

Scranton-Abingtons Planning Association (SAPA) Comprehensive Plan

Features of the SAPA Land Use Plan

This document describes, in a summary version, the SAPA Land Use Plan Map.

The SAPA communities have identified their interest in working together for a positive future. This includes a commitment to pursue strategies that will support their existing centers (boroughs & city), to minimize urban development in the rural and agricultural lands, and to promote conservation of natural resources.

The bold-type headings, following, provide a brief description of the Land Use Plan, giving a snapshot of what is meant by the different land use categories shown on the Plan. Each of the designations included will be fully described in the sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

Before moving to the land use designations, it is important to remember that the Draft Land Use Plan includes several conservation components throughout the SAPA area, consisting of the following elements:

- * Recreational lands, including playing fields, parks, public and civic space and golf courses;
- * Environmental resource protection, storm water management, natural areas retention and conservation, including surface water, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and woodlands;
- * Networks of trails;
- * Agricultural and natural land preservation;
- * Deed-restricted permanently undeveloped lands secured as part of land development approvals;
- * Bicycle/Pedestrian network linking the different parts of the SAPA area and providing non-motorized access to open space and recreational resources as well as to schools, shopping, and cultural facilities;
- * Buffers between incompatible land uses where feasible.

City Center incorporates adaptive reuse of existing buildings and "infill" of new buildings into the existing block structure. The emphasis is on mixed-use activities, with ground floor retail shops, restaurants, and services, and offices and/or residences above. The City Center provides a high level of transit service. Pedestrian accessibility, safety and amenities are emphasized, through provisions for traffic calming, landscaping, lighting, and appropriate street furniture. Development and redevelopment occurs with sensitivity to historic resources. Civic squares, parks, and urban green space are part of the use mix. The City Center designation applies to downtown Scranton.

Borough Centers are community focal points and hubs of mixed use activity that support residential, retail and office uses. Borough Centers contain traditional building forms and uses and new and infill development compatible with the existing character of each community. Centers incorporate pedestrian amenities and accessibility to public transportation. Civic open space, pocket parks, and green links to adjacent areas are also present. Borough centers are focused areas within Clarks Green, Clarks Summit, Dalton, and Dunmore.

Village Centers are relatively small in scale and include village-scale housing and limited non-residential uses focused primarily on services for people who live in the village and nearby. Examples of village centers include the Red Barn Village area in Newton Township and Waverly in Abington Township.

Urban Neighborhoods are primarily residential areas that may also include some supporting retail, office, and institutional uses. These areas have maintained and improved existing housing stock and a high rate of owner-occupied dwellings. In cases where demolition is required to promote public health and safety, infill development occurs that is compatible with the context. Urban greening is part of these neighborhoods and include parks, green linear connectors, and urban gardens, the latter emphasized in areas where demolition has occurred. Examples of urban neighborhoods are found in Dunmore and Scranton.

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Features of the Land Use Plan, continued

Mixed Use districts include moderate- to high-density residential development, retail, and office uses, often structured as ground floor retail shops restaurants and services, with offices or residences above. These districts also offer live-work structures, attractive to artisans for the co-location of residences and studios and to other individuals and families as well. These areas include adaptively-reused buildings and new infill structures, all completed with sensitivity toward historic resources and fitting within the existing context. Examples of mixed use districts are found surrounding the City Center in Scranton.

Mixed Use Corridors are linear activity concentrations and include a mix of moderate-to- high-density residential development with retail and office uses. These corridors are a destination for adjacent residential neighborhoods as well as for a broader area. Activities along these corridors are compatible with adjacent areas, although the corridor itself may be more intensely developed than neighborhoods alongside. Pedestrian access both to and from the surrounding areas and along the corridors is a hallmark, as is public transportation along the corridor. Examples in Scranton include portions of North Main Avenue and Providence Road, South Main Avenue, Pittston Avenue and Cedar Avenue. Examples in the Abingtons include portions of the 6/11 corridor both north and south of Clarks Summit.

Employment Centers are concentrations of commercial, industrial and some office development, with flex space to accommodate low-impact light industrial development, assembly, and high technology ventures. These centers are highly accessible to the transportation network and include areas where low intensity developments have been succeeded by higher-intensity structures of multiple stories that may include structured parking. Examples of Employment Centers are found along the Keyser Avenue Corridor in Scranton and along interchanges with I-81 in both Scranton and Dunmore.

Agriculture, Open Space & Limited, Very Low Density Residential areas are for the practice of agriculture and forestry and to be maintained as an open landscape. Limited, very low density residential development may occur in the form of farmettes that present a low impact on the natural or agricultural landscape.

Resource Conservation exists throughout the SAPA area and overlays other designations. The overlay provides the basis for policies that protect natural features. The resource conservation overlay is comprised of the following elements:

- * Rural wooded areas;
- * 150-foot buffer along all surface water features (ponds, lakes, waterways), and wetlands;
- * Floodplains;
- * Steep slopes.

Residential - Low Density development is characterized by pre-2008 single-family detached dwelling units located on large lots. Post-2008 development is highly clustered, with disturbance of land for dwelling construction relatively limited (sometimes referred to as "conservation development") and a high rate of permanent open space and natural resource protection occurring in conjunction with land development. Residential - Low Density development is found in some of the more rural locations in the SAPA area.

Residential - Low/Moderate Density areas are located around the Borough Centers in the Abingtons and extending beyond into the surrounding townships. These areas are strongly residential in character and offer road, sidewalk, and trail connections to their local centers and green corridor links to larger open space areas. New development is compatible with existing neighborhoods.

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