



Chapter I

Community Profile

Introduction

Lower Frederick 2040 serves as Lower Frederick Township's long-range plan and establishes community goals for public facilities, infrastructure, land use, and community development. This plan recommends policies and programs to achieve these goals and realize the township's vision for its future. This plan is a supplement to the *Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan Update (2014)*, building on its recommendations and describing strategies for the local application and implementation of these policies within the township.

The four main topic areas of *Lower Frederick 2040* are:

- Natural Environment and Open Space
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Village Development and Community Character

The chapters covering each topic area list the community goals associated with that topic area and provide background information. For each topic area there is a list of policy recommendations and the community objectives they support. This chapter summarizes the process by which the plan was written and introduces the township with historic background, and current demographics and land use information. The final chapter addresses the implementation of the plan and presents the full list of recommendations. The implementation chapter identifies potential funding sources and partner organizations that may contribute to the implementation of this comprehensive plan in addition to the government departments and boards of the township that will lead the implementation of each item.

Lower Frederick 2040 Planning Process

Lower Frederick Township began the process of creating a comprehensive plan in 2018. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was first convened in December of 2018 to lay out the objectives of the township's comprehensive plan and develop strategies for public outreach and participation. The steering committee consisted of seven residents of the township: Charles Yeiser, Ernie Schmitt, Philip A. Smith, Pam Reich, Crystal Gilchrist, Tarek Osman, and Amy Sacks.

On June 19, 2019, the township held a public outreach workshop. During this workshop, attendees from the public helped to identify community issues, preferences, and goals. Input from this event was used to develop a vision for the comprehensive plan. The event featured poster stations covering the following topics: village development and community character; transportation and infrastructure; preservation of natural resources, open spaces, and agricultural preservation; and finance and paying for infrastructure.

Over the summer of 2020, the township conducted a public survey in support of the *Lower Frederick 2040* comprehensive plan. The survey was initiated as public outreach to reengage residents in the comprehensive planning process after in-person meetings were curtailed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The survey gauged public sentiment regarding land use, housing, historic properties, and commercial

development. The survey was prepared on surveymonkey.com for online outreach, with hardcopies available at the municipal building. The survey was published in mid-July and responses were collected through the end of September. In total, the survey collected 193 responses with 188 responses coming from township residents.

Open House – More information will be included after this event is held, on May 6, 2021.

Relationship to Other Plans

Montco2040: A Shared Vision

The Montgomery County comprehensive plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*, was adopted in 2015 and provides an overall land use and growth management framework for the county and provides guidance on multi-municipal and regional issues such as trails, flooding and roadway improvements. *Montco2040* is structured around the implementation of three primary themes: connected communities, sustainable places, and vibrant economies.

The future land use plan that *Montco2040* describes for Lower Frederick is consistent with the township's future land use plan, designating the preservation of open spaces, farmland, woodlands, and stream corridors and identifying areas where residential and commercial development would be appropriate.

Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan of the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Planning Commission (CPVRPC) was updated in 2014. The *Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan* is the comprehensive plan for the member communities of the CPVRPC: boroughs Colledgeville, Trappe, and Schwenksville and Perkiomen, Upper Frederick, and Lower Frederick townships. The regional comprehensive plan set goals to ensure management of future development; encourage more livable communities; encourage investment in open space; and promote responsible integration of historical, cultural, and natural amenities with new development.

The township's comprehensive plan supports and complements the recommendations of the regional comprehensive plan and is consistent with the region's future land use plan. The recommendations of *Lower Frederick 2040* support the implementation of the regional comprehensive plan's recommendations for open space preservation, recreation, future development, and transportation improvements.

Neighboring Plans

Upper Frederick Township – In November 2020, Upper Frederick Township adopted the *Upper Frederick Comprehensive Plan Update*. Like *Lower Frederick 2040*, the Upper Frederick comprehensive plan supports the *Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan* and establishes local implementation strategies to address the township's priorities. The Upper Frederick future land use plan supports the regional comprehensive plan, which designates the majority of the township as Rural Resource Conservation Area and the Future Growth Area along the Big Road Corridor. Where Upper Frederick borders Lower Frederick, land uses are generally consistent with those across the township boundary. The Upper Frederick plan identifies greenway conservation and recreational trail goals in riparian corridors that are shared with Lower Frederick.

Limerick Township – Limerick Township adopted its latest comprehensive plan in 2009. Among its other goals, the township's plan seeks to direct development to growth areas, revitalize and maintain village centers, and preserve resource conservation areas. The growth management recommendations of the *Limerick Comprehensive Plan* designate all township land abutting Lower Frederick as resource

conservation areas. The existing and future land uses along this shared border are fully consistent with those in Lower Frederick. This plan, with Limerick's *Greenways and Trails Master Plan*, supports the Sunrise Trail, a proposed county trail that would also pass through Lower Frederick.

Upper Salford Township – Upper Salford, Lower Frederick's neighbor across Perkiomen Creek, is a member of the Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission (IVRPC). Adopted in 2015, the *Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan* set goals for the region, including: protect historic, cultural, and natural resources; implement effective growth management techniques; encourage farmland preservation; and direct sewer and water infrastructure improvements to designated growth areas. The regional land use plan identifies most of Upper Salford as Rural Resource Area, though an area partly abutting Lower Frederick is designated as Village Conservation Area. This area includes Salford village and is largely screened from the boundary with Lower Frederick by public open space. The conditions in the Salford village area are similar to those around Spring Mount, where Lower Frederick's village abuts Rural Resource Area in Upper Salford. The future land use plan of the *Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan* is consistent with existing and planned land uses in Lower Frederick.

Lower Frederick Open Space Plan

The open space plan of Lower Frederick Township was adopted in 2006 and updated in 2015. This document set goals for the township to preserve natural resources and scenic character, maximize active recreation opportunities, facilitate pedestrian and bicycle mobility, preserve agricultural heritage, and accommodate efficient growth. The open space plan and any subsequent updates to it act as a component of the township's comprehensive plan, developing goals and implementation strategies specific to the natural environment, parks, and open space of Lower Frederick.

Background

Location

Lower Frederick Township occupies 8.2 square miles of rugged land in the Perkiomen Valley in western Montgomery County. The township is located on the west bank of the Perkiomen Creek and borders five other municipalities: Upper Frederick, Limerick, Perkiomen, and Upper Salford townships and Schwenksville borough.

History

Prior to the founding of Pennsylvania, much of the land of the Delaware watershed was part of Lenapehoking, the home of the Lenape tribe. The Unami, a subgroup of the larger Lenape tribe, lived along the Schuylkill River and its tributaries, including the area of Lower Frederick Township. Many places and geographic features in the region still bear the names given to them by the Lenape.



Built on Swamp Creek in 1767, Sunrise Mill is located in a county park that straddles the boundaries between Upper Frederick, Lower Frederick, and Limerick townships. The mill is an excellent example of the region's early agriculture and industry.

In the early 18th century, German and English immigrants became the first Europeans to buy land and establish farms in the area that would become Lower Frederick. In 1731, Frederick Township was founded. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, farming prevailed in the area while other local industries grew, including mills powered by the township's numerous creeks. The mineral resources of the township supplied quarries, brickworks, potters, and mining throughout the 1800s. In 1919, Frederick Township was divided into Upper Frederick and Lower Frederick townships, the last of Montgomery County's municipalities to be incorporated.

Lower Frederick's Delphi and Spring Mount villages developed into a resort area as the Reading Railroad's Perkiomen Branch made them a popular destination for Philadelphians. In the latter half of the 20th century, population growth and suburbanization in the metropolitan region reached Lower Frederick, adding to its population and transforming it into the rural bedroom community it is today.

Demographics

Since its incorporation in 1919, Lower Frederick has grown from a sparsely-populated farming community to a more residential area with the arrival of suburban development. During the township's fastest period of growth from 1980 to 2000 the population of Lower Frederick doubled. In recent years, the township has generally followed prominent regional and national demographic trends, seeing decreases in average household size and increases in the median age, educational attainment, and income level.

Population

In 2018, Lower Frederick had a population of 4,881 people. Over the past 50 years, Lower Frederick's population has nearly doubled, with most of that growth occurring during the 1980s and 1990s (fig. 1.1). Population growth in the township has otherwise occurred at a much slower pace. Population forecasts prepared in 2015 by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission project that growth will continue at an average rate of 0.4% per year. This projection estimates that Lower Frederick will have a population of 5,355 people in the year 2040 (fig. 1.2).

Year	Population	Change	Average Annual Growth Rate
2018	4,881	80	0.2%
2010	4,801	6	0.0%
2000	4,795	1,399	4.1%
1990	3,396	1,017	4.3%
1980	2,379	-136	-0.5%
1970	2,515	407	1.9%
1960	2,108	488	3.0%
1950	1,620	521	4.7%
1940	1,099	201	2.2%
1930	898		

Figure 1.1 Lower Frederick Population Change (Decennial Census and ACS 5-Year Estimates)

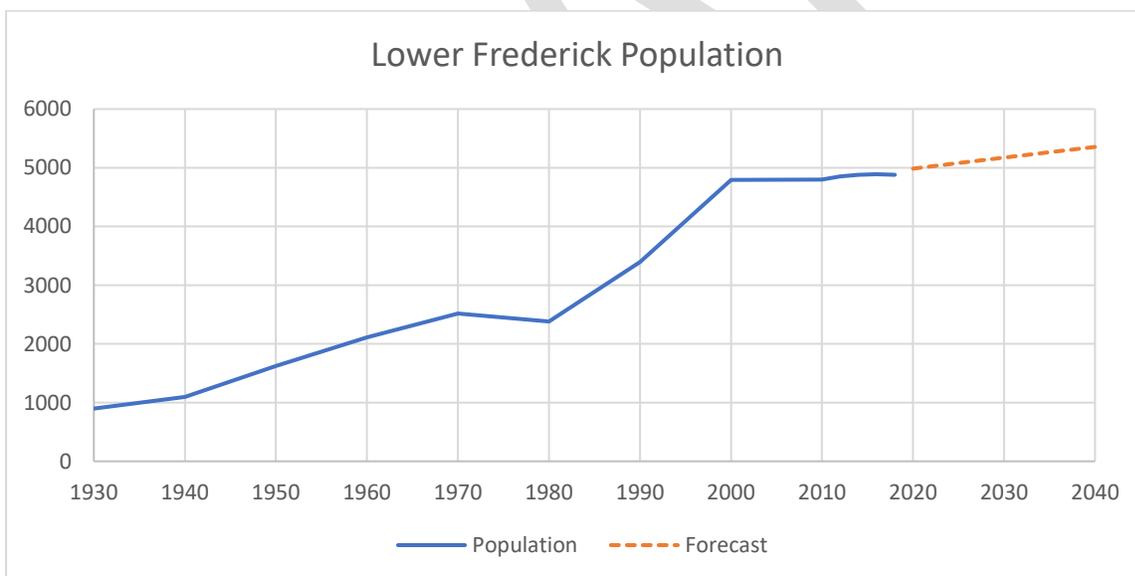


Figure 1.2 Lower Frederick Population Growth and Forecast (Decennial Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates, DVRPC Population Forecast)

Age and Sex

An age pyramid divides a population by sex and age, to show its composition. The age pyramid of the township and the county (fig. 1.3) shows that each have a similar distribution of ages across their populations. Each have distinct age ranges that are proportionally larger within the population. These larger age groups appear in the ranges of 5 to 14 years, and 40 to 54 years.

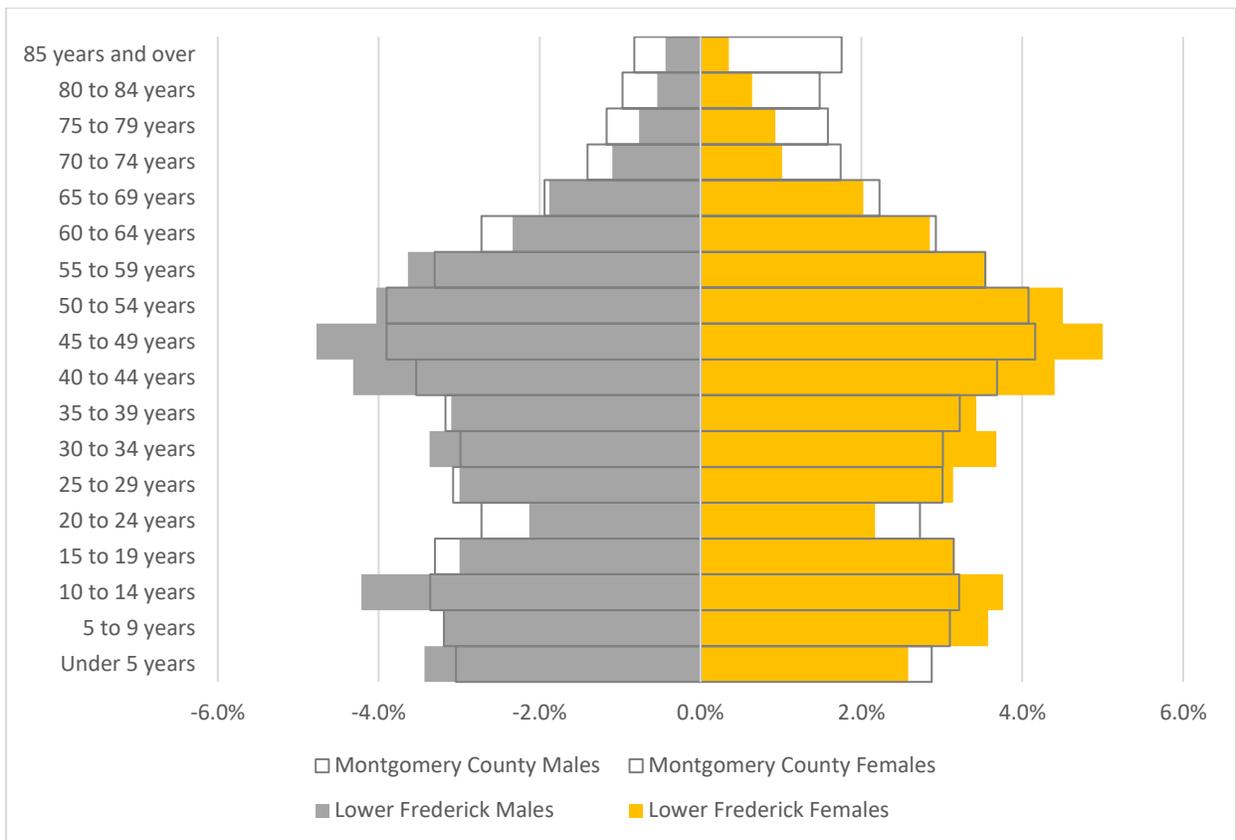


Figure 1.3 Age Pyramid (2010 Decennial Census)

In 1990, the median age of Lower Frederick’s population was 32.5, while Montgomery County had a median age of 35.8 years. Since then, the median age of both the township and county have risen. The median age of Lower Frederick residents in 2018 was 39.6 years, while the county overall had a slightly older median age, 41.3 years. Lower Frederick’s younger population, relative to the county, is reflected in the township’s proportionally larger share of residents under 18 years of age and proportionally smaller share of residents 60 years or over. Neighboring townships, Limerick, Perkiomen, Upper Frederick, and Upper Salford share this characteristic to a lesser or greater degree.

	Montgomery County	Lower Frederick	Limerick	Perkiomen	Schwenksville	Upper Frederick	Upper Salford
Population	823,823	4,881	18,990	9,163	1,422	3,608	3,353
Percent under 18 years	21.7%	23.9%	24.8%	27.6%	22.7%	23.6%	30.7%
Percent 60 years or over	24.2%	18.7%	18.3%	14.3%	26.1%	22.7%	24.3%

Figure 1.4 Age groups comparison (2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Household sizes in Lower Frederick have been decreasing in recent decades. The average household in the township is now 2.65 people, down from 2.77 in the 2000 census. While this shrinking of the township's average household size may represent an ongoing trend, average household sizes in Montgomery County and nationwide have stabilized between 2.5 and 2.6 in recent years after declining for decades. If Lower Frederick undergoes the same transition from declining average household size to long-term stability in that measure, it will allow for greater certainty when making population and housing projections.

In 2018, the share of households with one or more person under 18 years in Lower Frederick was 7 percentage points larger than the share of households that had one or more person 60 years or over. This situation was reversed at the county level, where the share of households with one or more person 60 years or over was 8.9 percentage points larger than the share of households with children. One-person households are significantly more common countywide than they are in Lower Frederick. The share of one-person households in Montgomery County is 9.5 percentage points higher than in Lower Frederick.

	Montgomery County	Lower Frederick
Households with one or more people under 18 years	32.1%	36.4%
Households with one or more people 60 years and over	41.0%	29.4%
Householder living alone	25.8%	16.3%

Figure 1.5 Household composition comparison (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Diversity

Like many rural communities, the population of Lower Frederick has less racial diversity than the county as a whole. In 2018, minority groups made up 20.6% of Montgomery County's population, but accounted for just 6.9% of the township's population. Across the county, racial and ethnic diversity has increased in recent years. The upward trend in diversity is seen in Lower Frederick, too, though generally at a slower rate than at the county level.

	Montgomery County		Lower Frederick	
	2010	2018	2010	2018
White alone	81.1%	79.4%	94.3%	93.1%
Black or African American alone	8.7%	9.1%	2.0%	1.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
Asian alone	6.4%	7.5%	1.4%	2.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race alone	1.6%	1.3%	1.0%	1.4%
Two or More Races	1.9%	2.5%	1.0%	1.0%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	4.3%	5.0%	3.0%	6.9%

Figure 1.6 Racial and ethnic composition (2010 Decennial Census, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Education

A community's educational attainment level can indicate the community's overall income potential and economic status. Levels of educational attainment in Lower Frederick are comparable to those countywide, with 95.9% of Lower Frederick adults aged 25 years or older having graduated high school or earned a GED to the county's 94.2%. Among higher levels of education, however, Lower Frederick has a smaller share than at the county level. In 2018, 34.4% of Lower Frederick adults 25 aged years or older held a Bachelor's degree or higher, whereas this figure for Montgomery County reached 48.7%.

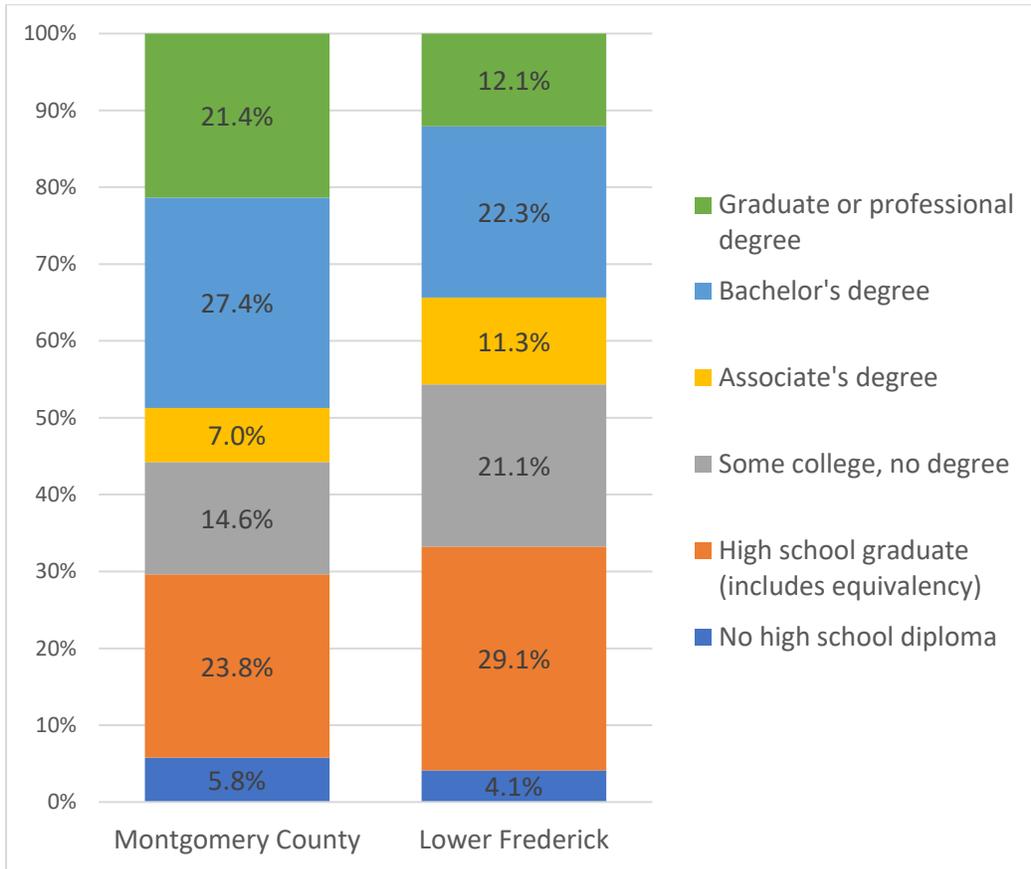


Figure 1.7 Educational attainment of people 25 Years or Older (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Income

In Lower Frederick, the median household income in 2018 was \$85,994, approximately 2.5% lower than that of Montgomery County. In that same year, the per capita income of Lower Frederick was \$37,238. This amount is nearly 20% lower than the county's per capita income.

	Montgomery County	Lower Frederick
Per capita income	\$ 46,199	\$ 37,238
Median household income	\$ 88,166	\$ 85,994
Mean household income	\$ 120,859	\$ 98,675

Figure 1.8 Income comparison (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

The disparity between the township and county’s per capita income is partly due to Lower Frederick’s larger median household size, but a larger share of this disparity is attributable to the county’s larger mean household income. Lower Frederick Township has relatively fewer households than the county that earn \$150,000 or more. A greater share of households in Lower Frederick have earnings in middle income levels.

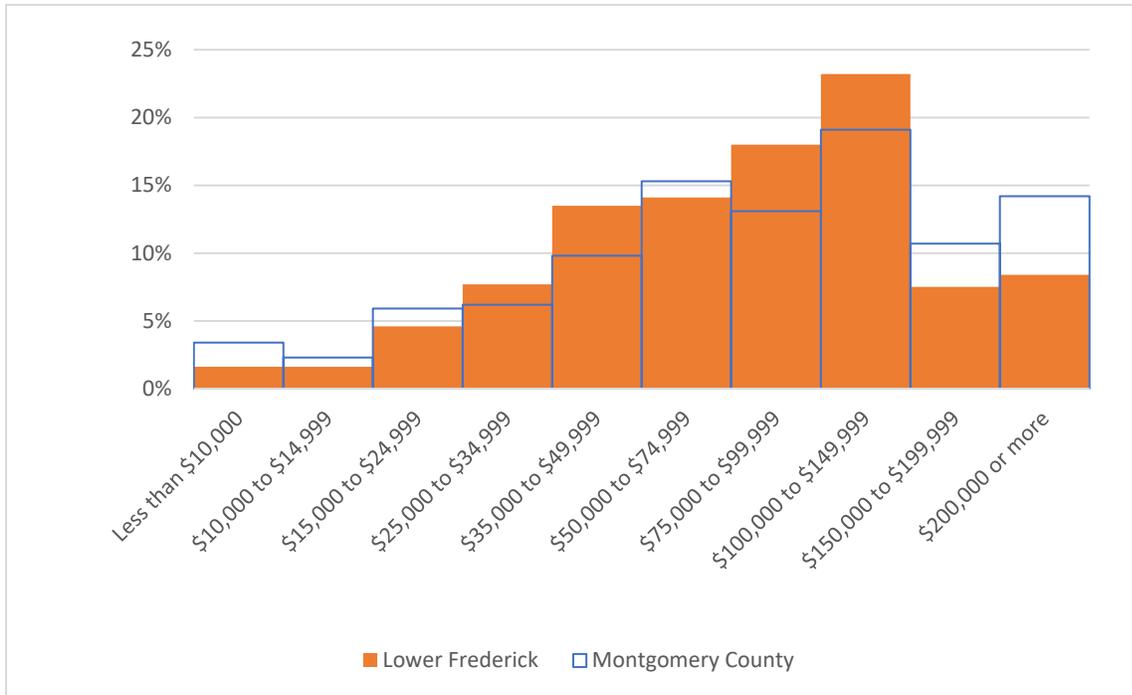


Figure 1.9 Household income comparison (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Despite having comparable shares of households at lower income levels, estimated poverty rates in Lower Frederick were higher than those across Montgomery County. The share of families with income below poverty level was 4 percentage points higher in Lower Frederick than in Montgomery County in 2018.

	Montgomery County	Lower Frederick
Percent of residents below poverty level	5.9% - 6.5%	5.1% - 12.9%
Percent of families below poverty level	3.8% - 4.4%	4.0% - 12.2%

Figure 1.10 Poverty rate comparison (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Employment

In recent years, the unemployment rate in Montgomery County has generally trended downward from its peak in 2010, reaching 4.6% in 2018. In 2018, the unemployment rate reported in Lower Frederick was higher, at 6.8%. In 2018, the labor force participation of residents 16 years and over was 71.9% in Lower Frederick- higher than either Montgomery County or Pennsylvania.

	Pennsylvania	Montgomery County	Lower Frederick
Employment rate	94.2%	95.4%	93.2%
Unemployment rate	5.8%	4.6%	6.8%
Population 16 years and over in labor force	62.7%	68.3%	71.9%

Figure 1.11 Employment rate comparison (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

The list of employment sectors represented among Lower Frederick residents is broadly similar to the county level. At the township and county level, Management, business, science, and arts sector occupations account for the largest share of jobs held by residents, followed by jobs categorized under natural resources, construction, and maintenance. Though they are not the largest employment sectors in the township or county, Production, transportation, and material moving occupations and sales and office occupations are where the greatest differences between the township and county labor forces can be found. In 2018, the share of Montgomery County workers in production, transportation, and material moving occupations was 61% larger than that sector's representation in the labor force of the township. The share of the Lower Frederick labor force in sales and office occupations was 48% larger than that sector's representation at the county level.

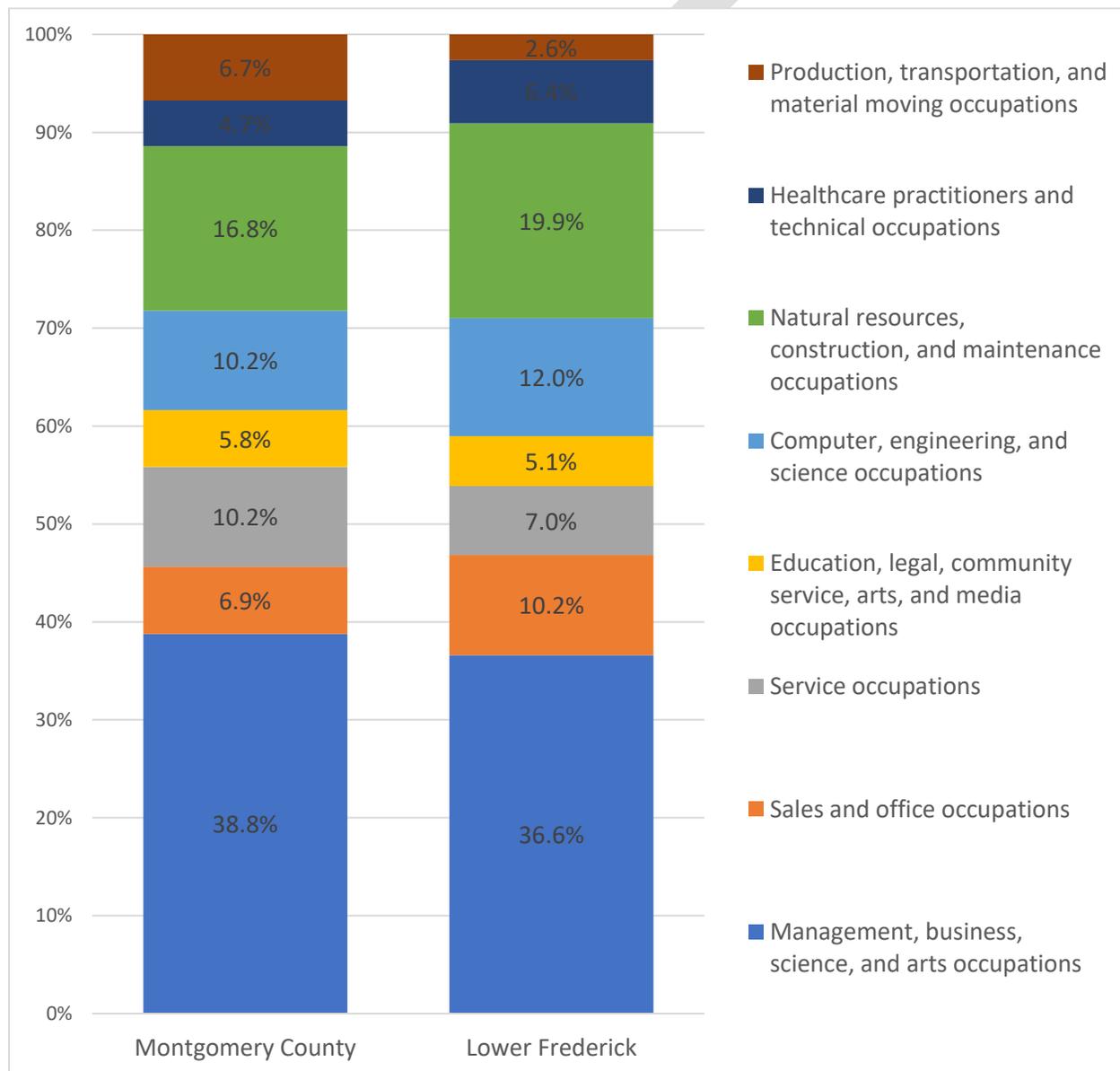


Figure 1.12 Residents' Employment Sector (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Overall, Lower Frederick is a net exporter of jobs, meaning that a larger number of workers live in the township and commute to a job outside of it than live outside of the township and commute to a job in the township. In 2018, 609 people worked in Lower Frederick but lived elsewhere; 71 people both resided and worked in the township, and 2,587 residents of the township were employed outside of the township. This imbalance between commutes into and out of the township, along with the ratio of jobs and population characterizes Lower Frederick as a bedroom community. In 2018, there were approximately 7.2 residents for every job located in Lower Frederick, giving the community a jobs to population ratio of 0.14. Small, neighboring communities Upper Frederick, Upper Salford, and Schwenksville have similarly low ratios, whereas Limerick Township's ratio of 0.64 identifies it as a larger employment center than Lower Frederick.

	Lower Frederick	Limerick	Perkiomen	Schwenksville	Upper Frederick	Upper Salford
Population	4,881	18,874	9,186	1,483	3,584	3,366
Jobs	680	12,011	2,998	356	470	621
Jobs/Population Ratio	0.14	0.64	0.33	0.24	0.13	0.18

Figure 1.13 Jobs and Populations comparison (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)



Figure 1.14 Worker Inflow-Outflow Diagram (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

In Lower Frederick, the largest employment sector is Educational Services, accounting for over a quarter of all jobs in the township. Retail Trade is the second-largest share of jobs located in the township, and is a prominent employment sector throughout Montgomery County.

Jobs in Lower Frederick Township by Employment Sector	Percentage
Educational Services	26.0%
Retail Trade	22.5%
Construction	14.1%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	12.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	5.9%
Other (less than 5%)	19.0%

Figure 1.15 Largest employment sectors in Lower Frederick (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Existing Land Use

Currently, the main land use in Lower Frederick is residential properties, accounting for nearly half of the township's area. The second largest category of land use, which groups agriculture and undeveloped land, makes up another third of the township's area. Open space, a category that includes both public and privately-owned land that is permanently preserved from development, covers 10% of the township. Together, these three categories cover 91% of the township and define the appearance and identity of Lower Frederick as a primarily rural residential community. All other land, including commercial, institutional, and utility uses add to less than 10% of the township.

Land Use Categories (2021)	Acres	Percentage
Residential	2,398.4	48.0%
Commercial and Industrial	122.5	2.5%
Open Space	512.4	10.2%
Agriculture and Undeveloped	1,663.8	33.3%
Institutional and Utility	303.1	6.1%
Township Total	5,000.2	100.0%

Figure 1.16 Land use category table

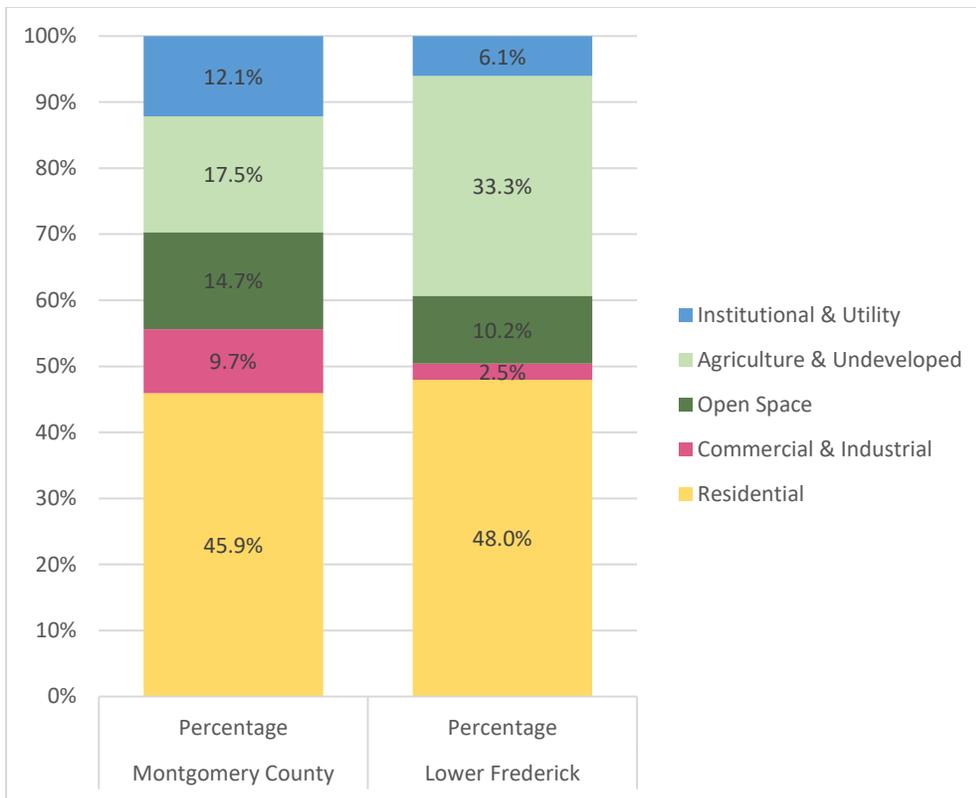


Figure 1.17 Land use categories area comparison

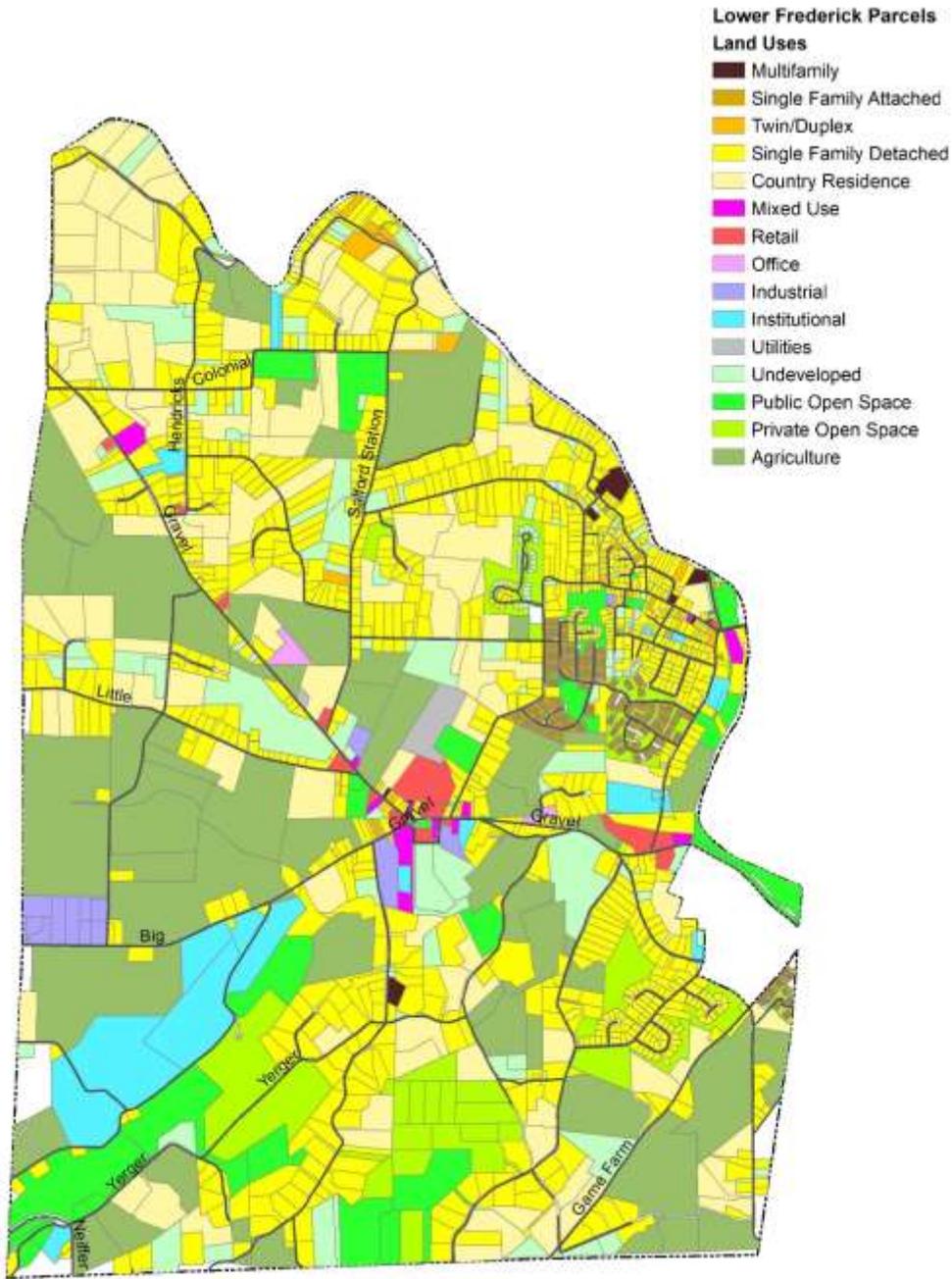


Figure 1.18 Lower Frederick land uses, July 2020

Residential

Residential land makes up 48% of the township's area. Every type of residential land use can be found in Lower Frederick with the sole exception of mobile home parks. The largest fraction of the township's residential land is composed of single-family detached lots under 5 acres in size. Together, these

properties account for 28.3% of the township. Another 17.7% of the township is classified as “country residence”, single-family detached homes on lots five acres in size or larger.

The remaining residential land use types, single-family attached, twin or duplex, and multifamily account for less than two percent of the township’s area, covering a combined 94.9 acres.

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent of township
Single Family Detached	1417.1	28.3%
Country Residence	886.4	17.7%
Single Family Attached	56.1	1.1%
Twin/Duplex	25.7	0.5%
Multifamily	13.1	0.3%
Mobile Home Park	0.0	0.0%

Figure 1.19

Commercial and Industrial

All commercial and industrial land uses in Lower Frederick, combined, make up only 2.5% of Lower Frederick’s area. These land use types are commonly places of employment. Industrial land uses cover 49.4 acres and represents the largest land use type in this category. Retail accounts for another 42.2 acres and represents the largest commercial land use type in the township. Mixed-use properties include a residential use in combination with a commercial use and are categorized as a commercial land use type. Mixed use properties can be a prominent feature in village areas, but cover less than one percent of the township. Office properties occupy only 8.2 acres in Lower Frederick and make up the smallest area of any land use present in the township.

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent of township
Industrial	49.4	1.0%
Retail	42.2	0.8%
Mixed Use	22.8	0.5%
Office	8.2	0.2%

Figure 1.20

Industrial uses in Lower Frederick are concentrated in the township’s LI Limited Industrial zoning district, located on the western edge of the township, in an area bounded by Big Road, Simmons Road, Goshenhoppen Creek, and the border with Upper Frederick Township. The other commercial types are more widespread in the township, but there are significant clusters in Zieglerville and Delphi.

Open Space

The open space category includes two land use types, representing the ownership of the open space. In Lower Frederick Township, public and private open space is present in nearly even amounts and each account for roughly five percent of the township. Public open space, including township-, county-, and state-owned parks and open spaces, is the larger of the two open space types. Private open spaces, mainly consisting of open spaces reserved in residential developments, account for the township’s remaining

open spaces. Whether private or public, open space hosts a large portion of the community’s natural areas and, as permanently-protected properties, will preserve them for years to come.

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent of township
Public Open Space	260.2	5.2%
Private Open Space	252.3	5.0%

Figure 1.21

Public and private open spaces alike are widely dispersed across the township. Although some private open spaces and public parks can be found in more developed areas, these land uses are mainly found in wooded, upland areas of Lower Frederick. Examples of this land use category are described in greater detail in the Natural Environment and Open Space chapter of this plan.

Agricultural and Undeveloped

Agriculture and undeveloped properties are grouped here because these two land use types are uniquely sensitive to development pressure. Typically large properties with comparatively low land prices make them appealing sites for land development. Over the past fifty years, these land uses have shrunk from 80% of the township in 1970, to 33% in 2020.

After single-family detached housing, agriculture makes up the second-largest land use in Lower Frederick. These properties cover more than a quarter of the township and many of them continue the township’s centuries-old tradition of farming. Farmland preservation can help to alleviate development pressure and maintain this culturally and historically significant land use. Many properties in the township are a part of the Act 319 Clean & Green preferential tax assessment program. Properties enrolled in this program may be in active use as a farmland or acting as an agricultural or forest reserve. All properties enrolled in the Clean & Green program are identified as agriculture land use.

Despite the township’s long history of settlement and recent population growth, nearly 400 acres of the township is currently undeveloped. This land use category identifies land that has no homes, businesses, or other identified uses. The majority of Lower Frederick’s undeveloped land is located in stream valleys and other areas with rugged terrain that makes development challenging. Undeveloped land covers nearly 8% of the township and contains much of Lower Frederick’s most sensitive natural areas.

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent of township
Agriculture	1268.4	25.4%
Undeveloped	395.4	7.9%

Figure 1.22

Institutional and Utility

Public buildings, churches, and cemeteries are common examples of institutional land uses found in Lower Frederick. This land use totals 5.7% of the township's area and occurs most commonly as isolated properties that are not located near other institutional uses. Prominent examples of this land use type include Saint Mary Catholic Church, Lower Frederick Fire Company, and Perkiomen Valley Middle School West, which has a 160 acre campus.



Saint Mary Catholic Church, on Spring Mount Road, is a prominent examples of an institutional land use in the township.

In Lower Frederick, utility facilities make up one of the township's smallest land uses. These properties host infrastructure that supply the area with drinking water and treat the community's wastewater.

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Institutional	283.2	5.7%
Utility	19.9	0.4%

Figure 1.23

Land Use Trends

In recent decades, the most prominent trend in Lower Frederick's land use has been the gradual transformation of agricultural and undeveloped land to open space and residential properties. This ongoing process is also seen in neighboring townships and throughout the region. This has accompanied the growth of suburban job centers and road development that has made these employment areas more accessible to rural communities. In the township, this development trend has slowed since 2000. Recently

proposed residential developments in the Zieglerville area represent a continuation of the trend and would convert undeveloped properties into residential land and open space.

DRAFT