

# HISTORIC AND SCENIC RESOURCES INVENTORY AND PLAN

Through policy and other means Elverson Borough has repeatedly reinforced the importance of community character. Historic and scenic resources help create the character that the Borough's residents call their own and the visual images that residents carry of the place they call home.

Historic preservation protects and retains historic resources that provide a reminder of the original settlement patterns that helped create the landscape of today. A plan for historic resource protection is required under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

Scenic preservation is not mandated, but worthy given the value of scenic resources to a community's sense of place and quality of life. This chapter addresses scenic resources and intrusions on the scenic landscape, such as light pollution. Protecting scenic qualities requires this dual approach, as scenic qualities are lost through direct impacts to resources and incrementally through poor quality siting and design.

This chapter addresses the following topics:

- Inventory
  - Historic Resources
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    - What is a Historic Resource?
    - Borough Historic Resources
    - Local Historic Preservation Activities
    - Federal, State, and County Policy and Programs
    - Resource Protection Measures
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    - Existing Scenic Resources
    - Scenic Intrusions
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- Planning Implications
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# Inventory

## Historic Resources

### Historic Overview<sup>1</sup>

The area of present-day Elverson was founded in the mid-1700s as a wayside hamlet along an early regional roadway (the Route 23 corridor). Three strong springs in the area attracted settlers and the village of Springfield was established by 1740. Through the early 1800s the village developed into a thriving rural village that provided services to the surrounding agricultural community. Present-day Route 82 was routed through the village in 1832, bringing significantly more traffic. The village gained a post office in 1849, which adopted the name Blue Rock for the local stone outcroppings, as Springfield was already in use elsewhere in southeastern Pennsylvania. The anticipation and then arrival of the railroad in 1870 spurred new types of businesses that solidified the town as a regional center in northwestern Chester County.

In 1899 residents of the area chose a new name to eliminate the confusion of differing names for the town and post office. Elverson was chosen in honor of the owner and publisher of The Philadelphia Inquirer – James Elverson, Sr. The Borough of Elverson was incorporated in 1911 and expanded by 490 acres through the annexation process in 1953.

Much of the town’s historic architecture dates from the late 1800s and early 1900s. The period of 1860 – 1920 represents a peak period in architectural development.



*The rail line is now gone, but the freight and passenger station remain a focal point along Main Street.*

### What is a Historic Resource?

Historic resources are defined in various ways by different agencies and organizations. Broadly speaking, historic resources are buildings, sites, districts, objects, or structures evaluated as historically significant. At the federal level, the National Register of Historic Places is the official inventory of historic resources that should be preserved. The National Register was authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 and is administered by the National Park Service. Additional information on the NHPA and National Register is provided in the Federal, State, County Policy and Programs section, below. The National Register includes buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts that are significant in

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<sup>1</sup> John Milner Associates Inc., *Historic Preservation Plan and Design Guidelines*, 2000; and Patry, Bob, *The History of Our Community Elverson, Pennsylvania*, 2011.

American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Park Service generally defines historic resource categories as follows:

- **Building:** A house, barn, church, hotel, or similar construction created principally to shelter any form of human activity.
- **Site:** The location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value.
- **Structure:** A building used for purposes other than sheltering human activity.
- **Object:** A form of simple construction that is primarily artistic in nature and relatively small in scale. It may be movable, but is generally associated with a specific setting or environment.
- **District:** A significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of site, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

A comprehensive historic preservation program begins with the identification and evaluation of historic resources, so that the nature and types of resources to be protected is understood. Once historic resources have been systematically identified through a survey, implementation strategies can be undertaken to protect these resources. Historic resources change over time and, depending on the type and degree of the change, this should be respected as part of the continued evolution of that resource.

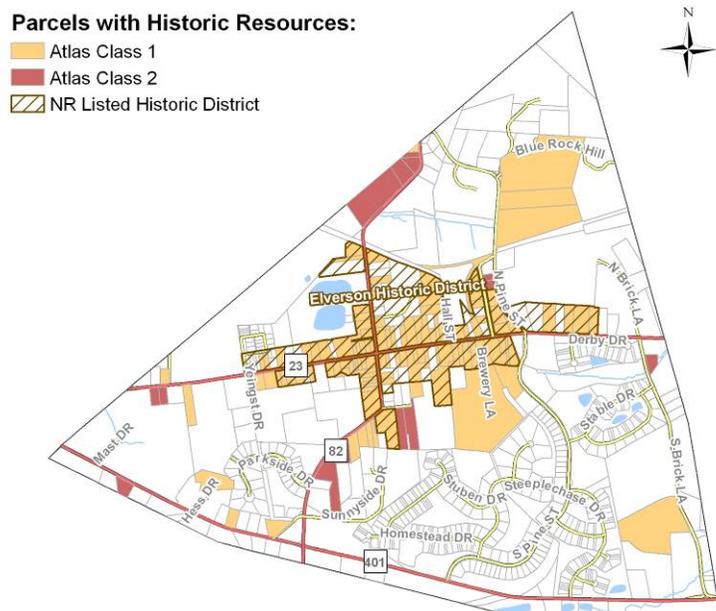
## Borough Historic Resources

Multiple efforts have been undertaken to identify historic resources and help preserve the local heritage and character of Elverson Borough. The Chester County Historic Sites Survey (1979-82) identified 85 historic buildings or groups of buildings in Elverson. The County Survey is considered a “preliminary” or “reconnaissance” survey, focusing on a listing of sites, primarily residential, and providing general information such as location and owner. Sites documented in the County Survey are on file at the Chester County Historical Society.

Following the County effort, the local community successfully nominated the Elverson Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993 (see Figure 7-1; detailed mapping is provided on Map 7-A in Appendix B). The Elverson Historic District is focused on the architecture and development patterns evident up to 1930.

Elverson is considered to be a representative example of the development of a small, agriculturally-oriented, mercantile center along a locally significant trade route. For the National Register Historic District, 179 buildings were inventoried. It was determined that 140 buildings were contributing

Figure 7-1: Historic Resources



Source: CCPC.

resources to the Historic District and 39 buildings were non-contributing. At the time of listing the District encompassed:

- 81 contributing (and 9 non-contributing) dwellings
- 6 contributing (and 1 non-contributing) small barns
- 25 contributing (and 27 non-contributing) small buildings (such as garages or sheds)
- 14 contributing commercial/public buildings
- 1 contributing school (now Borough hall)
- 2 contributing churches
- 1 contributing hotel
- 3 contributing sites
- 4 contributing (and 1 non-contributing) structures
- 1 non-contributing object



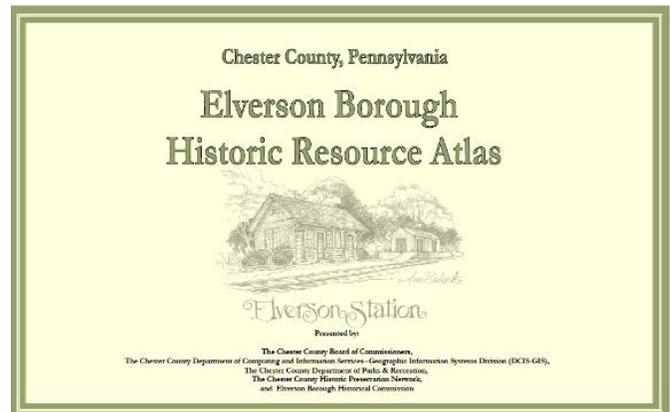
*Dwellings within the National Register Historic District.*

As of 2014, the state database of historic resources website identifies Elverson Historic District as the only historic resource listed on or determined eligible for listing on the National Register in Elverson.

In 2011, Elverson Borough completed a *Historic Resource Atlas* in coordination with the Chester County Historic Preservation Coordinator. These resources are depicted on Figure 7-1 as well as Map 7-A (with the National Register Historic District). The Chester County Historic Resource Atlas is an effort between the Chester County Historic Preservation Coordinator and GIS Department in partnership with the Chester County Historic Preservation Network and municipalities. The Atlas identifies and inventories historic resources 50 years or older for planning purposes, and is being completed on a municipality-by-municipality basis. As of 2014, 39 municipalities in the County had completed their atlas and others were underway.

Historic resources in Elverson’s *Atlas* have been classified as to their significance based on National Register criteria for resource evaluation. The classification structure was agreed upon by Elverson and the Chester County Heritage Preservation Coordinator. Class I and II resources are considered to be of critical importance to the quality of life in Chester County and resource protection planning is recommended to protect these resources.

- **Class I:** The resource is listed on, or is determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This includes contributing resources in a listed or eligible National Register Historic District or resources designated by the municipality.
- **Class II:** The resource is considered by the municipality to meet the standards to be considered for the National Register of Historic Places and/or is identified as significant at a local level.
- **Class III:** All remaining resources that are 50 years and older effective at the published date of the *Historic Resource Atlas*.
- **Class IV/Other:** Properties that are 50 years and older effective at the published date of the *Historic Resource Atlas* that have not been classified.



The Elverson Atlas identified multiple properties within the Historic District and several properties outside of the Historic District as Class I resources. There are 116 Class I and 15 Class II resources within the Borough.

Even though local historic resources may not be listed on or eligible for the National Register, due to their local significance these sites should still receive consideration when a change of land use, other zoning permit item, new land development, or subdivision is proposed that may affect the historic integrity of the site. The Elverson Borough *Historic Resource Atlas* is available for review at Borough Hall.

## Local Historic Preservation Activities

Historic preservation activities in Elverson have been supported by the Elverson Borough Historical Commission. The Elverson Historical Commission was created in 1988 for the purpose of locating, documenting, and preserving historical resources. The mission of the Historical Commission is to collect, preserve, and disseminate the history that relates to the people, properties, and events of the Borough. The Historical Commission consists of seven members that serve four year terms.

Recent efforts of the Historical Commission include publication of *The History of Our Community Elverson, Pennsylvania* (2011), which commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Elverson as a borough (1911 – 2011) and traces its history from the early 1700s through 2011. As part of the Elverson Centennial celebrations in 2011 the Borough participated in the Town Tours and Village Walks program and created a time capsule. The Historical Commission has installed plaques on historic businesses and homes in the Borough and installed streetscape banners. The Commission has also played a role in planning for Elverson Day and hosting events for the broader historic community.

Another critical historic resource effort on the part of the Borough was the development of a *Historic Preservation Plan and Design Guidelines* in 2000. John Milner Associates assisted the Elverson Historic Preservation Plan Task Force in developing this plan, which includes detailed information on the history of the Borough, background information on historic preservation planning, discussion of threats to historic resources, and recommendations to preserve those resources and their context. Design guidelines were also included as an appendix to the plan and, while not specific to Elverson, do provide details on appropriate and inappropriate design on items such as additions, doors, windows, porches, signs, and storefronts.



*An example of a plaque on a historic home.*



*An example of new development built to reflect and complement the character of the Borough's existing structures.*

## Federal, State, and County Policy and Programs

There are a variety of federal, state, and county programs and policies that are relevant to historic resources and historic preservation. While the discussion below is not a comprehensive listing of these programs and policies, it does cover those most relevant to Elverson Borough.

## Federal Policy and Programs

The **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)** earmarked the beginning of a broad scale federal historic preservation policy and created a strong legal basis for the protection of historic resources through a framework of measures to be used at the federal, state, and local levels. The NHPA created a comprehensive framework for protecting historic resources throughout the nation through a system of reviews, regulations, and incentives, and encouraged cooperation to address the protection of historic resources. Key NHPA programs and mandates include:

- Formalized the National Register of Historic Places.
- Requires any project that receives federal funds, sponsorship, permitting, or assistance to review its impact on historic properties (Section 106 review).
- Authorized State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) to facilitate cooperation among governmental levels by coordinating and administering preservation activities contained in the NHPA on a state level. In Pennsylvania, this agency is PHMC.
- Authorized the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, which enables municipalities to participate directly in federal preservation programs and to access (through the state) certain funds slated for historic preservation activities.



Pennsylvania Historical  
& Museum Commission

The **National Register of Historic Places** is the official, comprehensive listing of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of historical, architectural, engineering, or cultural significance to the prehistory and history of the locality, state, or nation that are deemed worthy of preservation. The list is maintained by the National Park Service under the US Department of the Interior. In Pennsylvania the National Register program is managed by PHMC (specifically its Bureau for Historic Preservation).

Sites on the National Register are termed ‘National Register listed’ sites. Through a preliminary review process, sites also may be determined to be eligible for listing, referred to as ‘National Register eligible’ or as having received a ‘Determination of Eligibility’ (DOE). In the case of a National Register Historic District, proposed District boundaries are delineated to include areas and properties determined to be significant; these properties are ‘contributing’ to the district. Within those boundaries may also be properties that are not considered significant to the district; these properties are considered ‘non-contributing’.

A National Register listing on its own does not affect the rights of property owners nor place obligations or restrictions on the use or disposition of property. Local governments can choose to locally regulate historic resources, and include National Register properties within their definition of historic resources. A National Register listing, or determination of eligibility, does impact the use of federal funds or assistance because federal or federally assisted projects must be reviewed for their potential impact on National Register listed or eligible sites under the Section 106 process (described below).

To determine significance, there are established criteria against which a property is reviewed to determine whether it could be on the National Register. Criteria for evaluation are:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and



*This former residence has been adaptively reused as a law office.*

objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that:

- are associated with events, activities, or patterns that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

National Register listed and eligible properties are included on a listing found on PHMC's website. As previously noted, the list includes the Elverson Historic District (depicted on Map 7-A.)

The **Section 106 process** is one of the most effective components of the NHPA in reducing the loss of historic resources, and requires that any federally sponsored, funded, permitted, or assisted project, including those requiring a federal permit, license, or approval, is reviewed for its impact on historic resources either listed on, or determined eligible for, the National Register. The federal agency directly or indirectly responsible for the project is responsible for ensuring compliance with the review process. Section 106 does not necessarily protect historic resources from demolition or alteration; it requires an investigation of alternatives and consideration of mitigation measures for projects that are federally sponsored, funded, or assisted. For example, all PennDOT projects must ensure that a Section 106 review is conducted prior to construction to determine a project's potential impact on historic resources.



*Representative historic architecture within the National Register Historic District.*

The **Certified Local Government (CLG) Program**, enabled under the NHPA, was established to facilitate greater participation in historic preservation at the local level. It strives to encourage local, state, and federal partnerships to protect historic resources and address historic preservation issues. A CLG is one that meets certain criteria including:

- The adoption and enforcement of historic preservation regulations,
- Establishment of an historical commission or similar body, and
- Engaging in the survey of historic properties.

One of the most important incentives of the CLG program is increased access to federal preservation funds. Ten percent of each state's allocation of historic preservation funds (as authorized by the NHPA) must be allocated to the CLGs. In Pennsylvania, funds are administered by PHMC. As of 2013, Elverson Borough was not a CLG.

The availability of **federal income tax credits for historic preservation** – specifically the rehabilitation of income producing historic resources - has proven to be a very effective means of encouraging their voluntary preservation. Investment tax credits first became available for historic preservation in 1976. Although the program was scaled back in 1986, investment tax credits remain available and may result in

substantial savings in rehabilitation costs. Section 47 of the Internal Revenue Code provides a rehabilitation tax credit of 20 percent for the rehabilitation of certified historic structures (for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but not for structures used exclusively as an owner's private residence) or a rehabilitation tax credit of 10 percent for the rehabilitation of a non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936 (applies only to buildings rehabilitated for non-residential uses). A certified historic structure is one that is either individually listed on the National Register or is certified as contributing to a National Register Historic District. (See State Policy and Programs for details on Pennsylvania's new companion tax credit program.)

Unrelated to the federal rehabilitation tax credit program, but with federal tax implications, are preservation easements. For historic preservation purposes, a preservation easement is a legal agreement designed to protect a significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resource, or a portion thereof. Under an easement, a property owner grants a portion of the property rights to a qualified organization. Many times historic preservation easements are specifically for the preservation of a historic building's façade and referred to as a façade easement. There are potential financial benefits for a property owner from the charitable donation of a facade easement to a tax-exempt organization. The donation of a façade easement must be made for conservation purposes, such as the protection of a National Register listed historic structure, and must be made in perpetuity. Unlike the rehabilitation tax credit, an easement donation can be for a structure used for either business or non-business use.

### State Policy and Programs

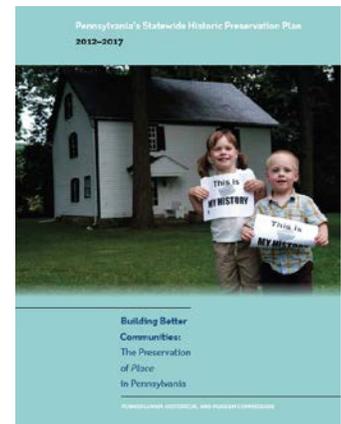
The **Pennsylvania History Code, Title 37** of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes reiterates many of the federal mandates required through NHPA. The Code pertains to the conservation, preservation, protection, and management of historic and museum resources and identifies PHMC as the responsible agency. It outlines Pennsylvania's legal framework for historic preservation and also mandates cooperation among other state entities in identifying and protecting historic and archeological resources. Additional state legislation addresses preservation, supplementing the provisions of the History Code.

The **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)** is responsible for maintaining and administering the state's sites and museums, making determinations of eligibility for the National Register, managing the State Archives, and administering a wide variety of historic preservation programs as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). PHMC also provides education and outreach about historic preservation.

### **Building Better Communities: The Preservation of Place in Pennsylvania -**

Pennsylvania's Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2012 - 2017 is the most recent update to Pennsylvania's historic preservation plan, first developed in 1999 by PHMC and its partners. The five main goals of the plan are as follows:

- Goal 1: Increase preservation planning at the local level.
- Goal 2: Expand and strengthen state and federal partnerships.
- Goal 3: Bolster the efforts of preservation advocates and partners.
- Goal 4: Identify, recruit, and engage new audiences.



*The latest Statewide Historic Preservation Plan focuses on local efforts and partnerships.*

- Goal 5: Administer an effective and proactive statewide historic preservation plan.

**Act 167, Historic District Act of 1961**, authorizes municipalities to create local historic districts and protect historic and architectural character through regulating the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition, or razing of buildings within those historic districts, once they are formally certified through PHMC. Act 167 also requires the appointment of an historic architectural review board (HARB) to advise the local governing body on the appropriateness of building activity in the district. As of 2013, there are no Act 167 Certified Historic Districts in Elverson Borough.

**Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)** authorizes the use of municipal land use controls such as use regulations and area and bulk requirements to protect historic resources. MPC enabled regulations primarily focus on land use-oriented provisions, in contrast to the Act 167 regulations that focus on architectural character. The MPC regulates places having unique historical, architectural, or patriotic interest or value through the creation of a specific zoning classification. In Chester County, the MPC has often been applied to protect historic resources through adoption of municipal-wide historic overlay zoning. Relevant portions of the MPC include Section 301(a)(6), which notes that a municipality shall include a plan for the protection of historic resources within their comprehensive plan. Article VI of the MPC establishes the basis for zoning ordinances and specifically notes that zoning ordinances shall provide for protection of historic features and resources.

**PHMC's Historical Marker Program**, established in 1946, is one of the PHMC's oldest and most recognized state programs. Located throughout Pennsylvania, the blue and gold markers highlight people, places, and events significant in history. New markers are approved and erected along Pennsylvania roadways every year. PHMC owns and maintains the markers after they are installed and dedicated. There are over 2,000 markers statewide, but none within Elverson.

**Act 537, the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act**, requires each municipality in Pennsylvania to have an Official Sewage Facilities Plan that addresses existing and future sewage disposal needs. With limited exceptions, PADEP requires the completion of formal sewage facilities planning modules for subdivisions and/or land development proposals to update the municipal Act 537 plan. Once a planning module has been completed by an applicant, it is given to the municipality in which the project is proposed for review, as well as PADEP and other agencies.

Prior to PADEP review of the planning module, PHMC reviews project activities for their potential effect on significant historic and archeological resources and provides comments to PADEP. PADEP is to consider this review and implement PHMC's recommendations for the site. An applicant is required to submit a Cultural Resources Notice form to PHMC if a proposal involves ten acres or more of earth disturbance; and/or if a 50 year old or older structure(s) is on the site of the proposed development. Activities which may affect properties included on the National Register are not exempt regardless of project size. Procedural gaps can occur in the process and a municipality may need to take steps to ensure that they receive PHMC comments.



*PHMC's markers raise awareness of historically significant people, places, and events in a community.*

The **Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Incentive Act** closely mirrors the federal program, providing a 25 percent tax credit for restoring historic properties. Historic properties are defined as those listed on the National Register, located within a historic district listed on the National Register, or certified by the National Park Service. The property must be used for income-producing purposes. The Act was signed into law in 2012, with an annual limit of \$3,000,000 and an individual property cap of \$500,000. Applications for this program are handled by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

### County Policy and Programs

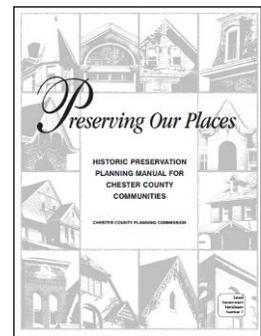
**Landscapes2**, the Chester County Comprehensive Policy Plan, addresses the loss of important historic resources. *Landscapes2* is a 2009 update to *Landscapes*, which was developed in response to concerns over sprawling development patterns, land consumption, and loss of resources. *Landscapes2* champions balance of growth and preservation, sustainable communities, and protection of cultural resources. The Plan includes objectives, policies, and actions related to historic resource protection.

**Preserving Our Places: Historic Preservation Planning Manual for Chester County Communities** promotes the implementation of the historic preservation goals and objectives in *Landscapes* and *Landscapes2* by providing general background information about historic preservation, providing an outline of core elements of a comprehensive historic resource protection plan, and describing historic resource protection planning for Urban, Suburban, and Rural settings.

Through the **Vision Partnership Program (VPP)**, the Chester County Commissioners provide matching grants for eligible projects on a competitive basis to qualified municipalities in the County. Historic preservation plans, historic resource surveys, and ordinance and special study implementation projects may be eligible for funding under this program. Elverson's 2000 *Historic Preservation Plan and Design Guidelines* was funded in part by a County grant.

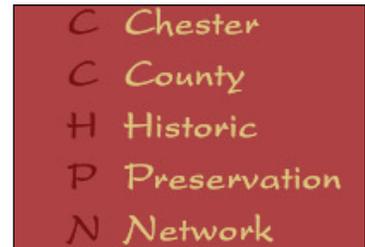
The **Chester County Historic Preservation Coordinator** promotes heritage tourism for the County as well as provides direct heritage and historic preservation assistance to municipalities in a variety of ways, including the following:

- The **Chester County Historic Resource Atlas**, as noted previously, is a cooperative planning effort to identify and inventory historic resources 50 years or older, and is being completed on a municipality-by-municipality basis. Elverson Borough completed an *Atlas* in 2011.
- The **Chester County Historic Certification Program** resulted from public and private requests for acknowledgement of locally significant historic resources that may not be eligible for the National Register. Designation of locally significant historic resources that meet specific criteria is issued upon request. Documentation (such as assessment and deed records, lineage, and historic maps) must be submitted in support of the designation. Elverson Borough does not have any sites in the County Historic Certification Program.
- **Technical expertise and educational assistance** is provided to municipalities, residents, businesses, property owners, task forces, historic preservation organizations, and historical commissions, committees and societies, and covers historic preservation issues as well as historic structure preservation and maintenance standards.



## Other Programs and Entities

The **Chester County Historic Preservation Network (CCHPN)** is a non-profit organization that provides support to grassroots historic preservation efforts. CCHPN's mission is to be an affiliation of local organizations and individuals dedicated to protecting and preserving Chester County's historic resources and landscapes through education, facilitation, and public and private advocacy. Activities include educational programs, recognition of volunteers, highlighting successful preservation projects, publishing a newsletter, providing support to the Chester County Historic Resources Atlas project, and co-sponsoring the Chester County Town Tours and Village Walks program.



Past **federal transportation funding bills** have included programs to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation's intermodal transportation system. The current federal funding bill (MAP-21) is more limited with respect to historic resources, with potentially eligible historic projects being restricted to historic preservation of transportation facilities under the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

The **National Trust for Historic Preservation** has helped protect historic resources for more than 50 years. The Trust provides leadership, education, and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. The Trust owns and operates a collection of nationally significant house museums and provides a wide range of preservation services across the country, including grant programs.

**Partners for Sacred Places**, based in Philadelphia, is the nation's only non-denominational, non-profit organization devoted to helping Americans embrace, maintain and make good use of older and historic religious structures. Partners for Sacred Places provides assistance and serves as an information clearinghouse for groups interested in finding out more information on how to maintain historic structures, share property and uses, and conduct outreach and fundraising.

## Resource Protection Measures

In the 1998 Land Use Ordinances, the Historic Village Center District encompasses the historic core of Elverson and generally follows the boundaries of the National Register Historic District. The zoning district generally encourages uses and area and bulk in keeping with the existing characteristics of the historic core. Within this zoning district the area and bulk requirements can be modified if a property complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The ordinances also encourage adaptive reuse by permitting additional square footage for non-residential uses in historic buildings. Delay of demolition for historic resources is also addressed, with a 90 day review process and 90 day delay.

## Scenic Resources

Elverson Borough has long understood the importance of scenic resources to the overall character of the Borough. Scenic resources were addressed in the 1993 *Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan* and revisited in the 1995

*Comprehensive Plan.* This plan updates the inventory of scenic resources presented in those prior plans, and categorizes the resources in a modified manner.

Scenic resources can and do overlap with natural, historic, and agricultural features. While natural and agricultural features that are scenic will be discussed in this section, all historic resources identified previously in this chapter will not be addressed again but should be considered scenic for the purposes of developing protection measures. Whether agricultural, historic, or natural, all scenic resources are categorized based on their most prominent attributes that promote the Borough's character. Intrusions and negative impacts on the scenic landscape, such as light pollution and signage, are also addressed as part of this discussion. Preserving existing scenic resources and minimizing intrusions on the landscape helps preserve local character and quality of life.

## Types of Scenic Resources

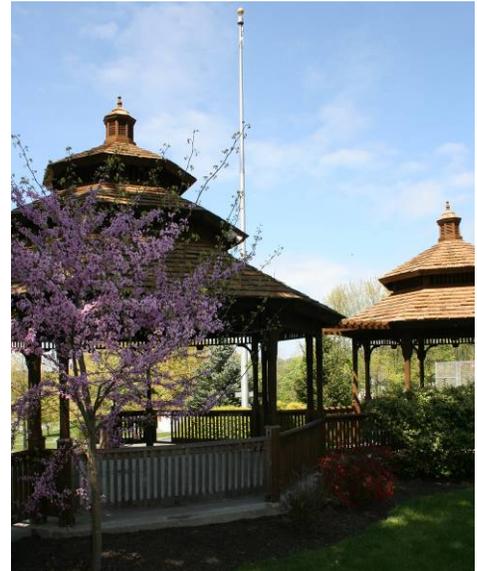
Each category of scenic resources has unique characteristics that separate it from the other, and together they are distinct from the related natural, historic, and agricultural resource categories. Photographs offer further clarification on both types of resources.

### Scenic Feature

A specific feature, visible from multiple public viewpoints, but limited in overall geographic scale, that has inherent scenic or aesthetic value. Trees, stone walls, or rock outcrops would be examples of scenic features.

### Scenic Vista

A physiographic area composed of natural, historic, agricultural, and/or cultural elements that may be viewed from a public area such as a roadway or park, and which has inherent scenic qualities and/or aesthetic values.



*The gazebos in Livingood Park have been identified as a scenic feature within the Borough for scenic and cultural features.*

## Existing Scenic Resources

The inventory from the 1995 Comprehensive Plan served as the starting point for this inventory of scenic resources in Elverson Borough, with updates provided by the Taskforce. The scenic resources noted in Figure 7-2 and depicted on Figure 7-3 (as well as depicted on Map 7-A within Appendix B) are representative of the area's landscapes, character, and cultural feel. As noted previously, all historic resources identified on Figure 7-1 and Map 7-A should also be considered scenic, but are not included within Figure 7-2.



*The view from Main Street south into the cemetery has been identified as a scenic vista for both its scenic and cultural values.*

**Figure 7-2: Existing Scenic Resources**

Name	Description
<b>Scenic Feature</b>	
1. Gazebos	Gazebos at Livingood Park
2. Trees	Line of mature trees perpendicular to Main Street
3. Tree/cemetery	Tree and cemetery
4. Trees	Line of street trees along Main Street
5. Pond	Pond at Summerfield
6. Stable/pasture	Stable and horse pasture at Summerfield
7. Path/Open Field	Walking path and open field off Brick Lane
8. Wooded hillside	Steep wooded hillside rising abruptly at Brick Lane/Route 401
<b>Scenic Vista</b>	
A. Rt 82 View E	Across the open field
B. View W from Park	View west across the valley from Livingood Park
C. Rt 23 View NW	Across the agricultural field
D. N Chestnut View E	Into the stream valley and wetlands
E. Rt 23 View S	Across the cemetery and open field
F. Brick Ln View SE	Across the agricultural field
G. Rt 401 View S/SE	Across the open field

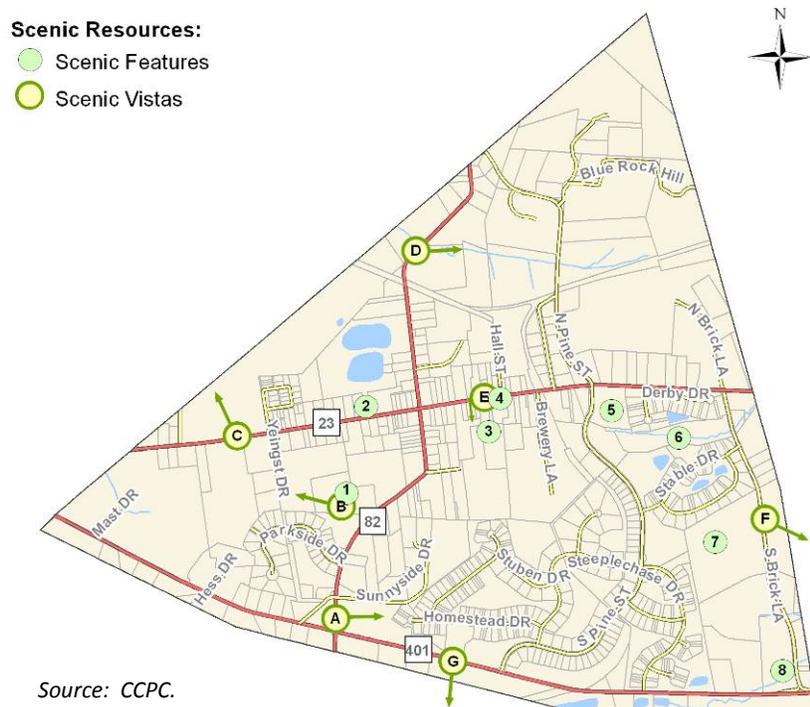
**Blue Rocks**

One scenic feature of note that is not within the bounds of Elverson, but that has been a scenic and recreation destination for generations, is the Blue Rocks. Located just to the east of Elverson, near the abandoned rail line, the Blue Rocks have drawn generations of Elverson residents to them to the extent that the town’s post office was once named Blue Rock for the geologic feature. The Blue Rocks consist of a natural outcropping of granite boulders that have a blue cast to them. Currently there is no public access to this feature, although they were highly visited in the past.

**PA Scenic River**

French Creek was designated as a Scenic River by Pennsylvania in 1982. The PA Scenic River program is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR). Within Elverson, tributaries to the South Branch French Creek in the southeast portion of the Borough are included within the designation. French Creek is identified as “scenic” for the purposes of this

**Figure 7-3: Locations of Scenic Resources**



Source: CCPC.

program (wild and pastoral are other potential classifications). In this context, PADCNr defines scenic as:

*Scenic rivers shall be free-flowing and capable of, or under restoration, to support water-based recreation, fish and aquatic life. The view from the river or its banks shall be predominately wild, but may reveal some pastoral countryside. The segment may be intermittently accessible by road.*

Green Valleys Association is the managing organization for the French Creek Scenic River, and the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities is identified as a local coordinating entity.

### **Scenic Byway**

While not located within Elverson, it is notable that a section of Route 23 to the west of Elverson (the segment located between Blue Ball and Morgantown) has been designated as both a Lancaster County Heritage Byway (2012) and as a PA Scenic Byway (2013). Named the Conestoga Ridge Road Byway, it is an eight-mile corridor that is significant for its farmland and historic resources. Both state and county designations indicate a commitment on the part of local municipalities to preserve these resources and can open doors to potential funding sources.

## **Scenic Intrusions**

Scenic intrusions are those manufactured objects or structures that detract from the landscape, such as: poorly sited or designed development (residential, commercial, institutional, or industrial), light pollution, inappropriate signage, utility structures or transmission lines, parking facilities, and abandoned or unkempt properties. A single intrusion can tarnish an otherwise scenic landscape, and depending on how topography and landscaping either permit or obscure views, it can diminish a scenic landscape from multiple viewpoints. A comprehensive listing of existing, individual, scenic intrusions was not developed as part of this Plan because existing features are difficult to change. Avoiding the creation of new scenic intrusions is a feasible goal however, and the discussion below and recommendations at the end of this chapter focus on this purpose.

### **Poorly Sited or Designed Development**

Poorly sited or designed residential, commercial, institutional, or industrial development ignores the context and resources of the site and, in doing so, loses an opportunity to fit in with the existing landscape. In creating and maintaining an up-to-date listing of scenic resources, as well as requiring protection of natural resources, the Borough can notify developers of the resources they consider critical early in the development process, enabling a site design that fits with the character of the site and surrounding area.

### **Light Pollution**

Light pollution is any adverse effect of artificial light including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night, and energy waste. Light pollution is created by stray outdoor lighting that creates a halo of brightness, blocking out the Milky Way, individual stars, and other features visible under more natural conditions. One need only travel to an area without light pollution on a clear night and view the

night sky in comparison to the typical Chester County night sky to understand the difference.

Light pollution is not just a concern because of the impact on our view of the night sky, or the nuisance one neighbor can inflict on another. Impacts can generally be grouped within the following categories: human health, safety, energy, and wildlife. Human health is impacted through disruption of circadian rhythms, impacts that are significant enough for the American Medical Association to adopt a resolution in 2009 to support the reduction of light pollution. Safety can be compromised by “disability glare” (particularly when excessive lighting impacts drivers), and by lighting that may be perceived as increasing security. Various studies, including a 1997 National Institute of Justice study, have shown no conclusive correlation between night lighting and crime. Light pollution is wasted energy, which translates to wasted money and wasted natural resources. Wildlife perhaps suffers the most from light pollution, as nocturnal animals become confused and disoriented. Species have experienced a decline in reproduction, difficulty foraging for food, increased exposure to predators, and increased mortality due to impairment of their night vision. Using the appropriate amount of light for the task at hand in the most efficient manner possible is being energy-efficient, safe, and preserves dark skies for everyone.

### **Utilities**

From a scenic perspective, utilities include the visible structures or transmission lines, such as cell towers, stormwater management facilities, and overhead transmission lines. As with other forms of development, the siting and design of these features should be regulated to the degree possible to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to scenic features. Empty detention basins that lack landscaping quickly become eyesores – proper ordinance language regarding design can prevent this. While control of certain utilities, such as cell towers, comes under the purview of state or federal agencies, municipalities retain some control, such as location (within certain zoning districts) and design (such as a flag pole or silo structure).

Other entities often control some aspects of utility design and location. Federal regulations require that cell tower construction trigger a review of potential impacts to historic resources that are listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Lands under conservation easement by any non-profit or government entity may have similar restrictions or prohibitions.

Overhead utility lines can be significant scenic intrusions. Although little can be done with existing lines and structures, redevelopment and new development in select locations may warrant the requirement that utility lines be located underground. Although costly to implement, in select locations it may be beneficial in the long term.

### **Signage**

Outdoor signage is a necessity, and when designed appropriately it can complement the character of an area. Advertising that is too close together, distracts drivers, or blocks a scenic vista is inappropriate. The MPC permits municipalities to regulate signage, including size, location, and lighting. Doing so provides municipalities a greater level of control over the impact of advertising.

### **Parking Facilities**

Parking is another feature that can have an impact on a community's character without proper design. Endless pavement, lack of vegetation, and the locational prominence of a parking area can create a scenic intrusion. Appropriate layout and landscaping can turn a parking area into a less offensive, and even pleasant, feature of a development.

### **Abandoned Buildings/Unkempt Properties**

Abandoned buildings and/or unkempt structures or properties are a public eyesore and can become a public nuisance and health concern if not addressed. In addressing this type of scenic intrusion, maintaining the public health and safety should be a primary consideration.

## **Resource Protection Measures**

Elverson Borough currently has natural resource protection measures in place in the 1998 Land Use Ordinance (see Chapter 6 for details). Due to the overlap of natural resources and scenic qualities, these measures are critical in protecting scenic resources. However, there are limited regulatory provisions related specifically to scenic resources. The Historic Preservation Plan and Design Guidelines noted that the signage provisions were not compatible with the historic nature of the village.

# **Planning Implications**

### **Historic Resources**

The Borough has significant historic resources, which form an important part of the scenic and cultural fabric of Elverson. Protecting and preserving these resources will help to maintain the character of the Borough for its own residents, as well as serve the Borough's goal to become a heritage and recreation destination for visitors (see Chapter 8 for detailed discussion on the heritage and recreation concept).

### **Scenic Resources**

Scenic resources within the Borough are also an important part of the character for both residents and visitors. Preserving scenic resources, while also minimizing the impacts of scenic intrusions, are key to quality of life within Elverson. Given the size of Elverson, and the condensed nature of development within much of its borders, small impacts to scenic quality can quickly detract from the community's overall character.

# Recommendations

The recommendations below detail how Elverson Borough can work to protect and preserve historic and scenic resources, as well as enhance those resources where possible. Priorities for the implementation of these recommendations are established in Chapter 9, Implementation Measures. Implementation of the recommendations identified below will help Elverson Borough achieve its historic and scenic resources goal to:

Identify, preserve, protect, and enhance the integrity of historic and scenic resources and their settings to maintain the Borough's heritage and character.

## Historic Resources

### **7-1 Continue identifying historic resources with local markers and investigate installing historic markers through PHMC's Historical Marker Program.**

The Historical Commission currently provides plaques for individual historic buildings in Elverson. Programs of this nature increase local awareness of historic resources. The Historical Commission could also investigate potential topics for submission to PHMC for their Historical Marker Program.

### **7-2 Continue to identify and evaluate historic resources through historic resource surveys.**

The *Historic Resource Atlas* completed by Elverson Borough in 2011 was a reconnaissance or windshield survey – information collected included physical information such as age, materials, style, and condition. Information compiled for the submission of Elverson to the National Register is now approaching 30 years old. Additional research and documentation should be conducted, such as a comprehensive survey and potentially an intensive survey, when funding and time permit. Surveys of this nature would document architectural and historic features and significance and would require a professional consultant. For consistency, the PA Historic Resource Survey Form should be used, as it is the form used when applying to PHMC for a National Register determination of eligibility. Such a survey could focus on resources identified as Class I in the *Atlas* that are outside of the existing National Register Historic District.

### **7-3 Support nominations of high priority properties for eligibility and/or listing on the National Register of Historic Places.**

While Elverson has its existing National Register Historic District, there are notable resources outside of this District. Given the value of the National

Register as a public education tool, support should be provided for the nomination of high priority properties to the National Register.

National Register listing is a two step process. First, a Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form, ideally completed as part of the comprehensive historic resource survey, is submitted to PHMC. If a property is determined to be eligible, the second step is completion of a National Register nomination form. If a property is determined to be eligible but then formal listing is not pursued, it is important to understand the differences between the two categories. Eligible resources are provided the same level of protection as listed resources with regard to federal projects. However most tax credit programs are limited to properties formally listed on the National Register. National Park Service guidance documents on pursuing National Register listing are available online ([www.nps.gov/history](http://www.nps.gov/history)) and include:

- How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (Bulletin #15)
- How to Complete the National Register Registration Form (Bulletin #16A)
- How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (Bulletin #16B)
- Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes (Bulletin #30)
- Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places (Bulletin #41)
- Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons (Bulletin #32)
- How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes (Bulletin #18)
- Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties (Bulletin #36)

#### **7-4 Review existing regulatory provisions to determine additional methods to protect and preserve historic resources.**

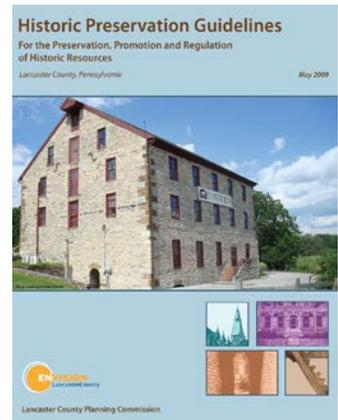
In the 1998 Land Use Ordinances, the Historic Village Center District encompasses the historic core of Elverson and generally follows the boundaries of the National Register Historic District. There are some provisions in place to maintain the historic character of this specific district, but provisions to protect historic resources outside of this district are limited. The Borough should consider the following to strengthen historic preservation through its regulations:

- review of area and bulk standards;
- review of permitted and conditional uses;
- consideration of additional incentives for adaptive reuse;
- consideration of denial of demolition (rather than the existing delay of demolition) and demolition by neglect; and
- requirement of a historic resource impact study.

Additionally, if the Borough wishes to protect historic resources that are outside of the Historic Village Center District, consideration should be given to adopting a historic overlay district. This approach does not provide for architectural controls, but instead modifies characteristics such as use, lot area, setbacks, height and bulk to preserve existing historic resources and ensure that new

development is complementary. This type of historic resource protection is enabled through the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), and requires documentation of the historic resources that are to be regulated by the overlay district. The resources to be regulated could be based on the *Historic Resource Atlas*, rather than be based on the more limited area of the National Register District.

Provisions that can potentially be addressed through a historic overlay district include restricting certain uses to conditional use, permitting additional uses in historic resources, and restricting height, bulk, and lot coverage to those compatible with existing historic resources. Additional detail on the use of a historic overlay district is provided in the Chester County Planning Commission publication *Preserving Our Places* (1998) and from the Lancaster County Planning Commission publication *Historic Preservation Guidelines* (2009). Implementation of this recommendation will serve the Borough's in its broader goal to become a heritage and recreation destination (see Chapter 8 for additional discussion of this concept).



**7-5 Continue to support the Historical Commission in its role as an advisor to Borough Council, archive for historic artifacts, and the primary public outreach entity for historic resources.**

The Historical Commission serves several roles. One is as an advisor to Borough Council regarding the Borough's history and historic and archaeological resources. Another is as the entity that works to collect, preserve and share artifacts and information on the Borough's history and historic resources. A last key role is public outreach. Through all of these activities the Commission can support the Borough's efforts to become a heritage and recreation destination.

For historic preservation efforts, public outreach can include promotion, advocacy, and education about community history, historic resources and their importance to community character, and historic resource rehabilitation, reuse, and protection. There are a variety of ways to educate the public and the Historical Commission already uses various outreach methods. Additional methods to consider would be:

- hosting workshops or history talks;
- publicly recognizing business owners or homeowners that undertake construction, rehabilitation, or restoration projects that are sensitive to historic character;
- taking part in the Chester County Town Tours and Village Walks program on a periodic basis; and
- developing a brochure to highlight the Borough's history and key historic buildings (to be available at area businesses and community events).

**7-6 Review the *Historic Preservation Plan and Design Guidelines* (2000) for additional projects to implement the goals of that plan.**

The *Historic Preservation Plan and Design Guidelines* had many detailed recommendations, ranging from community outreach to physical improvements. Several items have been incorporated in the recommendations noted within this

Plan, but others have not. The Historical Commission should review the recommendations of the 2000 plan to determine which recommendations remain to be implemented and are a priority for the Borough.

## Scenic Resources

### **7-7 Update municipal ordinances to guide development to areas less likely to impact scenic resources.**

Protection of scenic resources requires that municipal ordinances recognize scenic resources and their value. The following steps are critical to complete this process:

- recognize the importance of scenic resources within ordinances (Purpose statements);
- maintain a current listing and mapping of resources (through updates to Figure 7-2 and Figure 7-3); and
- require within ordinances that any proposed subdivision, land development, or permit action in the vicinity of a recognized scenic resource coordinate early and throughout project development with the municipality to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate negative scenic impacts.

Avoidance could be as simple as relocating an access point to a different portion of a property, thus avoiding being in the line of a scenic vista. Minimization could be a design that reduces the prominence of new development from the public view. Mitigation could be as simple as a well thought-out landscaping plan that provides a buffer between a new structure and an existing scenic resource. Early awareness and coordination regarding scenic resources is key to protecting the qualities that these resources bring to the community.

### **7-8 Coordinate with PennDOT (or Chester County as appropriate) on any proposed transportation projects early and throughout the project development process to ensure a context sensitive design.**

Construction or rehabilitation of roads or bridges can create significant impacts to the local environment, including scenic, natural, historic, or agricultural resources. In any transportation project it is critical that the local community be involved at the earliest stages to identify significant resources and transportation needs in order to achieve a project that serves the transportation needs while protecting community resources.

### **7-9 Continue to support efforts to organize volunteers for PennDOT's Adopt-a-Highway Program and the Great American Cleanup Program.**

Currently multiple organizations within the Borough participate in the Adopt-a-Highway Program, including homeowners' associations and Boy Scout Troop 37. The Adopt-a-Highway program requests participants to pick up litter at least four times a year, with PennDOT providing safety training, safety vests, highway warning signs, trash bags, and pick up of the bagged litter. The Great American Cleanup of Pennsylvania Program is a spring statewide community cleanup

program and part of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. The program asks communities to organize and conduct local cleanups – recruit volunteers, promote the event, and report the results for inclusion in statewide and national cleanup totals.

Elverson Borough could periodically acknowledge its Adopt-a-Highway participations through existing public outreach methods, and consider coordinating a Borough-wide spring cleanup in conjunction with the Great American Cleanup.

**7-10 Update municipal ordinances to recognize the negative impact of scenic intrusions and require that applicants seeking to construct a new scenic intrusion, or redevelop an existing scenic intrusion, investigate options to avoid, minimize, or mitigate its negative scenic impacts.**

Scenic intrusions can be addressed in part through regulations. As sites with existing scenic intrusions are redeveloped or require any type of municipal permit, discussion of ways to minimize or mitigate the intrusion should occur between the municipality and the property owner. Early awareness and coordination regarding scenic intrusions is key to minimizing the negative aspects of these features within a community.

**7-11 Adopt ordinance language to diminish the negative impacts of lighting and promote the continuance of dark skies.**

Regulation of outdoor lighting has not been updated since 1998. There have been significant improvements in available fixtures during this time period. Regulations should be updated to fully address shielding, glare, and full cut-off fixtures and require the use of reasonable lighting levels, luminaries that do not emit glare and light above the horizontal (full cut-off), and automatic extinguishing of lighting when it is not needed. The Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council is a local resource for model ordinances and will present to municipal or other groups regarding light pollution on request.

**7-12 Recognize the importance of dark skies protection and educate residents through the Elverson Borough newsletter, website, and other outreach methods.**

Public education is always important to avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating the negative impacts of scenic intrusions, but particularly so with regard to lighting due to the extent of existing lighting that creates light pollution. Educational materials on reasons for promoting dark skies and reducing light pollution, as well as guidance for reducing light pollution within residential neighborhoods, are available from the International Dark-Sky Association.

**7-13 Adopt ordinance provisions that will diminish the impact of outdoor signage, and investigate the option of developing specific design guidelines.**

Strengthening signage regulations can help prevent the overuse of signs of all types, ensure signs are not a distraction to drivers, promote good sign design guidelines, and avoid impacts on scenic resources. While Elverson does have sign

standards in their existing regulations, these could be strengthened to minimize the scenic impact of outdoor advertising.

Specific design guidelines, which would be voluntary, could address features such as size, color, material, lighting, legibility, and sign type. By creating guidelines for areas that have a concentration of commercial or mixed uses, a municipality can encourage a consistency in appearance that improves the scenic character of an area while allowing for flexibility and uniqueness. Elverson Borough could establish guidelines and then simply encourage adherence, or provide an incentive (such as a larger size) to further encourage adherence to the guidelines.

**7-14 Review ordinance provisions to ensure they permit and encourage utility structures and transmission lines (such as cell towers, stormwater management facilities, and overhead utility lines) to respond to scenic qualities as well as functional requirements, and conduct coordination early with outside groups regarding construction of these features.**

Early coordination on design issues for all utilities is most effective in creating an effective, efficient, and aesthetic facility, even when such coordination is not a regulatory requirement. Best management practices (BMPs) should be encouraged and required where appropriate through regulatory means. Regarding stormwater management, the Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Practices Manual (DEP, 2006) and the Chester County Water Resources Authority's Countywide Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan for Chester County offer current guidance.

**7-15 Review ordinance provisions to ensure they permit and encourage design of parking facilities to respond to scenic qualities as well as functional requirements.**

Important issues to consider with parking facility design and construction are access, location, layout, surface treatment, screening, buffering, and landscaping. Inadequate consideration of these features can greatly impact aesthetics. Encouraging or requiring the use of native trees, shrubs, and plants has multiple benefits (see Chapter 6). Ordinance language should be flexible enough to allow for innovative ideas (such as pervious pavement or shared parking) without compromising minimum standards.

**7-16 Review and amend as necessary regulatory provisions and procedures that address public nuisances to protect public health, safety, and welfare.**

Public nuisance regulations can address issues such as abandoned buildings and unkempt properties that are creating potential impacts to public health and safety, such as harboring rats, vermin or insects, creating a fire hazard, or other public hazard. Enforcement of regulations is a necessary component to protecting public health, and procedures must be in place for enforcement of appropriate regulations. Educational efforts can also be useful – covering issues of concern in the Borough newsletter may help curb nuisances before they rise to the level of a violation.

### **7-17 Continue the tree planting and maintenance program.**

The Borough currently has a Shade Tree Commission, which has been active with the planting of street trees in the newer residential subdivisions, replanting of damaged trees in the Borough's parks, and plantings as part of the Route 23 streetscape project. Additional street trees within the Borough would provide scenic and environmental benefits, and fit the historic nature of the Borough's core. Street trees are particularly needed in the eastern portion of the Borough, along the eastern portion of Main Street, and at both gateway areas along Main Street. A dense but informal planting pattern would be appropriate. Selection of appropriate street trees is important given the limited area available and limitations created by the street environment.

Appropriate maintenance of existing and new trees is important to not only the scenic quality that the trees provide, but also the health of the trees. Improper pruning can mar the appearance of a tree and weaken it. The Shade Tree Commission can lead efforts to further the planting and proper care of trees within the Borough.

One area for the Shade Tree Commission to focus on in the coming years is the maintenance and condition of ash trees within the Borough, due to the risk of infestation of the emerald ash borer. Additional detail on the emerald ash borer is provided within Biotic Resources discussion in Chapter 6: Natural Resources. The Borough should develop a management plan for the emerald ash borer due to its potential impacts to the woodlands and street trees within Elverson. Emerald ash borer infestations should be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Additional information on this species, its spread, and recommended management plans can be obtained from the PADCNr: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/insectsdisease/eab/index.htm>.

## Links

### **Chester County Planning Commission – Preserve our Places**

[www.chesco.org/planning/lib/planning/documents/preservingplaces/hispresmanual.pdf](http://www.chesco.org/planning/lib/planning/documents/preservingplaces/hispresmanual.pdf)

### **Chester County Historic Preservation Network**

[www.cchpn.org](http://www.cchpn.org)

### **Great Pennsylvania Cleanup**

[www.gacofpa.org](http://www.gacofpa.org)

### **International Dark Sky Association**

[www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org)

**Lancaster County Planning Commission – Historic Preservation Guidelines**  
<http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/toolbox/lib/toolbox/tools/histpreservguidelines.pdf>

**National Park Service – Cultural Resources and the National Register**  
[www.nps.gov/history](http://www.nps.gov/history) and [www.nps.gov/nr](http://www.nps.gov/nr)

**National Trust for Historic Preservation**  
[www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org)

**Partners for Sacred Places**  
[www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org)

**PennDOT – Adopt a Highway**  
[www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/Bureaus/pdHwyBeau.nsf/AAHHome?OpenFrameset](http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/Bureaus/pdHwyBeau.nsf/AAHHome?OpenFrameset)

**Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**  
[www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us)

**Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council**  
[www.polcouncil.org](http://www.polcouncil.org)