

CHAPTER 7

Existing Land Use

The following description of existing land use in Cumberland County is fundamental to understanding the character of the County and its development related issues. Economic factors, development trends, cultural attitudes, and physical features have resulted in land use patterns that express what the community has been in the past and what it is in the present. Future development will, for the most part, take place within the framework already established. Information gathered through the existing land use inventory serves as an important part of the County's multi-faceted inventory of resources, which provides the basis for recommendations regarding future land use.

Methodology

Two different approaches have been used in this chapter to inventory existing land use. The first is a visual land-use survey compiled in 1997 by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. The second is a Tax-Parcel Analysis using 2002 data from the Cumberland County Tax Assessment Office.

In 1997, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission compiled a generalized existing land-use map, primarily by a series of windshield inspections. To determine the type and total acreage of existing land uses throughout the County, these visual observations were supplemented by a variety of sources, as listed below:

- Correlation of available maps and aerial photographs
- Tax maps / tax assessment file data
- Development records
- Meetings with municipal officials

The result of this compilation of sources is displayed cartographically in the Existing Land Use Map (Figure 7.1). On this map, the categories listed below have been generalized since each municipality identifies land use categories differently in their ordinances. For the purposes of analysis, major categories of land uses were established, as follows:

- Residential
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Services
- Industrial
- Public / Semi-Public
- Vacant /Agricultural

The acreage of each category was estimated by calculating the area of each category using the Existing Land Use Map (Tables 7.1 and 7.2). It was then compared with data for 1975, which is

the last available acreage data. This determined the total acreage change and the percentage change in each use (Table 7.1) and percentage of the total (Table 7.2).

TABLE 7.1 EXISTING LAND USE BY ACREAGE, CUMBERLAND COUNTY - 1997				
Land Use Category	Acres 1975	Acres 1997	Total Change	% Change
Residential	29,676	40,801	11,125	37.4
Commercial	3,425	4,545	1,120	32.7
Industrial	1,878	6,273	4,397	234
Public/ Semi-Public	43,441	52,978	9,537	21.9
Vacant/ Agricultural	280,364	254,187	-26,177	-9.3

Source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Atlas GIS, Existing Land Use Survey, 1997.

TABLE 7.2 EXISTING LAND USE BY ACREAGE AND PERCENT TOTAL, CUMBERLAND COUNTY - 1997		
Land Use Category	Acres 1997	% Total
Residential	40,801	11.40%
Commercial	4,545	1.30%
Industrial	6,273	1.70%
Public/ Semi-Public	52,978	14.80%
Vacant/ Agricultural	254,187	70.80%

Source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Atlas GIS, Existing-Land-Use Survey, 1997.

While the 1997 Tri-County Study established areas of each category of land use, the Tax Parcel Analysis examined the land use by parcel. The existing land use data collected from the Tax Parcel Analysis has been compiled at municipal, Plan Development Section, and County levels. For planning purposes, Cumberland County is divided into three Plan Development Sections: Cumberland East, Cumberland Central, and Cumberland West. Each Section contains eleven, eight, and fifteen municipalities, respectively (Figure 3.1).

The Tax Parcel Analysis utilized data obtained from the Cumberland County Tax Assessment Office for 1987, 1997, and 2002. This analysis illustrates the land use information recorded for each parcel as part of the tax assessment information. The data have been compiled by land use categories to indicate the total number of parcels in each use by municipality and by plan development section (Table 7.3). Also determined were the number and percentage of Cumberland County parcels within each land-use category (Table 7.4). These County land-use inventory totals for 2002 data have been compared with those for 1987 and 1997 in order to examine the percent changes that have occurred (Table 7.4). The percentage of land use by Plan Development Section has been summarized in order to examine the patterns in each region of the county (Figure 7.2, Table 7.5). A map of land use by tax-parcel information has been included in order to illustrate the data for 2002 cartographically (Figure 7.3).

**TABLE 7.3
EXISTING LAND USE BY PARCEL, CUMBERLAND COUNTY - 2002**

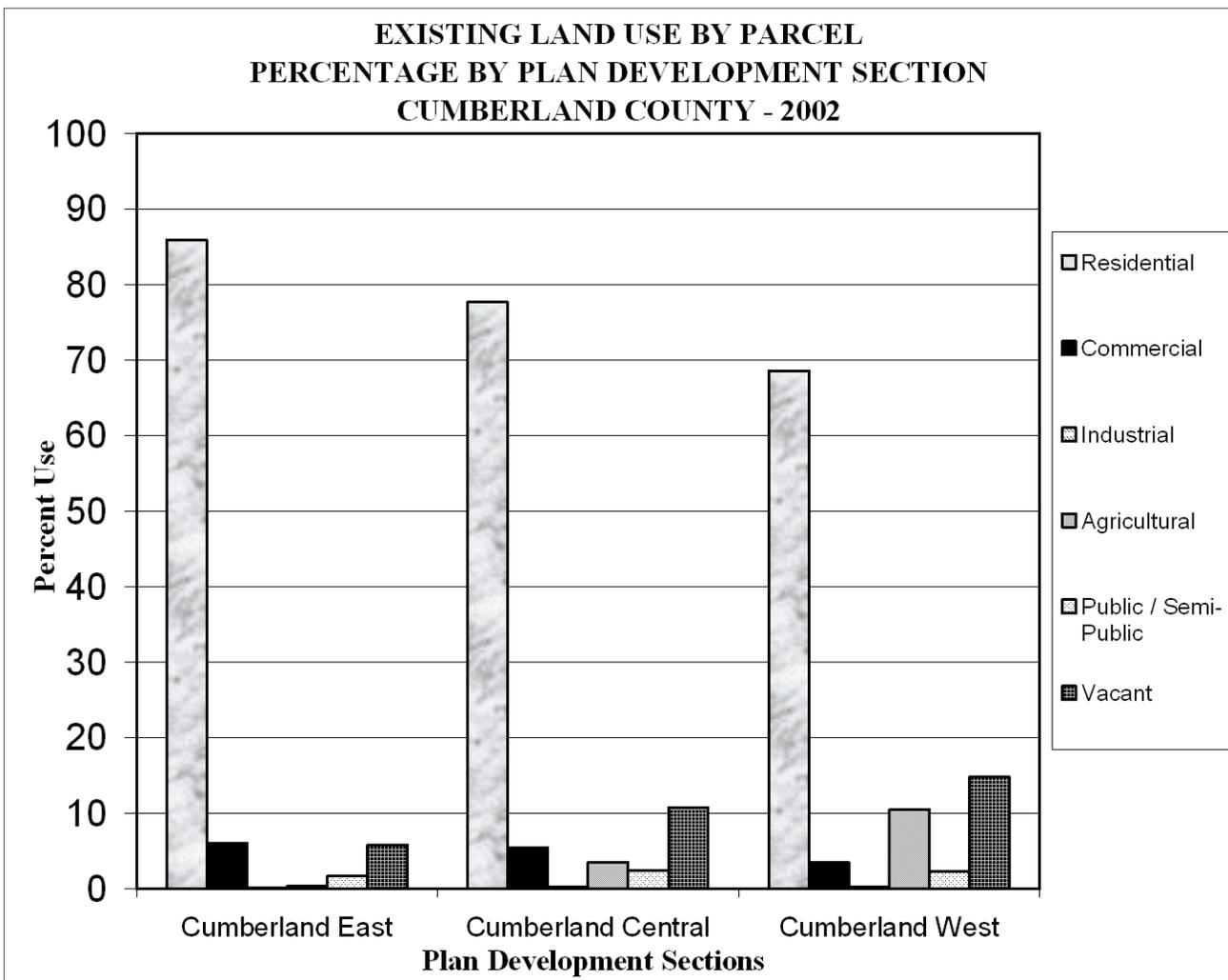
	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	AGRICULTURAL	PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC	VACANT	TOTAL
EAST SECTION							
Camp Hill Borough	2,855	218	3	0	40	34	3,150
East Pennsboro Township	6,494	311	0	21	153	710	7,689
Hampden Township	8,687	555	6	48	87	650	10,033
Lemoyne Borough	1,438	273	10	1	34	78	1,834
Lower Allen Township	4,761	361	8	28	109	306	5,573
Mechanicsburg Borough	3,017	282	8	2	74	56	3,439
New Cumberland Borough	2,799	213	3	0	42	64	3,121
Shiremanstown Borough	547	43	0	0	17	5	612
Upper Allen Township	4,768	209	0	56	123	501	5,657
West Fairview Borough	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wormleysburg Borough	808	95	0	0	17	42	962
TOTAL EAST	36,174	2,560	38	156	696	2,446	42,070
CENTRAL SECTION							
Carlisle Borough	5,034	626	26	1	231	235	6,153
Dickinson Township	1,719	43	1	201	50	598	2,612
Middlesex Township	2,173	170	7	158	85	256	2,849
Monroe Township	2,003	59	2	165	60	317	2,606
Mt. Holly Springs Borough	713	71	7	5	26	64	886
North Middleton Township	3,479	95	2	134	58	436	4,204
Silver Spring Township	3,974	299	11	210	85	760	5,339
South Middleton Township	4,904	307	9	218	147	649	6,234
TOTAL CENTRAL	23,999	1,670	65	1,092	742	3,315	30,883
WEST SECTION							
Cooke Township	371	2	0	10	19	53	455
Hopewell Township	619	7	0	210	13	264	1,113
Lower Frankford Township	546	9	0	158	6	161	880
Lower Mifflin Township	541	6	1	137	11	137	833
Newburg Borough	126	7	0	0	11	8	152
Newville Borough	429	77	4	0	26	24	560
North Newton Township	631	22	2	148	26	128	957
Penn Township	866	14	2	183	23	269	1,357
Shippensburg Borough	1,077	222	22	0	71	57	1,449
Shippensburg Township	571	64	2	10	19	32	698
Southampton Township	1,622	40	3	214	52	456	2,387
South Newton Township	416	14	1	53	9	75	568
Upper Frankford Township	599	8	1	151	14	159	932
Upper Mifflin Township	401	4	0	138	11	148	702
West Pennsboro Township	1,780	52	2	209	47	310	2,400
TOTAL WEST	10,595	548	40	1,621	358	2,281	15,443
TOTALS BY SECTION							
Cumberland County East	36,174	2,560	38	156	696	2,446	42,070
Cumberland County Central	23,999	1,670	65	1,092	742	3,315	30,883
Cumberland County West	10,595	548	40	1,621	358	2,281	15,443
Cumberland County Total	70,768	4,778	143	2,869	1,796	8,042	88,396

SOURCE: Cumberland County Real Estate Assessment Listing – 2002; * West Fairview Borough merged with East Pennsboro Township in 1998.

TABLE 7.4								
EXISTING LAND USE BY PARCEL								
CUMBERLAND COUNTY – 1987, 1997, & 2002								
	1987		1997		1987- 1997	2002		1997-2002
Land Use Category	# Parcels	%Total	# Parcels	% Total	% Change	# Parcels	%Total	% Change
Residential	55,669	77.20%	66,858	80.30%	20.10%	70,768	80.10%	5.80%
Commercial	2,524	3.50%	3,009	3.60%	19.20%	4,778	5.40%	58.80%
Industrial	75	0.10%	87	0.10%	16.00%	143	0.20%	64.40%
Agricultural	2,534	3.50%	2,348	2.80%	-7.30%	2,869	3.20%	22.20%
Public/Semi-Public	1,272	1.80%	1,664	2.00%	30.80%	1,796	2.00%	7.90%
Vacant	10,079	13.90%	9,312	11.20%	-7.60%	8,042	9.10%	-13.60%
Total Parcels	72,153	100%	83,278	100.00%	15.40%	88,396	100.00%	6.15%

Source: Cumberland County Real Estate Assessment Listings – 1987, 1997, and 2002.

Figure 7.2



Source: Cumberland County Real Estate Assessment Listings 2002.

**TABLE 7.5
EXISTING LAND USE BY PARCEL
PERCENTAGE BY PLAN DEVELOPMENT SECTION
CUMBERLAND COUNTY - 2002**

Section	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Agricultural	Public / Semi-Public	Vacant	Total
Cumberland East	85.9	6.1	0.09	0.37	1.65	5.8	47.6
Cumberland Central	77.7	5.4	0.21	3.5	2.4	10.7	35.0
Cumberland West	68.6	3.5	0.26	10.5	2.3	14.8	17.4
Cumberland Total	80.1	5.4	0.2	3.2	2.0	9.1	100.0

Source: Cumberland County Real Estate Assessment Listings, 2002.

General Land-Use Characteristics

As illustrated on the Existing Land Use Map, the County's land use, in the eastern section adjacent to the Susquehanna River, is characterized by high density, mixed urban development. This area is primarily an extension of the Harrisburg City Urbanized Area. High density, mixed-use development consists of townhouse, apartment, and single-family dwellings, as well as commercial and industrial uses located on relatively small lots (10,000 sq. ft. or less).¹ This type of development is also evident in the older urban centers of Mechanicsburg, Carlisle, and Shippensburg Boroughs.

The large concentrations of medium-density residential development (10,000-20,000 sq. ft. lots) occur adjacent to the more intensely developed urban areas.² These are newer developments, which have located on the more developable land, particularly where public sewer and water services are available. The concentration of this type of density gradually decreases moving west towards Carlisle, where it increases again in connection with the higher density development associated with the Borough. There is limited medium-density residential development west of Carlisle. That which does exist, occurs near the Boroughs of Newville, Newburg, and Shippensburg. Some medium density development also occurs to the south of Carlisle near Mt. Holly Springs Borough and the Village of Boiling Springs.

Low-density residential development (lots greater than 20,000 sq. ft.) occurs throughout the County in random strip development fashion along existing road corridors.³ This type of residential development is predominant in the Cumberland Central and Cumberland West Plan Development Sections.

Isolated nodes of non-residential development occur throughout the County in a scattered fashion and adjacent to existing roadways. The greatest concentration of non-residential strip

¹ *Cumberland County Municipal Zoning Ordinances*, current as of 2003.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

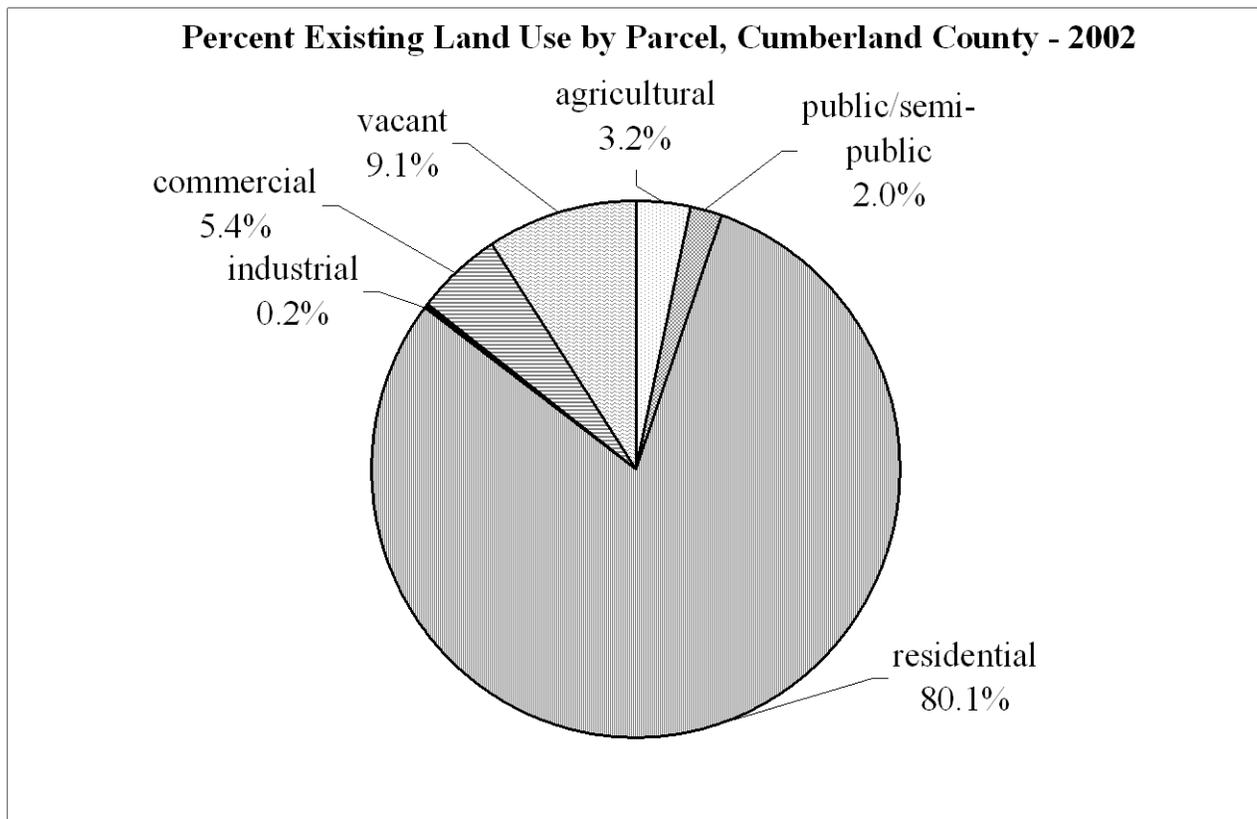
development occurs in the area between Camp Hill and Carlisle Boroughs, adjacent to U.S. Routes 11 and 15. Other concentrations occur along U.S. Route 11 and Pennsylvania Route 641 west of Carlisle. Concentrations of non-residential development also occur at the limited access intersections of Interstates 81 and 83, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

The central and western parts of the County, lying in the heart of the Cumberland Valley, contain a vast amount of agricultural activity. Much of the southern tier of the County is mountainous and forested. The majority of the forested and steeply sloped areas in the County are located along the northern and southern county boundaries, with very limited development activity.

Residential Land Use

According to the 2002 tax parcel information, approximately 80 percent of all land parcels in the County contain residences (Table 7.4, Figure 7.4). The single-family dwelling is the predominant type of residence. About 51 percent of these residential parcels are located in the Cumberland East Plan Development Section followed by Cumberland Central containing about 34 percent, and Cumberland West with only 15 percent.

Figure 7.4



The amount of acreage in residential use has increased more than any other land use between 1975 and 1997. During this period, approximately 11,125 acres were developed for residential use (Table 7.1).

Those municipalities containing the greatest number of residential parcels in 2002 (Table 7.3) are listed below:

Hampden Township
East Pennsboro Township
Carlisle Borough
South Middleton Township
Upper Allen Township

Based on historic land-use/parcel trends, between 1975 and 1987 the total number of residential parcels increased by 41%. As displayed in Table 7.4, between 1987 and 1997, the total number of residential parcels only increased by 20.1%. Between 1997 and 2002, the total number of residential parcels increased by 5.8%. If this number is extrapolated to 2007, the total number of residential parcels will increase by 11.7% between 1997 and 2007. This data indicates Cumberland County experienced a boom in residential development during the 1970s and 1980s, compared to previous decades. In addition, over the last 15 years it appears residential activity has continued to increase, but at a slower rate. This seems to indicate the County's housing growth has become more stable, providing a generally consistent number of new housing units each year.

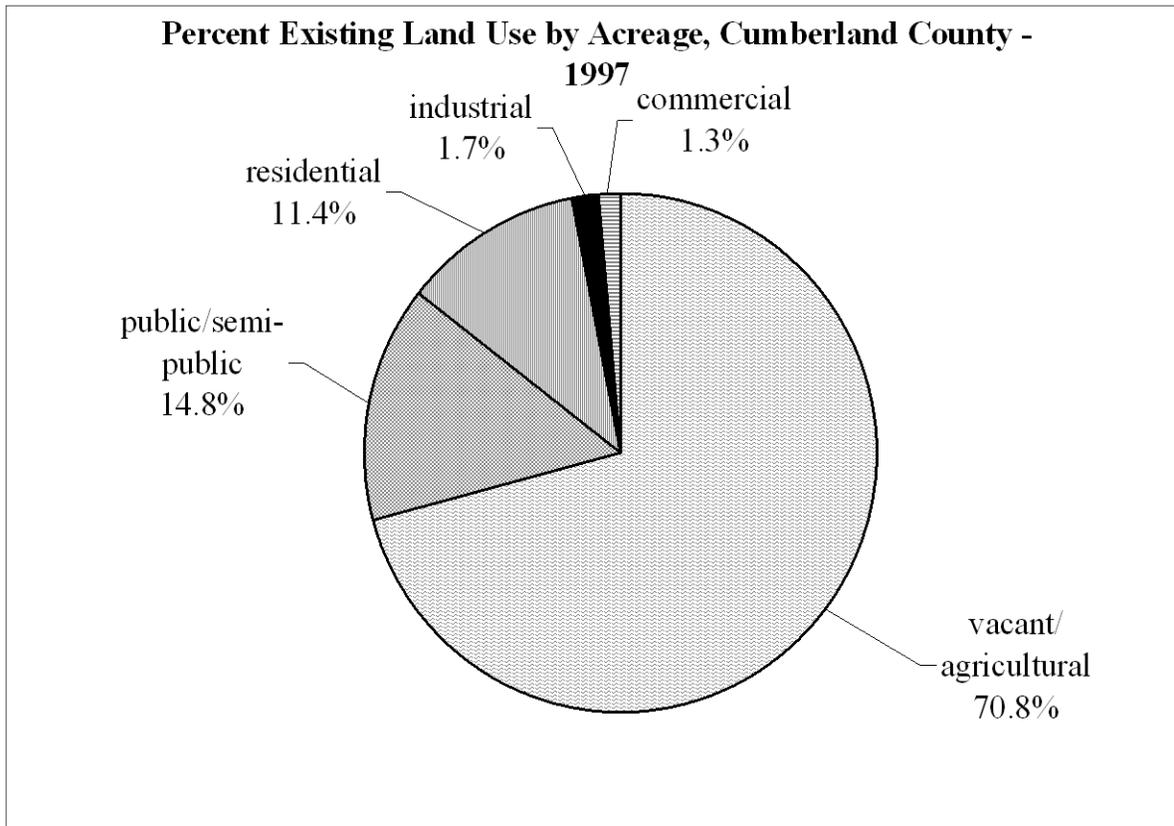
The number of new residential building permits issued between 1987 and 2002 supports this conclusion. During that period, new residential building permits consistently numbered between 1,000 and 1,500 almost every year.⁴ Between 2000 and 2001, the number of residential building permits issued in the County increased by only six permits - 1,126 in 2000 to 1,132 in 2001. In 2001, Hampden, East Pennsboro, Upper Allen, and Silver Spring Townships issued the most residential building permits.

Commercial Land Use

The acreage developed for commercial use has steadily increased between 1975 and 1997 (Table 7.1). In 1975, commercial uses occupied approximately 3,425 acres in the County. By 1997, the number of commercially developed acres had grown to 4,545, an increase of 1,120 acres. Nonetheless, commercially developed acreage in 1997 accounted for just 1.3 percent of the County's overall land use (Figure 7.5).

⁴ Cumberland County Planning Commission. *Annual Building Permit Survey*.

Figure 7.5



The Existing Land Use map divides the commercial land uses into two categories: service and retail (Figure 7.1). This provides a more detailed description of the County's commercial development and reflects the significant increase in service industries being established. (See Chapter 6, *Economy and Employment*). The Commercial Retail category is used to describe businesses involved in the sale of goods to consumers, while the Commercial Service category encompasses businesses that do not offer material merchandise in exchange for payment. Commercial Service uses include health, business, and personal services such as advertising, data processing, insurance, consulting, accounting, research, management, and automotive repair. In 1997, approximately 3.6% of all land parcels in the County contained some type of commercial use. In 2002, the percentage increased to approximately 5.4% of all land parcels in the County (Table 7.4, Figure 7.4). About 54% are located in the Cumberland East Plan Development Section, followed by Cumberland Central containing about 35%, and Cumberland West with 11% (Table 7.3). According to Table 7.3, those municipalities containing the greatest number of parcels in commercial use are listed below:

- Carlisle Borough
- Hampden Township
- Lower Allen Township
- East Pennsboro Township
- South Middleton Township

Between 1987 and 1997, it is estimated that the number of commercially developed land parcels increased by about 19.2% (Table 7.4). From 1997 to 2002, the number of commercial parcels continued to increase by more than 58% (Table 7.4). This large increase in just five years appears to indicate that the County experienced a boom in commercial activity during that time period. If this number is extrapolated to 2007, the total number of commercial parcels will increase by more than 117% between 1997 and 2007. If the economy remains stable, this appears to indicate a healthy economic future for Cumberland County.

Industrial Land Use

In 2002, the Cumberland County Tax Assessment Office classified about 143 individual land parcels in the County as being industrial in use (Table 7.3). This amounts to about .2 % of all the land parcels in the County. Approximately 45.5% of these parcels are located in the Cumberland Central Plan Development Section, followed by Cumberland West with 28%, and Cumberland East with 26.5%. Most of the industrial parcels are located in the Central Section due to the County's established highway system. The intersection of Interstate 81 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike, in the center of the County, has attracted the distribution industry to locate there. The almost equal number of industrial parcels in the Cumberland East and Cumberland West Plan Development Sections appear to indicate that industrial activity is increasing in the west where vacant land is available. In contrast, the rate of industrial activity in the mostly developed eastern section appears to have decreased.

According to Table 7.3, those municipalities containing the greatest number of industrially developed parcels are:

- Carlisle Borough
- Shippensburg Borough
- Silver Spring Township
- South Middleton Township
- Hampden Township

Between 1987 and 2002, the total number of industrial parcels has greatly increased (Table 7.4). The number of industrial parcels increased by 16% between 1987 and 1997. The percentage increased again by 64.4% between 1997 and 2002, a large increase in a five-year span of time. If this number were extrapolated to 2007, in order to compare it to the previous 10 years, the number of industrial parcels will increase by more than 128% between 1997 and 2007. The rapid increase of industrial parcels between 1997 and 2002 appears to reflect the recent new development of distribution related industries.

Table 7.5 describes the land use parcel percentages of the total parcels in each Plan Development Section. Of the three Plan Development Sections, Cumberland West had the largest percentage of parcels in industrial use with 0.26%, followed closely by Cumberland Central with a total of 0.21%. Cumberland East has approximately 0.09% of its total parcels in industrial use (Table 7.5). These figures generally characterize the historic development of the County. Population density and residential uses are the greatest in the Cumberland East Plan Development Section and generally decrease to the west. With the historically large residential population in the

Eastern Section, the number of industrial parcels is a smaller percentage of the total in that section.

The total acreage in industrial land uses has significantly increased during the period from 1975 to 1997. During that 22-year period, industrial acreage increased from approximately 1,878 to 6,273 acres (Table 7.1). The industrial land use category had the greatest percentage increase (234%) in acreage during this period.

Vacant/Agricultural Land Use

In 2002, vacant or unused land parcels comprise about 9.1% of all the land parcels in the County. Approximately 41% of the parcels in this land-use category are located in the Cumberland Central Plan Development Section, followed by Cumberland East with about 31%, and Cumberland West with about 28% (Table 7.3).

Those municipalities containing the greatest number of vacant parcels in 2002 are the Townships of Silver Spring, East Pennsboro, Hampden, and South Middleton. These are leading growth municipalities. A sizeable number of their respective vacant parcels have been created through recent subdivision activity and are not yet developed.

For the purpose of determining the amount of total acreage in vacant or undeveloped land, agricultural uses were included in this category. Table 7.1 illustrates the significant loss of vacant/agricultural land in Cumberland County between 1975 and 1997. During that time, approximately 26,000 acres of open space was developed.

The 1992 Census of Agriculture data indicates that there were 940 farms in Cumberland County, having a total farm acreage of 141,919 acres or about 40% of the County's total area. The 1997 Census of Agriculture (the most recent census for lands in agricultural use) indicated an increase in the number of farms to 1,035, with a total of 152,000 acres in farmland. (See Chapter 6, *Economy and Employment*). By comparing 1992 with 1997 Census of Agriculture data, the number of farms increased by about 10.1% and the total farm acreage increased by about 7.1%. The reason for the increase in farm acreage between 1992 and 1997 is due to a change in the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code that defined agricultural activities. The definition now includes certain forestry and timber-harvesting operations.

The number of agricultural parcels has been steadily decreasing since the mid 1980s in Cumberland County. In 1987, about 3.5 percent of all land parcels in the County were used for agricultural activities (Figure 7.4). By 1997, that percentage had decreased to 2.8% (Table 7.4). Approximately 56% of these parcels are located in the Cumberland West Plan Development Section, followed by Cumberland Central containing 38%, and Cumberland East with about 5.4% (Figure 7.2). According to the tax parcel data, those municipalities having the greatest number of agricultural parcels in 2002 are the Townships of South Middleton, Southampton, Silver Spring, Hopewell, and West Pennsboro (Table 7.3). The loss of a certain amount of open space is unavoidable, but the objective should be to preserve those areas considered most important. Where and how land is developed or preserved depends on many factors. Each situation has its own issues to be considered. Generally, this plan encourages the preservation of

prime agricultural soils, wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes, corridors identified in the County Greenways Study, and sites indicated in the Natural Areas Inventory.

Public/Semi-Public Land Use

Examples of public/semi-public land uses include utilities, municipal administration and maintenance, state forest and game lands, state park lands, hospitals, public schools and parks, public libraries, firehouses, police stations (tax-exempt parcels), cemeteries, and churches. In 2002, approximately 2% of all land parcels in the County contain either public or semi-public land uses (Table 7.4 and Figure 7.4).

About 41% of these parcels are located in the Cumberland Central Plan Development Section, followed by Cumberland East containing 39%, and Cumberland West with 20% (Table 7.3). It is estimated that between 1975 and 1987 the number of public/semi-public land parcels increased by about 105%. Between 1987 and 1997, the number of public/semi-public parcels continued to increase by more than 30.8%. From 1997 to 2002, the percent of public/semi public land parcels continued to increase again by 7.9% (Table 7.4). The largest single areas in this land use category are contained in the State owned forestlands, game lands, parks, and Fish Commission Lands.

The number of acres in public and semi-public uses greatly increased between 1975 and 1997. This land use category increased in area by approximately 9,537 acres during this period (Table 7.1).