



## PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Charlestown • East Pikeland • Phoenixville • Schuylkill • West Pikeland • West Vincent

**TO:** John A Granger, Township Manager  
West Vincent Township

**FROM:** Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee  
Edward A. Theurkauf, RLA, ASLA, APA, Theurkauf Design & Planning, LLC

**DATE:** January 25, 2023

**RE:** Consistency Review – Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan  
West Vincent Zoning Amendments – PRD Overlay/Unified Development Area  
Overlay/Multifamily Uses in Rural and Residential Districts

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The Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee (PRPC) is a coalition of Charlestown Township, East Pikeland Township, Phoenixville Borough, Schuylkill Township, West Pikeland Township, and West Vincent Township that coordinates efforts to advance regional common interests. The PRPC operates within the parameters of a Regional Comprehensive Plan and Intergovernmental Implementation Agreement to direct growth into the Region's established communities and designated growth areas, to maximize the efficient use of public infrastructure, and to preserve the Region's rural areas. To achieve its purpose, the PRPC works to:

- Protect unique historical, cultural, aesthetic, agricultural and natural resources, and quality of life.
- Promote economic vitality through effective organization and coordination of development, attributes and resources.
- Implement growth management practices to provide for orderly and well-planned new development.
- Preserve open space.
- Develop multi-modal transportation choices for better mobility in and through the Region.
- Encourage walkable communities with a mix of uses and a range of housing options where appropriate.
- Maintain and improve recreation options, including the trail system.
- Address the specific needs and unique conditions of each member municipality.

**Overview** – West Vincent Township proposes amendments governing multifamily uses in residential districts. The stated purpose is to restrict such uses to areas where there is appropriate road, water, sewer, and other infrastructure, and to reinforce Township land preservation efforts and recent zoning changes to support contemporary mixed use planning concepts in the ongoing development near Ludwigs Corner. Proposed amendments include:

- Repeal of the Planned Residential Development overlay district, which applies within part of the R-2 Residential District and in the entire RM Residential Mix District

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- Delete two-family and multifamily buildings from uses permitted by special exception in the RM Residential Mix District
- Rescind applicability of the Unified Development Area overlay district in the RC Rural Conservation District, the R-2 Residential District, the R-3 Residential District, and the RM Residential Mix District

The effect of the proposed amendments is that twins, duplexes, townhouses, and multifamily dwellings will no longer be permitted within the RC, R-3, R-2, and R-M districts, but will still be permitted in areas of the Township with adequate supporting infrastructure.

**Consistency with Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan (PRCP)** – The proposed zoning ordinance amendments are evaluated for consistency with the PRCP, specifically as follows:

1. **PRD Overlay District** – Planned Residential Development is an overlay district that allows mixed residential developments consisting of single family detached, twin, and multifamily housing. The PRD overlay district is applicable within the R-M Residential Mix district and part of the R-2 Residential district in the northeast part of the Township along French Creek. A part of the R-M area is currently developed in single family detached residences on one acre lots. The remainder of the PRD overlay district is in farms and large residential estate lots, with the exception of 10 residential lots of modest size at the intersection of Pughtown and Saint Matthews Roads. None of the PRD overlay district area is serviced by public sewer or public water.

All of the PRD overlay area is shown on the PRCP Future Land Use Plan as within the Rural designation, except for the existing one acre lot single family development, which is in the Low Density Residential Area. The Rural land use category is for farms, conservation uses, and residential use at less than 0.45 dwelling per acre. The Low Density Residential category is for single family development with open space, at densities of less than 1 dwelling per acre. PRD development with mixed single-family and multifamily housing types at densities of 2.5-3 dwellings per acre is not appropriate to the Rural or Low Density Residential land use designations.

The proposed repeal of the PRD overlay is **consistent with** the PRCP Land Use Plan.

2. **RM District Uses** – The RM Residential Mix District allows two-family and multifamily residential uses by special exception. Two-family units require 15,000 square foot lots per dwelling units (2.5-2.9 DU/acre), and multifamily dwellings are permitted at densities up to 5 dwellings per gross acre. The RM district includes lands within the Rural and Low Density land use designations, which are for single family detached residential uses, and not for two-family and multifamily residential. Rural residential densities are to be less than 0.45 dwelling/acre, and Low Density Residential is to be at less than one dwelling/acre. The RM district is not served by public sewer and water.

The proposed amendment to delete two family and multifamily residential uses from the RM district is **consistent with** the PRCP Land Use Plan. It is noted that the Area and Bulk Regulations of §390-34 and Site Development Standards of §390-36 that pertain to two-family and multifamily residences are not proposed for deletion. It is recommended that

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§§390-34.A.2, 390-34.A.3, 390-34.B.2, 390-34.B.3, 390-34.D.3, and 390-36 be deleted for consistency with the proposed use regulations. In addition, §390-34.D.1 should be modified to delete reference to two-family dwellings.

3. Unified Development Area Overlay District – The Unified Development Area (UDA) overlay district allows for mixed residential and residential/office park developments including greenways to be implemented under a master development plan. The UDA was originally formulated to facilitate mixed use development of specific lands near Ludwigs Corner, but its applicability was subsequently expanded to any parcel of 200 or more acres with frontage on an arterial or collector road in the RC Rural Conservation, R-3 Residential, R-2 Residential, and RM Residential Mix districts. The proposed amendment would limit UDA applicability to the original Ludwigs Corner area. Most, but not all of the original UDA area has been built out.

The UDA allows single family detached, twin, townhouse, and various configurations of multifamily housing at densities of 0.6-1.5 dwellings per acre, depending on the amount of office park or farmstead use included in the plan. Current allowable uses and densities in the applicable base districts, and the related PRCP Land Use Plan policies are as follows:

<u>WVT District</u>	<u>WVT Res Uses</u>	<u>WVT Density</u>	<u>PRCP LU Designation*</u>	<u>PRCP Density</u>
RC	SFD, SFA	0.36 DU/ac	Rural – Ag, SFD	<0.45 DU/ac
R-3	SFD, SFA	0.36 DU/ac	Rural, LD – Ag, SFD	<0.45-1.0 DU/ac
R-2	SFD, SFA	0.43 DU/ac	Rural, LD – Ag, SFD	<0.45-1.0 DU/ac
RM	SFD	2.0 DU/ac	Rural – Ag, SFD	<0.45 DU/ac

\* Exclusive of existing developed lands

Development under the UDA allows residential development at densities far exceeding the PRCP policy for residential density in the PRCP Rural and Low Density Residential Land Use areas, and exceeds the Township’s base zoning thresholds in all but the RM district. From a use perspective, office parks and multifamily housing are not to be permitted in the PRCP Rural or Low Density Residential areas, but would be permissible under the UDA overlay. Limiting the UDA to its original extent in the Ludwigs Corner area would allow the ongoing development of that area to continue, without promoting the introduction of inappropriate uses and densities in heritage country landscapes that are to be preserved.

The proposed amendment to restrict the UDA overlay district to its original limits is **consistent with** PRCP Land Use Plan.

4. PRCP Housing Plan – The PRCP Housing Plan promotes diverse and affordable housing options throughout the Region, while preserving natural and scenic landscapes. The proposed zoning amendment would eliminate multifamily housing as allowable types from rural areas of the Township, while maintaining those opportunities around Ludwigs Corner, where supporting roads and other infrastructure are accessible. There has already been much development of multifamily, townhouse, and Traditional Neighborhood Development housing near Ludwigs Corner, which is a designated Mixed Use and Economic Development Area by the PRCP, and there is considerable available land in the area for continued growth.

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In addition to the Ludwigs Village Commercial Center district, the zoning permits multifamily residential in the Kimberton Village district and the Village Center Residential overlay district. The proposed amendment to delete the PRD district and limit the UDA overlay district would still allow appropriate levels of multifamily housing in areas with available infrastructure, while preserving the scenic undeveloped countryside that is vital to Township and regional character.

The proposed zoning amendments are **consistent with** the PRCP Housing Plan.

5. **Environmental Resources Plan** – The PRCP Environmental Resources Plan encourages protection of forest, surface water, habitat, and other critical resources, which are particularly abundant in West Vincent Township. Zoning provisions that disallow multifamily and other residential uses at relatively high densities from landscapes with sensitive ecological features will facilitate their protection.

The proposed zoning amendments are **consistent with** the PRCP Environmental Resources Plan.

**Conclusion** - The proposed zoning ordinance amendments are consistent with the Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan. Consideration should be given to deleting remaining references to two-family and multifamily housing in the RM Residential Mix district.

cc:

**PRPC Governing Representatives**

Richard Kirkner  
Hugh Willig  
Rusty Strauss  
Danielle Jouenne  
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**Planning Commissioners/Alternates**

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**Municipal Managers**

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