

## ABSTRACT

**Title of Thesis:** A HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN FOR EXURBAN COUNTIES IN PENNSYLVANIA: WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BERKS COUNTY

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This thesis undertakes an examination of the factors involved in the comprehensive planning process as it relates to historic preservation planning in general, and in Pennsylvania specifically. Factors examined include: the need for comprehensive planning as it relates to growth issues and the associated loss of environmental and historic resources; enabling legislation for comprehensive planning in Pennsylvania; the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC); types of land use controls allowed under the MPC; the legal basis for historic preservation; and the state historic preservation office.

Comprehensive plans from several Pennsylvania municipalities are examined to show the various ways the MPC is applied and the result those variations have on land use and historic preservation planning in those municipalities. A look at state, county, and municipal comprehensive plans from other states provides examples of state mandated historic preservation planning, as well as historic preservation planning initiated at the local level. The historic preservation elements of those plans are examined to determine what differences in historic preservation measures exist, if any, in locations that are different both geographically and demographically.

Berks County, Pennsylvania, is profiled to provide an in-depth view of its setting, history, growth, historic resources and the need for a comprehensive plan containing a historic preservation element. Political and cultural factors in the county are discussed as they relate to historic preservation issues.