

Oxford Region

Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

*Future Land Use Categories – The future land use plan (and map) designates the future land use or reuse of land within the Region and, therefore, serves as a **guide** for official decisions regarding the distribution and intensity of growth as well as the location of future public facilities and areas designated for resource and/or open space preservation. The vision for the Oxford Region Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan is based on a 10-year horizon.*

Future Land Use Categories

RESOURCE PROTECTION AREAS - These areas are characterized by farmland and agricultural operations, historic villages, and natural resources including woodlands and streams. While these areas include a limited number of local commercial uses and scattered nodes of residential uses, the absence of community infrastructure (sewer and water) has restricted the development of large residential subdivisions and commercial operations. The Region's priority for the continuation of agricultural operations and the preservation of natural resources and historic villages indicates a desire to restrict expansion of infrastructure into these areas.

Agricultural (A) – The Agricultural category is characterized by active agricultural operations (crops, cattle, horse farms, etc.) that define an agrarian tradition that influences all other land uses in the Region. The number of agricultural parcels/acres protected through easement further supports the priority in this category. Agricultural also includes small nodes of residential development, a number of historic villages, and limited commercial facilities (some ag-related).

Recommended Strategies: Agricultural operations in the Region should be maintained and encouraged to expand, where possible. The municipalities of the Region should 1) promote agricultural support businesses to locate within and/or near this area and 2) amend municipal ordinances to provide additional flexibility and reduce potentially burdensome regulations on the local farmers to promote the continuation of the agricultural industry. A limited number of residential uses may be permitted at a lower density in this area through TDR (sending development rights to designated growth areas) and effective agricultural zoning. The Region's municipalities should continue to work with

the County and local landowners to preserve agriculture and protect farmland (the Region's most important natural resource).

Rural (R) – This category represents the transition area from Agricultural to the growth areas identified below. Open space, natural resources, and low-density residential are the primary non-agricultural uses in this area. Residential uses in this area include single family homes along street frontage and as part of subdivisions at a density of approximately one dwelling unit per one or two acres (1 DU per 1 or 2 acres) typically served by on-lot water and sewer facilities.

Recommended Strategies: Existing agricultural uses in this area should be maintained and encouraged to expand, where possible. While residential development should be limited, it may continue to be permitted at a suggested density of one dwelling unit per one to four acres (1 du per 1 - 4 acres) in order to accommodate the incoming population and expanding agricultural families. In order to limit the disturbance of the Region's natural resources (including Prime Agricultural Soils), development should continue under smart growth techniques such as TDR (sending development rights to designated growth areas) or cluster development with consideration for the need to limit the potential conflicts between agricultural and residential uses. The Region's municipalities should continue to work with the County and local landowners to preserve agriculture and protect farmland.

Village (V) – This category is defined by the villages that represent the historic development pattern of the Region: Homeville, Russellville, Tweeddale, Hopewell, and Lewisville. Villages are located in the Agricultural and Rural and are characterized by small lots, short setbacks, historic residential uses, small shops and home occupations, and community features such as post offices, churches, or grange halls.

Recommended Strategies: The historic villages of the Region are planned for limited infill development at a scale similar to existing residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Business/commercial development should be limited to home occupations and small commercial uses and agricultural support businesses that do not compromise the existing village character. The inclusion of mixed uses and higher densities should be considered as an option to supplement and/or expand existing villages, if and when infrastructure becomes available.

GROWTH AREAS - Designated Growth Areas includes those categories intended for the orderly and efficient development of suburban and urban areas of the Region, at appropriate densities that 1) meet the projected population growth in the Region; and 2) take infrastructure limitations into consideration. These areas are planned to accommodate a diversity of residential uses to meet the needs of the socioeconomic range of the population, while also accommodating commercial, industrial, and institutional uses to provide for the economic and employment needs of the Region and to provide an adequate tax base for the Oxford Area School District.

Suburban (S) – The Suburban Residential category represents the area in the Region that has experienced the most significant growth during the last few decades. This area is characterized by single-family homes on one or two acre lots in a traditional suburban development pattern. While some single-family development in this area has been created under a cluster option, resulting in the preservation of a few areas of open space, the vast majority has been developed in a conventional, more land-consumptive manner. This area also includes local commercial uses, light industrial uses, and institutional uses that primarily serve the local population. For the most part, vehicular movement has been prioritized over the need for pedestrian circulation facilities even when those uses are in close proximity to points of interest such as schools and/or park and recreation facilities.

Recommended Strategies: While a conventional development pattern has traditionally been utilized in Suburban, the continuation of this pattern should be avoided on those remaining developable parcels where the benefits of smart growth techniques could be realized. These techniques, that include TDR, cluster development, and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) should be the priority for future development in Suburban. While the amount of open space preserved may be limited as a result of the use of on-lot water and sewer facilities, the preserved open space can be designed in such a way to provide buffers to adjacent roadways and uses and reduce possible conflicts and the impact new development may have on an existing community. Where public water and sewer infrastructure is available (As specified by the OASA Act 537 Plan) for new development, the Region can accommodate higher density uses to focus growth and address fair share issues and housing affordability. Future commercial uses may be appropriate in this area when proposed adjacent to the Commerce, Town Center, and Village Center areas.

Town Center (TC) – This category focuses on the downtown of Oxford Borough including residential, commercial, and institutional uses along Route 10/3rd Street South and Market Street. The Town Center’s location and characteristics are consistent with the Urban Landscape designation in Landscapes². Residential uses in Town Center include historic single family homes, row homes, and apartments, some of which are located above commercial uses (mixed uses). Commercial uses are characterized by offices, shops, and restaurants. Institutional uses include the Oxford Hotel, Union Fire Hall, Borough Hall, Neighborhood Services Center, Oxford Friends Meeting, the Oxford Library, and several educational facilities in the Borough’s southeast quadrant. Many of uses in Town Center are housed in historic structures along sidewalk-lined streets that provide a connection to the Borough’s past and a quaint walking opportunity for both residents and guests to the community.

Recommended Strategies: While developable land in this area is limited, a mix of residential, commercial, and service uses should be promoted for new development or re-development in Town Center to provide goods and services to the Region’s population. Professional offices, restaurants, and retail stores should continue to be encouraged to serve residents and to provide an employment base in the central core of the area. Building renovations and adaptive reuses should be encouraged “that will sustain the downtown’s physical rejuvenation and provide a greater range of goods and services” as indicated in the Borough’s 2003 Revitalization Plan. This physical rejuvenation should include an ongoing effort to continue to provide pedestrian access and connection between uses in the Borough and the Suburban land use category. A limited number of larger commercial uses such as grocery and hardware stores may be permitted but these uses should be limited to a smaller scale consistent with the existing character of the Borough. Minimum lot sizes for these commercial uses should be controlled and building size should be limited to protect the pedestrian scale of this area. Larger scale commercial uses such as “big box” commercial and retail developments are not consistent with the scale of Town Center and should be considered for the Commerce category.

Town Residential (TR) – The Town Residential category is adjacent to Town Center and is characterized by a mix of single family and two family residential uses and institutional uses. A traditional neighborhood pattern characterizes the older parts of the Borough with streets in a grid pattern, sidewalks, and shorter building setbacks. Newer development in the Borough, which is located further from the intersection of Route 10 and Market Street, has been developed in a more conventional pattern with large lots, deeper building setbacks, and a winding curvilinear street pattern. The Ware Presbyterian Village is an example of a retirement community in the Borough that provides housing to the elderly within a short distance of service and commercial facilities.

Recommended Strategies: New development or re-development in Town Residential should continue in the tradition of the neighborhood pattern in the Borough and should provide pedestrian facilities that link to existing residential development and commercial and institutional uses in the nearby Town Center.

Village Center (VC) – This category is intended for the Village of Nottingham, an area designated by Landscapes2 as a Rural Center as a result of its future potential development pattern. Nottingham is an historic village located at the intersection of Old Baltimore Pike and Route 272 just off of the Route 1 interchange with traditional residential and commercial uses and a large scale light industrial use and employer in Herr’s Foods. While the interchange with Route 1 has brought with it the opportunity for new commercial uses (Wawa and CVS), the existing uses suffer from a lack of identity, pedestrian facilities, and a meaningful development pattern.

Recommended Strategies: This area has been designated as a traditional neighborhood development (TND) and receiving area for the extensive TDR sending area in West Nottingham Township in an effort to preserve the Township’s surrounding farmland and rural character. As such, future development should promote a more traditional development pattern and the densities in the village area may be further increased through the use of TDRs. This category promotes a mixed use village center, a village commercial area, and a village residential area, with medium to high-density uses in a traditional village pattern with appropriate setbacks and a focus on pedestrian access and mobility. A mix of uses is being promoted as an integral part of the village rehabilitation to expand commercial and

residential opportunities, to share parking facilities, and introduce a true village pattern. ¹

Commerce (C) – These areas are characterized by larger scale commercial, retail, light industrial, and warehousing operations. North of the Borough, commercial uses are focused along Route 10 north and south of Route 1. South of the Borough, commercial uses are located along Old Baltimore Pike and Barnsley Chrome Road (Along the Octoraro Rail Line) south of the Borough into Nottingham and the Herr’s Factory. Herr’s is the anchor of the Village of Nottingham providing a commercial anchor for the Region. Within the Borough, there is an area designated for Industrial uses in the northwest quadrant which includes the Oxford Mall and Oxford Industrial Park. These areas are important to the Region in terms of local employment as well as providing critical tax dollars to support the Oxford Area School District.

Recommended Strategies: The pattern for commercial development in the Oxford Region has been well-established and, for the most part, runs parallel to Route 10, Route 1, and the Octoraro Rail Line. Municipal regulations should continue to permit commercial facilities within this commercial/industrial core with regard to the need to link commercial facilities to adjacent residential facilities with adequate pedestrian access. The Oxford Region remains a largely rural area and municipal design standards should be amended to reflect this character by requiring that signage, landscaping, and lighting are appropriate and fit in with the surrounding neighborhoods and/or uses.

The Octoraro Rail Line, now operated by East Penn, is a key link in the ongoing effort to bring commercial and/or industrial uses to the Commerce areas of the Region. As stated above, the rail line runs within or adjacent to the Commerce land use category and currently provides freight rail service to a few of the Region’s employers including the Herr’s corporation. Going forward, every effort should be made to continue to expand the use of the rail line in attracting, improving, and expanding commercial and/or industrial uses in the Region.

¹ The recommended strategies below are based on the assumption that the proposed West Nottingham Zoning Ordinance update will be adopted.