

TRENDS AND ISSUES

Introduction

Before realistic plans can be made for future development, it is essential to understand the Hereford-Washington community as it is today, what trends have defined its existing condition, and what forces are likely to shape its future. This chapter takes a comprehensive look at the trends and issues surrounding the community's natural, social, and functional characteristics, and examines their potential impact on its future sustainability.

Population Trends and Issues

Population statistics were collected from the 2010 Census as well as the 2010-2014 American Community Survey and used to characterize Hereford-Washington in terms of number of residents, distribution of age groups, education completion, income and economic condition, and household composition.

The population in the Hereford-Washington Township planning region is growing and losing population with the greatest population growth by number and rate occurring in Washington Township during the 2000 to 2010 period. In contrast, Hereford Township lost 70 residents (-2.3 percent). Washington Township grew by 731 residents (23.5 percent).

Population Growth Trends, 2000 - 2014							
Municipality	2000	2010	2014	2000-2010 # Change	2000-2010 % Change	2010-2014 # Change	2010-2014 % Change
Hereford Township	3,013	2,943	2,923	-70	-2.3%	-20	-0.7%
Washington Township	3,109	3,840	3,962	731	23.5%	122	3.2%
Colebrookdale Township	5,469	5,080	5,074	-389	-7.1%	-6	-0.1%
District Township	1,449	1,387	1,404	-62	-4.3%	17	1.2%
Douglass Township (Mont. Co.)	9,104	10,195	10,401	1,091	12.0%	206	2.0%
Longswamp Township	5,387	5,682	5,684	295	5.5%	2	0.0%
Lower Macungie Township	19,220	30,633	31,639	11,413	59.4%	1,006	3.3%
Lower Milford Township	3,617	3,775	3,839	158	4.4%	64	1.7%
Pike Township	1,359	1,724	1,746	365	26.9%	22	1.3%
Upper Hanover Township	4,885	6,464	7,124	1,579	32.3%	660	10.2%
Upper Milford Township	6,889	7,292	7,522	403	5.8%	230	3.2%
Berks County	373,638	411,905	413,016	38,267	10.2%	1,111	0.3%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,702,379	12,758,729	421,325	3.4%	56,350	0.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2000-2010 and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Hereford-Washington is still growing faster than the state. While Hereford-Washington Township's growth rates (-2.3 and 23.5 percent, respectively) were relatively comparable to the growth/loss rates enumerated for neighboring townships over the 2000 and 2010 Census period, jointly, even with Hereford Township losing population between 2000 and 2010, they far exceeded the growth rate experienced by Pennsylvania (3.4 percent). These trends are indicative of the region's location along the State Route 100 (SR 100) corridor and accessibility to the greater Allentown, Philadelphia and Reading areas. Transportation access, coupled with the planning area's rural environment, make the Hereford-Washington Township region an attractive place to live.

The population in the Hereford-Washington Township planning region is projected to increase. By the year 2040, Washington Township is expected to increase its population by 415 persons to 4,255, which equals a 10.8 percent growth rate from 2010 population. By the year 2040, Hereford's total population is also projected

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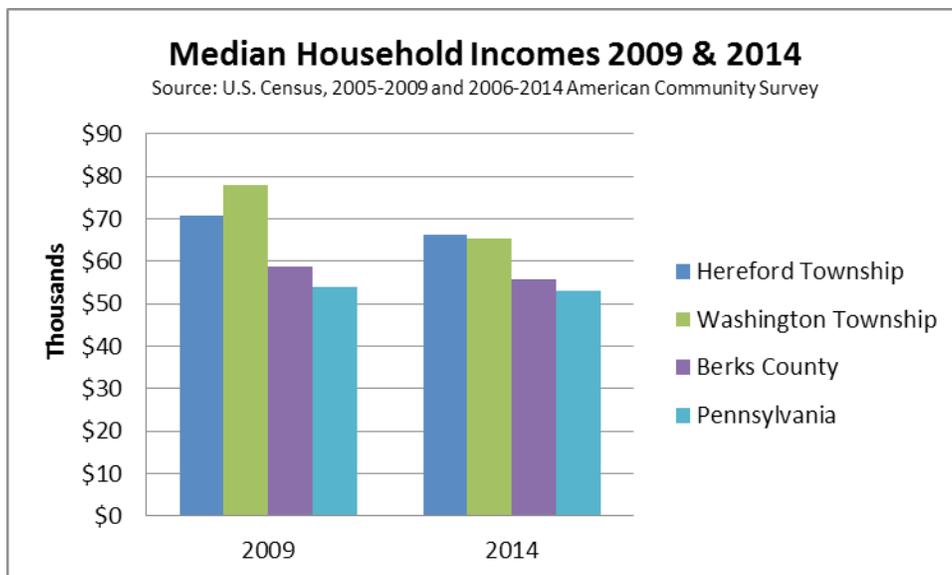
to increase by 10.8 percent, or by 318 persons to 3,261.

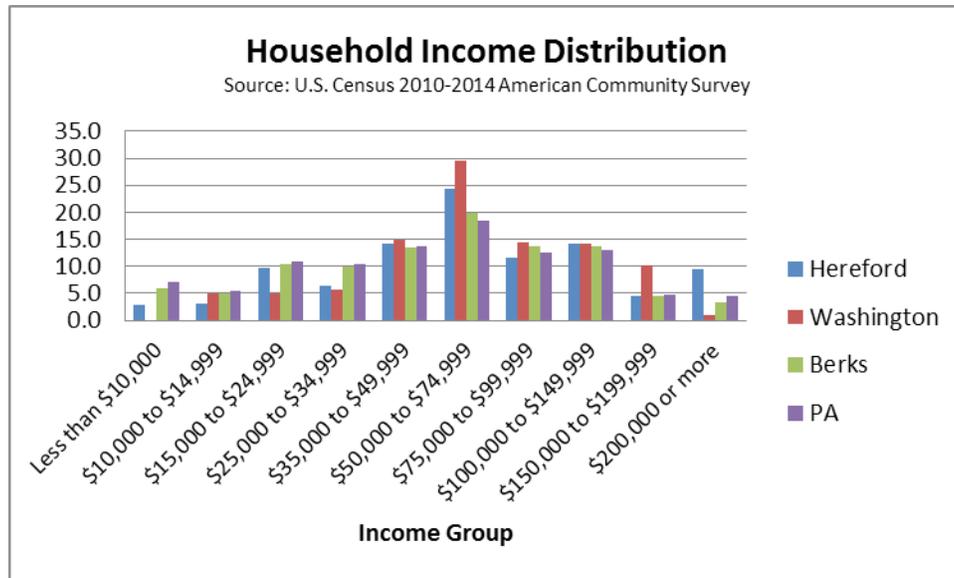
Hereford-Washington Townships' population is aging. Hereford Township has one of the oldest populations in Berks County, with a median age of 49. It has aged significantly from a median age of 32.8 in 1990 and 38.2 in 2000. Washington Township also trends older than Berks County as a whole with a median age of 43. Washington has aged slower than Hereford from a median age of 33.6 in 1990 and 38.2 in 2000.

People are “here” to stay in Hereford Township. Hereford Township has much higher concentrations of residents in the 40+ age group than Berks County and the State. When coupled with the housing tenure data in the Demographics, Housing and Economy section the concentrations of the “older” age groups suggests that Hereford Township residents continue to reside in the Township after raising families and entering retirement.

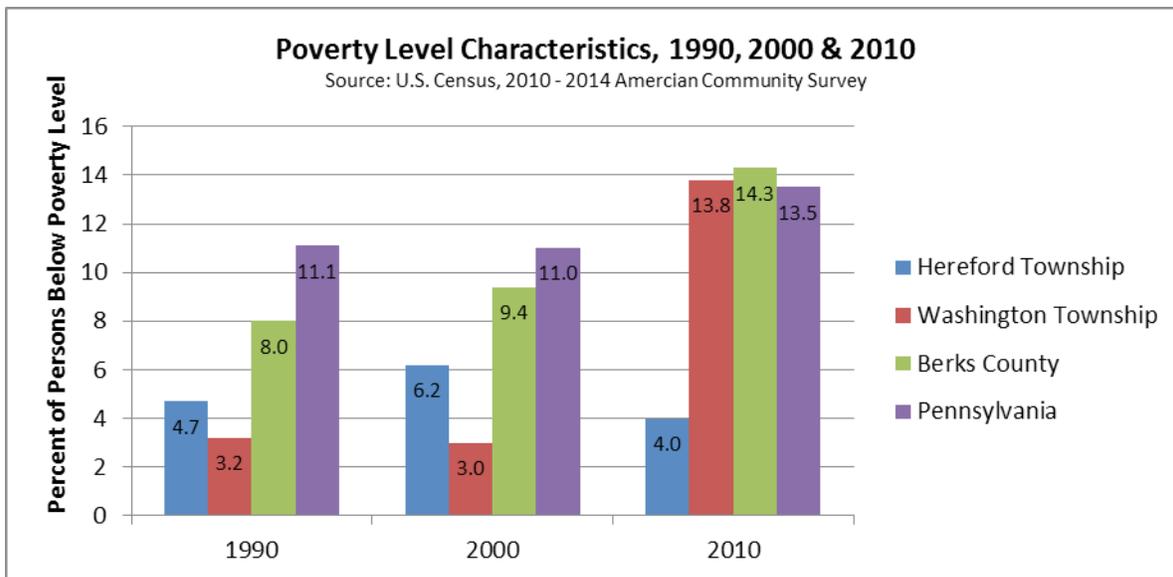
Washington Township is attractive to young families. The Township has a high concentration of young families with children below the age of ten than Berks County and the State. This appears to be driven by a higher concentration of people in the 25-29 age group.

Both Townships have high household incomes, however... Both Townships have median incomes that greatly exceed the county median. However, both townships have experienced declines in median income at a greater rate than county or state figures since 2009. Most households in the township earn \$50,000 - \$75,000. Both townships have higher rates of households in the \$100,000 - \$150,000 band than the county and state. Hereford Township has more households earning \$200,000 and more than county and state figures.





Poverty levels are slowly increasing in Hereford and Washington Townships. Poverty rates have increased over time in the townships. While the poverty rates in Hereford remain relatively low, the poverty rate in Washington exceeds the state rate for overall poverty.



Housing Trends and Issues

Housing is important to the prosperity of any community. Affordable, available, and attractive housing creates a sound tax base that will continue to appreciate in value. Housing unit growth, density, type, age, ownership, vacancy, and affordability are key characteristics in this housing inventory.

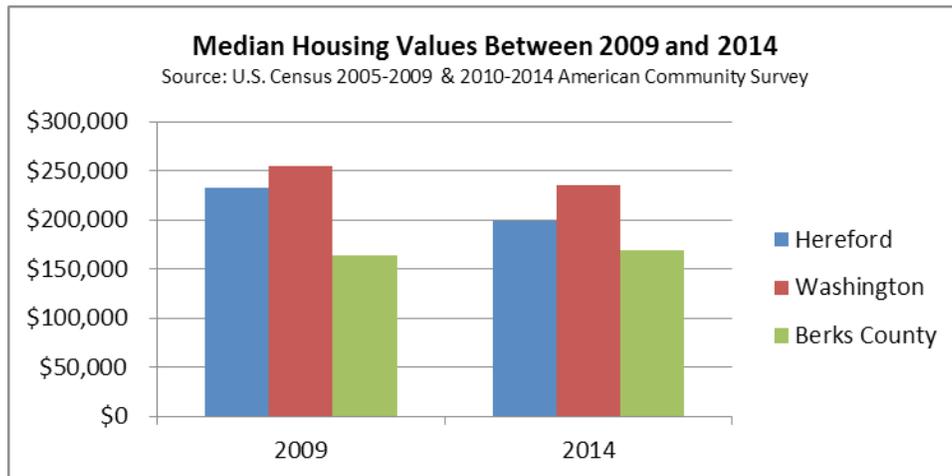
Both Townships are distinctly rural places, and remain inviting places for workers and new families to call home, and enable seniors to remain in their homes as they age. In both townships, the majority of homes are owner occupied. Interestingly, in both townships, many of the residents moved to the township between 2000 and 2009.

Owner Profile				
Type	Hereford		Washington	
	#	%	#	%
Owner-occupied	958	89.4%	1,148	87.0%
Renter-occupied	114	10.6%	172	13.0%
Moved in 2010 or later	105	9.8%	203	15.4%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	321	29.9%	489	37.0%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	218	20.3%	273	20.7%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	205	19.1%	133	10.1%
Moved in 1970 to 1979	191	17.8%	158	12.0%
Moved in 1969 or earlier	32	3.0%	64	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census 2010-2014 Community Survey

The majority of homes sold since 2006 in both townships were single-family homes. Washington Township had more sales than Hereford, but the median sales price of homes is higher in Hereford. Both townships experienced significant declines in median sales price due to the 2007-2009 recession and have been slow to recover. The median sales price declined 25 percent in Hereford since 2006 and declined 16.3 percent in Washington. Historically, the median sales prices in both townships have greatly exceeded the overall Berks County median sales price.

Median housing values in the Hereford-Washington planning area are relatively high but declining. The median value of a house in Berks County in 2014 was \$169,200. Both townships have median housing values that exceed county figures. Hereford ranks 25th in median housing value in the County. Washington Township ranks 9th in median housing value. However, it should be noted that the median housing values in both townships have steadily declined in recent years.



A relatively high proportion (26.7 percent) of Hereford Township’s housing units is comprised of mobile homes, which is a key factor in the availability of affordable housing for lower income families.

The high level of home ownership present in the Hereford-Washington Township planning region is also reflective of the region’s rural character and demonstrates a close-knit community. According to the U.S. Census 2010-2014 American Community Survey, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units in Hereford (89.4 percent) and Washington (87.0 percent) Townships exceeded the levels enumerated for Berks County (71.7 percent) and Pennsylvania (69.5 percent).

Owner Profile of Occupied Housing								
Type	Hereford		Washington		Berks County		Pennsylvania	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner-occupied	958	89.4%	1,148	87.0%	110,353	71.7%	3,446,230	69.5%
Renter-occupied	114	10.6%	172	13.0%	43,504	28.3%	1,511,506	30.5%
Moved in 2010 or later	105	9.8%	203	15.4%	29,035	18.9%	969,379	19.6%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	321	29.9%	489	37.0%	63,140	41.0%	1,881,987	38.0%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	218	20.3%	273	20.7%	27,667	18.0%	866,333	17.5%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	205	19.1%	133	10.1%	14,490	9.4%	495,770	10.0%
Moved in 1970 to 1979	191	17.8%	158	12.0%	9,014	5.9%	361,726	7.3%
Moved in 1969 or earlier	32	3.0%	64	4.8%	10,511	6.8%	382,541	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Approximately one-third of the housing units in both Washington Township and Hereford Township were built after 1980, when the use of lead based paint began to decline. Because of this, it is possible that the remaining majority of homes, which were built prior to 1980, contain lead-based paint, which represents both a substantial health risk for children and a liability concern for property owners. The cost of removing lead-based paints, however, is often beyond the budget of landlords and lower income individuals have limited equity in their properties and lack access to financing.

Cultural Resource Trends and Issues

Cultural resources are those characteristics of a community that make it socially and historically different from other communities. The comprehensive plan reviews cultural resources in order to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the local heritage by decision makers that will improve the community’s overall quality of life.

Several properties and villages within the planning area have documented historic value. The planning area contains properties already listed on the National Register of Historic places. There are five properties currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places and three that are eligible. There are twelve Historic Districts in the planning area; these are protected under authority of the home municipality. Additional resources of state and county significance have been identified. There are a total of 157 identified historic resources in the planning area.

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National Register: Listed and Eligible Properties

Historic Site Name	Address	Eligible	Key
<i>Hereford Township</i>			
Gehman, John, Farm	Township Rd., N of Harlem	5/7/1992	National Register - Listed
Baver, Faith & George, Property	Township Rd., N of Harlem	8/16/2001	National Register - Eligible
Hunter's Mill, Rush's Mill			National Register - Listed
Mensch Mill	Camp Mensch Mill Rd.	4/23/2001	National Register - Eligible
Wiegner-Schelly House	Rte. 29 & Toll Gate Rd.	1/22/1991	National Register - Eligible
<i>Washington Township</i>			
Barto Bridge	L.R. 284	6/22/1988	National Register - Listed
Borneman Mill	Off PA 100, SW of Clayton	11/8/1990	National Register - Listed
Christman, Philip, House	Gehman Rd., off T-865	3/8/1973	National Register - Listed

Source: Berks County Historic Resources Database

Historic Districts			
Site Name	Location	Eligible	Key
<i>Hereford Township</i>			
Siesholtzville (Village of)	Seisholtzville & Dale Rd	8/16/2001	National Register - Eligible
Treichlersville (Village of Hereford)	PA 100 & PA 29	4/9/1991	National Register - Eligible
Huff's Church (Village of)	Huff's Church & Dale Road		PHMC
Perryville (Village of Harlem)	PA 100 & Kutztown Road		PHMC
Herefordville (Village of)	PA 29, near Montgomery Co.		PHMC
Hunter's Mill District			National Register - Listed
<i>Washington Township</i>			
Dale Furnace & Forge Historic District	Forgedale Road, N. of Dale	9/6/1991	National Register - Listed
Barto (Village of)			PHMC
Dale (Village of)			PHMC
Eshbach (Village of)			PHMC
Schultzville (Village of)			PHMC
Falkners Swamp Rural Historic District			PHMC

Source: Berks County Historic Resources Database

One historical marker commemorates an early business of national significance. The Hereford Furnace sign, located in the village of Hereford, refers to the furnace in nearby Mensch Mill that produced the first cast-iron cooking-stove in North America in 1767.

Residents and officials of the planning area and the County are interested in preserving agricultural lands as part of their cultural landscape. 8,021 acres in the planning area have been enrolled in the Agricultural Security Program.

Conservation organizations are working to protect cultural resources of the region. The Schuylkill River Greenway is one of 23 heritage areas in the state. The primary focus of the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and the Highlands Coalition is natural resources conservation; however, since much of the local heritage in these areas of Pennsylvania is based in natural resources, cultural resource conservation and interpretation is a natural extension of their efforts. The Highlands Coalition has identified the Perkiomen watershed as one of the natural treasures critical to retaining high quality drinking water, clean air, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities

for the nearly 25 million people who live within an hour's drive of the Highlands region, reaching from Reading, Pennsylvania to western Connecticut.

Natural Resource Trends and Issues

Hereford-Washington enjoys a wealth of natural features. Identification and preservation of these resources will help ensure that future development takes place in an environmentally sensitive manner.

The geologic formations that underlie the planning area influence development and open space opportunities. Geologic constraints to development include excavation difficulty throughout most of the planning area.

Wellhead development potential is highest along the eastern edge of the planning area, parallel to SR 100. Groundwater appears most available in the Leithsville and Limestone Fanoglomerate Formations located along the eastern edge of the Townships.

Groundwater contamination has occurred in and around the planning area. Mitigation efforts are complete at the Crossley Farms Superfund site in Hereford Township, however this area is still currently unsuitable for additional development that would rely on groundwater for water supply. The US EPA is currently monitoring the site for the presence of 1,4-dioxane found in one of Bally's municipal wells, which serves some of Washington Township's residents.

Air quality is a concern throughout the planning area. There is a growing concern, in both Townships, regarding residents experiencing respiratory illnesses that could be contributed to the application of certain stabilized residual solids fertilizer on farms throughout the planning region. The appropriate agencies should systematically monitor application of this fertilizer to ensure that proper protocols are followed when applying it to fields; especially when in close proximity to neighboring residential areas.

Prime farmland soils in the planning area have supported agriculture as the predominant local industry since its settlement; increasing regional growth threatens the agricultural landscape with development pressure. The planning area contains prime farmland soils; the majority of these are in active agricultural production. Many of these areas have Agricultural Conservation Easements and Agricultural Security Areas.

Certain land features of the Hereford-Washington planning area are sensitive to disturbance and therefore unsuitable to development. The planning area contains floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes; these areas are not suitable for development and are key to the preservation of the rural character in the planning area.

A high percentage of open fields and forest cover define the planning area as a scenic, rural landscape. The planning area contains open fields and forest; defining its rural character. Changes to the distribution of the land cover will have significant impacts to this character.

The planning area contains environmentally sensitive features: high (surface) water quality and five species of state concern. The headwaters of the Perkiomen Creek, which lie in the planning area, have been classified as high quality and exceptional value watersheds and high quality cold-water fisheries. Because of their high quality, Swamp and Middle Creeks serve as a vital water supply sources. If development in these areas is planned, careful assessments of its impacts will need to be addressed in order to preserve these designations. Failing septic systems in the Huff's Church area are of immediate concern.

The planning area is home to five species of concern in the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Inventory. Any development that may impact these areas will need to be carefully looked at in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts to these species.

Although many areas of the Townships are undeveloped, public and private recreation is scattered throughout. The planning area contains state game land, public parkland, and private parkland offering many opportunities for both passive and active recreation.



Transportation Trends and Issues

The transportation network of a community is the backbone for its development and prosperity. By providing access to residential and business properties, transportation networks and improvements influence future development patterns. A carefully planned and maintained transportation system will help sustain the County's existing quality of life.

The importance of the road network to Hereford-Washington cannot be overstated. Two major state thoroughfares pass through Hereford-Washington. SR 100 connects Pottstown (to the south) and Allentown (to the north), carrying over 16,000 vehicles per day. SR 29 crosses the

northeast corner of the Hereford Township, connecting Emmaus/Allentown with East Greenville/Pennsburg and points southeast.

There are some structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges with the planning area. Structurally deficient bridges are characterized by deteriorating conditions of the major components of a bridge. There are four (4) such bridges in the planning area. A functionally obsolete bridge does not meet current design standards. There are 11 such bridges in the region.

The state is aware of three needed improvements in the planning area. Replacement/rehabilitation of Burkey's Bridge on County Line Road in Washington Township; road and intersection improvements to SR 100, near the intersection of Dairy Lane and PA 29 resurfacing from the Montgomery County line to the Lehigh County line are programmed on the Reading Area Transportation Study's 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program.

The freight rail line that crosses the northeast corner of the planning area does not stop in the planning area. Though there are no plans to develop this site, the area is zoned for light industrial to take advantage of the rail line.

There are no commercial airports within the planning area, however there is a small private airfield in the western region. This private airfield has a paved runway. Concern for the safe take-off and landing of small aircraft has been expressed by local residents. Additionally, the Butter Valley Golf Port is located just east of Hereford-Washington in Montgomery County.

Washington Township has implemented traffic impact fees to fund transportation improvements based on land development. The Transportation Impact Fee Study prepared for Washington Township recommended possible widening, an access management plan, and a signal specification system for SR 100. The study also called for the possible widening of various one-lane bridges around the Township.

Land parcels along SR 100 are under increasing pressure to develop as residential and commercial properties. Development along the corridor will result in increased traffic volumes and turning movements to and from SR 100. This may decrease safety and level of service values along the corridor. Integrated land use and transportation planning need to occur especially along the SR 100 corridor to manage growth and minimize development impacts.

The carrying capacity of the local roadway network is limited by its current roadway conditions and potential for improvements. Topographical and geologic constraints to construction (e.g. widening, re-alignment) may limit the improvement potential of many local roads. Development in many areas without significant roadway improvements would inappropriately endanger the residents of these areas.

Community Facilities and Services Trends and Issues

Community Facilities and Services include the public safety, health care, education, recreation, and utilities services that residents and businesses rely on for safe, clean communities in which to live, work, and play.

- **Police Services**

The Pennsylvania State Police provides emergency police response services to Hereford-Washington residents.

Response times of the Pennsylvania State Police are often longer than expected. State police routinely patrol the Hereford/Washington region. Response times vary depending on the nature of the request for service, location of available officers and the existence of other business that may require state police assistance.

The Berks County Fire Police Association provides emergency site control, crowd control, scene security, and fire investigation for the Townships.

- **Fire and EMS Services**

Eastern Berks, Seisholtzville and Hereford Fire Companies provide primary response to protect Hereford-Washington Township residents from fire hazards.

Townships' residents receive emergency medical services (EMS) from Bally Community Ambulance Association.

Berks County's Hazardous Material Response Team handles emergencies involving large quantities of hazardous materials in the County, including the planning area.



Fire Service

- **Utility Networks**

Natural gas service is made available in portions of Hereford-Washington by the Reading Gas Division of the UGI Corporation. Due to the rural nature of the Townships, many residents use propane gas, delivered by local/regional providers.

Metropolitan Edison Company (Met Ed) distributes electricity to Hereford-Washington Townships.

There are a number of telecommunications services in the Townships, including D&E Communications and Verizon phone service, Comcast and Service Electric cable television, and a variety of local/regional Internet providers.

- **Educational Facilities**

Hereford-Washington spans two school districts: Boyertown Area School District and the Upper Perkiomen School District. One elementary school from each district is located in the planning area. Local students attend secondary schools outside the planning area. One Mennonite school and one Montessori school are also located in the planning area.

Although rural, the Townships' residents have access to educational options throughout the Berks, Lehigh, and Montgomery County regions. Such options include private schools, such as St. Francis Academy in Bally and the Perkiomen School in Pennsburg,



School

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vocational-technical programs, continuing education classes, and many regional colleges and four-year universities.

- **Health Care Facilities**

There are no major medical facilities in Hereford-Washington. Two private medical facilities provide family practice and dental care in the planning area.

Four hospitals provide medical care to residents of the region; Lehigh Valley Hospital, the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center, the Reading Hospital and Penn State Health - St. Joseph's Hospital.

- **Library Facilities**

There are no public library facilities located within the study area. The J.K. Boyer Boyertown Community Library branch of the Berks County Library system, the Red Hill Library of the Montgomery County Library system, and the Hereford Elementary School provide residents with library services.

Other regional library facilities include the Carnegie Library and Schwankenfelder Heritage Center and Library, both located in Pennsburg.

- **Solid Waste Management**

Berks County adopted an Act 101 *Berks County Solid Waste Management Plan* in 1991. It was updated in 2005.

Due to their rural population density patterns, **the Township governments do not provide trash collection and disposal services.** Instead, residents contract with private haulers for waste disposal services. Washington Township operates a drop off site at the Red Barn on the first Saturday morning of every month and the third Wednesday of the month from March through October.

- **Public Water Facilities**

There are two municipal water authorities and three community water systems operating in Hereford-Washington; the Bally Borough Municipal Authority, the Upper Hanover Water Authority, and the community water systems (CWS) located in Hereford Estates in Hereford Township, The Reserve at Bally Springs and Spring Valley Village both located in Washington Township.

Bally Borough Municipal Authority provides water to over 100 households in Washington Township.

The Upper Hanover Water Authority's water mains connect wells in Hereford Township with the Authority's service area in Montgomery County. The Authority serves a limited number of residents along SR 29 in the village of Chapel. There is concern for the effects that withdrawal may have on the local water table and private wells.

Public Water Systems in the Planning Area

System Name	Service Area	Customer Connections	Primary Source
Bally Borough Municipal Authority	Bally Borough, portion of Washington Township	106	One well
Upper Hanover Water Authority	Portion of Hereford Township, along P.A. 29	56	Two wells (in Hereford Twp)
Red Hill Water Authority	Northeast portion of Hereford Township	45	Two wells, spring-fed reservoir
Hereford Twp. CWS	Manufactured Home parks in central part of Township	450	various

A vast majority of the Townships’ residents have on-lot water wells.

Recommendations have been made to share services among the water supply providers, as found in the Berks County Water and Sewer Management Plan.

- **Public Sewer Facilities**

Washington Township has a public sewer system. Washington Township’s Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan was prepared in 1993 and laid the foundation for creating the Washington Township Municipal Authority and its present system. Washington Township’s public sewer service area generally parallels its public water service area. An update to the plan was completed in 2009. The Bally Municipal Authority serves some residents in Washington Township.

The southwestern area of Washington Township was chosen as the primary sewer services area to resolve existing contamination problem areas and provide capacity for the growing SR 100 corridor.

Hereford Township currently does not have public sewer. At the time of this plan Hereford Township has not completed an Act 537 Plan. Although Hereford Township has no existing Act 537 Plan in place, the Township is currently studying the feasibility of creating a sewer service area in the future.

- **Municipal Facilities and Services**

Both Hereford-Washington Townships have municipal buildings, which generally serve as community centers. These complexes are multi-purpose, in that they provide Township office space, meeting facilities, public works storage, and park land. Washington Township also offers recycling services at their municipal building.

- **Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services**

The County and Townships have been actively involved in park planning, acquisition, and development activities through formal recreation plans and informal initiatives. Berks County Planning Commission produced a County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan in 2007. Washington Township produced a Township Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1992. Hereford Township addresses recreation and open space in their 1991 Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Hereford-Washington Townships have 25 parks and/or open space areas totaling approximately 715 acres. Hereford Township has 12 parks on 454 acres for its 2,923 (2014) residents. Seven parks and the majority of this acreage are privately owned. Washington Township has 13 parks and/or recreation facilities on 261 acres for its 3,962 (2014) residents.

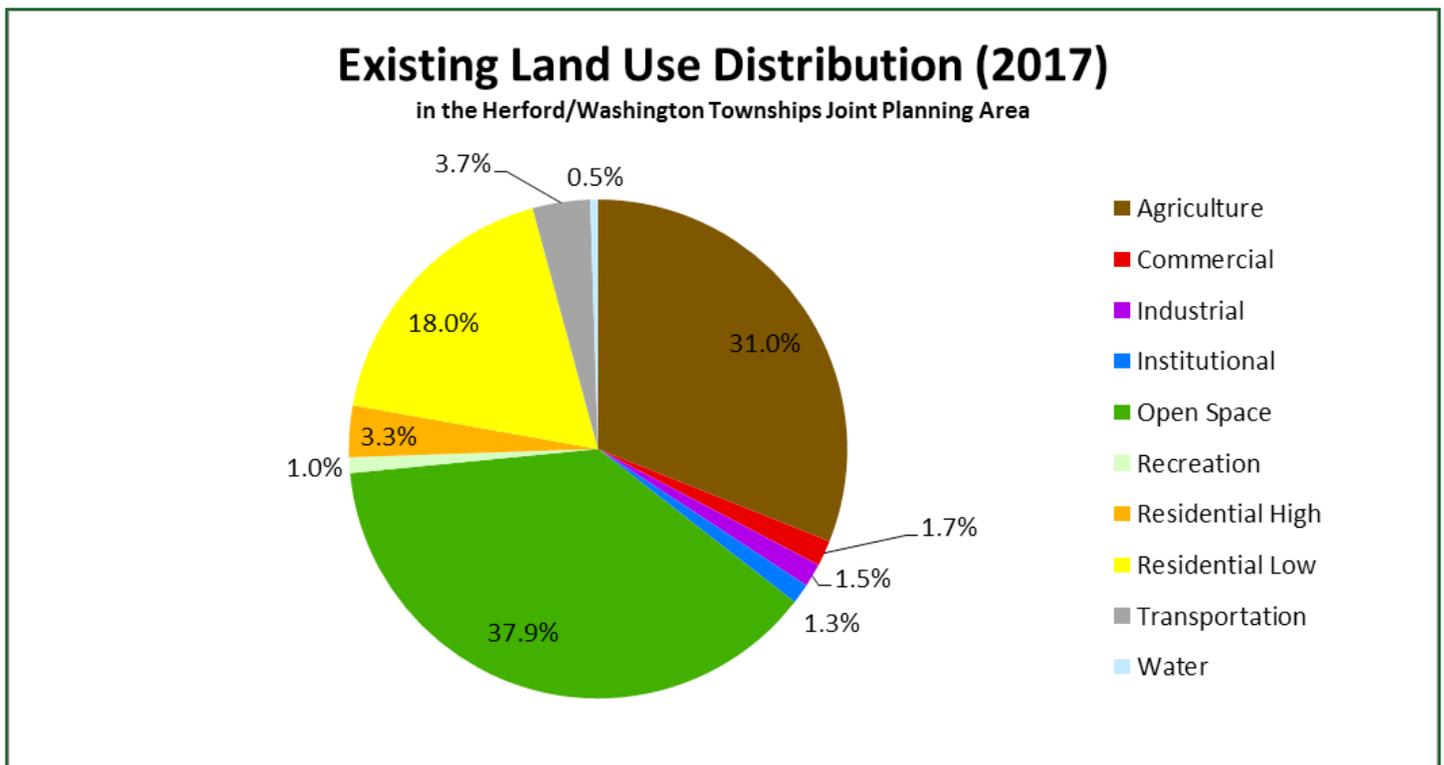
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There are currently no trails in Hereford-Washington. NRPA standards recommend one mile of trail per 2,000 community residents, indicating a need of 3.5 miles of trails in the planning area.

Land Use Trends and Issues

A review of recent land use patterns allows decision makers to examine land use patterns, the effectiveness of existing regulations, and the forces that influence land use decisions, such as natural features and the location of transportation routes. From this review, they can determine how to guide future development (both new and redevelopment) through regulations, and policy and program incentives.

Hereford-Washington has been and remains predominantly rural. Nearly 68.9 percent of the total land in the planning area lands is used for agricultural and woodland uses.



Most development has occurred in the lowland areas along the eastern portions of the Townships. Some future development is planned in this area, particularly the southeastern portion of Washington Township as zoning permits and where sewer service is available.

Most of the developed land in the planning area is used for single-family housing, with just over 3,300 acres throughout both Townships. Roads and rights-of-way are the second most dominant developed land use, with nearly 700 acres devoted to this purpose.

The Townships vary in their land use distribution, but residential development is the predominant developed land use type. Washington Township has a greater percentage of its land devoted to single-family residential uses (86.9 percent, compared to 69.9 percent in Hereford Township). It also has nearly three times as much multi-family residential acreage. Washington Township has greater percentages of commercial and institutional lands. The Townships' acreage and percentage of industrial land is relatively similar.

Regionally, the larger urban areas of Reading, Allentown, and Philadelphia are experiencing population shifts from their centers to their edges. As these edge areas become more intensively developed, their

residents seek attractive, less dense, typically rural communities with good transportation access to their urban and suburban employment centers. This has resulted in the further spread of suburbanization in the region and into the Hereford-Washington area.

Development pressure has waned partly due to the recession of 2009, but the potential for sprawl of residential subdivisions, strip-type retail development, and loss of farmland still exists in the planning area.

Both Townships have a previously adopted joint comprehensive plan (January 2006) but still maintain separate zoning ordinances.

Residents and officials of the planning area and the County are interested in agricultural preservation. Nearly 8,021 acres in the planning area have been enrolled in the Agricultural Security Program. That's nearly 2,621 acres more than were enrolled in 2005.

Estimated Growth

Independent population projections indicate that resident population will continue to increase in the Hereford-Washington Planning Area into the year 2040. The population increase is estimated at an additional 318 residents for Hereford Township and an additional 415 residents for Washington Township, for a total of 733 new residents in the Planning Area. These increases represent a growth rate of approximately 3.3 percent for both Hereford and Washington Townships. From this population increase, estimates for growth in various land uses can be approximated. This approximation in comparison with existing land use data and the current regulations for new development allow the determination of whether or not adequate land is available to accommodate projected growth.

Population increases are directly related to increases in numbers of households, which in turn, represent an estimate of the number of dwelling units needed. Projected numbers of new households are determined by dividing the number of new residents by the average number of persons per household. In this case, the average number of persons per household was assumed to remain at 2014 levels for each municipality. As a result of 318 new residents, Hereford Township can expect 118 new dwelling units by 2040. Similarly Washington Township can expect 138 new dwelling units by 2040. In total, 256 new dwelling units may be needed in the Planning Area by 2040—an increase of 10.2 percent.

At an average density of one dwelling unit per acre, this would result in an additional 256 acres of residential development.

In addition to residential growth, the Planning Area may anticipate growth in other land use categories to support the new residents with private and community services. This growth would occur in some relative proportion to the residential growth.

As stated in the land use analysis, the majority of the Planning Area (68.9 percent or 12,996.6 acres) is rural and undeveloped. While there are regulatory limitations to development, including steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains, sufficient land remains to accommodate estimated future development in other areas. The protection of prime farmland (currently regulated by zoning) is a limitation to development in Washington Township. Constraints on the construction of on-lot septic systems and excavation are notable, however development and design alternatives could address these on a per-site basis, without precluding development, specifically in areas along the SR 100 corridor.

There is sufficient available undeveloped land that is currently zoned for potential development and that could accommodate the estimated growth for each of the use categories. In fact, even more development, particularly residential, could occur under existing zoning.

The more important question that remains is how such development, if and where it occurs, will impact the character of the Planning Area. The residential development will likely have the greatest impact. In the long term,

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conventional development could consume the open space that currently exists, resulting in obvious suburban sprawl. In the short term, development could fragment the agricultural and woodland areas into small pockets rather than large, scenic expanses of open space.