

IMAGINE FRANKLIN 2035

FRANKLIN COUNTY, PA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



VISION AND MISSION OF THE PLAN



VISION

FRANKLIN COUNTY WILL BE A PLACE THAT EMBRACES AN EVER-CHANGING FUTURE WHILE RESPECTING OUR HISTORY AND TREASURING OUR SMALL TOWNS AND NATURAL LANDSCAPES TO MAKE SURE OUR COMMUNITY IS WELCOMING, AND EVERY RESIDENT HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROSPER AND THRIVE.

CORE MISSION

FRANKLIN COUNTY WILL STRIVE TO MEET OUR VISION BY ACTIVELY PURSUING THE FOLLOWING: ENSURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE WHERE PEOPLE CAN LIVE HEALTHY, FULFILLED LIVES APPLYING A BALANCED APPROACH TO GROWTH WHERE WE PROTECT OUR SENSITIVE NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY, AND LEGACY BUSINESSES WHILE GROWING SUSTAINABLY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR FUTURE POPULACE DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE POLICIES THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS THAT STRIVE TO BENEFIT ALL RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTY.



IMAGINE FRANKLIN 2035 FRANKLIN COUNTY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Imagine Franklin 2035, adopted by the Board of Commissioners on September 27, 2023, serves as the official policy guide for short-term and long-term decision making relative to priority investments in Franklin County over the next 10+ years. At its core purpose, a comprehensive plan is intended to answer the question, “What is the county’s plan and vision moving forward for the next decade?” Through the planning process, comprehensive plans allow elected officials, staff, and residents to take a step back and look at the big picture to form a strategic and targeted plan for local initiatives and investments.

The plan was developed over the course of about 16 months starting in early 2022 with extensive public outreach and engagement, facilitated in a hybrid virtual and in-person format. Based on public input, a vision statement and seven prominent areas of focus, or “issues,” were identified as priorities for the next 10 years. The issues are stated as goals with recommendations for each and are not listed in any priority order.





Steering Committee Kick-Off

A steering committee of community members representing a variety of sectors and backgrounds kicked off the plan update and continued to offer guidance throughout the development of the plan.

Focus Groups & Municipal Meetings

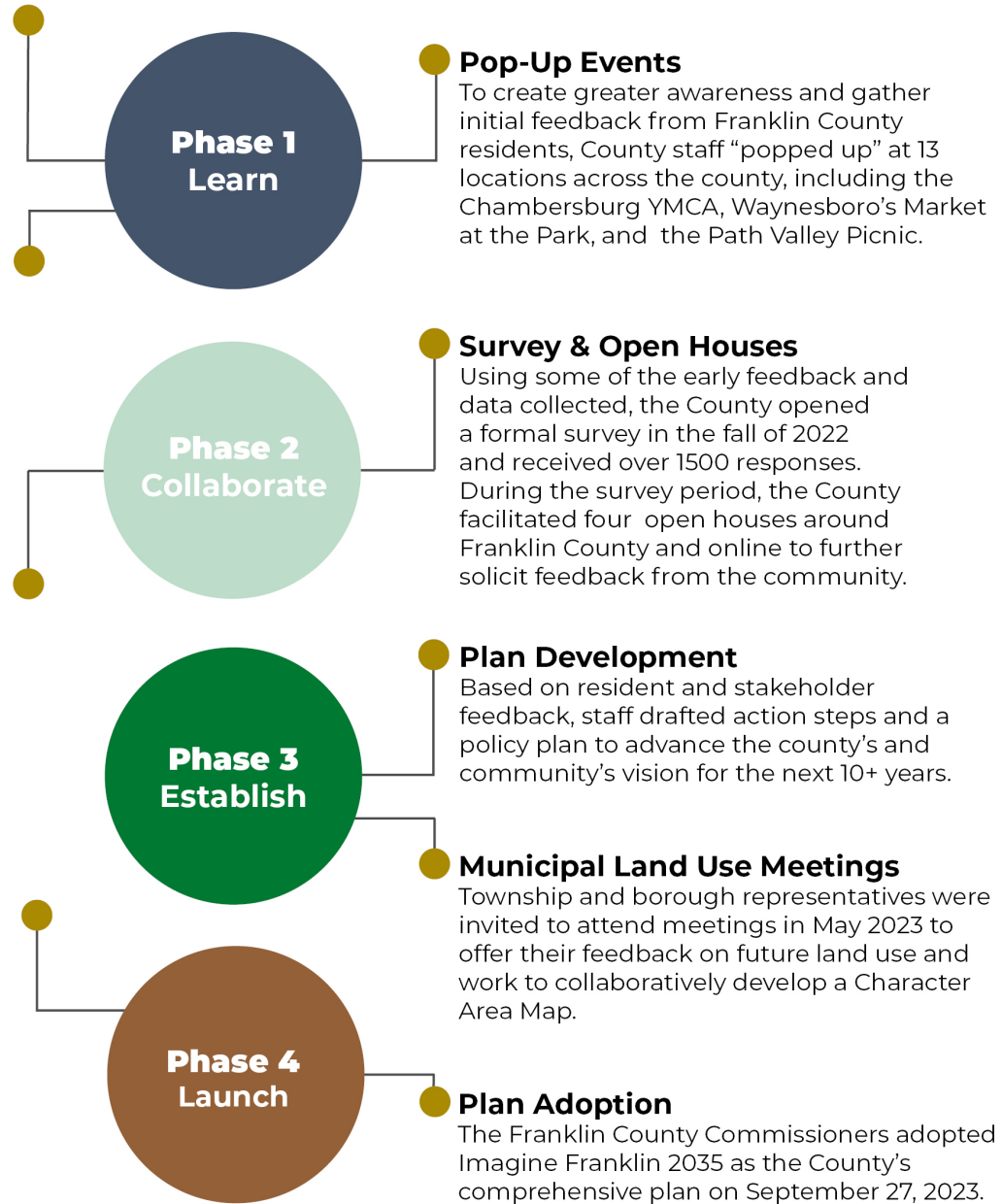
The County facilitated seven focus group meetings with various community stakeholders to receive targeted feedback on issues that are currently impacting or may soon impact the county. Township and borough representatives were also invited to a series of meetings to share the issues they see in Franklin County.

One-On-One Interviews

Key community stakeholders were invited to participate in one-on-one calls to discuss their experiences and feedback with concerns facing Franklin County communities.

Draft Plan Released

The County released a draft of Imagine Franklin 2035 on July 28, 2023 for a 45-day public comment period. The County also invited the public to review the draft at two open houses on August 8, 2023.



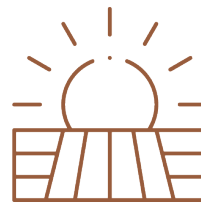


GOALS



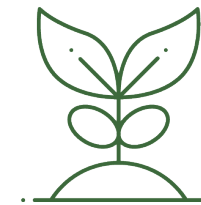
QUALITY OF PLACE

1. Create a strong sense of place within our historic urban centers by activating underutilized and vacant spaces and supporting economic vitality.
2. Ensure our transportation network supports our goals.



QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Provide community facilities in concert with our approach to future growth.
2. Support human services that work to help people improve their lives and their livelihood.
3. Provide access to quality housing that meet the needs of a growing community.



QUALITY OF GROWTH

1. Expand attainable housing options.
2. Strengthen opportunities to grow our workforce and educational assets.
3. Balance growth opportunities that provide housing and business development to support future populations with preservation of the county's scenic beauty and natural resources.



OUR FOCUS



LAND USE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Franklin County will impact quality of place, quality of life, and quality of growth through acting on the following:

- Support protection of farmlands
- Support protection of natural areas
- Promote development patterns consistent with the county's Character Area Map



HOUSING

Franklin County will support quality of life and quality of growth for residents by supporting the following actions:

- Create a Local Housing Best Practices Toolkit to assist municipalities and developers in planning and zoning for attainable housing
- Expand tools and resources that will support the goals of Imagine Franklin 2035 particularly in instances where urban centers are impacted
- Promote multi-municipal and regional planning and zoning that supports a fair, coordinated distribution of housing choices across the county



WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

Franklin County will create quality of growth through strengthening opportunities to grow our workforce and educational assets by doing the following:

- Confront the childcare and transportation barriers that hinder the workforce participation of working families, low-income citizens, and citizens with disabilities
- Provide housing options to meet the needs of Franklin County's current and future workforce
- Improve the delivery of workforce training and worker availability by addressing regulatory, licensing, and funding burdens that create obstacles for businesses, employees, schools and students
- Attract and retain employees by developing agile organizations as well as private and public sector employers that balance the needs of different types of workers and employers to find common ground and maximize positive outcomes for both



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Franklin County will build quality of place, quality of life, and quality of growth by doing the following:

- Broaden and publicize recycling opportunities
- Support the Adams and Franklin County Broadband Study outcomes
- Balanced approach to renewable energy development
- Promote and encourage outdoor recreation and park system development
- Support implementation of Franklin County's Emergency Management Plan



STRENGTHENING OUR URBAN CENTERS

Franklin County will create quality of place through acting on the following:

- Create a Development Best Practices Toolkit to assist municipalities and developers in planning and zoning for context sensitive design
- Expand tools and resources that will support the goals of Imagine Franklin 2035 particularly in instances where municipalities have the most influence
- Promote Historic Preservation resources and support for main street redevelopment
- Promote multi-municipal planning and zoning to support an equitable and the coordinated distribution of land uses throughout the county



HUMAN SERVICES

Franklin County will enhance the quality of life for people living in the County through following through with these initiatives:

- Support state and local efforts to expand funding for and improve childcare services throughout the county
- Support Franklin County Human Services Division



FUTURE LAND USE – CHARACTER AREA

The Franklin County Future Character Area Map (CAM) is designed to help guide growth and resource preservation for Franklin County communities over the next 10 years. The map reflects six categories, four in the Growth Areas and two in the Rural Resource Areas that are designed to promote development within areas with sufficient infrastructure to support growth while preserving areas of significant natural resources, prime farmland, and protected open space. Special Overlays identify areas within the county that are unique in their design and use of space.

Collectively these areas define Franklin County’s unique development patterns and history. Smart growth planning principles and design standards accompany each character area to cover the three themes of the county Comprehensive Plan: Quality of Life, Quality of Place, and Quality of Growth. Development in the respective character areas that is consistent with the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan will exhibit these principles and collectively benefit the environment, community, and businesses.

GROWTH AREAS

The four classifications within Growth Areas are designed to preserve existing developed areas while allowing for growth to occur in areas that have or are planned for a full array of public infrastructure.

- Urban Center - Historic downtowns and boroughs that represent centers of economic activity and population density.
- Suburban Center - Predominantly regional centers of economic activity containing multiple land uses of varying degrees of intensity.
- Suburban - These areas are predominantly residential communities with locally oriented commercial uses and community facilities.
- Rural Center - Rural, unincorporated villages with limited access to major infrastructure, such as public water or sewer and interstates.

RURAL RESOURCE AREAS

Rural Resource Areas include two character area classifications focused on conservation of natural resources and agricultural industries while supporting rural living.

- Rural - Open and wooded lands with scattered villages, farms, and residential uses.
- Agricultural - Large concentrations of high-quality soils and active and diverse farm operations along with related support services.

SPECIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT

Letterkenny Army Depot Overlay to identify the boundaries of this unique community asset



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

These represent the areas that should be considered as part of the development or investment decision making process. Consideration should be given to potential and appropriateness of growth, if preservation is a focus, existing land use patterns, and the current and legacy costs of infrastructure.

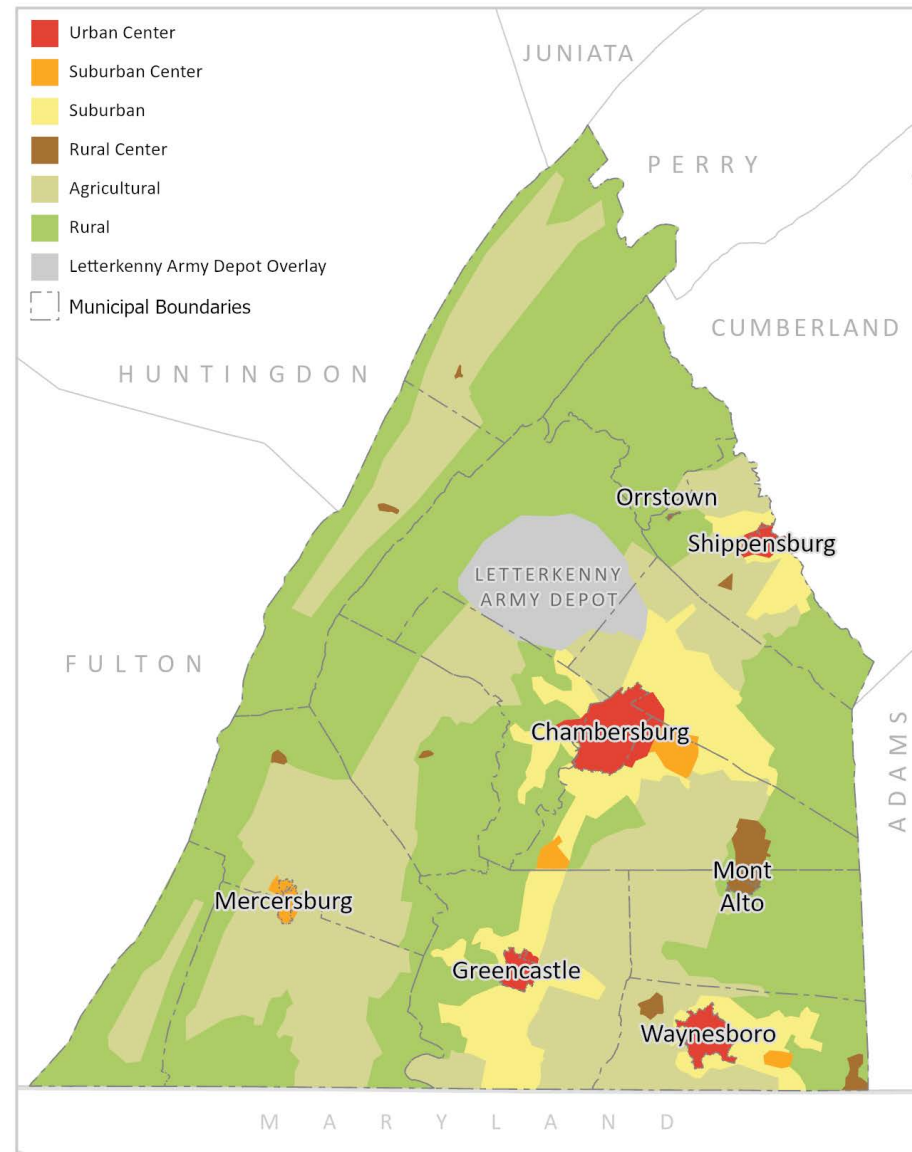
DESIGN ELEMENTS

Design elements that are anticipated for different character areas include the building character, appropriate site amenities, and transportation that compliments the current or future development patterns.

Development of this map has taken into consideration the following elements:

1. The adjacent land uses of neighboring municipalities and counties have been considered and that the Character Area Map is generally consistent with proposed future land use plans in contiguous areas in Adams, Cumberland, Fulton, Huntingdon, Perry, and Juniata counties in Pennsylvania and Washington and Frederick Counties in Maryland.
2. That environmentally constrained areas such as steep slopes and floodplain have been incorporated, where relevant, into the Rural Resource areas of the CAM.

Franklin County Character Area Map (CAM)



FC GIS 7/11/2023



3-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

To support the implementation of Imagine Franklin 2035 and achieve the goals for the county, a 3-Year Implementation Strategy was developed which details the strategies and actions that are necessary in the short term. This Implementation Strategy is designed to provide tangible and realistic steps that the County and strategic partners should initiate over the next three years to meet the goals of the community. The Implementation Strategy will be reviewed annually for progress and to take necessary course corrections where barriers to achieving desired outcomes exist. Through these progress reviews, the plan becomes a living document that can evolve as new ideas or influences undiscovered today are later revealed.

ACHIEVING THE COMMUNITY'S VISION

A large share of the recommended actions of Imagine Franklin 2035 fall to the county government and its departments for implementation. However, the plan is not intended to be solely administered by the government. Many actions will require the coordinated efforts of the public, private, and non-profit organizations as well as the individuals that make up the community. Active community participation is necessary to ensure that the vision of the community set out in Imagine Franklin 2035 is achieved.

CONTACT

For more information, please contact:

Steve Thomas, AICP
Planning Director
Franklin County Planning Department
272 N. Second Street
Chambersburg, PA 17201
sjthomas@franklincountypa.gov
(717) 261-3855