

**Potter County Comprehensive Plan –
Preserving and Enhancing the Quality of Life for Current and Future Residents of Potter County**

Chapter 7 – Existing Land Use

Introduction

Economic influences, development trends, cultural attitudes, and physical features of the land area are several factors that combine to influence community land use patterns. The Existing Land Use (ELU) survey provides important information regarding the general development pattern and character that exists in the county. Information collected in the existing land use inventory will serve as an important component of the county’s multi-faceted inventory of resources, and, together with other studies, will form the basis for recommendations regarding future land use strategies.

Existing land use patterns in the county were identified through land use codes utilized by the Potter County Tax Assessment Office, as mapped by the Tioga County Geographic Information Department. This was deemed to be the most accurate method of identifying existing land use patterns county-wide. As of October 18, 2005, the Tioga County coded 16,534 parcels with a total area of 684,246 acres. Upon completion of the coding process, this chapter will need to be updated. Unfortunately, information from the county’s current plan was too outdated to assist with the analysis. When that plan was prepared, the county did not have access to land use codes in digital format from the county tax assessment office; therefore, general assumptions were made regarding existing land use conditions in the county.

Land Use Classifications and Statistics

Table 7-1 shows the different land use classification utilized in preparing the existing land use map and analysis. In total, the Tioga County identified twenty-seven different land use categories. The rural nature of the county is evident by reviewing the percentage of acreage column in Table 7-1. Areas of the county classified as deciduous forests represent 83.4% of the county’s total land area coded to date. The deciduous forest land classification totals 570,923 acres and consists of 5,007 parcels. As noted by Tioga County, the majority of the remaining parcels not coded are areas of deciduous forest. Cropland and Pasture land represents the next largest land area totaling 81,885 acres or 11.9% of the county’s total land area. Based on the amount of cropland and pasture land in the county, agriculture activity plays an important economic role. The vast area of deciduous forest can be attributed to the large area of public lands, steep slopes, and forested stream valleys. Not surprisingly, the largest area of developed land consists of single family residential dwellings. The majority of the dwellings are located in the five developed boroughs in the county; however, single family dwellings are scattered throughout the entire county in small villages and hamlets as can be seen on Map 7-1, the Existing Land Use Map.

**Table 7-1
Existing Land Use
2005**

Land Use	Acreage	Parcel Sum of Land use	Percentage of Acreage
Single Family/Residential	21,591	8,591	3.155%
Multi Family/Residential	7	5	0.001%
Mobile Home Park	212	15	0.031%
Commercial	713	449	0.104%
Junk/Salvage Yard	24	5	0.004%
Warehouses and Temporary Storage	6	4	0.001%
Industrial	181	16	0.026%
Parking Lots	36	48	0.005%
Utilities	208	6	0.030%
Institutional/Governmental	306	35	0.045%
Cemetery	22	3	0.003%
Hospital	90	4	0.013%
Recreational	126	24	0.018%
Cropland/ Pasture	81,885	1,863	11.967%
Idle Fields	2,066	127	0.302%
Orchards/Nurseries/Horticulture	189	6	0.028%
Farmsteads and Farm Related Buildings	448	19	0.065%
Successional Grassland/Shrub/Brush	2,815	156	0.411%
Deciduous Forest	570,923	5,007	83.438%
Evergreen Forest	71	3	0.010%
Clear-cut	277	4	0.040%
Streams/Waterways/Canals	830	62	0.121%
Manmade Reservoirs and Impoundments	413	31	0.060%
Wetlands	128	3	0.019%
River Banks	118	26	0.017%
Mining/ Extraction	351	11	0.051%
Unknown	210	16	0.031%
Total	684,246	16,534	100%

Source: Tioga County GIS Department

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Development of Regional Significance

Section 301.a.(7) (ii) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires a county comprehensive plan to identify development of regional and significance impact. Potter County is a rural county with a 2002 population of 18,217; therefore, development of regional significance is limited and can be primarily found in the boroughs of the county, specifically Coudersport, Galeton, Austin, Shinglehouse, and Ulysses Boroughs.

This plan recognizes the following as development of regional significance:

Coudersport Borough – County seat, county’s hub of cultural and human resources, historic downtown, small shops, home of Adelphia Communications, and a Keystone Opportunity Zone. The borough is fully served with public utilities and is wired for high speed internet. Route 6 bisects the borough, which contributes to a high volume of direct and pass-through trips to the borough. Cole Memorial Hospital is located in the borough along with other medical offices which contribute to a high quality of life for all ages. The borough is also the employment center of the county with many small to large businesses located within it.

Austin, Shinglehouse, Ulysses, and Galeton Borough Boroughs – These boroughs serve the immediate geographic region in which they are located. Galeton Borough is home to a Keystone Opportunity zone which is an employment center in the county. They are home to educational facilities that include local schools and libraries, and local emergency services.

Susquehannock State Forest, State Game Lands, and State Parks – These areas are not developed in terms of brick and mortar; however, in terms of regional significance they play a very important role in Potter County. The Community Facilities and tourism chapters identify the important role these facilities have in the county, specifically with tourism and economic development. The future of Potter County will not lie with large brick and mortar projects; it will be in tourism and these facilities attract people just not from the immediate geographic region, but from all parts of Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

Route 6 Corridor – US Route 6 is the major corridor in Potter County. It traverses the county and bisects Galeton Borough and Coudersport Borough. The importance of the Route 6 corridor in Potter County has been discussed throughout this plan; however, from a development perspective the uses and services located along Route 6 should be identified as development of regional significance. There are four significant development areas along Route 6 which offer a variety of services to residents and non-residents. These areas include: Galeton Borough Region; the West Pike, Telescope, and Walton Region; the Denton Hill Region; and the Coudersport Borough Region.