

BERN TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Plan

2025

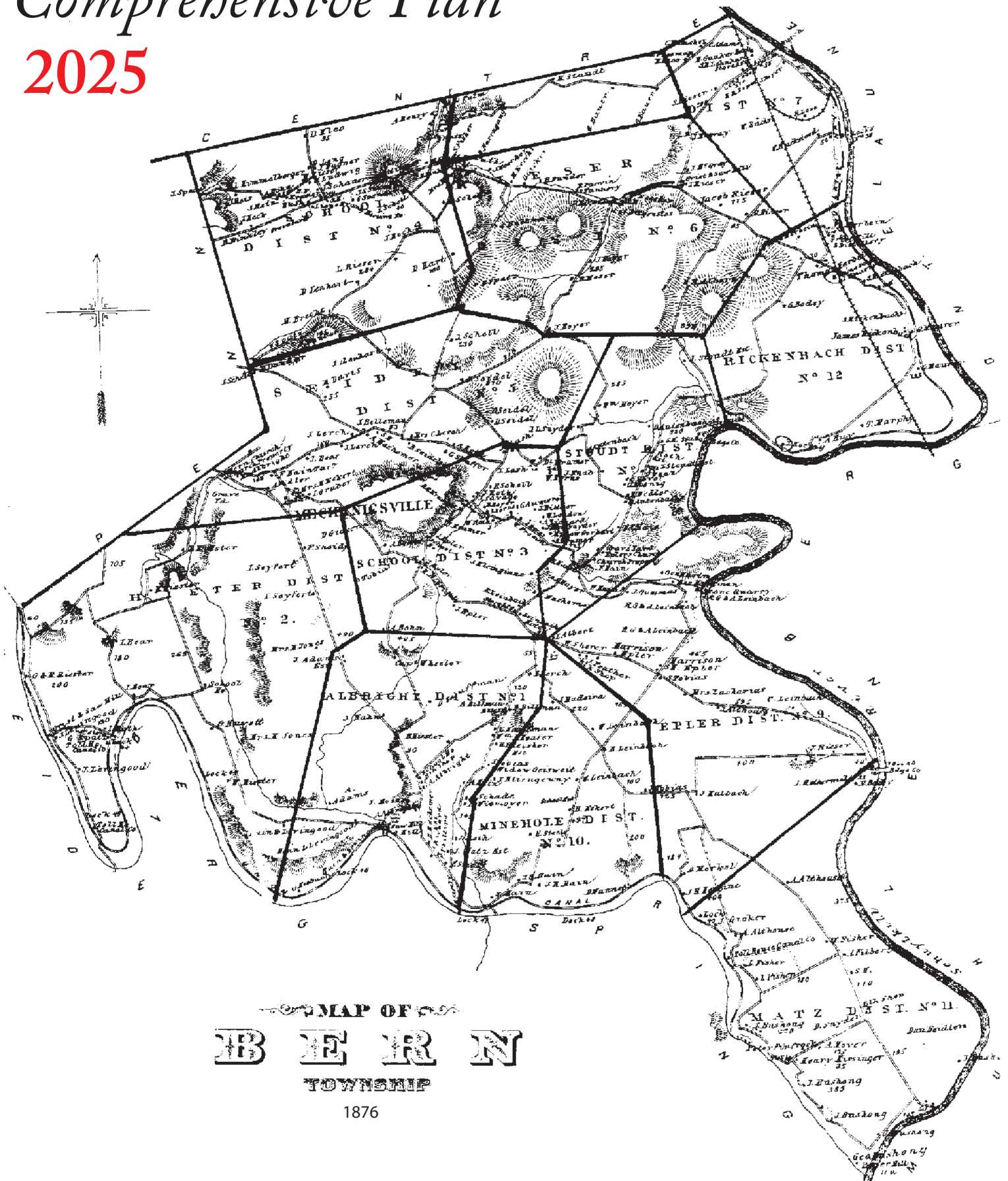


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Introduction

The Bern Township Comprehensive Plan

was first adopted in 1972 and subsequently amended in 1980, 1987, 2003 and 2013. This Plan is an update of the 2013 amendment.

Bern Township covers **19.35 square miles** (19.1 square miles of land and the rest is water). The Township is partly suburban and partly rural in nature.

Situated immediately north of the City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania, it is bounded on the east by the Schuylkill River and south by the Tulpehocken Creek. It is adjacent to Centre, Lower Heidelberg, Muhlenberg, Ontelaunee, Penn, Spring Townships and the Boroughs of Leesport and Wyomissing.

Characteristics

- ◆ Topographically, the eastern half of the Township has gently rolling terrain, with limestone-type soils—except for the Tulpehocken Creek, Siefert Run and Schuylkill River valleys. The western half has overlying shale soils with a number of hills, valleys and narrow ravines and the slopes are more severe. Soil types and limited public sanitary sewer and central water systems also constitute important factors in local planning.
- ◆ Agriculture is still a desirable industry in the Township, and there are a number of places where Prime Agricultural soils (USDASCS Class I, II and III) are found.

Influences

- ◆ Reading Regional Airport is situated at the east end of the Township. This facility has been in operation since 1939 and currently serves general private aviation. There is no regularly scheduled commuter service. Aviation creates noise and requires clear zones and slide slopes. Berks County Industrial Development Authority (BerksIDA) is developing Berks Park 183, an industrial area adjacent to the Airport.

A Vision of Sustainability:

Bern Township is committed to fostering a sustainable future by integrating environmental stewardship, and economic resilience into all aspects of community planning and development. We aim to meet the needs of current residents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This involves promoting energy efficiency, reducing waste, conserving natural resources, and enhancing green spaces. By encouraging sustainable practices in housing, transportation, and local businesses, we strive to create a vibrant, healthy, and resilient community that can adapt to changing environmental and economic conditions.

Our Comprehensive Plan will guide us in making informed decisions that balance growth with the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage, ensuring a high quality of life for all residents.

Current Land Use in Bern Township

Berks Co. Land Classification	Acres
Farm	4238
Exempt	3261
Residential	2933
Commercial	689
Industrial	431

Comparing Growth from 2010 to 2020

The 2020 Federal Census Data on the next page shows the *actual count of people in Bern Township on Census Day April 1, 2020.*

Between 2010 and 2020 the population of Berks County increased by 17,407 from 411,442 to 428,849. This was a 4% increase.

How has Bern Township Grown? Compare US Census Bureau’s actual count of persons in 2010 and 2020:

P1 POPULATION	2010 Census	2010 Census %	2020 Census	2020 Census %
Bern Township Total Population	6,797	100	6,706	100
Population of Berks Heim & Berks County Jail (Group Quarters)	1585	23.3	1248	18.6
Householders	2080	30.6	2161	32.2
Families	1565	23.	1674	24.9
Density of People per Sq Mile	351.3	-	346.6	-
Population Characteristics				
Persons under 5 years	238	3.5	237	3.5
Persons age 5-64	5122	75.3	4770	71.1
Persons aged 65-69	351	5.1	428	6.3
Persons aged 70 - 74	247	3.6	359	5.3
Persons aged 75-79	237	3.4	311	4.6
Persons aged 80-84	226	3.3	180	2.6
Persons aged 85 years and over	376	5.5	421	6.2
Population Categories				
Age 65 years and over	1437	21.1	1699	25.3
Male Population	3674	54.	3476	51.8
Female Population	3123	45.9	3230	48.1
Median Age	50.8		47.5	-
HOUSEHOLD TYPES				
Total Housing Units	2168	100	2243	100
Households with persons under 18	574	26.4	559	24.9
Families	1337	61.6	1687	75.2
Family with children under 18 years	514	23.7	936	41.7
Householder living alone male	166	7.6	227	10.1
65 years and older	48	2.2	109	4.8
Householder living alone female	231	10.6	249	11.1
65 years and older	166	7.6	169	7.5
Households with persons over 65	705	32.5	886	39.5
Total Occupied Housing Units	2080	95.9	2168	97.4
Unoccupied Housing Units	88	4.	75	3.3

Links to Bern Township Maps Mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan *

Bern Zoning Map 2019: https://www.berntownship.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/Bern_Township_Zoning_Map_2019.pdf

(Any zoning questions should be addressed to the Bern Township Manager or the Zoning Officer.)

Bern Composite Map: https://www.berntownship.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/Bern_Composite_Map.pdf

Bern Twp Prime Ag Soils Map: https://www.berntownship.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/Bern_Prime_Ag_Soils_Map.pdf

****The maps above are the most recent ones available.***

Pennsylvania Agricultural Security Areas:

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/plants-land-water/farmland-preservation/agricultural-security-areas>

<https://www.berntownship.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/ACE2024.pdf>

Act 319 Clean & Green:

<https://www.berkspa.gov/departments/assessment/cama-exports>

1 Community Goals & Objectives

Goals are general statements about the desired direction for the Township. They reflect relatively long-term conditions, which the Township wants to maintain or establish.

Objectives are more specific, relatively short-term policy guidelines for the Township to follow. Goals are achieved by accomplishing the stated objectives.

Bern Township is still a “green and pleasant land” and is considered to be a very desirable place to live. One of the most attractive features of the Township is its balanced mix of residential regions, agricultural areas, commercial segments, industrial sectors, and recreational and institutional facilities. The Township still has a rural atmosphere, with ample open space and appealing undulating scenery, while offering diverse land use opportunities.

Comprehensive Plan Goal

The goal of this revised Comprehensive Plan is to guide, manage and adequately control development of our diverse land uses, while at the same time preserving and enhancing our deep-rooted rural atmosphere.

Comprehensive Plan Objective

Residential development should be balanced with commercial and industrial development to help offset the disproportionately high community costs associated with residential development.

Agricultural development is the least costly of the types of development common to our area due to the fact that taxes paid by Agricultural land users far exceed the cost of services delivered to them.

The Township should encourage existing Agricultural uses and promote this type of development by encouraging landscaping nurseries, horse farms, and other viable forms of agriculture-related business.

The Composite Map of Bern Township is an integral part of this Comprehensive Plan. It serves as a valuable tool in guiding the future growth of the Township. It also identifies the existing natural features, and parcel boundaries.

Future Development Goals & Objectives

It is recommended that future development occurs in areas where sewage disposal, water supplies, existing utilities, and transportation are adequate to accommodate the proposed levels of development. This will:

- ◆ Help promote the effective and efficient use of the existing land base and public facilities
- ◆ Maintain moderate separation of suburban and rural land uses
- ◆ Lessen development pressures in agricultural areas
- ◆ Minimize travel distances, and promote the cluster and village design concepts which, in turn, reduce suburban sprawl.
- ◆ Areas with steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and woodlands should be left as open areas

Land Use and Housing

Land Use & Housing Goal 1:

Allow managed and adequately controlled residential development at appropriate locations where necessary physical services are, or could be, available (i.e., highway access, open space, utilities, etc.)

Land Use & Housing Objective 1:

- ◆ Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents.
- ◆ Provide for well-planned development in the Township, which will be consistent with community character.
- ◆ Discourage residential development in areas unsuitable for on-site sewage disposal, without public sewers.

- ◆ Provide for flexibility in land use ordinances and regulations to encourage innovative site design and alternatives to standard subdivisions, such as conservation development consistent with *Growing Greener* concept.
- ◆ Restrict adult-oriented businesses to areas away from the vicinity of residences, churches, parks, schools, industries, and government facilities.

Land Use & Housing Goal 2:

Provide for industrial and commercial development at appropriate locations, which are compatible with existing residential areas and consider transitional areas between industrial, commercial and residential uses.

Land Use & Housing Objective 2:

- ◆ Provide for a mix of land uses, which will balance growth with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the Township, and support manageable tax structures.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for suitable and compatible commercial, office, and environmentally responsible industrial activities at appropriate locations, within the context of existing land use patterns, support services, transportation networks, environmental concerns, and availability of public sewer and water facilities.
- ◆ Minimize the conflict between non-residential and residential uses through the proper allocation of land use and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards with screen plantings. Discourage proximity of incompatible land uses within the Township and along municipal boundaries.
- ◆ Require commercial and industrial sites to be developed in accordance with design and performance standards, open area and setback requirements that are intended to provide attractive development, particularly along Route 183.

Land Use & Housing Goal 3:

Discourage residential or industrial development of agricultural lands and permit varied agricultural uses and related activity.

Land Use & Housing Objective 3:

- ◆ Consider the needs of the agricultural industry when making land use decisions
- ◆ Promote the retention of agricultural uses and encourage the use of available organizations and programs which will help make farmland retention possible.
- ◆ Encourage land development techniques, such as conservation development based on land characteristics, which will preserve natural resources, agricultural lands, and open space. Review what zoning techniques are appropriate to the Township to preserve agricultural lands.

Land Use & Housing Goal 4:

Promote controlled higher density development in portions of the Township where public sewer and water facilities are available.

Land Use & Housing Objective 4:

- ◆ Provide opportunity for a variety of residential housing types within the natural and service constraints of the Township, which are compatible with the general character of the Township.
- ◆ Allow for a variety of housing densities in appropriately designated areas consistent with availability of infrastructure that will support the proposed development.

Land Use & Housing Goal 5:

Encourage the development of businesses and industries in the area of the airport that promote economic stability, increase the local tax base and expand employment opportunities for residents of the Township.

Land Use & Housing Objective 5:

- ◆ Ensure that development of areas near the airport is consistent with public safety in recognition of airspace safety requirements.
- ◆ Develop and maintain a local economic development strategy for the airport focused on the compatibility and sustainability of existing, as well as future, businesses and industries.

- ◆ Review the airport’s long-range planning process to assure it is in the best interest of the Township and involve the public and private sectors in the economic development of the airport area, on a local and regional basis.
- ◆ Encourage a broad diversification in business and industry with appropriately planned areas for future expansion, and work closely with Berks County, the Airport Authority and other agencies to create employment opportunities.
- ◆ Work toward additional land use and infrastructure improvements in the area of the airport, and promote business and industrial development as anticipated in the *Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update, Chapter 7, Future Land Use Plan, page 98*.
- ◆ Recognize and protect residential neighborhoods in the vicinity of the airport from adverse impacts of airport operations and expansion.
- ◆ Require review of development near the airport to assure it is consistent with public safety in recognition of air space safety requirements.

Ecological Resources

Ecological Resources Goal 1:

Establish programs for the most effective use of land and preserve land not suitable for development.

- ◆ Evaluate the effectiveness of measures currently in place intended to protect natural features and consider including additional provisions in the Township’s Zoning Ordinance, such as woodland protection provisions and stream corridor overlay zoning.
- ◆ Develop techniques to guide and encourage the conservation of land.
- ◆ Encourage public awareness of and sensitivity toward natural and scenic resources in Bern Township. Support private efforts to preserve and maintain natural resources.

Ecological Resources Objective 1:

Ecological Resources Goal 2:

Preserve agricultural areas.

- ◆ Promote the preservation of agricultural areas within the Township through conservation development, agricultural security areas, purchase and donation of development rights, and conservation easements. Work with farmers to identify programs available for preserving farms.
- ◆ Minimize conflicts of agricultural and non-agricultural uses through the effective use of setbacks and buffers.

Ecological Resources Objective 2:

Ecological Resources Goal 3:

Provide ecological management so as to preserve prime agricultural land, protect downstream population areas and provide a healthful and safe environment for existing residential areas.

- ◆ Encourage developers to preserve key environmental resources and to incorporate these features into their developments.
- ◆ Ensure that land areas subject to flooding, or otherwise not suitable for any buildings or structures, because of steep slopes, poor soil bearing qualities or with poor or prohibitive water and/or sewage capabilities are not used for building development purposes.
- ◆ Encourage the protection of water resources and thus the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater. Of particular concern are the Schuylkill River, Siefert Run, Plum Creek, Tulpehocken Creek, and Blue Marsh Lake, as well as wetlands and floodplains along these watercourses. Preserve and buffer these areas to protect watercourses and groundwater discharge/recharge areas while also providing a system of open space.
- ◆ Minimize the loss of topsoil and erosion and sedimentation of soils and employ effective storm water management techniques.

Ecological Resources Objective 3:

Ecological Resources Goal 4:
Protect floodplain areas.

Ecological Resources Objective 4:

- ◆ Protect the natural capabilities of floodplains, wetlands, and drainage swales by limiting their disturbance and avoiding negative impacts on adjacent properties.
- ◆ Support the efforts of those agencies involved in efforts to create a greenway along the Schuylkill River.

Ecological Resources Goal 5:
Protect areas of steep slopes to preserve their natural state.

Ecological Resources Objective 5:

- ◆ Minimize alterations to existing topography with particular attention given to protecting steep slope areas (i.e., in excess of 15% slope) from indiscriminate disturbance.
- ◆ Explore development regulations, which limit intrusion or disturbance to areas characterized by steep slopes.

Ecological Resources Goal 6:
Preserve open space for recreation purposes around Blue Marsh Reservoir, Berks County Institutional Complex and along the Schuylkill River and Tulpehocken Creek and protect the recreational areas of the Township, such as waterways and woodlands, and to promote their effective utilization.

Ecological Resources Objective 6:

- ◆ Establish criteria for project sites such as: acreage, locations, site amenities, access, existing ground cover, etc.
- ◆ Require recreation sites as deemed necessary by the Township.
- ◆ Work with the landowners to identify preservation targets and means of preserving them.
- ◆ Require developers to dedicate land when appropriate.
- ◆ Require developers to provide recreation facilities or fees-in-lieu in order to support the development of Township recreation facilities when appropriate.

Transportation

Transportation Goal 1:
Promote an effective transportation system with separate local and through traffic, and good access to areas generating higher traffic volume.

Transportation Objective 1:

- ◆ Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- ◆ Monitor the impacts on roadway capacity from new development and require developers to address projected increased traffic volumes in the road system by improving the existing system.
- ◆ Provide maintenance of the existing road system as warranted.
- ◆ Address existing deficiencies and safety concerns in the transportation system with landowners, PennDOT and developers as appropriate.
- ◆ Recognize that significant traffic is generated outside the Township, work with State, County, municipal, and other agencies and organizations to address areas of concern within the Township.
- ◆ Require connecting road systems within subdivisions and between subdivisions, eliminate cul-de-sacs.

Transportation Goal 2:
Regulate and minimize direct driveway access on traffic routes through the use of parallel access roads, promoting controlled points of intersection, and internal road systems.

Transportation Objective 2:

- ◆ Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the Township as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT as applicable.
- ◆ Promote coordinated access management programs along the road corridors within the Township, to minimize the number of access points to the road system.
- ◆ Require developers to provide internal road systems in order to minimize driveway access to roads in Twp.
- ◆ Facilitate access for emergency services in developments using interconnected roads and eliminate cul-de-sacs.

Community Facilities and Services

Community Facilities & Services Goal 1:

Provide community services in accordance with the needs of residents and balance revenue required with demand for such services.

Community Facilities & Services Objective 1:

- ◆ Periodically evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded or improved community services and facilities and plan for the efficient and economic distribution of those services and facilities.
- ◆ Review opportunities and/or needs for regional cooperation in the provision of services and facilities.
- ◆ Review proposed developments to ensure that required infrastructure is provided by the developer.

Community Facilities & Services Goal 2:

Provide water services within physical and financial capabilities.

Community Facilities & Services Objective 2:

- ◆ Ensure that the scale of development is consistent with the capacity of the Township's infrastructure.
- ◆ Monitor areas with groundwater problems.
- ◆ Coordinate sewer and water planning with land use policies.

Community Facilities & Services Goal: 3

Ensure that provision of public sewer facilities is consistent with the Township's Act 537 Plan.

Community Facilities & Services Objective 3:

- ◆ Regulate waste disposal, including but not limited to, human, household, industrial, hazardous, toxic, nuclear and biological wastes.
- ◆ Ensure that sewage planning and land use planning are consistent, and designation of areas of highest density residential development reflects the policies of the Act 537 Plan.

- ◆ Coordinate economic development policies with sanitary sewer planning.
- ◆ Coordinate sewer planning efforts with Berks County and the Reading Regional Airport Authority.

Community Facilities & Services Goal 4:

Develop Open Space and Recreation Areas

Community Facilities & Services Objective 4:

- ◆ Provide for conservation developments to encourage preservation of open space.
- ◆ Provide financial means, through ordinance language, to build the recreation and park facilities planned by the Township.
- ◆ Develop a park and recreation budget.
- ◆ Protect natural areas of the Township, such as woodlands and waterways.

2 Existing Land Use

Existing land use patterns have a major influence on any future land use plan. Land use also affects transportation within the Township and the demand for additional community facilities and services. Even though Bern Township has experienced steady population growth and residential land development during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, much of the Township still remains agricultural, or rural in nature, especially in the western part.

According to the Berks County Data Hub Bern has:

- ◆ More than 2,100 Single Family Residential properties occupying more than 2,900 acres
- ◆ 16 Multi-Family (Apartments) Residential properties occupying 33 acres
- ◆ 75 Commercial properties occupying close to 700 acres
- ◆ 30 Industrial properties occupying 430 acres
- ◆ 159 Farm properties occupying more than 4,200 acres
- ◆ 128 Tax Exempt properties occupied by government organizations, churches, and others totaling 3,327 acres

Much of the farmland is cultivated and interspersed with pasture and woodlands. One of the largest areas of wooded land is found around Blue Marsh Lake.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

Single Family Residential

Most residential uses within the Township are single family residential. Single family residential development can be classified as either:

- ◆ Compact, dense development patterns immediately adjacent to the northwest corner of the City of Reading, in the vicinity of Greenfields and Greenfields Manor, in the area of Fairview Heights, and in West Ridge south of Route 183.

- ◆ Scattered lower-density growth along various major and secondary roads, west of US Route 222 and north of Route 183.

Multi-Family Residential

In Bern Township, multi-family residential development is primarily located in two areas of the Township: in the vicinity of the Greenfields, and South Gate at Upper Van Reed. Multi-Family buildings occupy about 30 acres of land in the township.

In 2019, Bern Township revised and updated their **Zoning Map** in a limited area located adjacent to Leesport Borough. This was changed from Urban Residential (UR) Zoning to Rural Residential (RR).

Part of this area was considered to be an environmentally hazardous area due to potential flooding issues. In addition, this location has very limited road access. On the south approach there was a very narrow underpass under an historic railroad bridge, and on the north side the residential roads in that area are very narrow and congested.

Commercial

Commercial development in the Township has continued to increase during the past decade. Most of this growth has been along the Route 183 corridor. Growth in this area reflects the Berks County Comprehensive Plan for Future Land Use. Commercial establishments added in the last 10 years include:

- ◆ Wawa gas station and convenience store,
- ◆ Stor-4-U, a self-storage facility,
- ◆ S&L Mechanical, a commercial refrigeration service
- ◆ And several other small businesses

Industrial

Industrial development continues to grow in the areas zoned for Light and General Industrial. New development includes **UGI's Training Center** on approximately 40 acres of land. This complex includes a 47,500 square-foot building, which is used as a learning center. There are six classrooms, two lecture rooms, and four specialized labs for different training programs. There is also a 10,500 square-foot welding shop designed for hands-on training in welding, stopping, and capping natural gas lines.

Another new building in this area is **G&T Industries**. This company specializes in foam and rubber fabrication for the medical, transportation, furniture, military, packaging, and marine industries. Their 100,000 square foot building is located on 13 acres of land.

Airport

In 2022, Reading Regional Airport Authority (RRAA) developed the *Reading Airport Strategic Plan* in an effort to maintain self-sustainability. Included in this plan is a 5+ year goal "to lease airport real estate to take advantage of the income-producing asset." These assets will continue to be owned by RRAA. This report also states that RRAA will maximize non-aviation revenue sources such as preparing for the establishment of an Airport Land Development Zone, to incentivize development on vacant land or buildings. This area may be up to 50 acres in size.

In 2011, Berks County Industrial Development Authority (BerksIDA) purchased 155 acres of land from RRAA. The land, located on the southeast side of the airport was zoned Limited Industrial and has since been developed. A 250,000 square foot building was constructed on a 37-acre lot. It is now occupied by FedEx. The remaining 115 acres are still being developed.

Institutional

Penn State Health St. Joseph's Medical Center

In 2006 the original St Joseph's Hospital, which was founded in Reading in 1873, relocated to a new campus in Bern that is located across from the airport on Route 183. This 212-bed facility is adjacent to the Doctors' Office Building, a day care facility and a credit union. In 2015 the hospital became part of the Penn State Regional Health Network.

Tower Behavioral Health

A new medical facility, also known as Reading Behavioral Health, LLC, (part of Tower Health) opened in July 2020. This facility provides comprehensive mental health services, including acute inpatient and outpatient treatment for both adults and adolescents. This 92,000 square foot facility has 144 beds and is located on 83 acres on Route 183, south of Penn State Health Medical Center and cross from Reading Airport. The campus also includes a two-story 30,000 square foot Medical Office Building.

Non-taxable Land in Bern

In 2025 the Value of Lost Revenue from Tax Exempt land in Bern Township has a current value of \$ 992,375.47 a year, which is an increase of \$359,737 since 2013. Bern Township must still provide services to those areas.

Non-taxable Holdings in Bern Township

Table 2.1

OWNER of property	Acres
Alvernia University	13.49
Berks Co Industrial Develop. Authority	74.07
Berks Career & Technology Center	29.28
Berks County	928.27
Bern Lions Club	26.36
Bern Township	17.99
Bern Township Municipal Authority	.47
Cemeteries	26.23
Churches	43.22
City of Reading	8.97
City of Reading Water Bureau	39.65
Commonwealth of PA	79.93
Commonwealth of PA Game Lands	293.92
Commonwealth of PA Dept Forest & Water	278.41
US Federal Lands	131.48
Greenfields Fire Company Social Club	.27
Leesport Borough	23.75
Mid-Atlantic Air Museum	1.38
Ontelaunee Grange	2.94
Penn-DOT Engineering	3.22
Penn State Health St Joseph Medical Center	32.98
Reading Regional Airport & Authority	567.68
Santander Bank/RRAA	2.26
Schuylkill River Greenway	3.81
Schuylkill Valley Library	.51
US Army Corps of Engineers	685.38
Veterans with Real Estate Exemptions	11.52
Total number of TAX EXEMPT acres	3,327.44

Planned Office Business District (POBD)

This district provides opportunities for modern office buildings and other compatible businesses that will serve businesses, as well as the need for medical, financial, legal, architectural and other professional services.

Allowed uses in this district include:

Business, professional or government office;
 research, testing or experimental laboratories;
 medical center;
 veterinary clinic;
 grocery store/supermarket;
 hotel/ conference center.

Uses allowed by Conditional Use in the POBD district include:

day care center;
 interior service and convenience uses;
 retail sales of goods;
 banks, savings and loans, finance companies;
 restaurants;
 personal or household service establishments;
 business services;
 pharmacies

One of the businesses in this district is EnerSys, which is a leader in stored energy solutions such as batteries, chargers and accessories for automotive, reserve, aerospace and defense applications has its global corporate headquarters located in Bern Township on Route 183.

Their headquarters campus occupies 125 acres and includes a 100,000 square foot state-of-the-art Global Technology Center, which serves as the hub for the company's core engineering and technology team. This center consolidates EnerSys' engineering functions and supports the development of advanced energy storage technologies.

3 Natural Constraints

LINKS TO MAPS are on page vi

The Composite Map, Bern Township, dated 2013

shows natural constraints in the Township. (If you are reading this on paper the map should be in the pocket at the end of this report.) This map shows:

- ◆ Water resources, including wetlands
- ◆ 100-year and 500-year floodplains; (Also referred to as the 1% annual chance of flooding and the 0.2% annual chance of flooding, respectively.)
- ◆ Areas of steep slope, including slopes of 15-25% and slopes greater than 25%
- ◆ Wooded areas

There are several natural resources that limit development in the Township:

- ◆ Floodplains, wetlands and wooded areas are found along the watercourses.
- ◆ Wooded areas are scattered through the Township, though they are found in their greatest concentrations in the Blue Marsh Lake area and in the central portion of the Township extending from the Schuylkill River.
- ◆ Steep slopes are also scattered through the Township, often in the area of stream corridors.

Floodplains

Floodplains are areas adjacent to watercourses, which are covered by floodwater during times of flooding.

A 100-year floodplain is an area which has a 1% chance of being flooded during any one year, and which is typically used for regulatory purposes.

It is best if floodplains are not developed, because development within floodplains can result in danger to persons and property. If development occurs within the floodplain, this may constrict the area over which floodwaters may flow,

resulting in increased flood damage downstream relating to increased floodwater velocities. Consideration should be given to not disturbing areas adjacent to watercourses because increased sedimentation within a watercourse can occur. Increased impervious coverage along watercourses also typically increases storm water runoff in streams. This runoff erodes stream banks and channels. Sedimentation leads to the filling of stream beds, which could cause floodwaters to cover a larger area, permanently altering the location of streams, impact their ecological balance and detract from the aesthetic value of the stream.

The 100-year and 500-year floodplains that are shown on the Composite Map are based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps which were available at the time. FEMA continuously updates floodplain maps to reflect changes in flood risk. The most recent updates are part of an ongoing process, with new and revised data being added continuously.

Detailed studies have not been performed to establish, through calculation, the extent of all 100-year and 500-year floodplains for all watercourses in Bern Township.

Developers should be required to calculate 100-year floodplains by checking the latest updates and view current flood maps on FEMA's Flood Map Service Center found at:

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas that are inundated, or saturated by, surface, or groundwater, at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, specific vegetation typically associated with saturated soil conditions.

Wetlands within the Township are generally found near watercourses. During on-site inspections, wetlands can sometimes be identified when they are saturated with permanent or semi-permanent standing water. They may

<https://dced.pa.gov/download/watershed-restoration-protection-program-wrpp-guidelines/>

contain common wetland plants such as cattails and willows. If wetlands cannot be identified by the plant life, soils may be investigated to determine wetlands. Hydric soil mapping can also be used to identify potential wetland sites.

Developers should be required to show hydric soils on their plans and investigate the existence of wetlands.

- ◆ Wetlands are an important part of the natural environment. They can be areas rich in plant growth and animal habitat. They often serve as breeding grounds for many organisms and are an important part of the natural environment.
- ◆ In addition to providing a habitat and source of food for many organisms, wetlands can protect water sources and can help keep water sources clean by acting as a natural filter and removing pollutants such as bacteria and sediment from water. This is a function of the plant growth in and around wetland areas.
- ◆ Wetlands also offer flood protection, and they can also store water, which can replenish surface and groundwater supplies. **In general, no development activity or placement of fill may occur within wetlands without obtaining a DEP permit.**

Watershed Restoration and Protection Program (WRPP) guidelines, published 11/2022, is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development (DCEd).

(See link at top of page.)

This document outlines various strategies and best management practices for watershed restoration and protection, including the use of riparian forest buffers, BMPs in urban development, agriculture, and forestry, voluntary conservation easements, and stream habitat improvement.

The wetlands that are shown on the Composite Map are based on the National Wetlands Inventory, prepared by the Office of Biological Services, U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service.

The wetlands inventory is prepared by analysis of high altitude aerial photographs, with the wetlands identified in the photographs based on vegetation, visible hydrology, and geography. A detailed site analysis may result in a revision of wetland boundaries, and it is possible that small wetlands and those obscured by dense ground cover may not have been identified. The Composite Map of the Township shows wetland coverages, as well as a one hundred foot wetland margin around the identified wetland. **Developers should be required to identify all wetlands on their properties.**

Steep Slopes

Areas which have slopes greater than 15% have severe limitations to development.

In general, this land is too steep for residential subdivisions and cultivation. Development of steep slopes can result in hazardous road conditions, costly excavation, erosion and sedimentation and storm water run-off problems.

These slopes are quite prone to erosion, and protection of these areas is particularly important for water resource protection when adjacent to nearby watercourses.

Development should be limited, vegetation cover maintained to the greatest extent possible, and erosion controls instituted. Removal of absorptive vegetation causes runoff to rapidly erode slopes.

Slopes of 15 to 25% and greater than 25% are indicated on the Composite Map. Data is from a United States Geological Survey's (USGS), a digital elevation model. Most of the steep slopes occur in the west and northern areas of the Township.

Woodlands

Woodland areas are scenic amenities, habitat for wildlife and home to many native species in Berks County.

- ◆ They provide visual relief from developed areas.
- ◆ Woodlands increase the capacity of land for the absorption of storm water runoff, diminishing flooding potential and decreasing erosion.

- ◆ Woodlands on steep slopes are especially valuable, playing an important role in reducing runoff and erosion and sedimentation by securing the soil.
- ◆ Maintenance of woodland areas on steep slopes is of even greater importance when the steep slopes are near streams, which could be disturbed through sedimentation and experience greater flood peaks if they are impacted by increased surface runoff. Woodland areas are in proximity to watercourses within the Township,

When woodland areas are retained, the quantity and quality of ground water can be better maintained than if woodlands are removed, because the natural cover allows for infiltration of rainwater into the ground water system.

Retention of woodlands also preserves the habitat of most of the native species within the Township. They provide the potential for recreation, whether through private or public means, for the population as a whole. Woodlands are shown on the Composite Map. Data is from USGS.

Rivers, Streams, Creeks and Lakes

Some of the natural functions of watercourses and the area surrounding them have been discussed above. It is important to note that streams and creeks provide a recreational resource, particularly fishing.

- ◆ **The Tulpehocken Creek** from below the Blue Marsh Dam to the first deflector downstream at the Covered Bridge is classified as Special Regulated Trout Waters. Within this area, there is delayed harvest and only artificial lures can be used.
- ◆ **Blue Marsh Lake Reservoir** above the dam is also classified as a Trout Stream Fishery.
- ◆ **The Tulpehocken Creek Corridor**, specifically 29 miles of the main corridor, is designated as a Pennsylvania Scenic River by the State of Pennsylvania. This includes the section of the Tulpehocken Creek from the discharge of the Blue Marsh Dam to the creek's confluence with the Schuylkill River at Reading, 6.6 miles. The designation is based on its recreational value.

Tulpehocken Creek is designated as a Pennsylvania Scenic River by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). This designation is intended to protect the natural, aesthetic, and recreational values of the waterway.

“Construction projects in the vicinity of the river are required to undergo a more rigorous permitting process and may be required to adjust the project design and/or construction practices to ensure that the natural and aesthetic values of the waterway are maintained.” (dcmr.pa.gov). Requirements for potential discharges are listed in the Rules and Regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

The Pennsylvania Code (25 Pa. Code § 93.4c.b.)

Requires that a proposed point source discharge to High Quality Waters must show that the discharge is justified for necessary economic or social development, which is of significant public value and that the proposed discharge alone, or in combination with other discharges, will not affect the protected use criteria.

The Schuylkill River is another asset in the Township. From the Schuylkill-Berks County Line to the Berks-Montgomery-Chester County Line, the river is designated as Warm Water Fisheries. The designation of Warm Water Fisheries indicates that the river should be protected as habitat for warm water fish and other ecosystems indigenous to warmer waters.

The Schuylkill Watershed Conservation Plan was designed to be a guidebook for municipalities, conservation groups, and citizens interested in taking steps to enhance the long-term health of the Schuylkill River watershed. Municipalities and non-profits can use the Plan to engage landowners and citizens in implementing the recommendations developed in the Plan, which focused on three major areas:

- ◆ Reducing non-point source (runoff) pollution,
- ◆ Creating a network of Greenways and integration of conservation lands,
- ◆ Landscape-level sustainability of watershed in terms of wildlife habitat and ecosystem stability.

In 2000 the U.S. Congress designated the Schuylkill River a National Heritage Area, one of only 7 in Pennsylvania. National Heritage Areas are places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. Unlike national parks, National Heritage Areas are large lived-in landscapes. Consequently, National Heritage Area entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

Prime Agricultural Soils

Prime agricultural soils constitute a local, state and national resource by reason of their inherent ability to produce cultivated crops.

These areas are shown on the soils mapping prepared for Berks County by the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service**.

Prime agricultural soils are those with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing high yields of crops. Since prime farmland is also good building land, it is rapidly being converted to development use. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for such land to revert to its original purposes.

Bern Township desires to preserve prime agricultural land wherever possible. The Township has an Agricultural Security Area Program, and participation in it is encouraged.

Pennsylvania's Agricultural Area Security Law was enacted in 1981 to protect agricultural operations from the spread of urbanization.

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program provides protection against local regulations restrictive to agriculture and condemnation from state agencies.

LINKS TO BERN MAPS

are in the Introduction on page vi.

Those maps are the most recent maps available.

Soils Not Conducive to Septic Systems

All municipalities are faced with the common challenge of sewage waste disposal. In more densely populated areas, sewage from homes and businesses is collected and delivered to sewage treatment plants (STPs) through a network of underground piping and pumping systems. In parts of Bern Township the Bern Township Municipal Authority (BTMA) provides public water and sewer service to some of the more densely populated areas of the Township.

In other areas of the Township, where public sewers are not available, a type of on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS), is used.

The most common method of on-site waste disposal is the septic tank, which consists of an underground storage tank for holding waste and a series of below ground pipes that discharge the effluent from the tank into the soil.

The soil underlying these distribution pipes must be of sufficient depth and have the characteristics necessary to allow for the proper filtration of the wastes found in the effluent.

If the soil is too shallow, that is, if there is bedrock or another limiting zone too close to the surface of the soil, the wastes will not be completely filtered from the effluent.

In such a case, the effluent will either resurface or enter groundwater supplies without being treated properly.

If these wastes enter the groundwater untreated, then an on-site water supply well, or a nearby stream or lake, can become tainted and polluted with these wastes. Wastes that surface untreated can destroy vegetation, animal habitat, and animal life.

4 Reading Regional Airport

The Reading Regional Airport Authority (RRAA) owns 567.68 acres in Bern Township, and of this, 488 acres at Reading Airport are used for airport operations. This area is zoned as the Airport Special Use District. The rest of the airport's land is zoned Industrial or Commercial.

In 2011 about 50 acres on the northeast side of the airport was sold to the Berks County Industrial Development Authority (BerksIDA). The Airport is surrounded by a mixture of commercial, light industrial, agricultural and residential areas.

The airport was constructed between 1935-36 as a joint venture of the federal government and the City of Reading. In 1938 it was dedicated and opened as a civil airport. During World War II, the U.S. Army Airforce First Air Force used the airport as a training facility and made extensive improvements. Reading Army Airfield was opened on June 1, 1943, with the 309th Base Headquarters and Air Base Squadron as its host unit. On January 1, 1944, Reading AAF was reassigned to Air Technical Service Command and became a sub-base of the Middletown Air Depot near Harrisburg. The mission of the station became to repair and overhaul aircraft and return them to active service.

After the war, the airport was deactivated as an active military airfield and designated as an Air Force Reserve base, then in 1948 the jurisdiction of the field was transferred to the ADC First Air Force. A series of reserve bombardment groups were assigned to the airport. Due to budgetary cutbacks, the Reserve Training Center at Reading was deactivated on 1 May 1950. The Air Force closed its facilities at Reading airport and it was returned to full civil control. Since the 1950s, the airport has also been home to the Reading Composite Squadron (Pennsylvania Wing designation Squadron 811) of the U.S. Civil Air Patrol.

Commercial airline service began in 1946. On December 5, 1984 the airport was dedicated as Gen. Carl A. Spaatz (USAF) Field. In the 1950s Reading Air Services sponsored the National Maintenance & Operations Meeting,

better known as the Reading Airshow, and later Reading Aerofest. This annual air show was one of the largest in the U. S. in the 60s and 70s peaking at 100,000 attendees in 1976. The show expanded to become a week-long trade and air show, then declined until it ended in 1980. It was later revived as a smaller air show, The Reading Aerofest, which was last held in 1998.

In 1990 Reading Airport began hosting the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend, also known as "A Gathering of War Birds." This event has become the premier World War II reenactment event in the United States. For more information see: <https://maam.org/wwii/>

WWII Weekend is held annually on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the first full weekend in June. It features a wide range of activities and displays including historic aircraft, air shows and many events honor war veterans. Speakers discuss aspects of war, battles and flight. Re-enactors show how those in the military lived, worked and played, as well as how people at home survived, including demonstrations of what they wore, swing dancing and big band music.

Reading Airport is now owned and operated by the Reading Regional Airport Authority. Bern Township has no direct participation in the operation of the airport.

In 2022 Reading Airport had:

- ◆ 38,139 aircraft operations, averaging 104 per day:
 - 85% general aviation,
 - 12% air taxi,
 - 3% military, and
 - <1% scheduled commercial.
- ◆ 115 aircraft were based at the airport:
 - 77 single-engine,
 - 19 multi-engine,
 - 14 jet,
 - 4 helicopter,
 - 1 glider.

Due to loss of regularly scheduled airline service at Reading Airport, in September of 2004, the Reading Regional Airport Authority made a number of changes to their proposed Master Plan based on availability of funding. The Reading Airport Master Plan is available on line at <https://readingairport.org/master-plan>

The airport area complex has as four basic land uses:

- ◆ the airfield
- ◆ air carrier facilities
- ◆ general aviation services
- ◆ industrial and commercial areas

In recent years, the Township has seen increased commercial and industrial growth in this area with the potential for future growth.

The current runway configuration at Reading Regional Airport provides the required wind coverage at 100 percent. It consists of two runways:

Runway 13-31 is oriented west and is 6,350 ft. long.

- ◆ Runway 31 is the primary departure runway due to its greater length and visual flight condition wind coverage.
- ◆ Runway 13 serves as an adequate secondary precision instrument approach for aircraft requiring a landing length longer than what is provided for arrivals to Runway 36.

Runway 18-36 is oriented east and is 5,151 ft. long.

- ◆ Runway 18-36 is the **primary precision instrument approach arrival runway** due to terrain, obstruction-free clearances and better instrument flight condition wind coverage.
- ◆ This runway is clear of terrain obstructions, but is constrained by the location of PA 183 (Bernville Road) on the approach end and the Schuylkill River on the opposite end (Runway 18).

The airport has established **runway safety areas (RSA)**. These areas, as described by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), are: “the surfaces surrounding runways suitable for reducing the risk of damage to airplanes in the event of an undershoot, overshoot, or excursion from the runway.”

Current FAA design standards require a runway safety area to be 500 feet in width and at a length equal to the runway plus 1,000 feet beyond the end of each runway.

Regional Airport Authority completed new runway safety areas for Runways 13-31 and 18-36 in 2013.

Another issue involving the airport concerns the **runway protection zone (RPZ)**, an area off the runway end to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground. There are two components of the RPZ, a runway object-free area, which extends 1,000 feet from the end of

the runways and is 800 feet wide, and the controlled activity area, which encompasses the remainder of the RPZ.

An object free area (OFA), according to the FAA, is: “an area on the ground that is provided to enhance safety of aircraft operations by having the area free of objects, except for objects that need to be located in the OFA for air navigation and the controlled activity area, whose purpose is to limit activities within the RPZ.” While, according to the FAA, it is desirable to clear all objects from the RPZ, some uses could be permitted:

- ◆ provided they do not attract wildlife
- ◆ are outside the OFA
- ◆ do not interfere with navigational aids

FAA also states that places of residence and public assembly should be specifically prohibited from the RPZ. The Reading Regional Airport controlled a portion of the RPZ areas at each runway end. The airport acquired additional land within the Runway 13 RPZ area. The airport currently has aviation easements within the Runway 18 and 36 RPZ areas that provide a limited degree of control with regards to land use in this area.

Commercial Carriers and Facilities

Since 2004 there have been no regularly scheduled commercial airlines serving the Reading Regional Airport.

Non-aeronautical land uses

The non-aeronautical uses area comprises approximately 20% of the land or about 149.73 acres.

Airport Industrial Park Section 1

This area, known as West Airport Industrial Park, occupies the northwest portion of the airport with access from Mac Arthur Road.(T-935). It is located in the Limited Industrial Zone, and is roughly 65 acres in size. It includes several tenants such as:

- ◆ Barco Industries Inc.
- ◆ Berks County Coroner
- ◆ Optimum Controls Corporation
- ◆ Life Lion EMS
- ◆ Suburban Testing Labs
- ◆ Heltronics Inc
- ◆ Phoenix Allstars
- ◆ Fed Ex Ground Ship Center (no air cargo operations)
- ◆ Furniture Soup

Airport Industrial Park Section 2

This section, also known as the Northfield Business Center, is located on the northeast portion of the airport between Arnold Road and Leisz's Bridge Road. Warehouses currently leased by INCOR Properties (formerly known as ProLogis) are occupied by:

- ◆ Prostar Packaging
- ◆ Supply One Plastics
- ◆ G&T Industries has recently moved to their new building located on the north side of Leisz's Bridge Road.

Airport Industrial Park Section 3 is located in the southeast corner of the airport, and accessed from Aviation Road. This is in the Limited Industrial Zone and is approximately 50 acres in size. In 2011 Berks County Industrial Development Authority (BerksIDA) purchased land from Reading Airport to create an industrial park, Berks Park 183. A new 35 acre site there is now occupied by Fed Ex. Another 234,8800 Sq. ft. warehouse will open there soon.

Also based in this area is US Anodize, (formerly known as Industrial Metal Plating Inc.) This is a family-owned quality aluminum finishing company that has been based at Reading Airport since 1959. It is a modern 50,000 square foot facility on Aviation Road, but it is not part of the BerksIDA project.

The Reading Airport operates its own Wastewater Treatment Plant on Aviation Road behind the airport.

Commercial facilities at the Airport generate a large percentage of the airport's operating revenues and contribute substantially to the capital expenses of the airport.

Government Facilities at the Airport

The Pennsylvania State Police have an aviation facility located on the west apron of the airport.

Airport Key Issues

There are a number of issues involving the airport and future land use in the Bern Township. In October 2022 the Reading Regional Airport Authority published a Strategic Plan to address long-range development at the airport. This plan is available on-line at:

<https://readingairport.org/master-plan>

This Plan's recommendations may involve development, and in some cases expansion, of the airport. Key issues are:

- ◆ Land Use Impacts (due to efforts to expand or encourage commercial, industrial or general aviation land uses)
- ◆ Economic Development (such as opportunities to encourage commercial development in the Township)

FAA Standards and Criteria

- ◆ Aircraft Noise (such as take-off, landing and engine maintenance activities)
- ◆ Environmental and Quality of Life Impacts
- ◆ Vehicle Traffic on Local Roads
- ◆ Airline Service

Airport expansion should occur in a manner which preserves viable residential neighborhoods in the Township. Expansion should not adversely impact traffic patterns or quality of life in the Township.

Prior to receiving Plan Approval, all applicants for Land Development within the airports **Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS)** shall furnish a statement from the FAA and Commonwealth Bureau of Aviation that the project complies with applicable regulations or is exempt from these regulations.

5 Population

NOTE: Numbers in Tables MAY be different

The Decennial Census is conducted every 10 years. Every living person in a municipality is included in the “official count” of the entire US population.

See pages 16 to 18.

The American Community Survey is made more frequently. This survey is only sent to random addresses and it provides information on topics not covered in the Decennial Census such as education, housing, jobs, internet access and transportation.

American Community Survey numbers are considered to be estimates based on samples, since these surveys do not include the entire population of the US.

See page 19.

Table 5.1 Profile of General Population and Housing and Household Types

US Decennial (Federal) Census Data	2010 census	%	2020 census	%
POPULATION OF BERN *	6797	100%	6706	100
Persons under 5	228	3.3	237	3.5
Persons aged 5 to 19	1037	15.2	936	14.0
Persons aged 20 to 64	4095	60.2	3834	57.2
Persons aged 65 and over	1437	21.1	1699	25.3
Male persons	3674	54.0	3476	51.8
Female persons	3123	45.9	3230	48.2
Population per sq. mile	351.3	-	346.6	-
* Numbers above include population in Heim and in Jail				
In Berks Heim & Berks Jail (Group Quarters)	1585	23.3	1248	18.5
POPULATION IN HOUSEHOLD TYPE				
Population in households	5212	76.6	5458	81.3
Householders	2080	30.6	2161	32.2
Population in households under 18 years	1315	19.3	1461	21.7
Urban housing units	959	-	1115	-
Rural housing units	1209	-	1128	-
RACE TOTAL POPULATION P9	6797	100	6706	100
White	6185	90.9	5477	81.6
Black	393	5.8	246	3.6
Hispanic	?	?	762	11.3
Asian	45	0.6	47	0.7
American Indian	6	0.08	5	0.07
Other	168	2.47	169	2.5

Table 5.1 Profile of General Population and Housing and Household Type (continued)

US Decennial (Federal) Census Data	2010 census	%	2020 census	%
HOUSING UNITS	2168	100	2243	100
Housing units occupied	2080	95.9	2163	96.4
Housing units vacant	88	4.	80	3.5
Owner occupied Housing Units	1834	84.5	1905	84.9
Renter occupied units	246	11.3	258	11.5
Owned Free and clear	635	29.2	656	29.2
Owned with a Mortgage or loan	1199	55.3	1249	55.6
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE	2080	100	2163	100
Number of Family households	1565	75.2	1570	72.5
Married couple family	1337	64.2	1285	59.4
Householder living alone	397	19.0	476	22.0
Householder living alone age 65+	214	10.2	278	12.8
Male householder no spouse	93	4.4	315	14.6
Male living alone	166	7.9	227	10.5
Male over 65	48	2.3	109	5.0
Female householder no spouse	135	6.4	414	19.1
Female living alone	231	11.1	249	11.5
Female 65 and older	166	7.9	169	7.8
Households with children under 18	574	27.5	559	25.8
Households with persons over 65	705	33.8	886	40.9

US Census Decennial Data 2010 and 2020

TABLE 5.2 Total Population of Bern Township and Berks County in the last 5 decades

US Census Data from 1980- 2020 Total Population in Bern Township & Berks County

Year	Bern Township			Berks County		
	Persons	Persons Added	% Change	Persons	Persons Added	% Change
1980	5097	—	—	312509	—	—
1990	5748	651	11.2%	336523	24014	7.1%
2000	6758	1010	14.9%	373636	37113	9.9%
2010	6797	39	.5%	411442	37804	9.1%
2020	6706	61	.9%	428849	17407	4.0%

TABLE 5.3 *Population of neighboring municipalities and Berks County*

Municipality	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census
BERN	5097	5748	6758	6797	6706
Centre	2329	3154	3631	4036	4140
Leesport	1258	1825	1805	1918	1954
Lower Heidelberg	1819	2209	4150	5513	6230
Muhlenberg	13031	14127	16305	19628	21915
North Heidelberg	953	1288	1325	1214	1726
Ontelaunee	1408	1359	1217	1646	2598
Reading	78686	78380	81207	88082	95112
Spring	17193	20505	23402	27119	28396
BERKS COUNTY	312509	336523	373636	411442	428849

..... Data Source: U. S. Census Bureau

1850 Census Information

This page is part of the Farm Census Productions of Agriculture in of Bern Township for the year ending June 1, 1850. Census categories were: Acres of Land Improved & Unimproved, Cash Value of Farm, Value of Farm Implements and Machinery, Livestock: Horses, Asses & mules, Milch Cows, Working Oxen, Other Cattle, Sheep, Swine, Value of Livestock; Produce: Wheat, Rye, Indian Corn, Oats.

Categories of crops also mentioned were: Irish potatoes, Orchard products, Market Garden produce, Butter, Hay and Value of Animals Slaughtered

9579

SCHEDULE 4. — Productions of Agriculture in Bern Township **in the**
enumerated by me, on the 12th **day of** August **1850.**

Name of Owner, Agent, or Manager of the Farm.	Acres of Land.		Cash value of Farm.	Value of farming implements and Machinery.	Live Stock, June 1st, 1850.								Produce during the						
	Improved.	Unimproved.			Horses.	Asses and Mules.	Milch Cows.	Working Oxen.	Other Cattle.	Sheep.	Swine.	Value of Live Stock.	Wheat, bushels of.	Rye, bushels of.	Indian Corn, bushels of.	Oats, bushels of.	Rice, lbs. of.	Tobacco, lbs. of.	
																			2
Jonathan Peff	60	3	4000	100	4	4	3	8	300	100	100	200	682						
Reuben Kottenstone	122	8	6000	200	5	6	2	7	260	300	100	200	570						
Samuel Hartman	60	15	7500	150	3	5	4	9	300	100	100	150	200						
William Ford	137	5	6000	175	4	6	4	10	325	300	100	200	570						
George Althouae	121	4	12000	300	4	8	5	13	300	300	200	200	400						
George Zashenias	100	2	9000	300	4	9	3	28	600	300	150	400	300						
Johan Hattbach	110		11000	400	6	6	1	15	570	200	100	200	300						
John Sobies	53	15	5500	100	2	5	1	8	200	200	100	100	200						
Samuel Sobies	50	7	5700	120	5	5		7	200	50	50	60	100						
Larsa Eptor	110	10	10000	200	6	8		12	300	400	100	400	900						
Peter McKinney	25		2500	100	3	2		4	175	40	10	30	40						
Johan H. Hain	130	50	9500	250	5	12	10	20	400	400	400	500	500						
Joseph Gorman	8		850	25		2		7	50			56	25						
Charles Schacht	53	20	4000	100	2	4	4	6	130	30	30	30	10						
Jacob Meiler	15	3	2000	50	1	2	1	5	100	40		20	60						
Peter Eptor	4		870	25		2		7	50			56	25						
William Fromm	28		1000	30	4	4		6	250			40	50						
Samuel Shivers	41	7	3400	110	3	3	1	8	230	30	30	50	100						
Isaac Proff	90 1/2	1 1/2	9200	220	6	7	2	17	350	250	200	300	500						
Anna Reeser	119	6	11000	200	5	10		6	300	300	30	400	800						
Georg Shivers	55	28	2800	150	3	7	2	5	200	200	100	200	267						
Levit Geizer	58	2	2600	100	3	7		4	250	150		200	150						
Adam Althouae	150	50	16000	200	9	12		20	570	200	100	100	600						
22			1701 1/2	235 1/2	1403	80	134	45	4	229	620	4140	2140	1505	7159				
Page 1	2215	232	155490	3960	105	176	173	32	307	10188	5190	5755	5720	7763					
3	2173	611	158105	3180	93	159	119	70	343	7925	4710	3545	3287	6550					
5	2269	445	162375	3605	85	152	45	25	236	6990	3515	3579	4652	5210					
7	960	259	82500	1986	48	104	24	1	199	4620	1250	1352	1579	2157					1257
9318 1/2	176 2/3	728 5/6	16309	412	725	354	132	1314	35945	18835	14175	19515	28835						
Page 9	1703 1/2	235 1/2	11100	3620	55	135	43	4	236	620	4140	2140	4330	767					
7	985	239	36000	2077	48	111	32	1	217	4345	1252	1410	1670	2151					
5	2371	445	162975	3495	83	154	45	25	233	7030	3528	3379	4692	5210					
3	2215	612	161665	3184	93	165	49	70	354	8070	4710	3628	3262	6620					
1	2279	232	191130	4666	106	182	74	32	345	10865	5191	3753	5740	7790					
Total	9536 1/2	1763 1/2	74280	16321	415	757	235	132	1388	37035	18862	14320	19706	28940					

6 Transportation Infrastructure: Roads, Trains & Buses

Land use and transportation are closely linked, so a road system that can accommodate current, as well as projected traffic volumes must be maintained.

The transportation system within the Township is an important influence on the type and location of future development.

The location of residential, commercial and industrial uses is influenced by the function, or classification of roads, their design and their condition.

Table 6.1

Mileage of Roads in Bern Township 2020	
State Roads	17.99 miles
County Roads	4.00 miles
Township Roads	53.82 miles
TOTAL	75.81 miles

State Arterial Roads Highways

- ◆ **US Route 222** This was formerly known as the *Road-to-Nowhere*. It is classified as Principal Arterial Expressway. It runs in a southwest to northeast direction and carries high volume long distance traffic. Rt 222 leads to the Park Lane Corridor, a four-lane limited-access beltway around the City of Reading. Rt 222 also connects to Route 61 in Muhlenberg Township and Route 422 in Spring Township.
- ◆ **State Route 183** Route 183 (Bernville Road), is a Rural Minor Arterial Road. It is a two lane road running in a southeast to northwest direction from the City of Reading to Bernville, Strausstown and beyond, to the northwest portion of Berks County and into Schuylkill County. The 183/222 interchange has been redesigned and reconstructed to handle increased traffic volumes.

Major Collector Roads

- County Welfare Road
- Cross Keys Road (SR-4030)
- West Leesport Road

Minor Collector Roads

- Butter Lane
- Fairview Drive
- Grange Road
- Hilltop Road
- Old Bernville Road
- Palisades Drive
- Reber’s Bridge Road
- Red Bridge Road
- Rickenbach Road
- Upper Van Reed Road
- White Oak Lane

Berks County Road

- County Welfare Road (except between Hilltop & Prison Roads)

Other Bern Township Roads

All other roads are considered Township local roads, except for Private Roads.

PA Rt 183 Detour Routes

A system of detour routes running east to west was created several years ago. **All routes start and end on Route 183.**

Table 6.2

PA Route 183 Detour Routes	
Greenfields Area:	
Red Detour:	Barlow Ave, Cullum Drive, Boeing Ave
Blue Detour:	Oak Grove Road, Dennis Drive, Egle Road
Airport Area:	
Green Detour:	Aviation Road, Leiszcz's Bridge Road, Van Reed Road
Orange Detour:	Van Reed Road, Leiszcz's Bridge Road, Old Bernville Road, West Leesport Road
North Area:	
Blue Detour:	West Leesport Road, County Road, Palisades Road
Red Detour:	West Leesport Road, Old Bernville Road

Bus Service

Berks Area Regional Authority (BARTA)

Bus Route 17 provides service from BARTA Transportation Center, 1700 N. 11 St, Reading to Bern Township. This scheduled bus route runs via Centre and Greenwich St to the Reading Regional Airport, Airport Industrial Park (Rt 183 & McArthur Rd), Penn State St Joseph Hospital, then down County Welfare Road to Berks Heim and the Berks County Jail. Senior Citizens aged 65+ may apply to BARTA to obtain a free travel card.

Intercity Transportation by Bus

Beiber Transportation Group operated bus services to several major metropolitan cities, until it ceased operations in 2019. Klines Bus Service provides transportation to New York City. Other bus services such as Our Bus, Busbud and FlixBus may travel to other cities.

Rail Service

The Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad Company (RBMNR)

This company operates in eight counties in Pennsylvania using 320 miles of track. They handle freight to and from all points in the United States, as well as import and export traffic. They connect to both Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific Class I railroads.

Materials handled by RBMNR include coal, plastics, wine, lumber, paper, grains, chemicals, and sand. In Bern Township trains run along the west side of the Schuylkill River, north of Reading.

Trains run from Reading north into Schuylkill County. This private operator is guaranteed a revenue level through necessary surcharges placed on shippers and partial subsidization by PennDOT.

The rail line running north/south across Cross Keys Rd is freight. There are no rail sidings in the Township.

However the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad Company also offers scenic passenger excursions departing from Outer Station on Rt 61 in Muhlenberg Twp. The train stops at Port Clinton and Tamaqua, then it continues through to Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, which is known as "The Switzerland of America."

Trips by steam locomotive trains are available on select dates.

7 Community Facilities

Community Facilities

Community facilities are the public buildings and structures that house programs and activities essential to Township operations. They provide necessary and important services to Township residents.

Public services include activities ranging from police and fire protection to libraries and recreation programs.

The extent to which facilities and services are available in any one municipality is dependent on many factors including, population density, tax base, the transportation network and regional location.

Bern Township Municipal Authority

BTMA administers public sewers and water in the Township. BTMA was incorporated in June 1994, with its own Articles of Incorporation and it operates independently.

Some parts of the Water District and Faller Lane are connected to the County of Berks sewage treatment plant.

Other sections of the Water District, including the West Shore area, are connected to the Reading Airport's sewage treatment plant.

Two new sewage pumping stations were recently installed in this area to replace old flow meters and improve the accuracy of sewage flow measurements.

Future development near Leesport may be connected to the Leesport Borough Authority sewage treatment plant.

- ◆ It is important to remind system users not to discharge their sump pumps into the municipal sewer system.
- ◆ Users should also be reminded that only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed.
- ◆ Rags, grease, and other non-flushable debris should not be disposed of in the toilet.

Water

Currently, portions of the Township are served by public water supplied by the Bern Township Municipal Authority, the Reading Area Water Authority, Leesport Borough and Western Berks Water Authority.

Bern Township Municipal Authority generally serves the area near the Township building, West Ridge, and County facilities.

An area adjacent to Leesport is served by BTMA sewers, but water in that area is provided directly by the Borough of Leesport.

The Reading Area Water Authority (RAWA) serves West Shore, Greenfields and the Airport area.

The City of Reading's Northwest Reservoir, which consists of two storage tanks with a combined capacity of 25 million gallons, is located southwest of the intersection of Route 222 and Route 183. These tanks provide flow to lines serving the east portion of Bern Township, which includes service to the area west of Route 222 in the vicinity of Leinbachs.

Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan

The Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act, also known as Act 537, requires that all municipalities develop and implement comprehensive official plans to provide for:

- ◆ resolution of existing sewage disposal problems,
- ◆ the future sewage disposal needs of new development
- ◆ the future sewage disposal needs of the municipality.

Bern Township updated its Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan in 2007. It identifies areas currently served by sewers, major sewerage facilities, sewer planning areas, and areas proposed for new sewers. The primary recommendations of this Plan update are:

In the Leesport Area

Sewage will flow to the Leesport Borough Authority (LBA) Sewage Treatment Plant. Sewers will be constructed by developers and subsequently dedicated to the Bern Township Municipal Authority (BTMA).

In the PA Rt 183-US 222 Interchange Area

Sewage will flow to the Berks County Sewage Treatment Plant, this sewage treatment plant has a design capacity of 500,000 gallons per day (gpd). In 2018 the facility proposed construction to rehabilitate existing equipment to accommodate the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant's (WWTP's) design capacity and increase the efficiency of its sludge de-watering system. The proposed actions include a new influent screening, replacement of diffusers, flow control modifications, replacement of the oxidation ditch system equipment, new ultraviolet (UV) disinfection to replace chlorine disinfection, and an upgraded sludge de-watering system. The WWTP's hydraulic and organic treatment capacity will remain unchanged.

In addition, this plant will treat sewage from County facilities including the County Prison, Berks Heim and parts of the area known as the Water District that drains naturally to the Berks County sewage plant.

In the Reading Airport Area

The Airport's plant has been expanded and upgraded to 420,000 gpd. This plant continues to serve present and future airport needs. It will also treat flow from the portion of the Water District that drains naturally to the airport sewage plant, the West Shore area and sewage from the Penn State Health St. Joseph Hospital and Tower Behavioral Health facilities on Rt 183. The Airport's east and west interceptors have been either partially replaced or rehabilitated.

Utilities

Electrical service

Service is provided by Metropolitan Edison (MetEd), a part of FirstEnergy Corp. In order to increase electrical capacity in the Township MetEd's transmission affiliate company, First Energy, is planning to build the Van Reed 69-kV Transmission Line, which will run from an existing transmission line to a new substation in Bern Township.

Cable TV

Comcast Cable Company (sometimes known as Xfinity) has a franchise to service the Township with cable television. Only some of the more densely populated areas of the Township have been provided with this service.

Internet Providers

Comcast-Xfinity, Verizon, Frontier

Cell Phone Service

There are at least two cell towers in the Township.

Educational & Cultural Resources

Schuylkill Valley Schools

Bern Township is part of the Schuylkill Valley School District, but no Schuylkill Valley schools are located within the Township. Bern students attend the Schuylkill Valley Elementary School, the Schuylkill Valley Middle School and the Schuylkill Valley High School in nearby Ontelaunee Township. (There are several historic one-room schoolhouses, that have been transformed into desirable residences.)

Schuylkill Valley School District officials do not contemplate additional school construction in the near future.

Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC)

Founded in 1968, in partnership with its 16 sponsoring Berks County school districts, and other private schools, as well as business and industry, BCTC is designed for high school and adult students who want a technical education that is directly connected to the real world of business and industry. BCTC's west campus is on 23 acres in Bern. There is also another campus in Oley Township.

More than 400 business and industry advisors review and update the school's educational program annually. BCTC provides students with classroom theory and technical applications in labs, as well as work-based experiences. Students can also become licensed, or earn nationally-recognized industry certifications.

Each year approximately 870 secondary and 630 adult students attend BCTC to further their education and acquire knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in a competitive workplace. About 37 career programs are offered.

The campus in Bern contains separate wings that house Welding Technology, Auto Collision Repair Technology, Auto Technology, Diesel Technology and Heavy Equipment Technology. In addition, a Graphic Communications Center, includes Visual Imaging and Design Technology, Photo Imaging, and Graphic Imaging Technology. Also at BCTC is a Commercial Driving License (CDL) Training Facility which allows students to obtain hands-on driving experience. It is located at this campus in Bern Township.

Schuylkill Valley Community Library

Schuylkill Valley Community Library is located on Washington Road in Bern Township. It is part of the Berks County Library system. Patrons borrow books, CDs, DVDs, periodicals and newspaper and there are also several computers available for patrons' use. The building was enlarged in 2021.

The Mid Atlantic Air Museum

Established in 1980 and located at the Reading Regional Airport, the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum reflects this region's unique contribution to aviation history. Historically accurate exhibits chronicle general and military aviation.

Aside from the educational collection and lectures, there may also be flying demonstrations featuring restored aircraft and special events such as the World War II Weekend.

Berks County Facilities

A current list of other Berks County facilities located in Bern and elsewhere is in Appendix Two, page 55. Here is a description of a few of the largest County facilities in Bern.

The Berks Heritage Center

This historical interpretive complex commemorates important eras of our cultural history. It includes the Gruber Wagon Works, (a National Historic Landmark), the C. Howard Hiester Canal Center, Wertz's Covered Bridge, Epler's One-room Schoolhouse, Melcher's Grist Mill, Deppen Cemetery, Bicentennial Eagle Memorial, Police and Veteran's Memorial, Doctor's Grove, the Distlefink and a salad and herb garden. All are located within the Heritage Center off Rt 183.

To support area schools, Epler's Schoolhouse, Gruber Wagon Works and the C. Howard Hiester Canal Center provide a variety of educational programs and facilities, that are used for both school and adult education activities and seminars.

The Berks County Jail

The average daily Berks County Jail population is 775.

Berks Heim County Nursing Home

A new state-of-the-art building was constructed in 2005 with 420 skilled nursing care beds. Berks Heim continues its tradition of offering quality, long-term nursing care, including a secure memory care program and rehabilitation services provided by Advantage Care Rehabilitation. The Heim uses an individualized approach to health care and dedicated staff provide for the social, emotional, and physical well-being of the residents. Berks Heim employs about 497 persons.

The Township of Bern

Building Code

The Building Code of the Township is the Uniform Construction Code (UCC). Permits are required for all construction, except maintenance. Code enforcement is currently contracted to LTL, a consulting company.

Trash Collection

For residents of the Township in the Trash District there is one weekly trash collection. Residents living outside trash collection areas must make their own individual arrangements with private trash collectors.

Recycling

Act 101 of 1986 requires the Township to fully implement a township-wide recycling program. This includes collecting household recyclables from all residences located on public streets. In addition the Township has:

- ◆ A Leaf and Yard Waste program operating in selected areas on scheduled routes.
- ◆ A new Leaf and Yard Waste Drop-Off Center for the use of Bern residents only is located at the County Recycling Facility on Hilltop Road. To use this drop-off site you must first be enrolled at the Township office, then you will be given a fob for access. It is not for commercial use.

Emergency Services in Bern

Emergency Management Coordinator

The Emergency Management Coordinator is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The EMC prepares and maintains the Emergency Operations Plan and coordinates emergency operations with the County.

Fire Companies

There is a mutual aid agreement in effect among all Fire Companies serving the Township.

There have been three volunteer fire companies serving Bern Township: Greenfields Fire Company served the Township from 1953 until it was decertified in 2025 due to lack of volunteers. However, both the Union Fire Company, (located in Leesport Borough) and Mt. Pleasant Fire Company, (located in Penn Township) continue to serve Bern Township. Since April 2, 2025 Bern has been served by Muhlenberg Twp Fire & Rescue, a volunteer and career fire company. Fire hydrants are located in areas of the Township currently served by public water.

Ambulance Services

The Township is served by two volunteer ambulance associations:

- ◆ Northern Berks Emergency Medical Service (EMS) (Schuylkill Valley Division) was established in 1959. It is located at the Union Fire Company in Leesport.
- ◆ Western Berks Ambulance Service was established 1961.

Bern Township Police Department (BTPD)

Bern Township has its own full-time police force located in the Township building. Currently, the force has 13 officers, including the Chief of Police. The department has mutual aid agreements with neighboring municipalities and additional officers are available in a case of emergency. Several recent BTPD projects include:

- ◆ Appointing a full-time Criminal Investigator
- ◆ Establishing BTPD Bicycle Patrol Unit
- ◆ Participating in a SWAT team, the Berks County Emergency Response Team (BCERT)
- ◆ A mobile Special Service Command Post is used for special operations such as truck details, etc.

Bern's Historic and Cultural Resources

In celebration of 250 years of Bern Township history residents on the Historical Committee created this book:

“THE BOOK OF BERN,
A HISTORY OF BERN TOWNSHIP,
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA 1738-1988”

Here is a quotation is from this book:

“The area that became Bern Township, located in what is now south central Berks County, was settled through land grants from Thomas and Richard Penn in 1733 by German farmers and artisans who arrived from upstate New York.

Prominent among the early settlers was John Hiester. At one time the Hiesters owned thousands of acres along the Tulpehocken and built a number of mills. Peter Herbein owned quarries, a distillery and a mill.

In 1738, the residents petitioned for and were granted establishment of a township to be carved out of eastern Tulpehocken Township. The new Bern Township was huge, extending beyond the Blue Mountain.

By 1767, Bern officials realized their township was too large to manage, so they asked that it be divided. The expanse beyond the mountain is now part of Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County, the crest of the mountain serves as the county line.

Bern eventually gave up land for the formation of Upper Bern, Penn, Centre and Tilden townships, as well as the Glenside section of Reading.

Farming and milling were the principle activities of township residents, and when large limestone deposits were found in the eastern portion of Bern, limekilns were established. The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad laid a spur line at Rickenbach Station, which became the shipping center for the finished product, lime.

Below the railway station, John Rickenbach ran a successful canal-boat-building business. Many old locks, lock houses, mills, barns and fine old homes can still be found in Bern Township.”

Land Development and its impact on Historical Properties

Recent amendments to the Township's Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances reflect concern for preservation of remaining historic resources, including requirements for identification, analysis, mitigation of impacts, and protection from neglect.

The National Register of Historic Places

This is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. Berks County has 133 resources listed on the National Register.

The National Register of Historic Places in Bern are:

- ◆ **Rieser-Reiser Grist Mill** is located on Cross Keys Road at the intersection of Grange Road and West Main Street. The Reiser family originally purchased 100 acres of land on Siefert's Run in 1741 for 15 pounds. Philip Rieser built a large stone grist mill in 1784, this was a replacement for his father, Jacob Rieser's, original log mill. Philip's mill was owned and operated by the Rieser family until the 1950s.
- ◆ **Rieser-Shoemaker Farm** is located on Cross Keys Rd.
- ◆ **Wertz's Covered Bridge** is on Red Bridge Road. This is one of the longest one-lane covered bridges in Pennsylvania. It was erected in 1867 using the Burr Arch-Truss construction design. Though it is now closed to vehicles, it stretches 204 feet across the Tulpehocken Creek, and served as a link between Bern and Spring Townships. In 1979, the bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ◆ **Gruber Wagon Works** is at the Berks Heritage Center. This national historic landmark is “the most complete example of an integrated rural manufactory of its kind in the nation.”

Source: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission PHMC

Table 7.1**Berks County List of Historic Properties in Bern Township****Berks County Jail**

The first jail was built in Reading in 1748. This was replaced by another building in 1770, which was used then used as the Berks County Jail until it was converted into a grocery store. Then in 1849 a dramatic building resembling a Norman castle was built on Penn's Common, in City Park in Reading.

In 1928 William Essick donated 712 acres of land in Bern Township to Berks County. A new prison was constructed on what is now County Welfare Rd in 1932, with the original capacity of, at that time 2,145 men and 165 women.

C. Howard Hiester Canal Center

Houses the largest private collection of 19th century canal memorabilia in America. Canal artifacts from the Schuylkill Navigation Company and the Hiester Boatyard include the houseboat "Mildred," which plied the Schuylkill Canal between Reading and Philadelphia, a toll collection booth, and a pilot house from the tugboat "Dolphin."

Epler's Church

Built on land donated by Adam and Peter Epler, this brick structure was erected in 1851. It replaced two log churches which had been originally built at the center of an old settlement. The graveyard at Epler's dates back to 1727. One of the first pipe organs used in Berks was built by Dieffenbach for Epler's. This organ was used for 100 years, and is now housed in the Berks History Museum. This Dieffenbach is thought to be one of the oldest working organs in America.

Epler's One-Room Schoolhouse

Built in 1847, this well-preserved stone structure was one of eleven schoolhouses in Bern. After the closure of all one-room schoolhouses in 1931, this building was used as a dwelling. Faced with its demolition, a group of concerned citizens established a 501(c)3, Friends of Epler's School in 2019. Within a year they raised more than \$20,000 and moved the schoolhouse from its original location on Van Reed Road to the Berks County Heritage Center on Red Bridge Road.

Hain's Tavern/Store

This large structure closed long ago and is currently used as a dwelling.

Joseph Hiester Home

The home and lands of former PA governor Joseph Hiester (1820 -1823) was given to Berks County in 1928 by William W. Essick. As of 1976, this 712 acre tract was the largest single donation of land ever made to Berks County. This mansion, located adjacent to the prison, became the home of the warden of the Berks County Jail in 1930s.

Leinbach's Hotel

Landmark store-hotel opened by Christian Leinbach in 1848 established in 1852 in the store part. As of 1976 the hotel was operating in some form. It is on the E side of West Leesport Rd.

Leinbach's Store

Former Leinbach's Store built in 1867 at which time the store and post office were removed from the hotel building. The store and post office have been closed for a long time. Currently, the structure is used as a dwelling. It is on the W side of West Leesport Rd.

Peacock Railroad Bridge

Constructed in 1854 this 63 foot diameter, 9 arch stone bridge has a 12 foot diameter opening. A smaller version of the bridge is located on Washington Road in the Township.

Rickenbach Family Graveyard

Small burial plot below railroad track level. Rickenbach Station (this building has been removed) was the center of a bustling settlement.

Schuylkill Canal #38

The buildings have been removed but the lock chambers remain nearly buried

Stolzfus Family Graveyard

The burial site of Nicholas Stolzfus. South of this site is the Peacock School, Canal Lock #39 and the former Murphy's Canal Hotel.

Stoudt School House

This one-room stone school house with rounded interior corners is now used as a dwelling.

The County of Berks Planning Department has an interactive Map of Historic Resources in Berks County. Some information can be found on the Berks County Data Hub website at:

<https://opendata.berkspa.gov/>

Table 7.2

Historic Resources Survey of Bern Township by Berks County Conservancy (1986) *

<i>Historic Name</i>	Year	PHMC Key No	Resource Type	Address	Builder
Belleman House (Windy Hill Farm)	1791	89131	residential farm complex	975 Grange	
Berks County Prison	1931	89470	prison	County Welfare Rd	Berks County
Bushong House	1783-1820		gardener's cottage	Old Bernville & Woodward	Bushong
Colonial Hall Acres	1800-1824	89460	house tannery	Parvin Tannery Grange Rd	
County Farm No. One	1800-1824		farm complex		
Dester-Rieser House (Jacob Rieser)	1800-1824	89461	residential farm	1096 Grange	Rieser
Dundore Farm	1856	894659	residential farm complex	Grange Road	Dundore
Epler's Church	1851	89472	Church	W Leesport Rd	Epler
Epler-Hain Farm	1797	89473	residence & farm complex	158 Stinson Rd	Epler
Epler Farm & School	1850	89479	res/farm complex & school	Van Reed Rd	Epler
Epler Johannes Farm	1850	89474	residence & farm	1160 Old Bernville Rd	Epler
Epler-Wistar Tract	1800-1824	89475	log house/residence res Dechant	613 Prison Rd	Epler
Fisher-Hain House & Blacksmith Shop	1790	89471	home and blacksmith shop	W Leesport Rd	
Gruber Wagon Works	1882	101638	industrial, wagon works,	Tulpehocken Creek Park	National Historic Landmark
Hain Tavern	1812		tavern	Old Bernville Rd	Kline
Peter Herbein Homestead	1760-1811	89469	residence & farm complex	1182 Cross Keys Rd	Herbein
Hiester Mansion	1800-1824	89480	Governor's residence	County Welfare Rd	Hiester
Leinbach's Tavern	1848	89477	country hotel & tavern	1079 Old Bernville Rd	Leinbach
Locktender's House	1825	89481	Lock 48 of Union Canal	Van Reed Rd	Union Canal
Moser Homestead	1797	89462	residential farm complex	White Oak Rd	Moser
Maurer-Kintzer House	1820-1849	89467	canal & Schuylkill River	1400 Cross Keys Rd	Maurer
Mc Gray House (Reeser)	1807	89463	Federal house	West Main St	Rieser
Parvin Lightfoot House	1819	89468	canal & Schuylkill River	1504 Cross Keys Rd	Parvin
Jacob Rieser Homestead & Mill	1784	89464	residence and mill complex	1002 Cross Keys Rd	
Daniel Rieser Farm	1800-1824	89466	residence & farm complex	1014 Sillman Lane	
Rieser-Shoemaker Farm	1800	89465	residence & farm complex	1062 Cross Keys Rd	Rieser
Silvis-Bright House	1840-1919	89478	quarry/ restoration by Okie	Cedar Hill Rd	Silvas
Jonathan Stoudt House	1854-1862	115377	model farm of the period	1450 W Leesport Rd	Stoudt
Schell Farm	1780-1820	89130	residential farm complex	Possum Lane	
Mathias Weaver Farm	1764		residence & farm complex	Rt 183	Weaver
Wertz's Covered Red Bridge	1780-1899	101637	bridge	Red Bridge Rd	

* The Berks County Conservancy (BCC) is now known as Berks Nature. The original Historic Resource Survey was conducted by Phoebe Hopkins, formerly Executive Director of BCC. Survey documents are now located in the Henry Janssen Library of the Berks History Center, which was previously known as the Historical Society of Berks County.

Recreation Facilities

In order to fund development of recreation facilities the Township shall encourage developers to pay recreation fees pursuant to the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Where considered appropriate by the Township, recreation facilities will be required of developers.

Trails

There are several trails, or linear parks, located within the Township.

Blue Marsh Trails

- ◆ National Recreation Trail multi-use loop around the lake. People can hike, bike or ride a horse.
- ◆ Skinners Loop and Foxtrot Hiking Trail are connected to this trail.
- ◆ The Squirrel Run Nature Trail is located near the State Hill Boat Ramp.
- ◆ There also is a universally accessible Eyes of the Eagle Sensory Trail.
- ◆ The Great Oak Nature Trail located within the Day Use Area.

Schuylkill River Trail

The Schuylkill River Trail starts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and runs 120 miles to the end in Frackville, Schuylkill County. 81 miles of the trail have been completed.

Along its path, trail users can see evidence of several centuries of industrial development, canal navigation, railroad transportation, quarrying of limestone and iron ore, and the production of iron and steel. This trail will eventually connect to a 750 circuit in the Philadelphia area.

A trail head is located on Washington Road in Bern Township. In 2015 the Bern Township Road crew constructed the Bern to Leesport section of Schuylkill River Trail, in a cooperative effort with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association (SRGA). Work included excavation, soil and erosion control, installation of a stone base and paving the trail entrances. Material was provided by the SRGA.

The Union Canal Bicycle and Walking Trail

This 4.5 mile long, crushed-stone path is fairly flat. It follows the original 1827 canal towpath along the Tulpehocken Creek between the Stonecliffe Recreation Area and Reber's Bridge Road. Horses are prohibited on this trail.

Now designated as a National Recreation Trail, the Union Canal trail provides a link to many Berks County Parks including Stonecliffe Recreation Area, (which was the site of Gring's Limestone Quarry), the Berks Leisure Area, Red Bridge Park, Gring's Mill Recreation Area and the Berks County Heritage Center, which includes Wertz's Covered Bridge, now known as the Red Covered Bridge. This 204 foot bridge was built in 1867. It is the longest surviving single-span covered bridge in Pennsylvania.

- ◆ At Stonecliffe Recreation Area, the Union Canal Trail connects to the **Schuylkill River Trail**
- ◆ At Reber's Bridge Road, a 1.8 mile connector trail, links the Union Canal path to the **Blue Marsh Trail System**.

Tulpehocken Creek Valley Geo Trail

This interpretive trail consists of 20-acres along the scenic Tulpehocken Creek and around Blue Marsh Lake.

It opened on September 29, 2012 and was developed in partnership with the Berks County Parks Department.

Table 7.3

Public & Private Recreational Facilities in Bern

Bern Township Public Recreational Facilities			
Facility Owner	Park Type	Facilities Description	Acres
Airport Desilting Basin	State of PA	Natural Resource, fishing, nature study	41.84
Berks County 4-H Youth Center	County Single Purpose	Community center, horseback riding, horse show rings, support building with meeting rooms, gymnasium and concession stand	29.44
Berks County Heritage Center	County Single Purpose	An historic interpretive area that includes a National Historic Landmark, The Gruber Wagon Works and the C.Howard Hiester Canal Museum, Wertz's Covered Bridge, Melcher's Grist Mill, Deppen Cemetery, Bicentennial Eagle Memorial, Epler's One-room Schoolhouse, Police and Veteran's Memorial, Doctor's Grove, the Distlefink and a salad and herb garden. Union Canal Towpath Trail, a 4.5 mile walking/ jogging/ bicycling trail created following the actual towpath, where the mules walked as they towed the canal boats. It runs from the Blue Marsh Project Area to Stonecliffe Recreation Area near Reading. Supports Berks County Park Department special events biking, hiking, museum	44.64
Berks County Youth Recreational Area	County Sports Complex	Berks County-owned athletic complex. State-of-the-art athletic fields. Fee based used for games only, (no practice times permitted). Fields include: 4 soccer fields (1 lighted) , 1 baseball field, 1 lighted softball field, 1 Little League field and 1 T-ball field. Complex is serviced by a concession stand and rest room building, as well as on-site service buildings for field maintenance, equipment materials. Fields made available through field use fees with equal access for all County groups. Berks has entered into a management agreement with a private athletic organization to schedule events. Schuylkill Valley schools & Youth Groups can use facility at no cost when not in use, handicapped accessible, hiking, soccer, softball	117.40
Bern Desilting Basins	State of PA Natural Resource	Fishing, hiking	275.10
Bern Township Municipal Complex	Municipal Neighborhood	The Township owns and maintains these facilities: 2 tennis pickleball courts, childrens' playground equipment, basketball court, picnic tables and a pavilion. There are 6 acres of Soccer Fields located on West Leesport Rd, which are used without charge by Schuylkill Valley Schools and Youth Groups.	10.0
Blue Marsh Lake	Federal	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facility was built for flood control, water supply, water quality and recreation. Construction was completed in 1979. There are more than 36 miles of trails, 5,000 acres of land, 1,147 acres of water. State-of-the-art recreational facilities include a lake, picnic area, pavilions, volleyball courts, showers, rest rooms, swimming beach, boat launch ramps for sail and motor boats, water skiing, fishing, hunting, hiking trails and a Visitor Center.	6,194 site 1,150 lake
State Gamelands #280	State of PA Natural Resource	Hiking, hunting, nature study	315.34
Epler's Landing	PA Fish & Boat Greenway	PA Fish Commission Facility has a boat ramp area adjoining a grass area. There are no support facilities	72.33
Reading Airport Open Space	Municipal Natural Resource	Fishing, nature study; Located between Aviation Road and the Schuylkill River	8.88
Berks County Fairground	County Single Purpose	Leased from Berks County, used for the Berks County Fair and other special events. There are 2 pole barns, toilet facilities, a racetrack and grandstand.	73.63
Schuylkill River Greenways Trail segment Bern-Leesport	Non-Profit Linear Park	Fishing, hiking, horseback riding, Schuylkill River Trail	21.40

Table 7.3 (continued)

Public & Private Recreation Facilities in Bern

Bern Township Public Recreational Facilities			
Facility Owner	Park Type	Facilities Description	Acres
Union Canal Trail	County	biking, fishing, hiking	144.92
	Greenway		
Schuylkill River Greenway Trail	Non-Profit Linear Park	The Schuylkill River Trail runs from Philadelphia to Pottsville. The section between Reading and Hamburg is currently a 20-mile signed, on-road route that enables cyclists to make their way from Reading, where the trail currently breaks off, to Hamburg, where it can be accessed again from the State St. Trailhead. In Bern the trail runs along the river and Washington, Richenbach, West Leesport, County Welfare Roads then meets Stonecliffe Park Trailhead	17.5 .59 mi
Willow Hollow Public Golf Course	Private	Privately owned 18 hole golf course open to the public	62.8

Table 7.4

Private Recreational Facilities in Bern Township			
Facility Owner	Park Type	Facilities Description	Acres
Berkshire Country Club	Private	Exclusive membership facility with a 18 hole golf course, tennis courts, swimming pool and clubhouse facilities	115.75
Bern Church Grove	Non-Profit Private Park	Picnic pavilions; Little League field, baseball youth, picnic area	8.18
Bern Lions Club	Non-Profit Private Park	Privately owned facilities include: baseball, softball field, T-ball backstop, concession stand, and swimming pool. Serves Bern Township Athletic Association youth league programs.	26.28
Epler's Church Recreation Area	Non-Profit Private Park	BB, Basketball, Tot lot Est. 1737, the church grounds have a grass area with backstop, basketball court and stand-alone playground equipment. There is a maze in the grounds.	4.16
Grand Slam USA	Private Park	Private	3.24
Leesport Historical Society	Non-Profit Private Park	Museum	0.25
Orchard Hill	Non-Profit Private Park	Boating, fishing	31.13
Mid Atlantic Air Museum	Non-Profit Private Park	Museum	10.55
Willow Hollow Golf Course	Private Private Park	Golf, picnic area	119.77
Public and Private Recreational Facilities Total			2,350.90

Source: Berks County Greenway Park and Recreation Plan adopted 2022

Berks County Recreational Areas in or near Bern Township

Berks County owns 1,411 acres of recreational facilities including:

Tulpehocken Creek Valley Park

This 280.6 acre park is located along a 5-mile stretch of Tulpehocken Creek, in the neighboring municipalities of Bern, Spring and Wyomissing. It contains both historic and recreational facilities including:

The Berks County Heritage Center near Rt 183 at 1102 Red Bridge Rd, in Bern Township

This is a historical interpretive complex commemorating important eras of our cultural history. Highlights include:

The Gruber Wagon Works, a National Historic Landmark, the C. Howard Hiester Canal Center, Wertz's Red Covered Bridge, Melcher's Grist Mill, Deppen Cemetery, Reeser Farm House Epler's One Room School House Other attractions located within the Heritage Center complex include the Bicentennial Eagle Memorial, Police and Veteran's Memorial, Doctor's Grove, the Distlefink and a salad and herb garden.

Union Canal Bicycle and Walking Trail located in Bern Township and the City of Reading

This National Recreation Trail follows the old canal path along the Tulpehocken Creek. The trail averages 6 to 8 feet in width and the 4.5 mile crushed stone path is considered handicapped accessible.

Berks Leisure Area 1901 Tulpehocken Rd., Wyomissing PA 19610

This 7.1 acre facility includes a picnic pavillion, picnic areas, pickleball court, shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits, Footbridge provides access to the Union Canal Bicycle and Walking Trail on the opposite side of Tulpehocken Creek. This bridge marks the location of a mule bridge that was used in conjunction with the operation of the Union Canal. Crossing over the bridge from the Berks Leisure Area, the remains of lift Lock No. 51 of the Union Canal can be found.

Gring's Mill Recreation Area 2083 Tulpehocken Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610

The historic buildings at Gring's Mill Recreation Area house the Berks County Parks and Recreation Department's administration and maintenance offices. An information center, group meeting facilities, snack bar, and rest rooms are located in the adjoining barn. Recreation facilities include six tennis courts, a softball field, an eighteen-station exercise course, one sand volleyball court, and a ranch-theme children's play area. A game court area features volleyball and shuffleboard courts, quoits, and horseshoe pits.

Red Bridge Recreation Area 2141 Tulpehocken Rd., Wyomissing PA 19610

The Red Bridge, originally known as Wertz's Bridge, at 220 feet is the longest single span covered bridge in Pennsylvania. Built in 1867 and one of five remaining in Berks County, the covered bridge allows pedestrians to pass over the Tulpehocken Creek to the Union Canal Bicycle and Walking Trail and the Berks County Heritage Center. The Red Bridge Recreation Area, located just south of Wertz's Bridge on Tulpehocken Road, consists of a picnic pavilion and badminton court.

Stonecliffe Recreation Area and Action Park Rt 183 and Columbia Street, Reading

A new attraction at Stonecliffe Recreation Area, is an Action Park for skaters and bikers. Skates include in-line skates, skateboards and scooters. Bikes include BMX-style bikes only. Hours -8:00 a.m.-Sunset (Weather and Conditions permitting) Action Park includes Quarter Pipes that range in height from 3-5', Three-sided Pyramid with Curved Rectangular Grind Rail, Double Pump Hump, Grind Box with angled edge, Skate Table (picnic table) with Kicker Ramp, Kinked Rectangular Grind Rail, Straight Round Grind Rail, Kinked Round Grind Rail, 5' Hip and Spine, and 3 Ledges- 2 with 2" round coping, 1 with 2" square coping.

Table 7.5

Facilities at Berks County Recreational Areas

	Berks Heritage Center	Berks Leisure Area	Gring's Mill Rec Area	Leesport Lockhouse	Red Bridge Rec Area	Stonecliffe Rec Area	Youth Rec Facility
ACRES	50	7.5	33	1	7	15	82.6
Action Park						X	
Amphitheater			X				
Badminton		X			X		
Baseball/ Softball Fields			X				X
Basketball							
Cabins							
Electricity (with reservation)	X (barn)	X	X (barn)	X	X	X	X
Exercise Course			X				
Fishing Dock							
Gazebos							
Grills		X	X		X	X	
Horseshoes		X	X		X		
Lodge/Barn	X		X				
Meeting Area	X		X	X			
Parking Area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pavilions		X			X		
Play Equipment			X		X	X	X
Picnic Tables	X	X	X		X	X	X
Pool							
Quoits		X	X		X		
Restrooms	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sand Volleyball			X				
Shuffleboard		X	X				
Soccer Fields						X	X
Tennis			X				
Volleyball Court			X			X	
Walking Trail	X	X	X		X		

8

Ecological Management

Ecological management must be included as a component of all future land use development in the Township. There is a clear and urgent need to preserve and protect floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and prime agricultural soils (USDA Class I, II and III) and other natural resources of the Township.

The Township is bordered by the Schuylkill River on one side and the Tulpehocken Creek on the other, so it is imperative to consider how water courses within the Township relate to land use. The Township's objectives are:

- ◆ Protect water resources within the Township as well as the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater. Of special concern are:
 - The Schuylkill River
 - Tulpehocken Creek
 and tributaries such as Siefert Run and Plum Creek
- ◆ Protect the watershed and wellheads of community water supplies. The Township is participating in the Western Berks Water Authority's Source Water Protection Committee, which was formed in 2012 by order of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- ◆ Protect and improve water quality in the Township, with special emphasis on the water courses listed above.
- ◆ Protect ground water in the Township, especially in limestone areas where the potential for pollution exists. The Township is participating in the Berks County MS4 Steering Committee which educates the public on the importance of storm water management.
- ◆ Manage and protect woodlands within the Township.
- ◆ Protect the steep slopes in the Township.
- ◆ Protect and conserve natural areas in the Township, such as areas adjacent to Blue Marsh Lake.
- ◆ Protect and preserve agricultural areas for agricultural use. The Township will identify the methods to use to protect and preserve agricultural areas.

Relation to Future Land Use Plan

Stream corridors within the Township are designated for protection in order to:

- ◆ buffer water courses,
- ◆ protect ground water discharge and recharge areas
- ◆ protect the quantity and quality of surface and ground-water.

Vulnerable wooded areas, steep slopes, as well as critical ecosystems, should be protected to maintain an adequate ecosystem.

Net-Out Provisions

The Township's Zoning Ordinance contains provisions requiring developers to identify :

- ◆ critical natural resources on their tracts
- ◆ eliminate areas containing those resources when determining the permissible density of development of a tract
- ◆ protecting those resources

Identified Important Natural Areas

The Berks County Natural Heritage Inventory Update 2014 identifies the Schuylkill River as an important natural resource. This river is a Pennsylvania Scenic River and it is recommended to be protected from encroachments, increased pollution, and excessive sedimentation.

The *Orchard Hill* tract, located along West Leesport Road, has also been identified as an important natural area. It contains the Schuylkill River Cliffs, which are of geological interest, and a variety of habitats. The area is managed by Berks Nature.

There are several private conservation easements located

throughout the Township. Private landowners have taken steps to preserve and protect farmland, woodland, wildlife habitat and wetlands. Many of these properties are monitored by Berks Nature, a land trust.

Berks Nature (was formerly known as Berks County Conservancy) is a 501(c)(3) conservation organization and land trust that has been serving Berks County since 1974. In 2015, Berks County Conservancy (BCC) became known as Berks Nature. Their mission is to preserve Berks County’s unique cultural and environmental heritage for the benefit of future generations. In order to fulfill that mission, they focus on preserving agricultural land and open space; protecting the quality of our streams and ground water; preserving historic landmarks and scenic landscapes; and by promoting those values which contribute to a sustainable future for our community. Additional information about conservation can be found at the *Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer* at: <https://conservationexplorer.dcnr.pa.gov/content/map>.

Agricultural Preservation

Conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency, which permanently limits uses of land in order to protect its agricultural or conservation values. An easement remains with the property deed in perpetuity. Landowners may continue to own and use their land, or sell it, or pass it on to heirs

An easement can be used to protect prime agricultural soils, and cultural and historic resources in the Township. The two organizations in Berks County that control easements are: Berks Nature and the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

The Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, is a government agency appointed by the Berks County Commissioners that has been protecting farmland through the purchase of agricultural conservation easements since 1989. This board administers the agricultural land preservation program which permanently preserves large clusters of viable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conserva-

tion easements (ACE). An ACE limits the use of the land for any purpose besides productive agriculture.

Table 8.1

Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board		
Agricultural Conservation Easements		
Location	Year	Acres
Berks County	2003	34,219.3
Berks County	2012	64,954.2 (640 farms preserved) Berks Co. is Number 3 in the nation.
Berks County	2023	79,047 (828 farms preserved) Berks Co. is still Number 3 in U.S.A.
Bern Township	2003	62.9
Bern Township	2012	62.9 plus 42.5 overlapping in Penn & Centre Twps

Table 8.2

Berks Nature, (formerly known as Berks County Conservancy)		
Conservation Easements		
Location	Year	Acres
Berks County	2003	3,535
	2012	6,769
Bern Township	2003	115
	2012	151
	2024	182.83

What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust (like Berks Nature) or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows you to continue to own and use your land, or to sell it, or pass it on to your heirs.

9 Transportation Plan

The goal of a transportation plan is to provide for a safe and efficient transportation system, which will enhance vehicular travel within the Township, given the limits of the existing system and natural and fiscal constraints.

The objectives for transportation are as follows:

- ◆ Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- ◆ Preserve and improve the capacity of existing roads within the Township as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT, as applicable.
- ◆ Monitor impacts on roadway capacity from new development and require developers to address projected increased traffic volumes.
- ◆ Promote coordinated access management programs along road corridors within the Township, to minimize the number of access points to the road network.
- ◆ Provide maintenance of the existing road network as needed.
- ◆ Recognizing that a sizable amount of traffic in the Township is generated outside Bern, work with State, County and other municipal officials to address concerns.
- ◆ Address existing deficiencies and safety concerns in the transportation system with landowners, PennDOT and developers as appropriate.
- ◆ Investigate ways of relieving congestion on roads in the Township, especially Route 183, such as: increased use of public transportation, traffic management policies along Route 183 and relationships with employers in the corridor.

Future Functional Classification of Roads

There are no recommendations in this plan update for the re-classification of any Township road.

Road Improvements

A number of improvements have been made to Route 183 since the last plan update.

- ◆ The Route 183 and Route 222 interchange was redesigned and constructed to address traffic volumes and back ups on Route 222 for those traveling northbound on Route 183.
- ◆ Aviation Road, which is not a Township road, was widened and relocated in certain areas. This was done in association with the Berks County Industrial Development Authority (BerksIDA) on land development behind the airport. As part of this project, the intersection of Aviation Road and Route 183 was widened and turn lanes were added to improve access to Aviation Road.
- ◆ Improved access along Route 183, especially in the area of Leinbachs. Develop parallel access roads in this area to handle additional growth.
- ◆ Require road improvements from developers, like adding traffic calming devices, such as the circle, or roundabout, in the area of the Tower Behavioral Health site.
- ◆ The Palisades Road Bridge Scour Repair Project was completed.
- ◆ Washington Road was improved to reduce flooding using a Dirt, Gravel and Low-Vehicle Maintenance grant. This was an award-winning project for the Township.

Cooperation with Municipalities

While some road improvements will be handled by the Township, cooperation with other municipalities will be important, particularly along Route 183.

Cooperation between the Township and the City of Reading and Penn Township to address the impacts of Route 183 is encouraged. Access management will be a key element.

Access Management

Access management problems can result in congestion and safety concerns. Typically, problems occur on roads serving high volumes, higher speed traffic, and abutting roads with more intense trip generating uses, such as Route 183.

An example of an access management problem can be found where commercial development occurs on a road and the mobility of traffic is adversely affected by an increase in the number of driveways from adjacent land to the road on which the land fronts. **As the number of driveways increases, the safety and efficiency of the road can decrease.**

In future, access management will be a serious concern on roads in the Township. To promote access management, appropriate roadway access regulations should be added to the Township's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

To help alleviate this problem an Overlay District restricting driveway access to Rt 183 has been created starting at Egle Drive and ending north of Fairview Drive. Access management is a concern on all roads, but particularly Route 183. The Township should consider working with PennDOT to develop an access management plan for Route 183.

Major elements in an Access Management Plan are:

- ◆ Design standards for driveways
- ◆ Reduce the number of entrances to roads
- ◆ Traffic Impact Analysis where development is proposed
- ◆ Left turn lanes and right turn lanes constructed at road and driveway intersections
- ◆ Shared access to properties
- ◆ Acceleration and deceleration lanes
- ◆ Signalization of high volume roadways

Transportation Development Districts

The Transportation Partnership Act (Act 47 of 1985, as amended) allows municipalities to create Transportation Development Districts to assist in the financing of transportation facilities and services. The Township has already identified a district in the past, but it should evaluate other areas in the Township where a district would be appropriate.

Traffic Calming

As development occurs in the Township, and traffic volumes increase, there can be increased traffic flow on residential streets. It is hoped that some of the improvements proposed will direct traffic to roads on the periphery of residential areas. If problems develop, the purpose of traffic calming is to manage movement through an area in a way that is compatible with the land usage in the vicinity of the road.

Some methods of traffic calming are:

- ◆ Speed reduction
- ◆ Street design
- ◆ Installation of signs
- ◆ Comprehensive transportation planning

Optimization of Traffic Signalization along Route 183

In order to increase system capacity and reduce intersection delays, traffic signal timing along Route 183 should be kept current.

Consideration should be given to implementing a closed loop system to enhance the operation of coordinated signalized intersections along the Route 183 corridor.

A future project in Bern Twp is widening PA 183 to four lanes, with a central turning lane and traffic signals (where required) to improve safety, ease congestion and support growth areas between US Route 222 and West Leesport Road.

Traffic Counts

The most recent PennDOT traffic counts along Routes 183 and 222 shows a considerable increase in traffic calculated as **Average Daily Trips (ADT)**.

Table 9.1 Average Daily Trips

Traffic Counts	2012	2023
PA Rt 183, South of US Rt 222	11,883	12,987
PA Rt 183, North of US Rt 222	24,324	28,002
US Rt 222, Northbound, S of PA Rt 183	32,277	36,385
US Rt 222, Northbound, N of PA Rt 183	-	30,325
US Rt 222, Southbound, N of PA Rt 183	26,810	26,919
US Rt 222, Southbound, S of PA Rt 183	-	35,329

Source: <https://gis.pennndot.gov/TIRe>

The Township has seen a number of road improvements occur in the past several years. At the intersection of Rt 183 and West Leesport Road, a left turn lane was added to the southbound lane of Rt 183.

As development of this corridor continues, the Township will experience:

- ◆ considerable congestion
- ◆ conflicts between local and through traffic
- ◆ an increase in accidents as development of this corridor continues

For these reasons, it is important for the Township to be sure that future commercial uses have limited vehicular access to the corridor, and are restricted to designated areas, preferably from parallel access roads.

The Township's first roundabout was added recently to accommodate additional traffic flow on Rt 183. Roundabouts can carry about 30% more vehicles than signalized intersections during peak times. National studies have shown that they result in a safer method of integrating traffic with a 90% reduction in fatalities, as well as a reduction in injuries and crashes.

Developer's Responsibilities

Developers shall be required to perform transportation impact studies and address the impacts of their developments. Developers will also be **required** to improve frontage roads, manage access, and construct internal roads to limit driveways to roads within the Township. **The Township has adopted a Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance and developers in identified districts are required to pay traffic impact fees.**

In developing the traffic impact fee ordinance, the Township prepared a "*Land Use Assumption Report-Roadway Sufficiency Analysis Report*" with recommended improvements and a Transportation Capital Improvements Plan with proposed road improvements.

Transportation Capital Improvements

Transportation Capital Improvements Plan (TCIP) was updated in February 2020. The original TCIP was adopted by the Board of Supervisors as part of the traffic impact fee Ordinance in September 2006.

The 2020 TCIP identifies 8 intersections that potentially will be upgraded, depending on whether or not potential development is realized. Also, road widening on Rt 183 from County Welfare Road to US 222 South Bound ramps may be required if projected development occurs.

The original 2006 TCIP identifies two Transportation Service Area (TSA) boundaries within the township. The 2020 TCIP also calculates new required traffic impact fees for each TSA.

The recommended new fees were \$2,213 for TSA 1 and \$2,812 for TSA 2. Both fees apply to new PM peak hour trip ends, exclusive of pass-by trip.

Mass Transit

With congestion along Route 183 a major concern, the Township should take incremental actions to encourage the use of the Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority (BARTA) bus system.

An objective will be to maintain and then expand service. Elements in trying to expand service will be well-located bus stops, attractive and safe stops, with connections to the transit hub in Reading and Passenger Rail Services, if implemented.

BARTA also operates a shared ride (paratransit) transportation service called **BARTA Special Services (SS)**, which is a door-to-door transportation service (for senior citizens or persons with disabilities), who are unable to use BARTA's fixed-route bus system.

BARTA Special Services operates as a shared-ride transportation service where trips are grouped together, according to their travel time and destination location. Isolated elderly persons in rural areas will benefit from this system.

Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update 2030

The Berks County Comprehensive Plan Update named US Rt 222 as the most congested road in the county with the highest daily traffic count. An earlier version of this plan identified the intersections and/or roadway segments that should be considered for improvement by the Township, based upon growth projections through 2025.

10 Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Plan is guided by the existing land use categories. These serve as a guide on which to base regulatory controls, such as municipal zoning, maps and ordinances. The pattern of development that has emerged over the past 10 years is expected to continue along a similar path. An area of concern is infrastructure limitations.

Future zoning amendments adopted by the Township may establish new zoning boundaries, permit or restrict land uses or reconsider the permitted density of development. In the land use categories listed below, the types of land use changes recommended in each category is indicated.

The philosophy of the proposed Future Land Use Plan is to depart as little as possible from the pattern of development that has emerged during the past several decades, while accommodating expected future growth.

This current plan is similar to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan in that it retains the Township's existing land use categories for planning purposes. These categories are largely consistent with existing land uses and with zoning districts established under the Bern Township Zoning Ordinance. They are intended to function as a baseline, or guide, for recommending review, adjustment, or an addition of zoning districts. For the purpose of planning land use, the Township has been divided into various categories and overlay districts.

All questions about the zoning map or zoning districts should be directed to the Bern Township Zoning Officer.

Land Use Categories

Rural Residential RR

This category reflects existing areas which have been developed for low-density residential development in the Township and areas where such low density development could occur. Single family detached homes would be permitted on lots ranging from one and one-half acres, if on-site sewer and water were used, to one-half acre if public sewer and water were used.

Suburban Residential SR

These areas are intended for residential development for single family detached dwellings at a density of about one dwelling unit per acre without both public sewer and water and one-third acre lots with both public sewer and water.

Urban Residential UR

These areas are intended for higher density residential development for single family, two family and multiple family developments and mobile home parks. With on-site sewer and water, the density of development will be about one dwelling unit per acre. With public sewer and water, higher densities of development will be permitted.

Urban Residential Moderate-Density URMD

This area is intended for single family detached dwellings served with public sewer and water facilities, at a density of up to four dwelling units per acre.

Limited Industrial LI

These uses are intended for light industrial and office uses.

General Industrial GI

These areas are intended for general or heavier industrial uses, as well as light industrial and office uses, provided there are no adverse impacts by the uses.

Office Research OR

These areas are designated to provide locations for office and research development in the future.

Shopping Center SC

These uses reflect a higher intensity of neighborhood and highway commercial uses, developed as an integrated shopping center.

Highway Commercial HC

These areas reflect existing and potential commercial concentrations along Route 183. In addition to serving the day-to-day needs of nearby residents, these areas accommodate highway users, regional-oriented uses, and those uses best located along major roads.

Neighborhood Commercial NC

These areas are intended for commercial uses which serve the day-to-day needs of surrounding residential areas and will not adversely impact these neighborhoods.

Agricultural /Business AB

The Township encourages the continuation of existing agricultural operations and agricultural-related uses; conservation uses are permitted, as well as single-family detached dwellings on minimum two acre lots.

Institutional /Recreational IR

This includes County sites, recreational areas, and green ways along the Schuylkill River and Tulpehocken Creek.

Airport Special Use ASU

These facilities support airport operations.

Planned Office/ Business POB

The purpose of the Planned Office/ Business District is to provide opportunities for modern office buildings and other compatible businesses that will serve businesses as well as the need for medical, financial, legal, architectural and other professional services.

Allowed uses in the district include business, professional or government office; research, testing or experimental laboratories; medical center; veterinary clinic; grocery store / supermarket; and hotel / conference center.

Uses allowed by Conditional Use include day care center; interior service and convenience uses; retail sales of goods; banks / savings and loans / finance companies; restaurants; personal or household service establishments; business services and pharmacy.

Light Commercial LC

The purpose of the Light Commercial District is to permit a mix of low-impact professional office and retail uses to provide a diverse mix of goods and services to residents surrounded by a residential setting within the municipality and region, achieving an improved balance of commercial development within the municipality, and utilizing suitable land for low-impact commercial development in an efficient, functional, and aesthetic manner, while minimizing impacts on adjacent residential areas. Development controls will ensure sign control, attractive landscaping, desirable setbacks, traffic control and compatibility with nearby residential uses.

Overlay Districts in Bern Township

Route 183 Overlay District

This Overlay District extends the length of Route 183 from Greyrock Road in the south to the terminus of a Highway Commercial district in the north, as shown on the Bern Township Zoning Map. This includes all the parcels that have frontage on Route 183.

Special Events Overlay District

The purpose of this Overlay District is to provide for the orderly and efficient conducting of community activities on large parcels of land within the Institutional/Recreation Zoning District, it being recognized that such activities foster and create a sense of community by providing an opportunity for large community gatherings and events.

Wind Energy Systems Overlay District

The purpose of this overlay district is to provide for the safe and orderly construction and location of the wind energy systems within the Township of Bern.

Solar Electric Energy Systems Overlay District

The purpose of this district is to provide for the safe and orderly construction and location of solar electric energy systems within the Township of Bern. This pertains to small-scale solar electric energy systems installed for personal use in residential commercial and institutional properties. It does not pertain to large-scale systems, including those installed primarily to generate a profit.

Berks & Bern

The Bern Township Future Land Use Plan and the County Future Land Use Plan are generally consistent.

The Future Land Use Plan in the Berks County Comprehensive Plan generally shows remaining undeveloped land in the Township south of Route 183 and east of Route 222 as Future Growth Area. Remaining undeveloped land north of Rt 183 and east of Rt 222 is a Designated Growth Area. West of Route 222 and south of Route 183, remaining undeveloped land outside State and Federal land holdings or County recreation land is Designated Growth Area or Future Growth Area.

Undeveloped land immediately west of Route 222 and north of Route 183 is a Future Growth Area. West Ridge land is Designated Growth Area. Land immediately adja-

cent to the Borough of Leesport is Future Growth Area or Designated Growth Area. The remainder of the Township, except for flood plains, existing developed areas, and a small area of Agricultural Preservation in the northwest tip of the Township, is Rural Conservation.

Adjoining Municipalities

Adjoining land in Penn Township is zoned Rural Preservation or Low Density Residential, so there are no major inconsistencies with the Agriculture Business and Rural Residential designations in Bern Township.

In Centre Township, the western contiguous portion is zoned Agricultural Preservation. The area adjoining Leesport Borough is zoned Medium Density Residential, and the area in-between is zoned Low Density Residential. Land in Bern Township is designated Rural Residential, Agricultural Business, and Suburban Residential. Buffering could be appropriate within a residential subdivision in Bern Township adjoining agricultural preservation land in Centre Township.

Adjoining land in North Heidelberg and Lower Heidelberg Townships is included in the Blue Marsh Recreation Area and presents no conflict.

Adjoining land in Ontelaunee Township is buffered by the Schuylkill River and the Institutional/Recreational area along the River. Adjoining land in Spring Township is buffered by the Tulpehocken Creek and the Institutional/Recreational land along the Creek. Adjoining land in Leesport Borough is zoned Low Density Residential and does not present a conflict.

Adjoining land in the City of Reading is designated R-3 Residential. The City land abuts the Berkshire Country Club and residential development in Greenfields.

Land in Muhlenberg Township which adjoins Bern Township is buffered by the Schuylkill River and Institutional/Recreational land along the River.

Future Land Use Considerations

- ◆ As development occurs in the Township, particular concern for resource preservation and rural conservation will be critical.
- ◆ An on-going sensitivity to natural resources should be encouraged.

- ◆ Development should be concerned with geologic stability, soils suitability, groundwater and stream flows.
- ◆ Groundwater resources should be protected.
- ◆ Floodplains and wet soils should be protected from encroachment.
- ◆ Retention of natural vegetation should be encouraged to control erosion, control storm water, provide animal habitat and provide visual amenities.
- ◆ Ensuring that infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer systems can support future growth is essential. Planning for schools, health care and other community services is also important.

Estimated Future Land Use in Bern

(based on Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 update)

Developed land	5,255 acres
Rural Conservation	4,037 acres
Environmental Hazards	1,176 acres
Permanent Open Space & Recreation	1,381 acres
Future Growth	581 acres
Designated Growth	242 acres
Agricultural Preservation	138 acres

Table 10.1 Future Recommendations, Actions to Take & responsible Parties

Future Recommendations	Actions to Take	Responsible Party
Consider Outdoor Lighting Standards to control light pollution and protect the night sky	Revise section 184-149 to read as follows: “When the property on which any activity is conducted is illuminated at night, such illumination shall be so designed and located that the light sources are shielded from adjoining properties and streets and in such a manner as not to allow light to be emitted skyward. No direct beams of light shall be directed toward adjacent properties or roads. No lighting shall be utilized in such a manner to produce a noxious glare or light intensity greater than one footcandle beyond the lot boundaries (0.6 footcandle in the case of a property zoned for residential use).”	Board of Supervisors
Enact appropriate Forestry Regulations	Research an example from other municipalities	Township Manager
Encourage expansion of Agricultural Security areas.	Contact local farmers and schedule a meeting with Berks County Conservation District	Ag Preservation Board
Ensure Municipal Act 537 plans are coordinated with this plan, particularly the Future Land Use Plan	Review Act 537 Plan and Chapter 10 of this Plan	Planning Commission
Investigate watershed planning and wellhead protection opportunities available under the Growing Greener initiative and other programs	Review the Growing Greener Program	Board of Supervisors subcommittee, Berks Nature, Berks County Conservation District
Maintain a dialog with the school district regarding development activities, school facility’s needs, and location of school facilities	Keep School District informed whenever a residential development has more than 5 houses proposed.	Township Manager,
Monitor zoning along municipal boundaries	Annual phone call to surrounding municipalities to gage impact of new development near boundaries. Share proposed Development Plans when it is near the boundary of an adjacent municipality.	Township Manager, Planning Commission
Develop guidelines for development in areas of transmission pipelines	Investigate typical restrictions imposed by owners of the pipeline	Township Manager, Planning Commission
Consider the following for the Route 183 corridor: Evaluate the effectiveness of the Township Traffic Impact Fee Program.	In February 2020 the Transportation Capital Improvement Plan (TCIP) was updated. Consider another update in 2030.	TCIP Committee
Work with PennDOT to keep traffic signal timing current in the Township. Evaluate the need for a closed loop signalization system.	Required by Township Ordinance 154-24.A.10	Township Manager, PennDOT
Require developer-financed road improvements where necessary and appropriate.	Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission to review development plans and determine any required improvements to roads.	Board of Supervisors, Township Engineer, Planning Commission
Monitor the need for a Transportation Development District.	Update Traffic Study as required.	TCIP Committee
Monitor the need for traffic calming techniques and implement them as necessary.	Review problem areas with Bern Twp Police Dept and Township engineer and develop mitigation measures.	Township Engineer/Bern Twp Police Dept.

Future Recommendations	Actions to Take	Responsible Party
Establish a program to implement the proposed intersection improvements, proposed road improvements, and improvements. Place improvements on the 12- year road program of PennDOT	TCIP Committee, PennDOT,	TCIP Committee, PennDOT,
Shoulders along roads, where appropriate, should be constructed, widened or improved as necessary. Developers should improve shoulders along their properties	Required by Township Ordinance 154-24.A.12	Township Engineer,
Obtain enhanced infrastructure rights-of-way and corridors for future road and other improvements, particularly during the planning process and highway occupancy permit process for developments.	Required by Township Ordinance 154-24	Township Engineer
Schedule a meeting to update the Bern Township Recreation Plan	Develop a plan and a budget. Coordinate reviews of planned recreational facilities with Planning Commission and Rec Board	Recreation Board Planning Commission Board of Supervisors
Create a budget for Recreation Plan	Develop a budget	Board of Supervisors
Encourage Agriculture & Open Space	Added a page to Twp website: LAND PRESERVATION This includes: Link to County Clean & Green info Link to Information on Twp Ag Security Link to Berks Nature, a land trust, using private conservation easements for land protection	Board of Supervisors Twp Ag Security Advisory Committee

11 2013 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations & Changes

Table 11.1 Recommendations made in previous Comprehensive Plans that have been done, or may be considered sometime in the future

Recommendations made in 2013 Comprehensive Plan:	Actions Taken since then:
1. Update the Zoning Map to reflect Future Land Use Plan and adjust district boundaries to reflect Future Land Use Plan	Zoning Map updated in 2019.
2. Consider adopting an Official Map, designating all existing and proposed public facilities and streets.	Composite Map published in 2013
3. Consider the merits of updating Zoning Ordinance to further protect natural resources using appropriate development techniques and regulations.	Ordinance includes 154-30 Natural features, utility easements, erosion and sediment controls, mobile home parks, community facilities, solid waste management, landscaping, required studies.
4. Net out natural resources.	Ordinance includes 184-175.B.1 “The applicant shall calculate the “Protected Area” of the parcel...”
5. Explore Cluster Housing.	Ordinance includes 184-40 Cluster Zoning (URMD only) We should consider adding this to other Zoning Districts.
6. Establish maximum overall density.	Ordinance includes 184-1.A “To promote, protect and facilitate any or all of the following: the public health, safety, morals and the general welfare; coordinated and practical community development and proper density of population...”
7. Establish a minimum substantial open area requirement	Ordinance includes minimum required open area in all zoning districts
8. Evaluate Steep Slope Protection Provisions 9. Control and limit development and disturbances on steep slopes. 10. Consider larger lot sizes for steep slopes. 11. Discourage development on slopes >25%.	Ordinance includes 154-30.I.(2)(g)[2][b] Prevent the construction of structures and other site improvements on areas with slopes exceeding 25%
12. Develop Woodland Protection Provisions. Limit clearance for development. 13. Encourage tree protection and replacement during development.	Ordinance includes 154-30.A Natural features. Wherever possible, natural features such as large trees, rock outcroppings, wooded areas and natural watercourses and bodies of water shall be preserved

Recommendations made in 2013 Comprehensive Plan:	Actions Taken since then:
<p>14. Evaluate Wetlands, Wetland Margin and Hydric Soil Protection Provisions</p> <p>15. Require wetland delineation in hydric soil areas.</p> <p>16. Restrict on-site sewage disposal.</p>	<p>Ordinance includes 154-30.I.(2).(e)[3] The impact of the proposed use on the site’s soils, slopes, woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, ...</p>
<p>17. Maintain Floodplain Controls and</p> <p>18. Riparian Buffer Zoning</p> <p>19. Restrict development and impervious surfaces.</p> <p>20. Require riparian (vegetative) buffers to moderate water temperatures, protect wildlife habitats, control sedimentation, and reduce pollution.</p>	<p>Ordinance includes 184-171 Floodplain controls and riparian buffer zones</p>
<p>21. Encourage conservation easements, donations, and dedications.</p> <p>22. Encourage use of best management practices for development, storm water management, agriculture</p>	<p>Ordinance includes 158-48.A.18 A transfer to a conservancy which possesses a tax exempt status pursuant to § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 [68A Stat. 3, 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3)] and which has as its primary purpose preservation of land for historic, recreational, scenic, agricultural or open space opportunities.</p>
<p>23. Consider expanded Historic protection.</p>	<p>Ordinance includes 184-177.3 Historic Resource Impact Study and mitigation</p>
<p>24. Prepare a Capital Improvements Program for street improvements, recreation and other community facilities, and other improvements recommended by this Plan</p>	<p>Bern Township’s Road Department inspects, evaluates and ranks all Township roads annually, then creates a schedule of repairs.</p>
<p>25. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Township traffic impact fee program’</p>	<p>Transportation Capital Improvement Plan was done in 2020.</p>
<p>26. Require developer-financed road improvements where necessary and appropriate</p>	<p>Ordinance includes 154-24.A.10 Streets within the subdivision or land development and adjacent roads which will receive traffic from and distribute traffic to the subdivision or land development shall be adequate or made adequate by the developer, in construction, grade, width and capacity to accommodate traffic generated by the subdivision or land development.</p>
<p>27. Consider the possibility of marginal access roads/service roads</p>	<p>Ordinance includes 184-159.A ... except for necessary accessways or access roads which supply entrance to and egress from such parking, loading or storage areas. Direct driveway access shall be restricted, and every effort should be directed toward obtaining driveway access via a parallel access road or adjoining minor or collector streets.</p>

Appendix One

Bern Township's Accomplishments since the previous Comprehensive Plan

Year		
2015	ADMINISTRATION	Created a comprehensive property database for all township properties. This was completed during the year – including water / sewer system types, zoning information, recycling and trash district information, acreage, rental information, street light information.
	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Adopted the Industrial Park Zoning Amendment
	PLANNING COMMISSION	Planning Commission met 7 times during the year. The Commission recommended approval of: Holiday Village 2, Carriage House, Greth Office Building, Stonehedge Farm 3 and three minor property annexation plans.
	STORMWATER	Developed a comprehensive stormwater management program and manual, including an Illicit Discharge, Detection and Elimination written plan
2016	PLANNING COMMISSION	Planning Commission met 11 times during the year. The Commission recommended approval of Stor4U, Berks County Solid Waste, two agricultural security applications and six residential subdivisions. The commission informally reviewed plans for the BCIDA, Try Mac Towers, Bulk Chemicals, Wawa Food market and the Hartman Farm development.
	ROADS	The road crew dismantled and rebuilt the Mill Road culvert during the year. SSM Group designed the project and secured our General Permit from DEP.
	STORMWATER	Staff attended DEP's 2 full day stormwater training sessions on future requirements / regulations
	STORMWATER	Assisted the township engineer in preparing the township's Progress Report to DEP regarding the township's efforts on stormwater programming over the last two years. Effort included writing narratives, listing dates of actions / activities, listing training activities, attaching stormwater program documents, newsletter information with respect to stormwater, copy of our stormwater ordinance, citizen complaint form, educational material handouts, MS4 Steering Committee Agreement Resolution and mapping of our facilities.

Year		
2016	STORMWATER	Improved and expanded our comprehensive stormwater management program and manual including amending narratives, adding training information, updating the Public Education and Outreach Plan and the Public Involvement and Participation Plan with new narratives and matrixes of accomplishments, revising our Operation and Maintenance Plan based on learning experiences and develop detailed mapping (including on electronic media) of outfalls, private facilities and other features as required by DEP.
	STORMWATER	Re-created the stormwater ordinance package to reflect the ordinance amendment changes early in 2016.
	STORMWATER	Participated in the review and comment on development of educational material being created by DEP consultants for municipal training packages.
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	The Zoning Hearing Board met three times and rendered decisions on a cell tower application (Try Mac) on Van Reed Road, parking lot paving relief request on Old Bernville Road (Carriage House) and a self-storage facility (Stor4U) on Bernville Road.
2017	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Approve the Town Center Overlay District and Developer's Agreement.
	PLANNING COMMISSION	Planning Commission met 11 times during the year (no meeting in March). The commission recommended approval of Bulk Chemicals, Wawa Food Market and three minor residential subdivisions. The commission also reviewed plans for Acadia (Tower) Healthcare, Holiday Village and the BCIDA Berks Park 183.
	RECREATION-Trails	Transferred the Washington Road Schuylkill River Trail walking path land inside the Borough of Leesport to Leesport Borough.
	RECREATION-Trails	Held meetings to discuss, and develop a preliminary design for the proposed walking trail behind the Reading Airport. Walked the proposed trail location with the BCIDA and Schuylkill River Greenway Association. Marked the proposed trail route in the field and photographed it.
	STORMWATER	Staff assisted the township engineer to complete the stormwater pollution reduction plan and application to DEP for our next five year MS4 Permit.
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	The Zoning Hearing Board met to render decisions on steep slope relief request for a Bernville Road development plan (Acadia, Tower Health), a cell tower application (AT&T Mobility) on Possum Lane, parking lot count relief request on Stinson Drive (Bulk Chemical), signage relief request for the self-storage facility on Bernville Road (Stor4U) and property access and dimensional relief request for a Food Market on Bernville Road (Wawa).

Year		
2018	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Approve the Transportation Impact Study Committee Resolution.
		Approve the Special Event Ordinance Amendment.
		Approve the Berks County Municipal Hazard Mitigation Plan Resolution.
	PLANNING COMMISSION	Planning Commission met 11 times during the year (no meeting in March). The commission recommended approval of Berks Agricultural Building Vestibule, 1362 Fairview Drive Annexation Plan, Reading (Tower) Behavioral Health Land Development Plan, Reading Behavioral Health Annexation Plan, BCIDA Phase 1 Preliminary Plan, Ontelaunee Orchard / Wagner Annexation Plan and the Classic Harley Preliminary Plan. The commission also reviewed the Reitnouer Preliminary Plan for a 400,000 square foot trailer manufacturing facility on Stinson Drive.
	PLANNING COMMISSION	The Greater Berks Development Fund purchased lands at Stinson Drive / Van Reed Road / Leiszcz's Bridge Road to develop a small industrial park.
	STORMWATER	Approve the Berks County MS4 Steering Committee Intergovernmental Cooperation Ordinance and Agreement.
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	The Zoning Hearing Board met to render decisions on a residential driveway, a commercial parking lot and the appeal of the Zoning Officer's determination that the Reading (Tower) Behavioral Health facility use meets the zoning of the land.
2019	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Approved Light Commercial Zoning District Ordinance.
		Approved re-zoning of the northern Bern area near Leesport.
		Approved the 2015 Property Maintenance Ordinance.
		Approved the 2015 International Fire Code Ordinance
	PLANNING COMMISSION	Planning Commission met 10 times during the year (no meeting in March). The commission recommended approval of the BCTC Welding Shop, Berks Park 183 Phase 1 Final Plan, Berks Heim Subdivision, U.G.I. Training Facility, Keller Subdivision, DeJesus Subdivision and Mengel Subdivision. The commission also reviewed the Reitnouer Preliminary Plan, G&T Industries Preliminary Plan, Peacock Kennels Sketch Plan, Perfetto Subdivision, Grandview Estates Subdivision Sketch Plan and Carriage House Sketch Plan. The Planning Commission served as the Traffic Study Committee during the year.
	POWER TRANSMISSION LINE	The green route was proposed to run through the township: Starting at White Oak Lane, crossing Route 183, running next to Hilltop Road, to County Road, to Upper Van Reed Road, crossing route 183 to Reading Airport property, to Leiszcz's Bridge Road crossing Route 222.
	ROADS	Accept Robby Drive and Belfair Drive into the township street system.
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	The Zoning Hearing Board met to render decisions on signage for Eagle Metals, a residential garage addition and a recovery group home on Hilltop Road.

Year		
2020	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Approved the Transportation Capital Improvement Plan.
	PLANNING COMMISSION	<p>Planning Commission met 9 times during the year. The commission recommended approval of the Rohrer Sketch Plan for Record, final land development plans for G&T Industries, Berks Heim Boiler addition, Berks Park Building E and the Grandview Estates preliminary plan. The commission also reviewed Sketch Plans for Misco Products, Suncap and the Burkey Development projects. The Reitnouer land development plan was withdrawn.</p> <p>The planning commission served as the traffic study committee during the year and recommended approval of the updated Transportation Capital Improvement Plan.</p>
	ROADS	Approved the vacation of Van Reed Road between Leisz's Bridge Road and the Schuylkill River. Submitted the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Maintenance Grant after completing an in-house traffic study and receiving the easement agreement from the farmer. Began updating the ten year road plan, measure streets and updated the Road Inventory Book to include additional information.
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	For the first time since 2005, the Zoning Hearing Board didn't meet during the year.
2021	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Approved the Keystone Communities Enterprise Zone.
		Approved the SunCap Conditional Use application.
		Approved Traffic Regulation Ordinance: – no parking / standing / stopping on Leisz's Bridge Road; no U-Turn on Route 183; no un-registered / unlicensed vehicles parked on public streets
		Updated the plan submission requirements for subdivision and land development projects.
		Approved new commercial parking requirements for commercial properties.
	PLANNING COMMISSION	<p>Planning Commission met 12 times during the year. The commission recommended approval of subdivision plans for Grandview Estates, Eaton Farms, Eberly, Mengel and Wentzel-Schaeffer, and land development plans for Willow Hollow and SunCap. The commission also reviewed land development plans for Misco Products, Ammeraal Beltech, two Penske projects, Berks Park Building H, Logistics 222 / Northpoint and the Reitnouer residential subdivision. The Logistics 222 / Northpoint development plan was withdrawn during the year.</p> <p>The planning commission discussed the commercial parking requirements revisions. Development projects during the year included the completion of the improvement of Aviation Road and the UGI facility. Projects started during the year include G&T Industries and the next phase of Holiday Village.</p>
	POWER TRANSMISSION LINE	Met Ed provided an update on their proposed transmission line project. The project is currently on hold due to difficulties with the Reading Airport / FAA. The FAA originally ruled that the transmission line could run above grade in front of the runway at Route 222. The FAA has now changed that ruling requiring the transmission line to be buried.

Year			
2021	ROADS	Bern was awarded the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Maintenance Grant for Washington Road. Grant award is \$39,175.00 for the \$94,263.00 valued project.	
		Vacated Wayne Street in Greenfields	
		Began the process to vacate the stoned portion of Cedar Hill Drive.	
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	The Zoning Hearing Board met to consider variance applications for the Misco Project and the Burkey Warehouse project.	
2022	AIRPORT	The Reading Airport investigated the possibility of re-establishing commercial airline services.	
		Approved Solar Electric Energy System Ordinance amendment.	
		Approved Solid Waste Ordinance amendment to allow earlier starting time of 5:00 AM	
		Approved Berks Park 183 Building H Conditional Use application.	
		Approved Town Center Overlay District amendment.	
		Approved the SunCap Conditional Use application	
		Approved submission of administration grant for Yard Waste Site upgrades.	
		Approved Solar Ordinance	
		PLANNING COMMISSION	Planning Commission met 12 times during the year. The planning commission recommended approval of the Town Center Overlay District amendment. Planning commission recommended approval of the Misco Final Land Development plan, the Stinson Drive 2 lot Subdivision, the Leisz's Bridge 2 lot Subdivision, the UGI Data Center Land Development plan, the Haupt Annexation Plan, the Herebein Annexation plan, the Wentzel Schaeffer Subdivision plan, the Wagner Subdivision plan, the BCIDA Building H Land Development plan, the Penske Subdivision at Hartman Farm and a waiver from land development for a proposed pavilion at the county recreation center. The G&T and SunCap projects were constructed during 2022. The construction of Holiday Village continues. The planning commission reviewed other projects including: Lords and Ladies Salon and the Penske Collision and Repair Center.
			POWER TRANSMISSION LINE
	RECREATION-Trails	Received a copy of the Schuylkill River Greenway Association Trail Feasibility study for our area and found that their trail is proposed to enter Bern Township at the previous Leisz's Bridge location and continues along our shore to Leesport Borough.	
	ROADS	Request PennDOT study of Route 183 / West Leesport Road intersection for justification of southbound Route 183 left turn arrow.	
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	The Zoning Hearing Board met to consider variance applications for the Reitnauer Riparian Buffer area, Lords and Ladies Salon and Medical Spa, a strength and conditioning fitness training facility, Short Term Rental property, a residential pool installation and a residential garage addition.	

Year		
2023	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Approved the updated Stormwater Ordinance.
		Approved the Hazard Vulnerability Assessment & Mitigation Plan Resolution.
2023	PLANNING COMMISSION	<p>Planning Commission met 9 times during the year. The planning commission recommended approvals for the Bern Township Municipal Building land development plan, the S&L Mechanical land development plan, the Lords and Ladies land development plan, the Penske / Hartman Farm District Service Facility land development plan, the Andrew Roberts sketch plan for record and the Salamone sketch plan for record.</p> <p>The planning commission reviewed the Garage Strength Sports land development plan, the Stinson Drive Partners subdivision plans, the Penske Collision and Repair land development plans and the C&B Warehouse land development plans.</p> <p>The planning commission recommended a waiver from land development requirement for the Berkshire Country Club patio pergola. The planning commission did not recommend a waiver from land development requirement for the Berkshire Country Club kitchen addition and golf learning center projects.</p> <p>G&T Industries and the Federal Express distribution facilities completed and occupied their buildings in 2023.</p> <p>The UGI Data Center addition, the BCIDA Building “H” Warehouse and the S&L Mechanical projects were under construction in 2023. The construction of Holiday Village continues and the Enersys solar panel project started in 2023.</p>
	RECREATION-Trails	Schuylkill River Greenway Association unveils their plans for the proposed walking trail through Bern and Muhlenberg Townships. The trail is proposed to enter Bern Township at either the previous Leiscz’s Bridge or Stoudt’s Ferry Bridge locations and continuing on our shore to Leesport Borough. Epler Schoolhouse grand re-opening took place after move to Berks Heritage Center and recent renovations.
	ROADS	Received the Low Volume Grant Project of the year for Washington Road. Berks County Conservation District selects our Washington Road project as the Low Volume Road Project of the year. Approve the installation of a left turn arrow for southbound 183 traffic turning on to West Leesport Road. Completely rebuild and overlay Penn Bern Road with the assistance of Penn and Center Townships. Left turn arrow for southbound 183 traffic turning on to West Leesport Road installed. Over the last 16 years, the township has resurfaced 24 ¼ miles of roadway with asphalt encompassing 52 roads.
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	Met to consider variance applications for the Enersys Solar Panels, a residential sunroom addition and a garage without a principal structure.

Year		
2024	ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & AMENDMENTS	Approved the Rural Residential Conditional Use Ordinance.
		Approved the Organic Yard Waste Collection Facility Ordinance and fee resolution.
	PLANNING COMMISSION	<p>Planning Commission met 9 times during the year. They recommended approvals for the Stevens Acres sketch plan, Stinson Drive Partners subdivision plan, Grandview Lot One revision to plan of record, Suncap landscape plan revision to plan of record, Reading Behavioral (Tower) Health land development plan, C&B development preliminary land development plan, Reitnouer subdivision plan, Lookout subdivision plan and the Noll Pallet & Lumber sketch plan for record.</p> <p>And a sketch plan submission for a 284,000 square foot warehouse at West Leesport Road and the new Faller Lane location, and a submission for a warehouse on Reading Airport land behind Dubbles Motors.</p> <p>They recommended approval of the Rural Residential Conditional Use zoning amendment, and reviewed the C&B warehouse land development plan and the Penske Truck Collision & Repair land development plan. The planning commission recommended a waiver from land development requirement for the Malsnee Tile storage building.</p> <p>The UGI data center addition, the BCIDA Building “H” Warehouse and the S&L Mechanical projects were completed in 2024. The Reading Behavioral Health addition was under construction in 2024.</p> <p>The construction of Holiday Village continues and the Enersys solar panel project continued in 2024. The township and PennDOT received a scoping application for the development on the Route 183 Hartman Farm property. Discussion of traffic flow and options for site entrance locations were reviewed solar panel project started in 2023.</p> <p>Facilitate the building addition and the remodeling of the township building. The final cost of the general, HVAC, plumbing and electrical contracts equals \$1,154,652.58.</p>
	POWER TRANSMISSION LINE	Effort continues on the 69 KVA transmission line project. First Energy is still negotiating easements with two property owners. Completion of the line and substation is forecasted for late 2026.
	ROADS	<p>Met with PennDOT representatives to discuss the proposed widening of Route 183 to four lanes plus a center turning lane between the 183 / 222 interchange and West Leesport Road. The 183 southbound turning lane for northbound 222 will also be lengthened. Construction is expected to begin in 2029.</p> <p>Over the past 16 years, the township has hired contractors to resurface 25 ¼ miles of roadway with asphalt encompassing 55 roads.</p>
	STORMWATER	The township approved a stormwater agreement with the Greater Berks Development Fund for the installation of stormwater facilities on an undeveloped lot by Route 222 and Leiszcz’s Bridge Road.
	ZONING HEARING BOARD	Met to consider a variance application for the Prison Road Short Term Rental.

Year		
2024	FUTURE ROADWORKS	<p>Local road projects will impact Bern Township</p> <p>The West Shore Bypass is scheduled to be rebuilt. The project involves the section of roadway from Warren Street to just past the Morgantown Expressway. This section of road will be increased to three lanes in both directions. The bridge will be reconstructed to allow the Morgantown Expressway exit lane to be longer.</p> <p>The Buttonwood Street bridge must be removed and rebuilt over the new roadway to allow space for the three lanes. There will be a divergent diamond layout for the Penn Street bridge with traffic lights. The Lancaster Avenue bridge and exits will be completely reconstructed to create right hand exits in all locations. There will only be one traffic light on Lancaster Avenue instead of the two that are there now. The Bingaman Street bridge will be demolished and rebuilt – it will be closed 18 months to two years to allow this work. They are now in final design, they will have a public meeting in the fall of 2025, right-of-way acquisition and permit submission will happen in spring of 2026, current let date for contractors is July 2027, construction will start in early 2028 and will take 10 years to complete.</p>

Appendix Two

DISTRICT	ZONING DISTRICTS	Number of ACRES in 2025
AB	Agricultural Business	3121.08
ASU	Airport Special Use	444.18
GI	General Industrial	93.22
HC	Highway Commercial	85.94
HC	Highway Commercial	30.81
HC	Highway Commercial	0.32
IR	Institutional/Recreational	477.18
IR	Institutional/Recreational	2311.42
IR	Institutional/Recreational	0.00
LC	Light Commercial	15.56
LI	Limited Industrial	117.39
LI	Limited Industrial	31.17
LI	Limited Industrial	54.03
LI	Limited Industrial	504.72
LI	Limited Industrial	44.65
NC	Neighborhood Commercial	36.54
NC	Neighborhood Commercial	10.50
NC	Neighborhood Commercial	7.79
OR	Office Research	269.03
OR	Office Research	134.96
OR	Office Research	1.81
POB	Planned Office/Business	102.75
RR	Rural Residential	252.28
RR	Rural Residential	1352.28
RR	Rural Residential	797.38
RR	Rural Residential	716.67
RR	Rural Residential	448.59
SC	Shopping Center	8.11
SR	Suburban Residential	355.98
SR	Suburban Residential	13.17
SR	Suburban Residential	301.13
SR	Suburban Residential	180.27
SR	Suburban Residential	112.07
SR	Suburban Residential	180.05
UR	Urban Residential	23.35
UR	Urban Residential	128.73
URMD	Urban Residential Moderate-Density	46.01

Locations of Berks County Departments and Agencies

North Campus

IN BERN: TOWNSHIP

These facilities are located in Bern Township:

Agricultural Center - 1238 County Welfare Rd., Leesport, PA 19533

Berks County Youth Shelter & Library Systems - 1040 Berks Road, Leesport, PA 19533

Berks Heim (County Home) - 1011 Berks Rd., Leesport, PA 19533

Berks Recreation Center - 1206 County Welfare Rd., Leesport, PA 19533

Coroner - 1047 MacArthur Rd., Suite 200, Reading, PA 19605

Dept of Emergency Services (DirectLink Building) - 2561 Bernville Rd., Reading, PA 19605

Heritage Center - 1102 Red Bridge Rd., Reading, PA 19605

Jail - 1287 County Welfare Rd., Leesport, PA 19533

Parks & Recreation Department Facilities

Recycling Center - 1316 Hill Top Rd., Leesport, PA 19533

Youth Recreation Facility - 1098 County Welfare Rd., Leesport, PA 19533

IN READING OR WYOMISSING:

Red Bridge Recreation Area - 2141 Tulpehocken Rd., Wyomissing, PA 19610

Grings Mill Recreation Area - 2083 Tulpehocken Rd., Wyomissing, PA 19610

Berks Leisure Area/Sheeler House - 1901 Tulpehocken Rd., Wyomissing, PA 19610

Stonecliffe Recreation Area - 1200 Monroe St., Reading PA 19601

Veterans Affairs - 20 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610

South Campus

400 E. Wyomissing Avenue, Mohnton, PA 19540

Archives

Area Agency on Aging

Assessment

Economic Development

Industrial Development Authority

Mapping

Planning Commission

Redevelopment Authority

Workforce Development Board