

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

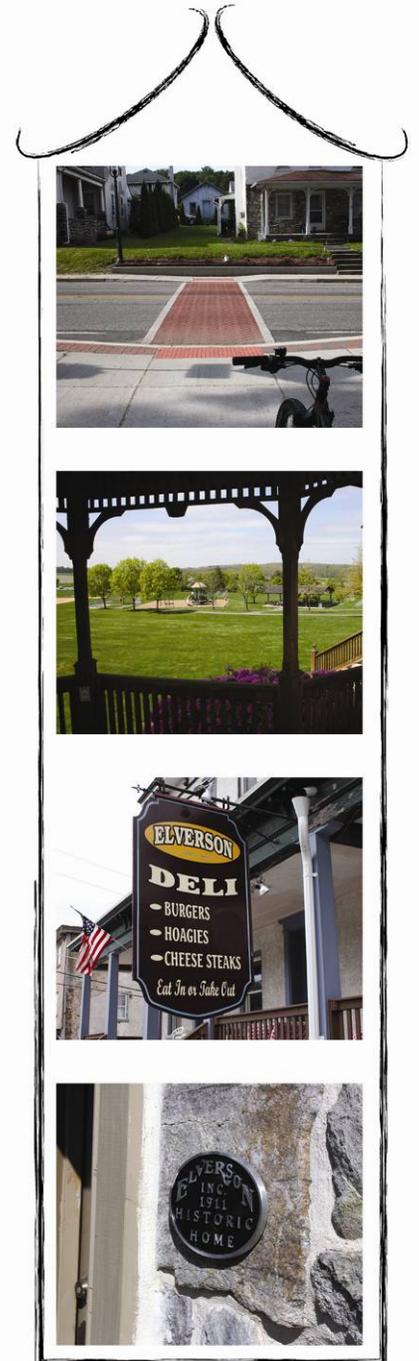
The population of Elverson Borough grew dramatically (104 percent) in the 1990s, with slower but still substantial growth (28 percent) since 2000 (detailed population data is provided in Appendix A). As a community with a diversity of affordable housing options, amenities such as parks and trails, and access to major roadways - all in a largely rural setting - the Borough will continue to be a place that attracts growth. Facing continued growth pressure, the Borough should take a proactive approach to its own growth management and prepare to respond to regional development. Planning for an appropriate level of development where it can be accommodated, while simultaneously protecting sensitive resources and community character, will help meet the challenges of the coming decade.

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to guide future decisions by delineating the policies – goals and objectives – on which those decisions will be based. These policies are developed through the comprehensive planning process, and informed by factors affecting the community. These factors include existing land uses, natural resources, the transportation system, historic resources, and community facilities. The assessment of existing conditions and creation of policies together leads to the development of specific recommendations to achieve the goals and objectives for Elverson Borough.

Elverson’s most recent Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1995. Land use regulations (zoning and subdivision and land development) were adopted in 1998 and the Historic Preservation Plan was adopted in 2000. Elverson adopted a Revitalization Plan in 2003 and updated it in 2010 with a project-oriented action plan. This Comprehensive Plan update incorporates information and actions from these prior planning efforts while providing a focused vision for the Borough.

This chapter addresses the following:

- Process
 - Contents
 - Public Participation and Plan Adoption
 - Implementation
- Regional Setting and Influences
- Relationship to *Landscapes*²



Process

The comprehensive planning program was led by a nine member task force consisting of representatives of the Borough Council and Planning Commission. The task force met on a monthly basis for over a year to compile, analyze and evaluate pertinent data affecting land use, housing, transportation, recreation, community facilities, and resource protection in the Borough of Elverson.

This comprehensive planning process began with a review and evaluation of the area’s demographic characteristics. Goals and objectives were developed early and refined throughout the process. Inventory information was gathered for the individual topic areas, followed by discussion on needs and desired outcomes. Plans and specific recommendations were then developed and reviewed. Topic areas addressed in this Plan include:

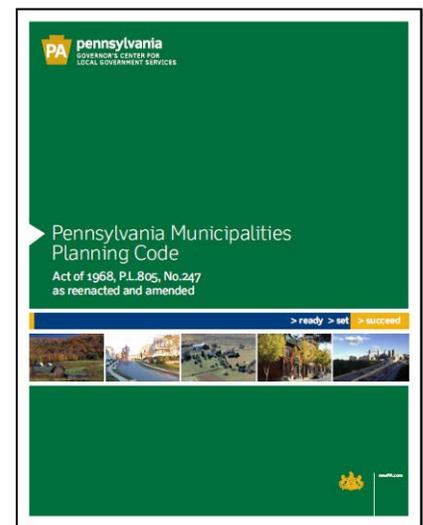
- Land Use and Housing
- Community Facilities and Services
- Transportation and Circulation Systems
- Natural Resources
- Historic and Scenic Resources
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Contents

The Comprehensive Plan was completed in compliance with the provisions of Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended. This legislation enables municipal land use controls in Pennsylvania and provides the framework for developing and implementing plans and land use regulations. It specifically enables municipalities to produce and adopt comprehensive plans to regulate development through the use of various regulatory tools including zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances. The required contents of a comprehensive plan are specified in Section 301 of the MPC.

Key components to this Plan include background and policies (chapters 1 and 2), topical areas inventory and recommendations (chapters 3 through 8), and Implementation Strategies (Chapter 9). Implementation Strategies provides summary tables of all preceding recommendations, including detail on priority and responsible party/parties. Additionally, Chapter 9 provides a narrative implementation framework. This framework notes two key overarching points of focus for the Borough’s implementation of this Comprehensive Plan:

- Regulatory Update
- Heritage and Recreation Destination



The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) is also referred to as Act 247 of 1968.

Public Participation and Plan Adoption

A critical component of a comprehensive planning process is resident input and participation. The task force consisted of representatives from the Borough who collectively presented their issues and concerns for discussion and incorporation. They represented a wide range of views on planning issues, thus providing for broad input on the issues.

A public information meeting was held by the task force on May 14, 2013, and generated substantial public feedback. In addition to task force members there were approximately 20 members of the public and Borough officials in attendance. The full draft of the plan was presented at a public meeting on April 8, 2014. MPC procedures regarding a Planning Commission public meeting and Borough Council public hearing prior to adoption were followed. All public meetings and the hearing were held pursuant to public notice as required by the MPC. The Elverson Borough Comprehensive Plan was adopted in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the MPC.



Public meetings provided residents an opportunity to review materials and obtain information on the process and plan details.

Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document developed to define the Borough's future vision and make recommendations to achieve that vision. The recommendations are to be implemented through various means by different Borough entities, individually and in a joint effort, in an organized and coordinated manner consistent with local goals. Many recommendations can be implemented through updates to land use regulations, while others can be implemented through special programs, administrative activities, and planning activities. The final chapter of this Plan assigns priorities and responsibilities to each recommendation in the Plan. Achieving the vision of the Comprehensive Plan requires a commitment to the implementation by Borough Council and other Borough entities. The planning horizon for the Elverson Borough Comprehensive Plan is ten years.

Regional Setting and Influences

Elverson Borough is located along the northwestern border of Chester County (see Figure 1-1 and detailed mapping provided on Map 1-A in Appendix B). Because of the Borough's adjacency to Berks County, the availability of services in nearby Morgantown, and the proximity of an interchange for the Pennsylvania Turnpike, a discussion of regional influences extends to areas of Berks and Lancaster counties. Availability of jobs and services requires that Elverson residents travel in a variety of directions to meet their needs.

Figure 1-1: Regional Setting

The Borough is one of three more densely developed areas (also including Honey Brook Borough and Morgantown) within a setting that is largely rural with a strong agricultural component. Surrounding townships include Honey Brook, West Nantmeal, and East Nantmeal in Chester County; Caernarvon and Robeson in Berks County; and Caernarvon Township in Lancaster County. As a whole, the area has experienced strong growth in recent decades, a trend that is likely to continue. The Borough of New Morgan, located approximately four miles to the west in Berks County, contains significant potential for future growth, although plans for development have largely been unrealized over the past decade.

SR 2082

The Borough is well connected to major highway corridors. PA Route 23 (Main Street) is a heavily travelled road that runs east-west through the Borough while PA Route 82 (Chestnut Street) travels north-south. PA Route 401 runs east-west along the southern portion of the Borough. These corridors link Elverson to Phoenixville, Coatesville, and Malvern in Chester County and to Lancaster to the west. The Pennsylvania Turnpike, Interstate 176, and PA Route 10 serve a broader area for movement of people and goods, linking Elverson to points along the Turnpike, Reading, and southwestern Chester County.

Source: CCPC, 2013.

In addition to the Borough's own Livingood Park and National Register Historic District, there are several significant heritage and recreational attractions within easy traveling distance for Borough residents. State Game Lands Number 43 is located immediately to the northeast. Joanna Furnace, French Creek State Park, Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site and Warwick County Park are all located within ten miles. Recreation attractions in the broader area include Marsh Creek State Park and two Chester County parks (Springton Manor Farm and Hibernia County Park). Elverson is situated in the southern portion of the Hopewell Big Woods, which encompasses portions of Berks, Montgomery, and Chester counties. The Hopewell Big Woods is the largest unbroken forest area in southeastern Pennsylvania, and a critical natural area.

Community facilities within or in close proximity to Elverson include the St. Joseph Health Network Urgent and Outpatient Care, Twin Valley Fire Company, and the Twin Valley schools. Morgantown Aero Corp Airport is approximately two miles west of Elverson. Other community facilities are located further from Elverson, including police service and hospitals.

Relationship to *Landscapes2*

Chester County's Comprehensive Policy Plan *Landscapes2*, adopted in 2009, designates the vast majority of Elverson Borough as an Urban Landscape, with Elverson's far northern corner being a Rural Landscape (see Figure 1-2). The Natural Landscape overlay is most prevalent in the northern portion of the Borough. The areas surrounding Elverson are largely Rural and Agricultural landscapes. These countywide categories are defined as follows.

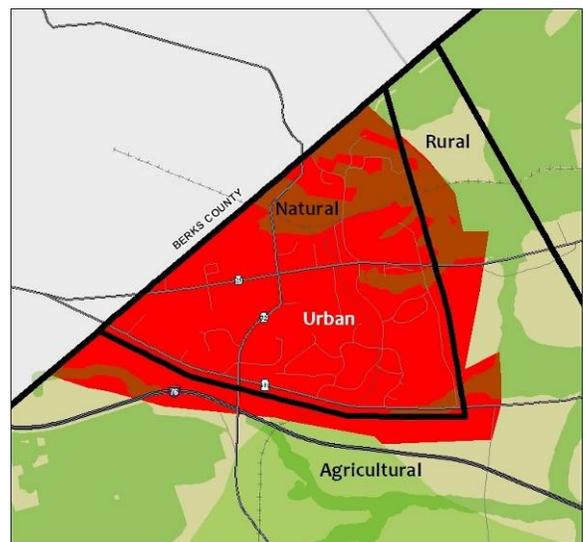
The **Urban Landscape** is one of three landscapes (also including Suburban and Suburban Center) that make up the County's Growth Areas. Urban Landscapes include historic population centers that typically have a development pattern of grid streets and alleys. These places serve as centers for commerce and civic and cultural activities for the surrounding area. They have a pedestrian orientation with sidewalk systems. While Elverson is not as densely developed as some other Urban Landscapes in Chester County, the Borough has the pedestrian orientation and street and lot pattern of an urban area.

The **Rural Landscape** is characterized by open space dominated by woodland and other open areas. It contains agriculture and scattered residential lots and subdivisions on relatively large lots or with protected common open space. There is an auto-oriented land use pattern with limited non-residential uses. Development is primarily served by on-lot sewer and water systems.

The **Agricultural Landscape** is dominated by a concentration of active farms, Agricultural Security Areas in proximity to farms, large clusters of land permanently protected by agricultural easements, and areas with municipal commitment to adopt effective agricultural zoning. This landscape is predominantly located in western Chester County, where the character is more similar to the large agricultural area in Lancaster and Berks counties than to the Philadelphia metropolitan area. This landscape is not planned to accommodate future projected growth.

The **Natural Landscape** is an overlay that contains the highest concentrations of important natural resources such as streams, floodplains, and forests. These resources are essential elements of the physical environment and the foundation for the livability of all landscapes. The Natural Landscape overlay does not preclude all development or agricultural operations, but indicates major areas of natural resources that should be protected or subject to limited disturbance.

Figure 1-2: *Landscapes2* Designations



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