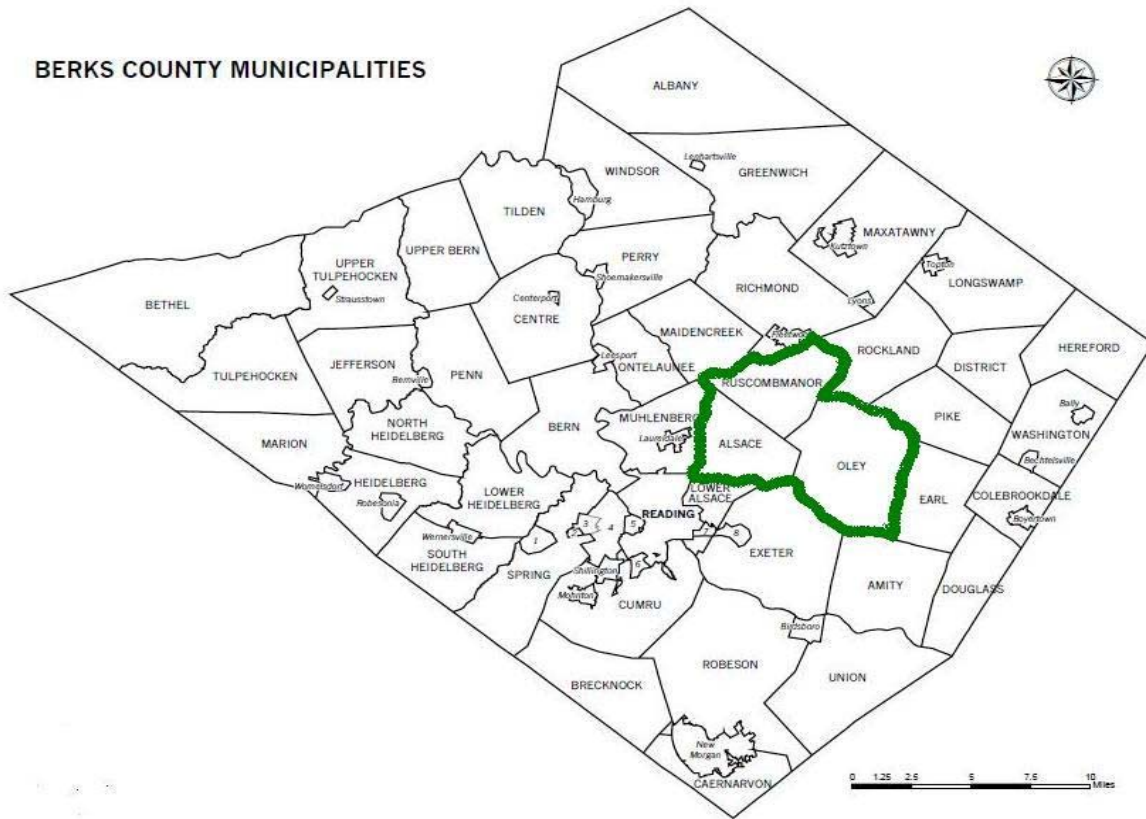


Chapter 2 Regional Setting



Oley, Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships are located in southeastern Pennsylvania to the east of Reading, in Berks County, approximately 60 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Berks County is 864 square miles and contains 44 townships, 31 boroughs, and the County Seat, Reading. Berks County was incorporated in 1752 from parts of Philadelphia, Chester, and Lancaster Counties, and was reshaped in 1772 with the formation of Northumberland County and again in 1811 with the formation of Schuylkill County.

Berks County and Reading's early growth was directly related to the Schuylkill River and Union and Schuylkill Canal systems which became a transportation corridor for agricultural products and anthracite coal from Schuylkill County and central Pennsylvania. Canal systems were replaced by Railroads as a more efficient way to transport products and became a catalyst for growth in Berks County.

Growth trends in Berks County suggest that the County will continue at a moderate rate. The current trend is outward growth from the City of Reading into surrounding

municipalities. The goal of the County is to promote a more consolidated development pattern instead of the scattered pattern currently occurring. New growth is encouraged to occur within natural service areas of existing and proposed public water and sewer systems, where higher densities and greater variety can be provided.

Regional growth pressures are affecting the Region from several directions. From the east, suburbanization is spreading through Montgomery County and Chester County from Philadelphia along the Schuylkill River corridor. This trend has accelerated since the Schuylkill Expressway extension was completed in the early 1980's. From the northeast, Berks County is affected by major growth in the Lehigh Valley and road improvements to PA Route 222 and PA Route 100.

Ruscombmanor is bisected by two major state roadways, PA Route 662 and PA Route 2026, which intersect in Pricetown. PA Route 12, also known as Pricetown Road, connects Pricetown and Fleetwood with Reading and is the major road through Alsace. Oley is traversed by both PA Route 662 and PA Route 73, which join to form a bypass around Oley Village. Heading eastward, these two state highways then separate with {A Route 73 heading directly east to Boyertown (on the Berks/Montgomery County line) and PA Route 662 traveling southeast to U.S. 422 near Pottstown.

Oley and Alsace are being affected by Reading area development from both the west and south. Exeter and Muhlenberg are two populous, suburban townships that share boundaries with both the City of Reading and the Oley/Alsace area. Both Exeter and Muhlenberg have experienced rapid residential growth in recent years.

Need for Regional Comprehensive Planning in the Oley/Alsace/Ruscombmanor Region

As development continues in the Region, the quality of life is threatened. The major concern of this Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and enhance the quality of life for the Region's residents. While threats to the Region present challenges, they also present opportunities for coordinated action to address the challenges:

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is not to stop development, but to see that it gets done smartly, with respect to the Region's resources, and in designated growth areas rather than areas which are critical to maintaining the Region's character and quality of life.

Adjacent Planning

The Region is bordered by the Townships of Maiden creek, Richmond, Rockland, Pike, Earl, Amity, Exeter, Lower Alsace, Muhlenberg and Fleetwood Borough. The following is a brief summary of the recommendations of the comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances of adjacent municipalities to the Joint Regional Comprehensive Plan.

The existing and proposed development of the Joint Regional Comprehensive Plan for Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships is generally consistent with the plans and objectives of the County Comprehensive Plan, Berks Vision 2020.

Maiden creek Township

Maiden creek Township is 14.8 square miles and is located northwest of the Region bordering on Ruscombmanor Township. The population is 6,553 people as of the 2000 U.S. Census.

The area adjacent to Ruscombmanor Township is zoned Agriculture, Residential, and a small area of Commercial. The Residential areas in Maiden creek Township are adjacent to Residential areas in Ruscombmanor; however, the western portion of Ruscombmanor is zoned LI-2 (Light Industrial) and is adjacent to Agriculture. Buffering should be used to provide a separation between these two uses. These areas are generally consistent with each other.

Fleetwood Borough

Fleetwood Borough is north of the Region bordering Ruscombmanor Township. Fleetwood has a population of 4,018 as of the 2000 U.S. Census and is 1.0 square mile.

Fleetwood land use is consistent with Ruscombmanor. The adjacent land use is residential for both municipalities.

Richmond Township

Richmond Township borders a small portion of Ruscombmanor on the northeast. The Township is 23.7 square miles with a population of 3,500. The adjacent land uses are zoned residential and therefore achieve consistency.

Rockland Township

Rockland Township borders Ruscombmanor and Oley on their east side. The Township has a population of 3,765 and is 17.1 square miles.

The adjacent areas between Rockland and Ruscombmanor are consistent. Residential areas are next to each other and Agricultural Preservation areas are next to Rural Conservation.

Pike Township

Pike Township is 13.9 square miles on the eastern border of Oley Township. The population is 1,677.

Low density residential areas in Pike Township are adjacent to Agricultural Preservation in Oley Township. There is a small area of high density residential next to Agricultural Preservation. A buffer area should be used to offset the uses.

Earl Township

Earl Township borders Oley on the southeastern border. It is 13.9 square miles and the population is 3,050. The land use in the adjacent areas are Woodland Agricultural District next to effective agriculture in Oley; highway residential next to Oley residential; Municipal Waste Landfill next to effective agriculture with buffering in place. These areas are generally consistent.

Amity Township

Amity Township is located at the southwestern corner of Oley Township. It is 18.4 square miles with a population of 8,867.

The adjacent planning is consistent with Oley. Agricultural Preservation and Rural land are the designations in Oley which border Agricultural Preservation and Rural Preservation in Amity.

Exeter Township

Exeter is a Township bordering both Alsace and Oley Townships on the southeastern and eastern perimeter. Exeter is 24.6 square miles with a population of 25,000.

Exeter Township is generally consistent with the adjacent lands of Oley Township. Agricultural Preservation and Rural Preservation in Exeter are consistent with Agricultural Preservation and Rural land in Oley. Adjacent land in Alsace is zoned as Rural Conservation, Commercial and Woodland Conservation while Exeter is zoned as Rural Conservation and Low Density Residential. Buffering should be used for any new commercial development in Alsace Township to offset the lack of consistency. All other bordering uses are consistent.

Lower Alsace Township

Lower Alsace Township is 4.7 square miles and has a population of 4,473 persons as of the 2000 U.S. Census.

The adjacent planning with Alsace Township is generally consistent with Residential zones on each border.

Muhlenberg Township

Muhlenberg is a fairly populated area adjacent to Alsace Township. The population as of the 2000 Census was 16,305 persons. The land area was 12 square miles, therefore the population density was 1357 persons per square mile.

The adjacent areas between Alsace and Muhlenberg Townships are generally consistent. The southeast corridor has some areas of conflict with existing uses. Commercial Areas in Alsace Township border High Density Residential in Muhlenberg and the Commercial area in Muhlenberg is adjacent to Low Density Residential in Alsace. These areas should be monitored to ensure that when an opportunity to achieve consistency presents itself that a change is made or a buffer is put in place to offset the contrasting uses.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and Multimunicipal Planning

Objectives:

Intergovernmental cooperation is encouraged in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- To provide for development that is compatible with surrounding land uses and that will complement existing land development with a balance of commercial, industrial and residential uses.
- To protect and maintain the separate identity of Pennsylvania's communities and to prevent the unnecessary conversion of valuable and limited agricultural land.
- To encourage cooperation and coordinated planning among adjoining municipalities so that each municipality accommodates its share of the multimunicipal growth burden and does not induce unnecessary or premature development of rural lands.
- To minimize disruption of the economy and environment of existing communities.

- To complement the economic and transportation needs of the region and this Commonwealth.
- To provide for the continuation of historic community patterns.
- To provide for coordinated highways, public services and development.
- To ensure that new public water and wastewater treatment systems are constructed in areas that will result in the efficient utilization of existing systems, prior to the development and construction of new systems.
- To ensure that new or major extension of existing public water and wastewater treatment systems are constructed only in those areas within which anticipated growth and development can adequately be sustained within the financial and environmental resources of the area.
- To identify those areas where growth and development will occur so that a full range of public infrastructure services including sewer, water, highways, police and fire protection, public schools, parks, open space and other services can be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate the growth that occurs.
- To encourage innovations in residential, commercial and industrial development to meet growing population demands by an increased variety in type, design and layout of structures and by the conservation and more efficient use of open space ancillary to such structures.
- To facilitate the development of affordable and other types of housing in numbers consistent with the need for such housing as shown by existing and projected population and employment data for the region.

Governing bodies of municipalities are authorized to enter into intergovernmental cooperative agreements for the purpose of developing, adopting and implementing a comprehensive plan. Such agreements may also be entered into between and among counties and municipalities for areas that include municipalities in more than one county, and between and among counties, municipalities, authorities and special districts providing water and sewer facilities, transportation planning or other services within the area of a plan and with the opportunity for the active participation of State agencies and school districts.

Contents: The multimunicipal plan is to include all required elements for comprehensive plans specified in the MPC. The plan may:

1. Designate growth areas where:
 - a. Orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area within the next 20 years is planned for residential and mixed use densities of one unit or more per acre.
 - b. Commercial, industrial and institutional uses to provide for the economic and employment needs of the area and to insure that the area has an adequate tax base are planned for.
 - c. Services to serve such development are provided or planned for.
2. Designate potential future growth areas where future development is planned for densities to accompany the orderly extension and provision of services.
3. Designate rural resource areas, if applicable, where:
 - a. Rural resource uses are planned for.
 - b. Development at densities that is compatible with rural resource uses are or may be permitted.
 - c. Infrastructure extensions or improvements are not intended to be publicly financed by municipalities except in villages, unless the participating or affected municipalities agree that such service should be provided to an area for health or safety reasons or to accomplish one or more of the purposes set forth above.
4. Plan for the accommodation of all categories of uses within the area of the plan, provided, however, that all uses need not be provided in every municipality, but shall be planned and provided for within a reasonable geographic area of the plan.
5. Plan for developments of area wide significance and impact.
6. Plan for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic resources within the area of the plan.

Implementation Agreements:

In order to implement multimunicipal comprehensive plans, counties and municipalities shall have authority to enter into intergovernmental cooperative agreements.

Cooperative implementation agreements between a county and one or more municipalities shall:

- (1) Establish the process that the participating municipalities will use to achieve general consistency between the county or multimunicipal comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development and capital improvement plans within participating municipalities, including adoption of conforming ordinances by participating municipalities within two years and a mechanism for resolving disputes over the interpretation of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan and the consistency of implementing plans and ordinances.
- (2) Establish a process for review and approval of developments of regional significance and impact that are proposed within any participating municipality. Subdivision and land development approval powers under this act shall only be exercised by the municipality in which the property where the approval is sought. Under no circumstances shall a subdivision or land development applicant be required to undergo more than one approval process.
- (3) Establish the role and responsibilities of participating municipalities with respect to implementation of the plan, including the provision of public infrastructure services within participating municipalities, the provision of affordable housing, and purchase of real property, including rights-of-way and easements.
- (4) Require a yearly report by participating municipalities to the county planning agency and by the county planning agency to the participating municipalities concerning activities carried out pursuant to the agreement during the previous year. Such reports shall include summaries of public infrastructure needs in growth areas and progress toward meeting those needs through capital improvement plans and implementing actions, and reports on development applications and dispositions for residential, commercial, and industrial development in each participating municipality for the purpose of evaluating the extent of provision for all categories of use and housing for all income levels within the region of the plan.
- (5) Describe any other duties and responsibilities as may be agreed upon by the parties.

Cooperative implementation agreements may designate growth areas, future growth areas and rural resource areas within the plan. The agreement shall also provide a process for amending the multimunicipal comprehensive plan and redefining the designated growth area, future growth area and rural resource area within the plan.

Legal Effect:

Where municipalities have adopted a county plan or a multimunicipal plan is adopted under this article and the participating municipalities have conformed their local plans and ordinances to the county or multimunicipal plan by implementing cooperative agreements and adopting appropriate resolutions and ordinances, the following shall apply:

1. Where municipalities have adopted a multimunicipal comprehensive plan pursuant to Article XI but have not adopted a joint municipal ordinance pursuant to Article VIII-A and all municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan have adopted and are administering zoning ordinances generally consistent with the provisions of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan, and a challenge is brought to the validity of a zoning ordinance of a participating municipality involving a proposed use, then the zoning hearing board or governing body, as the case may be, shall consider the availability of uses under zoning ordinances within the municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan within a reasonable geographic area and shall not limit its consideration to the application of the zoning ordinance on the municipality whose zoning ordinance is being challenged.
2. Where municipalities have adopted a joint municipal comprehensive plan and enacted a zoning ordinance or ordinances consistent with the joint municipal comprehensive plan within a region pursuant to Articles VIII-A and XI, the court, when determining the validity of a challenge to such a municipality's zoning ordinance, shall consider the zoning ordinance or ordinances as they apply to the entire region and shall not limit its consideration to the application of the zoning ordinance within the boundaries of the respective municipalities.
3. Where municipalities have adopted a multimunicipal comprehensive plan pursuant to Article XI but have not adopted a joint municipal ordinance pursuant to Article VIII-A and all municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan have adopted and are administering zoning ordinances generally consistent with the provisions of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan, and a challenge is brought to the validity of a zoning ordinance of a participating municipality involving a proposed use, then the court shall consider the availability of uses under zoning ordinances within the municipalities participating in the multimunicipal comprehensive plan within a reasonable geographic area and shall not limit its consideration to the application of the zoning ordinance on the municipality whose zoning ordinance is being challenged.

4. State agencies shall consider and may rely upon comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances when reviewing applications for the funding or permitting of infrastructure or facilities.
5. State agencies shall consider and may give priority consideration to applications for financial or technical assistance for projects consistent with the county or multimunicipal plan.

Participating municipalities that have entered into implementation agreements to carry out a county or multimunicipal plan as described in this article shall have the following additional powers:

1. To provide by cooperative agreement for the sharing of tax revenues and fees by municipalities within the region of the plan.
2. To adopt a transfer of development rights program by adoption of an ordinance applicable to the region of the plan so as to enable development rights to be transferred from rural resource areas in any municipality within the plan to designated growth areas in any municipality within the plan.

Specific Plans:

Participating municipalities shall have authority to adopt a specific plan for the systematic implementation of a county or multimunicipal comprehensive plan for any nonresidential part of the area covered by the plan. Such specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams and implementing ordinances which specify all of the following in detail:

1. The distribution, location, extent of area and standards for land uses and facilities, including design of sewage, water, drainage and other essential facilities needed to support the land uses.
2. The location, classification and design of all transportation facilities, including, but not limited to, streets and roads needed to serve the land uses described in the specific plan.
3. Standards for population density, land coverage, building intensity and supporting services, including utilities.
4. Standards for the preservation, conservation, development and use of natural resources, including the protection of significant open spaces, resource lands and agricultural lands within or adjacent to the area covered by the specific plan.

5. A program of implementation including regulations, financing of the capital improvements and provisions for repealing or amending the specific plan. Regulations may include zoning, storm water, subdivision and land development, highway access and any other provisions for which municipalities are authorized by law to enact. The regulations may be amended into the county or municipal ordinances or adopted as separate ordinances. If enacted as separate ordinances for the area covered by the specific plan, the ordinances shall repeal and replace any county or municipal ordinances in effect within the area covered by the specific plan and ordinances shall conform to the provisions of the specific plan.

Regional Quick Facts:

	Oley	Alsace	Ruscombmanor
Settled	1700	1735	1749
Incorporation Date	September 1, 1740	March 4, 1744 or 1745	1752 or 1759
Land Area	24.2 Square miles	12.2 Square miles	13.9 Square miles
Population (2000)	3,583	3,689	3,776
Government	3 member Board of Supervisors	3 member Board of Supervisors	3 member Board of Supervisors
Senatorial District	11 th District	11 th District	11 th District
Legislative District	130 th	126 th	130 th
U.S. House of Representatives Congressional District	17 th	17 th	17 th
Municipal Sewer Service	Oley TWP Municipal Authority PO Box 19, Oley, PA 19547-0019 610-987-3423	A small portion is served by Muhlenberg Township Municipal Authority; an area will be served by Alsace Municipal Authority	N/A Small portion served by Fleetwood Borough Authority and Maiden Creek Township.
Non-Municipal Sewer Service	On-lot septic	On-lot septic; 5-points served by private system in Exeter	On-lot septic
Municipal Water	Oley TWP Municipal Authority PO Box 19, Oley, PA 19547-0019 610-987-3423	A small portion is served by Muhlenberg Township Municipal Authority; an area will be served by Alsace Township	Fleetwood Borough Authority 110 West Arch St, Suite 104, Fleetwood, PA 19522 610-944-8220 (serves a small portion) Pennsylvania American Water also serves a small area
Non-Municipal Water	Wells	Wells	Wells
Education	Oley Valley School District		
	(1) Elementary School K-5		
	(1) Middle School 6-8		
	(1) High School 9-12		
Township Offices:	Oley Township	Alsace Township	Ruscombmanor Township
	1 Rose Virginia Rd.	65 Woodside Ave	204 Oak Lane
	Oley, PA 19547	Temple, PA 19560	Fleetwood, PA 19522
	Ph: 610-987-3423	Ph: 610-929-5324	Ph: 610-944-7242
	Fax: 610-987-9010	Fax: 610-921-0977	Fax: 610-944-7265
	Email: oleytownship@hotmail.com	Email: AlsaceTwp@comcast.net	Email: ruscotwp@ptdprolog.net