



Organization of Chapter

Agriculture Industry	page 7-3
Revitalization	page 7-6
Business Retention and Expansion	page 7-9
Economic Infrastructure	page 7-13
Workforce Development	page 7-15
Sustainability	page 7-20

Introduction and Goal and Objectives

The Oxford Region Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan was developed during very uncertain economic times. It is important to focus on the strengthening and expansion of the Region’s economic assets. They are many. A strong agricultural industry base, a revitalizing urban center, a major industrial employer in Herr’s Foods, a strategic location along the U.S. Route 1 corridor, and convenient access to freight rail service, all work together to support employment opportunities for the resident workforce and to attract new businesses to the Region in accordance with the following goal:

Recognize the importance of agriculture as an industry, support Oxford Borough as the traditional commercial center of the Region, and encourage targeted commercial and industrial development, redevelopment, and the advancement of a skilled and educated workforce.

Plan Objectives

This Plan Chapter focuses on how best to achieve the following Objectives:

- 7-A** Support existing and proposed farming operations, by connecting farmers with technical assistance and funding resources, to sustain agriculture as a viable, long term component of the regional economy.
- 7-B** Ensure that land use patterns and regulations do not limit the expansion of agricultural operations or the development or continuation of farm support businesses.
- 7-C** Support the revitalization of Oxford Borough, and promote the Borough, through the Oxford Main Street Initiative, as a destination of choice for residents, visitors, and local businesses.
- 7-D** Facilitate communication and coordination among businesses, municipalities, economic development entities, and education providers, to create a supportive environment for retention and expansion of industry across all sectors.
- 7-E** Support new business development in designated growth areas where adequate infrastructure systems currently exist or are planned for expansion.
- 7-F** Promote expansion and increased utilization of the rail freight system to support regional business and industry.
- 7-G** Support improvements to roadways and bridges, public transit, and pedestrian circulation systems to improve employment accessibility.
- 7-H** Promote local employment and training programs to assist unemployed and underemployed residents in accessing jobs that provide a self-sufficiency wage.
- 7-I** Promote the development of workforce housing to provide adequate housing options for workers in the agriculture, manufacturing, service, education, government, and emergency response sectors.
- 7-J** Focus non-agricultural economic development efforts within the Commerce, Town Center (Oxford Borough), and Village Center (Nottingham Village) land use areas.
- 7-K** Provide for buffers between agriculture or agricultural support uses and new residential or other potentially incompatible development.
- 7-L** Encourage the development of walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, within designated growth areas, that will foster establishment and growth of local, neighborhood-oriented businesses.

Agriculture Industry

Agriculture is a way of life, and a critical component of the economy, in the Oxford Region. The analysis conducted for Chapter 11 concluded that the Oxford Region is well positioned to support a diversity of agriculture for many decades to come. Climate and soils are ideal for farming and the Region has access to the agricultural support businesses of both Lancaster County and neighboring communities and regions in Chester County.

The mushroom, crop farming, livestock, and equine industries in southeastern and southwestern Chester County form an interrelated network and are mutually supportive. Proximity to major markets and ports along the eastern seaboard is also a great advantage for Oxford Region farms and farmers.

The Agricultural Industry was identified as the top growth industry in the Region

Agricultural Resources Survey

Employment Overview

With a traditionally strong and diverse economy, Chester County on average has felt less of an impact than most counties in Pennsylvania, or the nation as a whole, from the economic recession. In April of 2011, Chester County reported an unemployment rate of 5.9%.

The rate of unemployment for the state was 7.5% and national rate was 9.0%. The county rate, after rising for several years, is falling, and down from 6.8% in May of 2010.

The Census data set titled *Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics* can be used to derive a general measure of employment for a geographic area and to look at specific industry sectors within the economy.

Figure 7-A shows the number and percent of agriculture jobs in the Region and Chester County. The Region has a higher percent of Agriculture jobs (7.4%) than the County as a whole (2.6%), which reflects the importance of the agriculture industry within the Region. In both instances there are jobs related to agriculture that are not represented, such as businesses including feed and grain, farm equipment, and farm stands or markets. These types of jobs would be counted separately under the *Retail Trade* industry sector.

Figure 7-A: Number and Percent Agriculture Jobs 2009¹

Municipality	Agriculture Primary Jobs	Total Primary Jobs	Percent of Total
Region Total	380	5,108	7.4%
Chester County	5,442	210,452	2.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD, 2009.

¹ It was necessary to include multiple data sources in this chapter to ensure that the information in each Figure, and discussed in the narrative, is the most up-to-date available.

Mushrooms

The majority (75-85%) of agricultural jobs in the Region are related to the mushroom industry. Mushroom growing, packaging/processing, and marketing all occur in some form within the Region. Mushroom industry employers include Sherrokee Mushroom Farms, DTD Mushroom Farm, Inc., Solo D. Mushrooms, Inc., and Oakshire Mushroom Farm, among others. Mushroom growers benefit from access to the local hay industry and livestock manure providers which contribute to mushroom soil composting (spent mushroom compost can then be sold as fertilizer).



Agriculture Industry Partnership

The Chester County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), in collaboration with the Chester County Economic Development Council, has received funds to support countywide Industry Partnerships. Industry Partnerships encourage initiatives that are tailored to meet the needs of a specific industry cluster and its workforce. Newly administered in Chester County, the mission of the Southeastern PA Agriculture Industry Partnership is to build the capacity of farmers and their supply chain partners to meet the growing demand for local, fresh foods in the greater region through investment in business training and workforce development.



As an integral part of this mission the Partnership is dedicated to addressing the following needs in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Region:

- Promoting and elevating the perception of farming as a viable livelihood to youth and second career entrants.
- Increasing availability of local processing for meat and dairy producers.
- Advancing regional farmers' retail marketing skills and ability to meet local markets.

Oxford Region farmers could benefit from participation in training, workshops, youth development programs and other agriculture support initiatives. Some examples of those include:

- Improving Farm Profitability
- North American Mushroom Conference
- Getting More Value from Farm Raised Beef and Pork
- Retail Farm Market School
- Grant Writing Workshop with USDA Rural Development
- Sustainable Agriculture Youth Education Workshops

The need for next generation farmers was identified as the top issue of concern to the Region's farmers

Agricultural Resources Survey

RECOMMENDATION FOR AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

Action 7-1 Encourage farmers and agricultural business operators to participate in the *Southeastern PA Agriculture Industry Partnership* initiatives to receive business training and workforce development services.

✓ Action addresses Objective 7-A.

Sustaining agriculture was identified as very important to the regional economy

Agricultural Resources Survey

Agriculture Support

As noted above, mushroom growing accounts for a large majority of agricultural employment in the Oxford Region. Dairy, crops, and livestock are also critical components of the regional economy. Local support businesses, including hay farming/equine, composting, food

processing, tractor, feed, and farm supply are necessary to support the industry of farming.



There are numerous examples of agriculture support businesses throughout the Region, including Tractor Supply, Oxford Farm Market, Atlantic Tractor, Scotts Hyponex, Oxford Feed and Lumber, Nottingham Canning Company (Hanover Foods), Sunny Dell Foods, and Crownstone Feed Store. Many of these businesses are supported by the Octorara rail line and the proximity to the

U.S. Route 1 corridor. The support of individual municipalities for farmers and the businesses needed to sustain the agriculture industry is a benefit to the Region.

RECOMMENDATION FOR AGRICULTURE SUPPORT BUSINESSES

Action 7-2 Through land use and zoning decisions, permit start up or expansion of food processing facilities and other businesses that support the mushroom, dairy, crop farming, livestock, and other agriculture operations throughout the Region.

✓ Action addresses Objectives: 7-A, 7-B, 7-K.

Revitalization

Oxford Borough is one of Chester County's sixteen urban centers and sits at the geographic center of the Oxford Region. It is also the economic center of the Region. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2009 there were approximately 1,500 jobs in the Borough, which is the most of any municipality in the Region. The top five industries represented in the Borough are shown in Figure 7-B.

Figure 7-B: Top 5 Industries by Employment - Oxford Borough 2009

Industry Sector	No. of Jobs	Percent of Total
Educational Services	233	15.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	194	13.2%
Manufacturing	142	9.6%
Retail Trade	136	9.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	106	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD, 2009.

Several Oxford Area schools are located within the Borough, and contribute to *Educational Services* sector jobs. Jobs in *Healthcare and Social Assistance* likely include the staff of the Ware Presbyterian Village as well as the many social service agencies that are represented at the Neighborhood Assistance Center. (See Chapter 8: Community Facilities and Services) There are a number of facilities in the Borough that provide *Manufacturing* jobs. Oxford Borough's downtown, including the Third Street business district, features numerous shops and other businesses which fall under the *Retail Trade* sector. The many Borough restaurants and the Octoraro Hotel employ staff in the *Accommodation and Food Services* sector. The employment numbers indicate a good mix of businesses in the Borough which can lead to a more stable economic situation over the long term.

Community Revitalization Program (CRP)

The Chester County Community Revitalization Program was created in 2001 to assist the County's urban centers with streetscapes and infrastructure improvements. Since its inception, more than \$43 million in funding has been allocated to fifteen of the County's sixteen urban centers. In order to qualify for county funding, each urban center was required to prepare and adopt an Urban Center Revitalization Plan (UCRP). Oxford Borough adopted its original UCRP in 2003. Oxford Borough has sought and received three separate Revitalization grants, as follows:

- (2004-2005) Infrastructure improvements
- (2007) Sewer repair
- (2008) Streetscapes improvements



The 2008 streetscapes project included new streetlights, sidewalks and curbing, crosswalks, parking meters, bulb-outs, additional parking, and landscaping on South Third Street, from Hodgson Street to Market Street.

As of July 2011, Oxford Borough was in the process of updating its urban center revitalization plan. The update will reflect completed activities identified in the original plan and will detail plans for current and future priority activities to be accomplished with the assistance of Chester County Community Revitalization Program funding, Community Development Block Grant assistance, or other funding where appropriate. The streetscapes and infrastructure improvements made possible by the CRP grants support business development and expansion and make the downtown business district attractive to residents and visitors.

Oxford Main Street

Oxford Main Street, Inc. (OMI) represents an effort to support the Oxford Borough downtown business district through partnerships with supporting organizations that promote and foster economic growth and stability, while preserving downtown



Oxford's rich historic and cultural identity. OMI works closely with both Oxford Borough and the Oxford Area Chamber of Commerce. At any one time there are multiple activities and events underway. Some examples of OMI's projects include: www.downtownoxfordpa.org

Facade Improvements Grants

This program is provided through a grant from the PA DCED Main Street Program and provides funding to commercial property owners or business owners to encourage restoration projects of building facades and to enhance the building's overall exterior appearance.

The Oxford Theater

The efforts of the Oxford Theatre are spearheaded through a stand alone Steering Committee with the full support and involvement of OMI. As of July 2011, the Chester County Community Foundation has agreed to become the fiscal agent for the Oxford Theatre Project as the next logical step in the process of redeveloping the historic Oxford Theatre. A preliminary business plan has been formulated and a request for proposal for the final study, a feasibility/marketing study, is currently underway.

Main Streets Trail

As of August 2010, Oxford was adopted as an established partner in the Chester County Conference Visitors Bureau's Main Streets Trail program. The details are available on www.brandywinevalley.com. You can view Oxford as a destination point under the icon for Main Streets Trail once you log in.

Oxford Village Market

The OVM is a weekly open air style market that brings together 15 vendors in the hub of the downtown to offer: seasonal fruits, vegetables, artisan breads, Amish baked goods, vegan and ready made meals, handcrafted soaps, jewelry and accessories, bedding plants, fresh cut flowers and much more to the local community. The OVM operates 6 months out of the year, May through October, on Tuesdays from 2-6pm. This market has also provided a “testing ground” for businesses considering Downtown Oxford as a viable business location. Based on this successful test of the market, three new businesses opened in a brick and mortar building in downtown Oxford just in the first half of 2010 alone. Not only does the market provide access to locally grown and produced products, it also serves as an important economic development tool.

Main Street Affinity Group

OMI has partnered with the Kutztown University Small Business Development Center and the Chester County Economic Development Council to provide nine sessions of business counseling and workshops to Oxford Borough businesses. This is a pilot program intended to be offered to other Main Street communities in Chester County.

The 3/50 Project

OMI is promoting the 3/50 Project, a national initiative that encourages residents to spend \$50 each at 3 different independently owned businesses every month. For every \$100 spent, \$68 returns to the community, versus \$43 if spent at a national chain.

In addition to the initiatives outlined above, OMI sponsors and promotes a number of arts, cultural, and community events that provide quality of life enhancement for residents of the Borough, but also attract visitors from throughout, and beyond, the Oxford Region.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVITALIZATION OF OXFORD BOROUGH

Action 7-3 Support the development, updating, and implementation of the *Oxford Borough Urban Center Revitalization Plan*.

Action 7-4 Support initiatives by Oxford Main Street Inc. (OMI) and the Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce (SCCCC) by promoting local businesses, historical and cultural events, and community enrichment activities through municipal newsletters, websites, public meetings, and other events.

Actions address Objective 7-C

Redevelopment

The Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC) serves as a resource in identifying brownfield sites that are available for redevelopment. The Chester County Brownfields Advisory program (through the CCEDC) is comprised of a team of professionals with varying environmental expertise that provides assistance to municipalities and landowners with the clean up and redevelopment of brownfield sites. A grayfield site, a previously developed underutilized commercial retail center, may qualify for funding assistance if there is environmental contamination on the property.

Brownfields are generally defined as abandoned, idle or underused industrial and commercial sites and/or structures where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

RECOMMENDATION FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Action 7-5 Identify opportunities for redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties and facilitate public-private partnerships to bring those properties back into active commercial or industrial use.

Action addresses Objectives 7-D and 7-E

Business Retention and Expansion

In order for economic development and growth to occur, the municipalities of the Oxford Region must offer support and resources to existing businesses so they will remain in the Region and also provide opportunities for businesses to expand.

Jobs and Employers

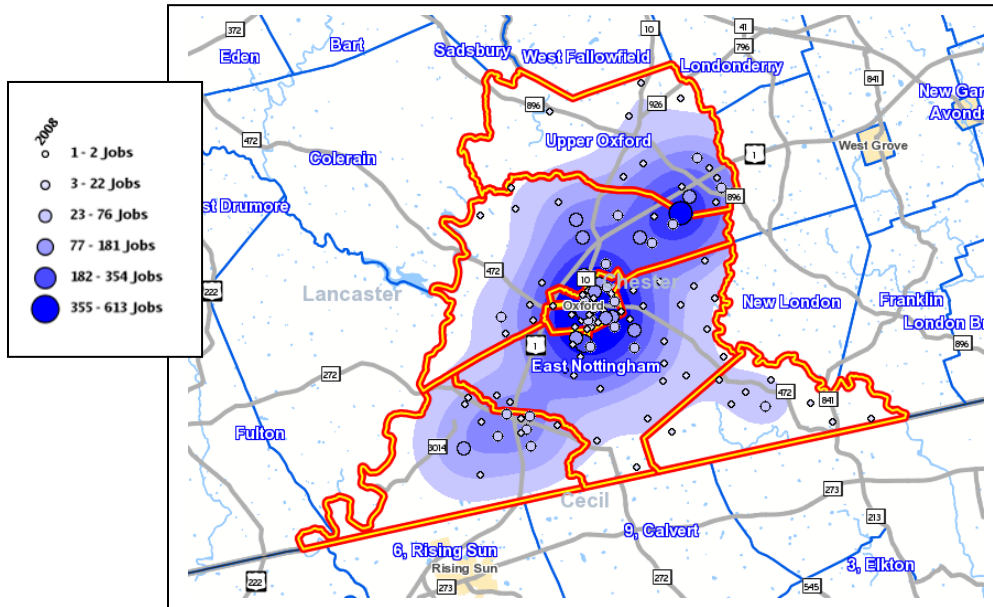
The pattern of employment (as of 2008) for the Region is illustrated in Figure 7-C. Oxford Borough is by far the largest employment center in the Region and numerous jobs are found in neighboring areas of adjacent municipalities. Secondary centers of employment are found in Lincoln University and Nottingham Village. In general, the majority of jobs in the Region are located within close proximity to the U.S. Route 1 and Old Baltimore Pike corridor. There is also a concentration of smaller employment locations along Route 472.

Creating and retaining jobs within the Region is critical for economic stability.

The pattern of jobs located along transportation corridors and at major crossroads, with additional jobs scattered in more far reaching parts of the townships, is typical for a predominantly rural/agricultural community.

Figure 7-D shows the change in jobs, both in absolute numbers and percentage, between 2002 and 2009. This is a relatively new data set from the U.S. Census and is intended to provide a general picture of employment and job growth patterns. The Region shows an overall growth rate of 14.2% compared with the County's job growth over the same period of 9.9%.

Figure 7-C: Oxford Region Employment Density - 2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD, 2008.

**Figure 7-D: Total Number of Primary Jobs – 2002, 2009
Oxford Region and Chester County**

Municipality	2002	2009	Change 2002-2009	Growth Rate 2002-2009
East Nottingham	728	895	167	22.9%
Elk	38	57	19	50.0%
Lower Oxford	1,166	1,295	129	11.0%
Oxford	1,320	1,473	153	11.6%
Upper Oxford	280	350	70	25.0%
West Nottingham	941	1,038	97	10.3%
Region Total	4,473	5,108	635	14.2%
Chester County	201,451	221,344	19,893	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD, 2002, 2009.

Economic Development Support

Ongoing job growth is important to maintaining economic stability. In order to sustain employment and job growth, the Oxford Region may need to connect existing or potential businesses with economic development services. One valuable source for economic development support is the Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC). The CCEDC partners with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to help build relationships with the Chester County business community. Through the *PA Business Retention and Expansion Program*, the CCEDC provides a variety of services to Chester County businesses. These services include

assistance with business start-up, workforce development, corporate site selection, obtaining low interest loans, manufacturing support, expansion into international markets, finding venture capital, and acquiring customized training grants.

RECOMMENDATION FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT

Action 7-6 Promote business retention and expansion services to the regional business community.

Action addresses Objective 7-D

Industry and Land Use

In the Oxford Region, business start up, retention, and expansion must be appropriately directed within the context of the Future Land Use Plan, as described in Chapter 5. The Future Land Use Plan for Oxford Region identifies Commerce, Village Center (Nottingham Village), and Town Center (Oxford Borough) as the primary target areas for the location and expansion of commercial and industrial uses. (See Figure 5-G) Agricultural industry uses would continue to be supported in the Rural and Agricultural land use categories.

“We need commercial development in the appropriately designated areas to help offset the high taxes...as long as agricultural land remains undisturbed.”

Agricultural Resources Survey

Nottingham Village and Oxford Borough are by their nature mixed-use environments and should continue to develop or redevelop in that manner. There may also be opportunities for commercial or light industrial development to occur adjacent to higher-density residential uses, where appropriate, within the **Commerce** designation. Municipal support for the development of commerce and industry in the appropriate locations is critical to successful economic development as well as the implementation of the Future Land Use Plan for the Region (See Chapter 5: Land Use).

RECOMMENDATION FOR REGULATORY SUPPORT

Action 7-7 Remove regulatory restrictions on businesses desiring to locate or expand within the Commerce, Village Center, or Town Center land use designations through the use of tools such as incentives or streamlined approvals.

Action addresses Objectives 7-E, 7-F, and 7-G

Mix of Uses

The Suburban land use category, which currently includes local commercial uses, could be an appropriate location to consider for new commercial or light industrial development. Such development should only occur where neighboring uses are compatible. A mix of uses, less automobile dependence, and pedestrian circulation systems that provide safe, convenient access to neighborhood-scale commercial/retail uses should be emphasized.

Residential neighborhoods, within Suburban or Town Residential designations, could be an appropriate place for neighborhood-oriented businesses such as a corner grocery or convenience store. Additional non-residential uses might include schools or parks, where all uses are connected by pedestrian circulation systems that are safe and efficient. (See Chapter 9:Transportation and Chapter 15: Recreation)

☑ RECOMMENDATION FOR MIXED-USES

Action 7-8 Encourage mixed-use neighborhoods where appropriate, with context-sensitive commercial or light industrial uses, within the Suburban land use area.

Action addresses Objectives 7-E and 7-G

Growth Industries

The 2009 top five industries by employment in the Oxford Region are shown in Figure 7-E. *Manufacturing* is the top industry with 888 jobs. It is likely that the majority of manufacturing jobs in the Region are concentrated at the Herr’s complex in West Nottingham although the census data shows some jobs more evenly distributed. The K-12 schools, as well as Lincoln University, contribute to the *Educational Services* jobs. With population projected to continue growing, this sector will likely remain at or near the top of the list. Approximately 40% of *Educational Services* jobs, and 35% of *Health Care and Social Assistance* jobs are located within Oxford Borough.

Figure 7-E: Top 5 Industries by Employment - Oxford Region 2009

Industry Sector	No. of jobs	Percent of Total
Manufacturing	888	17.4%
Educational Services	592	11.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	545	10.7%
Retail Trade	421	8.2%
Construction	383	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD, 2009.

The Oxford Region economic development survey identified Smart Energy as a growth industry for the region. Smart Energy refers to a collection of emerging industries which generally incorporate clean and renewable energy sources, as well as energy efficiency and conservation. The Southeast PA Smart Energy Initiative, a program led by CCEDC, is working to promote the growth of the "smart" energy industry by providing comprehensive workforce and economic development services to partnering companies.

Due to geographic location (U.S. Route 1 and Octorara rail line), geologic/soils characteristics, and availability of land and a local workforce, the Oxford Region holds great promise for attracting, retaining, and expanding business within these top industry sectors over the long term.

Route 1 Business Corridor Alliance

The Oxford Region has been identified by the CCEDC as one of the critical growth regions in the county, and in fact, in the greater Philadelphia area. The Oxford Region is set within the context of the local growth corridor that stretches from the Maryland State line in West Nottingham Township, along U.S. Route 1, up to and including Kennett Square. The CCEDC has also identified the *Route 1 Business Corridor Alliance* to include all of the municipalities that fall within that corridor. The



Alliance, in partnership with the CCEDC, is focusing upon the attraction and development of industries with significant future growth potential. To this end, representatives of the CCEDC have been meeting, and will continue to meet as necessary, with elected officials and county planners to ensure that new commercial and industrial growth is consistent with the growth management policies set forth in this Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROWTH INDUSTRIES

Action 7-9 Through participation in regional economic development initiatives, create opportunities for businesses in the regionally identified growth industries: 1) Agriculture; 2) Utilities/Smart Energy; 3) Retail sales; 4) Education; 5) Manufacturing; to locate, remain, and grow appropriately and proportionately within the Region.

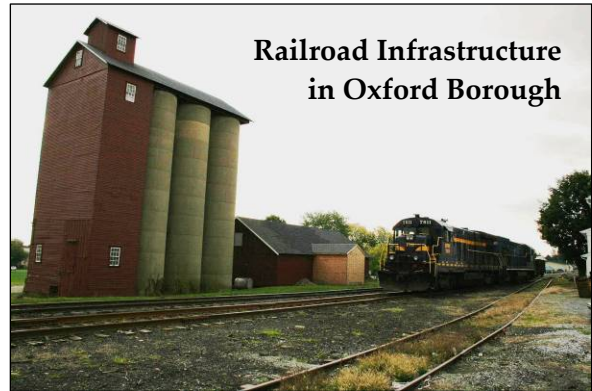
Action 7-10 Utilize resources available through the Southeastern PA Smart Energy Initiative to support development and growth of emerging energy technologies.

Actions address Objectives 7-D and 7-E

Economic Infrastructure

Economic infrastructure refers to those infrastructure systems that are needed to support businesses and sustain economic development within the Region. These systems may include soils, surface water and ground water (as it relates to agriculture), transportation, energy production and distribution, sanitary sewage disposal, education and training, affordable housing, open space/recreation amenities (green infrastructure), and a skilled and available workforce.

In the Oxford Region Economic Development survey results (2009), infrastructure issues of most concern were the lack of viable public transportation, increasing traffic congestion, lack of sanitary sewer capacity, roadway conditions, and an underutilized rail line. Most of these issues are discussed in more detail in other chapters of this Plan. Some highlights related to economic development are discussed below.



Octorara Rail Line

The Octorara section of the East Penn railroad offers a valuable resource in the form of freight transportation for commerce and industry located along the rail corridor within the Oxford Region. The rail line runs through the Region generally parallel to Baltimore Pike and connects the Region to the Wilmington and Northern line at Chadds Ford which then connects to Coatesville to the north and Wilmington, DE to the south.

Increased use of the freight rail line by businesses in the Oxford Region will help to sustain and possibly expand freight services. In the Oxford Region Future Land Use Plan, the Commerce category recognizes and supports the critical relationship between commercial and industrial uses and the location and expansion of rail freight service. Opportunities for new development exist along the rail corridor and efforts to attract new businesses to these sites have been ongoing. (See Chapter 9:Transportation)

RECOMMENDATION FOR RAIL FREIGHT

Action 7-11 Coordinate with East Penn Railroad and its affiliates to create a mutually supportive environment between the freight rail line and existing and potential businesses located along the corridor.

Action addresses Objective 7-F

Green Infrastructure

The green infrastructure concept was originally developed as an alternative to “grey” infrastructure, i.e. traditional transportation and stormwater management systems. Green systems are designed to provide infrastructure which results in enhanced natural resource protection.

“Green Infrastructure” is generally defined as the interconnected natural systems and ecological processes that provide clean water, air quality, and wildlife habitat.

Green infrastructure addresses not only environmental health, but also sustains a community’s social and economic well-being. From a workforce enhancement perspective, it creates opportunities for active and passive recreation to occur throughout the course of a typical day. Employers have begun to recognize the importance of wellness programs including opportunities for workday exercise and enjoyment of the outdoors in the form of greenways,

open space, and trail amenities. Municipalities in the Oxford Region have the opportunity to update ordinances to require some type of green approach to new development. Newly planned or expanded commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development should incorporate the idea of green infrastructure into projects from very early in the process.



RECOMMENDATION FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Action 7-12 Consider open space, recreation, and trail amenities as required components of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development proposals.

Objective(s) addressed by Action: 7-E

Workforce Development

The most important resource for business is a skilled and educated workforce. Chester County, and much of southeastern Pennsylvania, is home to a highly skilled and well-educated population, providing a major incentive for businesses to locate in the Region. Oxford Region is situated at the geographic end of the employment cluster that centers on U.S. Route 1 between Chadds Ford and Oxford Borough. As it is clearly within the path of growth, DVRPC projects that the Region can expect approximately 16% employment growth between 2010 and 2020, which will in turn generate a greater workforce demand.

The workforce demand within the Oxford Region differs from the countywide demand because of the predominance of agriculture and manufacturing in the Region. Current trends, however, indicate a countywide shift from traditional agriculture and manufacturing enterprises to higher technology and more specialized processes and products. As the Region grows, it may expect to see the growth of more specialized industries that will require a higher level of education and specialized training from its workforce.

Resident Workforce

An analysis of education, income, resident employment, and unemployment data provides a general profile of the Oxford Region’s resident workforce.

Educational Attainment

Analyzing the level of education attained by municipal residents helps to predict employment demand and directly relates to the economic prosperity of the residents in the Region. Figure 7-F shows the educational levels of the Oxford Region and Chester County residents age 25 years and older. The Oxford Region on average has a slightly lower education level than Chester County as a whole. The County’s levels, however, rank among the highest in the state.

**Figure 7-F: Highest Educational Level
Oxford Region and Chester County residents 25 years and older**

Educational Attainment	Oxford Region 2006-2008		Chester County 2006-2008	
	Population 25 years and older	14,784	100%	320,415
Less Than High School	2,166	14.7%	24,233	7.9%
High School	5,710	38.6%	80,003	25.0%
Some College or Associate Degree	2,820	19.1%	64,684	20.2%
Bachelor's Degree	3,161	21.4%	94,071	29.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	927	6.3%	57,424	17.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2006-2008.

The largest number of residents in the Region, age twenty-five or older, has high school as the highest education level (38.6%). Those with at least a Bachelor's degree represent 21.4% compared with the countywide rate of 29.4%. The Region has a higher percentage of individuals with less than a high school diploma (14.7%) than the County (7.9%). Levels of education generally correspond to income levels and poverty levels within the community. It should be noted that the Plain Sect population may influence the Region's education data.

Household Income

The individual municipalities of the Oxford Region experienced a significant increase in median household income between the 1990 and 2000 censuses, as did the County as a whole (Figure 7-G). In general, the county's median income has remained slightly higher than that of the Oxford Region municipalities. This is consistent with the education levels discussed above. Household income for the Region as a whole can be found in the 2006-2008 American Community Survey data.

**Figure 7-G: Median Household Income, 1990, 2000, and 2005-2009*
Oxford Region and Chester County**

Municipality	1990	2000	2005 – 2009 ACS	% Change 2000-2009
East Nottingham	\$37,778	\$53,864	\$80,904	50.2%
Elk	\$37,986	\$60,380	\$80,455	33.2%
Lower Oxford	\$38,780	\$49,766	\$81,250	63.3%
Oxford	\$22,671	\$34,996	\$49,311	41.0%
Upper Oxford	\$36,741	\$61,094	\$78,750	28.4%
West Nottingham	\$30,366	\$45,142	\$57,973	28.4%
Chester County	\$45,642	\$65,295	\$84,284	29.1%

*1990-2000 data corresponds to years 1989 & 1999. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000. ACS, 2005-2009

**Figure 7-H: Median Household Income
Oxford Region, Chester County, and Pennsylvania**

Municipality	2006-2008 Average
Oxford Region	\$71,737
Chester County	\$84,844
Pennsylvania	\$50,272

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2006-2008

Although the Oxford Region’s median household income (2006-2008) is lower than the county median, Chester County has the highest median income of all counties in Pennsylvania. As shown in Figure 7-H, The median household income of the Region is significantly higher than the statewide median. Oxford Region is a predominantly rural area, where household incomes are traditionally lower than in more suburbanized areas. The Region is, however, becoming more suburbanized, and the residents benefit from its proximity to major transportation corridors which provides access to regional employment opportunities.

Poverty Level

In Chester County, the poverty level (percentage of individuals living at or below the federal poverty level) increased from 5.2% in 2000 to 6.0% in the 2005-2009 ACS. Although the poverty statistics for Oxford Region as a whole are not available for 2000, it is likely that, similar to the County, average poverty rates across the Region have increased since 2000. Poverty levels relate to the need for social services which may include basic needs assistance (housing, food, clothing, and health care), and educational support. In addition, those municipalities with higher poverty levels might benefit from more widely available and accessible workforce development and employment and training services.

**Figure 7-I: Percent of Persons Below Poverty Level, 2005-2009
Oxford Region, Chester County, and Pennsylvania**

Municipality	Poverty Level	
	2000	2005-2009
Oxford Region	*	8.1%
Chester County	5.2%	6.0%
Pennsylvania	11.0%	11.9%

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2005-2009.

* not available by region

Resident Employment

Employment characteristics provide an overview of the types of businesses in which Oxford Region residents are employed. “Industry” is defined as the type of business conducted by the person’s employing organization. Figure 7-J shows the top five industries by employment for Oxford Region residents, and the corresponding employment for the

Chester County population (2005-2009). The top five industries represent about 60% of employment for Oxford Region residents. For more information about where Oxford Region residents work, see Chapter 9, Transportation Inventory and Plan.

The Region has a very similar percentage to the County in the *Education, Health and Social Services, Manufacturing, and the Retail Trade* sectors. The Region has a lesser percentage of residents employed in the *Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administrative* industry than the County as a whole, which reflects the more rural nature of the community. Although not in the top five for the Region, *Agriculture* is shown in the Figure for purposes of comparison with the County. As might be expected, the Region's percentage of residents employed in *Agriculture* (6.8%) is more than three times the county percentage (1.9%).

**Figure 7-J: Employment by Industry, 2005-2009
Oxford Region and Chester County**

INDUSTRY		OXFORD REGION		CHESTER COUNTY	
		Number	%	Number	%
Top Five	Educational, Health & Social Services	2,506	22.2%	52,846	21.2%
	Manufacturing	1,445	12.8%	31,052	12.4%
	Retail Trade	1,229	10.9%	28,273	11.3%
	Professional, Scientific, Management, & Admin.	907	8.0%	36,593	14.7%
	Construction	808	7.2%	14,976	6.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining		764	6.8%	4,753	1.9%
Total Employed Population		11,273	-	249,690	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2005-2009.

Unemployment

Chester County typically has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Pennsylvania. While low unemployment rates are generally desirable, a very low rate may indicate a lack of available employees which can become a deterrent for new businesses seeking to locate in an area and for existing businesses seeking to expand.

**Figure 7-K: Percent Unemployment
Chester County and Pennsylvania**

	May 2010	December 2011
Chester County	6.8%	5.4%
Pennsylvania	8.7%	7.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Figure 7-K shows a comparison of the unemployment rates for the county and the state. The unemployment rates for December 2011 from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that rates have been recently falling. However, the members of the Planning Committee have reported numerous layoffs throughout the Region within the last one to two years. The impact has been felt across many industries.

While the municipalities of the Oxford Region do not offer any assistance to unemployed residents, there is a web-based resource available for job seekers, provided by the *PA CareerLink*, an initiative of the PA Department of Labor and Industry. All County libraries have been introduced to the online services provided through the *PA CareerLink*. The main site in Chester County is based at 250 E. Harmony Street in Coatesville. Online services include job search, resume development, career research, and training resources. Additional services, provided one-on-one with a program coordinator, are available at the Coatesville location.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Action 7-13 Direct job-seeking residents to the *PA CareerLink* services that are accessible online at the Oxford Public Library.

Action addresses Objective 7-H

Workforce Development

As of January 2011, there were no Oxford Region representatives on the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Chester County’s workforce development entity. The WIB is a federally-mandated entity whose membership consists of representatives from government, private enterprise, and education or training institutions from throughout the County. The role of the WIB is to facilitate collaboration between employers and educators and promote career and technical education, apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, service learning, and volunteerism. The WIB, in collaboration with the Chester County Economic Development Council, coordinates with educators and employers to develop effective transitions from education to careers.

There is also a strong focus on youth development initiatives through the “Council for the Workforce of Tomorrow,” a subcommittee of the WIB. Several youth programs funded through the Council recruit and serve youth from the Oxford Region including “Pathstone” based in Kennett Square (a career investigation program) and Handi-Crafters (a summer program serving youth with developmental disabilities).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Action 7-14 Recommend a regional stakeholder for membership on the Chester County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to represent the business, education, training, and youth development interests of the Region.

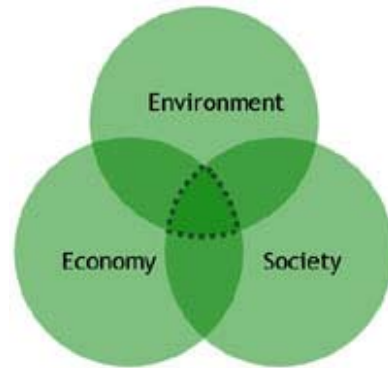
Action addresses Objectives 7-H and 7-I

Sustainability

The Temple University *Center for Sustainable Communities* describes sustainability as:

“Making decisions, both as individuals and as a society, that seek to maintain or enhance economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend.”

The Region can anticipate renewed development and continued growth over the ten-year term of this Comprehensive Plan. Finding the balance between economy, environment, and society is critical to sustaining the rural/agricultural way of life that is so greatly valued in the Oxford Region. Numerous planning tools exist to promote and support sustainable development. The following analysis will explore some of those options and how they might be utilized within the Region.



Transfer of Development Rights

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a mechanism by which owners of agricultural or other open space and resource lands may sell the development rights to their property to owners or developers of land that is better suited to development. These types of programs have been used successfully for achieving agriculture preservation within many communities in Southeastern PA. The Oxford Region could implement a multi-municipal TDR program where development rights are bought and sold across municipal boundaries.

With regard to economic development, a multi-municipal TDR program could help to achieve the overall agriculture preservation goals as well as promoting commercial and industrial development or expansion within designated growth areas. TDRs might also be utilized for higher density residential development as part of a mixed-use community that provides a market for local businesses. (See Chapter 5 for more information on TDRs)

RECOMMENDATION FOR TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Action 7-15 Consider areas designated for commercial and industrial development as receiving areas within a municipal or multi-municipal Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.

Action addresses Objectives 7-J, 7-K, and 7-L

See Actions 5-11 and 5-12

Smart Growth Initiatives

Smart growth and sustainability are concepts that attempt to balance resource preservation with economic growth and development while allowing a community to maintain a high quality of life. Some of the primary components of smart growth include:

- A range of housing opportunities
- Walkable neighborhoods
- A strong sense of place and a mix of land uses
- Preservation of open space and farmland
- A variety of transportation choices
- Compact building design
- Development near existing infrastructure

Standard zoning, however, does not lend itself easily to this type of development. Ordinances could be amended, as in the case of the Nottingham Village Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) district, to accommodate development that is more pedestrian oriented and provides connections between housing, businesses, and other community services and amenities. Smaller, neighborhood oriented businesses are well-suited to a TND setting. The development of Nottingham Village will occur in coordination with the Township’s TDR program with the Village acting as the receiving area. The Village is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented, economically-viable, and sustainable environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SMART GROWTH INITIATIVES

Action 7-16 Review ordinances and amend as needed to ensure that regulations support the development of local businesses in proximity to workforce housing, public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

Action 7-17 Support Nottingham Village as a center of commercial activity and employment consistent with the goals of the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) district.

Objective(s) addressed by Action: 7-I, 7-J, and 7-K

Adaptive Re-Use

Sustainable development also incorporates the re-use or redevelopment of existing sites and structures. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, administered by the National Park Service, could be one resource to support the rehabilitation of historic structures within the Oxford Region. It is available for properties rehabilitated for income producing purposes. These tax incentives promote the rehabilitation of historic structures of every period, size, style and type. Adaptive re-use of historic structures or sites for commercial purposes is a viable economic development tool.

More detailed information about the Federal Historic Preservation



Tax Incentives program can be found in Chapter 13 Historic Resources Plan, or by visiting: www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/index.htm.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ADAPTIVE RE-USE

Action 7-18 Facilitate adaptive re-use of historic properties within the Oxford Region, and the use of available tax incentives, as an economic development tool.

Action addresses Objective 7-C

Village Commercial

Finally, the Region’s smaller villages (Homeville, Russelville, Tweedale, Hopewell, Hickory Hill, and Lewisville) hold the potential, at some point in the future, for small-scale village commercial development. Infrastructure limitations and expansions, and market demand, will dictate how this development occurs. The villages might accommodate a limited amount of medium to high density housing with complementary non-residential uses. There is also an opportunity for expansion of existing businesses. The critical elements for any additional development within Oxford Region villages are pedestrian orientation, maintaining village scale and character, and meeting the specific needs of village residents through locally-oriented businesses. (See Chapter 5)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VILLAGE COMMERCIAL

Action 7-19 Target pedestrian-oriented retail development, where appropriate, to existing villages, at a scale and character suitable for a village setting.

Action addresses Objective 7-L

Summary of Website References

Some examples of OMI’s projects include: www.downtownoxfordpa.org

Chester County Conference Visitors Bureau’s Main Streets Trail program: www.brandywinevalley.com.

Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce (SCCCC): www.scccc.com

More detailed information about the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program can be found in Chapter 13: Historic Resources Inventory and Plan, or by visiting: www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/index.htm.