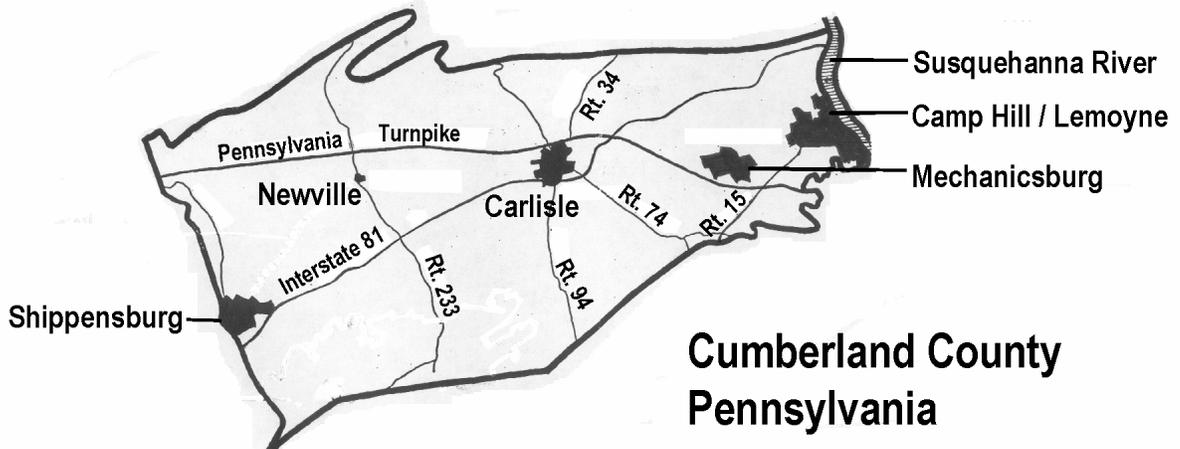
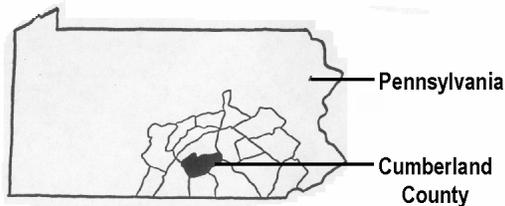


Chapter 2  
**Background**

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## Location

Cumberland County is located in the southcentral portion of Pennsylvania. The County is approximately 555 square miles in size and is surrounded by the counties of Perry, Adams, Franklin, Dauphin, and York. The Susquehanna River forms the eastern boundary of the County. The County is located within the Cumberland Valley, part of the Great Valley of the Appalachians that stretches from Roanoke, Virginia to the Delaware River.



## Cumberland County and its People

The gently rolling farmland of the Cumberland Valley, the ridges of Blue Mountain and South Mountain, the small hamlets of the rural area, and the historic towns characterize Cumberland County. From Shippensburg, the university town on the western edge of the County, to Carlisle, the County seat of government, to the suburban townships of Hampden and East Pennsboro, Cumberland County's diversity is linked by the scenic landscape of the Cumberland Valley.

Cumberland County has grown dramatically from its origins as a sparsely populated frontier outpost to a diverse county of 33 municipalities with a 1990 census population of 195,257. More recent growth has resulted in loss of agriculture land and changing patterns of land use. Since 1970 the county has grown by over 23 percent. The Pennsylvania State Data Center projects that the County population will be approximately 210,000 in 2000 and 231,700 in 2040. These continued population increases and the resulting development of residential areas, schools, commercial areas, and industrial sites threatens the very characteristics of the County. Loss of farmland, encroachment in floodplain and stream corridors, and development of ridge areas are forever changing the Cumberland County landscape.

## Benefits of Greenways

Creating a network of green corridors throughout the County is one means of protecting the character and landscape of Cumberland County. Greenways provide an array of direct and indirect benefits that add to the quality of life of a region. Protection of green corridors and open spaces provides numerous economic, social, transportation, recreation, and ecological benefits. Understanding the benefits of greenway creation and protection will promote and sustain the Cumberland County initiative to develop a comprehensive network of greenways throughout the County. The benefits of greenways are identified below:

### Economic Benefits

- Increase nearby property values
- Precipitate new and expanded businesses related to greenway and trail use. New businesses will provide employment opportunities and revenues.
- Create tourist destinations which will generate expenditures on food, services, and lodging
- Reduce damage and financial loss from flooding by providing buffer areas along stream and river corridors

### Social Benefits

- Provide access to historically and culturally significant features in our communities
- Provide opportunities to reconnect with the natural environment and urban fabric of our communities
- Help to preserve the character and aesthetic appeal of a place or landscape
- Provide significant new public places which can help to connect people and communities
- Increase quality of life
- Improve health and wellness of greenway and trail recreation users
- Heighten sensitivity to the natural environment by providing for interaction between people and nature



### Transportation Benefits

- Promote non-motorized transportation
- Provide safe alternative transportation routes for pedestrians and bicyclists which will lessen our dependency on automobiles
- Provide emergency access via trails to undeveloped areas
- Reduce roadway congestion through redistribution of users to alternative transportation routes

## Ecological Benefits

- Promote plant and animal species diversity
- Serve as a filtering zone; wetlands absorb pollutants and nutrients and slow surface run-off
- Provide corridors for wildlife migration and movement
- Preserve and protect vital wildlife, plant, and aquatic habitats
- Improve air quality and reduce noise
- Reduce stormwater damage and promote flood mitigation within protected floodplains
- Protect natural areas
- Connect fragmented landscapes
- Store and convey floodwaters
- Clean up abandoned corridors



## Recreation Benefits

- Provide areas to jog, walk, bike, ride horses, and canoe
- Serve as sites for passive pursuits such as picnicking, fishing, and enjoying nature
- Connect existing and planned trails
- Encourage ecotourism
- Provide landscapes for environmental education
- Provide connections between parks and other protected lands

