

LAND USE

The character of established communities like Lansdowne and East Lansdowne is determined to a large extent by the uses to which land is devoted. The fact that both Boroughs are essentially fully developed serves as a limitation on new planning proposals. The emphasis of land use planning should therefore be to preserve existing desirable development, ensure that new development is compatible with the existing, and generally enhance community character by establishing effective guidelines and controls concerning design, access, screening, signage, environment, walkability and property maintenance.

This chapter will provide both an inventory of existing land uses and offer proposals for future land uses. To accomplish this, progressive but realistic planning steps must be taken towards achieving these goals. Recommendations for land use and zoning ordinance revisions are identified in the Future Land Use section. This chapter also includes discussions of the relationship between the future land use map and the zoning map, an explanation of the relationship of this plan to plans of adjacent communities, and an outline of the consistency mandates contained in the 2000 amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247. As this chapter unfolds, the various objectives and recommendations offered will represent a coherent approach to addressing the existing and future land use needs of Lansdowne and East Lansdowne.

<p>GOAL: <i>Maintain the Boroughs as attractive, stable, and blight-free residential communities that offer a mix of housing, service, recreational, and leisure options, and revitalize Baltimore Avenue through coordinated zoning and land development and economic development initiatives.</i></p>

EXISTING LAND USE

In order to adequately plan for the future it is important to first inventory and analyze existing land use. In the summer of 2003, DCPD conducted a series of land use surveys to collect data on the type, location, and distribution of land uses throughout the Boroughs. The following is a breakdown and description of land uses as they existed in 2003.

Residential

Residential uses are the most significant in the study area, accounting for 87% of the total land area in East Lansdowne and 74% in Lansdowne. Within the category, single-family detached dwellings are the largest use. This use can be found in all sections of the Boroughs with the exception of Baltimore Avenue from the Central Business district in Lansdowne to the intersection of Baltimore Avenue and Long Lane in East Lansdowne.

Single-family semi-detached (twin and duplex) dwellings are the second largest use, accounting for 37% and 27% of the total land area in East Lansdowne and Lansdowne respectively. In Lansdowne, this use is concentrated mainly in the northwest, the area in and around Gladstone Manor in the southwest, and in a number of blocks in the eastern section of the Borough. In East Lansdowne twins and duplexes are distributed fairly evenly throughout the Borough.

Apartments and multi-family dwellings are the next largest use. In East Lansdowne 8.5% of the land is devoted to this use while it accounts for 14.8% of the land in Lansdowne. It should be noted that this use also includes residential conversions, which make up about two thirds of this category. Residential conversions are scattered throughout Lansdowne with concentrations on Rigby Avenue north of Baltimore Avenue, Lacrosse Avenue between Long Lane and Wycombe Ave and the two-block area between Owen Avenue and Windermere Avenue (east/west) and Stratford Avenue and Baltimore Avenue (north/south).

A very small percentage of the total land area (less than 3%) is devoted to single-family attached dwellings or row homes. These dwellings are concentrated mainly in the northeast and southeast sections of Lansdowne.

Commercial

Less than 4% of the total land area in the two Boroughs is devoted to commercial uses. Commercial uses in the study area are concentrated in the Lansdowne central business district, which extends along Lansdowne Avenue from Stewart Avenue to the railroad tracks and along Baltimore Avenue from Owen Avenue in Lansdowne to Long Lane in East Lansdowne. In addition there are a number of neighborhood shopping areas located on Shadeland Avenue between Drexel and Berkley Avenues; on Marshall Road between Windermere and Owen Avenues; and on Plumstead Avenue between Braddock Avenue and Marshall Road in Lansdowne. There are also a few scattered commercial uses along Long Lane in East Lansdowne.

Industrial

Less than one percent of the total land in the study area is used for industrial uses. The only such uses are light industrial uses such as warehousing, light manufacturing and processing and these are located in the southeast section Lansdowne in the vicinity of Union Avenue south of Baltimore Avenue. It should be noted however, that a significant number of industrial establishments exist in Upper Darby Township along Union Avenue south of Baltimore Avenue and on the south side of Baltimore Avenue from Hirst Avenue to Long Lane.



Residential uses account for 87% of the total land area in East Lansdowne Borough and 74% of the total land area in Lansdowne



Less than 4% of the total land area in the Boroughs is devoted to commercial uses

**TABLE 9-1
EXISTING LAND USE 2003**

Land Use	East Lansdowne		Lansdowne		Combined	
	Acreage	Percent of Total Land	Acreage	Percent of Total Land	Acreage	Percent of Total Land
Single-family detached	48.4	48.0%	264.0	42.5%	312.4	43.1%
Single-family semi-detached	33.2	33.0%	118.6	19.1%	151.7	21.0%
Single-family Attached	0.0	0.0%	10.4	1.7%	10.5	1.5%
Multi-Family	7.2	7.0%	16.4	2.6%	23.6	3.3%
Apartment	0.6	0.6%	26.1	4.2%	26.7	4.0%
Conversion	0.0	0.0%	26.0	4.2%	26.0	3.6%
Mixed Use	1.6	1.5%	8.0	1.3%	9.6	1.3%
Commercial	4.0	4.0%	23.6	3.9%	27.6	3.8%
Office	0.0	0.0%	2.2	0.4%	2.2	0.3%
Institutional	5.1	4.7%	25.6	4.1%	30.7	4.2%
Light Industrial	0.5	0.5%	4.4	0.7%	4.8	0.7%
Recreation	0.0	0.0%	37.6	6.0%	37.6	5.2%
Open Space	0.0	0.0%	36.4	5.9%	36.4	5.0%
Parking Lot	0.1	0.1%	2.9	0.5%	3.0	0.4%
Vacant	0.7	0.7%	4.3	0.7%	5.0	0.7%
Utility	0.0	0.0%	12.8	2.1%	12.8	1.8%
TOTALS	101.3	100%	619.3	100%	720.6	100%

Source: DCPD Land Use Survey, 2003.

Institutional

Institutional uses are those that are operated for a public or quasi-public purpose. Institutional uses include municipal properties, government offices, schools and other educational facilities, churches, firehouses and police stations. These uses account for around 4% of the total land area in the Boroughs.

Open Space and Recreation

All of the open space and recreation areas in the study area are located in Lansdowne. These uses account for just over 10% of the total land area and take the form of open space areas along Darby Creek and numerous parks and ball fields scattered throughout Lansdowne.

Vacant

It is clear from the table and figures that the Boroughs are almost fully “developed”. Furthermore, although some new development will occur, it is not likely that there will be significant changes to existing land use patterns in the Boroughs. Undeveloped or vacant land use is listed as less than 1 percent of the total land area. These few parcels, typically quite small, are dispersed throughout the Boroughs and not concentrated in any one location.

FUTURE LAND USE

Objective 9-1: Maintain the Boroughs as attractive, stable, and blight-free communities that are pedestrian friendly, with distinct residential neighborhoods containing a variety of housing types, and vibrant commercial areas.

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is the fundamental component of the comprehensive plan and is intended to provide a general framework for guiding decisions of Borough Council concerning land use and community development. It is considerate of the patterns of existing development but not constrained by it.

Recommendations for future land use are the essence of the comprehensive plan. These proposals indicate the type of land use determined most appropriate for the respective parcels or land areas. These recommendations are based on several factors that include the existing land use patterns, size, shape, and slope of parcel, traffic volume and accessibility, floodplain, condition of existing and nearby structures, and other considerations.

The FLUM is not a zoning map. It is a comprehensive planning tool designed to assist the Boroughs in their comprehensive planning and zoning efforts. Because the FLUM is based on studies of various factors, such as adjacent land use, zoning, topography, access, etc., it provides a justification for a zoning map that should be generally consistent with the FLUM. Similarly, a zoning map that is based on a well-conceived Future Land Use Map has a much stronger legal standing and validity than one not based on a comprehensive study.

The following categories are the conceptual groupings displayed on the FLUM and should provide the basis for any zoning ordinance revisions that follow the completion of this Plan. (See Future Land Use Map).

Future Land Use Categories

Residential

There are four residential categories on the future land use map: low-density residential, medium-density residential, medium-high density residential, and high-density residential. The **low-density** category essentially follows the existing pattern of development and covers areas with concentrations of larger single-family detached dwellings. North of Baltimore Avenue, this category covers the area bounded by Berkley Avenue and Stratford Avenue to the north and south and Shadeland Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue to the east and west. South of Baltimore Avenue, much of the area along Scottdale Road and the area east of Lansdowne Avenue, below Scottdale Road are also shown as low-density on the FLUM.

The **medium-density** category is made up of single-family detached and single-family semi-detached dwellings. This category covers the majority of East Lansdowne and the following areas in Lansdowne: north of Berkley between Windermere and Shadeland Avenues; along Ardmore and Willowbrook Avenues and the Gladstone manor area; in the southeast section of Lansdowne; and in the eastern section of the Borough north of Baltimore Avenue up to Greenwood Avenue.

The **medium-high density** category covers single-family semi-detached, single-family attached and multi-family dwellings. The northeastern section and a small section one block south of Baltimore Avenue in Lansdowne are represented by this category.

High-density residential refers to apartment building and condominiums and this use is generally encouraged in areas surrounding the Lansdowne CBD and in close proximity to the Lansdowne train station and Gladstone Station.

Central Business District (CBD)

The Lansdowne CBD category is intended to function as the Borough's mixed-use activity center, with an emphasis on retail and commercial uses supported by a limited amount of public, institutional as well as residential uses (above first floor).

The CBD also functions as an important transportation center, yet with an emphasis on its pedestrian scale and character. The heart of the CBD is at the intersection of Baltimore and Lansdowne Avenues. Its boundaries extend from Scottdale Road to the south to Stewart Avenue to the north and along Baltimore Avenue from Owen Avenue to Wycombe Avenue.

Baltimore Avenue Commercial

The emphasis of this category is on pedestrian-oriented, human-scale retail, office, and commercial uses. This category extends along Baltimore Avenue from Wycombe Avenue in Lansdowne to Long Lane in East Lansdowne.

General Commercial

This category is intended for auto-oriented, higher-impact commercial uses such as auto repair and servicing and light industrial uses such as light manufacturing and processing, warehousing and other non-nuisance uses. This category is located in the southeast section of Lansdowne off of Union Avenue between Baltimore Avenue and the railroad. The proximity to the railroad and the nature of the adjacent, industrial uses in Upper Darby make this an appropriate location for this designation.

Neighborhood Commercial

This is intended for small-scale retail and service to serve nearby residential neighborhoods. Uses would be restricted in size to promote a local orientation and limit

adverse impacts on nearby residential areas. Development is intended to be pedestrian-oriented and compatible with the scale of surrounding structures. Parking areas are restricted, since their appearance is generally out of character with the surrounding residential development and the desired orientation of the uses. This is similar to the “B-3 Neighborhood Commercial District” proposed in Lansdowne’s previous comprehensive plan and it encompasses the same areas. This category also designates the area along Church Lane/Long Lane in East Lansdowne.

Open Space

This category includes areas that should be preserved as passive open space such as wooded areas and areas along creeks and streams. These areas are concentrated along Scottdale Road in Lansdowne.

Recreation

This designates areas for active recreational uses such as parks, tot-lots, and skate parks. These uses are scattered throughout Lansdowne Borough.

Historic District

This district designates areas or neighborhoods that contain concentrations of structures with significant architectural character or that have local, regional, or national historic significance.

Institutional

Community facilities such as schools, churches, libraries, and government offices are all represented by this category.

KEY PROJECTS

Objective 9-2: To revitalize key commercial areas through redevelopment, targeted streetscape strategies and improvements, and zoning ordinance revisions.

Redevelop Commercial Areas

There are several sites within the Baltimore Avenue corridor and Lansdowne’s CBD that are vacant or underutilized. Many of these sites are aging, deteriorating structures on small lots. The redevelopment of these sites would increase tax revenue and enhance the vitality of the commercial areas in the Boroughs. To encourage private investment and enable efficient site development, the Boroughs should prepare redevelopment area plans to facilitate property acquisition and increase the marketability of key commercial areas.

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

The Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law provides that for an area to be designated as a *redevelopment area* it must present some or all of the following characteristics of blight enumerated by law:

- Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded conditions on dwellings therein;
- Inadequate planning of the area;
- Excessive land coverage of the buildings thereon;
- Lack of proper light and open space;
- Defective design and arrangement of buildings thereon;
- Faulty street and lot layout; or
- Economically or socially undesirable land use.

In early 2004, Lansdowne began a project to prepare a redevelopment area plan for the CBD and Baltimore Avenue. East Lansdowne should consider preparing a redevelopment area plan for Baltimore Avenue from Hirst Avenue to Long Lane. This is a mixed-use area with mainly commercial uses at street level and residential uses above. There are several vacant or underutilized sites in this area and many of the lots are small and narrow with insufficient parking.



Baltimore Avenue in East Lansdowne

Map 9-1 – Key Projects

Improve Long Lane Commercial Area

Long Lane, which runs north south along the eastern boundary of East Lansdowne, is a well-traveled route connecting the 69th Street Area in Upper Darby Township to Baltimore Avenue. It is also a gateway into the Borough. The northernmost section of Long Lane in East Lansdowne, at the intersection with Lewis and Glenwood, is the location of a small neighborhood commercial area consisting of first floor commercial and second floor apartments. Presently, there are no pedestrian amenities and an unattractive streetscape provides a poor first impression for drivers entering the Borough from the north and likely discourages shoppers from patronizing the stores.

East Lansdowne should create a more attractive entranceway and neighborhood commercial area through targeted streetscape improvements and by alteration of the types of uses allowed in the area. Current zoning permits a variety of high impact commercial uses including auto repair and service and gas stations. These are not appropriate uses given the residential nature of surrounding neighborhoods. Appropriate uses for this area would be small-scale retail and service uses and eat-in restaurants. Zoning should be revised to encourage this type of development (see *Zoning Ordinance Revisions* section of this chapter).



Long Lane is a major gateway into East Lansdowne. The addition of pedestrian amenities and some other streetscape improvements would greatly enhance the areas appearance and improve safety

To enhance the streetscape, improvements for this area should include:

- *Gateway Signage:* Install an attractive gateway sign to signal to visitors that they are entering East Lansdowne. A possible location could be on the JFK Memorial site as the Borough already owns and maintains it.
- *Textured, raised, or “continental” crosswalks at stop signs:* Install more visible crosswalks where Long Lane intersects with Lewis and with Glenwood to slow drivers and create a more inviting environment for pedestrians. The crosswalks would also provide a safer environment for residents of adjacent neighborhoods to patronize the stores.
- *Streetlights:* Human-scale streetlights create a safer nighttime environment for residents while improving the overall appearance of an area.
- *Curb bumpouts and wider sidewalks:* Install curb bumpouts at stop signs to reduce the distance pedestrians must travel to cross the street thereby improving safety.

The Borough should also consider partnering with Upper Darby Township to implement a façade improvement program to improve storefronts along Long Lane. It is important to note that the Renaissance Action Plan for Planning Area 5 (see *Delaware County Renaissance Program* section in this chapter) recommends that East Lansdowne and Upper Darby Township conduct an engineering study and reconstruct Long Lane. This project should be coordinated with the Renaissance Action Plan initiative.

Reclaim Important Community Corners

The first thing you see when you enter East Lansdowne traveling either way on Baltimore Avenue is a gas station. There are many problems with this situation. On a commercial street, corners are points of interest and set the tone for the entire block. In East Lansdowne, these corners are particularly important as they are at the entranceways to the community. Aesthetically, having gas stations at these important intersections creates a poor image of the Borough to commuters passing through. Pedestrian safety is also an issue. Both gas stations have large curb cuts spanning almost the entire length of the properties, to allow easy ingress and egress for motorists. These curb cuts break up the sidewalk and create major points of conflict for pedestrians.

Current zoning allows gas stations by special exception. The Borough should eliminate this type of use on Baltimore Avenue and encourage more pedestrian-oriented, retail/commercial uses. Potential options for reuse could be investigated further as part of a redevelopment area plan.

Gateway Park

The vacant site at the southeast corner of Scottdale Road and Baltimore Avenue presents a great opportunity to develop a “gateway park”. The easternmost section of the site currently contains a small welcome sign for vehicular travelers arriving into the Borough on Baltimore Avenue. Having natural wooded land cover on both sides of Baltimore

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

Avenue for a short stretch creates a positive entrance into Lansdowne while it breaks up the commercial nature of Baltimore Avenue. The property to the south of the vacant site currently belongs to a flower shop which occupies a small part of the lot, with the rest being left undeveloped in its natural state.

The parkland would be a passive park included in a Darby Creek Greenway that could be planned in detail as part of the *Multi-municipal Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan*. An existing plan, the *Darby Creek Stream Valley Park Master Plan* (1987) has already proposed a trail through many municipalities in this portion of Darby Creek. An established trail and signage would be included in the new plan, as this could be the central information point for the greenway and a gateway for Lansdowne Borough. A trail easement has been recommended in this plan for the swim club property on Falls Run. To extend a trail down to Hoffman Park, there would need to be road crossings with signage and/or striping. To cross Baltimore Avenue on the east, and Scottdale/Burmout Road on the south would present the least conflict with heavy traffic, but would involve making an arrangement with the current owner of the vacant site. Also of note is the fact that a portion of the vacant site is in the 100-year floodplain, making it undevelopable.



Vacant lot at the intersection of Baltimore Avenue and Scottdale Road provides a great opportunity for a passive recreational opportunity such as a gateway park

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

9-1 Lansdowne should continue to work with the consultant team to prepare a Redevelopment Area Plan for the Lansdowne CBD and Baltimore Avenue.

9-2 Lansdowne should work with the Delaware County Redevelopment Authority to implement the completed Redevelopment Area Plan.

Funding: Delaware County Redevelopment Authority

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Redevelopment Authority

9-3 Lansdowne should actively pursue private developers to work with the Borough and the Delaware County Redevelopment Authority to redevelop specific sites in the CBD and on Baltimore Avenue.

Funding: Delaware County Redevelopment Authority

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Redevelopment Authority

9-4 East Lansdowne should consider preparing a Redevelopment Area Plan for Baltimore Avenue between Hirst Avenue and Long Lane.

Funding: Renaissance Program

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Redevelopment Authority
DCPD Policy Section

9-5 Lansdowne should acquire or gain access to the vacant parcels on the southeast corner of the intersection of Baltimore Avenue and Scottdale Road for use as a gateway park and a pedestrian link between recreational amenities north of Baltimore Avenue and Darby Creek and Hoffman Park south of Baltimore Avenue.

Funding: Urban Open Space and Recreation Fund
Community Conservation Partnerships Program

Technical Assistance: DCPD Environmental Section

BALTIMORE AVENUE CORRIDOR

Objective 9-3: Revitalize the Baltimore Avenue corridor through a coordinated approach to land use and development and unified design standards.

Commercial corridors have been the subject of derision for decades, yet the features that characterize these areas have not changed much over the years. Today’s corridors, like yesterday’s strips, drags, and ribbon-type development, share a number of common components. Among the characteristics that have come to epitomize the common commercial corridor are:

- Numerous large freestanding signs and portable signs;
- Large expanses of unscreened surface parking;
- Little or no landscaping of public or private property;
- Few or no pedestrian improvements;
- Aboveground utilities and overhead lights;
- Numerous poorly delineated and closely spaced driveway access points, and;
- A generally uncoordinated approach to the design, location, and planning of various public and private improvements.

Visually, commercial corridors often lack a sense of organizational structure, and often this “confusion” reflects poorly on the community. Frequently, the development that occurs within these corridors bears no relationship to the character or architectural styles present in the rest of the community. This is true to a certain extent in both Boroughs Lansdowne and East Lansdowne; although the Boroughs have been able to preserve a reasonable amount of community character along Baltimore Avenue. This is reflected in the presence of structures such as the 1925 bank building and the municipal building in Lansdowne and the Queen Anne style architecture still visible in East Lansdowne. Moreover, commercial corridors often contain all the same national fast-food franchises, gas station chains, and large retail stores, making one community’s commercial corridor indistinguishable from the next. A prime example of this can be found on Baltimore Avenue less than 2 miles west of Lansdowne in Springfield. Here the road widens to 5 lanes (two lanes of traffic each way and a designated turning lane) and is flanked on either side with a multitude of large, garish signs all competing for attention – each one bigger, taller, and brighter than the next.

Pedestrian Amenities and Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements set the stage for private sector investment and signal to the business community that the governing body is serious about being a partner in sustaining the health of downtown. Since commercial corridors evolved to accommodate the automobile, it’s not surprising that pedestrian amenities are virtually nonexistent within the typical roadway corridor. Although Baltimore Avenue has remained relatively narrow (2 lanes) and sidewalks do exist along the majority of the corridor in the

Boroughs, most of the area consists of unattractive streetscapes and inadequate pedestrian amenities. Multiple curb cuts, poor condition sidewalks, no shade trees or landscaping, little or no street furniture and occasional deep building setbacks all contribute to an inhospitable pedestrian environment.

Attractive paving, tasteful pedestrian-oriented lighting, additional shade tree planting, curb bump-outs, and street furniture can dramatically improve the appearance of Baltimore Avenue. As the main thoroughfare through Lansdowne and East Lansdowne, an enhanced Baltimore Avenue will present a positive image to the thousands of commuters who pass through the Boroughs each day. As the symbolic heart of the communities, a renewed Baltimore Avenue can become an important source of civic pride. The design of the Baltimore Avenue streetscape should reflect the Boroughs' heritage as livable, walkable communities.



Multiple curb cuts, narrow sidewalks, large visible parking lots and a lack of landscaping creates an unattractive streetscape that is inhospitable to pedestrians

Parking

In order to properly manage parking supply and resolve the parking issues along Baltimore Avenue and in the Lansdowne CBD, the Boroughs should prepare a parking management plan. This plan should be the principal tool used by the Boroughs to address existing parking problems. The plan should provide the following information:

- Location, configuration, and condition of existing parking inventory
- Existing parking system operation, revenue, fine structure, and restrictions
- Current and future demand for on and off-street parking
- Strategies to increase the efficiency of the existing parking supply
- Recommendation regarding the development of new parking facilities (if necessary)
- Suggested sources of project financing

In the interim, some general approaches to resolving the problem can be identified. These include: (1) reducing demand for parking by encouraging walking, biking or transit and (2) increasing the efficiency of the existing parking supply. The following is an overview of how each of these approaches might apply to Lansdowne and East Lansdowne:

Reduce the demand for parking – Improving pedestrian linkages to Baltimore Avenue from other parts of the study area is one way to reduce demand for parking by encouraging people to walk. Enhancing bicycle safety by including bike routes/ lanes to the corridor is another option.

Increase the efficiency of the existing parking supply – Ways to increase the efficiency of existing parking supply include converting parallel parking to angled parking (Possibly in East Lansdowne on Baltimore Avenue); maximizing turnover through carefully designed and timed limitations; eliminating out-dated parking restrictions (such as redundant loading zones and other surplus or non-functional on-street parking restrictions); and promoting existing facilities (especially remote parking lots like the municipal lots in Lansdowne) with well-designed wayfinding and directional signage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

- 9-6 Update ordinances to include provisions for signs. The provisions should consider sign material, color, and shape and should discourage signs that are larger than, or out of proportion with, those on adjacent or nearby properties.
- 9-7 Improve the overall appearance of the corridor through façade and streetscape improvements, especially new pedestrian lighting and shade tree planting.

- Funding: Home Town Streets/Safe Routes to School
TEA-21
- 9-8 Prepare a sidewalk improvement plan.
- Funding: TEA-21
- Technical Assistance: DCPD Transportation Section
- 9-9 Prepare a comprehensive parking management plan to address downtown parking issues.
- 9-10 Implement the recommendations regarding streetscape quality and pedestrian amenities set forth in the *Baltimore Pike Corridor Revitalization Assessment, 2001* prepared by DVRPC.

DELAWARE COUNTY RENAISSANCE PROGRAM

Objective 9-4: Implement the Renaissance Action Plan for planning area 5.

In the fall of 2002, Delaware County Council initiated the Renaissance Program to reverse the trend of decline and begin revitalizing the County's first-generation municipalities. The aim of the program was to complete five-year action plans for each of the five planning areas in the southeastern portion of the County. Action Plans consist of a series of recommended implementation projects, intended to make the Renaissance Program municipalities more attractive, livable, safe, and economically viable. To receive implementation funding from Delaware County, Action Plan projects must address downtown economic development, housing, infrastructure, transportation, public safety, and other complementary elements such as streetscape improvements and historic preservation. The intent of the Renaissance Program is to recommend projects that have multiple impacts, and ideally, the Renaissance Program will foster regional cooperation through economic revitalization.

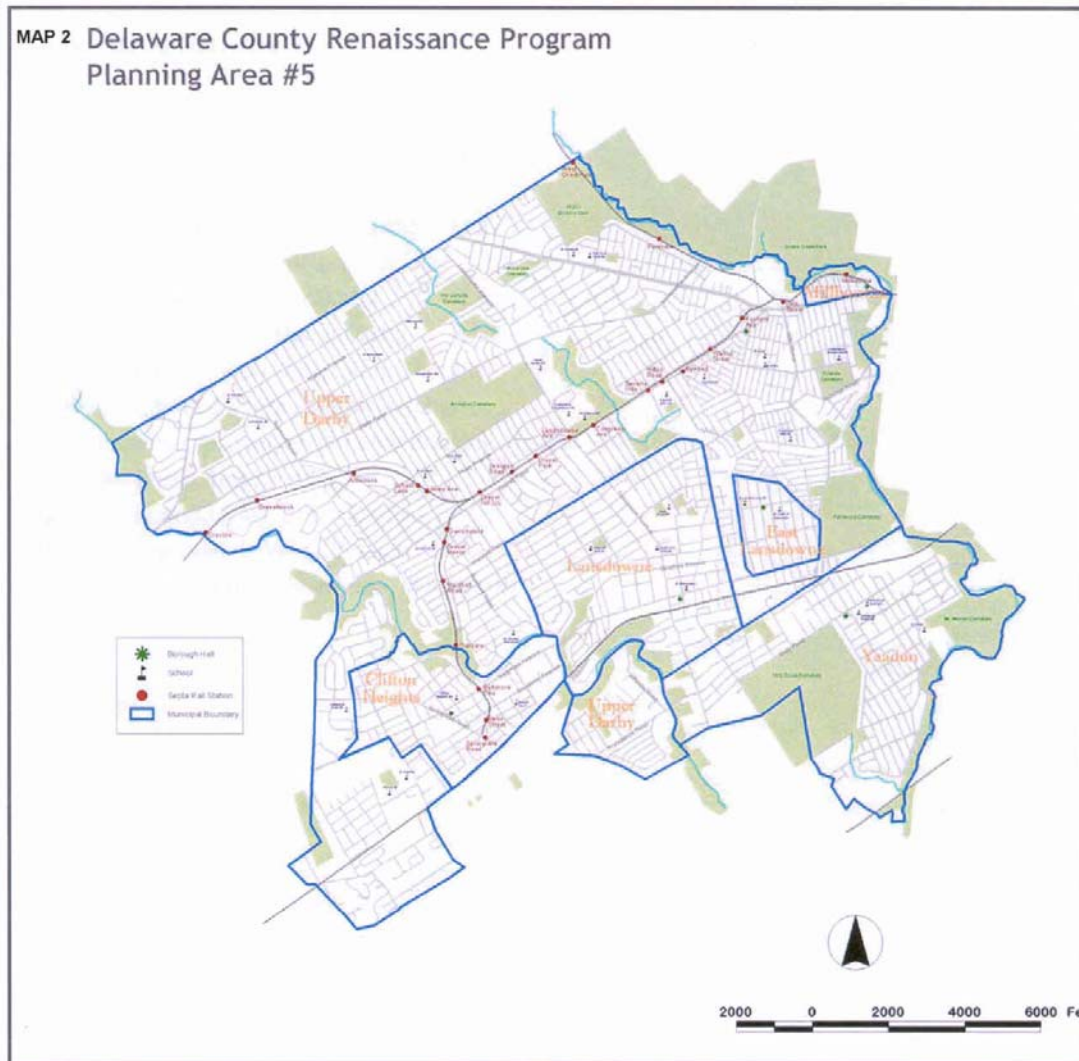
Lansdowne and East Lansdowne are in Renaissance Planning Area (RPA) 5 along with the Boroughs of Clifton Heights, Millbourne, and Yeadon and Upper Darby Township. Planning consultant Urban Partners was selected to work with the municipalities to develop the Renaissance Action Plan for RPA 5.

Renaissance Action Plan Vision Statement

- *Maintain and preserve the area's neighborhoods as communities of choice for homeowners;*
- *Revitalize Baltimore Pike in a coordinated way as a retail and employment center for all affected communities;*

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

- *Maintain and expand the communities' tax bases so that they have sufficient resources to support needed community services.*



Source: *Delaware County Renaissance Action Plan, Planning Area 5*; Urban Partners; 2003.

Key Action Plan Initiatives

Through the planning process the consultant worked with a task force made up of representatives from each of the municipalities in RPA 5 to develop a number of initiatives aimed at supporting the vision and goals of the municipalities in RPA 5. The initiatives are organized into four functional areas: Housing and Homeownership Support, Economic Development Project and Programs, Train Station Area Improvements, and Roadway and Infrastructure Improvements. Although each of the initiatives are intended to benefit the entire planning area, this comprehensive plan will only focus on the projects that directly involve Lansdowne and East Lansdowne. The

following is a summary of the key Action Plan initiatives involving Lansdowne and East Lansdowne.

Housing and Homeownership Support

The planning consultant recommended eight initiatives aimed at stabilizing the housing stock and increasing homeownership throughout RPA 5. All eight of the initiatives are intended to involve and ultimately benefit the Boroughs. The initiatives are as follows:

- Coordinated code enforcement
- Affordable home maintenance financing
- Affordable financing for homebuyers
- Absentee landlord reduction
- Abandoned housing redevelopment program
- Coordination of local code enforcement with Delaware County Housing Authority inspections
- Marketing the area to homebuyers
- Commercial and residential area parking and traffic safety issues

Economic Development Projects and Programs

Six initiatives were recommended to revitalize the Baltimore Avenue Corridor, attract businesses to the area, and improve access to higher wage employment opportunities. Four of the six initiatives directly benefit the Boroughs:

- Baltimore Avenue Corridor Economic Development
- Revitalize Lansdowne Avenue CBD
- Market the area to attract businesses
- Entrepreneur business incubator

Train Station Area Improvements

Two initiatives were recommended to attempt to increase the accessibility and usage of commuter lines and increase the development potential of the adjacent properties. The following initiative directly benefits Lansdowne:

- Lansdowne Train Station area improvements

Roadway and Infrastructure Improvements

Five initiatives were recommended to ease traffic flow and coordinate the improvements to the area's sewer system.

- Implement effective signal coordination
- Reconstruct Long Lane

- Widen Union and Nyack Avenues
- Coordinate sewer system improvement program
- County bid of street and sewer work

Action Plan Projects Approved in 2003

Following the completion of the Renaissance Action Plan in March 2003, the Boroughs submitted applications for consideration in the first round of Renaissance Program funding. Two projects were approved for funding in 2003 – the **Baltimore Avenue Corridor Economic Development** project and the **Abandoned Property Reuse/Refurbishment** project – resulting in grants totaling \$325,000.

The **Baltimore Avenue Economic Development** project involved the hiring of a full-time economic development specialist to coordinate redevelopment of the corridor by actively recruiting businesses and working regularly with realtors and existing businesses to assist with their needs. The specialist was hired by the Delaware County Commerce Center to work with the Eastern Delaware County Council of Governments (EDCOG), the RPA 5 municipalities, and other agencies to ensure an efficient implementation process.

The **Abandoned Property Reuse/ Refurbishment** project (or Abandoned Housing Redevelopment Program) involved hiring the Community Action Agency of Delaware County (CAADC) to develop an operating plan and method to get abandoned residential properties in RPA 5 back into active use. The specific activities to be undertaken with the Renaissance Program grant include:

- Develop 5 strategies to deal with:
 - Demolition of vacant or abandoned homes
 - Rehabilitation of vacant or abandoned homes with no subsidy
 - Rehabilitation of vacant or abandoned homes with light subsidy
 - Rehabilitation of vacant or abandoned homes with heavy subsidy, and
 - Evaluation of vacant parcels for potential new housing construction.
- Identify and investigate 2-5 homes in each municipality
- Prepare Plan of Action for each home, including photographs, researching ownership information, potential for rehabilitation or demolition, cost for same, and potential funding sources.
- Meet with several lending institutions and secure private line of credit for the program (after funding needs are determined)
- Prepare marketing plan for selling homes, based on various income levels and possible subsidies.

Action Plan Projects for 2004

In March 2004, the Boroughs collaborated with other municipalities participating in the EDCCOG to prepare and submit an application for consideration for 2004 Renaissance Program funding. The application is for a project comprising of two main components: coordinate zoning and land development along Baltimore Avenue and develop consistent design standards for the entire corridor from the Philadelphia boundary to Oak Avenue in Clifton Heights Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

- 9-11 Continue to work with other RPA 5 municipalities, the EDCCOG and the Economic Development Specialist for Baltimore Avenue to revitalize the Baltimore Avenue corridor.

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Commerce Center

- 9-12 Prioritize Action Plan projects and decide which projects to apply for funding for over the next 3 years (2005-2008).

- 9-13 Continue to implement the Renaissance Action Plan for Renaissance Planning Area 5.

Funding: Renaissance Program

Technical Assistance: OHCD
DCPD Policy Section

- 9-14 Review and revise the Renaissance Action Plan.

Funding: Renaissance Program

Technical Assistance: DCPD Policy Section
OHCD

ZONING ORDINANCE REVISIONS

Objective 9-5: Update zoning ordinances to be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan and to provide the framework for revitalization in the Boroughs.

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne are currently using zoning ordinances prepared in 1985 and 1995 respectively. In order to implement many of the recommendations set forth in

this Plan, the Boroughs should undertake a comprehensive revision of their zoning ordinances. In addition, the MPC requires that zoning ordinances be consistent with comprehensive plans. The MPC states:

Zoning ordinances adopted by municipalities shall be generally consistent with the municipal or multimunicipal comprehensive plan...(Article VI, Section 603(j))

The municipal zoning ordinance is the principal tool for implementing the comprehensive plan and can provide the framework for the preservation and revitalization of communities. Current zoning provisions do not provide for the right mix of uses in the Boroughs' commercial areas and do not adequately address urban design issues. New regulations are needed to impose character-defining design standards, provide for an appropriate mix of uses in commercial areas, preserve and enhance community character, and provide incentives for private sector redevelopment. The following sections provide recommendations for zoning ordinance revisions to enable the Boroughs to implement the comprehensive plan and set the stage for revitalization.

Coordinate Baltimore Avenue Zoning

Many zoning and land use inconsistencies exist along Baltimore Avenue as it runs through the Boroughs, particularly in East Lansdowne, where small-scale commercial and residential uses exist on the north side of the street across from the Manufacturing and Industrial District in Upper Darby Township.

The Boroughs should create a zoning district that provides a flexible regulatory framework to promote compact development and innovative design solutions along Baltimore Avenue. The district should include both regulatory and performance standards. The regulatory standards would deal with requirements such as building setbacks, lot coverage, sign placement, and number of parking spaces while the performance standards would essentially be design guidelines dealing with site design, buildings and public areas. These guidelines would serve as a framework for changes to existing development and the physical form of new development, and they would include recommendations for such things as architectural features, location of parking, streetscaping, and amenities.

Design Standards

The Boroughs should develop design standards to preserve community character while creating an inviting, aesthetically pleasing, vibrant and pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential environment. To do this, the standards should focus on the following:

- Improving the appearance and use of the existing street system
- Creating an aesthetically-pleasing and human-scaled pedestrian network linking major destinations, and a pleasing and safe street experience for pedestrians and transit users

- Building upon community assets, including public parks, public libraries and community gathering places
- Creating a unified streetscape
- Creating new gateways at main entryways into the Boroughs
- The installation of street trees
- Enhancing safety and a balance between pedestrian, vehicular and transit flow
- Enhancing central areas (Lansdowne and Baltimore Avenue in Lansdowne/ Penn Boulevard and Baltimore Avenue in East Lansdowne) with improvements that make them points of community interest and pride

The Boroughs should partner with Upper Darby, Clifton Heights, and Yeadon to develop standards for Baltimore Avenue from Clifton Heights to the Philadelphia municipal boundary to create a unified appearance for the corridor.

Create Historic Districts

At present neither Lansdowne nor East Lansdowne have any provisions for the protection of historic resources. The Boroughs should create a historic zoning overlay district to protect their numerous historic properties. The overlay can apply regulations and incentives in addition to those of the base zoning. These regulations can address such factors as:

- Historic impact studies as a part of the existing land development process;
- Demolition of historic resources;
- Design guidelines;
- Buffering or visual protection; and
- Additional or conditional uses.

The overlay zoning district could be applied to the two existing National Register Districts in Lansdowne in addition to a number of other areas throughout the Boroughs. A historic resource survey would need to be completed to determine where the overlay zoning could be applied.

In addition, Lansdowne should consider creating a Certified Local Historic District (Act 167) for the CBD. The Act 167 local district has distinct advantages, most notably the local control and design guidelines that are tailored to the individual municipality. It is the most effective way in which to preserve the character as well as the buildings (see *Chapter 4 – Preservation* for more information).

Incentive Zoning

Many new plans and land development regulations now subscribe to the principles of smart growth, which include: using land resources more efficiently through compact building forms and infill development; mixing land uses; promoting a variety of housing choices; supporting walking, cycling, and transit as attractive alternatives to driving; improving the development review process and development standards to encourage

developers to apply these principles; and connecting infrastructure planning to development decisions to make efficient use of existing facilities and ensure that infrastructure is in place to serve new development.

To encourage the right type of new development in the appropriate locations the Boroughs could utilize a technique called incentive zoning. Incentive zoning involves a

***Density Bonus –
Increased floor area ratio
(FAR) in return for new
amenities.***

trade-off between a community and a developer. A developer gets to build a project that would not otherwise be permitted under the existing zoning regulations in exchange for providing something that is in the community's interest – something that the community would not otherwise require of the developer. Usually, the trade-off involves the municipality allowing the developer to build a larger, higher-

density project in return for public amenities and urban design features such as street-level retail, urban plazas, building design, and parking lot landscaping. Cash contributions for off-site improvements are another thing developers could offer in a trade-off for higher densities. An adopt-a-landmark program involves a developer providing money to owners of nearby designated historic landmarks for substantial interior or exterior renovation work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

9-15 Work with the participants of the EDCCOG to create a unified vision for the future of the Baltimore Avenue corridor.

9-16 Develop design standards to preserve and enhance community character.

9-17 Create a historic zoning overlay district to protect significant historic resources.

Funding: PHMC

Technical Assistance: DCPD Preservation Section
PHMC

9-18 Work with the participants of the EDCCOG to create design guidelines for new development and alteration to existing development that address such things as architectural features, building design, construction materials, parking location and design, and streetscaping.

Funding: Renaissance Program
LUPTAP
TCDI

FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND ZONING MAP RELATIONSHIP

Frequently, discussions of planning and zoning reveal confusion between a future land use map and a zoning map. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the future land use map is not a zoning map; it is a generalized statement of reasonable and appropriate future uses. For example, while the future land use map may propose one general use, commercial for example, the zoning map may divide this same area into several different commercial zoning districts that allow very different types of commercial establishments with very different dimensional requirements.

The future land use map and text also serve as the basis for any zoning ordinance and zoning map amendments prepared after this plan. Zoning maps are very specific; land use maps are more general. The zoning map is, of course, part of the zoning code and is not part of this plan.

CONSISTENCY MANDATE

The Year 2000 amendments to the MPC (Pa. House Bill 14 and Senate Bill 300) place strong emphasis on coordinated, countywide planning. Section 301 requires municipal and multi-municipal comprehensive plans to be generally consistent with the County comprehensive plan. Since there is presently no adopted County comprehensive plan, there are no official or adopted countywide planning goals or policies with which the Boroughs need to achieve consistency. The MPC also requires municipal zoning ordinances to be consistent with municipal comprehensive plans.

The MPC also strongly emphasizes the importance of contiguous municipalities joining together to prepare joint or multi-municipal comprehensive plans. This Plan is one of three multi-municipal plans to be initiated in Delaware County since the Year 2000 amendments, and only the second in more than 25 years. State agencies that provide funding for planning and community development activities such as the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) give priority to joint planning efforts. The requirements for consistency between municipal and county plans, and encouragement for municipalities to prepare joint plans, represent a step toward a more coordinated planning process. This is particularly important in Pennsylvania, and Delaware County, where planning and zoning efforts have been often fragmented and contradictory.

The degree to which these efforts at consistency and coordination will be successful remains to be seen. It appears that the preparation of realistic and well-crafted consistency standards by county planning commissions as required by the MPC and the degree to which municipalities adhere to these standards will be important factors in determining the success of efforts to improve the planning process in Pennsylvania. Also, the extent to which the courts define and support the MPC's provisions requiring consistency will have a strong bearing on the success of planning efforts in the Commonwealth.

REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The MPC specifies that all municipal comprehensive plans shall include:

A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan. (Article III Comprehensive Plan)

Land Use and Planning Issues in Adjacent Municipalities

Each municipality has its own planning program and schedule for undertaking significant planning efforts, as well as an internal process for ordinance review and update. The comprehensive plans of municipalities adjacent to Lansdowne and East Lansdowne have been consulted and reviewed and the recommendations of this section as well as the recommendations made throughout this plan are generally compatible with the plans of neighboring municipalities.

The following is a summary of the status of planning within adjacent municipalities, as well as a brief comparison between existing land uses and future land uses for areas near Lansdowne and East Lansdowne's borders.

Planning Status of Adjacent Municipalities

Clifton Heights Borough – Comprehensive Plan (1975), Zoning Ordinance (1993)

Existing Land Use: The existing land use on the Clifton Heights side of the boundary shared with Lansdowne is mainly commercial near Baltimore Avenue with some high-density residential and some recreational uses south of Baltimore Avenue, adjacent to the municipal boundary along Scottdale Road. In Lansdowne, the existing land uses along the shared boundary, north of Baltimore Avenue are low-density residential and recreational. Therefore, conflicts exist, however uses appear adequately separated by Darby Creek and trees and vegetation that minimize adverse impacts. The area along the shared boundary, south of Baltimore Avenue is mainly vacant with one small commercial use.

Comprehensive Plan: The Clifton Heights Future Land Use Plan generally recommends a continuation of the existing land uses for the areas adjacent to the Lansdowne boundary. Therefore, the same conflicts exist. Clifton Heights Comprehensive Plan dates back to 1975 and it is unknown whether they intend to

update it at the present time, however the Borough is working together Lansdowne, East Lansdowne and other communities in eastern Delaware County to enhance the Baltimore Avenue corridor through various multi-municipal planning initiatives.

Upper Darby Township – Comprehensive Plan (2004 – update in progress), Zoning Ordinance (2001)

Existing Land Use: Uses are generally consistent along boundaries shared between Lansdowne and Upper Darby with residential matching residential, and recreational matching recreational. East Lansdowne is entirely surrounded by Upper Darby Township. The existing land uses near the boundaries shared to the north and west are generally consistent and no real conflicts exist. Some incompatible uses do exist at the eastern boundary along Long Lane. The existing land uses in East Lansdowne are a mix of medium-density residential and commercial uses, whereas on the Upper Darby side, the existing land use is mainly high-density residential. Conflicts also exist at the municipal boundary along Baltimore Avenue. Uses on the East Lansdowne side of Baltimore Avenue are a mix of retail, commercial, and residential uses, whereas light industrial is the primary land use with a limited amount of commercial and high-density residential uses on the Upper Darby side.

Comprehensive Plan: The Upper Darby Future Land Use Plan generally recommends a continuation of the existing land uses along the boundaries shared with Lansdowne and the northern, eastern and western boundaries shared with East Lansdowne. Along Baltimore Avenue, the Plan recommends office/industrial as future land uses. In addition, the Plan identifies Baltimore Avenue as an area appropriate for redevelopment. Currently, the Township is engaged in a multi-municipal planning project to coordinate zoning and land development along the corridor and to create a more consistent and unified appearance.

Yeadon Borough – Comprehensive Plan (2001), Zoning Ordinance (1984)

Existing Land Use: The existing land use on the Lansdowne side of the Yeadon boundary is primarily residential with some institutional. Uses on the Yeadon side are also residential therefore no conflicts exist.

Comprehensive Plan: Yeadon Borough's Future Land Use Map shows the boundary area as residential. No conflicts exist with this comprehensive plan as the Lansdowne and East Lansdowne Existing and Future Land Use Maps show the shared boundary as mainly residential also.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

- 9-19 Continue to be an active member of the EDCCOG.
- 9-20 Work with neighboring municipalities on regional planning initiatives.