

Report to Patton Township Board of Supervisors Housing Task Force Meeting of February 16, 2021

The Patton Township Housing Task Force met by zoom for 90 minutes on February 16, 2021. Present were 17 Task Force members, Patton Township Manager Doug Erickson and Mark Boeckel, Principal Planner with the Centre Regional Planning Agency.(CRPA)

A screen capture of the Task Force members on zoom was taken to provide to *Town and Gown Magazine* for an article they are planning for their March 2021 issue.



Zoning is a Tool to Implement Planning

Housing Task Force Co-Chair Nicole Pollock, Senior Planner CRPA, presented a basic overview of how planning and zoning relate. Planning is simply “what to do and how to do it” and zoning is a tool to implement planning.

Patton Township, as part of the Centre Region, is guided by a **Comprehensive Plan** that was adopted by Patton Township and each of the other municipalities within the Centre Region.* The Comprehensive Plan is a general framework for regional development and is considered the backbone for future planning.

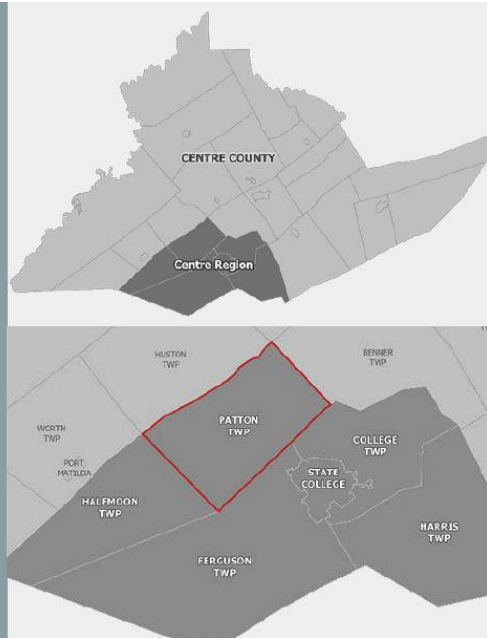
- The **Centre Region** consists of the State College Borough and five townships—Patton, College, Harris, Ferguson and Half Moon Townships.

The Following are highlights of Nicole Pollock's Presentation:

The Centre Region Comprehensive Plan

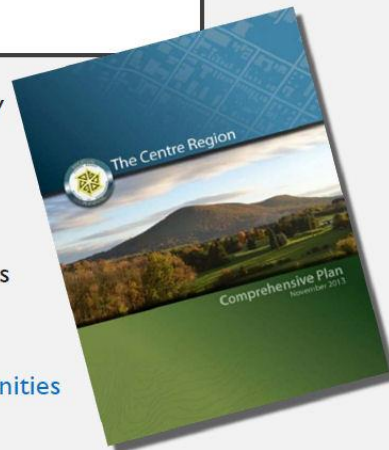
THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- General framework for regional development
- At least ten-year plan (2013 most recent)
- Policy-level
 - Implemented through local actions
 - Plan comes first – zoning implements



MAJOR POLICY THEMES WITHIN THE PLAN

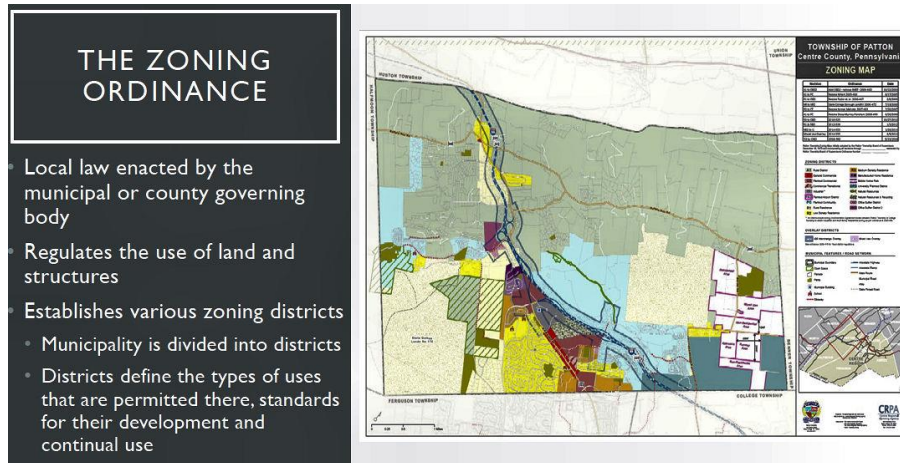
- The location/purpose of the Regional Growth Boundary
- Preservation of the agricultural industry
- Protection of natural resources
- Improved connectivity amongst all transportation modes
- Protection of residential neighborhoods
- Encouraging housing variety, affordable housing opportunities



- Directs highest density growth to occur inside the “**Regional Growth Boundary**” (RGB)
- **Are Pennsylvania townships required to have all different types of zoning?**
Mark Boeckel, Principal Planner with CRPA, responded:
“Every municipality has to provide for every land use in some way or another. You don’t necessarily have to have R1, R2, R3 but a municipality can’t exclude any land use from its jurisdiction or else the ordinance would be considered exclusionary.
Now **one of the benefits of the Centre Region** is all 6 municipalities share a **Comprehensive Plan** which allows for more cooperation in providing for these land uses across municipal boundaries.”
- For **2013 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan** see: <https://www.crcog.net/compplan>

Zoning Ordinances

Legal Basis: Pennsylvania legislation known as the **Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)** provides for local, county and regional entities to regulate planning and zoning. Municipalities have local regulatory authority to enact ordinances to control the use of land in their jurisdiction.



THE ZONING ORDINANCE

- Key Objectives
 - Promote and protect public health, safety, and welfare
 - Guide and coordinate community growth
 - Create more livable and sustainable communities
 - Provide for a mix of housing types and nonresidential land uses
 - Promote innovative planning and design
 - Preserve natural and historic features and prime agricultural land
- A tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan
 - Supports the land use policies and objectives of the community

RELATING ZONING TO THE COMPRE- HENSIVE PLAN

- The MPC requires municipal zoning regulations to be “generally consistent” with the Comprehensive Plan
- Support connectivity within communities and between differing land uses through pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations
- Provide for a variety of land uses
- Promote redevelopment activities through mixed-use districts
- Direct highest density growth inside the RGB (in the Centre Region)
- Preserve/enhance community character
- Ensure consistency with adjacent districts and across municipal boundaries
- Seek compatibility between current zoning and future land use designations

The Following are Highlights of Mark Boeckel's Presentation:



Mark Boeckel, Principal Planner with CRPA, gave an excellent presentation of demographic data and analysis including data sources, and what statistics can and cannot tell us about Patton Township and the Centre Region .

Census Data

The **2020 US Decennial Census Data** which is expected to be reported in the next few months will provide basic population, household and race information but **not socioeconomic or housing information** such as income level or how much a house cost. The every 10-year complete census count stopped collecting socioeconomic data after 2000.

A survey known as the American Community Survey, conducted annually, replaced the former census “long form” but its data can be misleading with high margins of error. It can be good, though, in analyzing socioeconomic trends in our community.

The census bureau provides data for a variety of different geographic levels. **There will be county subdivision data (which is Patton Township)** and Centre County data but there is no census data provided for the Centre Region itself. So for the Centre Region, planners use the State College Area School District data since its boundaries are the same as the Centre Region.

Population Trends The 2019 census bureau estimate shows that Patton Township, Centre Region and Centre County all have experienced population growth since 2010.. The Centre County growth includes the state correctional institutions especially the one established in Benner Township.

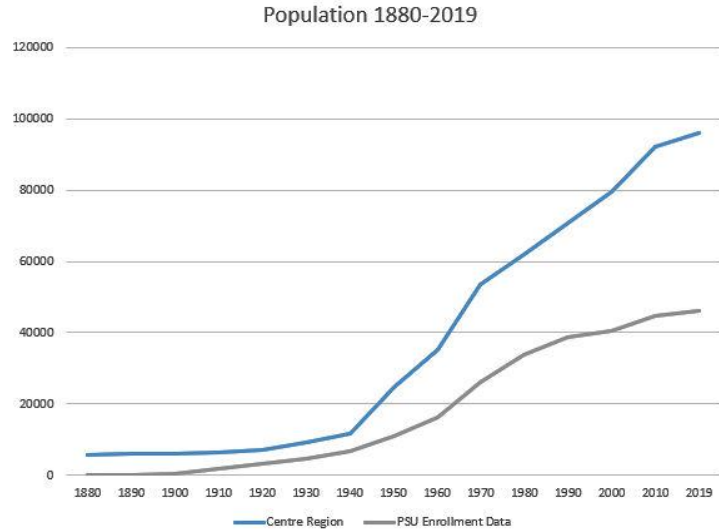
Population Summary



Centre Region Population Growth Mirrors PSU Enrollment

POPULATION TRENDS

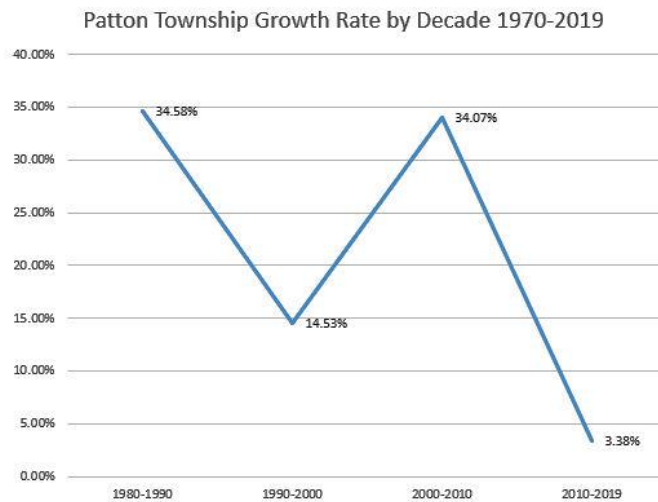
- Periods of substantial population growth
- Region population growth closely mirrors PSU enrollment



Patton Township Growth Rate Slowing

POPULATION TRENDS

- Periods of substantial population growth
- Region population growth closely mirrors PSU enrollment
- Recent trends show growth is slowing



Who Lives Here?

Patton Township

37.9% of population under age 24

21.1% are over 55

Median age of 29.6 years

Centre Region

48.5% of population under age 24

21.2% are over 55

Median age of 25.7 years

Centre County

37.9% of population under age 24

26.8% are over 55

Median age of 32.2 years



Where Are We Going?

- Some decline in under 24 population
- 18-24 year age group is relatively steady
 - PSU enrollment is steady, campus capacity, generation has fewer persons
- 55+ population is increasing
 - In-migration
 - Baby-boomer generation
- Other age groups are relatively steady, with moderate increases and decreases

Demographics Summary

- Access to data is limited and no data source is perfect
- Population is growing, but not as fast in recent years
- Population is getting older, student-aged population appears stable
- Fewer owner-occupied units due to large rental market, student population
- Substantial housing growth in the Centre Region between 2010 and 2020. Much of new development is for students. Who will occupy these units? What impacts will there be to the housing market?
- Housing value/cost data is difficult to obtain and understand
- Housing costs are high
- While the area has high median income, data can be skewed
- Poverty rates are higher 50% higher than throughout the State
- How do we assess affordable housing needs in the Township, Region, and County?

Mark Boeckel also provided details about housing trends in the area and the benefits and misconceptions of the Regional Growth Boundary.

The meeting concluded with a viewing of the video “Home Matters” produced by the Centre County Affordable Housing Coalition.

The next meeting of the Patton Township Housing Task Force will be Tuesday March 16 with a presentation on Affordable Housing by Andy Haines, Executive Vice President, Gatesburg Road Development.

Respectfully submitted by Supervisor Anita Thies, Task Force Co-Chair