

CJERP

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Draft – April 9, 2026

Prepared for the Chestnuthill, Jackson, Eldred, Ross,
& Polk Townships (CJERP) Regional Planning
Committee

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Thank you to the Monroe County Planning Commission for their support and partnership in developing the maps included in this plan.

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Introduction

Background

The CJERP region encompasses five townships in southwestern Monroe County, PA: Chestnuthill, Jackson, Eldred, Ross, and Polk. Predominantly rural in character, the region lies within the scenic and highly desirable Pocono Mountains and is defined by working farms, forested land, rolling hills, and access to outdoor recreation that shape daily life for residents and visitors alike.

Regional collaboration has been a defining feature of planning efforts in the CJERP region for more than two decades. In 2004, Chestnuthill, Jackson, Eldred, and Ross Townships formed a regional partnership known as CJER to coordinate land use planning and address shared challenges. In 2012, Polk Township joined the partnership, and the expanded CJERP region began the process that resulted in the adoption of the 2015 regional comprehensive plan. This collaborative structure allows the region to plan more strategically across municipal boundaries, planning for development while respecting local character.

Beginning in 2025, the Regional Planning Committee initiated an update to the CJERP Comprehensive Plan to

ensure that the region’s shared vision remains current and responsive to present-day conditions. Since adoption of the previous plan, significant changes have occurred in how people live, work, shop, travel, and recreate. These changes directly influence development patterns, infrastructure needs, and the provision of public services across the region.

With adoption of this plan, the CJERP region is positioned to move forward with a clear and coordinated vision for the future. The Comprehensive Plan provides a common foundation for decision-making across the five townships, supporting thoughtful growth, responsible investment, and long-term stewardship of the region’s landscapes and communities.

What is a Regional Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-term, community roadmap that outlines a shared vision for the future. Covering topics such as land use, housing, transportation, natural resources, and community facilities, the plan provides a foundation for policies and regulations over the next decade. It helps ensure that public decisions are coordinated, forward-looking, and aligned with the goals identified through the planning process.

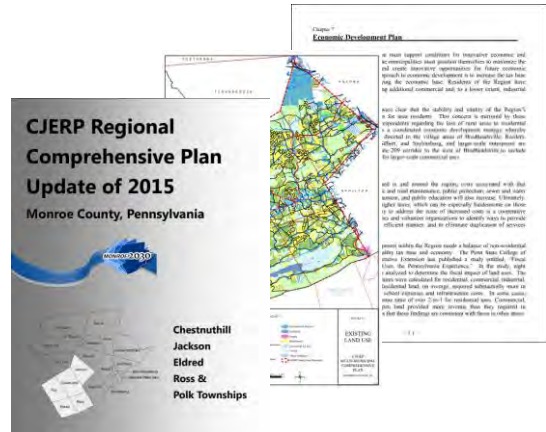
In Pennsylvania, municipalities have the opportunity to plan collectively, recognizing that development patterns, infrastructure needs, and quality-of-life issues often extend beyond municipal boundaries. Regional planning allows communities to address shared challenges more effectively and develop strategies that are relevant at a broader scale.

Why Update the Regional Comprehensive Plan?

The CJERP municipalities have made meaningful progress toward implementing the 2015 Regional Comprehensive Plan, with each township advancing strategies related to natural and scenic resources, land use and growth, housing, economic development, transportation, community facilities, and open space and recreation.

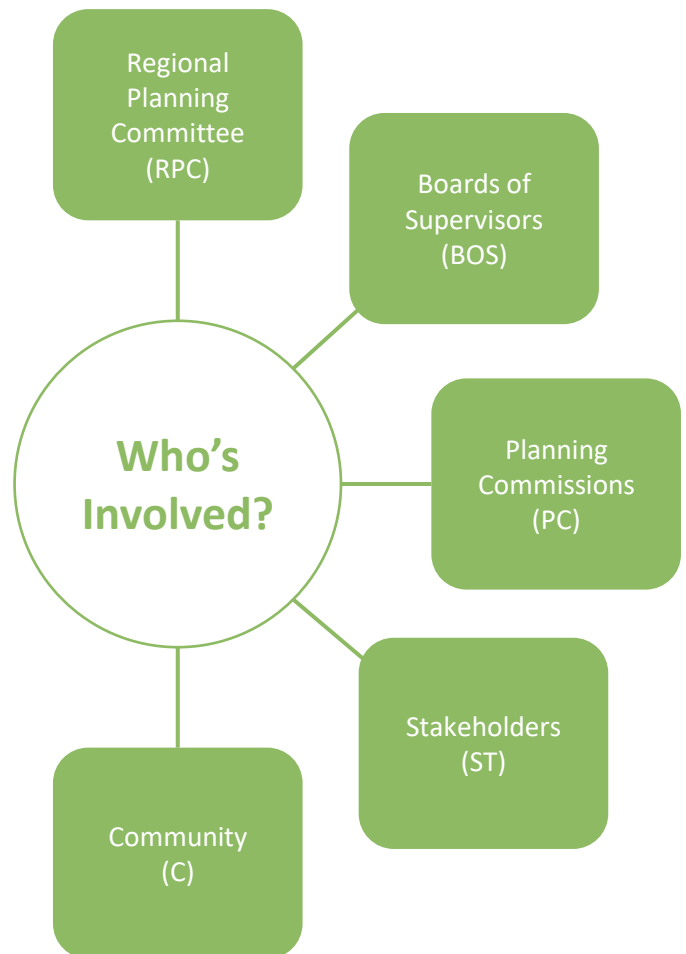
Since adoption of the 2015 Plan, the region has experienced changes in growth patterns, demographic and economic trends, and housing needs. These shifts present both challenges and opportunities, making it important to reassess priorities and ensure the plan continues to support quality of life across the region.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires municipalities to review their comprehensive plans at least every 10 years. This update allows the CJERP region to evaluate progress, refine goals, and extend its shared vision for the future, while continuing to promote economic vitality, community well-being, and responsible stewardship of natural resources.



Who was involved?

The CJERP Regional Planning Committee is responsible for managing updates to the Regional Comprehensive Plan. With a decade having elapsed since adoption of the previous plan, the Committee recognized the opportunity to work collaboratively with local governing bodies, stakeholders, and the broader community to update the plan and ensure it reflects present-day conditions.



Other Planning Efforts

As the process to update the CJERP Regional Comprehensive Plan began, it was important to review other relevant planning efforts that influence the region. These plans provide valuable insight into regional priorities, existing conditions, and shared goals, and help ensure that the CJERP Comprehensive Plan is aligned with broader planning initiatives.

Monroe 2030 – County Comprehensive Plan

Adopted in 2014, the Monroe 2030 Comprehensive Plan is an update to the original Monroe 2020 plan and serves as a long-range vision for development across the county. The plan emphasizes the preservation of Monroe County’s natural, cultural, and recreational assets while promoting economic vitality and regional collaboration. Key themes include the conservation of open space and agricultural lands, the use of conservation subdivision design in rural areas, and the concentration of development along major corridors such as Routes 611 and 209. The plan encourages multi-municipal planning and collaboration, like the CJERP Regional Comprehensive Plan, to support these efforts across the county.

Monroe County Return on Environment Study

Published in 2022, the Monroe County Return on Environment (ROE) Study quantifies the economic value of the county’s natural systems and open spaces. These include avoided costs from natural system services like stormwater management, air pollution removal, and habitat preservation, as well as revenue from outdoor recreation and healthcare savings. The study reinforces the link between environmental stewardship and economic resilience, highlighting how Monroe County’s forests, waterways, and recreational



assets support tourism, public health, and property values. The findings support land use and conservation strategies that align with the goals of the CJERP Regional Comprehensive Plan, particularly in preserving natural assets while channeling development to targeted locations in the region.

Monroe County Plan for Clean Water

The Monroe County Plan for Clean Water is designed to help municipal officials identify and protect the lands most critical to maintaining clean drinking water and healthy streams. The plan evaluates surface water quality and aquifer recharge potential using factors such as forest cover, soil type, slope, and proximity to wetlands and stream buffers. With over 1,600 miles of streams and 79 percent forest cover, Monroe County’s natural landscape plays a vital role in safeguarding water resources. The plan empowers local governments to make informed land use decisions that balance development with water protection—an approach that aligns with the CJERP Regional Comprehensive Plan’s emphasis on sustainable resource management and intermunicipal cooperation.

One theme was clear across all regional planning efforts – the importance of open space and natural resource preservation to the region’s quality of life, economic vitality, and environmental health

West End Open Space and Recreation Plan

Adopted in 2003, the West End Open Space and Recreation Plan outlines a coordinated strategy for preserving natural areas and enhancing recreational opportunities in the region. The plan recommends a mix of tools—including land acquisition, conservation easements, and development regulations—to protect sensitive areas, particularly along creeks and farmland. It also emphasizes the importance of centralized, active recreation facilities and identifies the West End Regional Park as a potential site for that type of development. These priorities align with the region’s goals of protecting natural resources and prioritizing open space recreation.

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP 2050)

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization Long-Range Transportation Plan outlines

a strategic vision for the region’s transportation system through 2050 and serves as a framework for prioritizing projects within the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The plan emphasizes themes of safety, economic development, environmental stewardship, multimodal accessibility, and travel and tourism, while evaluating current infrastructure conditions and future transportation needs. With many residents of Monroe County and the CJERP region facing longer-than-average commutes, the transportation network plays a critical role in supporting regional economic development and overall quality of life. The report underscores the importance of interstate and arterial corridors, frequently highlighting Route 209 as a key connector within the CJERP area. Its findings reinforce the need to maintain and improve the transportation system to enhance accessibility within and beyond the region.

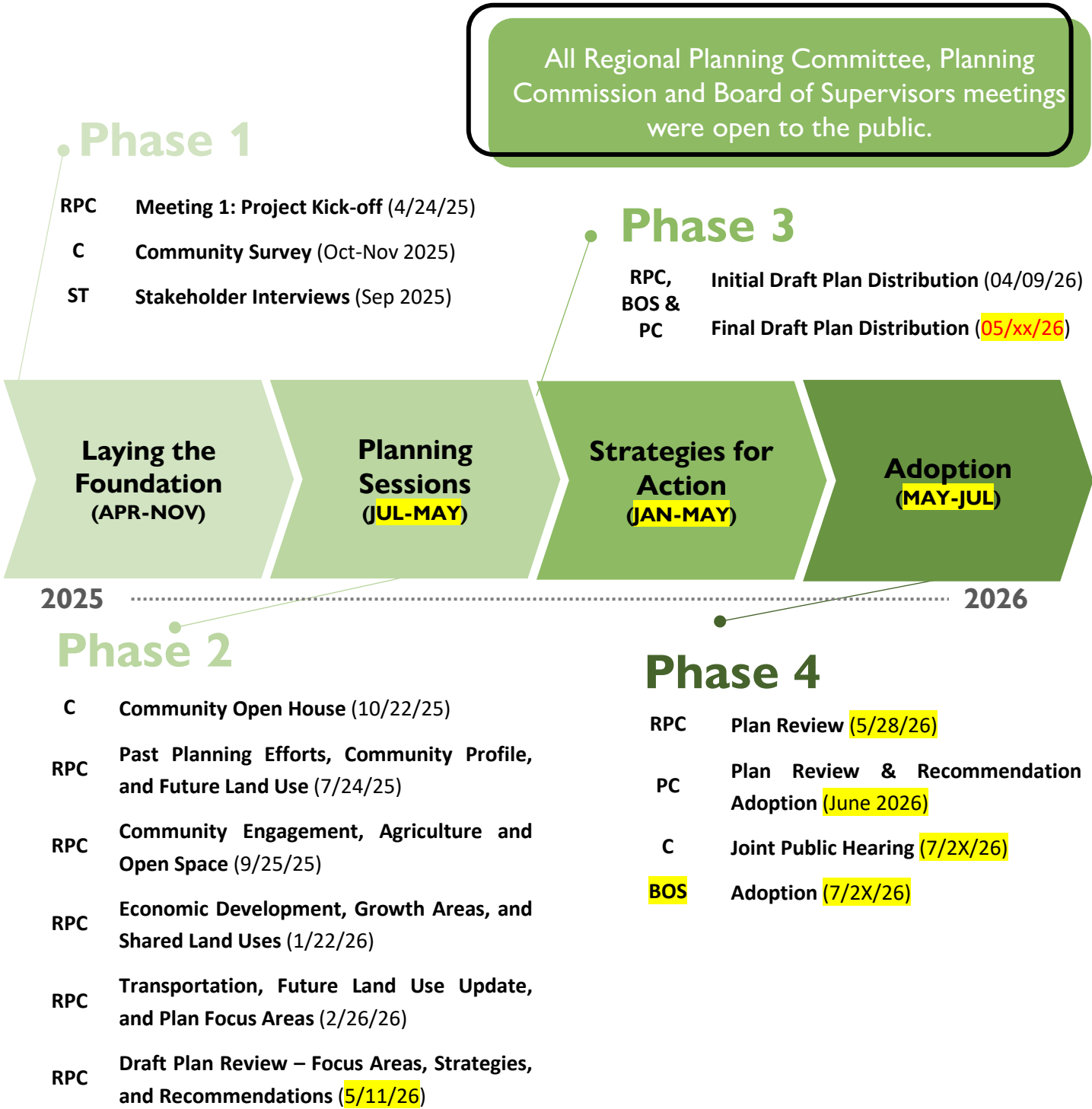


Process Phases and Schedule

A 15-month long planning process began in spring of 2025 and was organized around four phases. It was a thorough and inclusive effort that prioritized both targeted and widespread community engagement at every stage. The timeline below summarizes the breadth and depth of touchpoints between the planning team and the community, including the Regional Planning Committee (RPC), Boards of Supervisors (BOS), Planning Commissions (PC), the Community at-large (C), and Stakeholders (ST).

The process allowed for detailed research and analysis by the planning team, which was shared with the different groups and informed the development of targeted strategies to fulfill the shared vision.

All Regional Planning Committee, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings were open to the public.



Process Phases and Schedule (cont.)

Regional Planning Committee Meetings

Planning sessions conducted during Phase II occurred throughout the project and were held in conjunction with regularly scheduled Regional Planning Committee (RPC) meetings. The CJERP RPC is comprised of two representatives from each municipality, including at least one member of each township's governing body. These meetings served multiple purposes throughout the planning process.

The RPC played a central role in guiding development of the Comprehensive Plan by providing local knowledge, identifying ongoing initiatives, and sharing insight into projects that could influence future strategies. The Committee also served as a forum to review and validate data, ensuring that information used to inform the plan accurately reflected conditions across the region. Feedback gathered through public engagement was further contextualized through RPC discussions, allowing members to interpret community input based on local experience.

As the plan progressed, the RPC provided ongoing oversight of key decisions, including the refinement of focus areas, development of strategies, and establishment of the Future Land Use framework. Their continued involvement ensured that the plan remained grounded in local priorities while maintaining a coordinated regional perspective. Regular updates presented at RPC meetings also provided an additional layer of transparency and public visibility throughout the planning process.

Public Meetings and Plan Adoption

The RPC also played an important role in advancing the Comprehensive Plan through the adoption process. Draft versions of the plan were shared with each municipality's Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, ensuring that local governing bodies had the opportunity to review and provide input prior to formal consideration.



In May 2026, the RPC presented the draft Comprehensive Plan to each Planning Commission to seek formal recommendations for adoption. Throughout the process, RPC members, particularly those serving in elected roles, provided regular updates to their respective governing bodies. This ongoing communication ensured that the plan was well understood, feedback was incorporated, and the document was appropriately vetted prior to adoption.

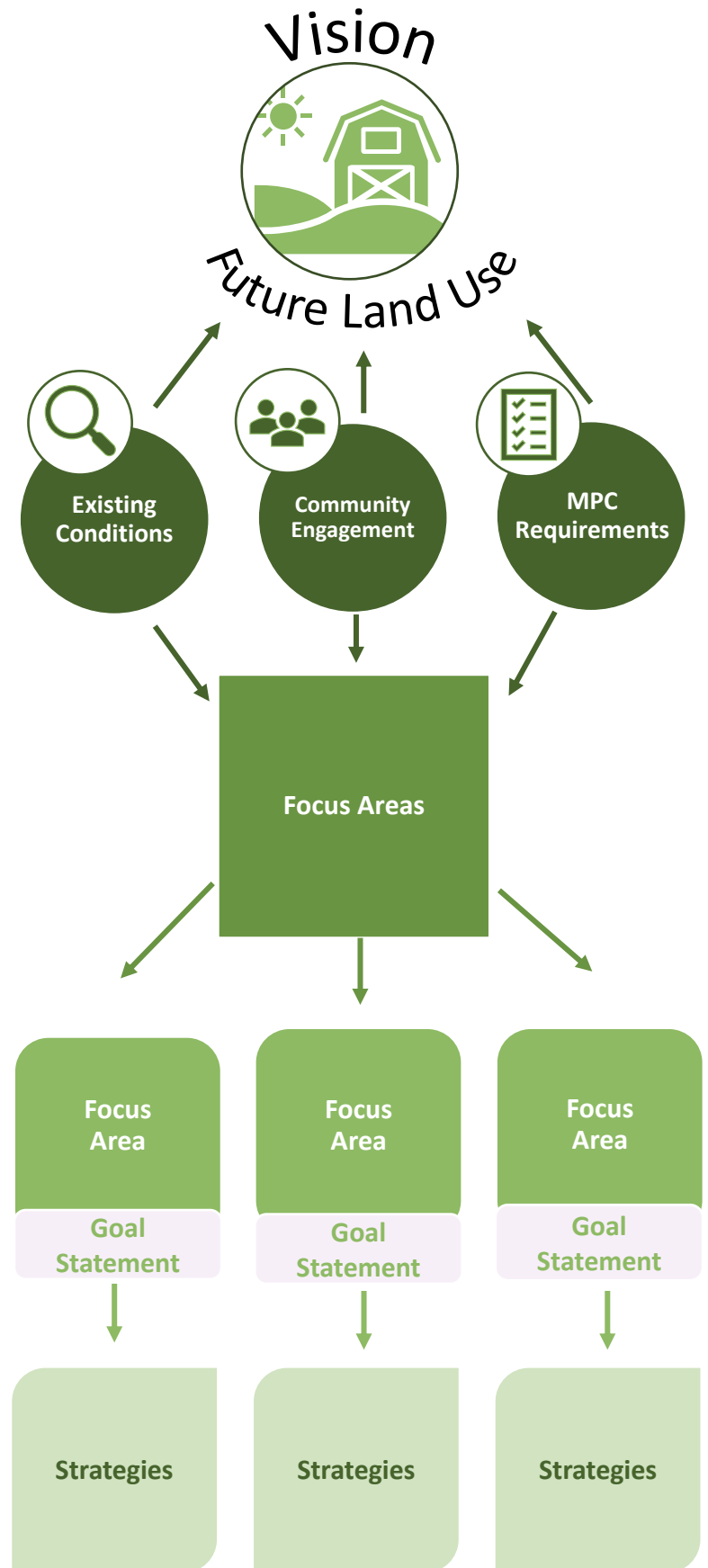
This coordinated approach supported a transparent and collaborative adoption process, allowing each municipality to participate meaningfully while advancing a shared regional vision.

Planning Framework

The comprehensive planning process for the CJERP region was designed to establish a shared, forward-looking vision that reflects local conditions, community priorities, and statutory planning requirements. The overall vision for the future of the region was informed by an evaluation of existing conditions, including land use patterns, demographic trends, housing needs, economic conditions, transportation, and natural resources. This technical analysis provided a foundation for understanding current challenges and opportunities facing the CJERP communities.

Community engagement was a central component of the planning process and played a critical role in shaping the plan’s direction. Input gathered through public meetings, stakeholder discussions, and other outreach efforts helped identify community values, concerns, and aspirations for the region’s future. This feedback ensured that the plan reflects the perspectives of residents, business owners, and local leaders, while aligning with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

Together, the analysis of existing conditions, community input, and MPC requirements guided the development of a set of Focus Areas that organize the plan’s recommendations. Each Focus Area represents a key topic or priority for the CJERP region and includes a clear goal statement that articulates the desired long-term outcome. Within each Focus Area, the plan outlines targeted strategies to help guide decision-making, policy development, and implementation efforts. Collectively, these Focus Areas provide a cohesive framework to support coordinated regional planning and to advance the shared vision for the CJERP region’s future.



How to Use the Plan

This plan is organized to present the most important information first, with the Future Land Use Framework in Chapter 2, Strategies for Action in Chapter 3, and the Implementation Plan in Chapter 4. Supporting information that informed these chapters is provided in Chapters 5 (Community Engagement) and 6 (Existing Conditions).

- 1 Introduction:** Describes the purpose and process of Comprehensive Planning, and introduces CJERP and its prior planning efforts
- 2 Future Land Use and Zoning:** Identifies CJERP's desired land use and community development objectives over the next ten years
- 3 Strategies for Action:** Outlines focus areas for the plan identified through community engagement and existing conditions analysis, and contains a detailed discussion of priority strategies related to focus areas
- 4 Implementation Plan:** Contains a comprehensive listing of recommendations for CJERP spanning all topics required for a comprehensive plan by the MPC
- 5 Community Engagement:** Summarizes input shared from the community and stakeholders, and identifies key insights
- 6 Existing Conditions:** Discusses population, housing, and economic data; reviews existing land uses, community assets, and regulations to inform vision and future land use

Over the next decade, this plan should serve as a central policy document to guide land use decisions, capital investments, and coordination among CJERP officials, community partners, and residents.

Guide Land Use Regulation: Ensure development aligns with community goals

Evaluate New Proposals and Projects: Check if projects fit within the plan's vision and recommendations

Engage the Public and Stakeholders: Use the plan to communicate goals and gather community input

Support Infrastructure and Capital Planning: Prioritize investments in utilities and public facilities

Coordinate Across Departments and Jurisdictions: Promote unified decision-making among planners, officials, and agencies

Monitor Progress: Review and update consistently to reflect changing conditions

CJERP'S Vision

Developed through community engagement, this vision statement establishes the foundation for the Future Land Use Framework and focus areas that guide the remainder of this Comprehensive Plan.

In 10 Years....

CJERP remains a region defined by its **high quality of life, rural character, and scenic landscape** shaped by working farms and open space. The region is **safe, livable, and affordable** for its residents, with **growth** directed to appropriate areas, **infrastructure** that functions for everyday needs and emergency services, and a **local economy** built on small businesses, outdoor recreation, and agriculture.





Future Land Use and Zoning

Overview

This section of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a unified vision for how land within the CJERP region should be used over the next decade. At the center of this effort is the Future Land Use Map, which provides a policy framework to guide growth, reinvestment, and preservation across the region. It reflects community priorities and technical analysis and is intended to guide future decisions related to land use, infrastructure, and economic development.

The Future Land Use Map is not a regulatory document and does not change zoning on its own. Instead, it establishes direction for future zoning updates, capital investments, and land use policies. Any changes to zoning or decisions regarding shared uses will occur after adoption of this plan and will be implemented by each municipality through its own regulatory process.

The CJERP region represents a collaborative approach to planning, bringing together Chestnuthill, Jackson, Eldred, Ross, and Polk Townships. While each municipality maintains control over its own zoning ordinance, they have committed to coordinating growth and development through a shared regional framework. This

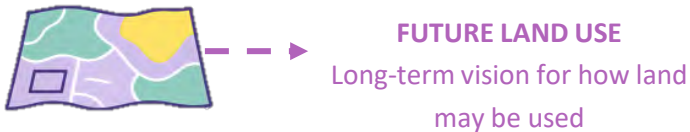
approach recognizes that land use patterns, economic activity, and environmental resources extend beyond municipal boundaries.

Through an intergovernmental cooperation agreement and shared use framework, the municipalities work together to ensure that land uses are accommodated across the region rather than within each municipality individually. As enabled by Article XI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, this allows certain uses to be planned at a regional scale, reducing redundancy and supporting more efficient land use patterns.

This chapter establishes the vision and direction for those future actions. It begins with an analysis of existing land use patterns and zoning regulations, which inform development of the Future Land Use Map. The chapter then presents the updated map, which will guide future policy decisions and coordination efforts across the CJERP region.

What is Future Land Use

Future land use is a foundational component of a comprehensive plan, serving as a long-term guide for how land is intended to be used and developed over the next decade. It establishes a framework for balancing growth, preservation, and community character, while identifying opportunities for housing, economic development, infrastructure, and conservation.



How Future Land Use Relates to Zoning

Future land use planning informs zoning by identifying where different types of uses should be encouraged or limited. The Future Land Use Map establishes the vision, while zoning serves as the regulatory tool used to implement that vision. Zoning ordinances define what is legally permitted on a property, including allowed uses, density, setbacks, and other development standards.



Zoning ensures that land use decisions align with community goals, protect public health and safety, and promote orderly growth.

Existing vs Future Land Use

Existing land use reflects how land is currently being used, while future land use represents how land could be used over time. Understanding both is critical. Existing conditions provide a baseline, while the future land use framework identifies where change is appropriate and where preservation should be prioritized.



How the Future Land Use Map was Developed

The Future Land Use Map was developed through a combination of technical analysis and community input. This included a review of existing land use patterns, zoning regulations, infrastructure capacity, and environmental constraints, along with feedback from the Regional Planning Committee, stakeholder interviews, a community survey, and public meetings. This approach ensures the plan reflects both local priorities and practical considerations.



Analysis of Zoning Map

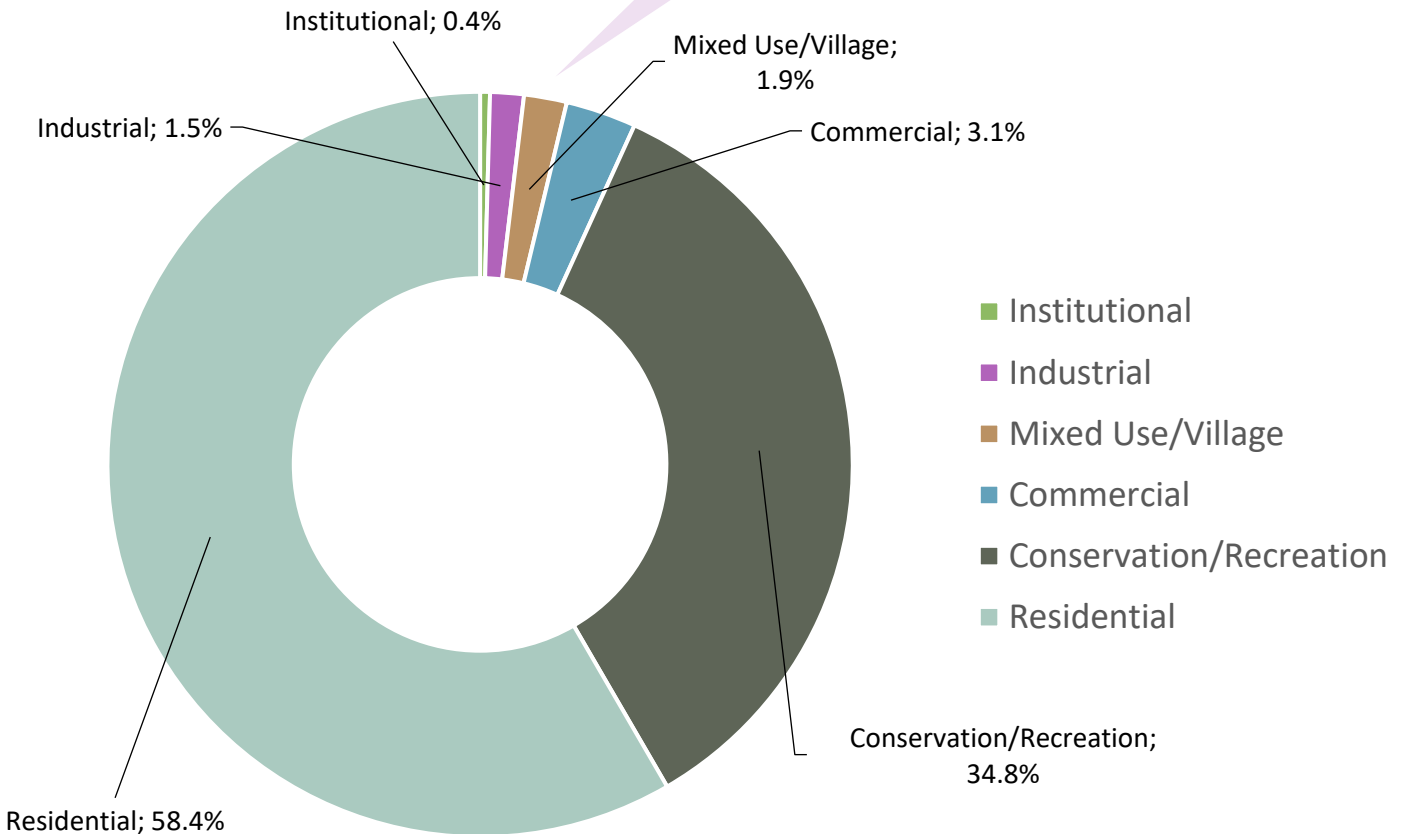
While the five CJERP municipalities share many common characteristics, including a predominantly rural landscape, low-density development patterns, and a strong presence of natural resources, each township has established its own zoning ordinance with distinct districts.

To better understand these similarities and differences, a generalized zoning map was developed for the CJERP region. Rather than replicating each township's individual zoning map, this combined map categorizes zoning districts into broader groupings to illustrate where different types of uses are permitted across the region. This approach provides a clearer, more cohesive picture of how land is regulated at a regional scale and highlights both areas of alignment and variation among the municipalities.

- 58% is zoned for **Residential**
- 35% is zone for **Conservation/Recreation**

Zoning: How Much of CJERP is Zoned for Different Uses

Monroe County Planning Commission



Zoning Patterns Across the CJERP Region

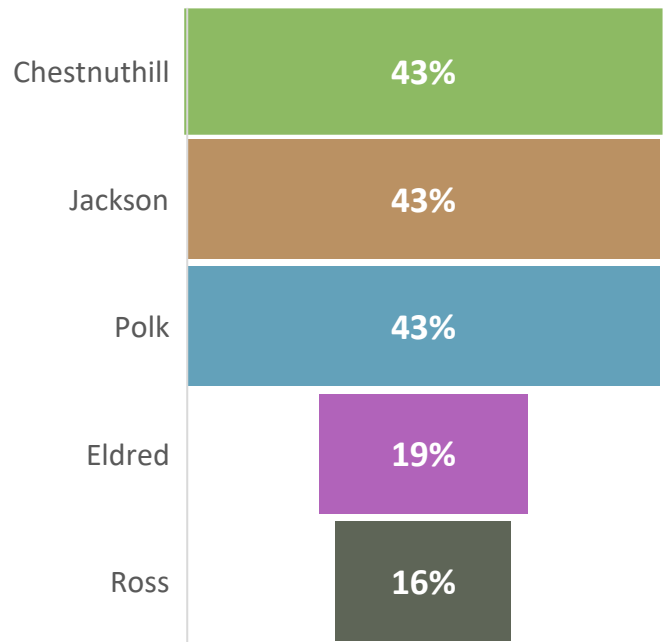
The CJERP region is overwhelmingly zoned for low-density residential and conservation-oriented uses. Region-wide, approximately 58% of land is zoned for residential purposes and an additional 35% is zoned for conservation or recreation. While the distribution between these categories varies by municipality, the overall pattern is consistent: a large majority of land is intended to remain rural in character.

This pattern is reinforced by the prevalence of low-density zoning districts across all five municipalities. The most common zoning designations include Rural Residential (RR) in Ross, Chesnuthill, and Polk Townships, Agricultural Residential (AR) in Eldred Township, and simply Residential (R-1) in Jackson Township. These districts often permit a mix of uses, including single-family housing, agriculture, forestry, and limited supporting uses. As a result, zoning across the region reflects a strong alignment between residential land use and open space preservation.

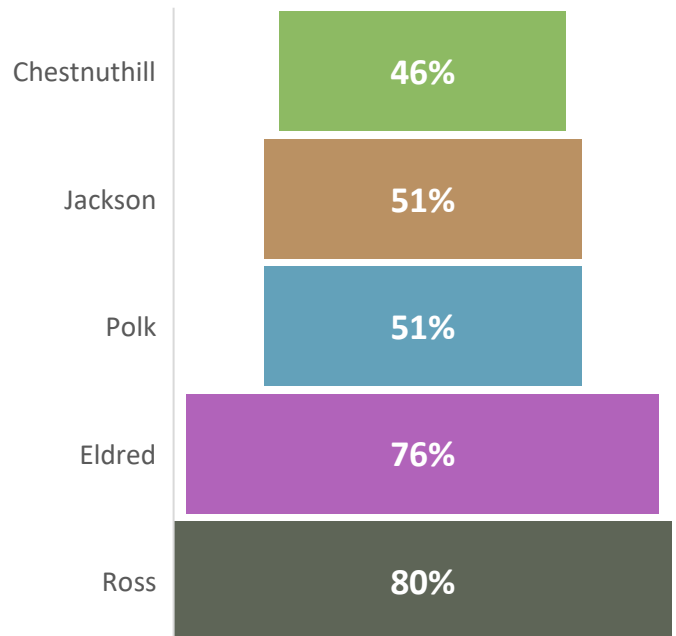
Differences between municipalities are largely influenced by how these low-density districts are categorized rather than fundamentally different land use patterns. In practice, both residential and conservation zoning districts contribute to maintaining the region’s rural landscape, scenic character, and environmental resources.

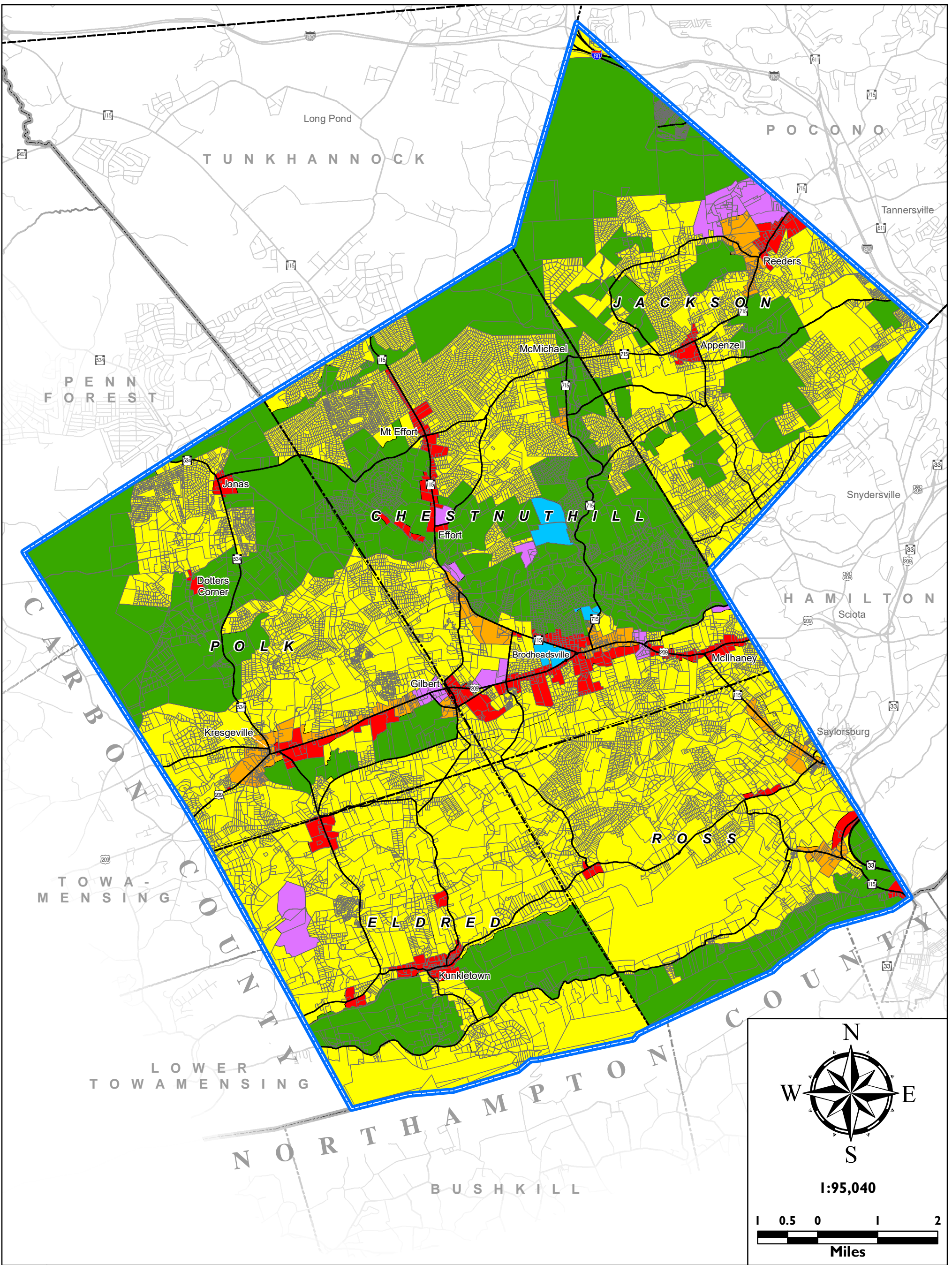
***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** This existing zoning framework supports many of the goals identified through the planning process, particularly the preservation of agricultural lands, natural features, and rural character. At the same time, it reinforces the importance of directing higher-intensity uses, such as commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development, to clearly defined growth areas. Doing so will help maintain the balance between preservation and strategic growth that defines the CJERP region.

Percent of Township Zoned for Recreation/Conservation
Monroe County Planning Commission



Percent of Township Zoned for Residential
Monroe County Planning Commission





CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: GENERALIZED ZONING

GENERALIZED ZONING

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
|  State Roads |  County Boundary |  Commercial |  Institutional |
|  CJERP Region |  Municipal Boundaries |  Conservation/Recreation |  Mixed Use/Village |
| |  Tax Parcels |  Industrial |  Residential |

Analysis of Existing Land Use

Existing land use represents the actual, current use of land. Unlike zoning, which identifies what is permitted, existing land use reflects how properties are currently developed and utilized. Understanding these conditions provides a critical baseline for evaluating development patterns and identifying opportunities or constraints that will influence future land use decisions.

Existing land use has been mapped across all five townships to provide a regional perspective. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of land use patterns across municipal boundaries, highlighting concentrations of development, preserved lands, and areas where land use may not align with current zoning or future planning goals. This analysis helps guide development of the Future Land Use Map by ensuring recommendations are grounded in existing conditions.

Natural resource-based land uses make up a significant portion of the CJERP region and are fundamental to its identity, economy, and quality of life. Categories such as

agriculture, forest, parks and recreation, government service lands, and resorts and group camps together represent a majority of the region’s landscape. While Chestnuthill Township has the lowest share of these uses at 49 percent, all other municipalities exceed 60 percent, reinforcing the region’s strong rural and open space character.

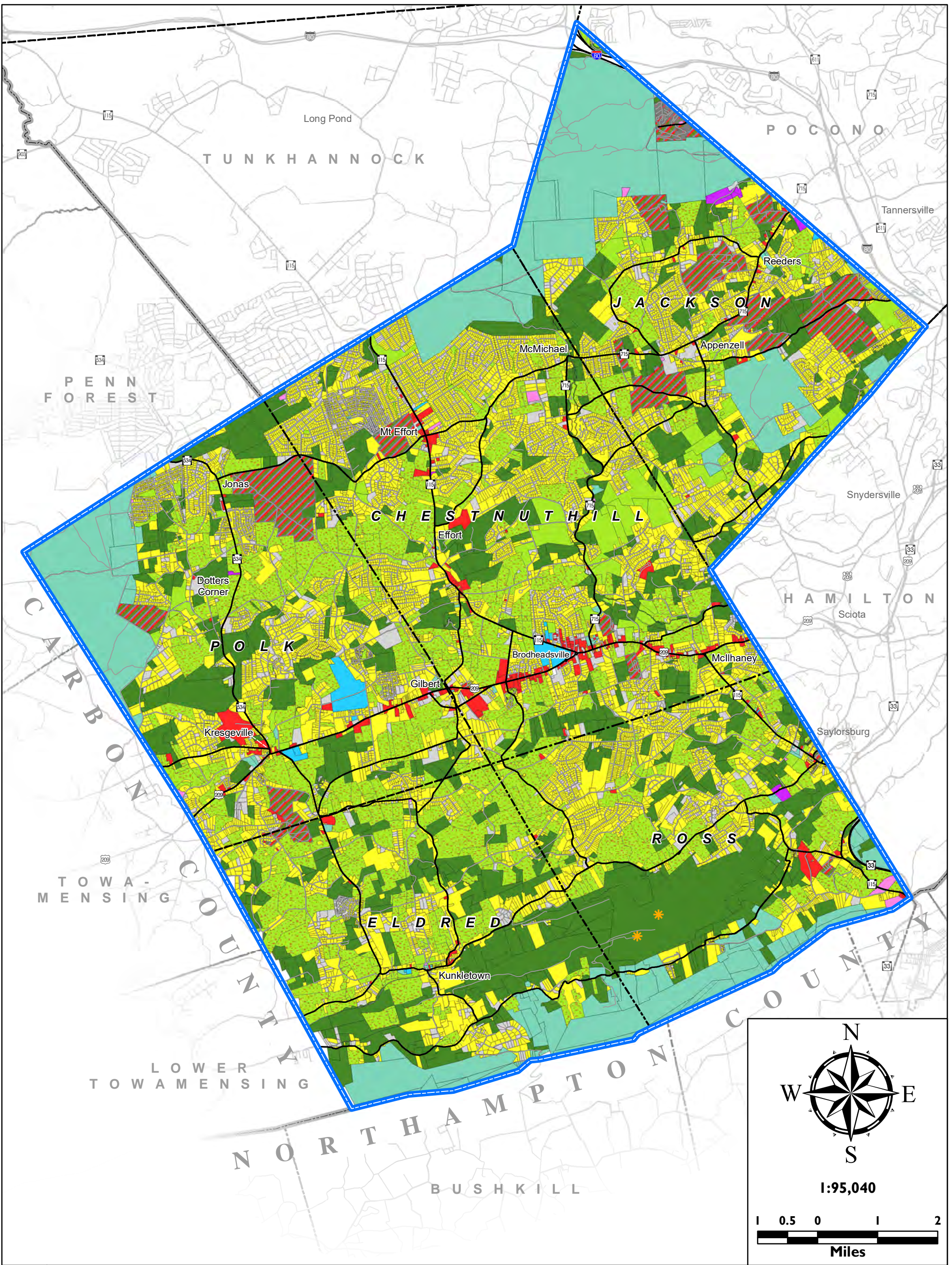
These land uses support local industries such as farming and tourism while also providing environmental benefits, including habitat preservation, water resource protection, and scenic character. Preserving and thoughtfully managing these natural resource-based lands will remain essential to maintaining the CJERP region’s character while supporting sustainable growth and recreation opportunities.

63% of existing land use is dedicated to natural areas

Existing Land Use – Natural Resources


















Monroe County Planning Commission

| | Chestnuthill | Jackson | Eldred | Ross | Polk |
|---|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Agricultural | 19% | 8% | 30% | 20% | 23% |
| Cultural, Pub/Priv Parks & Rec | 7% | 4% | 0% | 1% | 2% |
| Forest | 16% | 15% | 29% | 33% | 19% |
| Government Services | 6% | 30% | 14% | 12% | 13% |
| Resorts & Group Camps | 1% | 11% | 1% | 0% | 6% |
| Total | 49% | 68% | 74% | 66% | 62% |



CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: EXISTING LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USE

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  State Road |  Municipal Boundary |  Resorts & Group Camps |  Agricultural |
|  Other Road |  Vacant |  Cultural, Pub/Priv Parks, & Rec |  Educational Services |
|  CJERP Region |  Residential |  Government Services |  Comms/Transport/Utilities |
|  County Boundary |  Commercial Retail/Services |  Forest |  Industrial |
|  * Identified parcel is taxed as industrial (containing two quarried areas) but is primarily forest. | | | |

Introducing Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map establishes a shared vision for how land within the CJERP region should be used over time. It serves as a guide for decision-making, helping municipalities coordinate growth, infrastructure investment, and preservation in a consistent and intentional manner. While not regulatory, the map informs future zoning updates and regional land use decisions following adoption of the plan.

The map was developed through a combination of technical analysis and community input. Existing land use patterns, zoning regulations, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and feedback from the Regional Planning Committee and public engagement efforts were all considered. This approach ensures that the Future Land Use Map reflects both current conditions and long-term priorities for the region.

Future Land Use Categories

The CJERP Future Land Use Map identifies a range of land use categories, each with a corresponding description to guide future decisions. As part of a regional planning effort under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the map also designates three key planning areas: Designated Growth Areas, Future Growth Areas, and Rural Resource Areas. Rural Resource Areas include lands intended to support agriculture, forestry, open space, and environmental protection, and are not planned for significant public infrastructure expansion.

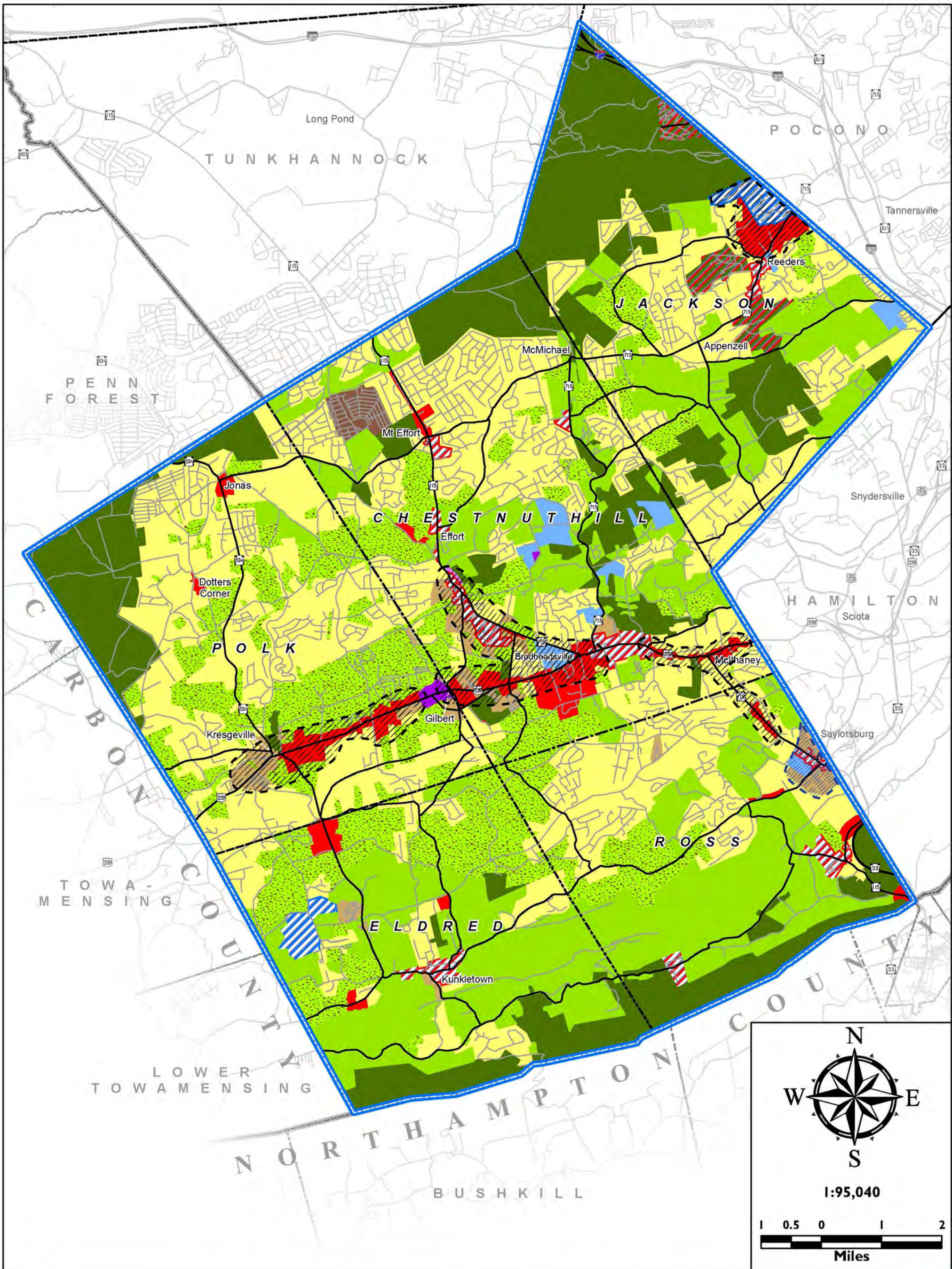
By clearly identifying where growth is intended to occur, the map helps direct residential, commercial, and industrial development to appropriate locations. At the same time, it reinforces the importance of preserving rural and natural areas elsewhere in the region. This structure supports the use of planning tools such as Transfer of Development Rights and coordinated zoning updates to balance growth and preservation.

The following graphic and descriptions outline how these planning areas function and provide additional detail on each Future Land Use category.



| Future Land Use Category | Description | Uses | Density |
|---|--|--|---------------------------|
|  | Agriculture Cultivation of the soil and the raising of livestock for commercial purposes, including ancillary uses such as the residence of the farm operator. Home-based crafts are also typically permitted by right as an accessory to farm operations. | Cropland; Pastureland; Farm-related structures and businesses; Woodlands. | N/A |
|  | Rural Conservation A mixture of agricultural, woodland, open space, and very low-density residential uses. Factors such as the presence of steep slopes, wetlands, and/or floodplains limit the development potential of these areas. | Cropland; Pastureland; Open space; Farm-related structures and businesses; Woodlands. | 1-acre minimum lot size |
|  | Low Density Residential Single-family detached homes (and accessory uses like garden sheds, detached garages, and swimming pools) are permitted. | Single-Family detached dwellings; Woodlands; Parks/Open Space. | 1-acre minimum lot size |
|  | Medium Density Residential Higher densities than the Low-Density Residential District and allows narrower lots. Single-family semi detached and detached houses. | Single-family detached dwellings; Single family semi-detached dwellings; Park/Open Space Uses. | 5 units per acre maximum |
|  | High Density Residential Permits all dwelling types, including townhouses, apartment buildings, and mobile home parks. | Single-family detached dwellings; Single-family semi-detached dwellings; Townhouses; Apartments; Park/Open Space. | 10 units per acre maximum |
|  | Mixed Use Center Chiefly a commercial area. Residences, second floor apartments, and professional offices will be accommodated at a higher density. | Offices; Small-scale retail and local commercial uses. Single-family semi-detached dwellings; Townhouses; Apartments; Parks and Recreation. | 5-10 units per acre |
|  | General Commercial Accommodate a diversity of commercial uses – spanning neighborhood-scaled businesses to larger, highway-oriented commercial development that ensures residents’ needs for goods and services are met. | Small-scale retail and local commercial uses. Highway oriented commercial uses: big-box retail; supermarkets; multi-tenant shopping plazas; automobile related uses. | 2,000 SF minimum lot size |

| Future Land Use Category | Description | Uses | Density |
|---|---|--|---------------------------|
|  | Commercial Recreation Category specific to Jackson Township, will accommodate medium density residential and seasonal housing, campgrounds, and resorts, both public and private. | Campgrounds, resorts, private recreation facilities, and medium density residential housing – both seasonal and permanent. | 5 units per acre maximum |
|  | Research & Development Located in Jackson and Eldred Townships. Appropriate for economic or limited industrial development activities. | Research and Technology-based firms, and professional offices. Warehousing, distribution facilities, and trucking terminals are not recommended. | 5,000 SF minimum lot size |
|  | Heavy Industrial Least restrictive category intended to accommodate heavy industrial uses. | Offices; Printing and Publishing uses; Warehousing and Distribution; Manufacturing; Food Processing; Extraction Industries. | 1-acre minimum lot size |
|  | Light Industrial Accommodates manufacturing operations. | Typical uses include assembly of components manufactured elsewhere, and include industries like electronics, laboratories, and research and development. | 1-acre minimum lot size |
|  | Major Public Facilities Not intended to be established as a separate zoning district. It includes the Pleasant Valley Area School District facilities, municipal-owned land, churches, cemeteries, and other cultural features. | To provide areas for public or semi-public uses. | 5,000 SF minimum lot size |
|  | Open Space Conservation Open space, recreational, and sensitive natural resource areas that should remain in such use for the foreseeable future. | Parks; Pavilions; Greenways; Open Space; Natural Areas. | N/A |



CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: FUTURE LAND USE

FUTURE LAND USE

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| State Roads | Low-Density Residential | Light Industrial | Growth Areas Designated |
| Other Roads | Medium-Density Residential | Heavy Industrial | Future |
| CJERP Region | High-Density Residential | Major Public Facilities | Rural Resources |
| County Boundary | Commercial Recreation | Research & Development | Rural Conservation |
| Municipal Boundaries | General Commercial | Mixed-Use Center | Open Space Conservation |
| | | | Agriculture |

Route 209: Designated Growth Area 4
Area along route 715 in Reeders, on the eastern edge of Jackson Township bordering Pocono Township

This portion of the Route 715 corridor in Jackson Township, near the boundary with Pocono Township, is intended to accommodate a mix of commercial, institutional, and industrial uses that benefit from proximity to major transportation infrastructure, including nearby access to Interstate 80. Development in this area is expected to be moderate-intensity, generally limited to two stories in height, while supporting a broader range of auto-oriented and employment uses than other growth areas. Appropriate uses may include warehousing and light industrial activities, self-storage facilities, retail and service establishments, churches, public and institutional facilities, and other auto-intensive uses designed to serve both local needs and regional access.

Route 209: Designated Growth Area 2
The triangle formed by the intersection of Route 209 and Route 115 in Chestnuthill, moving west to approximately Gilbert Road

This portion of the Route 209 corridor is intended to function as the primary commercial center for the western portion of Monroe County, accommodating a higher intensity of commercial development than other designated growth areas. Development in this area may include a blend of chain and locally owned businesses, with uses such as grocery stores, retail and service establishments, restaurants, car dealerships, and larger footprint strip commercial centers, generally oriented along the corridor and designed to serve both residents and visitors. Buildings in this area may be up to two stories in height and more intensively developed than in other growth areas, while remaining compatible with existing institutional uses, including school district facilities. Future growth is expected to occur through a mix of new development and redevelopment of smaller or underutilized sites, reinforcing the corridor's role as a regional commercial destination.

Route 209: Designated Growth Area 3
The intersection of Route 209 and Route 115 in McIlhaney, moving east and west along Route 209

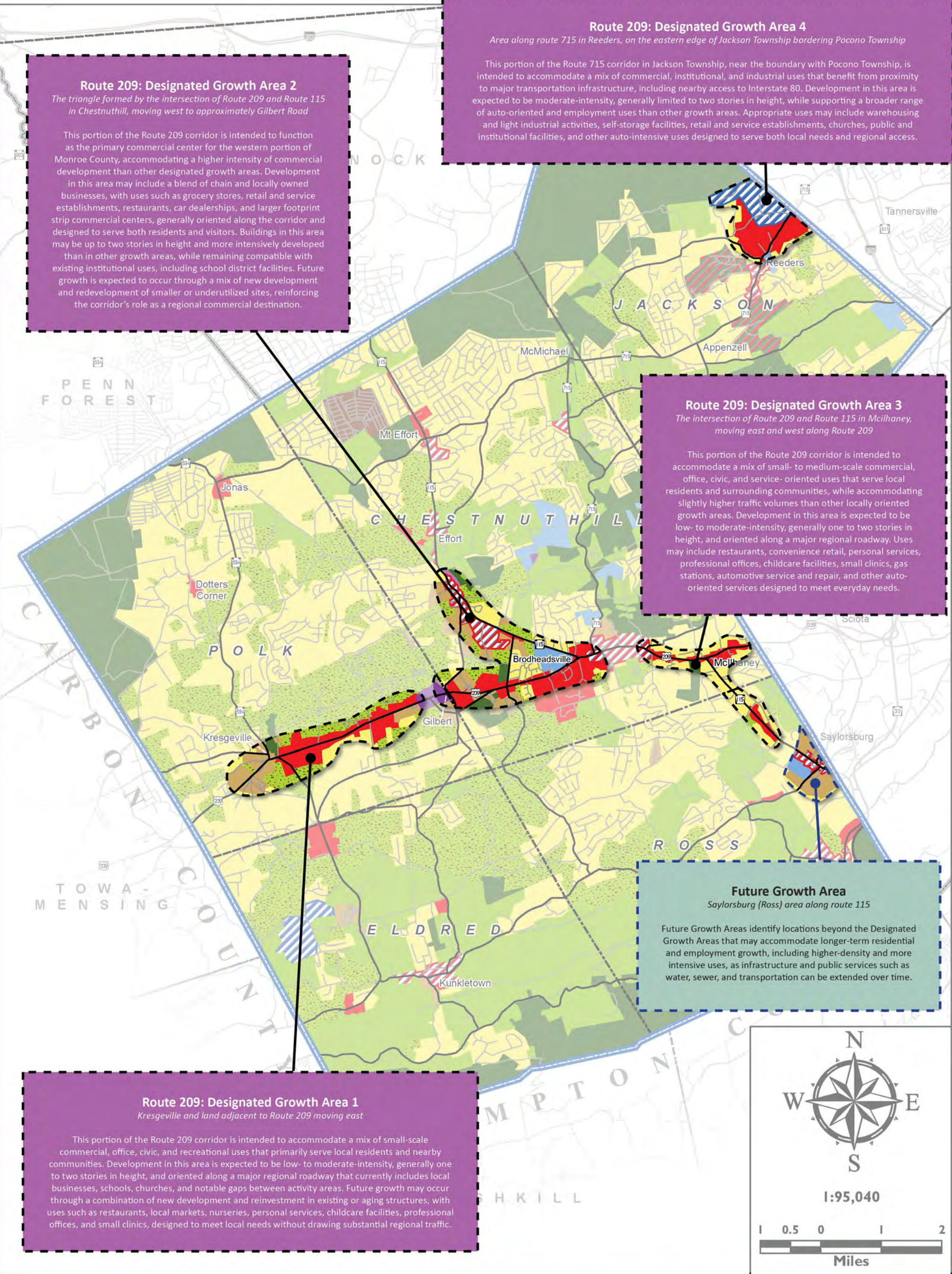
This portion of the Route 209 corridor is intended to accommodate a mix of small- to medium-scale commercial, office, civic, and service-oriented uses that serve local residents and surrounding communities, while accommodating slightly higher traffic volumes than other locally oriented growth areas. Development in this area is expected to be low- to moderate-intensity, generally one to two stories in height, and oriented along a major regional roadway. Uses may include restaurants, convenience retail, personal services, professional offices, childcare facilities, small clinics, gas stations, automotive service and repair, and other auto-oriented services designed to meet everyday needs.

Future Growth Area
Saylorsburg (Ross) area along route 115

Future Growth Areas identify locations beyond the Designated Growth Areas that may accommodate longer-term residential and employment growth, including higher-density and more intensive uses, as infrastructure and public services such as water, sewer, and transportation can be extended over time.

Route 209: Designated Growth Area 1
Kresgeville and land adjacent to Route 209 moving east

This portion of the Route 209 corridor is intended to accommodate a mix of small-scale commercial, office, civic, and recreational uses that primarily serve local residents and nearby communities. Development in this area is expected to be low- to moderate-intensity, generally one to two stories in height, and oriented along a major regional roadway that currently includes local businesses, schools, churches, and notable gaps between activity areas. Future growth may occur through a combination of new development and reinvestment in existing or aging structures, with uses such as restaurants, local markets, nurseries, personal services, childcare facilities, professional offices, and small clinics, designed to meet local needs without drawing substantial regional traffic.



CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: FUTURE GROWTH AREAS

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| State Roads | Low-Density Residential | Light Industrial |
| Other Roads | Medium-Density Residential | Heavy Industrial |
| CJERP Region | High-Density Residential | Major Public Facilities |
| County Boundary | Commercial Recreation | Research & Development |
| Municipal Boundaries | General Commercial | Mixed-Use Center |
| | | Growth Areas Designated |
| | | Future |
| | | Rural Resources |
| | | Rural Conservation |
| | | Open Space Conservation |
| | | Agriculture |

Scale: 1:95,040
 0 0.5 1 2 Miles

CJERP’s Future Land Use Map

The CJERP Future Land Use Map reflects a coordinated regional approach to managing growth while preserving the rural landscape that defines the region.

How the Future Land Use Map was Developed

The Future Land Use Map was developed through a collaborative, iterative process that built on prior planning efforts and incorporated both stakeholder and public input. The process began with a Regional Planning Committee (RPC) meeting, where members were asked to review the Future Land Use Map from the region’s previous comprehensive plan and identify any updates based on current conditions, ongoing projects, and emerging priorities.

Public input was then gathered through a community open house, where residents provided feedback on the types of development they would like to see in the region and where that development should occur. This feedback helped to inform both the location and character of future growth.

Using this input, an updated Future Land Use Map was prepared and presented to the RPC along with the concept of designated growth areas within a regional planning framework. A key point of discussion was that growth areas do not necessarily indicate large-scale new development or residential expansion. Instead, they also support reinvestment, infill, and the redevelopment of existing properties to strengthen the region’s economic base.

Through subsequent discussion, the RPC refined the boundaries of growth areas and clarified the types of uses and development patterns appropriate within each. The result is a Future Land Use Map that reflects both community priorities and a coordinated regional approach to managing growth and preservation.

57% of future land use in the CJERP region is dedicated to natural areas

Future Land Use - Natural Resources

| | Chestnuthill | Jackson | Eldred | Ross | Polk |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Agricultural | 15% | 6% | 25% | 13% | 31% |
| Open Space Conservation | 14% | 35% | 13% | 14% | 15% |
| Rural Conservation | 16% | 17% | 41% | 35% | 1% |
| Total | 45% | 58% | 79% | 62% | 47% |

Contents of the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map reflects a clear regional priority to preserve rural character and natural resources while directing growth to appropriate locations. When grouping together land use categories that support these goals, including Agriculture, Forest, Parks and Recreation, Conservation, and Rural Resource Areas, approximately 57 percent of the CJERP region is planned for natural resource-based uses.

The other dominant land use is residential, specifically of the low-density variety. Approximately 35 percent of land across the region is designated for low-density residential uses, reinforcing the region's existing development pattern. In contrast, only about two percent of land is designated for medium- and higher-density residential development.

More intensive land uses are limited in scale and location. General Commercial (2.7 percent), Mixed Use Centers (1.4 percent), Research and Development (1.0 percent), and Heavy Industrial (0.1 percent) uses are confined to designated growth areas and represent a very small portion of the overall land use pattern.

Together, these patterns demonstrate that the Future Land Use Map largely reinforces the region's existing rural character while providing targeted opportunities for growth and reinvestment.

What the FLUM Means for CJERP

The Future Land Use Map reflects the values and priorities of the CJERP region. It builds upon existing development patterns while providing a clear framework for managing future growth in a way that supports the region's character and long-term sustainability.

1. **Growth is concentrated along key transportation corridors, particularly routes 209, 115, and 715**
2. **The vast majority of residential areas remain low-density in character**

4. **Existing zoning already supports much of this pattern, though targeted updates will be needed to align with growth areas**
5. **Growth areas support reinvestment and redevelopment, not just new development**
6. **The Future Land Use map reinforces the region's long-standing commitment to agricultural and open space preservation**

Community Development Objectives

In addition to the Future Land Use Map, this chapter is accompanied by Community Development Objectives that reinforce its key themes. These objectives translate the map into clear policy direction to guide zoning updates, infrastructure investments, and future development decisions across the CJERP region.

Spotlight On... Transfer of Development Rights



Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a tool authorized by the Municipalities Planning Code that allows municipalities to direct growth while preserving open space. Through TDR, areas identified for preservation, such as rural or agricultural lands, are designated as "sending areas," while locations more suitable for development, such as growth areas, are identified as "receiving areas." Landowners in sending areas can sell development rights, which are then used to allow additional density in receiving areas. This approach provides financial value to rural landowners while permanently preserving land and guiding growth to appropriate locations. As part of a regional comprehensive plan, TDR can be implemented across municipal boundaries, creating opportunities for coordinated preservation.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Community Development Objectives work in tandem with the Future Land Use Map to establish the policy direction that guides how municipalities implement their comprehensive plan through zoning and land use decisions. As outlined in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, zoning ordinances are intended to reflect these objectives, which address topics such as land use, housing, economic development, infrastructure, and the preservation of agricultural land and natural resources.

In the CJERP region, The Future Land Use Map establishes a shared vision for where growth, reinvestment, and preservation should occur, while the objectives provide specific language to support and reinforce that vision over the next decade.

Together, they ensure that future zoning updates, infrastructure investments, and development decisions are aligned with regional priorities. This integrated approach allows the municipalities to maintain consistency in how land use decisions are made while remaining responsive to changing conditions and opportunities.

-  Direct commercial and industrial development to Designated Growth Areas along major transportation corridors
-  Support new development and redevelopment through the efficient use of existing, adequately maintained public infrastructure.
-  Preserve agricultural land, forested areas, scenic landscapes, and other rural lands for long-term conservation and predominantly low-density use
-  Provide for medium- and high-density residential development that accommodates a range of housing types and preferences in locations where adequate transportation infrastructure exists, particularly within designated growth areas.
-  Maintain predominantly low-density residential development outside Designated Growth Areas to protect rural character and limit infrastructure expansion
-  Require open space and conservation design elements in medium- and high-density residential development to reflect the region's landscape character
-  Coordinate regionally on the location and regulation of emerging or specialized industrial and commercial land uses
-  Align transportation planning and roadway improvements with the Regional Future Land Use Map, prioritizing major capacity improvements within Growth Areas to direct traffic away from rural and low-intensity areas



Strategies for Action

Comprehensive planning does not stop at establishing a vision for future land use—it also defines how the community can make meaningful progress on the issues that matter most. Building on the foundation established in previous chapters, this section translates that vision into a coordinated set of actions focused on natural resources, housing, economic opportunity, transportation, and community character.

This chapter is where the plan becomes actionable. The Future Land Use Map establishes a framework for where growth and preservation should occur, while this chapter outlines how to advance those priorities through targeted strategies.

Five Focus Areas are identified based on community engagement and analysis of existing conditions. Each includes a clear goal, desired outcomes, and priority strategies representing the most impactful actions.

While additional recommendations are included in the Implementation Plan, the strategies presented here reflect the highest-priority opportunities to advance the region’s shared vision over the next decade.





Strategies & Recommendations

To help support implementation, each strategy includes three additional pieces of information: a recommended priority level, an estimated cost, and applicable townships. These indicators are intended to provide general guidance as CJERP considers which initiatives to pursue and how they may be implemented.

Priority: The order which we'd recommend these recommendations be implemented, based on value to achieve the community's vision and available resources

⊕ - Short-Term

⊕⊕ - Medium-Term

⊕⊕⊕ - Long-Term

Cost: Estimated financial requirement to carry out the strategy. If the strategy is expected to generate revenue, the cost estimate is adjusted to reflect net cost (Expenses – Revenue)

\$ - < \$50k

\$\$ - \$50-500k

Applicable Townships: Many strategies are relevant across the region, but some strategies are tailored to specific townships

Focus Area #1: Agriculture & Open Space



Continue a Legacy of Ag and Open Space Preservation

Protect the agricultural land and open space that define CJERP's landscape and quality of life by continuing and strengthening the practical tools that preserve the region's defining landscape, including working farms, forested land, rolling hills, and scenic vistas.

Preserving the rural character of the CJERP region is not just a planning goal. It is a clearly expressed community priority. Across Regional Planning Committee discussions, stakeholder interviews, the community survey, and the public open house, no theme was more consistent. Residents overwhelmingly identified agriculture, open space, and rural character as defining features of the region. In fact, 88 percent of survey respondents indicated that maintaining rural character is "very important," and the most frequently selected words used to describe the region's future were "agriculture," "open space," and "rural."

This priority is not new. The CJERP municipalities, along with Monroe County, have a long-standing commitment to agricultural and open space preservation. As early as the County's 1996 Comprehensive Plan, preservation of farmland, natural areas, and scenic landscapes was identified as essential to maintaining regional character and quality of life. This vision led to tangible action, most notably the voter-approved \$25 million Open Space Bond Referendum in 1998, which established a dedicated funding source for land acquisition and conservation. By 2010, these efforts had resulted in the preservation of more than 12,000 acres of open space and 6,000 acres of farmland across Monroe County.

Key Outcomes

1. Preserved agricultural heritage
2. Sustained rural character
3. Protected scenic and open landscapes



Once an area loses its rural character, it is gone forever. I feel that there are plenty of areas, which have been urbanized for warehousing and manufacturing, with housing for those working in those workplaces, giving them short commutes. It is critical that we conserve our agricultural heritage, providing locally grown food, and family run businesses. Now, more than ever, it is vital that we as society are less reliant on imported agriculture products, one of the ways to do that is by maintaining and preserve a healthy, rural, agricultural area.

-Online Survey Respondent



Since that time, preservation efforts have continued through a combination of county programs and local implementation tools. Within the CJERP region, all five municipalities participate in Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs), which provide protections for farming operations and establish a foundation for permanent preservation. Today, approximately 15.7 square miles (over 10,000 acres) of farmland are enrolled in ASAs, with an additional 9.9 square miles (over 6,000 acres) permanently preserved through agricultural conservation easements. These efforts reflect a sustained commitment to maintaining agriculture as a viable land use and economic driver.

Municipalities have also integrated preservation into land use planning and regulation. Conservation design subdivisions, enabled across all five townships, allow development to occur in a manner that preserves significant portions of land as open space. In Chestnuthill Township, the adoption of an Official Map further reinforces this commitment by identifying priority lands for conservation and providing a mechanism to preserve them over time.

The Future Land Use Map builds directly on this legacy. With approximately 57 percent of land designated for agricultural, forest, and other natural resource-based uses, the plan reinforces the region's long-standing priority to protect its defining landscape. At the same time, it recognizes that preservation requires a proactive approach. This includes directing growth to appropriate areas while maintaining the rural character that residents value most.

Taken together, the region's history, current conditions, and community input make this focus area clear. Preserving agricultural land and open space is fundamental to CJERP's identity and essential to its future.



Priority Strategy #1:

Use Official Maps as a Preservation and Planning Tool

Encourage the use of Official Maps, as authorized under Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, to identify lands of public interest related to future right-of-way expansion, parks and open space, pedestrian connections, transit, flood control, and public facilities. Chestnuthill Township’s Official Map, adopted in 2015, can serve as a model for other CJERP municipalities considering this tool. When used alongside the Future Land Use Map and updated Open Space planning, Official Maps help preserve municipal options for future public investment and function as one component of a broader agricultural and open space preservation toolkit.

Priority



Cost

\$

Applicable Townships

JERP

Overview

One of the clearest ways the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) allows municipalities to support agricultural and open space preservation is through the adoption of an Official Map, as authorized under Article IV. An Official Map identifies lands that a municipality intends to reserve for future public use, including road and intersection improvements, parks and open space, pedestrian connections, flood control, and utility or easement areas.

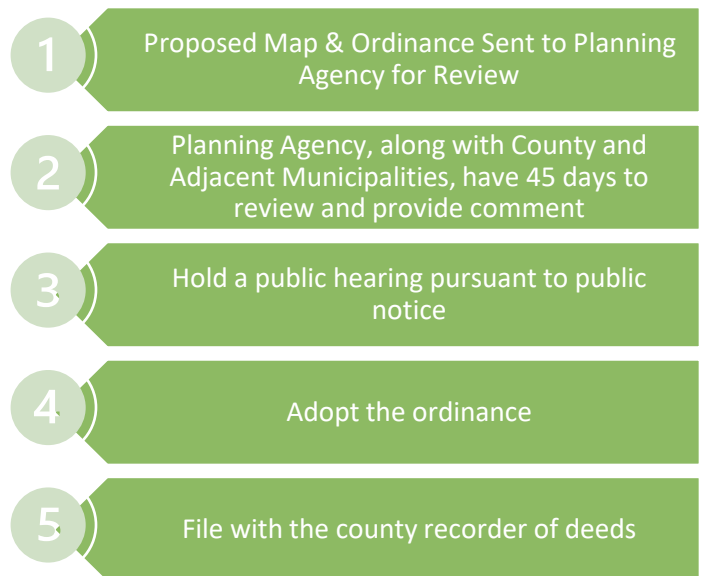
Importantly, the Official Map functions as a “right of first refusal” for the municipality. When a property owner proposes development on land identified on the map, the municipality has a defined period, up to one year, to pursue acquisition or begin condemnation proceedings. If no action is taken within that timeframe, the reservation is released. This mechanism allows municipalities to plan proactively for future needs while preserving the opportunity to secure key lands over time.

Chestnuthill Township’s Official Map, adopted in 2015, provides a local example of how this tool can be used effectively. The map identifies priority areas for future roadway improvements, including realignments, widenings, and signalization, as well as lands for park and open space preservation, agricultural easements,

and other public purposes. It serves as a flexible planning tool that supports long-term investment and preservation goals.

The process to adopt an Official Map is relatively straightforward. The governing body must refer the proposed map and ordinance to the municipal planning agency for review, which has 45 days to provide comments. During this time, the county and adjacent municipalities may also comment. A public hearing must be held prior to adoption, after which the Official Map is enacted by ordinance. Within 60 days, the adopted map must be filed with the county recorder of deeds.

Process to Adopt Official Map



Focus Area #2: Existing Corridors



Enhance Existing Corridors

Promote both new development and the redevelopment of aging or vacant buildings within existing commercial corridors to create attractive, functional places that serve local residents and support business activity.

This focus area is a direct extension of the Future Land Use framework established in this plan. By concentrating new development and redevelopment within designated growth areas, the CJERP region can strengthen existing commercial corridors while preserving the agricultural land, open space, and rural character that define the surrounding landscape.

In this way, Focus Area 2 is closely tied to Focus Area 1. Directing growth to appropriate locations is not separate from preservation. It is one of the most effective tools to achieve it. These two priorities work together, ensuring that investment is focused where it can be supported while limiting pressure on rural and natural areas elsewhere in the region.

Community input strongly reinforces this approach. Through stakeholder interviews and the community survey, residents expressed a clear desire to support local businesses and improve existing commercial areas rather than expand into undeveloped land. At the public open house, participants identified preferred locations for future development, with responses consistently concentrated along existing corridors such as Route 209 and in established activity centers.

These areas represent the most appropriate locations to accommodate growth. They already contain a mix of businesses, infrastructure, and visibility needed to support reinvestment. However, feedback also highlighted the need to improve the quality and function of these corridors. Concerns related to property maintenance, site design, and overall appearance were common, along with a desire for more locally oriented businesses and services.

Key Outcomes

1. Reduced Development Sprawl
2. Strong, Active Commercial Corridors
3. Focused Public and Private Investment

“Attracting diverse and useful businesses to our area without being used for our space in ways that would change our rural dynamic.”

“The businesses that are here already need to be cleaned up. The parking lot for the businesses are the worst. Pass some Ordinance laws to make the landlord clean up the properties. This area could be charming and entertaining with healthier restaurants to visit instead of fast junk food.”

By focusing attention and investment on these corridors, the region can support business growth, improve the character and functionality of commercial areas, and create places that better serve residents. At the same time, this approach reinforces the broader goal of managing growth in a way that aligns with the region’s identity and long-term vision.

Priority Strategy #1:

Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 1: Growth Area #3 - Route 209/115 East)

Chestnuthill and Ross Townships should conduct a focused corridor study within the third growth area on the Future Land Use Map at the intersection of Route 209 and Route 115 to evaluate existing traffic patterns and identify priority improvements to address safety and congestion. Based on study findings, municipalities should consider targeted zoning updates, corridor overlay districts, and revisions to SALDO standards to improve access management, including driveway spacing, shared access, and intersection design. Improvements should focus on reducing bottlenecks and improving overall corridor function.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Priority | ⊕ |
| Cost | \$ \$ |
| Applicable Townships | CR |

Priority Strategy #2:

Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 2: Growth Area #4 - Route 715 at Jackson Border)

Jackson Township should conduct a focused corridor study along Route 715 within the Jackson Township growth area to evaluate traffic patterns associated with regional access from Interstate 80. The study should identify opportunities to improve traffic flow, safety, and access management along this key gateway corridor. Based on findings, municipalities should consider targeted zoning updates and SALDO revisions to improve access design, driveway spacing, and coordination of development along the corridor.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Priority | ⊕ ⊕ |
| Cost | \$ \$ |
| Applicable Townships | J |

Priority Strategy #3:

Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 3: Growth Area #2 - Route 209/115 Central)

Chestnuthill Township should conduct a focused corridor study within the central growth area along Route 209 and Route 115 to build on recent transportation improvements and evaluate remaining opportunities to enhance safety, access management, and corridor function. Based on study findings, municipalities should consider updates to zoning and SALDO standards to improve site design, access coordination, and redevelopment potential along the corridor.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Priority | ⊕ ⊕ |
| Cost | \$ \$ |
| Applicable Townships | C |

Priority Strategy #4:

Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 4: Growth Area #1 - Route 209 West)

Polk Township should conduct a focused corridor study along Route 209 within the western growth area to evaluate existing conditions and identify long-term opportunities to improve access management, safety, and corridor development patterns. While zoning has been updated in this area, the study may identify targeted refinements to zoning and SALDO standards to support coordinated access, site design, and future development.

Priority ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

Cost \$ \$

Applicable Townships P

Overview

The growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Framework are largely located along key transportation corridors, including Routes 209, 115, and 715. These corridors serve as the backbone of the CJERP region’s development pattern and are critical to supporting both existing businesses and future growth. Because these roadways are owned and maintained by PennDOT, coordination with regional and state transportation partners is essential to advancing improvements.

Targeted corridor studies provide a practical next step to build on the comprehensive plan. These studies allow municipalities to evaluate traffic patterns, safety conditions, access management, and development trends at a detailed level, resulting in corridor-specific recommendations that can guide zoning updates, infrastructure investments, and long-term planning decisions.

Through engagement with the Regional Planning Committee, an order of priority has been established for these efforts. The highest priority is Growth Area #3, located at the intersection of Routes 209 and 115 in the eastern portion of the region, where traffic conditions warrant focused study. This is followed by Growth Area #4 along Route 715 in Jackson Township, a key gateway from Interstate 80. The central Brodheadsville corridor

represents a third priority, where recent improvements can be built upon. The lowest priority is Growth Area #1 along Route 209 in Polk Township, where recent rezoning efforts may warrant future evaluation as development occurs.

Spotlight On... Route 611 Corridor Planning



A corridor study is currently underway along Route 611 in the Pocono region, a key transportation route that has experienced increasing development pressure. Led by the NEPA MPO, the study is evaluating existing traffic conditions, identifying areas of congestion and safety concern, and assessing how future growth may impact the corridor. The effort will result in targeted recommendations to improve traffic flow, enhance safety, and better manage access along the corridor, helping to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with ongoing development and regional travel demand.

Focus Area #3: The Local Economy



Leverage Visitors Driven by Regional Attractions to Create a Local Economy that Works for CJERP

Leverage visitors drawn to the broader Poconos region to support a CJERP-focused tourism approach centered on outdoor recreation and agritourism that strengthens local businesses and community identity.

Tourism is a major driver of the regional economy, supporting jobs, businesses, and municipal revenues across the Pocono region. In 2024 alone, visitors spent \$4.9 billion in the region, supporting more than 26,200 jobs. Monroe County accounts for a significant share of this activity, underscoring the CJERP region’s role within the broader tourism economy.

However, public engagement made it clear that not all tourism is experienced equally at the local level. When many people think of tourism in the Poconos, they think of large resorts and destination attractions. While these uses draw visitors to the region, they do not always translate into meaningful economic benefit for CJERP communities and can place added pressure on local infrastructure and services.

This creates an opportunity. Rather than competing with large-scale destinations, the CJERP region can better position itself within the broader tourism economy by focusing on the types of experiences that align with its character and directly support local communities.

Data and community input both point to outdoor recreation and agritourism as defining elements of the CJERP economy. Consumer spending patterns show significantly higher activity in outdoor recreation compared to national averages, with all forms of hunting exceeding an index value of 150, along with boating at 143 and freshwater fishing at 136. These trends reflect a strong local and visitor market centered on the region’s natural assets.

This form of tourism is often smaller in scale but more locally impactful. A visitor hiking the Appalachian Trail

Key Outcomes

1. Regional Identify
2. Strong Local Business Network
3. Promote Community Assets

“The bread and butter of Poconos tourism; nature, unique and locally owned resorts or hotels, and unique dining experiences have largely been replaced by big name hotels, restaurants, and stores.”

“I prefer to see mom and pop stores. And local businesses.”

who chooses to stop at the Kunkletown Pub in Eldred Township for a meal represents the type of everyday tourism that supports small businesses and keeps spending within the community.

By building on these strengths, the CJERP region can cultivate a tourism approach that reflects its identity. Supporting trail networks, farm-based experiences, and locally owned businesses can help ensure that visitor activity contributes to a stronger local economy while enhancing quality of life for residents.

Priority Strategy #1:

Develop a Regional Identity to Support Outdoor Recreation and Agritourism

The CJERP municipalities should work collaboratively to develop a shared identity centered on outdoor recreation and agritourism that reflects the region’s natural assets and rural character. A coordinated approach can help promote local destinations, support businesses in villages and growth areas, and encourage visitors to engage more fully with the region. This effort may include partnerships with local organizations and the use of branding, wayfinding, and streetscape improvements to reinforce a consistent regional experience.

Priority

⊕ ⊕

Cost

\$\$

Applicable Townships

CJERP

Overview

Tourism in the broader Pocono region is well established and will continue to be a major driver of economic activity. Rather than attempting to compete with large-scale destinations, the CJERP region has an opportunity to define its own role within that system. By developing a clear and coordinated approach to tourism, the region can better capture the benefits of visitor activity in a way that aligns with its character and supports local communities.

Given its rural landscape, natural resources, and strong interest in outdoor recreation, the CJERP region is well positioned to establish a distinct identity centered on agritourism and outdoor experiences. A shared regional brand can help communicate this identity to visitors while reinforcing the connection between tourism, local businesses, and community character.

This effort can be supported through partnerships with local organizations, including municipal committees, business associations, and the West End Chamber of Commerce, as well as through coordinated marketing at regional events. Branding can also be integrated into wayfinding and signage, helping to direct visitors to local destinations, trail networks, farms, and small businesses throughout the region.

By taking a coordinated approach, the CJERP municipalities can shape how visitors experience the area and ensure that tourism activity more directly benefits local communities.



*Conceptual branding for tourism and recreation
in the CJERP region.*

Priority Strategy #2:

Build on Chestnuthill’s Local Business Advisory Committee Model to Strengthen Regional Business Support

The CJERP municipalities should build on Chestnuthill Township’s Local Business Advisory Committee (LBAC) model by exploring opportunities to expand the committee regionally or establish similar committees within each municipality. These committees can improve communication with local businesses, support “shop local” initiatives, and help connect businesses with available resources from organizations such as the Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation and other county partners. A coordinated approach can strengthen the local business environment and support long-term economic vitality.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Priority | ⊕ |
| Cost | \$ |
| Applicable Townships | JERP |

Overview

Chestnuthill Township’s Local Business Advisory Committee (LBAC) provides a useful model for strengthening communication between municipalities and the local business community. While still in its early stages, the committee has already demonstrated the value of creating a consistent forum where business owners, municipal officials, and partners can share information, identify challenges, and coordinate efforts to support economic activity.

Early discussions have focused on improving communication around available resources, including grants and loan programs, developing a local business inventory, and advancing “shop local” initiatives to support existing businesses. The committee has also explored opportunities to partner with organizations such as the West End Chamber of Commerce, host community events, and provide educational programming for business owners.

In addition, the committee has served as a venue to discuss regulatory processes, gather feedback from the business community, and identify opportunities to improve coordination with state and regional agencies.

Building on this model, other CJERP municipalities may consider establishing similar committees or facilitating these functions through existing boards, staff, or partnerships. Whether formalized as a committee or not, the core goal remains the same: to create clear, ongoing channels for collaboration that support local businesses and strengthen the regional economy.

Chestnuthill Local Business Advisory Committee Proposed Mission Statement...

“To advise the Township Supervisors on strategies to make Chestnuthill Township a place where local businesses and the community thrive together by utilizing resources that promote local shopping, and helping businesses access the tools, education, and partnerships they need to grow.”

Focus Area #4: Regional Partnerships



Building Regional Partnerships

Build a strong network of public and private partners to collaborate on shared regional priorities, including land use, emergency services, economic development, and community facilities.

The CJERP region has a strong foundation for regional collaboration. By forming a Regional Planning Committee and preparing a joint comprehensive plan, the participating municipalities have already established a framework for addressing shared priorities in a coordinated way. This approach recognizes that land use, infrastructure, and community needs extend beyond municipal boundaries and are best addressed at a regional scale.

A key component of this collaboration is the shared land use strategy. Rather than requiring each township to accommodate every possible land use, the region can collectively ensure that necessary uses are provided across the five municipalities. This allows each township to focus on development patterns that align with its character and capacity, while still meeting broader regional needs. It also provides a platform for sharing information, coordinating policies, and advancing consistent approaches to emerging land use issues.

Regional collaboration also plays an important role in service delivery. Coordination among municipalities can improve efficiency, reduce duplication, and strengthen the ability to respond to changing conditions. Emergency services provide a clear example, where shared facilities, coordinated investment, and joint planning can enhance service levels across the region.

Building on this existing foundation presents a significant opportunity. By continuing to strengthen partnerships, the CJERP region can better align priorities, pursue funding, and implement shared solutions that improve quality of life for residents while supporting long-term regional resilience.

Key Outcomes

1. Shared Resources and Expertise
2. More Efficient Service Delivery
3. Proactive Response to Emerging Regional Needs

Spotlight On... Chestnuthill Township Shared Emergency Services Facility



Opened in April 2025, the Chestnuthill Township Emergency Services Facility was more than a decade in the making and represents a unique example of regional collaboration. The facility houses the Chestnuthill Township Volunteer Fire Company, replacing an outdated station that could not accommodate modern apparatus and improving response times. It also includes space for Lehigh Valley Health Network, which operates private EMS services from the site, and serves as a shared Emergency Operations Center for the CJERP region. By bringing together multiple services under one roof, the facility demonstrates how coordinated investment can enhance emergency response and improve service delivery across municipal boundaries.

Priority Strategy #1:

Establish an Annual Comprehensive Plan Implementation Report

The CJERP municipalities should prepare an annual report documenting progress toward implementation of the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and strategies, consistent with the requirements of Section 1104 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. This annual check-in can serve as a structured opportunity to track progress, identify challenges, and share updates. Municipalities should also use this forum to engage regional partners, including school districts, emergency service providers, and county agencies, to support coordinated implementation.

Priority



Cost

\$

Applicable Townships

CJERP

Priority Strategy # 2:

Regularly Update the Regional Shared-Use Table

Prioritize regular updates to the CJERP shared-use table to reflect emerging land use trends and evolving development pressures. Keeping this tool current helps municipalities respond consistently to new or high-impact land uses and reduces the risk of incompatible development decisions. This review could be integrated with the recommendation to establish a yearly progress report on implementation of the regional comprehensive plan.

Priority



Cost

\$

Applicable Townships

CJERP

Overview

Section 1104(b)(4) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, regarding Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreements, requires participating municipalities to prepare an annual report to the county planning agency, with a corresponding report provided back to the municipalities. While often treated as an administrative requirement, this process can serve as a valuable organizing tool for regional coordination.

For CJERP municipalities, preparation of an annual implementation report creates a structured opportunity to review progress toward Comprehensive Plan goals, identify challenges, and establish priorities for the coming year. This recurring forum can also support engagement with regional partners, including county

agencies, school districts, and service providers, to strengthen coordinated implementation.

In tandem with this annual review, CJERP municipalities should evaluate emerging land use trends and development pressures to determine whether updates to the regional shared-use framework are warranted. Regular updates to the shared-use table can help ensure that municipalities are responding consistently to new or evolving land uses and reducing the risk of incompatible development decisions.

Together, these strategies position the annual reporting process as both a compliance requirement and a proactive mechanism for maintaining alignment across participating municipalities.

Shared Uses and Regional Coordination

As part of the effort to understand existing regulatory conditions across the CJERP region and their relationship to the Future Land Use framework in this comprehensive plan, a detailed review of zoning ordinances and maps was conducted for each participating municipality.

Building on this review, a matrix was developed to document the land uses currently permitted across all CJERP municipalities. This analysis identified both commonalities and inconsistencies in how uses are regulated throughout the region.

From this work, two categories of uses were identified for further discussion. The first included uses that are not currently addressed consistently across the region but but could be sensitive in nature, thus warranting consideration for inclusion in the shared-use framework. The second included uses that are currently permitted by all municipalities but can be the subject of community concern, thus presenting an opportunity to include them in the shared uses framework.

These findings were shared with the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) to initiate discussion around potential updates to the shared-use table. Through that dialogue, several uses were identified for further consideration:

- Data centers
- Homeless shelters
- Medical marijuana grower and processor facilities
- Natural gas processing plants
- Large regional resort uses
- Explosives, fireworks, or ammunition production

This initial coordination establishes a foundation for future updates to the shared-use framework. Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, any formal updates to the shared-use table would occur through amendments to the CJERP intergovernmental cooperative agreement.

Moving forward, these types of discussions should occur on a regular basis, ideally as part of the annual implementation reporting process. This approach ensures that the shared-use framework remains responsive to emerging land uses.



Priority Strategy #3:

Explore Regional Coordination Opportunities with Hamilton Township

Explore adding Hamilton Township to the CJERP Regional Planning Committee to reflect existing connections and shared interests. Hamilton Township borders CJERP municipalities on two sides, and residents participated in both the public survey and open house. Expanding participation would strengthen regional coordination and help address cross-boundary land use and infrastructure issues more effectively.

Priority



Cost

\$\$

Applicable Townships

CJERP

Overview

Input from stakeholders indicated that Hamilton Township shares similarities with adjacent CJERP municipalities and may benefit from stronger coordination on land use, infrastructure, and regional planning initiatives. Participation from Hamilton Township residents in both the public survey and open house further suggests a level of community connection to the CJERP region.

At the same time, Hamilton Township is currently part of a separate regional planning partnership. While that partnership provides a forum for coordination, it does not currently include a shared land use framework comparable to CJERP's regional approach. If Hamilton Township were to identify value in that type of coordination, participation in CJERP could be considered as one potential path forward.

Expanded coordination could strengthen regional advocacy efforts, particularly along the Route 33 and Route 209 corridors, and support more consistent approaches to zoning, land use policy, and the review of developments with area-wide impacts.

Implementation Considerations

Any change in regional affiliation would be initiated by Hamilton Township and would need to follow the procedures established by its current partnership.

If interest in participating in CJERP were to emerge, the first step would be to update the CJERP regional comprehensive plan to incorporate Hamilton Township. This could be accomplished through a targeted amendment, potentially focused on the Future Land Use Map and Community Development Objectives, to reflect expanded participation and establish a shared policy framework.

Following adoption of those amendments, the CJERP intergovernmental cooperative agreement would then be updated to implement the revised plan and formally include Hamilton Township. This sequencing is consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, which positions intergovernmental agreements as implementation tools for an adopted comprehensive plan.

This approach allows for a deliberate and coordinated process that ensures any expansion of regional participation is grounded in shared planning objectives and supported by the appropriate legal and administrative framework.

Focus Area #5: Infrastructure



Bolster Infrastructure to Handle the Effects of Regional Visitors and Growth

Improve transportation systems to better manage visitor traffic and daily commuting by focusing on key corridors and intersections and coordinating improvements that support residents, businesses, and emergency services.

The CJERP region’s transportation system is largely car-dependent, shaped by its rural character and regional travel patterns. This reliance on personal vehicles is further intensified by tourism, as seasonal and weekend visitor traffic places additional strain on key roadways and intersections. As a result, congestion and safety concerns are concentrated along heavily traveled routes, affecting both residents and visitors.

This focus area builds directly on other priorities identified in this plan. As growth is directed to defined corridors and activity centers, the transportation system must be able to support that development in a safe and efficient manner. At the same time, efforts to leverage regional tourism require a system that can accommodate increased travel demand without overwhelming local roadways.

Through coordination with the Regional Planning Committee and community engagement, priority intersections and transportation improvement areas have been identified to address these challenges. These focus areas reflect locations where targeted investments can have the greatest impact on safety, mobility, and overall system performance.

Improving transportation in the CJERP region requires a balanced approach that supports residents, local businesses, emergency services, and visitors. By focusing on strategic improvements along key routes and at high-impact intersections, the region can enhance mobility, reduce congestion, and ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with both growth and regional visitation.

Key Outcomes

1. Safer and More Reliable Transportation
2. Improved Emergency Response and Resilience
3. Infrastructure that Matches Community Needs



The incoming traffic from city folks might be overloading our roads at this point. I feel like there might need to be an expansion of Route 209 to handle it (or some one-way bypass), a traffic light at Weir Lake Rd and Route 115, and especially a warning sign for the intersection at Weir Lake and Cherry Hill. Route 33 also needs upgrades like longer merge/exit lanes for increased driver safety.



“Traffic during peak seasons and when there is congestion on 80 it pours onto local roadways.”



Priority Strategy #1:

Leverage Identified Priority Intersections to Advance Transportation Improvements

The CJERP municipalities should use the priority intersections and corridors identified in this plan to coordinate with Monroe County, PennDOT, and the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization to advance targeted transportation improvements. These documented priorities can support inclusion in the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, as well as strengthen applications for PennDOT grants and other funding opportunities to improve safety and traffic operations.

Priority



Cost

\$

Applicable Townships

CJERP

Overview

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) evaluated the CJERP region’s transportation network to identify intersections and roadway segments that are critical to its overall function. Each municipality identified priority locations where conditions impact mobility, safety, or reliability, particularly during peak travel periods and seasonal increases in visitor traffic.

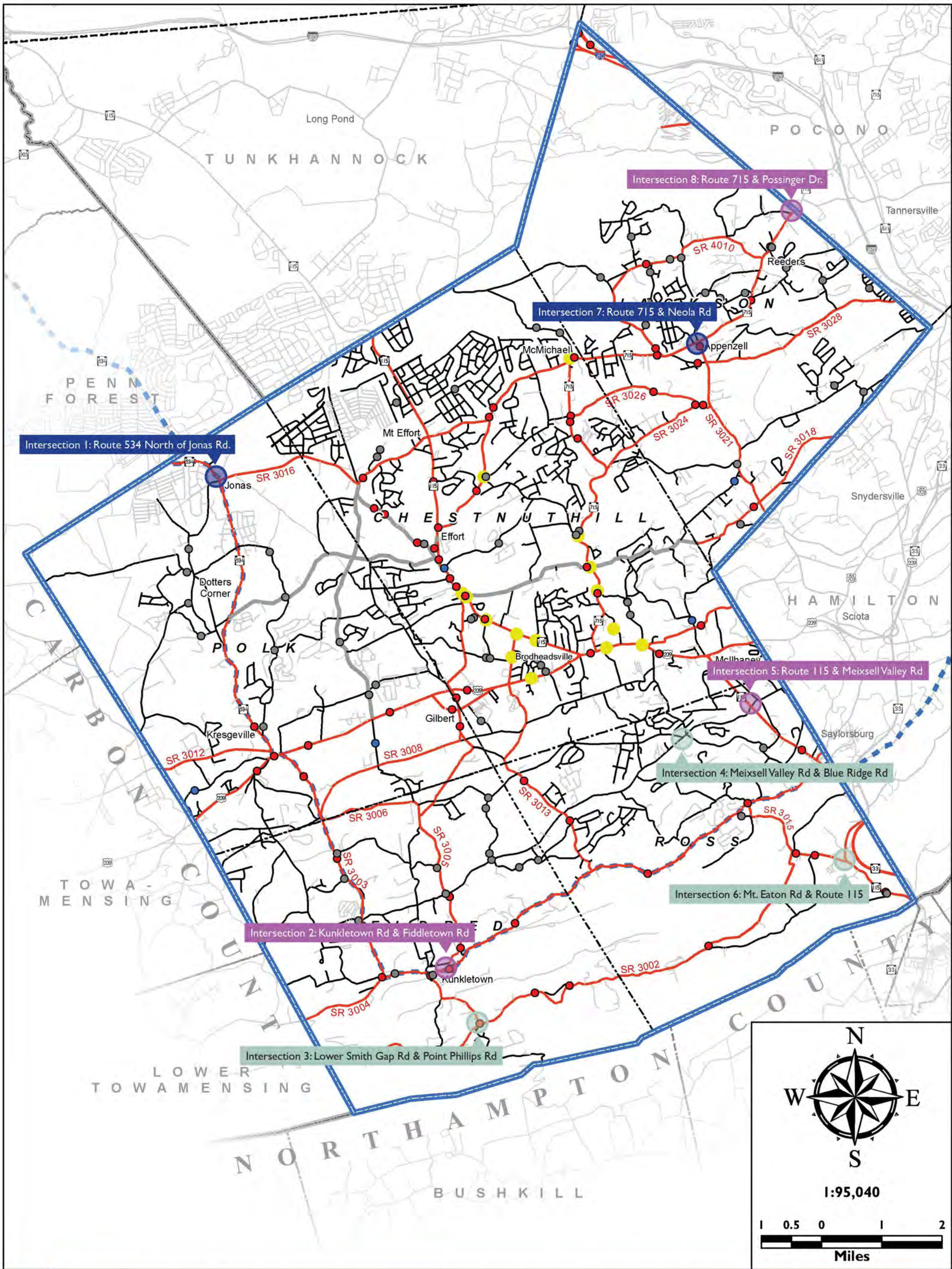
These priority locations generally fall into three categories. The first includes intersections experiencing traffic congestion, often due to proximity to major corridors or increased seasonal demand. The second includes locations with documented safety concerns, such as crash history, limited visibility, or challenging roadway geometry. The third includes infrastructure-related issues, such as drainage limitations or roadway conditions that affect safe and efficient travel.

Identifying these locations within the comprehensive plan provides several important benefits. First, it strengthens regional advocacy efforts by clearly documenting shared priorities, improving coordination with Monroe County, PennDOT, and the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This can support inclusion of projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Second, it enhances competitiveness for grant funding by demonstrating that

projects are grounded in an adopted, regionally supported plan.

Finally, documenting priority intersections establishes a direct connection to implementation tools. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code identifies the Official Map as a mechanism to carry out comprehensive plan recommendations. By identifying these locations here, municipalities can consider incorporating them into Official Maps to preserve options for future improvements.

The following pages summarize the priority intersections identified through this planning process, along with the key issues and considerations for each location.



CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Liquid Fuels Designation | | | |
| | State Road | | PennDOT Bridge |
| | Township Turnback Road | | County Bridge |
| | Township Road | | Township Bridge |
| | Other Road | | Chestnut Hill Official Map Priority Projects |
| | PA Bike Route V | | Priority Intersection - Traffic |
| | CJERP Region | | Priority Intersection - Infrastructure |
| | County Boundary | | Priority Intersection - Safety |
| | Municipal Boundary | | |

Intersection 1: Route 534 North of Jonas Rd.

Polk Township Infrastructure Concern

The segment of Route 534 north of Jonas Road includes a deceptively sharp curve that creates safety concerns for motorists, particularly those unfamiliar with the roadway. Limited shoulder width and drainage issues further contribute to hazardous conditions, indicating a need for targeted improvements to enhance safety and roadway performance.



Intersection 2: Kunkletown Rd & Fiddletown Rd

Eldred Township Traffic Concern

The intersection of Kunkletown Road and Fiddletown Road in Eldred Township experiences congestion due to its role as a primary route to Blue Mountain Ski Resort. During peak travel periods, particularly in the winter season, increased traffic volumes can result in significant delays and reduced efficiency of the intersection.



Intersection 3: Lower Smith Gap Rd & Point Phillips Rd

Eldred Township Safety Concern

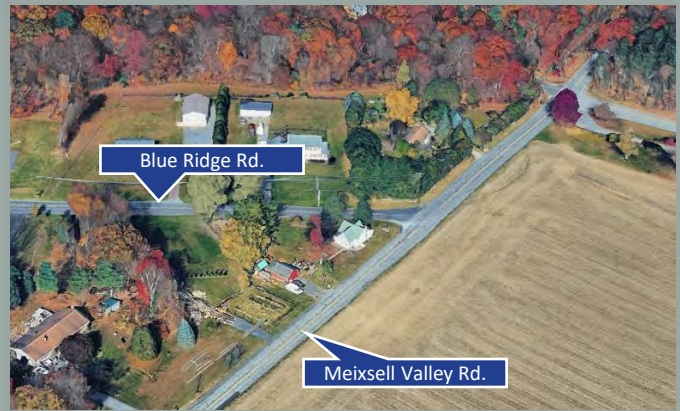
The intersection of Lower Smith Gap Road and Point Phillips Road presents safety concerns due to the steep grade and limited visibility along Point Phillips Road. Drivers who are unfamiliar with the area may not anticipate the stop condition at Lower Smith Gap Road, leading to instances of missed stops and vehicle instability.



Intersection 4: Meixsell Valley Rd & Blue Ridge Rd

Ross Township Safety Concern

The intersection of Meixsell Valley Road and Blue Ridge Road presents safety concerns due to its offset alignment with Flyte Road and higher travel speeds along Meixsell Valley Road. With traffic coming from nearby major corridors, it can be challenging for motorists to safely navigate across the intersection, indicating a potential need for realignment or design improvements.



Intersection 5: Route 115 & Meixsell Valley Rd



Ross Township Traffic Concern

The intersection of Route 115 and Meixsell Valley Road experiences traffic delays due to high volumes and travel speeds along Route 115. Motorists on Meixsell Valley Road can face difficulty finding adequate gaps to safely enter or cross the roadway.

Intersection 6: Mt. Eaton Rd & Route 115

Ross Township Safety Concern

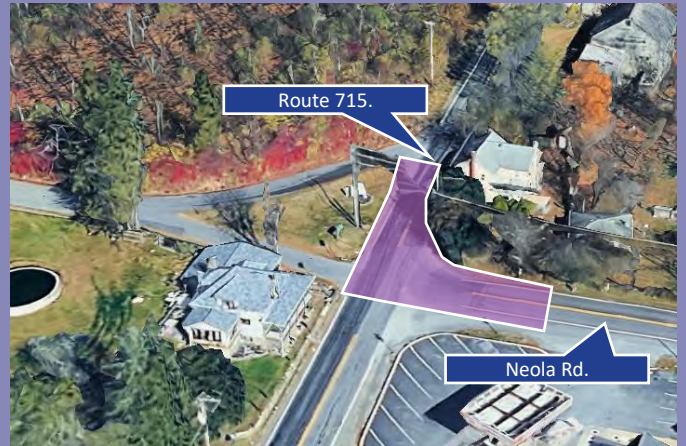
The intersection of Mt. Eaton Road and Route 115 presents safety concerns due to the sharp turning movements required to access Route 115. The geometry of the intersection can be challenging for larger vehicles, contributing to incidents such as vehicle rollovers and indicating a need for safety improvements.



Intersection 7: Route 715 & Neola Rd

Jackson Township Infrastructure Concern

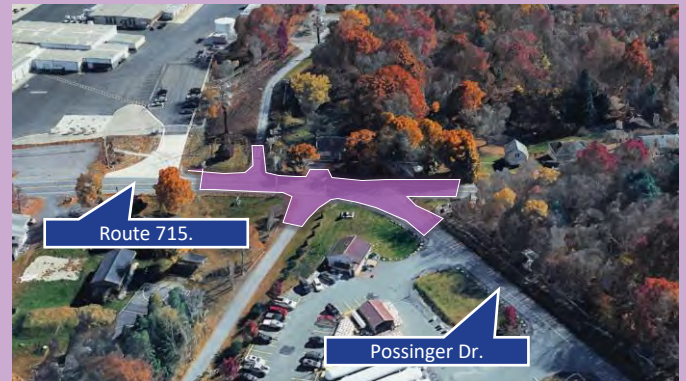
The intersection of Route 715 and Neola Road presents operational challenges due to limited shoulder width along this heavily traveled corridor. Larger vehicles, including trucks and those with trailers, have difficulty safely making turns onto Route 715, indicating a potential need for shoulder improvements.



Intersection 8: Route 715 & Possinger Dr

Jackson Township Traffic Concern

The intersection of Route 715 and Possinger Drive presents traffic concerns due to multiple nearby access points and increasing development activity along the corridor, including a warehouse. As traffic volumes grow, the current configuration may experience traffic flow or safety issues, suggesting that realignment into a simplified T-intersection could be an improvement.



Chestnuthill Township: Official Map Intersections

Unlike the other municipalities, Chestnuthill Township's priority intersections are not listed here because they have already been formally identified through the Township's Official Map, adopted in 2015. This tool has allowed Chestnuthill to proactively document and plan for key transportation improvements, including intersection upgrades, which are reflected on the priority intersection maps as yellow dots. It is important to note that these mapped locations represent remaining projects, as several improvements identified in the original Official Map have already been completed.

Moving forward, Chestnuthill Township should consider updating its Official Map to reflect current conditions, completed projects, and newly identified needs. At the same time, the other CJERP municipalities are encouraged to pursue adoption of their own Official Maps and incorporate the priority intersections identified through this planning process.



Implementation Plan

The implementation plan builds on the vision, focus areas, and priority strategies presented in prior sections by outlining specific actions that support CJERP’s long-term goals. This chapter includes a comprehensive set of recommendations that address essential topics required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and reflect opportunities identified through the planning process.

The strategies outlined in the implementation plan are organized by planning topic and represent actions CJERP may consider over the next decade. They provide a practical framework for implementation that extends beyond the plan’s core focus areas while remaining aligned with CJERP’s overall vision.

Each strategy includes a recommended priority level, estimated cost, and the townships to which the recommendation is applicable. These indicators are intended to provide general guidance as CJERP evaluates and advances specific initiatives.

Icons are also used throughout this chapter to identify which MPC requirements each strategy addresses, as well as alignment with the plan’s focus areas.

Priority: The order which we’d recommend these recommendations be implemented, based on value to achieve the community’s vision and available resources

⊕ - **Short-Term**

⊕⊕ - **Medium-Term**














⊕⊕⊕ - **Long-Term**

Cost: Estimated financial requirement to carry out the strategy. If the strategy is expected to generate revenue, the cost estimate is adjusted to reflect net cost (Expenses – Revenue)






\$ - < \$50k

\$\$ - \$50-500k






Applicable Township(s): Many strategies are relevant across the region, but some strategies are tailored to specific townships











| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|---|--|--|----------------------|
| Primary MPC Topic: Housing | | | | |
| <p>Improve Communication of Housing Repair and Assistance Programs: The CJERP municipalities should work to improve awareness of housing repair, weatherization, and homebuyer assistance programs available through the Monroe County Redevelopment Authority. These programs support low- and moderate-income residents by addressing critical home repairs, improving energy efficiency, and expanding access to homeownership. Municipalities should evaluate effective communication methods, including partnerships with community newsletters such as West End Happenings, as well as websites and social media, to better connect residents with available resources.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Evaluate Zoning Updates to Allow Accessory Dwelling Units in Targeted Residential Areas: The CJERP municipalities should evaluate strategic updates to zoning regulations within Medium- and High-Density residential areas identified on the Future Land Use Map to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units. Allowing ADUs can provide flexible housing options that support aging in place, improve affordability, and make more efficient use of existing housing and infrastructure.</p> | |   |   | CJERP |
| <p>Allow Modest Density Increases to Support Senior Housing in Growth Areas: The CJERP municipalities should consider allowing modest increases in residential density within designated growth areas to support senior housing opportunities near medical facilities and services. Pennsylvania is an aging state, and all five CJERP municipalities have median ages above the state average,. Providing housing options such as townhomes or small-scale multi-unit developments can support aging in place while improving access to healthcare and daily needs.</p> |  |   |   | CJRP |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features










| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|---|---|---|---|----------------------|
| Primary MPC Topic: Land Use | | | | |
| <p>Review zoning in Sensitive Ridgeline and Scenic Areas: Review zoning regulations in sensitive ridgeline, hillside, and scenic areas alongside the Future Land Use Map to ensure land use controls reflect landscape constraints and long-term preservation goals. This review may include consideration of low-density or agricultural zoning, slope-based development restrictions, and building height or design standards that limit visual and environmental impacts on prominent ridgelines, forested hills, and scenic vistas.</p> |  |   |   | CJERP |
| <p>Explore Transfer of Development Rights as a Regional Growth and Preservation Tool: Explore the use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), as permitted under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code for multi-municipal planning areas, to support higher-intensity development in designated growth corridors while helping preserve farmland and open space elsewhere in the region. A TDR approach would allow development rights to be shifted from preservation areas to appropriate receiving areas, aligning growth with infrastructure capacity and community goals.</p> |  |   |   | CJERP |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features











| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|---|--|--|----------------------|
| <p>Explore Regional Coordination Opportunities with Hamilton Township: Explore adding Hamilton Township to the CJERP Regional Planning Committee to reflect existing connections and shared interests. Hamilton Township borders CJERP municipalities on two sides, and residents participated in both the public survey and open house. Expanding participation would strengthen regional coordination and help address cross-boundary land use and infrastructure issues more effectively.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Regularly Update the Regional Shared-Use Table: Prioritize regular updates to the CJERP shared-use table to reflect emerging land use trends and evolving development pressures. Keeping this tool current helps municipalities respond consistently to new or high-impact land uses and reduces the risk of incompatible development decisions. This review could be integrated with the recommendation to establish a yearly progress report on implementation of the regional comprehensive plan.</p> |  |   |   | CJERP |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features











| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|---|--|--|---|----------------------|
| Primary MPC Topic: Transportation | | | | |
| <p>Upgrade Traffic Signal Technology to Improve Safety and Efficiency: The CJERP municipalities should work with PennDOT to upgrade traffic signals with modern timing and detection technologies, including vehicle sensors and coordinated signal timing, and to incorporate emergency vehicle preemption where appropriate. These improvements can reduce unnecessary delays, improve traffic flow, and support faster emergency response times along key corridors and intersections, particularly where limited roadway alternatives may create bottlenecks.</p> |  |   |   | CJERP |
| <p>Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 1: Growth Area #3 - Route 209/115 East): Chestnuthill and Ross Townships should conduct a focused corridor study within the third growth area on the Future Land Use Map at the intersection of Route 209 and Route 115 to evaluate existing traffic patterns and identify priority improvements to address safety and congestion. Based on study findings, municipalities should consider targeted zoning updates, corridor overlay districts, and revisions to SALDO standards to improve access management, including driveway spacing, shared access, and intersection design. Improvements should focus on reducing bottlenecks and improving overall corridor function.</p> |  |   |   | CR |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features










| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|--|--|--|----------------------|
| <p>Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 2: Growth Area #4 - Route 715 at Jackson Border): Jackson Township should conduct a focused corridor study along Route 715 within the Jackson Township growth area to evaluate traffic patterns associated with regional access from Interstate 80. The study should identify opportunities to improve traffic flow, safety, and access management along this key gateway corridor. Based on findings, municipalities should consider targeted zoning updates and SALDO revisions to improve access design, driveway spacing, and coordination of development along the corridor.</p> |  |   |   | J |
| <p>Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 3: Growth Area #2 - Route 209/115 Central): Chestnuthill Township should conduct a focused corridor study within the central growth area along Route 209 and Route 115 to build on recent transportation improvements and evaluate remaining opportunities to enhance safety, access management, and corridor function. Based on study findings, municipalities should consider updates to zoning and SALDO standards to improve site design, access coordination, and redevelopment potential along the corridor.</p> |  |   |   | C |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features




| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|---|--|---|----------------------|
| <p>Conduct Targeted Corridor Studies within Growth Areas (Priority 4: Growth Area #1 - Route 209 West): Polk Township should conduct a focused corridor study along Route 209 within the western growth area to evaluate existing conditions and identify long-term opportunities to improve access management, safety, and corridor development patterns. While zoning has been updated in this area, the study may identify targeted refinements to zoning and SALDO standards to support coordinated access, site design, and future development.</p> |  |   |   | <p>P</p> |
| <p>Use Tourism-Funded Grants to Improve Corridor Appearance and Identity: Leverage programs such as the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (PMVB) Beautification and Community Impact Grant Program to support corridor improvements that enhance community character and quality of life. Public input and stakeholder interviews expressed appreciation for recent banner installations along Route 209 in Brodheadsville, highlighting the value of coordinated, low-cost design enhancements. This funding source can support expanded corridor identity efforts, including gateways, signage, landscaping, and streetscape features that make commercial areas more attractive and welcoming for residents and visitors alike.</p> |  |  |   | <p>CJERP</p> |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
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MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features









| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|---|--|---|--|----------------------|
| <p>Leverage Identified Priority Intersections to Advance Transportation Improvements: The CJERP municipalities should use the priority intersections and corridors identified in this plan to coordinate with Monroe County, PennDOT, and the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization to advance targeted transportation improvements. These documented priorities can support inclusion in the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, as well as strengthen applications for PennDOT grants and other funding opportunities to improve safety and traffic operations.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Enhance Emergency Response Through Traffic Signal Preemption: CJERP municipalities should coordinate with PennDOT and local emergency service providers to evaluate and implement traffic signal preemption at key intersections, particularly along Route 209 and other primary corridors. These systems allow emergency vehicles to communicate with traffic signals using optical or GPS-based technology, temporarily changing signals to provide a clear path through intersections. Given the limited number of signalized intersections in the region, targeted implementation can reduce response times, improve safety for first responders, and minimize delays at known congestion points.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features








| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|---|--|--|---|----------------------|
| Primary MPC Topic: Community Facilities/Utilities | | | | |
| <p>Establish an Annual Comprehensive Plan Implementation Report: The CJERP municipalities should prepare an annual report documenting progress toward implementation of the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and strategies, consistent with the requirements of Section 1104 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. This annual check-in can serve as a structured opportunity to track progress, identify challenges, and share updates. Municipalities should also use this forum to engage regional partners, including school districts, emergency service providers, and county agencies, to support coordinated implementation.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Coordinate Planning with Local School Districts: The CJERP municipalities should coordinate with their respective school districts, including Pleasant Valley and Pocono Mountain, to share information on land development activity, residential growth trends, and demographic changes that may affect enrollment and facility needs. Coordination should occur at the individual municipal level through periodic meetings or cross-attendance at Township and School Board meetings. Ongoing collaboration can help both entities stay informed of shared priorities while also serving as an important conduit for understanding community concerns and emerging issues.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
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-  Natural & Historic Features





| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|---|---|---|----------------------|
| <p>Coordinate with Emergency Service Providers to Identify Cellular Coverage Gaps: The CJERP municipalities should coordinate with regional emergency service providers to identify and document areas with limited or unreliable cellular coverage that may affect emergency response. This effort may include mapping known “dead zones” and prioritizing locations where communication gaps present safety concerns. Documented needs can support coordination with service providers and strengthen applications for state or federal funding to improve coverage in critical areas.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Evaluate Long-Term Fire Service Sustainability Across the CJERP Region: The CJERP municipalities should work with local fire companies to evaluate long-term service sustainability, including volunteer recruitment trends, service demand, facility and apparatus needs, and future capital planning. This may include partnering with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to conduct a regional fire service study. A coordinated assessment can help identify risks, including potential service gaps, and evaluate opportunities for shared services or operational adjustments.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
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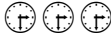



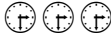





| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|-------------|---|---|----------------------|
| <p>Consider Incentives to Support Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention: The CJERP municipalities should consider adopting incentives to support volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention, such as property tax credits based on service hours. Chestnuthill Township currently offers a model that provides up to a 20 percent municipal property tax reduction for active volunteers. Expanding similar programs across the region can help attract and retain volunteers while reinforcing the importance of local fire service.</p> | |  |  | JERP |
| <p>Evaluate Establishing a Fire Tax to Support Equipment and Capital Needs: The CJERP municipalities should evaluate the use of a dedicated fire tax to provide stable funding for fire service equipment and capital needs. While some municipalities currently levy a fire tax, others do not. Establishing or expanding this funding source could allow municipalities to purchase apparatus and equipment directly, reducing the burden on volunteer fire companies and allowing them to focus more on recruitment, training, and emergency response.</p> | |  |  | ER |

Focus Areas






-  Agriculture
-  Corridors
-  Visitors/ Local Economy
-  Partnerships
-  Infrastructure

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan






-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Transportation
-  Community Facilities / Utilities
-  Natural & Historic Features











| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|---|---|--|----------------------|
| Primary MPC Topic: Natural / Historic Resources | | | | |
| <p>Protect regional water resources through coordinated planning and funding: Pursue joint wellhead protection and watershed protection initiatives under the Growing Greener program and other funding sources to protect community water supplies. For a competitive Growing Greener grant application, consider projects focused on watershed restoration and protection, including design and construction, technical assistance, plan implementation, and water quality improvements. Partner with regional organizations such as the Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy to identify and advance wellhead protection projects for potential funding.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Evaluate and Strengthen Buffer and Compatibility Standards for Protected Open Spaces: Conduct a review of preserved and targeted open space lands to identify gaps in buffering and adjacent land use controls. Based on findings, develop consistent standards within zoning and subdivision ordinances to reduce edge impacts from nearby development. Strengthening these requirements can help protect the long-term function, ecological value, and usability of open space resources across the region.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Update and Align the Regional Open Space Plan: Use the CJERP Future Land Use Map as a starting point to update the West End Open Space Plan. This would allow Jackson Township to be included in the plan. The update should revisit priority areas for active and passive recreation, agricultural lands, and natural resources, while identifying opportunities to expand greenways and connections between preserved areas.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |

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| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|---|---|---|--|----------------------|
| <p>Collaborate with Local Historical Societies to Support Preservation Efforts: The CJERP municipalities should collaborate with local historical societies to support efforts to identify, document, and preserve historic resources across the region. These partnerships can help increase public awareness of local history, inform planning decisions, and support community-led preservation initiatives. Building on existing organizations in each municipality can strengthen coordination while reinforcing the region’s unique heritage and identity.</p> | |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Evaluate Targeted Historic Preservation Overlay Approaches in Village Areas: The CJERP municipalities should evaluate the use of targeted historic preservation overlay approaches within mixed-use villages to support preservation of historic structures and community character. These overlays may establish standards related to building form, façade design, and compatible uses to guide new development and redevelopment. This effort can build on the work of active historical societies across the region, including those in Chestnuthill, Jackson, Ross, Eldred, and Polk Townships, and may include consideration of a formal advisory body where additional coordination is needed.</p> | |  |   | CJERP |
| <p>Identify Priority Lands for Future Preservation: Leverage the Future Land Use Map and updated Open Space Plan, overlaid with existing Agricultural Security Areas and conservation easements, to identify additional properties suitable for preservation. This approach helps focus limited resources on lands that reinforce rural character, protect working farms, and strengthen contiguous open space networks. Priority identification can guide outreach to willing landowners and future funding decisions.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |

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| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|--|---|---|----------------------|
| <p>Use Official Maps as a Preservation and Planning Tool: Encourage the use of Official Maps, as authorized under Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, to identify lands of public interest related to future right-of-way expansion, parks and open space, pedestrian connections, transit, flood control, and public facilities. Chestnuthill Township’s Official Map, adopted in 2015, can serve as a model for other CJERP municipalities considering this tool. When used alongside the Future Land Use Map and updated Open Space planning, Official Maps help preserve municipal options for future public investment and function as one component of a broader agricultural and open space preservation toolkit.</p> |  |    |   | JERP |
| <p>Target Funding to Priority Preservation Areas: Use the Future Land Use Map, Open Space Plan updates, and adopted Official Maps to identify and prioritize properties for preservation funding, directing resources such as the Monroe County Open Space Development Grant Program (funded through Act 13 Impact Fees) toward the Township’s highest-value conservation areas.</p> |  |   |   | CJERP |

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

| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|--|---|---|---|----------------------|
| Primary MPC Topic: Water Supply | | | | |
| <p>Develop Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans for Underserved Watersheds: The CJERP municipalities should coordinate with Monroe County to develop Act 167 stormwater management plans for watersheds not currently covered, including the Middle, Pohopoco, Buckwha, and Aquashicola Creek watersheds. This effort may include pursuing Growing Greener and similar funding sources to support plan development and implementation. These efforts will help protect the natural resources that are essential to the region’s identity.</p> |  | |   | CJERP |
| <p>Establish Consistent Riparian Buffer Standards Across the CJERP Region: The CJERP municipalities should evaluate and consider adopting consistent riparian buffer requirements across zoning districts to protect water quality and sensitive headwater areas. This may include establishing minimum buffer widths along streams and waterways and aligning standards across municipalities. Consistent buffer protections can help reduce impacts from more intensive land uses, such as warehousing, distribution, and data centers, while preserving the natural resources that are critical to the region’s environmental health and identity.</p> |  |  |   | CJERP |

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| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|---|---|------------|--|----------------------|
| Primary MPC Topic: Economic Development (Article XI) | | | | |
| <p>Build on Chestnuthill’s Local Business Advisory Committee Model to Strengthen Regional Business Support: The CJERP municipalities should build on Chestnuthill Township’s Local Business Advisory Committee (LBAC) model by exploring opportunities to expand the committee regionally or establish similar committees within each municipality. These committees can improve communication with local businesses, support “shop local” initiatives, and help connect businesses with available resources from organizations such as the Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation and other county partners. A coordinated approach can strengthen the local business environment and support long-term economic vitality.</p> |  | |   | JERP |
| <p>Leverage Regional Economic Development Resources to Support Local Businesses: The CJERP municipalities should work with organizations such as the Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC) and the Pocono Mountains Industrial Development Authority (PMIDA) to better leverage programs, funding opportunities, and technical assistance available to local businesses. Improving coordination and information sharing can help ensure that businesses are aware of available resources while also helping municipalities understand and utilize policy tools that support small business growth and economic development.</p> |  | |   | CJERP |

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| Strategy | Focus Areas | MPC Topics | Cost & Priority | Applicable Townships |
|---|---|---|--|----------------------|
| <p>Develop a Regional Identity to Support Outdoor Recreation and Agritourism: The CJERP municipalities should work collaboratively to develop a shared identity centered on outdoor recreation and agritourism that reflects the region’s natural assets and rural character. A coordinated approach can help promote local destinations, support businesses in villages and growth areas, and encourage visitors to engage more fully with the region. This effort may include partnerships with local organizations and the use of branding, wayfinding, and streetscape improvements to reinforce a consistent regional experience.</p> |  | |   | CJERP |
| <p>Consider Targeted Financial Incentives to Support Small Businesses and Employment: The CJERP municipalities should consider the selective use of financial incentive tools, such as the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) program, within designated growth areas to support small business expansion, reinvestment, and new development. Nearby municipalities, including Middle Smithfield Township and Pocono Township, currently use LERTA and can provide examples of how such ordinances are structured and administered.</p> |  |  |   | CJRP |

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Community Engagement

Overview

Community participation has played a vital role in the development of the CJERP regional comprehensive plan. The planning process engaged community members across the region to foster a shared sense of ownership and ensure the plan addresses local opportunities and challenges. The perspectives gathered through this process will help shape a forward-looking vision grounded in the region's values and priorities.

This community engagement summary reflects a collective regional voice, capturing community members' hopes, concerns, and aspirations for the future. Through open dialogue and robust data collection, CJERP is committed to an inclusive planning process that represents the people it serves.

Community engagement efforts for the regional comprehensive plan included stakeholder interviews, a community survey offered both online and in person, and a public open house.

Community Engagement Summary



Stakeholder interviews provided insight into the region's strengths, challenges, and opportunities.



The **Community Survey** received a tremendous response and captured community members' priorities, concerns, and vision for the region.



The **Public Open House** engaged community members to gather input on a vision for the region, growth priorities, housing needs, and key planning issues.

Stakeholder Interviews

The planning team interviewed ten key stakeholders from across the CJERP region to gather in-depth insights informed by their professional roles and areas of expertise. Participants included executive directors, business owners, and service providers representing sectors such as education, emergency response, housing, environmental initiatives, and commerce. These interviews helped identify the region’s existing strengths, critical challenges, and important themes to inform the regional comprehensive plan.

Community Strengths

Through stakeholder interviews, the planning team identified several key strengths of the CJERP region. Interview participants highlighted the area’s **natural beauty and rural character**, noting the importance of open spaces, working farms, and strong stewardship of water quality. Stakeholders emphasized that this setting fosters a **close-knit community** with a strong small-town identity and a welcoming, cooperative culture.

Stakeholders also pointed to the region’s **strategic location** as a significant asset. While maintaining its rural charm, the CJERP region remains highly accessible, with convenient highway connections to major metropolitan areas. Overall **quality of life** emerged as a central theme, supported by affordable housing options, well-regarded schools, and a safe living environment.

From an economic and governance perspective, stakeholders noted that the regional economy benefits from a **mix of hospitality, agriculture, and successful locally owned businesses**. These strengths are further reinforced by effective **intermunicipal coordination**, including shared zoning practices and a collaborative approach to emergency management across the CJERP municipalities.

Community Challenges

Findings from stakeholder interviews indicate that the CJERP region faces a set of interconnected challenges that could affect its long-term sustainability.



Stakeholder Interviews

1. Bill Rader
(Business Owner, Mountain Springs Lake Resort)
2. Sarah Wallace
(Director, Pocono Mountain Chamber of Commerce)
3. James Konrad
(Superintendent, Pleasant Valley School District)
4. Clary Fernandez
(Business Owner, The Body Shop)
5. Sarah Martini
(Resident, Chestnuthill Township)
6. Tom Campbell
(Director, Housing Initiatives – Pocono Mtns. United Way)
7. Jim Vogt
(Aquashicola / Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy)
8. Maryellen Keegan
(Monroe County, Director of Emergency Management)
9. Clifford Oppelt
(Volunteer Fire Chief, Jackson Township)
10. Cinthia Marino
(Business Owner, Cartesian Dance Academy)

Stakeholders identified **limited economic diversity** as a primary concern, noting that it contributes to heavy commuter dependence and the gradual decline of small, locally owned businesses. These economic pressures are compounded by **infrastructure constraints**, including increasing road congestion, limited coordination with PennDOT, constrained water and sewer capacity, gaps in broadband access, and growing strain on emergency services due to volunteer shortages.

Stakeholders also pointed to **intensifying development pressures**, particularly related to warehouse development, industrial-scale solar facilities, and data centers. According to interview participants, these trends highlight the need for improved siting decisions and stronger zoning regulations.

Stakeholders expressed concern that such development, if not carefully managed, could accelerate the loss of rural character, place additional pressure on farmland, and heighten environmental risks.

From a social and demographic perspective, stakeholders noted that the region is experiencing both the outmigration of younger residents and population growth driven by in-migration and new development. Stakeholders explained that this growth can place additional strain on infrastructure and services, particularly when growth occurs faster than the region's ability to support it.

Stakeholder Interviews Key Themes

Stakeholder interviews also helped the planning team identify important themes to inform the regional comprehensive plan.

- 1. Preserve the region's rural character:** Stakeholders identified protecting rural character, farmland, and scenic landscapes as a high priority. Stakeholders who value the regional small-town identity and the environmental quality of the landscape expressed concern about industrial uses and large-scale solar farms that could undermine these assets. Regarding housing, most stakeholders said they prefer low-density residential development compatible with the region's rural character, though targeted "missing-middle" housing was noted by one stakeholder as a strategy to limit farmland loss, as some higher-density housing would deliver new units while requiring less land. Stakeholders said proactive zoning and careful land-use planning are essential to balance growth with preservation.
- 2. Expand the region's economic base and local employment opportunities:** Stakeholders said the local economy, which provides ample job and career opportunities related to tourism, hospitality, and retail, is highly valued. However, many residents commute outside the region to work in other fields/sectors.

Limitations on job and career opportunities can reduce local tax bases, which strains schools and municipal services.

Stakeholders said small businesses face hurdles including outdated ordinances, septic and site development constraints, and weak business networks. While some view industrial development as an opportunity, other stakeholders see it as inconsistent with the region's desired economic identity. Stakeholders said expanding local employment and supporting entrepreneurship are critical for long-term resilience.

- 3. Strengthen the region's infrastructure and public safety capacity:** Stakeholders identified the most urgent concern as the region's ability to support growth without compromising safety or basic services. Key corridors, especially Routes 209 and 115 (and nearby Route 611), experience congestion, and emergency services face declining volunteerism, staffing shortages, and increasing response times. Limited broadband and cellular coverage exacerbate operational challenges. Stakeholders agree that infrastructure and emergency capacity must be strengthened to meet current and projected demands.
- 4. Update and streamline local ordinances and permitting processes:** Some stakeholders describe permitting, zoning, and land development processes as slow and overly restrictive. Several stakeholders indicated that regulations, and particularly time devoted to getting approvals, can sometimes discourage small business growth. There was consensus among stakeholders on the need for streamlined, predictable, and flexible processes that support desired development while protecting environmental and community values.

5. Encourage strategic growth and development:

Stakeholders endorsed strategic, node-based development growth. They said concentrating development in Brodheadsville and along key corridors while limiting expansion in rural areas can reduce sprawl, protect farmland, and align growth with infrastructure capacity. Stakeholders said smart growth approaches, such as infill development and redevelopment, are essential to balance economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and the region's community identity.

6. Reinforce a strong community identity, engagement, and quality of life: While secondary to infrastructure and economic concerns, stakeholders said strengthening community cohesion remains important. Stakeholders emphasize re-establishing events, enhancing parks and recreational spaces, and fostering collaboration among schools, municipalities, and businesses. Stakeholders viewed schools as an important asset for engagement, supporting families, and community vitality.

Community Survey

In October and November 2025, the planning team circulated a community survey consisting of 12 questions throughout the CJERP region. These questions addressed demographics, quality of life issues, housing, preservation, public services, and other topics.

Offered in both online and paper formats, the community survey provided both quantitative and qualitative input from residents, business owners, and other community members. The survey collected feedback on community satisfaction, areas for improvement, and development priorities. Participants were also invited to share their perspectives on a long-term vision for the region.

Survey Participation

The survey received **305 responses**, primarily from residents with strong ties to the region. Nearly half of respondents (**49.2 percent**) live in the region, while a nearly equal share of participants (**48.9 percent**) both live and work locally.

Very few respondents only worked in the area or neither lived nor worked in the region. Geographic participation generally mirrored population distribution, though **Chestnuthill was slightly overrepresented**, accounting for 51 percent of responses compared to 43 percent of the regional population. Eldred's response share closely aligned with its population (9% and 7%), while **Jackson, Polk, and Ross were somewhat underrepresented**.

The respondent pool skewed older, with **more than 55 percent of participants aged 55 or older**. Nearly all respondents identified as homeowners, with renters and non-resident participants representing only a small fraction of responses.

A survey was made available to residents to provide their feedback.

Community Satisfaction and Vision



More than **87 percent of survey participants** responded that they are either **highly satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of life** in the region. Respondents were highly satisfied with medical services, parks and recreational facilities, public safety/fire/EMS, and open space and natural areas. They were less satisfied with senior services, roadway conditions, utilities, and shopping options.



Overall perceptions of housing quality in the region was positive, nearly **three-fourths of respondents agreed that “housing in the region is high quality.”** However, **more than half said that affordable and workforce housing is inadequate.**



When responding to “types of development the region needs more of,” **80 percent of participants supported farmland and natural resources preservation. Retail and single-family homes also received significant support.** Generally, survey participants did not support townhome or multi-family development, tourism accommodations, industrial uses, and additional office and medical space.



The importance of maintaining the region’s rural character reverberated throughout the survey feedback. Not surprisingly, more than **two-thirds of respondents selected terms such as “rural,” “conservation,” “open space,” and “preservation” to define their 10-year vision** for region’s future. Additional terms, chosen by more than 50 percent of the survey participants, included: “safety,” “affordable,” “agriculture,” and “livability.”

Community Survey Key Themes

The community survey results affirmed important themes identified through the stakeholder interviews as well as identified other insights to inform the regional comprehensive plan.

1. Encourage strategic growth and preservation:

While respondents voiced strong concerns about growth, land use, and the future of the area’s rural character, most are not opposed to *all* development. Sprawl, and rapid expansion—particularly warehouses, data centers, and other large-scale commercial or industrial uses—are widely seen as threats to the landscapes and way of life that define the region. The permanent loss of farmland, forests, and open space was a central concern for survey participants, with many emphasizing that once land is developed, it cannot be reclaimed. Respondents also said they fear the area may become too urbanized and lose its rural identity.

However, many acknowledge that some growth is inevitable and, in some cases, necessary. These participants' perspectives highlight a need for well-planned, targeted development balanced with strong land and farmland preservation. Solar farms generated mixed reactions: some survey participants opposed them, while others supported renewable energy if projects are carefully sited, limited in scale, and paired with clear community benefits and environmental safeguards.

Some participants saw opportunity in deliberate, compact growth, including infill development and select industries or renewable energy projects, to strengthen the tax base, support local jobs, and retain younger generations.

2. Consider taxes and cost of living challenges: Some survey participants were concerned about high property taxes, particularly school taxes were described as excessive and unsustainable. Taxes were frequently cited by respondents as a serious financial burden, especially for seniors and residents on fixed incomes who fear being “taxed out” of their homes. Many survey comments reflected frustration with what is perceived as government and school district overspending or poor fiscal management, intensifying worries about long-term affordability and fairness.

While the dominant sentiment among survey participants was negative, a smaller group conveyed that responsible economic development, a broader commercial and industrial tax base, and improved fiscal discipline can have the potential to stabilize or reduce the tax burden on homeowners. Some acknowledged that limited, well-planned growth could help relieve pressure on residential taxpayers, particularly seniors.

Positive views toward higher taxes were rare among survey participants and limited to supporting visible improvements or enhanced services. Tax concerns, especially school taxes, were most prevalent in Chestnuthill Township. Respondents from Polk and Eldred emphasized the mismatch between taxes paid and services received, while Ross and Jackson participants addressed tax issues alongside concerns about growth, housing costs, and the ability of long-time residents to remain in the community.

3. Improve transportation, traffic, and road safety: Community survey respondents expressed concerns about transportation, traffic, and road safety, citing worsening congestion, safety risks, and increasing truck traffic. Heavy traffic on Routes 209 and 33, along with weekend and seasonal congestion, was mentioned, particularly in areas affected by warehouse and industrial development. Respondents also noted that aging roads and bridges may pose safety concerns as traffic volumes grow.

Survey participants identified potential improvements such as targeted road upgrades, traffic calming measures, better roadway design, and expanded sidewalks or walkable town centers to reduce car dependence and improve safety. A small number acknowledged that recent corridor improvements have helped.

Traffic concerns were most pronounced in Chestnuthill Township along Routes 209 and 33, while respondents in Polk, Jackson, Eldred, and Ross emphasized speeding, cut-through traffic, and unsafe conditions on rural local roads.

4. Encourage a wider variety of housing options and affordability: Survey respondents reported that limited housing availability and rising costs are making it difficult for young adults, local workers, and families to remain in the area. Some pointed to outside buyers purchasing homes with cash as a key factor pricing local residents out of the market, and some expressed concern about the lack of independent and assisted living options for seniors.

While respondents raised these concerns, they were not opposed to all new housing. Survey participants, including one with housing expertise, expressed interest in a wider range of well-planned, appropriately scaled options such as smaller homes, townhouses, tiny homes, and senior living communities. At the same time, there was unease about overbuilding and the effects of short-term rentals on neighborhood stability and affordability.

Support for targeted housing solutions was strongest in Chestnuthill and Polk, where affordability for local residents and seniors was frequently emphasized. In Jackson and Ross, housing concerns were often tied to tourism and corridor growth, while Eldred respondents focused on balancing new housing with preservation of rural and agricultural character.

5. Economic development, jobs, business & tourism:

Survey participants had mixed reactions regarding economic development, jobs, and tourism. They expressed hope for attracting the “right” kind of economic growth, including supporting small and locally owned businesses, revitalizing vacant or underused commercial areas, and creating walkable town or village centers with more diverse retail, dining, and family-oriented amenities. Improving existing corridors and making communities more attractive and functional were common aspirations.

Respondents’ frustration stemmed from a lack of quality local jobs, forcing residents to commute, and with an overreliance on tourism that brings crowding, higher property prices, and low-wage service work.

These themes were most prominent in Chestnuthill, where survey participants focused on revitalizing Route 209, filling vacant storefronts, and improving job quality. Other municipalities shared similar goals, balancing the desire for more local services and employment with preserving rural character and avoiding generic or large-scale chain development.

6. Public Services, Safety, and Social Support:

Community survey respondents raised concerns about public services, schools, safety, and social supports, particularly whether existing systems can keep pace with growth, increased traffic, and evolving community needs. Fire and EMS staffing shortages, volunteer fatigue, and response times were frequently cited, along with concerns about police coverage and crime as development and tourism increase. Schools were also a common focus, with respondents noting rising taxes, perceived mismanagement, and issues such as bullying that increase anxiety around community affordability and quality.

At the same time, many respondents expressed appreciation for volunteers, teachers, and existing services, while calling for improved planning, funding, and accountability.

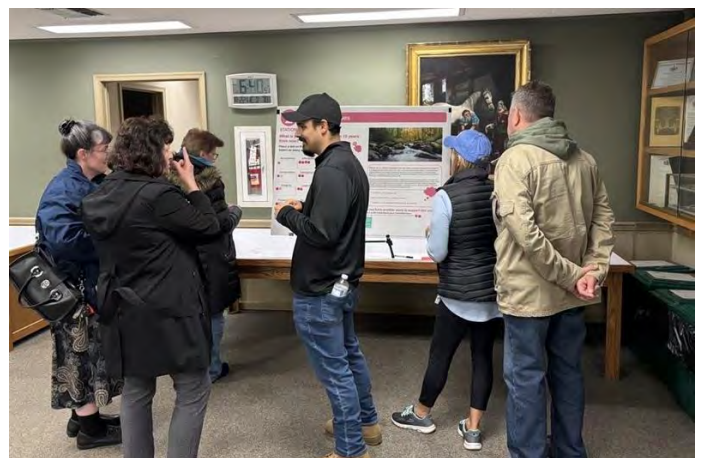
Survey participants also identified gaps in support for older adults on fixed incomes and adults with disabilities, especially related to transportation, housing, and social services. Parks, recreation, and walkability were viewed as important to quality of life, though some noted that offerings are limited.

Chestnuthill generated the most feedback on schools, EMS, parks, and policing, while respondents in Jackson and Eldred emphasized law enforcement coverage and EMS response times.

Public Open House

A public open house was held on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at the Chestnuthill Township Municipal Building and was open to residents from all five CJERP municipalities. The event provided an opportunity to learn about the regional comprehensive planning process and engage directly with the project team.

Through a series of interactive stations, participants shared input on key topics such as the region’s long-term vision, future development locations and types, housing needs, and community strengths and challenges. Feedback from the open house reinforced themes identified through other engagement efforts and will help inform the regional comprehensive plan.



Nearly 50 community members attended the public open house.

Board 1: Welcome!

At the public open house, the first board introduced the regional comprehensive plan and project timeline and asked attendees to identify where they live, work, or attend school. This information helped establish how open house participation aligned with the geographic makeup of the CJERP region.

Residents from four of the five municipalities participated in the open house, with Chestnuthill Township showing the strongest representation. This reflects Chestnuthill’s larger population base and may also be influenced by the location of the event at the Chestnuthill Municipal Building. Eldred, Polk, and Jackson Townships were also represented.

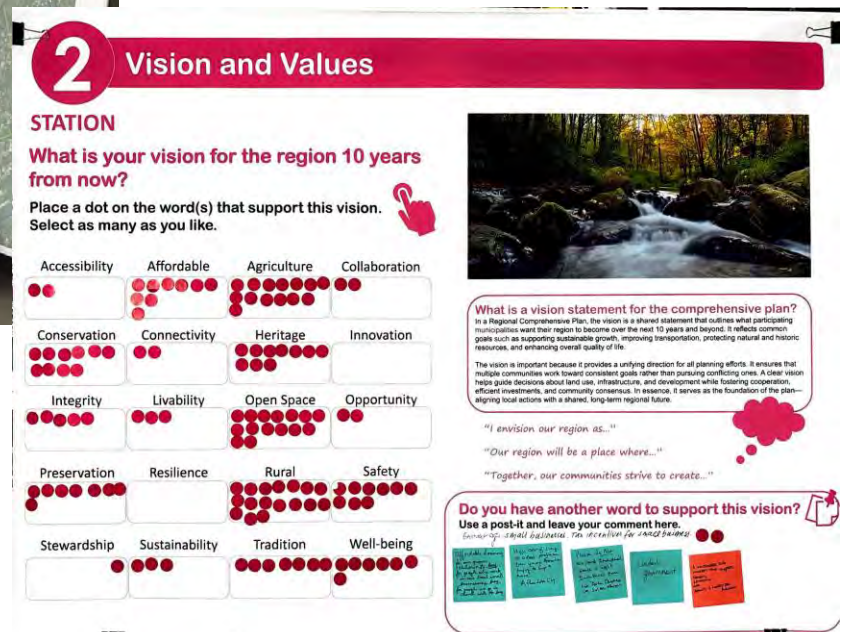
Board 2: Vision and Values

At this station, public open house attendees were asked to identify words they felt should be reflected in a shared vision for the region over the next 10 years. Participants could select multiple values representing their aspirations for the future.

The most frequently selected words were rural, open space, agriculture, and conservation, underscoring a strong desire to preserve the region’s rural character and natural resources. Affordability and safety also received notable support, with additional write-in comments referencing the need for housing affordability, a stronger local job market, and support for small businesses. Overall, the exercise reinforced community values identified through the previous community engagement efforts.



The first interactive board asked community members about where they live, work, or attend school.



At the second open house station, community members identified values to guide the region’s future vision.

Board 3: Future Land Use and Development

The third board asked public open house participants to identify where and what types of new development, if any, should be encouraged across the region. Attendees placed color-coded dots on a regional map to indicate preferred locations for housing, retail and restaurants, medical offices and healthcare, offices and employment centers, and industrial or warehousing uses.

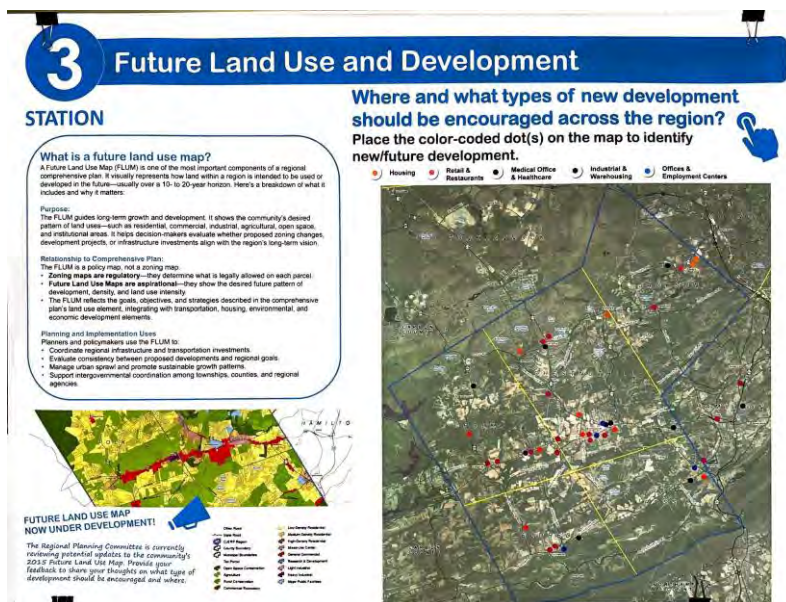
Most responses were concentrated along Route 209, particularly in the Brodheadsville area, where participants identified opportunities for a mix of commercial, employment, and residential uses. Smaller clusters of dots were placed in Kunkletown (Eldred Township), suggesting potential for limited retail, restaurant, or office uses, and near Reeder's along the Jackson Township border, where some opportunities for housing were identified.

Overall, responses reflected a preference for directing growth to existing corridors and service centers, while avoiding dispersed development in more rural areas.

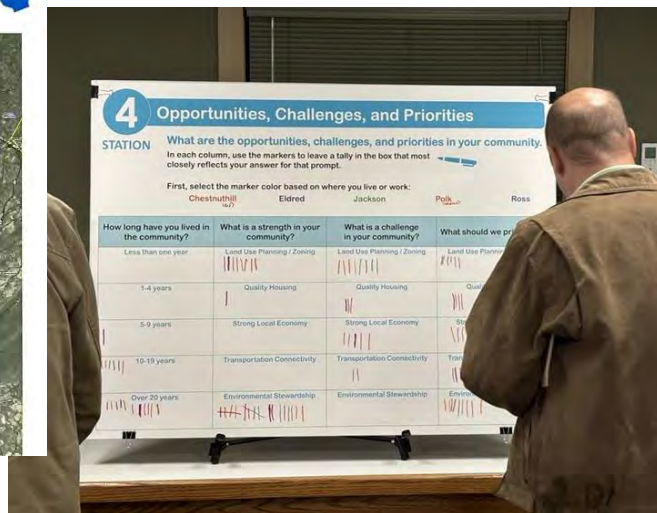
Board 4: Community Strengths, Challenges, and Priorities

This station asked participants to identify their length of residency, as well as key strengths, challenges, and priorities within their community. Most attendees indicated that they have lived in the region for more than 20 years, reflecting strong participation from long-term residents.

Across all communities represented at the public open house, Environmental Stewardship was consistently identified as both a strength and a top priority. Land use planning and zoning were frequently cited as both a strength and a challenge, reflecting appreciation for existing protections alongside concern about managing future growth. A strong local economy was almost exclusively identified as a challenge, highlighting attendees' shared concern about limited job opportunities and economic diversity.



At the open house, community members provided feedback on the types and locations of future development.



The fourth interactive board asked attendees to provide feedback on their community's opportunities, challenges, and priorities.

Key Takeaways

Community engagement throughout the planning process has been intentional and far-reaching to ensure the region’s collective voice shapes the future vision in the regional comprehensive plan. The following summarizes participants’ primary interests and concerns. These will be the basis for the recommendations included in the plan.

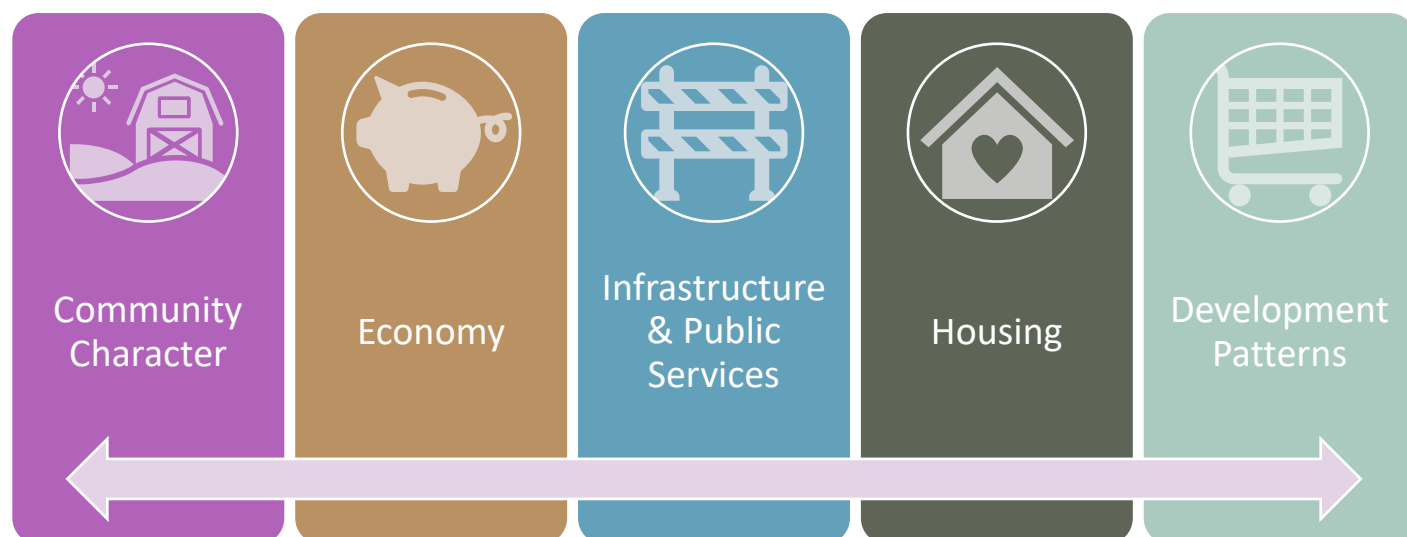
Preserving Community Character: Maintaining the region’s rural character, farmland, and open space remains one of the community’s highest priorities. While some growth is expected, community members consistently expressed a desire to protect the natural and agricultural landscapes that define the region, even as pressures from growth, tourism, and large-scale development increase.

Strengthening the Economy: Residents and stakeholders identified a need to strengthen the local economy beyond tourism and service-based jobs. There is support for expanding employment opportunities that allow residents to work closer to home, as well as for fostering small business growth and entrepreneurship through more streamlined and supportive regulatory and development approval processes.

Improving Infrastructure and Public Services: Traffic congestion, roadway conditions, and the impacts of seasonal tourism on infrastructure were recurring concerns. While public safety and emergency services were highly valued, participants noted growing pressure on these systems. Reliable broadband access also emerged as an important infrastructure need to support emergency response and residents and businesses more generally.

Increasing Housing Affordability: Housing in the region was generally viewed as high quality; however, housing affordability was an increasing concern, particularly for young families, local workers, and older adults. While there was interest in addressing affordability, there was also resistance to housing types that differ significantly from traditional single-family detached homes, underscoring the need for context-sensitive housing solutions.

Development Patterns: Across engagement efforts, participants consistently supported strategic, well-planned development concentrated in appropriate locations rather than dispersed across rural areas. There was strong preference for directing growth along established corridors, particularly Route 209, and within existing community centers, with an emphasis on redevelopment, infill, and development patterns aligned with smart growth principles.





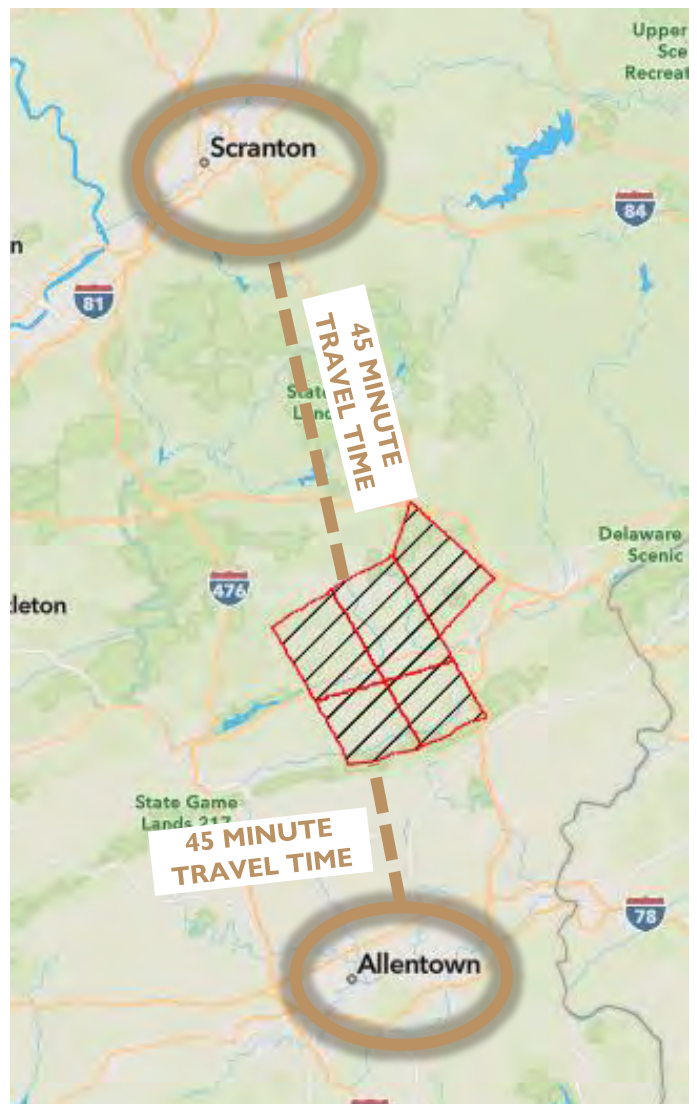
Existing Conditions

CJERP consists of five townships located in the southwest region of Monroe County. CJERP is situated in eastern Pennsylvania, approximately a 30-minute drive to New Jersey from the eastern portion of the region. The region is strategically located between metropolitan areas, with Allentown a 45-minute drive south from Eldred Township and Scranton a 45-minute drive north of Chestnuthill Township, and about 75 miles from the major city centers of New York City and Philadelphia.

Although rural in character, with Route 209 running west-east through Polk and Chestnuthill Townships and I-80 along the northern border of Jackson Township, the CJERP region benefits from access to major roadways and regional connections.

An analysis of existing conditions highlights key themes that shape the region today, including the importance of preserving agricultural lands and rural character, the role of tourism and outdoor recreation in the local economy, and the need to manage growth and infrastructure in a coordinated way.

This chapter outlines conditions and trends in the region that informed the 2026 Comprehensive Plan. This information is organized by 1) People, 2) Local Economy, 3) Housing, 4) Infrastructure, and (5) Environment, Parks, & Recreation.



Population & Demographics

Residents who have lived in their communities and homes for many years give the CJERP region its strong sense of place. Without sacrificing each township’s unique character, demographic trends across the region reveal shared experiences and challenges that make collaboration not only possible, but practical.

An in-depth look at the region’s demographic profile provides insight into who lives in the CJERP region today, how population trends have evolved over time, and what these trends may mean for the future. Understanding the people who live here is an essential foundation for planning across all topic areas including land use, housing, transportation, and economic development — which are explored further in later sections of this plan.

Population Growth

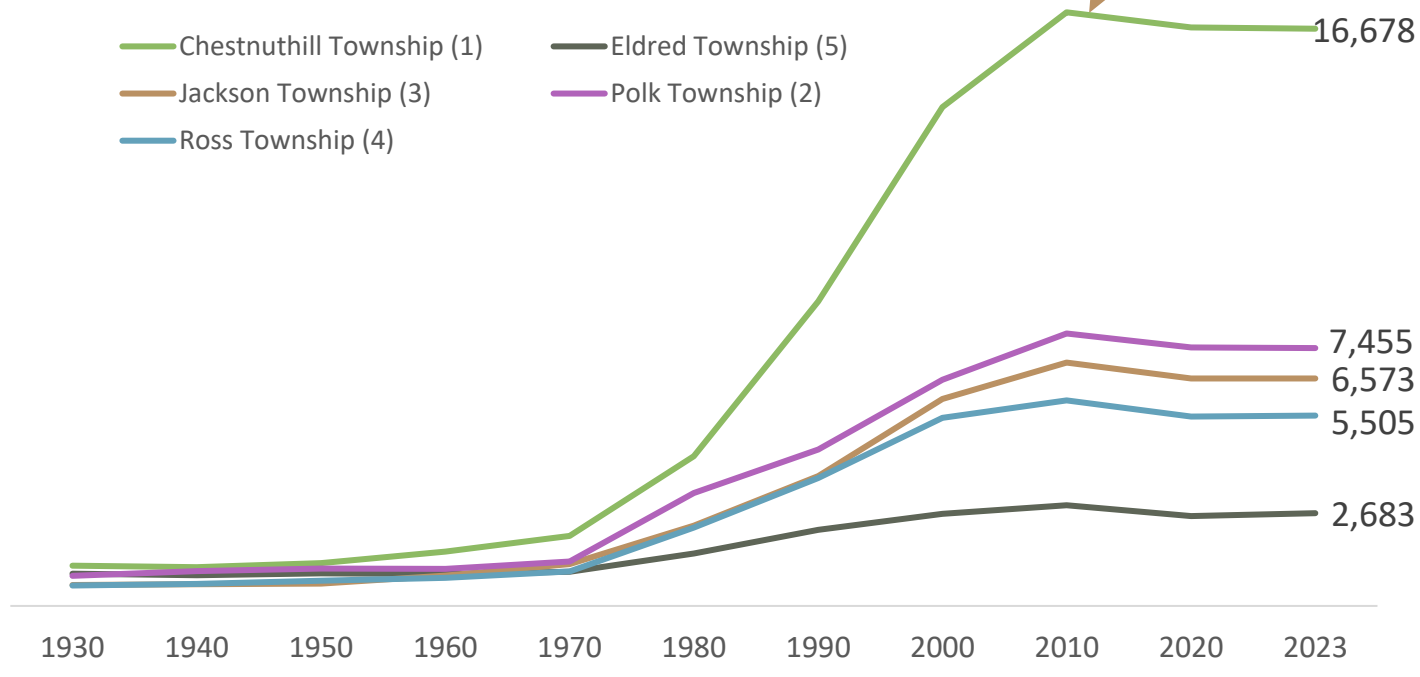
All five CJERP townships followed a similar population trajectory—slow growth through the mid-20th century, rapid expansion from 1970 to 2010, and a plateau or slight decline since.

All five townships, largely rural and undeveloped for much of the 20th century, have experienced growth at a different scale. Residential development that spread across the West End from 1970 to 2010 led to steady and substantial population increases, especially Chestnuthill Township, peaking at more than 17,000 residents. Since 2010, population trends across the CJERP region have stabilized or declined slightly, reflecting regional shifts seen in other parts of Monroe County.

All 5 townships followed a similar population trend, peaking in 2010 and plateauing since then.

HISTORIC POPULATION CHANGE

American Community Survey, 2023



Household Size

Average household sizes in the CJERP region range from 2.4 in Eldred Township (equal to the Pennsylvania average) to 2.9 in Polk Township. This trend highlights the need for housing options to accommodate a variety of household sizes across the region.

Race and Ethnicity

All five CJERP townships are predominantly white communities, slightly more so than the Pennsylvania average. The proportion ranges from 76.4 percent in Chestnuthill to 88.2 percent in Ross Township. Several townships, including Chestnuthill, Jackson, Polk, and Ross, also have relatively high shares of residents of Hispanic or Latino origin, each exceeding the statewide average.

However, all five townships remain below Monroe County’s overall share of 17.7 percent, reflecting more modest levels of racial and ethnic diversity in the West End compared to the county as a whole.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Inclusive planning, community outreach, and services that are welcoming and accessible to all current and future residents is particularly important for communities with higher rates of diversity.

Male to Female Ratio

The population across most CJERP townships is relatively balanced between male and female residents, aligning closely with county and state trends. Eldred and Jackson Townships are nearly even at 49 percent male and 51 percent female, while Polk reports an even 50/50 split. However, Chestnuthill and Ross Townships skew slightly more male (53 percent and 56 percent, respectively). This slight imbalance may be influenced by local employment patterns—particularly in Chestnuthill and Polk, which have the region’s highest share of jobs in the Transportation and Warehousing sector.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

American Community Survey, 2023

| Race | Chestnuthill Township | Eldred Township | Jackson Township | Polk Township | Ross Township | Monroe County | PA |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| White | 76.4% | 83.4% | 79.4% | 82.6% | 88.2% | 66.5% | 75.8% |
| Black or African American | 7.8% | 3.5% | 8.5% | 1.7% | 2.2% | 14.0% | 10.7% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| Asian | 1.8% | 0.0% | 2.0% | 1.6% | 2.6% | 2.6% | 3.7% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Some other race | 3.7% | 6.1% | 5.6% | 3.3% | 1.4% | 6.4% | 3.4% |
| Two or more races | 10.3% | 6.8% | 4.4% | 10.8% | 5.6% | 10.3% | 6.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race) | 11.0% | 2.8% | 12.8% | 14.5% | 9.3% | 17.7% | 8.4% |

Population Age

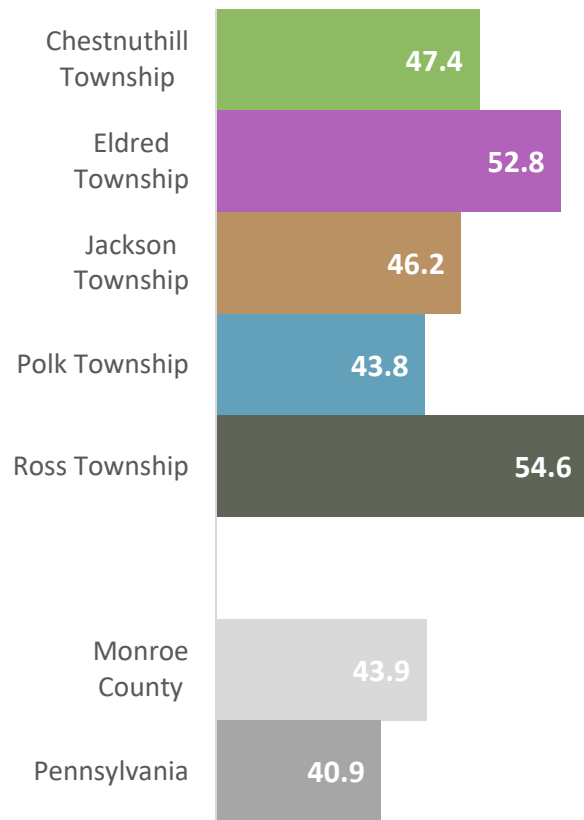
Every township in the CJERP region has a median age above the Pennsylvania average of 41.4, reflecting an overall older population across the region. Ross Township has the highest median age at 54.6, followed by Eldred at 52.8. Chestnuthill (47.4), Jackson (46.2), and Polk (43.8) all trend older than the state, but with more age diversity. Polk stands out as the youngest township in the region and has a comparatively higher share of residents under age 24.

Looking at broader age cohorts, all townships besides Polk have a greater proportion of residents aged 55 and older than both Monroe County and Pennsylvania overall. These patterns reflect the continued appeal of the Poconos as a retirement destination, driven in part by the region’s natural amenities, tourism, and quality of life.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Older age demographics demonstrate a need to ensure services and infrastructure are in place to support aging in place and enhance livability for older residents.

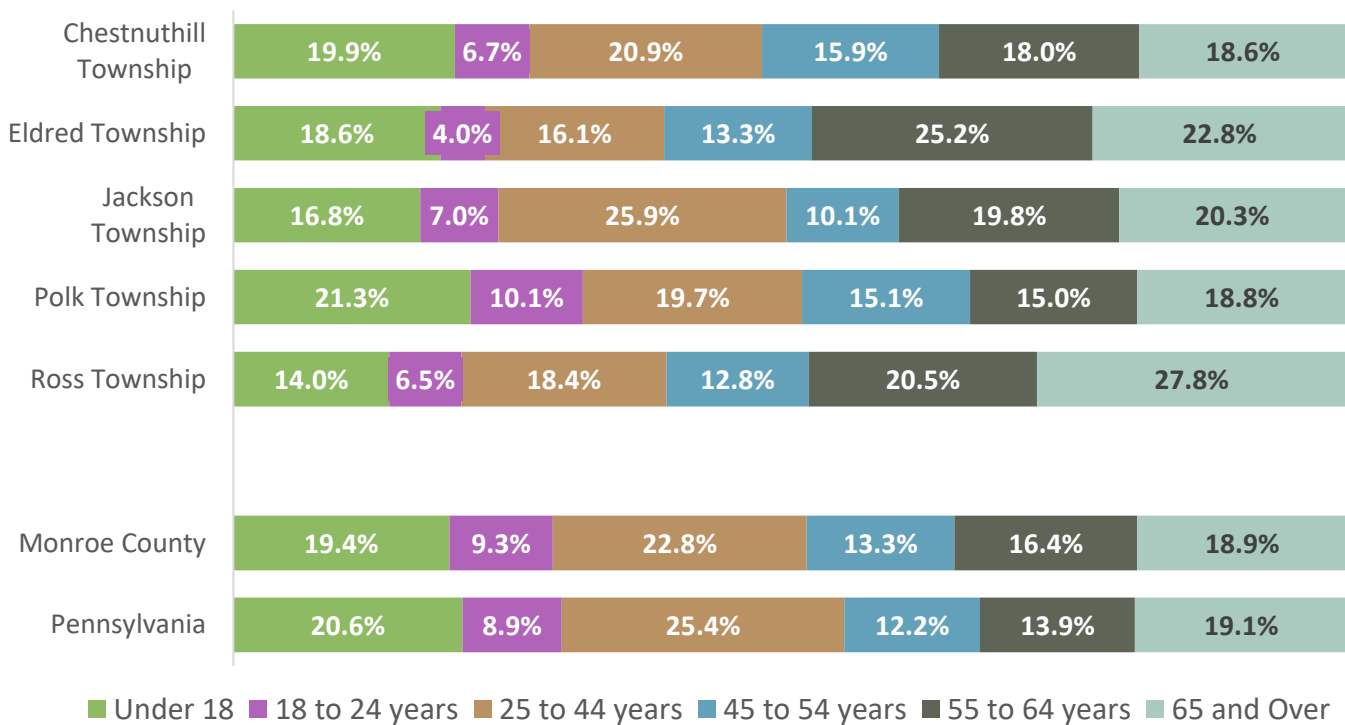
MEDIAN AGE

American Community Survey, 2023



HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

ACS, 2023



Household Income and Employment

Most CJERP townships have median household incomes that exceed both the Monroe County and Pennsylvania averages. Chestnuthill (\$90,144), Jackson (\$86,153), Ross (\$88,667), and Polk (\$82,297) all fall within a relatively similar range, reflecting a stable economic base in much of the region. Eldred Township stands out with a lower median household income of \$59,479 — a figure that may be partially explained by its older population and corresponding income characteristics.

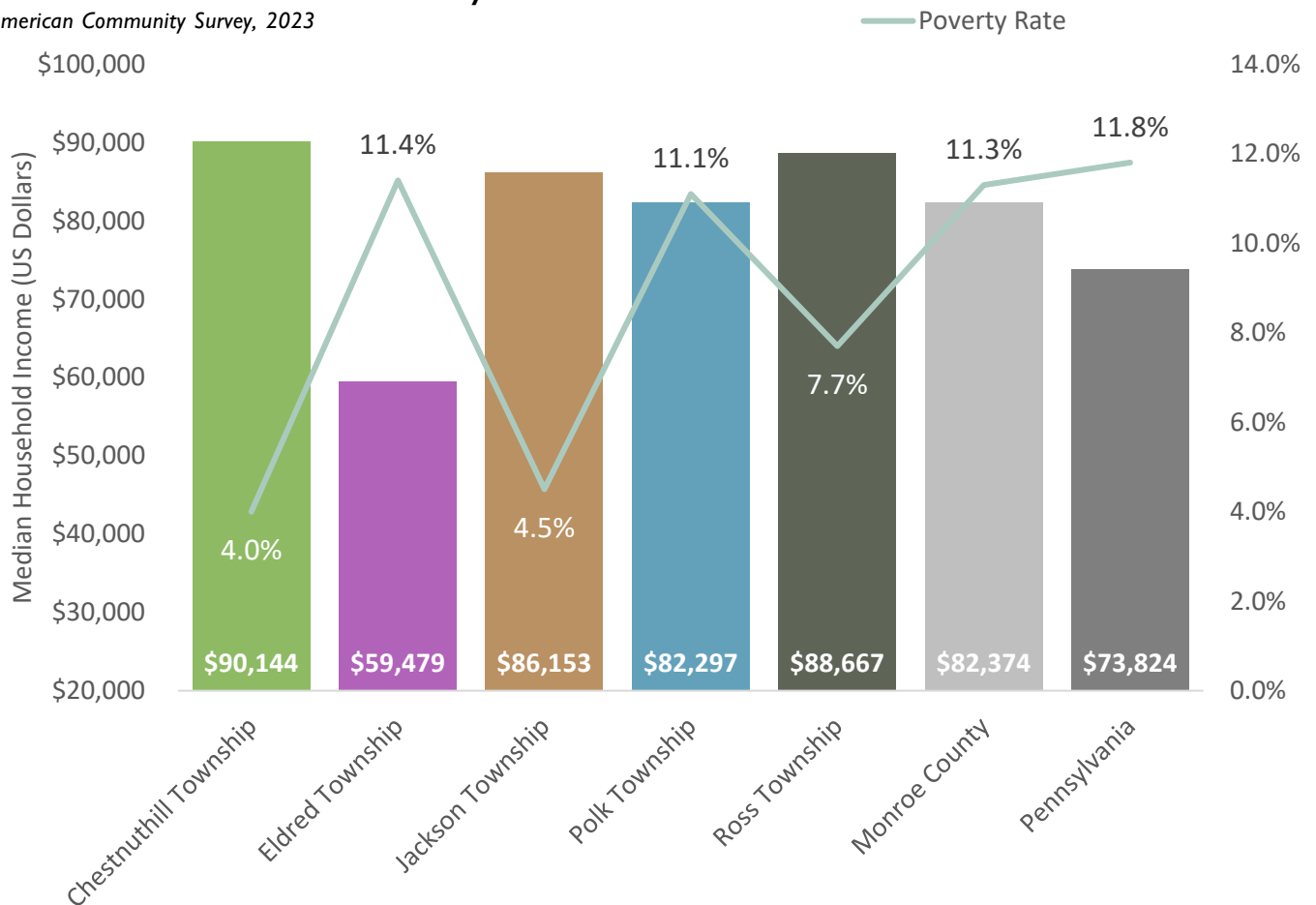
Poverty rates in the region generally follow a similar pattern. Eldred reports the highest poverty rate at 11.4 percent, slightly above the county average, followed by Polk at 11.1 percent. The remaining three townships report notably lower poverty levels. In Eldred’s case, the township’s age profile may help explain these figures: 25.2 percent of residents are between 55 and 64, and 22.9 percent are 65 or older — the highest combined share of older adults in the CJERP region.

It's important to note that poverty rates in the American Community Survey are based on annual income, not accumulated assets. Retirees with limited reported income but substantial home equity or savings may still fall below the poverty threshold as defined by the Census Bureau. As a result, poverty in older communities can sometimes appear overstated. That’s why interpreting these figures requires balancing the data with local knowledge and context to better understand which households may truly need support and where services should be targeted.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** For communities with higher poverty rates, consider strategies that support residents who may be financial vulnerable. For instance, connect older adults and low-income families with available resources.

Median Household Income and Poverty Rate

American Community Survey, 2023



Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in the CJERP region skews slightly toward individuals with some level of college attainment, at 55 percent of residents. This is in line with Monroe County as a whole, though slightly behind statewide levels in Pennsylvania.

There are no higher education institutions within the CJERP region, but residents have access to nearby options including Northampton Community College and East Stroudsburg University. Some former residents may have left the region to pursue educational opportunities and now represent a potential group to attract back through quality-of-life, workforce, or housing strategies.

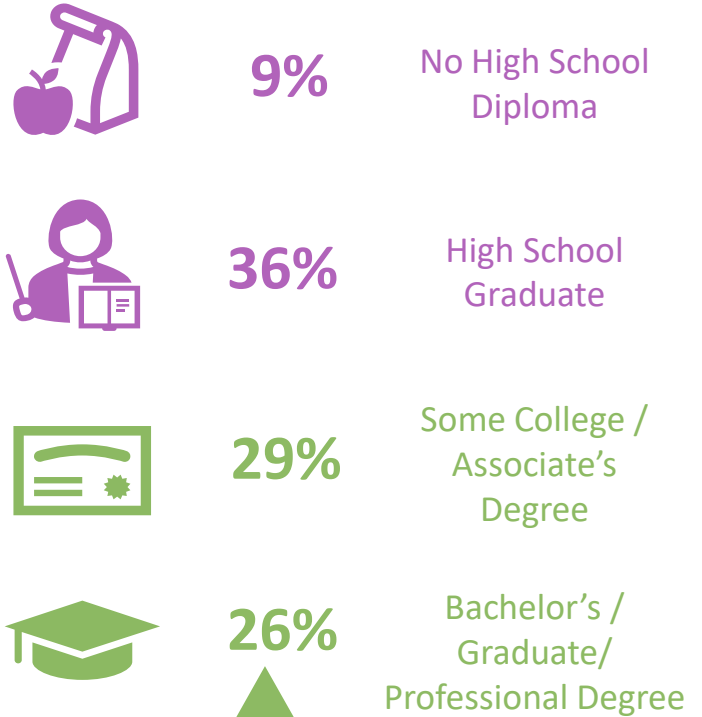
Pennsylvania has a higher share of residents with a bachelor's or graduate degree compared to the CJERP townships. The region's slightly lower levels of higher educational attainment may be a consideration for employers seeking a college-educated workforce. Additionally, with about nine percent of the region's population lacking a high school diploma, some residents may find it challenging to obtain employment.

*Considerations for the comprehensive plan:

Educational attainment patterns suggest the importance of supporting workforce development and expanding access to training and career pathways that align with regional employment opportunities.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

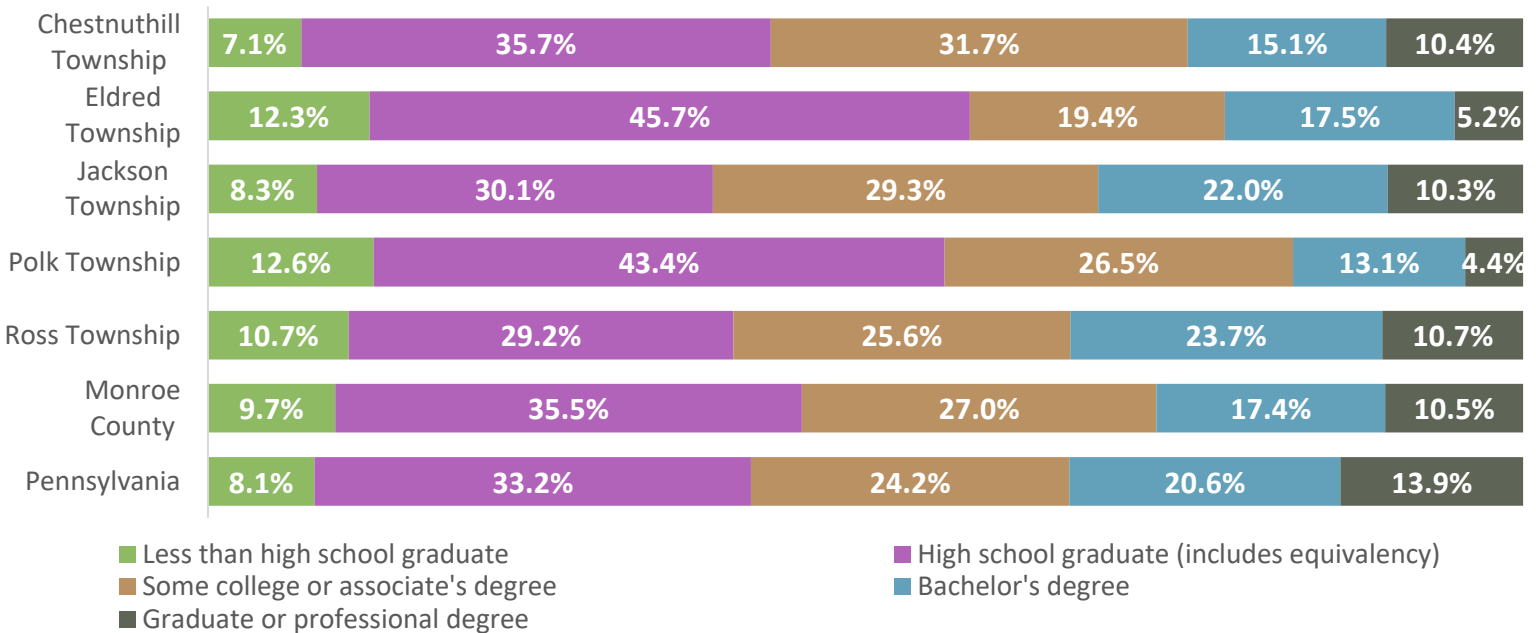
ACS, 2023



Over half of CJERP residents have some college education, similar to levels across Monroe County

EDUCATIONAL BREAKDOWN COMPARISON

ACS, 2023



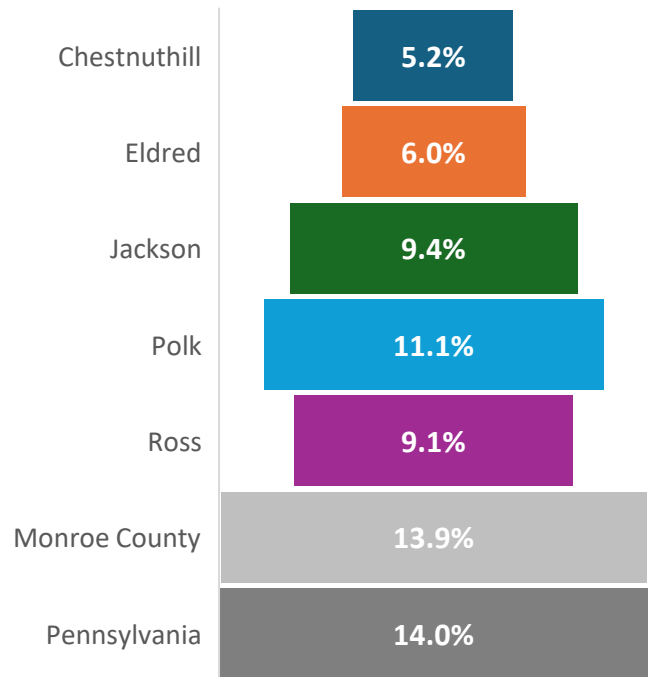
Benefits Coverage

Most CJERP residents are covered by health insurance, but public programs play an important role. Across the region, public health coverage rates are slightly higher than county and state averages, with more than 40% of residents leveraging public health coverage in Jackson, Polk, and Ross Townships. Changes to federal / state health insurance programs could leave some residents vulnerable and in need of additional support.

Similarly, while participation in SNAP and other food assistance programs is relatively low in CJERP municipalities, these benefits still provide vital support to a segment of the population. This underscores the importance of local partnerships—such as with nonprofits, schools, and health providers—that can offer wraparound services to residents whose needs may fall outside the bounds of traditional municipal programs.

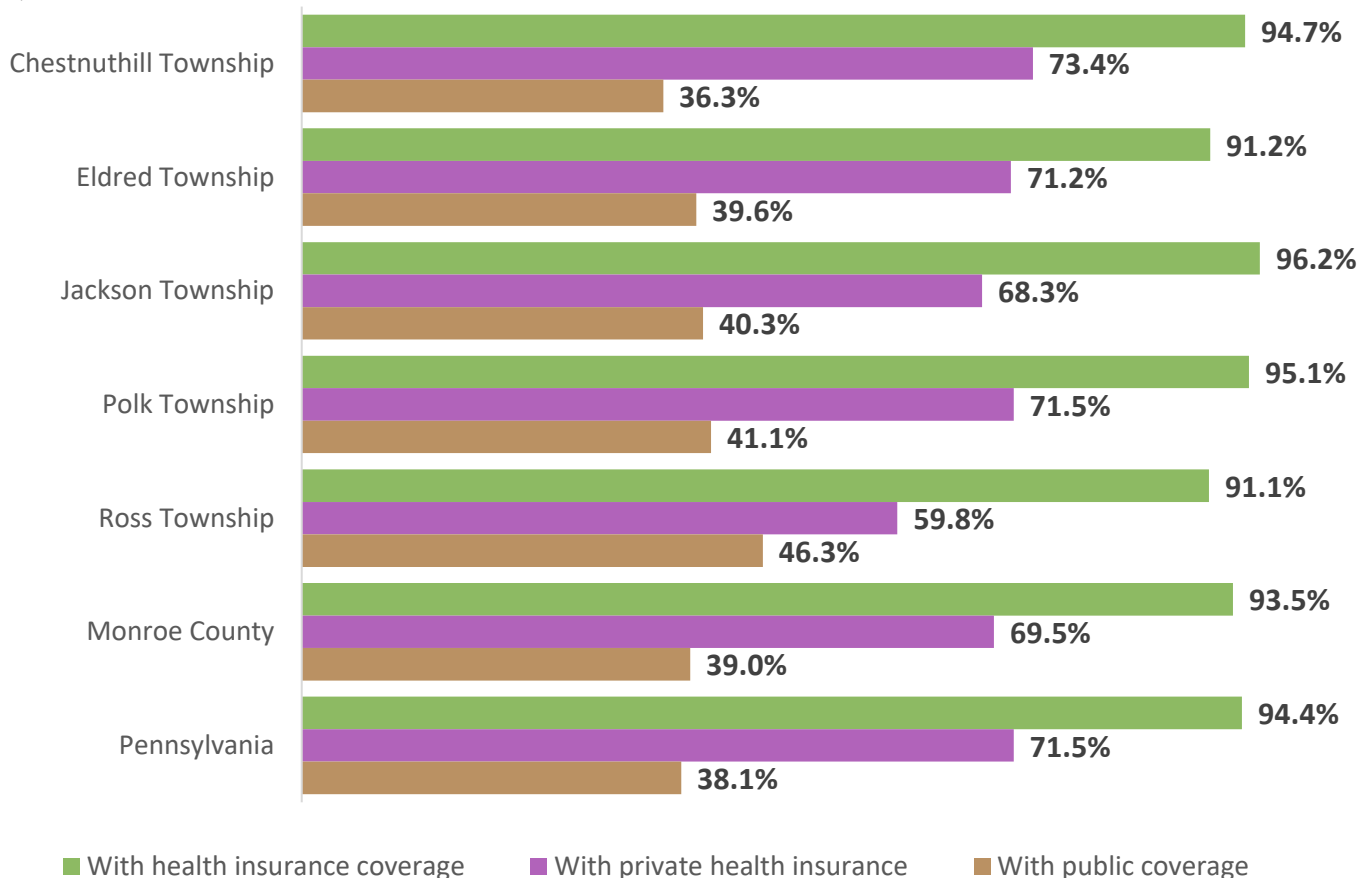
Food Stamp / SNAP Usage (In the Last 12 Months)

ACS, 2023



Health Insurance Coverage (In the Last 12 Months)

ACS, 2023



Local Economy

A strong local economy is essential for fostering growth, creating job opportunities, and enhancing quality of life for residents. In the CJERP region, the economy is supported by a blend of locally owned small businesses, some large retail anchors – like the “world’s largest ShopRite” in Broadheadsville, and the region’s thriving tourism industry. Together, these assets contribute to a dynamic and resilient economic base that reflects both the character and potential of the region.

To assess the strength of the economy, this plan examines the industries and employment sectors that drive the local economy, as well as commute patterns that influence where residents live and work. These trends are especially important when considering changes to these patterns during the past decade.

Continued prosperity is a top priority for the region, and the following data will help to identify strengths and weaknesses and guide strategic decisions that will promote economic stability and long-term growth.

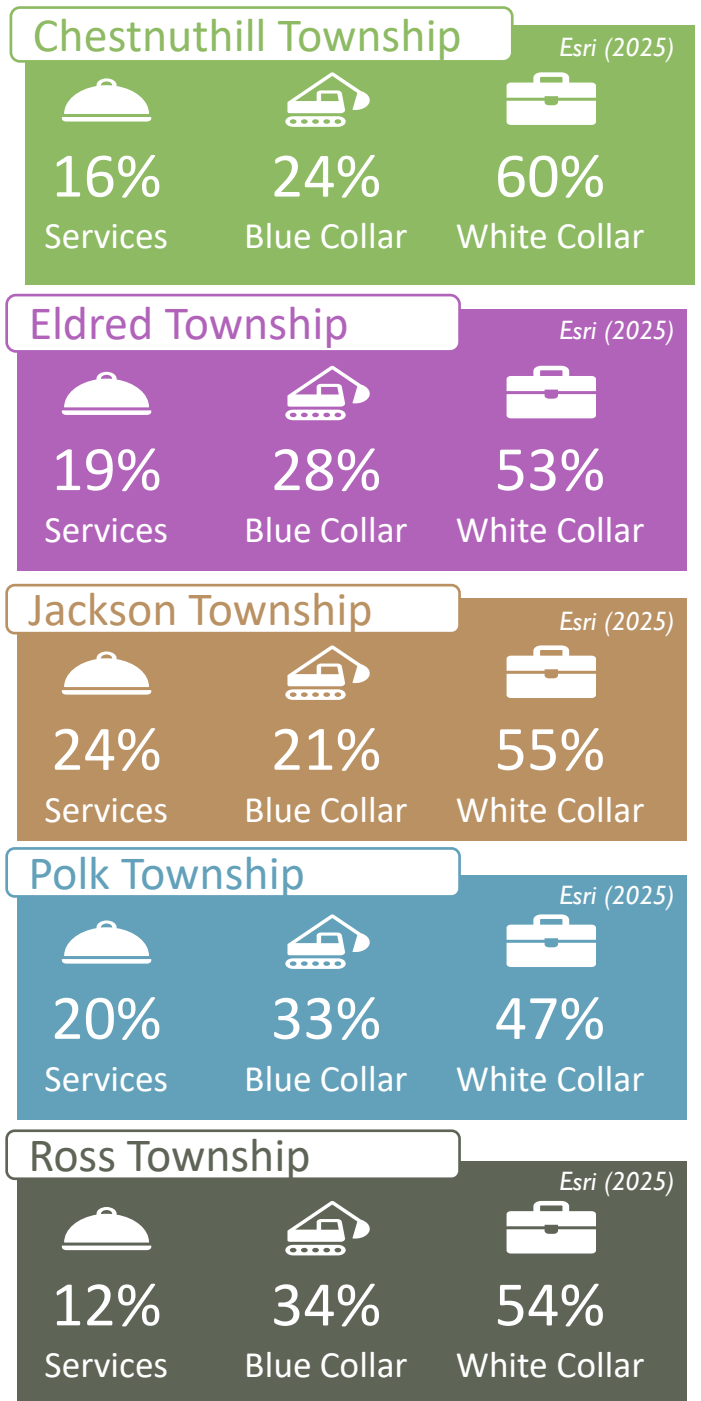
Industry Trends

Driving the region’s economy is a diverse range of industries that represent the top employers in the area. Industry trends help reveal areas where the township is currently excelling and where ongoing efforts to promote new industries can foster continued growth and prosperity.

Industry Sectors

Across the five townships that make up the CJERP region, white-collar jobs are the most prevalent form of employment. However, there is meaningful variation in the share of service and blue-collar jobs by township, contributing to a diverse regional economy that collectively provides goods, services, and infrastructure for residents of the region.

The **service sector** is a key component of each township’s workforce, but it plays an especially prominent role in Jackson Township, where one in four residents work in service-related fields. This includes jobs in building maintenance, personal service care, food preparation, and health support—roles likely supported by the township’s proximity to major tourism destinations like Camelback Ski Resort.



Blue-collar employment is especially common in Polk and Ross Townships, where nearly one-third of workers are employed in transportation, construction, farming, and other manual trades. These workers provide vital skills and labor that support both local development and daily operations.

White-collar employment includes positions in education, healthcare, sales, finance, and office support, making up the largest share of the labor force across the region. Chestnuthill Township, home to prominent institutions such as the Pleasant Valley School District and various healthcare facilities in Brodheadsville, has the highest share of white-collar workers at 60 percent.

Top Employers

The top employers in the CJERP region reflect the significant role of the tourism and recreation economy in the Poconos. Several summer camps and resorts, including Pinemere Camp, Mountain Springs Lake Resort-Lodge, and Hideaway Hills Golf Club, are among leading sources of employment. These businesses create jobs and provide unique recreational assets that contribute to the region’s quality of life and identity.

In addition, the Pleasant Valley School District serves as a major employer across the West End, reinforcing the school system’s central role in the community. Together, these employers offer valuable jobs, deliver important services, and are essential partners in shaping the region’s future.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** To support stable employment in the region, CJERP should focus on retaining and promoting existing businesses.

REGIONAL TOP EMPLOYERS

ESRI, 2024

| Location | Business Name | Employees |
|-----------------------|--|-----------|
| Chestnuthill Township | ShopRite of Brodheadsville | 214 |
| Polk Township | Pleasant Valley Intermediate | 180 |
| Chestnuthill Township | Brookmont Healthcare Center | 150 |
| Chestnuthill Township | Pleasant Valley High School | 150 |
| Polk Township | Pleasant Valley Elementary School | 150 |
| Chestnuthill Township | First Student Inc | 135 |
| Jackson Township | Pinemere Camp | 101 |
| Jackson Township | International Sports Training | 90 |
| Jackson Township | Mountain Springs Lake Resort-Lodge | 60 |
| Ross Township | Creature Comforts Veterinary Service | 60 |
| Chestnuthill Township | Pleasant Valley School District | 51 |
| Chestnuthill Township | Lehigh Valley Health Network Emergency | 50 |
| Eldred Township | MRS Bush's Personal Care Homes | 50 |
| Polk Township | Cherry's Sunset Family Restaurant | 50 |
| Polk Township | Hideaway Hills Golf Club | 50 |

Workforce Trends

Examining workforce trends is crucial for understanding the dynamics of a community's labor market and its overall economic health. Using workforce data, communities can identify key sectors that drive growth, areas where skill development may be needed, and gauge infrastructure needs and commuting patterns. This can influence local development and infrastructure policies and provide valuable insight for fostering a resilient workforce and sustainable economic growth.

Top Occupations

Top occupations align closely with the sector patterns identified early. Polk Township has a high share of jobs in retail trade, reflecting its strong service sector.

Ross Township stands out for its concentration in manufacturing, which mirrors its high percentage of blue-collar workers. Chestnuthill and Jackson Townships have greater representation in educational services and finance/insurance, aligning with their higher rates of white-collar employment. Across the region, health care and social assistance are among the top occupations.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** These occupational trends highlight how different parts of the CJERP region work together to support employment, services, and community well-being across the West End.

TOP OCCUPATIONS

ESRI, 2025

| Occupations | Chestnuthill Township | Eldred Township | Jackson Township | Polk Township | Ross Township | Monroe County | PA |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Health Care / Social Assistance | 15.2% | 8.7% | 9.8% | 15.2% | 15.4% | 15.0% | 17.4% |
| Retail Trade | 13.2% | 14.4% | 10.8% | 20.5% | 10.1% | 12.0% | 11.0% |
| Manufacturing | 5.6% | 11.2% | 11.4% | 12.3% | 15.6% | 9.9% | 11.0% |
| Transportation / Warehousing | 11.3% | 7.3% | 7.7% | 10.0% | 5.5% | 8.3% | 5.1% |
| Educational Services | 10.1% | 7.0% | 11.0% | 2.4% | 11.3% | 8.8% | 9.7% |
| Construction | 6.3% | 7.8% | 5.0% | 8.3% | 9.3% | 6.0% | 5.7% |
| Finance/Insurance | 7.3% | 9.8% | 6.9% | 3.6% | 3.2% | 4.6% | 5.1% |
| Accommodation / Food Services | 4.4% | 7.8% | 6.9% | 10.2% | 2.2% | 8.0% | 5.8% |

Modes of Travel

Across the CJERP region, the vast majority of residents commute to work by car, either driving alone or carpooling, with automobile usage exceeding 85 percent in every township. This trend is typical in rural communities where public transit is limited or unavailable. The region’s strong reliance on personal vehicles underscores the importance of a safe, reliable, and well-maintained roadway network that can efficiently support daily travel to and from job centers.

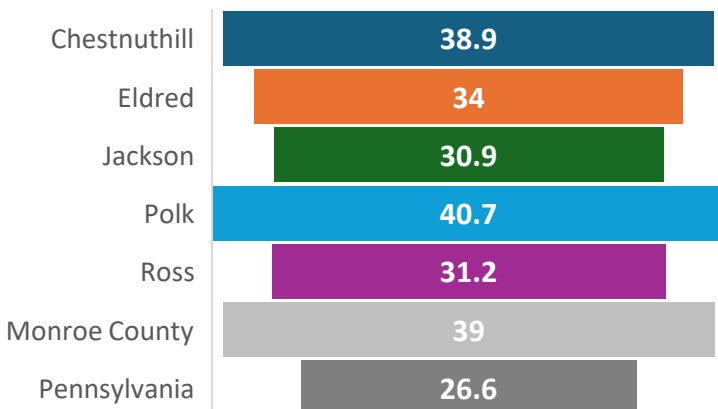
Commute Times

Commute times across all five CJERP townships exceed the statewide average of 26.6 minutes, with the longest average commute times found in Chestnuthill and Polk Townships (both over 38 minutes). These extended travel times may reflect limited access to nearby employment opportunities or trade-offs between affordability and proximity to work. Heavy reliance on driving, paired with longer commutes, adds stress to local infrastructure and highlights the need for coordinated transportation planning across CJERP..

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Heavy reliance on personal vehicles combined with longer commute times places increased demand on the region’s roadway network, particularly along key corridors connecting residents to employment centers. These trends highlight the importance of maintaining safe, efficient travel conditions through coordinated transportation planning, intersection improvements, and collaboration with PennDOT and regional partners.

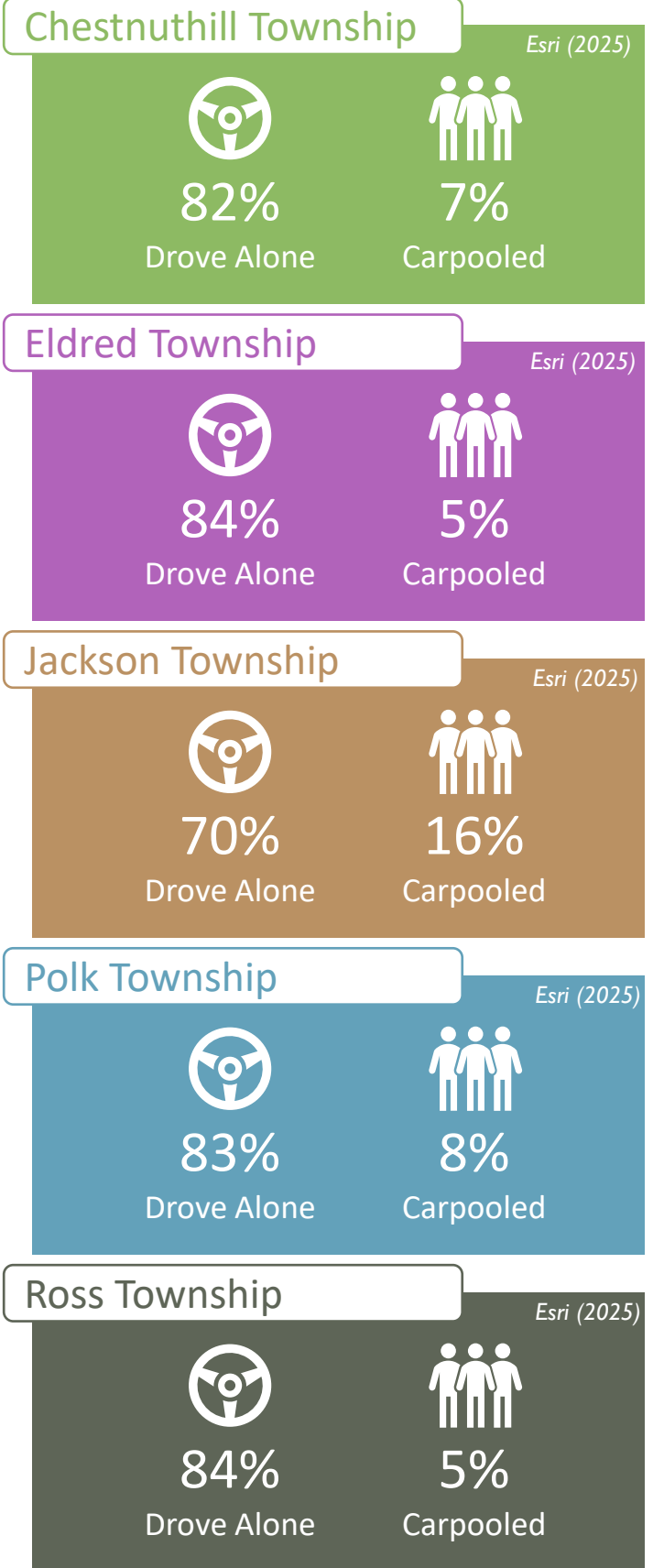
AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME

ACS, 2023



MODES OF TRAVEL TO WORK – DRIVING

ACS, 2023



Travel Destinations

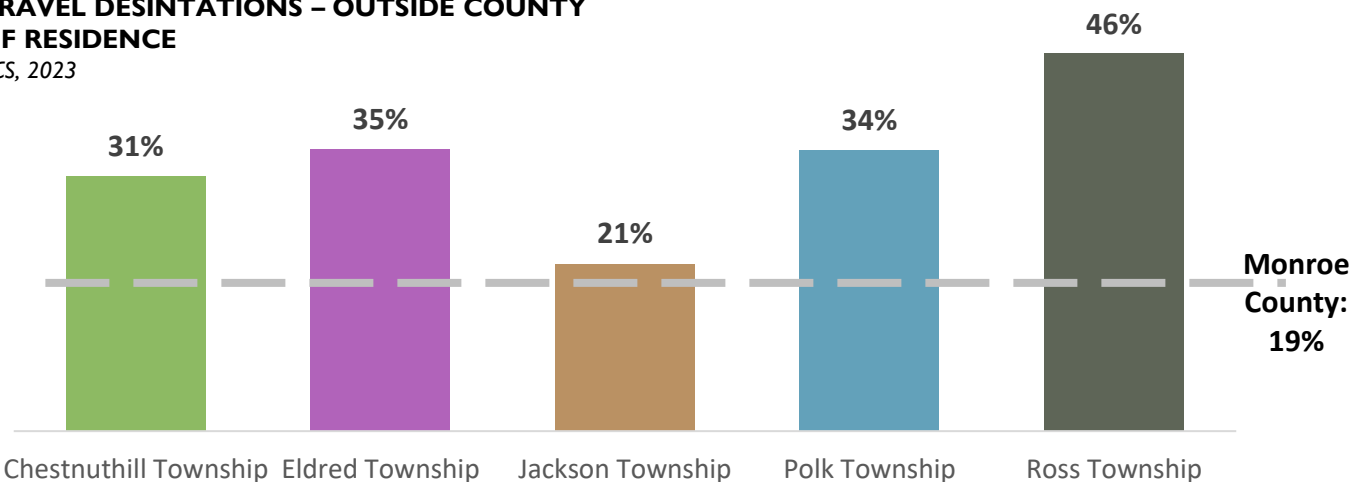
The importance of a well-maintained roadway network in the CJERP region is further underscored by travel patterns related to work. All five townships have a greater share of their residents working outside the county of residence compared to Monroe County as a whole. While just 19 percent of Monroe County residents work outside the county, only Jackson Township is comparable, at 21 percent. In Ross Township, nearly half of working residents are employed beyond county lines.

Place-based data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) tool reinforces this pattern. Brodheadsville is the top work destination for CJERP residents, but the second most common destination is New York City, with nearly 700 workers commuting there. The rest of the top 10 destinations are largely outside the immediate region, driving up commute times and increasing strain on roadways. These patterns highlight the need for thoughtful infrastructure planning to support safe, efficient regional commuting.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** These travel patterns place continued demand on the regional transportation network, particularly for longer-distance commuting. They also highlight an opportunity to support local businesses and entrepreneurship that create jobs closer to home, helping to reduce travel demand while strengthening the local economy and quality of life.

TRAVEL DESTINATIONS – OUTSIDE COUNTY OF RESIDENCE

ACS, 2023



TRAVEL DESTINATIONS (CITIES, PLACES)

LEHD, 2023

| Work Destination | Workers |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Brodheadsville CDP, PA | 715 |
| New York City, NY | 701 |
| East Stroudsburg Borough, PA | 421 |
| Stroudsburg Borough, PA | 394 |
| Arlington Heights CDP, PA | 369 |
| Bethlehem City, PA | 263 |
| Allentown City, PA | 192 |
| Philadelphia City, PA | 177 |
| Fountain Hill Borough, PA | 125 |
| Scranton City, PA | 114 |
| All Other Locations | 12,700 |

Tourism in the Poconos Region

Tourism plays a vital role in Pennsylvania's and the broader Pocono region's economy, serving as a major driver of economic activity and employment across the Commonwealth. For the CJERP region, the impacts of tourism can elicit mixed reactions. While the influx of visitors can at times place pressure on local infrastructure, it also reflects the strength and appeal of the area's natural assets and recreational opportunities. The industry is closely tied to the local economy and represents an ongoing opportunity for the CJERP region.

Further, tourism has been identified as a priority for economic development at the state level. This presents an opportunity for CJERP to strategically leverage state programs, marketing partnerships, funding opportunities, and technical assistance designed to support destination development, infrastructure improvements, and tourism promotion. By aligning local planning efforts with state-level resources, the region can better leverage the benefits of tourism while shaping it in a manner that reflects CJERP's character and supports local residents.

Tourism Impact in Pennsylvania

According to Tourism Economics and the 2024 Economic Impact of Visitors in Pennsylvania study, **Pennsylvania welcomed 201.6 million visitors**, representing a 2.5 percent increase over the prior year. As visitation increased, **visitor spending rose 4.2 percent to \$49.9 billion**, underscoring tourism's expanding economic impact statewide.

Visitor spending supports a wide range of industries, with food and beverage accounting for 22 percent of visitor budgets, generating \$11.1 billion in spending. Recreation-related spending led all categories, increasing 6.4 percent year-over-year.

Tourism is also a significant source of employment. In 2024, **employment directly supported by visitor activity increased 1.3 percent**, reaching 324,972 jobs. Visitor spending supports nearly all lodging employment, approximately 30 percent of recreation jobs, and 26 percent of food and beverage employment statewide.

State-wide Tourism Impact



49.9 billion in visitor spending



Small businesses make up **80% of tourism-based businesses**



51% of Pennsylvanians **spend money at local establishments** during recreation



Tourism supported **500,000+** jobs

Economic Impact of Visitors in Pennsylvania

Tourism Economics, 2024

When indirect and induced impacts are included, the visitor economy supported a total of 514,261 jobs.

State-wide Initiatives

According to the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Pennsylvania 2024-2033, the state is investing in initiatives that promote tourism and recreational assets to drive economic growth.

Pennsylvania is committed to employing modernized destination marketing efforts, increasing funding, and developing new strategies to support tourism and outdoor recreation, strengthen regional economies, and enhance quality of life across the Commonwealth.

The 2025 Pennsylvania Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan highlights the role that outdoor recreation plays in promoting economic development. The plan details key goals and strategies to enhance and support outdoor recreation across the state.

These strategies include promoting community and economic development by:

- Supporting communities in creating vibrant and resilient regions through outdoor economic development
- Continuing to activate Pennsylvania as a hub for outdoor recreation and adventure for all people
- Developing and supporting Pennsylvania’s outdoor recreation industry and its business and workforce

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Given that tourism is a major driver of employment and economic activity in Pennsylvania, CJERP has an opportunity to utilize state resources and support to better define its role within the broader Poconos tourism economy. This may include leveraging funding, marketing partnerships, and outdoor recreation initiatives in a way that aligns with local priorities and enhances quality of life for residents.

Regional Impact of Tourism

Tourism and outdoor recreation are major contributors to the CJERP region’s economy, driving business activity, employment, and municipal revenues throughout Monroe County and the Pocono Mountains. In 2024, according to the Economic Impact of Visitors in Pocono Counties, **visitors spent \$4.9 billion in the Pocono Mountains**. This spending directly supported more than 26,200 jobs and generated over **\$1.07 billion in labor income**, along with **\$235.9 million in state and local taxes and \$260.2 million in federal taxes**. Monroe County accounted for the largest share of visitor spending and employment, underscoring its central role in the region’s tourism economy.

Much of this economic impact is closely tied to the region’s outdoor recreation assets, which attract visitors year-round and support local lodging, dining, retail, and service industries. Visitor spending in Monroe County is diversified across multiple categories, strengthening small businesses and reinforcing the interconnected relationship between tourism, recreation, and long-term economic resilience.

Regional Tourism Impact



Lodging: \$484,100,000



Recreation: \$555,300,000



Retail: \$498,700,000



Transportation: \$659,000,000



Food and Beverage: \$604,000,000



Monroe County

- **2.8 billion** visitor spending
- **#1 in tourism spending** among Pocono counties



Pocono Mountains

- **27+ million** yearly visitors
- **18% employment increase** between 2020-2024

Economic Impact of Visitors in Pennsylvania

Tourism Economics, 2024

At 24 percent, Transportation account for the highest percentage of spending followed by Food and Beverage spending at 22 percent.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** This data highlights the significant role that tourism and outdoor recreation play in the regional economy and their influence on the CJERP area. As part of this broader system, CJERP has an opportunity to build on its natural assets and recreation-based economy while taking a more intentional approach to how tourism is experienced locally.

CJERP Economy for Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation refers to leisure and tourism activities that take place in natural or open-space settings and is a defining characteristic of the CJERP region. While tourism is often associated with large resorts and destination attractions, a significant portion of visitor activity is driven by individuals and families who come to hike, fish, hunt, boat, bike, and experience the region’s open spaces and natural landscapes. These recreation-based visits generate meaningful spending at local restaurants, retail shops, lodging establishments, and service providers, directly supporting the local economy. Access to well-maintained parks, trails, waterways, and public lands not only enhances quality of life for residents but also strengthens the region’s competitiveness as a year-round destination, reinforcing the strong connection between outdoor recreation, tourism, and long-term economic vitality.

A Consumer Spending Index measures the prevalence of spending on a particular good or service in a specific location compared to the United States. The baseline for comparison is an index value of 100. Both resident and tourism spending can influence index values.

When a high percentage of local households regularly participate in outdoor activities and spend money on equipment, licenses, memberships, or related services, the region’s index value for those activities rises above 100. This indicates that participation is embedded in the local culture and lifestyle. In this case, elevated index values signal strong resident demand and community identity tied to outdoor recreation.

Visitor spending can also elevate index values, particularly in destination regions. When non-residents travel to the area specifically to engage in outdoor recreation, their spending is captured in retail and service data. In high-tourism regions like CJERP, this influx of visitor activity can significantly boost spending levels beyond what the resident population alone would generate, pushing index values higher than the national baseline.

According to 2025 data from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), the CJERP region has an index value higher than 100 for many recreational activities:

| Activity | Consumer Spending Index (CJERP) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hunting (Bow) | 168 |
| Hunting (Rifle) | 157 |
| Hunting (Shotgun) | 151 |
| Boating | 143 |
| Fishing (Fresh water) | 136 |
| Horseback Riding | 126 |
| Golfing | 116 |
| Jet Skiing | 114 |
| Hiking | 111 |
| Bicycling (Road) | 104 |

ESRI, 2025

The higher rates of participation in these activities within the CJERP region stems from the region’s accessibility to recreational areas and facilities that attract residents and visitors. For instance, Mountain Springs Lake Resort, Big Pocono State Park, Hideaway Hills Golf Club, and the State Game Land 38 are located within CJERP and provide residents and visitors with the opportunity to enjoy seasonal recreational activities.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** This data highlights the strong role that outdoor recreation plays in the CJERP region’s identity, economy, and quality of life. Continued investment in infrastructure that supports these activities—such as trail connectivity, safety improvements, accessibility, and maintenance—can reinforce these strengths. As part of a broader tourism economy, CJERP has an opportunity to support recreation in a way that aligns with community priorities, enhances resident experience, and contributes to long-term economic vitality.

Housing

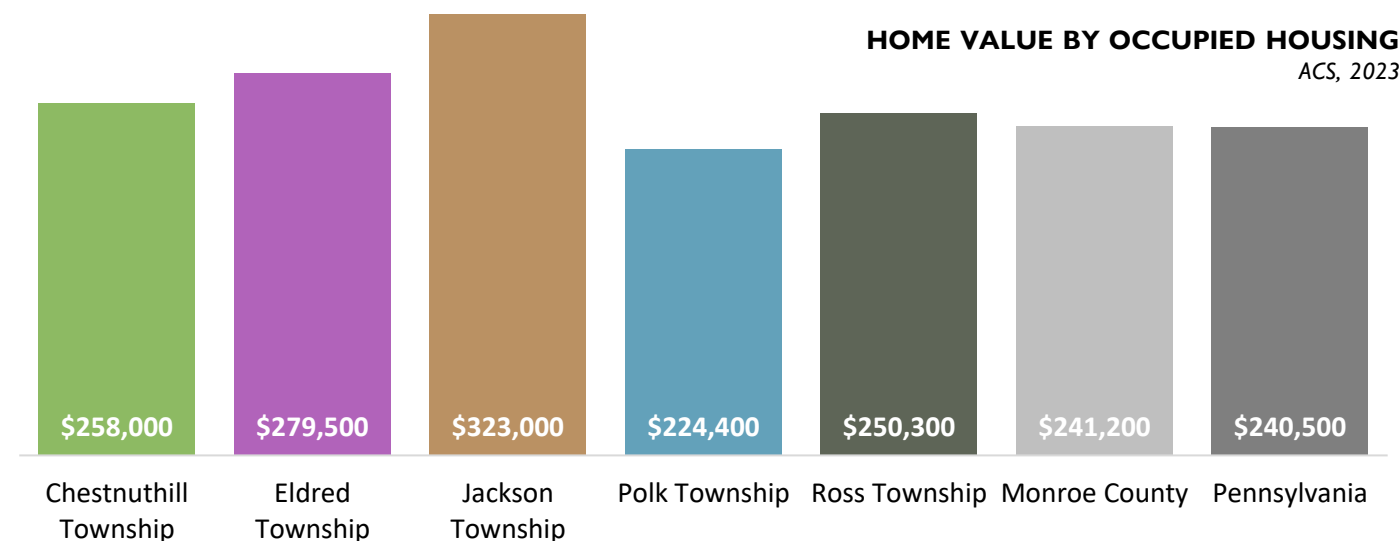
Quality, affordable housing is a cornerstone of community well-being and long-term stability. It ensures that individuals and families have a safe and secure place to call home by supporting both physical and mental health and creating a foundation for economic security. This section examines key characteristics of the CJERP region's housing stock, including affordability, condition, and value.

Median Home Value

The median home value in four of the five township is higher than in the county and state, with Jackson Township having much higher median home values.

Higher home values may signal strong market demand, but high ownership rates coupled with primarily single-family housing could lead to a constrained housing market.

Median home values in most of the region trend higher than home values in the county and state.



Housing Types

Most homes in the CJERP region are single-family detached, with Chestnuthill Township having the most units of this type, accounting for 93 percent of all housing units in the township.

Mobile homes make up five percent of homes in both Eldred Township and Polk Township and are most common in Ross Township at nearly 10 percent. Jackson Township leads the region in two-unit (duplex) homes, accounting for seven percent of units in the township.

With a majority of homes being single-family detached units, this may indicate a lack of diverse housing options that suit community needs. In the community survey, many residents identified that affordable housing is inadequate. The lack of diverse housing, including townhomes, multi-family homes, and mobile homes, may be a barrier to home ownership for some residents.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The predominance of single-family homes suggests limited housing options for residents at different life stages. Allowing for a modest range of housing types, such as duplexes or townhomes, in targeted growth areas can support aging in place and provide opportunities for younger or first-time homebuyers to remain in the community.

Housing Age

The timing of the majority of home construction varies across all five townships, ranging from 1960 to 2009.

A significant amount of housing units in the region were built between 1980 and 1999, with the majority of units in Chestnuthill Township being built during this time. An increase in construction throughout the region between 1980 and 1999 coincides directly with overall population increases experienced during that same time.

Very little new home construction has occurred since 2010, which may correlate to the population across the region remaining steady since that time. As the population is not expected to grow significantly in the future, new home construction is unlikely to occur.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** As the housing stock continues to age, maintenance or replaced of aging housing stock will become increasingly important.

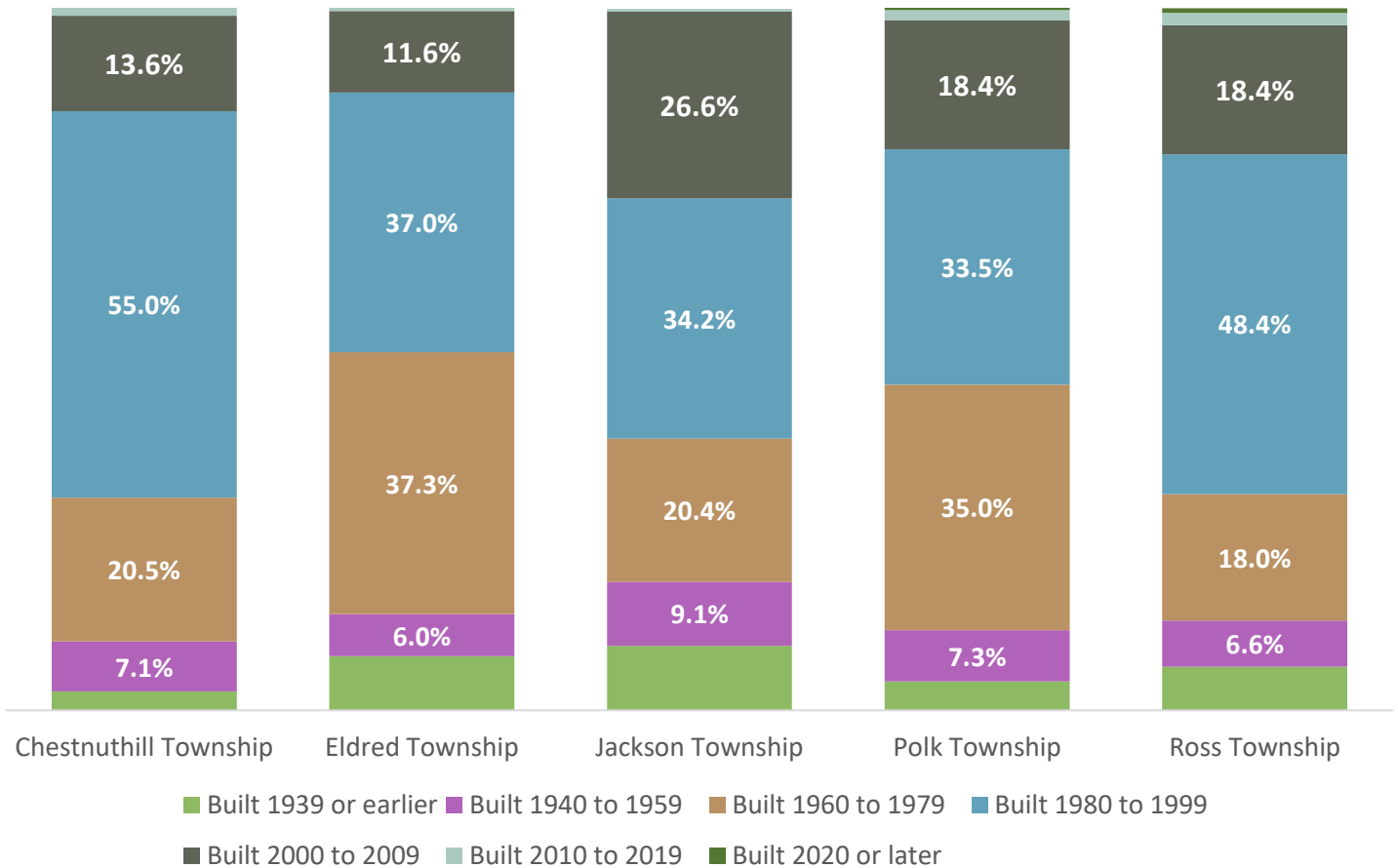
Spotlight On... Redevelopment Authority of Monroe County



The Redevelopment Authority of Monroe County offers programs that help residents maintain safe, affordable housing, including home repair assistance, weatherization services, and first-time homebuyer support. These programs help address aging housing conditions, reduce energy costs, and expand access to homeownership. Increasing awareness of these resources can help more CJERP residents remain in their homes and maintain housing quality over time.

HOUSING YEAR BUILT

ACS 2023



Housing Tenure

The majority of residents in all five townships moved into their homes between 2000 and 2020.

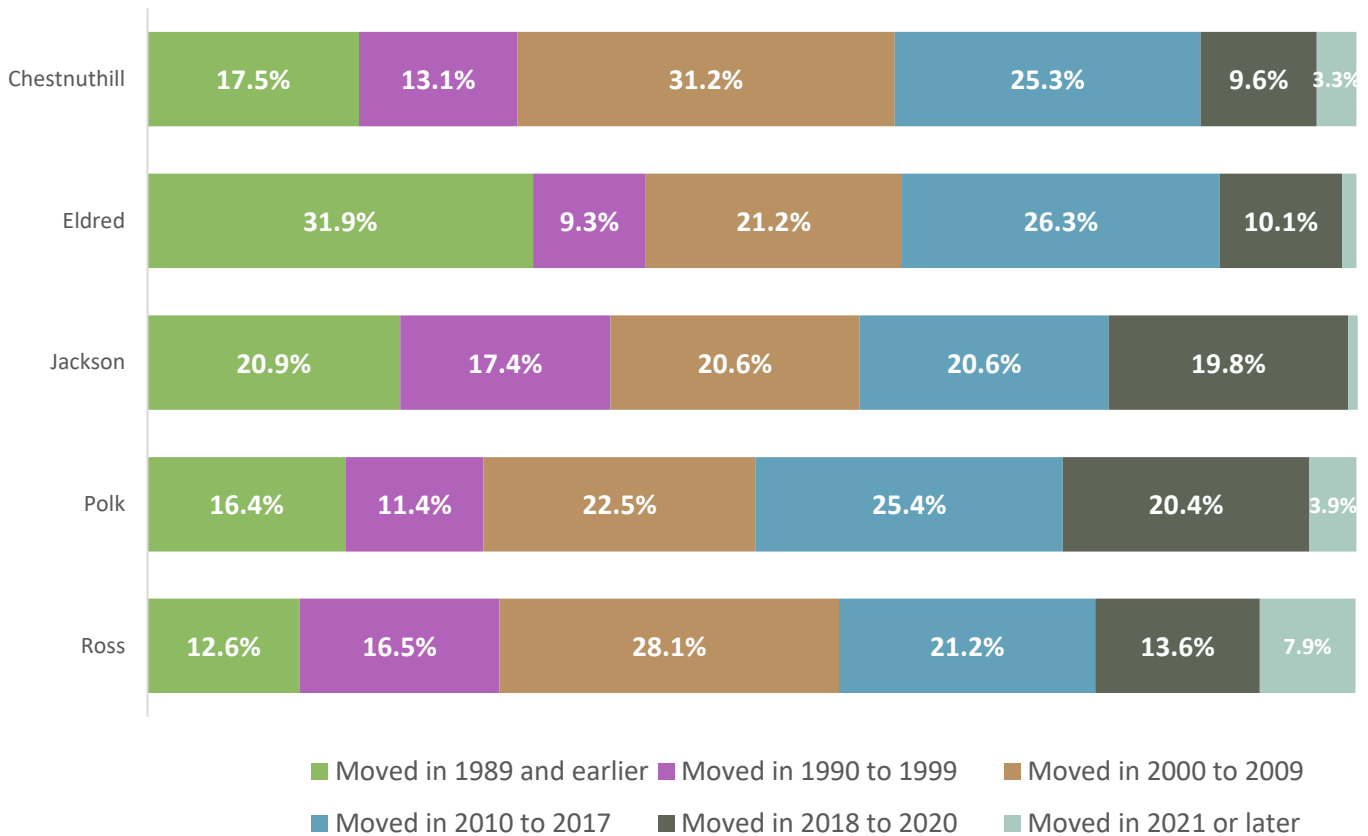
Eldred Township has a concentration of residents that moved into their residences in 1989 or earlier, while Polk Township has a high concentration of residents that moved into their residence in 2010 or later.

Overall housing tenure is consistent with the considerable population growth across the region experienced between 1980 and 2010. Aligned with the high proportion of home ownership in the region, this data indicates a high degree of housing stability.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** CJERP should consider efforts to support residents aging in place who may need resources to provided needed maintenance or updates to modernize their homes.

Housing tenure is consistent with population changes and indicates a high degree of housing stability.

YEAR MOVED INTO HOUSING ACS 2023



Home Ownership & Occupancy

There are relatively high rates of home ownership for occupied housing in the region compared to the county and state, indicating that home ownership is an affordable option for many residents.

Chestnuthill Township and Ross Township have the highest rates of home ownership with less than eight percent of residents renting their home. Polk Township has the lowest rate of home ownership with approximately 16 percent of residents renting their home.

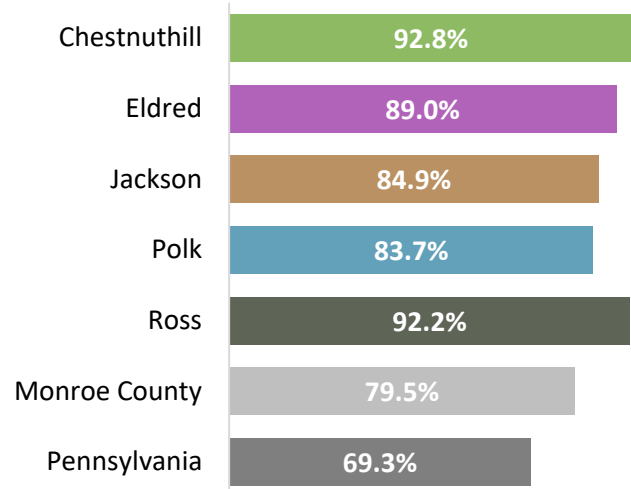
High ownership rates often contribute to stability and creating an established community. However, it may also portray a lack of housing diversity where there are fewer housing options as indicated by the majority homes throughout the region being single-family, detached units.

Per 2023 Census data, there were a total of 2,603 vacant units in the CJERP region, which makes up 16 percent of all housing units. At eight percent, Ross Township has the lowest amount of vacant housing, whereas Jackson Township has the most vacant housing at 24 percent. Vacancy in Jackson may be a result of higher rates of short-term rental or seasonal dwelling units.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Although homeownership is a strength across the region, areas of lower homeownership may benefit from more diverse housing options to support families with varying income levels.

OWNER-OCCUPIED VS RENTER-OCCUPIED

ACS 2023



HOUSING OCCUPANCY

ESRI 2023

| Housing Units by Occupancy | Chestnuthill Township | Eldred Township | Jackson Township | Polk Township | Ross Township | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Total Housing Units | 6,551 | 1,330 | 3,202 | 3,253 | 2,277 | 16,613 |
| Occupied | 5,822 | 1,087 | 2,425 | 2,570 | 2,106 | 14,010 |
| Owner | 5,405 | 967 | 2,060 | 2,151 | 1,941 | 12,524 |
| Renter | 417 | 120 | 365 | 419 | 165 | 1,486 |
| Vacant | 729 | 243 | 777 | 683 | 171 | 2,603 |

Housing Affordability

Mortgage costs in four of the five townships, with the exception of Polk Township, are comparable with mortgage costs in the county. The lower mortgage rates in Polk Township are consistent with lower home values.

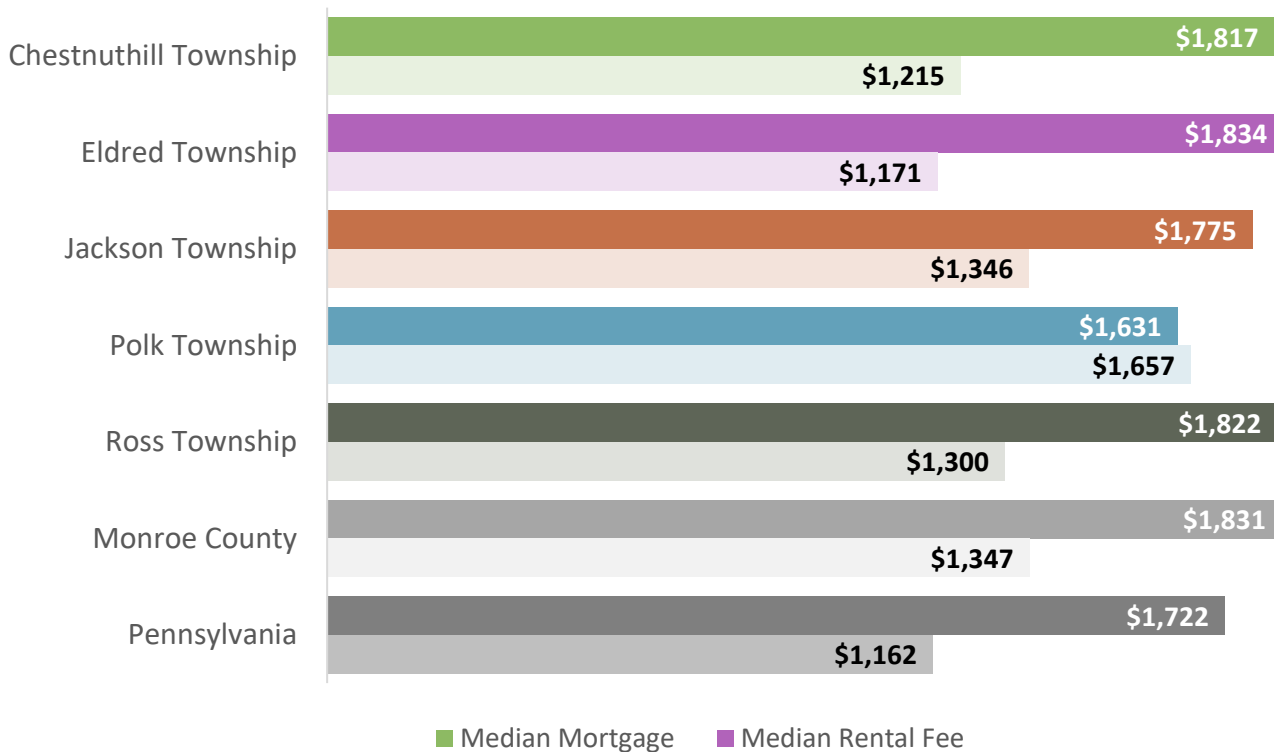
Conversely, Polk Township has the highest rental cost which exceeds median mortgage costs. Where as, all other townships in the region have significantly lower rental costs compared to mortgage costs. The high rental costs in Polk Township may pose a financial barrier for residents who wish to transition from renting to owning a home.

Higher rental costs in Polk Township may be attributed to a lack of available rental housing. Shortage of rental housing can increase the cost to rent, which financial hinders those seeking rental options.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Diverse housing options for both residents seeking home ownership and those wanting to rent may be considered to accommodate different housing needs.

Housing tenure is consistent with population changes and indicates a high degree of housing stability.

MORTGAGE VS RENT ACS 2023



Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the essential transportation networks and utility systems that support everyday life and community function. These systems enable the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while providing the basic services needed for residents, businesses, and emergency services to operate.

Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure includes not only roadway networks but also air travel and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. Due to its rural character, CJERP is an auto-centric community.

Regional Roadway Network

Route 209 is the major roadway running west-east that connects Polk and Chestnuthill Townships. This Route joins I-476 in the west, providing a direct path to Scranton and Allentown, and Route 33 in the east.

Interstate 80, spanning west-east, cuts through the northern tip of Jackson Township, offering access to major metropolitan areas across the state.

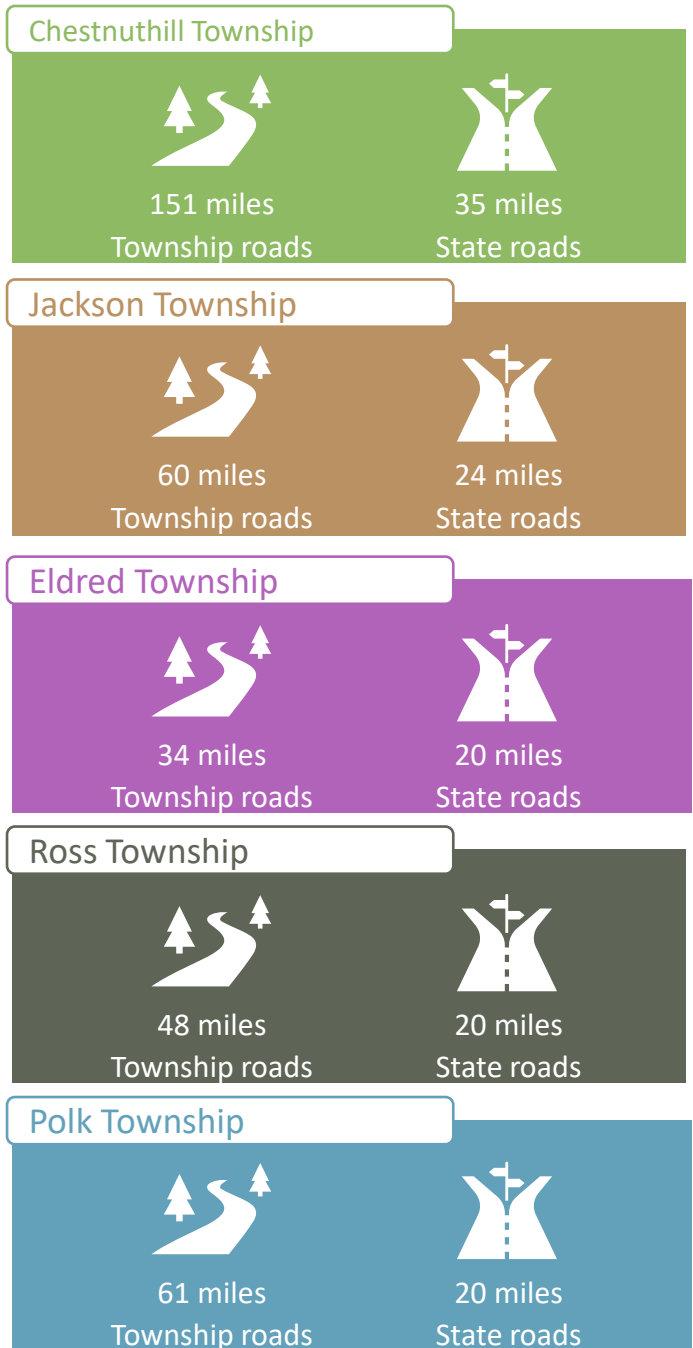
Community engagement identified congestion along Route 209 as a key concern for residents and stakeholders. Increased traffic volumes, driven by both daily commuting and tourism, have contributed to delays and safety challenges along this critical corridor.

Local Roadway Network

The five townships that form CJERP are connected by an intricate local roadway network that provides easy access to the region and major roadway networks.

Chestnuthill Township utilizes State Route 115 and Route 715 for north-south access. State Route 715 also crosses Jacksonville Township, connecting the township with the I-80 interchange. Route 115 passes the southeastern portion of Ross Township, allowing access to the Route 33 interchange. Route 534 runs north-south through the center of Polk Township, intersecting with Route 209.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** As a car-dependent region, CJERP should focus efforts on improving transportation along key routes and high-impact intersections to support the growing need for safer and more efficient travel for both residents and tourists.



Air Travel

The nearest international airports are the Lehigh Valley International Airport and Wilkes-Barre Scranton International Airport. The Lehigh Valley International Airport is located an approximately 30-minute drive south of Eldred Township while the Wilkes-Barre Scranton International Airport is located a 45-minute drive north of Chestnuthill Township. These major airports surrounding the CJERP region provides residents with convenient access to air travel and is also crucial for local businesses to facilitate employee travel and support commerce.

Public Transit

Public transportation plays a vital role in supporting accessibility, equity, sustainability, and economic vitality within a community.

Public transportation in the CJERP region is limited with the Monroe County Transportation Authority (MCTA) being the main transit system within the county. MCTA, also known as the Pocono Pony, does not run through the CJERP region but offers several routes in denser areas, connecting Tobyhanna, Stroudsburg, and Saw Creek. For CJERP residents, the closest stop to access this transit is located at the Northampton Community College Pocono Campus a mile east of Jackson Township.

The MCTA also offers transportation services for persons with disabilities through the Rural Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Program. Any person with a disability between the age of 18 and 64 in Monroe County may participate in this program. The MCTA also provides critical services for seniors with the Senior Lottery program, where residents 65 years or older and live more than a quarter of a mile from a public fixed route may enroll in the program



Pedestrian and Bicycling Network

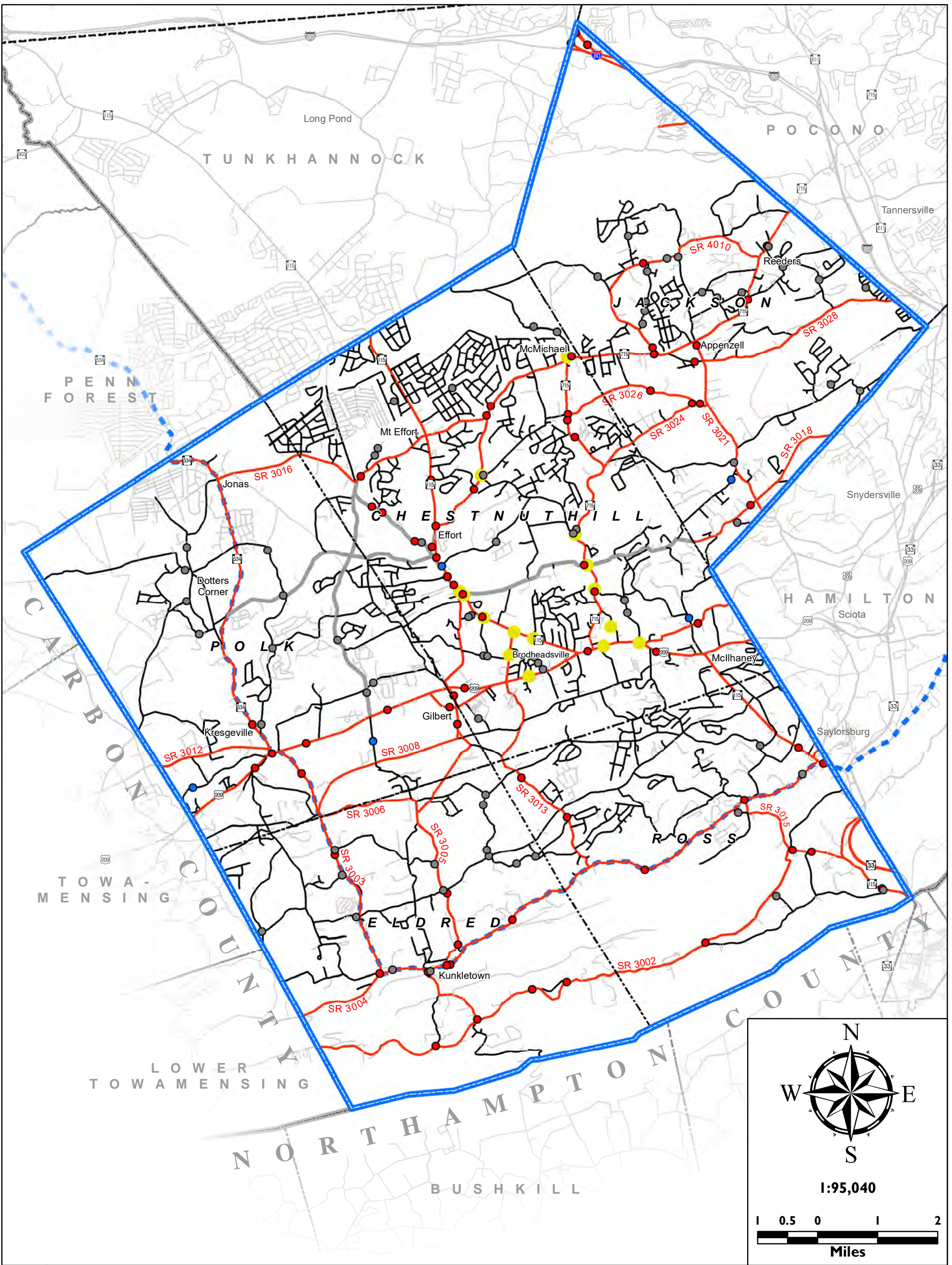
Pedestrian and bicycling networks are important to CJERP’s recreation offerings, providing opportunities for outdoor activity. Trails and bicycle routes connect residents and visitors to parks, open space, and natural areas, making it easier to access and enjoy the region’s recreational assets. Expanding and improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity can further strengthen the region’s outdoor recreation offerings, supporting both quality of life for residents and the visitor experience.

BicyclePA is a network of over 2,000 miles of bicycle routes across Pennsylvania. The BicyclePA Route V is a 371-mile route that stretches from the Ohio border in Lawrence County and across Pennsylvania to Portland along the New Jersey state line. This bike path crosses a significant portion of southern Monroe County, including Polk, Eldred, and Ross Townships. The BicyclePA Route V trail helps support healthy lifestyles and the overall well-being of residents by providing a safe place for residents to exercise, enjoy the outdoors, and connect with surrounding communities.

Spotlight On... SR 209 & 115 Improvements



A major transportation improvement project in Brodheadsville has significantly enhanced traffic flow, safety, and multimodal access in one of the region’s most heavily traveled areas. The project included the construction of a modern roundabout to reduce congestion and improve intersection efficiency, along with additional roadway upgrades designed to address long-standing traffic challenges. The addition of new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, enhances connectivity and accessibility.



CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Liquid Fuels Designation | | |
| | State Road | PennDOT Bridge |
| | Township Turnback Road | County Bridge |
| | Township Road | Township Bridge |
| | Other Road | Official Map Items |
| | CJERP Region | |
| | County Boundary | |
| | Municipal Boundary | |
| | PA Bike Route V | |

Utilities

Reliable water and sewer services are fundamental to supporting a community's growth and long-term development. These systems not only meet essential residential, commercial, and industrial needs but also play a key role in attracting new investment and facilitating expansion. A dependable water supply provides for daily use, fire protection, and industrial operations, while an efficient sewer system safeguards public health by managing wastewater effectively. Ongoing maintenance, expansion, and upgrades to these systems are necessary to accommodate population growth, prevent strain on existing infrastructure, and make undeveloped areas more attractive and viable for future development.

Access to reliable, high-speed internet has become an essential utility for modern communities, comparable to water, sewer, and electricity. It supports education, healthcare, business operations, and communication, making it a vital component of daily life and economic competitiveness. Ensuring that all residents and businesses have affordable and dependable internet access promotes equity, supports remote work and learning opportunities, and enhances overall quality of life. Expanding broadband infrastructure is therefore critical to sustaining growth and keeping the community connected in an increasingly digital world.

Water and Sewer

An important purpose of designating growth areas and rural resource areas is to help guide where public infrastructure may be extended in the future. Currently, the CJERP region does not provide public water or sewer systems. Service is generally confined select subdivisions that operate private water systems, and a small portion of Jackson Township that is supported by the Brodhead Creek Regional Authority.

Instead of public services, residents largely rely on water wells. According to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Bureau of Geological Survey, there are approximately 7,000 active and inactive water wells in the CJERP region. Private water wells are used in areas that do not provide public water service. These wells require maintenance to ensure that water is reliably supplied and is safe for consumption.

Water well and on-lot septic system maintenance can be costly for homeowners. Residents can use a variety of funding opportunities to help support ongoing maintenance:

- USDA Rural Development: Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants
- Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST): Homeowner Sewage Program
- Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA): Keystone Renovate and Repair Loan Program

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Given the limited availability of public water and sewer infrastructure and the importance of preserving the region's rural character, including growth areas, infrastructure priorities should focus primarily on transportation improvements rather than expanding water and sewer systems.

Environment, Parks, & Recreation

Planning for parks, recreation, and environmental resources is essential to supporting residents' quality of life, protecting natural systems, and even strengthening the local economy. Taking stock of CJERP's open space and recreational assets helps to inform future planning efforts that enhance the region's natural beauty.

Outdoor Recreational Amenities

One of CJERP's biggest strengths is the availability of outdoor recreational activities that are provided and protected by federal, state, and local organizations.

Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail, an over 2,000-mile trail that crosses 14 states between Maine to Georgia, cuts through the CJERP region along the Blue Mountain ridge. The Blue Mountain spans 150 miles from the Delaware Water Gap along the New Jersey border to Franklin County. The Appalachian Trail is a highlight for any avid hiker and those wishing to experience remarkable scenic views and historical landmarks.



Big Pocono Stake Park

Extending across the northern portion of Jackson Township, the Big Pocono State Park is a rugged and mountainous 1,300-acre park with sweeping views from Camelback Mountain. The park offers extensive trails for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and skiing.

Big Pocono State Park and Camelback Mountain offer year-round outdoor activities.



Community Parks

Community parks play a vital role in enhancing quality of life by providing accessible spaces for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction. They support physical and mental health by encouraging outdoor activity, reducing stress, and offering opportunities for people of all ages to connect with nature. Parks also serve as important community gathering places, strengthening social ties and fostering a sense of belonging among residents.

Chestnuthill Township Park

The Chestnuthill Township Park is a 34-acre park located adjacent to the Chestnuthill Township Municipal Building. Purchased in 1991, the park offers basketball courts, an all-purpose field, and playground equipment.

Jackson Park

Jackson Park's location adjacent to the Jackson Township Municipal Building enhances its accessibility and visibility within the community. Amenities include multiple ball fields, basketball courts, and playground equipment, supporting both organized sports and informal recreation.



Chestnuthill Township Park Playground (above) and community center (below)



Walter Mock Memorial Park

The Walter Mock Memorial Park was purchased by Eldred Township in 2007 to create a welcoming open space for residents to enjoy. The 75-acre park offers various scenic walking trails, a picnic area, and an area for fishing. Long-term plans for this park include constructing a wooded path and a historic farmhouse.

Ross Township Van Buskirk-Haney Park

The Ross Township Van Buskirk-Haney Park is located adjacent to the municipal building. The park features playground equipment, a walking trail, and pavilions available for rent, along with a Veterans Memorial that lies alongside the walking path.

Polk Township Community Walking Park

The Polk Township Community Walking Park features a half-mile stone walking trail, complemented by a pavilion and picnic tables that provide spaces for rest, gathering, and community use.



Veterans Memorial at Ross Township Van Buskirk-Haney Park

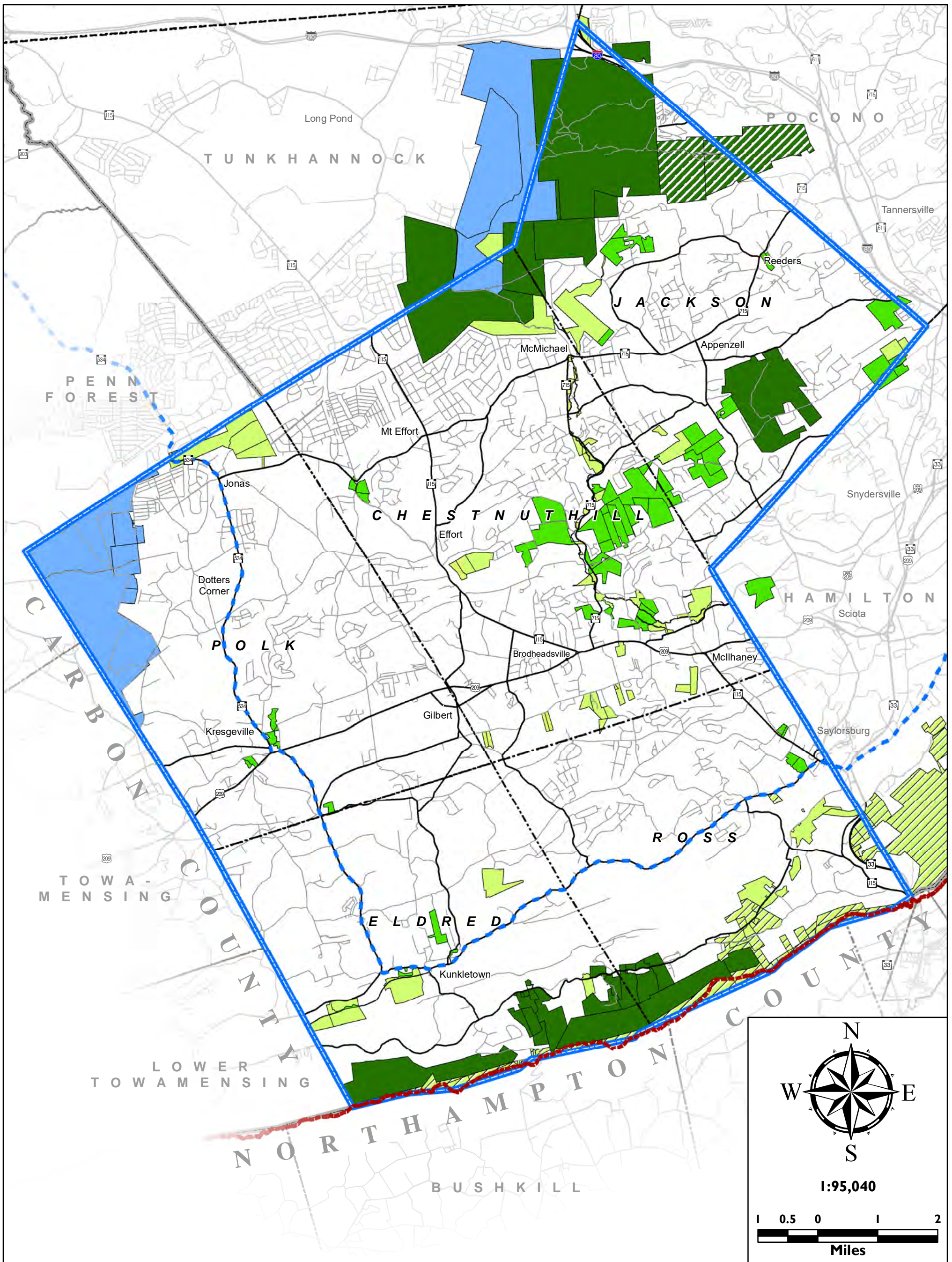
***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Parks and recreation assets contribute to the region’s scenic character, quality of life, and overall appeal, and should continue to be maintained and enhanced through ongoing investment.



Walter Mock Memorial park



Polk Township Community Walking Park



CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: PARKS & OPEN SPACE

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| State Road | CJERP Region | Water Authority Lands | State Game Lands |
| Other Road | County Boundary | Private Conservation | State Parks |
| Appalachian Trail | Municipal Boundary | Local Parks & Open Space | Federal Conservation |
| PA Bike Route V | | | |

Preservation in the CJERP Region

In addition to the active recreational amenities provided through parks, trails, and community facilities, the CJERP region's scenic landscapes and rural character are sustained through a long-standing commitment to agricultural and open space preservation. Over the past several decades, a combination of county initiatives, municipal tools, and state programs has helped protect farmland, natural areas, and environmental resources across the region.

Open Space Preservation in Monroe County

The CJERP region's commitment to agricultural and open space preservation is rooted in a broader county-led effort to manage growth and protect the region's landscape. In the late 1990s, Monroe County and the Pocono region were experiencing significant development pressure, prompting a coordinated planning response. The County's 1996 Comprehensive Plan established a long-term vision prioritizing the preservation of farmland, natural areas, and scenic resources to maintain regional character and quality of life.

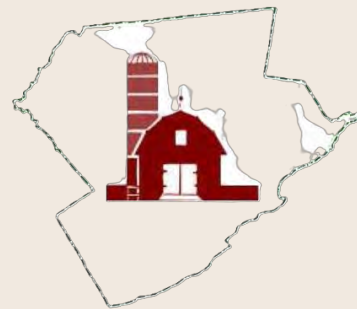
This vision was reinforced through the approval of a \$25 million Open Space Bond Referendum by voters in 1998, creating a dedicated funding source for land and conservation easement acquisition. The program proved highly effective. By 2010, Monroe County had preserved approximately 12,000 acres of open space and 6,000 acres of farmland. Since then, preservation efforts have continued through the County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program and related initiatives, with permanently preserved farmland now exceeding 8,000 acres.

Importantly, the County's investment extended beyond land acquisition. A portion of the funding supported municipal planning efforts, enabling local governments to update ordinances and adopt tools that integrate preservation into development. This approach helped translate county-level goals into on-the-ground outcomes, equipping municipalities with the resources to guide growth while protecting open space..

Implementation at the Local Level

Building on Monroe County's early leadership, municipalities across the CJERP region adopted local tools to integrate open space preservation into everyday land use decisions. One of the most widely used approaches is conservation design subdivision ordinances, enacted by all 5 CJERP townships, which allows residential development to be clustered on a portion of a site at densities higher than what would otherwise be allowed, while preserving the remaining land as open space. This approach was a direct output of the county's 1996 comprehensive plan. Similar outcomes can also be achieved through Planned Residential Development provisions authorized under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), which provide flexibility in site design while prioritizing open space protection.

Spotlight On... Monroe County Agricultural Land Preservation Program



The Monroe County Agricultural Land Preservation Program serves as an active partner in preserving farmland across the region, working directly with landowners to protect viable agricultural lands through the purchase of perpetual conservation easements. Since 1990, the program has preserved over 119 farms and approximately 8,000 acres, helping to sustain the agricultural economy and rural landscape. Supported by state and county funding, the program provides both technical guidance and financial resources, making it a critical tool for municipalities and landowners seeking to advance long-term agricultural preservation.

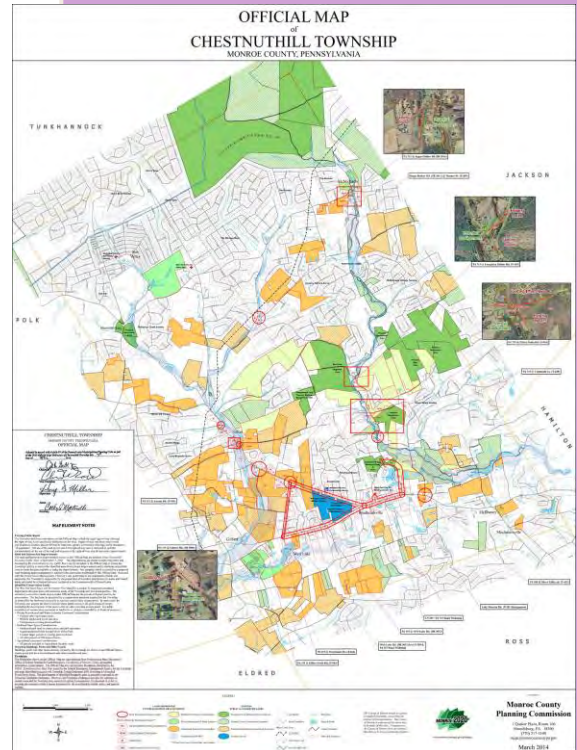
In addition to zoning-based tools, municipalities may formally identify land for future preservation through an Official Map, authorized under Article IV of the MPC. This tool allows municipalities to designate areas for future public use, including parks, greenways, transportation improvements, and conservation lands. While adoption of an Official Map does not change ownership, it establishes the municipality's intent to preserve these areas and provides a mechanism to delay development. If a mapped property is proposed for development, the municipality has a limited period of time to pursue acquisition or secure an easement, effectively functioning as a right of first refusal.

Chestnuthill Township provides a local example of how this tool can be applied. The Township's Official Map identifies priority lands for conservation based on factors such as proximity to existing preserved areas, agricultural viability, and opportunities to connect open space networks. It also designates future roadway and intersection improvements, helping to preserve right-of-way corridors and support long-term transportation planning in and around Brodheadsville.

Agricultural Preservation

Farmland preservation has long been a policy priority in Pennsylvania, and a range of state-enabled tools support the continued viability of agricultural uses. One of the most widely used programs is Act 319, also known as "Clean and Green," which allows qualifying properties to be taxed based on their agricultural use value rather than potential development value. This often results in lower property taxes, providing an incentive to keep land in agricultural use. If a property enrolled in Act 319 is converted to a non-qualifying use, rollback taxes are imposed, requiring repayment of prior tax savings.

Additional tools build upon this framework. Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) are voluntary, farmer-initiated designations that provide right-to-farm protections and serve as a prerequisite for participation in the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Program. Through this program, eligible farms may sell agricultural conservation easements, permanently restricting future



Chestnuthill Township's Official Map, permitted by Article IV of the MPC, is an important local tool for open space preservation and transportation improvements

development while remaining in private ownership and active agricultural use.

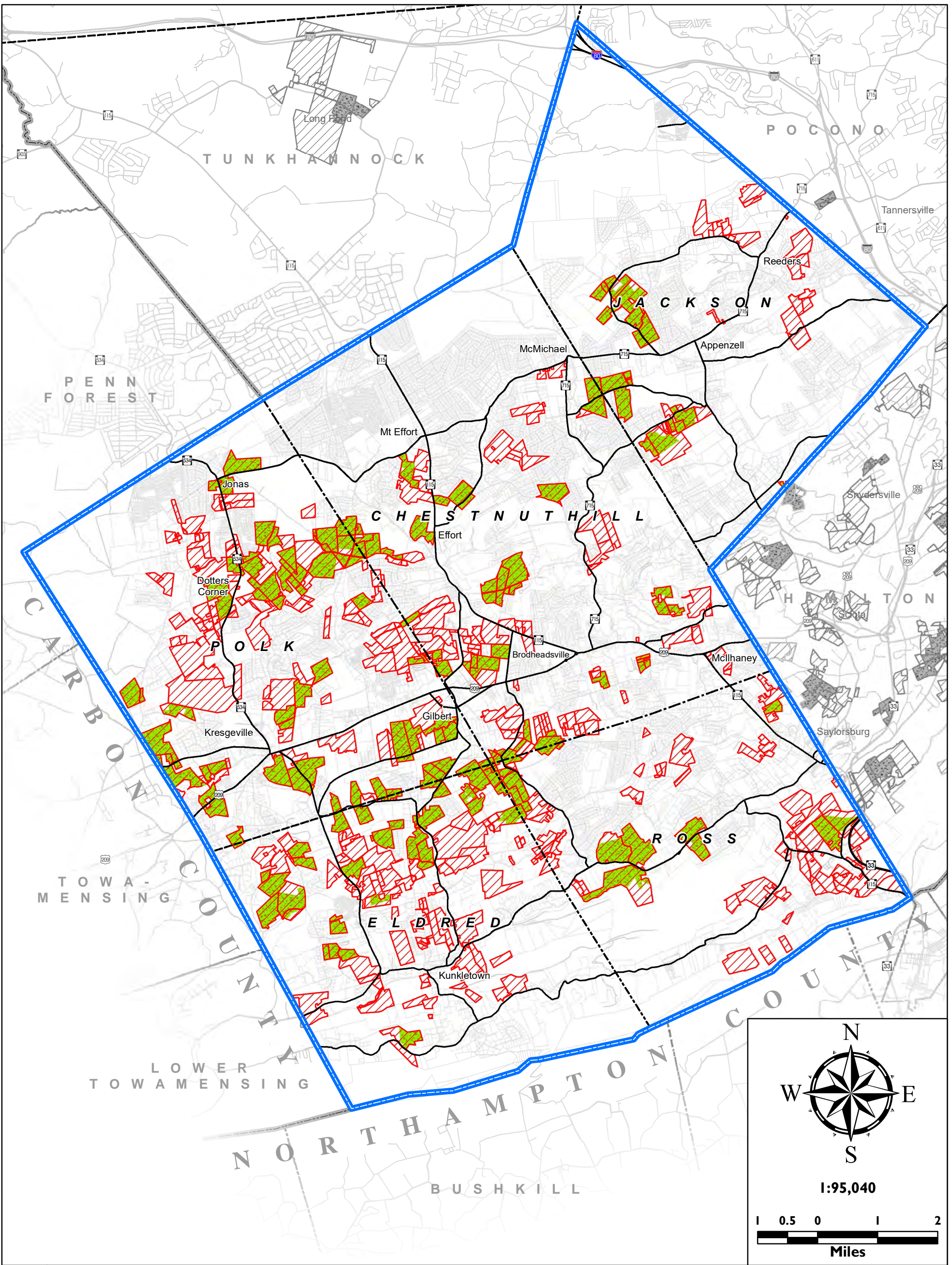
All five CJERP municipalities have enrolled farmland in ASAs and supported permanent preservation through easement purchases. As shown on the Agricultural Resources Map, ASA land is distributed throughout the region. In total, 15.7 square miles of farmland are enrolled in ASAs without permanent preservation, while an additional 9.9 square miles have been permanently preserved, totaling 25.6 square miles. Polk Township contains the largest share at 8.4 square miles, representing over a quarter of its land area. Jackson Township has a smaller amount, at 2.2 square miles, partially reflecting the extent of land maintained for public recreational use.

Ongoing Efforts

Agricultural and open space preservation remains an active effort in Monroe County. The County's Land Preservation Program continues to support the acquisition of conservation easements, building on earlier investments in open space planning. In addition, Act 13 impact fee funding from natural gas drilling provides an ongoing source of support for open space preservation initiatives, allowing municipalities and the County to pursue strategic acquisitions and conservation projects as opportunities arise.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Given the strong community focus on agricultural and open space preservation, CJERP municipalities should continue to pursue additional tools and strategies to support these efforts, including Official Maps, updated open space planning initiatives, and approaches such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to guide growth while preserving the region's landscape.





CJERP REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Road CJERP Region County Boundary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Boundary Tax Parcel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CJERP Ag Security Area CJERP Preserved Farm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjacent Ag Security Area Adjacent Preserved Farm |
|--|--|--|--|