

CHAPTER TWO: EXISTING CONDITIONS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

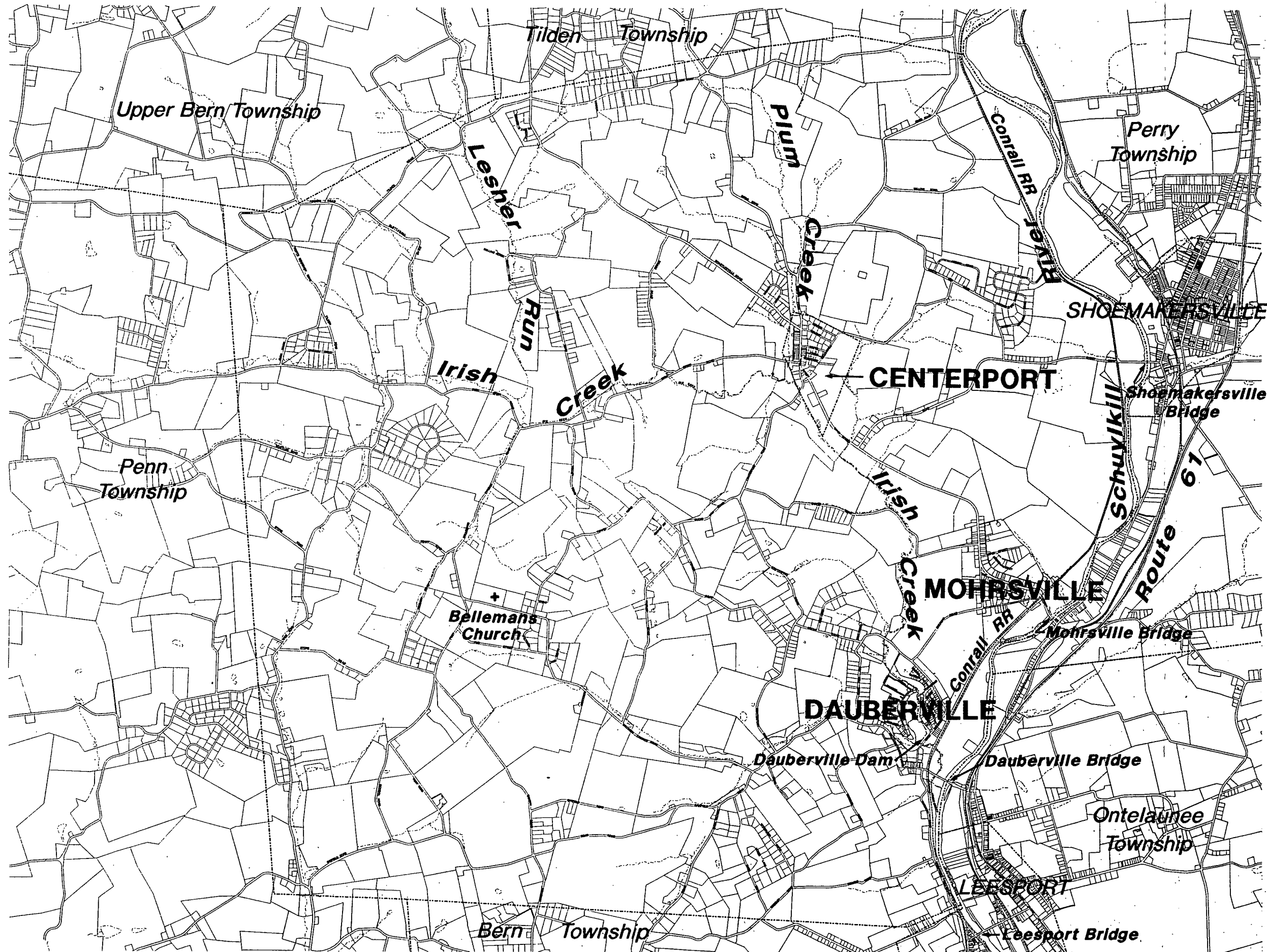
The purpose of this chapter is to analyze existing conditions in Centre Township and Centerport Borough. In particular, this chapter seeks to develop a clear understanding of the Joint Area's physical, demographic, social, and economic conditions, based on current circumstances and historical development. This analysis is intended to enable the two municipal governments and Joint Area residents to identify potential problems, to determine future needs, and to develop necessary policies and strategies to respond more effectively to future growth.

The material in Chapter Two is based on a series of background studies produced during the planning process. The chapter consists of seven sections in addition to this introduction: Existing Land Use; Pattern of Change; Natural Resources/Suitability for Development; Cultural, Historic, and Landscape Resources; Population, Housing, and Employment; Circulation; and Community Facilities and Municipal Finances.

The Land Use section provides a description of existing land use patterns and their implications for future development. The Pattern of Change section provides an analysis of recent development activity in the Joint Area. The Natural Resources/Suitability for Development section provides a summary of environmental factors that are capable of affecting the location and intensity of future development. Cultural, Historic, and Landscape Resources documents other environmental factors, some man-made, that are germane to consideration of prospects for new development in Centre Township and Centerport Borough. The Population, Housing, and Employment section reviews selected socio-economic characteristics of residents and employers, and data on housing development. Included are population and housing forecasts. The Circulation section assesses existing conditions regarding traffic and circulation, while the Community Facilities and Municipal Finances section analyzes services and facilities serving the Joint Area, as well as the fiscal circumstances of Centre Township and Centerport Borough respectively.

Much of the information concerning the subjects covered in this chapter is contained within maps associated with its individual sections. As a general orientation aid to the geography of the Joint Area and to the maps contained in Chapters Two and Three, Figure 2.1.1, Selected Community Features, follows.

Figure 2.1.1



**SELECTED
COMMUNITY
FEATURES**

**Centre/
Centerport
Joint
Comprehensive Plan**

Berks County, Pennsylvania



1000 500 0 500 1000



FIGURE

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SECTION 2: EXISTING LAND USE

Using recent aerial photography, relevant planning documents, and focused field reconnaissance, a generalized full-color map of current land use in the Joint Area has been constructed (Figure 2.2.1). The inventory includes the traditional full range of urban land uses, such as single-family and multi-family residential, commercial, public and private institutional, recreational, industrial, borough and village center mixed-use, utilities, and parking; and major categories of non-urban uses, such as agricultural, farmsteads, and open water. A separate, detailed view of current land use in Centerport is provided in Figure 2.2.2. (Reference to Figure 2.1.1, Selected Community Features and Figure 2.7.1, Road Functional Classification, is also recommended.)

The purpose of the land use survey is to document and assess the pattern and intensity of utilization of land in Centre Township and Centerport Borough. Based on this assessment, it is possible to evaluate the compatibility of existing uses, the extent of land consumption, and to predict the direction that future development may be expected to take in light of existing conditions. The survey also makes apparent the remaining amount and location of land available for future development.

The pattern of land use in the Joint Area is still to a large degree a representation of nineteenth-century settlement activities along the Schuylkill River and its tributaries. Early settlement relied on water power to operate mills and on the surrounding lands for agriculture. Centerport and Dauberville, for example, originated as mill locations along Irish and Plum Creeks. The arrival of the railroad in the 1840s led to Mohrsville's prominence as a transshipment point for agricultural and mill products. Today the traditional settlements are the area's only recognizable "urban" places. Outside of these places, the dominant land use is still agriculture, just as it would have been more than a hundred years ago.

However, in contrast to the earlier pattern of residential uses found almost solely within Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville, single-family residential uses are now widespread in the township. These newer single-family residential uses are located in either small-to-large clumps of roughly six to forty units, including new access roads constructed off existing township routes, or stripped along existing township routes. Overall, the configuration of these newer single-family residential uses appears quite scattered, although there is some degree of concentration in the southeast quadrant of the township and in an east-west band through the center of the township.

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Multi-family residential uses are still found mostly within Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville. There are two mobile home parks, one along Irish Creek Road, just west of Centerport, and another along the southern edge of the township, on Park Road.

Commercial uses in the Joint Area are limited and, except for a multi-acre outdoor used car parts operation accessible from North End Road, are small in size. Over the years the typical number of borough and village commercial uses that would once have existed in Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville have become diminished as local residents gained more mobility and quick access to larger neighboring centers for goods and services.

Public institutions include the three post offices (one each in Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville), the fire hall in Centerport, and the Township Building and garage facility along Bucks Hill Road. The largest private institution in area is the Pocono Beagle Club canine-training and hunting grounds at the southeast corner of the township and the second-largest is the Bellemans Church compound along Bellemans Church Road. Other private institutions include small churches in Dauberville, Centerport, and along Shoey Road, and the Lions Club Hall in Centerport.

The sole formal places for recreation in the Joint Area are the ballfields in Mohrsville and the small field opposite the fire hall in Centerport.

“Mixed Use” refers to the combining of uses, usually commercial and residential or institutional and residential, in small buildings in Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville. Typically, the commercial or institutional use is located on the ground floor, with residential use above.

Industrial uses are also not extensive in the Joint Area. The most prominent is the cardboard box company in the former mushroom-packing factory, accessible from Centerport Road.

The most visible utility use while traveling in the Joint Area is the two microwave relay towers, one on Tower Road in the center of the township and one south of Irish Creek Road at the western end of the township.

“Vacant” refers primarily to unoccupied lands and buildings, such as the former Centre Township Elementary School on Main Street, but also includes tracts such as the former impoundment area upstream from the Dauberville Dam and the extensive acreage under development for residential use on Rake Road at Bootleg Road in the central-western portion of the township.

Figure 2.2.1



EXISTING LAND USE

- A Agricultural
- F Farmstead
- SF Residential-Single Family
- MF Residential-Multi Family
- C Commercial
- Ins1 Public Institution
- Ins2 Private Institution
- Rec Recreation
- Mx Mixed Use
- Ind Industrial
- U Utilities
- P Parking
- V Vacant
- W Open Water

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office



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Planning & Urban Design
1811 Walnut Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102



FIGURE

DATE:

Centerport EXISTING LAND USE

- A Agricultural
- F Farmstead
- SF Residential-Single Family
- MF Residential-Multi Family
- C Commercial
- Ins1 Public Institution
- Ins2 Private Institution
- Rec Recreation
- Mx Mixed Use
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- P Parking
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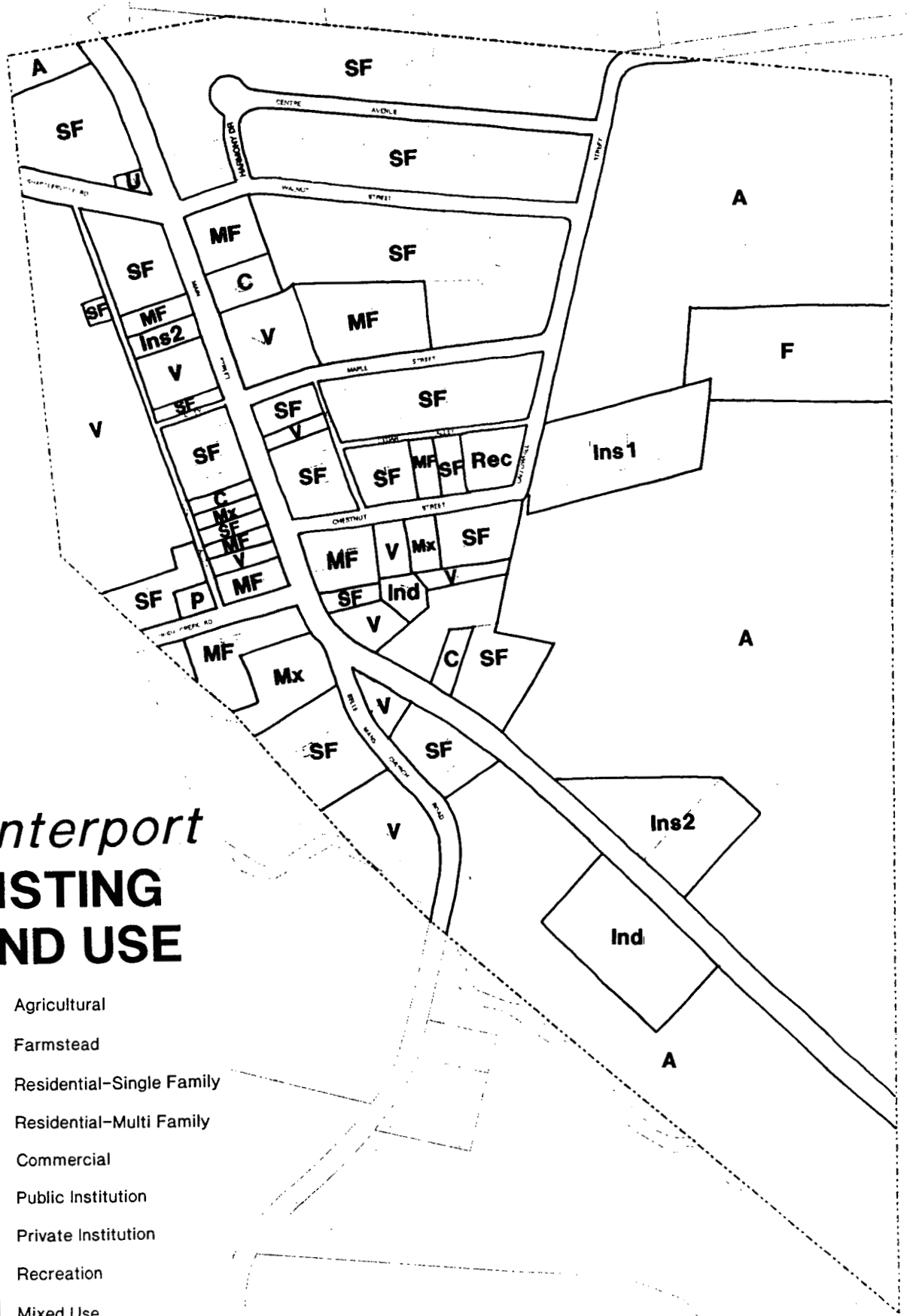


Figure 2.2.2

SECTION 3: PATTERN OF CHANGE

All of the significant changes in land use in the Joint Area over the last fifteen to twenty years have involved the construction of new single-family residential units. Starting in earnest in the late 1970s and gaining momentum through the 1980s and 1990s, this type of suburban-style residential development has now become a significant feature of the township, despite its still-present rural character and the continuing existence of the historic settlements of Centerport, Mohrsville, and Dauberville.

The new development, 1971 to 1995, is illustrated in Figure 2.3.1. While there were insertions of new single-family residential units into Centerport, Mohrsville, and Dauberville in the 1970s, this trend was completely overwhelmed by residential development outside these centers after 1980. The newer pattern of development is widespread throughout the township. Units occur either in small-to-large agglomerations of about half-a-dozen to thirty-or-more units in "freestanding" subdivisions with new streets, or stripped along existing township routes. The overall distribution of new units in the township is scattered, with some modest degree of concentration in the southeast quadrant of the township and in an east-west band through the center of the township.

In the fifteen-year period between 1981 and 1995 roughly 450 new single-family detached residential units were constructed in the Joint Area, translating to a rate of about 32 new units per year. This construction took place almost entirely in the non-village extent of Centre Township, with the total area transformed from agricultural or undeveloped to residential totaling about 980 acres or 1½ square miles. The average lot size of a new residential unit constructed during this period was about 2.2 acres.

The 980 acres cited above correspond to an average of 65 acres per year over the fifteen-year period. In contrast, in the ten-year period from 1971 to 1980, a total of 300 acres was developed residentially, for an average of 30 acres per year. The pace of development had picked up from the 1970s into the 1980s and 1990s.

The resulting pattern of development reveals widely-spread new residential units on large lots interspersed with agriculture. A continuation of this trend would lead to a further diminution of land devoted to agriculture, perhaps at an increasing pace, because conflicts between agricultural and residential land uses would likely increase. There are some basic incompatibilities between the two

uses, agriculture and residential, and the widespread residential development pattern makes it difficult to maintain a generally sympathetic setting for farming in the township.

Other implications of the 1971 to 1995 development trends include the following:

- Growth in traffic volumes across the Joint Area, with nearly all roads in the network affected by the new development;
- Transformation of the rural atmosphere in the township to much more of a suburban-type character;
- Widely-spread units do not encourage the creation of centers for services and community facilities -- residents are more likely to head directly out of the Joint Area for their shopping, recreational, and social needs;
- Widely-spread units do not offer a good opportunity for future central water and/or sewer service -- on-site systems are the only feasible methods;
- Few choices in housing types -- single-family detached dwellings are virtually the only type;
- Few choices in transportation -- mobility for individuals without the use of a car is limited.

Pending and proposed development includes the balance of construction for projects already begun, approved-but-unbuilt developments, and prospective developments. These are shown in Figure 2.3.2. The pattern illustrated in Figure 2.3.2 for the most part echoes that of Figure 2.3.1, with approved-but-unbuilt and prospective developments widely-spread across the Joint Area. Development trends appear to be still following tendencies established for the area over the last fifteen to twenty years.

The pattern of change reflects, among other considerations, the almost total absence of central water and sewer services in the Joint Area, the web-like network of local rural roads throughout the township, and existing zoning regulations:

Central sewer services: If these kind of facilities already existed in one or more places in the Joint Area, new development would likely be attracted to some

degree to locate adjacent to these places where “tapping-in” to the central facilities would be feasible. As things are, there is little reason to favor one location over another for development, based on sewer servicing factors;

Type of road network: The road network, for the most part, lacks a clear hierarchy; the many roads that extend throughout the township more-or-less have the same capacity and the same general physical characteristics. This factor tends to make all places in the Joint Area nearly equal in accessibility, in turn making each parcel of land nearly equally suitable to be developed;

Zoning: The present regulations controlling development in the Joint Area do not make clear distinctions between zoning districts. For example, the maximum intensity of development in the “R1 Farm District” is about 1½ dwelling units per gross acre (minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet) versus 2 dwelling units per gross acre (minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet) in the “R2 Suburban Residence District” (see Figure 2.3.3). These similar regulations from one district to another appear to be ineffective in establishing a pattern of development that is discernible from one district to the other.

Figure 2.3.1



LAND DEVELOPMENT

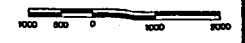
- 1 1971 - 1980
- 2 1981 - 1995

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office



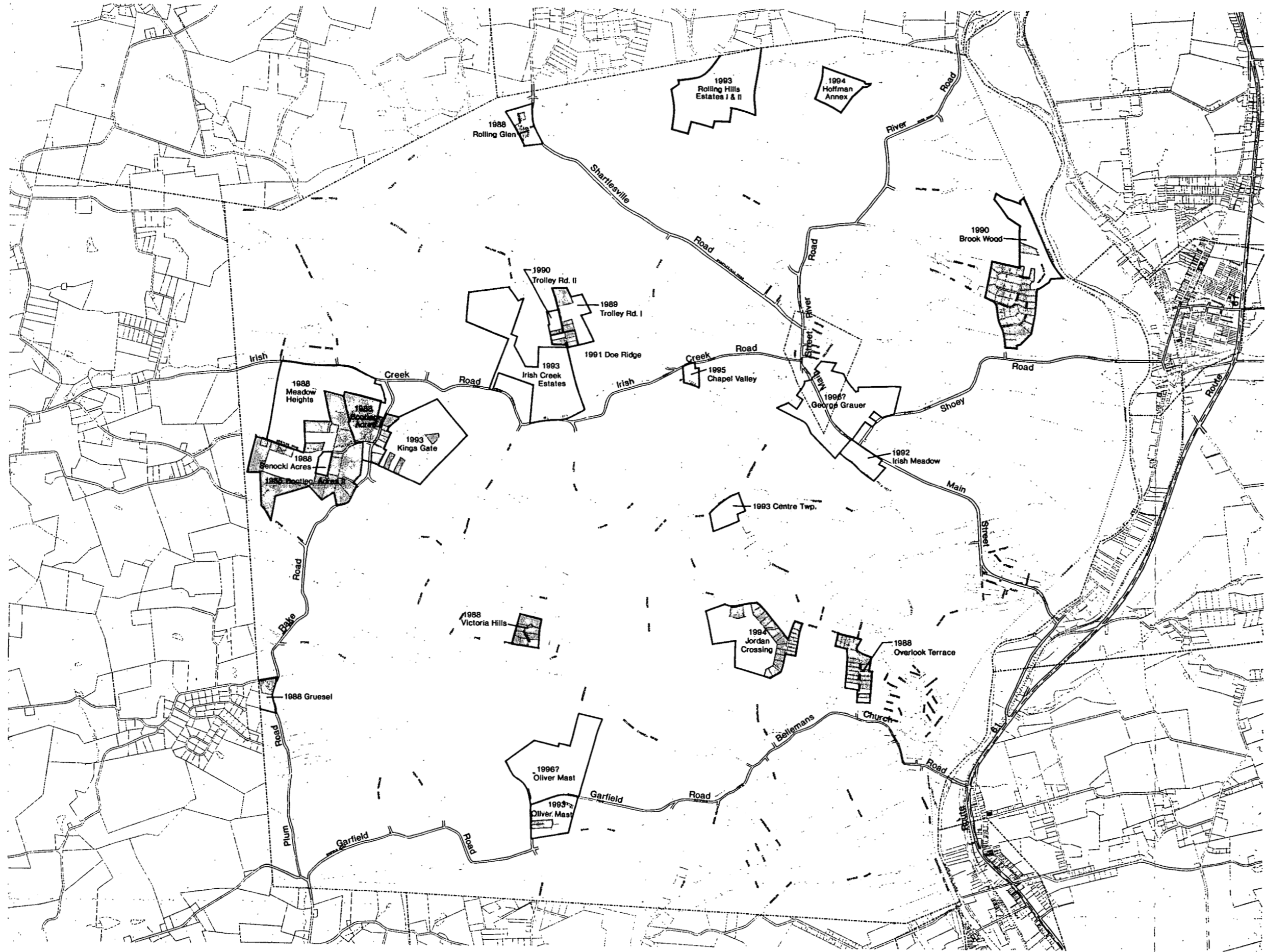
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FIGURE

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Figure 2.3.2



PENDING & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

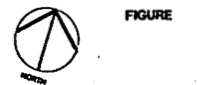
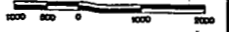
Completed / Under Construction

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DATE:

Figure 2.3.3

EXISTING ZONING

- R1 Farm
- R2 Suburban Residence
- R3 Urban Residence
- MC Mixed Commercial
- L1 Limited Industrial



Source: Center Township & Centerport Borough

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
2007-2015



FIGURE

**SECTION 4: NATURAL RESOURCES/
SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The natural characteristics of the landscape in the Joint Area have been an important factor in determining its historical pattern of development. Areas of significant physical constraint -- floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes -- have generally been less likely to be subject to development. These natural determinants continue to be constraints to development. Other factors, such as the presence of soils especially favorable to agriculture or hydric soils or woodlands, have also been influential in determining activities in Centre Township and Centerport Borough.

As part of the examination of existing conditions in the Joint Area, an inventory and analysis of various environmental factors was made. These factors are critical components in any consideration of future alternatives for growth and development. It is also important to note that some of these factors may impose constraints on development while others suggest opportunities for development. It is possible for an environmental factor to represent both an opportunity and a constraint.

Several analysis maps have been prepared that delineate these resources, including the following:

- Hydrology
- Prime Agricultural Land
- Composite Constraints (including floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, hydric soils, woodlands, and prime agricultural soils)
- Suitability for Development

This series of interrelated, interpretive maps permits the identification of areas requiring preservation, areas requiring conservation, and areas available for development within the Joint Area. Areas requiring preservation include rivers, streams, floodplains, and other lands that are generally undevelopable due to physical characteristics or statutory regulations. Areas in need of conservation include fragile environmental areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, and prime agricultural lands. These valuable resources should be protected or conserved due to the environmentally- and economically-sensitive nature of these areas and to their importance to the Joint Area.

Also in need of conservation are a variety of made-made factors, discussed in Section 5 of this chapter. These resources include historic sites and scenic

features.

For areas not requiring special efforts toward preservation or conservation, there remain other relevant factors that make lands more or less suitable for development. These factors include the availability of water and sewer service (or the prospect of their availability), road accessibility, and other issues.

Finally, a synthesis of these natural and cultural features was made and mapped, reflecting the relative suitability of all undeveloped portions of the Joint Area for future development.

Hydrology

The Hydrology map, Figure 2.4.1, delineates the significant water resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough. The Joint Area is bounded along its eastern side by the Schuylkill River and all lands in the area drain to this waterway. Most of the area of the township (and all of Centerport) fall within the Irish Creek watershed, a sub-basin of the Schuylkill River basin, with lands right along the eastern edge of the township draining directly into the Schuylkill River. In contrast, the southwestern corner of the township drains in a southerly direction into Tulpehocken Creek several miles south and eventually into the Schuylkill River near Reading.

While Irish Creek is the most important stream in the Joint Area, it is fed by several significant tributaries, including Plum Creek and Leshner Run. These streams drain small ponds, bogs, and wetlands to Irish Creek.

In consideration of future development in the Joint Area, these drainage patterns are significant in the analysis of stormwater runoff as well as in planning for sanitary and stormwater sewers. Other hydrologic characteristics contribute strongly to delineating areas that are available for development and those that are constrained for development. Of major concern are flood prone zones adjacent to bodies of water, and wetlands.

Development in floodplains is hazardous to life and property, not only for prospective development sites but in existing developed areas downstream that may be subjected to unexpected changes in stream channel location or in flood heights and velocities. The 100-Year Floodplain areas shown in Figure 2.4.1 have been identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the National Flood Insurance Program (Category 1 in Figure 2.4.1).

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The most extensive floodplains occur in lowland areas, where stream gradients are less and the landscape profiles are wider than on hillsides. Floodplains for the streams in the Joint Area tend to be relatively narrow, but floodplains along the Schuylkill River are much broader.

At two places along Irish Creek's path through the Joint Area floodplains coincide with the historic areas of settlement -- at Centerport and Dauberville. There is a history of flooding of dwellings and businesses at these two locations.

Floodplain soils are generally found adjacent to the stream network. These soils historically have been eroded, transported, and deposited by floodwater and generally indicate an area susceptible to flooding. These and other flood-prone areas are shown on the Flood Hazard Boundary Map for Centre Township and Centerport Borough, as published by FEMA.

Wetlands are among our most valuable resource areas because they control flooding, improve water quality, and support a wide variety of animal and plant species. Wetlands are characterized generally by a high water table, poor drainage, and some degree of surface ponding during the year. Most hydric soils qualify as wetlands if they support predominantly hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PaDEP). Essentially, no development activity may occur in a wetland area without a permit. The permit process requires an investigation of development alternatives. Mitigation may be required if development is to proceed; creation of "new" wetlands may be required to replace those disturbed or destroyed by development activity.

Although no comprehensive inventory of wetlands in Centre Township and Centerport Borough currently exists, the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) undertaken in the 1980s by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the (then) Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources delineates wetlands in the Joint Area. These wetlands include surface water bodies, most floodplains, and other areas, identified by means of aerial photography. Wetlands outside of the delineated surface water bodies and floodplains are shown as Category 2 on the Hydrology map.

According to the NWI, there are two types of wetlands in Centre Township and Centerport Borough: 1. Palustrine (swamps and small ponds); and 2. Riverine (perennial or intermittent creeks or streams). Many of the NWI's

qualifying palustrine wetlands in the Joint Area are farm ponds, in which surface water is impounded for use in agriculture.

Most hydric soils also qualify as wetlands. A hydric soil is one that in its undrained condition is flooded, ponded, or saturated long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions that favor the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation.

On the Hydrology map areas with soil series identified in the Soil Survey of Berks County as having major hydric components are classified as Category 3.

Soils

Soils information is a vital component of any natural resource evaluation because soil characteristics indicate the inherent suitability of an area for development, agriculture, or other land uses. The principal source of soils data for the Joint Area is the Soil Survey of Berks County, Pennsylvania (United States Department of Agriculture, 1970).

In general, soils are a very complex mixture of various amounts of weathered rock, minerals, organic matter, water, and air. Through the action of climate, plants and animals on these geologic materials, soils are formed over long periods of times.

The general soil areas in a locality are called soil associations. Each soil association shown in the Soil Survey of Berks County is a unique natural landscape, consisting of one or more major soils and some minor soils that occur together and have similar origins. In each association the major and minor soils occur in a distinctive pattern, and each association is named after its major component soils. The Soil Survey's General Soils Map provides a broad perspective of the soils characteristics in the study area and can form the basis for determining general future land use designations, but the map does not show the type of soil found at a specific site. For information on soils found at a specific location, the detailed photo-map sheets in the Soil Survey of Berks County must be consulted.

All soils within soils associations have been analyzed with respect to their suitability for residential, commercial, industrial, or other development. The characteristics of the soil in any given location are, in themselves, prime determinants of what that land is best suited for under what conditions. The main characteristics considered are soil depth, degree of slope, internal

drainage, freedom from flooding, type of parent material, and stoniness. When these same soil characteristics are analyzed in conjunction with the related features of a site -- slope, vegetation, geology, etc. -- an even more complete picture emerges of what would be appropriate uses.

The sole major soil association present in the Joint Area is the Berks-Weikert-Bedington association, consisting of shallow to deep, well-drained, rolling soils formed in material weathered mainly from shale and siltstone. Weikert-Berks soils dominate in Centre Township. These are gently rolling to hilly and are moderately deep and well-drained, with low available moisture capacity and moderate to low natural fertility. To obtain reasonable yields of most crops, efficient agricultural management is necessary. These soils are suitable for building development, but not suitable for septic tank tile fields because of shallowness, steep slopes, and rapid percolation.

Bedington soils are also important within the Joint Area. Nearly-level or gently-sloping, these are deep, well-drained, and moderately fertile. Bedington Shaly Silt Loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, qualifies as Prime Agricultural Land, according to the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service State Soil Database. Owing to high percolation rates, the Bedington soils are generally not suitable for septic tank drainage fields, although these soils are mostly suitable for buildings.

Prime Agricultural Land/Agricultural Land of Statewide Importance

Areas of Centre Township classified as Prime Agricultural Land by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDANRCS)(formerly the Soil Conservation Service (USDASCS)) are shown in Figure 2.4.2. Prime agricultural land is defined as land best-suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and also available for these uses. (The land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not built-up land or water). It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically when treated and managed, including water management, according to modern farming methods. Prime Agricultural Land consists primarily of soils of Agricultural Capability I and II.

Agricultural Land of Statewide Importance is land, in addition to prime agricultural land, that is of statewide importance for agricultural production. Pennsylvania has defined this category as consisting of soil mapping units in Capability Classes II and III that do not qualify as Prime or Unique. (Unique

Agricultural Land is another category of farmland, but one not represented in the Joint Area.) While the incidence of Prime Agricultural Land in Centre Township is not very high, the bulk of the land in the township does qualify as Agricultural Land of Statewide Importance. This should not be too surprising, since the primary land use in the township is agriculture.

Topography

Centre Township is characterized by rolling terrain, with the majority of the land area having slopes between 8 and 25 percent. The flattest part of the Joint Area, with slopes 0 to 8 percent, encompasses a triangular-shaped piece of territory, with the Borough of Centerport at one corner, the northern end of Dauberville at another, and the Schuylkill River along one side. This relatively flat area extends westerly through the township, in a narrow band parallel to and north of Irish Creek.

Very steep slopes, over 25 percent, are mostly confined to bands alongside creeks and swales with seasonal and intermittent streams, where these streams that feed into Irish Creek and the Schuylkill River have eroded deep channels.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Dense hardwood forests once covered the Joint Area, but land clearance for farming, commercial purposes, and other development has eliminated much of this virgin woodlands. Today, the remaining woodlands consist mostly of second and third growth mixed deciduous forest. These areas are associated with the steeply-sloping parts of the township and wetter, low-lying areas along creeks, streams, and the Schuylkill River.

Many species of plants and animals may be found in the township's three main habitats: 1. open field or pasture; 2. forest, often comprising steep and/or stony soils; and, 3. wetlands, including streams, springs, ponds, and meadows. Although some species have adapted to more than one habitat, other flora and fauna have adapted to very specific needs and conditions, and are critically dependent upon particular habitat types. Generally speaking, man-made features are considered disruptive to natural habitats, but some, such as farm fields, pasture, hedgerows, and treelines, offer important food and cover sources.

Composite Constraints

The preceding natural and resource information was combined and synthesized to illustrate the relative level of development constraints affecting various areas of Centre Township and Centerport Borough (Figure 2.4.3). Areas with very severe constraints are generally precluded from future development due to flooding, while very steep slopes and wetlands pose severe constraints for most development. These areas may be most suitable for farming, recreational use, and wildlife habitat. Areas with hydric soils, woodlands, slopes between 15 and 25 percent, or prime agricultural soils have moderate constraints for development. The balance of the Joint Area has only slight development limitations.

Suitability for Development

Other factors influencing the relative suitability of land for development have been combined with the preceding composite constraints information in a Suitability for Development analysis.

Areas may be considered more suitable for development in consideration of their relative advantages in accessibility and serviceability. These additional factors have been synthesized with the composite constraints designations to yield a Suitability for Development map (Figure 2.4.4) for Centre Township and Centerport Borough. (In this exercise, areas already developed or under public ownership have been excluded from consideration.)

With respect to accessibility factors, a designation *Accessibility 1* has been applied to locations situated close to the two area Rural Major Collectors identified by PennDOT (see Figure 2.7.1) or in the vicinity of the bridges over the Schuylkill River connecting the Joint Area with PA Route 61. Lands within 1,500 feet on either side of Shartlesville Road-Main Street and Shoey Road have been given an Accessibility 1 designation, along with lands within a one-and-a-half-mile (8,000-foot) radius of the five bridges (Shoey Road, Main Street, Bellemans Church Road, Leesport, and Berne).

Areas not qualifying as having Accessibility 1 have been designated *Accessibility 2*.

Servicing factors have also been established. The *Service 1* category includes lands proposed at the present time to be part of new central sewer service areas (see Figures 3.8.1 and 3.8.2), as well as an additional 2,000-foot zone

along the perimeter of each of the proposed central sewer service areas. The *Service 2* designation applies to areas not meeting the *Service 1* classification criteria.

Accessibility and servicing factors have been combined with the composite constraints designations (from the Composite Constraints map) to yield a Suitability for Development Index, as shown in Table 2.4.1, which was then mapped as Suitability for Development in Figure 2.4.4.

TABLE 2.4.1 SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT INDEX				
Composite Constraints	Accessibility and Servicing Factors			
	Accessibility 1		Accessibility 2	
	Service 1	Service 2	Service 1	Service 2
	C. C. Slight	Good	Moderate	Moderate
C. C. Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Very Limited
C. C. Severe	Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited
C. C. Very Severe	Very Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited

The Suitability for Development map illustrates that areas with good suitability are found mostly in and around Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville (this designation would also include parcels occurring as “infill” sites within the borough and the two villages).







Most of the areas that have a moderate suitability are found in the southeastern quadrant of the Joint Area and extending along Shartlesville Road-Main Street toward the northwestern part of Centre Township. These areas are accessible but services are lacking. The bulk of the rest of the township has limited suitability for development. These areas have relatively slight constraints, but do not have services and accessibility.

The very-limited suitability areas comprise the very-severely- and severely-constrained areas from the Composite Constraints map, along floodplains, and on steep hillsides.

Figure 2.4.1



HYDROLOGY

-  Open Water
-  100 - year Floodplain
-  Wetlands
-  Hydric Soils
-  Major Watershed Divider
-  Minor Watershed Divider

* Source: FEMA Map
 ** Source: National Wetlands Inventory LSI
 --- Source: Soil Survey of Berks County

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
 Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office

NDA
 Norman Day Associates
 Planning & Urban Design
 1811 Market Street - 2nd Floor
 Pottsville, PA 17860

1000 500 0 500 1000



FIGURE

DATE:

Figure 2.4.2



**PRIME
AGRICULTURAL
LAND**

Source: USDA - NRCS State Soil Database

**Centre/
Centerport
Joint
Comprehensive Plan**

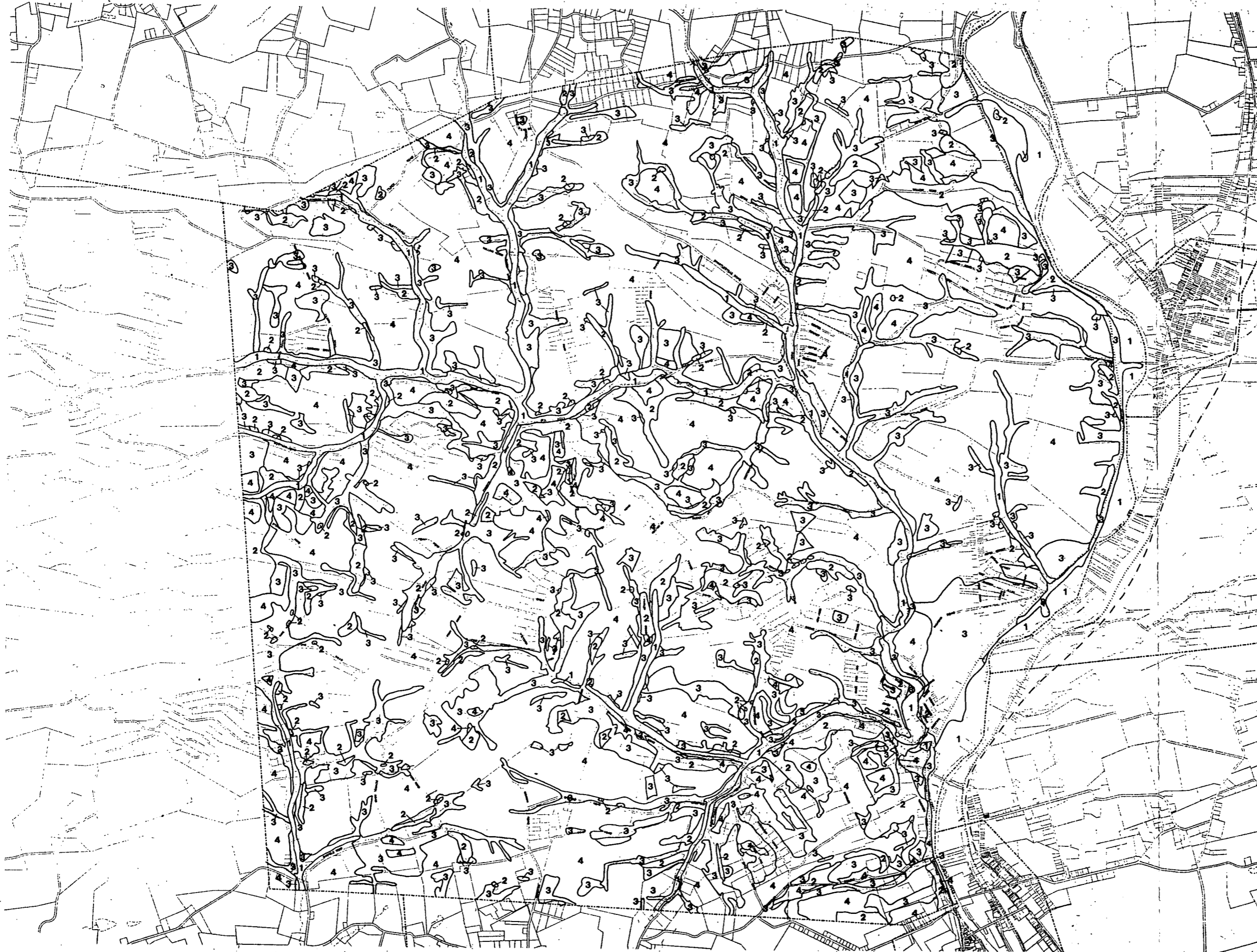
Berks County, Pennsylvania
2022-2028 Planning and Comprehensive Plan

Map Series
Map Series
Map Series



1:25,000

Figure 2.4.3



COMPOSITE CONSTRAINTS

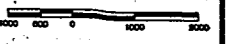
- 1 Very Severe (Floodplain)
- 2 Severe (Wetlands, Slopes Over 25%)
- 3 Moderate (Hydric Soils, Woodlands, Slopes 15-25%, Prime Ag. Soils)
- 4 Slight

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office



Norman Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
1211 Market Street, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102



FIGURE

DATE:

Figure 2.4.4



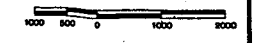
SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 1 Good
- 2 Moderate
- 3 Limited
- 4 Very Limited
- Existing Development

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office

NDA
Norman Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
111 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor
Pottsville, PA 19363



FIGURE

DATE:

SECTION 5: CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND LANDSCAPE RESOURCES

The Joint Area, like other areas of southeastern Pennsylvania, has a long history of human occupation and use. The prehistoric history of the area is characterized by successive periods of Native American occupation, primarily as an upland location for seasonal hunting, with small, short-term seasonal settlement sites. The area was first settled by European colonists in the late eighteenth century, with the primary settlement period in the nineteenth century. By the middle of the nineteenth century the township was a thriving agricultural area, with saw mills, grist mills, and wagon works as early commercial/industrial enterprises in the community.

Today, surviving nineteenth century resources include a number of noteworthy dwellings, places of business and/or manufacture, and community buildings. Many of the residences outside of Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville are part of farmstead complexes that may also contain barns and outbuildings of historical note. The following list of the extant nineteenth-century resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough contains map numbers referenced to the accompanying map, Historic, Scenic, & Community Resources (Figure 2.5.1):

Table 2.5.1
Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

<u>Map #</u>	<u>1980 Comprehensive Plan Listing #</u>	<u>Location</u>
(1)	CE-1-32	Farmstead -- Willow Road (T691) approx. 1600 ft. E of the intersection with Rider Rd. (T552)
(2)	CE-1-28	Farmstead -- W side of railroad tracks approx. 400 ft. N of Shoey Rd. (LR06174)
(3)	CE-1-26	E side of railroad tracks approx. 800 ft. S of Shoey Rd. (LR06174)
(4)	CE-1-38	House -- Main Rd. (LR06031) approx. 2400 ft. SE of the intersection with Easter Rd. (T681)
(5)	D	Mohrsville Post Office

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Table 2.5.1 (continued)

Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

<u>Map #</u>	<u>1980 Comprehensive Plan Listing #</u>	<u>Location</u>
(6)	C3-2-48	Farmstead -- Entrance on Main Rd. (LR06031) approx. 2400 ft. E of Centerport
(7)	C	St. John's Union Sunday School
(8)	B	Farmers and Drovers Hotel
(9)	A	Reber Wagon Works
(10)	CE-1-13	North End Rd. (T637) 2000 ft. N of Centerport
(11)	CE-1-3	Farmstead -- Tilden Rd. (LR06193) 1000 ft. E of Shartlesville Rd. (LR06031)
(12)	CE-2-6	Farmstead -- Blottadall Rd. (T714) approx. 800 ft. E of Tilden Rd. (LR06193)
(13)	CE-2-7	Farmstead -- Tilden Rd. (LR06193) approx. 1600 ft. S of Possum Rd. (T663)
(14)	CE-2-13	Farmstead -- Entrance on Blottadall Rd. (T714) approx. 2400 ft. N of the intersection with Irish Creek Rd. (LR06019)
(15)	CE-2-62	Farmstead -- Trolley Rd. (T726) approx. 3000 ft. NW of Irish Creek Road (LR06019)
(16)	CE-2-58	Farmstead -- Irish Creek Rd. (LR06019) approx. 1600 ft. SW of Drake Rd. (T734)
(17)	F	Ludwig/Lenhart Grist Mill
(18)	E	Dauberville Post Office and Store
(19)	CE-2-33	Farmstead -- Centerport Rd. (LR06163) approx. 800 ft. NW of the intersection with Bellemans Church Rd. (LR06036)

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Table 2.5.1 (continued)

Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

<u>Map #</u>	<u>1980 Comprehensive Plan Listing #</u>	<u>Location</u>
(20)	CE-2-27	Farmstead -- Entrance on Trailer Rd. (T728) approx. 1000 ft. N of the intersection with Bellemans Church Rd. (LR0604)
(21)	CE-2-25	Farmstead -- E side of the intersection of Bellemans Church Rd. (LR06045) and Pine St. (T669)
(22)	CE-2-18 Bellemans Church (Currently on National Register)	Bellemans Church Rd. (LR06045) approx. 1000 ft. W of the intersection with Tower Rd. (T726)
(23)	CE-3-28	Farmstead -- Entrance on Bellemans Church Rd. (LR06045) approx. 800 ft. S of the intersection with Pine St. (T669)
(24)	CE-3-27	Farmstead -- Quarry Rd. (T566) approx. 1600 ft. SE of the intersection with Pony Rd. (T566)
(25)	CE-3-18	Farmstead -- Entrance on Garfield Rd. (LR06036) approx. 2500 ft. W of Center Rd. (T558)
(26)	CE-3-16	Farmstead -- Entrance on Boar Road (T529) approx. 2400 ft. SW of Garfield Rd. (LR06036)
(27)	CE-3-22	Farmstead -- Entrance on Garfield Rd. (LR06036) approx. 1500 ft. SE of Pony Rd. (T724)
(28)	CE-3-24	Farmstead -- N side of the intersection of Garfield Rd. (LR06036) and Pony Rd. (T724)
(29)	CE-3-26	Farmstead -- Entrance on Pony Rd. (T724) approx. 800 ft. N of Garfield Rd. (LR06036)
(30)	CE-3-39	Farmstead -- Garfield Rd. (LR06037) approx. 3200 ft. N of Garfield

Table 2.5.1 (continued)

Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

<u>Map #</u>	<u>1980 Comprehensive Plan Listing #</u>	<u>Location</u>
(31)	CE-3-37	Farmstead -- Garfield Rd. (LR06037) approx. 400 ft. W of Garfield

The Joint Area's development was, and continues to be, strongly influenced by the character of the natural landscape. The natural setting into which agriculture, milling, manufacturing, and urbanizing activities were set is still a powerful factor in the overall character of the area. High points of elevation through the rolling landscape of Centre Township, particularly along a wide band through its midsection and in its northeastern quadrant, offer superb views of all the features in the valleys below and of the adjoining hillsides opposite. Several locations for outstanding scenic lookouts are indicated on the Historic, Scenic, & Community Resources map.

Another level of cultural, historic, and landscape/scenic resources is represented by the pre-twentieth century urbanized areas of the Joint Area -- the Borough of Centerport and villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville. These places have a high degree of architectural and historical integrity as tightly-knit assemblages of dwellings, stores, eating and drinking establishments, service and manufacturing operations, and community facilities.

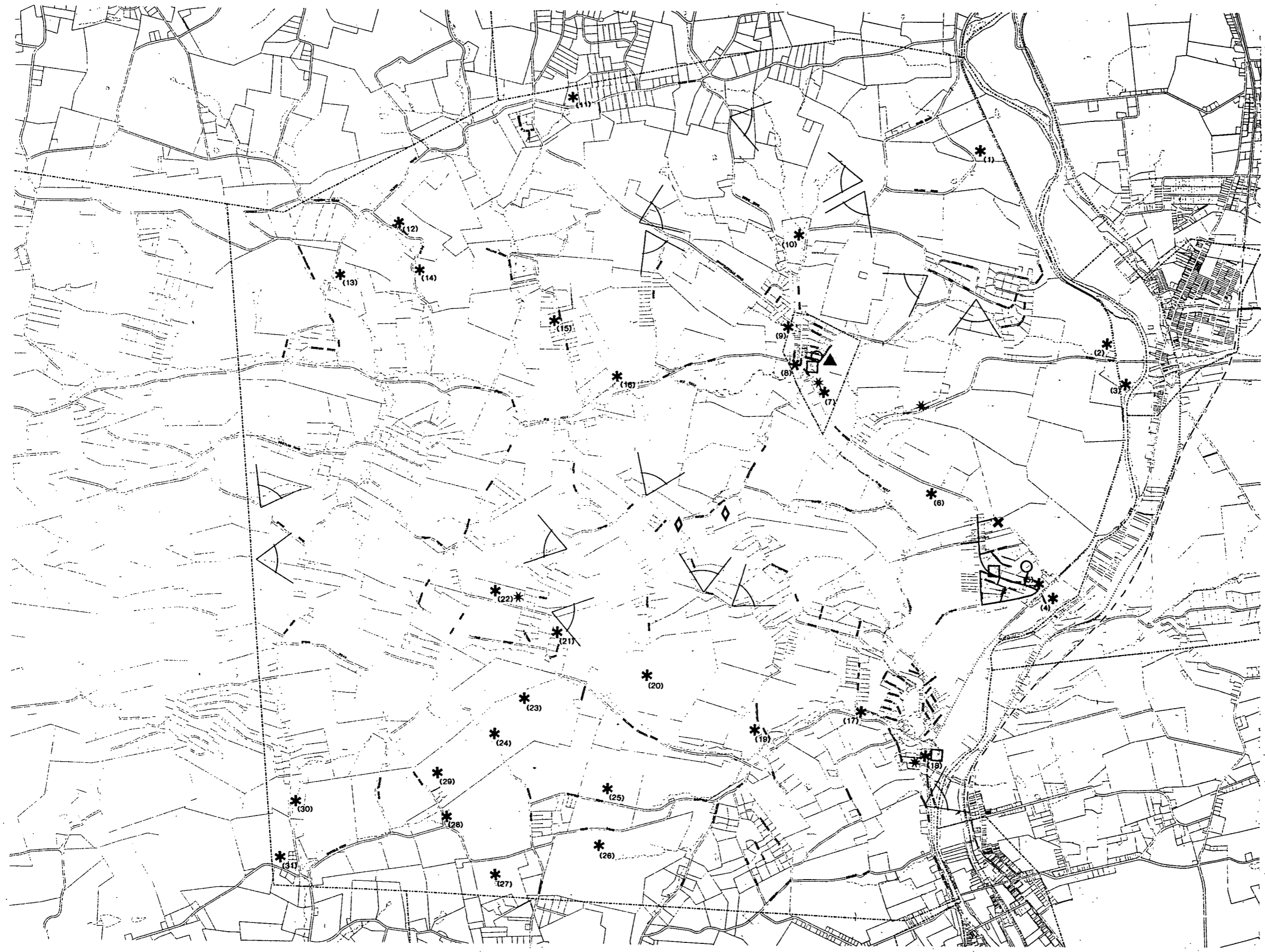
Three important techniques are now being used to protect farmland in the Joint Area: Differential assessment, Agricultural Security Areas, and purchase of agricultural conservation easements.

First, most owners of farmland in the Joint Area have been granted differential assessment for property tax purposes, under Pa. Act 319, the "Clean and Green Act". Under differential assessment, farmland is assessed at its value for farm production as opposed to its value for development. The resulting lower assessment and tax bill reduce a farmer's annual costs and make it more feasible for him to continue farming economically. It does not prevent the owner from developing his land, but if the land is developed, tax savings over the previous seven years and interest on those savings must be paid.

Second, many farmland owners have enrolled their land in Agricultural Security Areas (see Figure 2.5.2, Areas with Agricultural Land Protection Devices). The Agricultural Security Areas law prevents municipalities from enacting ordinances that restrict normal farming practices or structures in Agricultural Security Areas. It also requires state agencies with programs that might negatively affect farmers to conduct their programs in a manner that will encourage the continuance of viable agriculture in the Areas. It requires the approval of the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board of the Commonwealth before the Commonwealth or local governments use the power of eminent domain to acquire land in an Area. Finally, the law requires that state or locally funded development projects in a Security Area be reviewed by the state Agricultural Preserve Board and the Local Agricultural Advisory Committee. Inclusion of an area is voluntary and does not prevent the landowner from developing his land.

Third, there are two farms in the Joint Area that have easements limiting uses of the property to agriculture (see the Areas with Agricultural Land Protection Devices map). Acquisition of agricultural conservation easements, in these two cases by the Berks County Conservancy, is the most effective measure for preventing the development of farmland, since these are legally binding instruments, which go with the deed, that prevent development forever. The degree of protection for agriculture increases enormously as one goes from Agricultural Security Areas to land under easement.

Figure 2.5.1



HISTORIC, SCENIC & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- * Historic Sites
- Scenic Views
- ▲ Fire Station
- Post Office
- * Church
- Recreation
- ◇ Municipal Facilities
- ✕ Mohrsville Water Association Pump
- Mohrsville Water Association Service Area

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

Horner Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
1811 Walnut Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103

1000 500 0 500 1000






FIGURE

Figure 2.5.2

AREAS WITH AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION DEVICES

February 1996

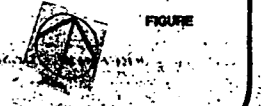
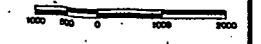
-  Agricultural Security Area
-  Conservation Easements
-  Ag. Security Area/Conserv. Easement



Source: Berks County Planning Commission

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
This Map Prepared by Berks County Planning Commission



FIGURE

Date:

SECTION 6: POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT

Population projections are considered an essential part of planning for future growth, in that they can be translated into approximations of the future need for housing, community facilities, and other forms of development. Many factors are taken into account in making population projections, but these factors are constantly subject to change. The longer the time period of the projections and the smaller the present population, the less reliable the projections may turn out. For instance, projections for individual municipalities are less valid than are those for a large region or for the entire nation, and five-year projections usually are more valid than fifteen- or twenty-year projections.

Population Trends for Centre Township, Centerport Borough, & Vicinity

Recent population trends for Centre Township, Centerport Borough, Bern Township, Ontelaunee Township, Penn Township, Perry Township, Tilden Township, Upper Bern Township, Leesport Borough, Shoemakersville Borough, the ten-municipality area including all of the preceding townships and boroughs, and Berks County are compared in Tables 2.6.1 and 2.6.2.

The ten-municipality area grew twice as rapidly as the county as a whole during the 1970s and, although the pace of growth for the county as a whole accelerated in the 1980s, the growth rate was still 2½ times greater in the latter decade for the ten-municipality area that includes Centre Township, Centerport Borough, and the surrounding municipalities. Centre Township, however, was among the fastest-growing municipalities of the ten, with a population that grew at about double the rate of the ten-municipality area in the 1970s and 1980s. Centre Township's population was 1,830 in 1970, 2,329 in 1980, and 3,154 in 1990, for a growth rate of 27.3 percent through the 1970s and 35.4 percent through the 1980s. Based on the Pattern of Change analysis in Section 3 of this chapter, there is ample evidence that this rapid growth rate is continuing through the 1990s.

The population of Centerport Borough is only about nine percent that for Centre Township. The borough had a population of 227 in 1970, 246 in 1980, and 284 in 1990. The additional borough population added between 1980 and 1990 (38 persons or 15.5 percent) reflects the creation of some small multi-family dwellings in the southern part of the community. Interestingly, the borough's main growth period was between 1920 and 1960, when it grew 1½ times, increasing from 134 to 208 persons.

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Centre Township, by contrast had a population of around 1,500 to 1,600 in both 1870 and 1960, although these dates are nearly a century apart. The township's growth period in the twentieth century did not commence until the 1960s, when it grew 15 percent. The rate of growth has increased in each successive decade.

TABLE 2.6.1
Centre Township and Centerport Borough
Population Trends, 1970-1990

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>
Centre	1,830	2,329	3,154
Centerport	227	246	284
Bern	4,764	5,097	5,748
Ontelaunee	1,568	1,408	1,359
Penn	1,205	1,254	1,831
Perry	2,112	2,420	2,516
Tilden	1,781	2,247	2,622
Upper Bern	930	1,159	1,458
Leesport	1,158	1,258	1,825
Shoemakersville	1,427	1,391	1,443
10 Municipality Area	17,002	18,809	22,240
Berks County	296,382	312,509	336,523

TABLE 2.6.2
Centre Township and Centerport Borough
Population Change, 1970-1990

	<u>1970-80</u>		<u>1980-90</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Centre	499	27.3	825	35.4
Centerport	19	8.4	38	15.5
Bern	333	7.0	651	12.8
Ontelaunee	-160	-10.2	-49	-3.5
Penn	49	4.1	577	46.0
Perry	308	14.6	96	4.0
Tilden	467	26.2	375	16.7
Upper Bern	229	24.6	299	25.8
Leesport	100	8.6	567	45.1
Shoemakersville	-36	-2.5	52	3.7
10 Municipality Area	1,807	10.6	3,431	18.2
Berks County	16,127	5.4	24,014	7.7

As the population of the Joint Area is growing, it is also changing (Table 2.6.3). According to Bureau of the Census statistics for Centre Township, the percentage of the population in the age groups 25 to 44 and 0 to 4 has been growing, reflecting a newly-arriving population that is in its household-formation years and starting families. This trend is already having a strong impact on school district enrollments and the need for expanded school facilities and more teachers, and will continue to be a potent force over the planning period. In contrast, the percentage of the township's population aged 18 to 24 is declining, reflecting a broad national demographic change (the "baby-bust") but as well, perhaps, the limited opportunities in education, employment, and housing in the Joint Area for this age group.

TABLE 2.6.3
Centre Township
Population by Age Groups

<u>Age Groups</u>	<u>1980</u>		<u>1990</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0 - 4	164	7.1	259	8.2
5 - 17	510	21.9	605	19.2
18 - 24	277	11.9	263	8.3
25 - 44	666	28.7	1,093	34.7
45 - 64	479	20.6	628	19.9
65 - 74	144	6.2	195	6.2
75+	84	3.6	111	3.5
TOTALS	2,324	100.0	3,154	100.0
Median Age:	31.2 years		33.2 years	

For Centerport Borough, the impact of the development of some small multi-family dwellings in the southern part of the community has similar effects on population age cohorts as in the case of Centre Township (Table 2.6.4). For the borough, however, the impact was also a lowering of its median age, a comparatively rare occurrence for municipalities in Pennsylvania in the late twentieth century.

While the total population of the Joint Area is projected to grow over the planning period (see the paragraphs that follow), the characteristics of the population will continue to evolve. For the near- and medium-term, school-age populations will increase, but at the same time the median age of heads-of-household will likely rise, as those who arrived between 1975 and 1995 age.

TABLE 2.6.4
Centerport Borough
Population by Age Groups

<u>Age Groups</u>	<u>1980</u>		<u>1990</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0 - 4	11	4.5	19	6.7
5 - 17	50	20.3	52	18.3
18 - 24	28	11.4	34	12.0
25 - 44	63	25.6	87	30.6
45 - 64	53	21.5	55	19.4
65 - 74	23	9.3	22	7.7
75+	18	7.3	15	5.3
TOTALS	246	99.9	284	100.0
Median Age:	36.2 years		33.4 years	

Population Projections

Municipal population projections for 2000, 2010, and 2020 were prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources in the early 1990s (prior to the name change for the agency), based on control totals for the county and region that link population and employment at the metropolitan level. For the Joint Area (both municipalities), a 2020 population of 5,396 was forecast, representing an increase in population of 1,958 persons or 57 percent from 1990.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources projection is shown as "Alternative 1" in Table 2.6.5. Alternatives to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources projections are also given in this table. The table focuses on a planning horizon of twenty years from the present -- the year 2016 -- as well as the years 2000, 2010, and 2020.

Alternative 2 is a projection that takes the actual combined Centre Township/Centerport Borough growth rate for the 1980-1990 decade, 33.5 percent, and projects this rate to continue through 2020. The total percentage change from 1990 to 2016 using this technique, 110.6, is about double that for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources projection, with a total population in the Joint Area by 2016 using Alternative 2's approach of 8,180 versus 5,211 persons in the Joint Area using the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources projection.

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Alternative 3 takes the actual growth rate for the ten-municipality area (referred to earlier in this Section) from 1980 to 1990, 18.2 percent, and projects this rate out over twenty-six and thirty years, from 1990 to 2016 and 2020. The results for the year 2016 are very close to those for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources projection in Alternative 1, but markedly less than those for Alternative 2.

In Alternative 4, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources projected growth rate for the entire county from 1990 to 2020, 10.8 percent, is applied to the Joint Area. By 2016, the total population in Centre Township and Centerport Borough would only be 4,454, about a 1,000-person increase over 1990.

Alternative 5 takes a much different tack in looking at possible future population in the Joint Area. Noting that the Joint Area constituted 0.8 percent of the total county population in 1980 and 1.0 percent in 1990, Alternative 5 forecasts this trend to continue, with the Joint Area population representing 1.2 percent of the county total in 2000, 1.4 percent of the county population in 2010, and 1.6 percent of the county figure by 2020. For the year 2016, the Joint Area “capture rate”, relative to the county, would be 1.5 percent. By the year 2016, the total

**TABLE 2.6.5
Centre Township and Centerport Borough
Alternative Population Projections**

<u>Alternative</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>1990-2016</u>	
						<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. DER Projections	3,438	4,280	4,968	5,211	5,396	1,773	51.6
2. Twp./Boro. Growth Rate, 1980-1990 (33.5%)	3,438	4,590	6,127	7,240	8,180	3,802	110.6
3. 10-municipality Growth Rate, 1980-1990 (18.2%)	3,438	4,064	4,803	5,314	5,678	1,876	54.6
4. Projected 1990-2020 County Growth Rate (10.8%)	3,438	3,809	4,221	4,454	4,677	1,016	29.6
5. Proportion of County Population	3,438 (1.0%)	4,255 (1.2%)	5,142 (1.4%)	5,622 (1.5%)	5,968 (1.6%)	2,184	63.5

area population would be 5,622, reasonably close to the Alternative 1 projection of 5,211 and the Alternative 3 projection of 5,314.

Looking at the various projections, it is probably unrealistic to expect the rapid growth rate of Joint Area through the 1980s to be sustained for Centre Township and Centerport Borough through the year 2016. Thus it would appear that the growth represented by Alternative 2 is probably high. On the other hand, the projected county growth rate through 2020 by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources is probably too low to be reasonably applied to the Joint Area, so Alternative 4 is probably too conservative. The range of population figures represented by Alternatives 1, 3, and 5 are probably the most reasonable upon which to base future projections of housing construction (see below) and the Comprehensive Plan (see Chapter 3) for Centre Township and Centerport Borough.

Housing Units to be Constructed

An estimate of the number of housing units to be constructed over the planning period has been formulated (Table 2.6.6). The estimate is based on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources projections discussed above, including a Joint Area 2010 population of 4,968, a 2016 population of 5,211, and a 2020 population of 5,396.

The table assumes that 99 percent of the population will live in households, that the average number of persons per household will be 2.8 (consistent with figures from the Federal Census for Centre Township for 1980 and for 1990), that vacancies will comprise 3 percent of the total housing stock, and that there will be modest needs to replace some of the existing housing stock over the planning period.

Applying the method used in the table, the total number of new housing units to be constructed in the Joint Area from 1990 to 2016 would be about 660, or an average of about 25 per year. This represents about 500 new units between 1996 and 2016. By way of contrast, the total number of new housing units built in the Joint Area from 1981 to 1995 was about 450, translating to a rate of around 32 units per year.

Based upon the "most-likely" population projections, then, the Joint Area may expect sustained growth in the construction of new housing units, albeit at a slightly slower pace than over the last fifteen years.

TABLE 2.6.6
Centre Township and Centerport Borough
Housing Units to be Constructed, 1990-2010, 1990-2016, 1990-2020

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2020</u>
DER Population Projection	4,968	5,211	5,396
Population in Households (99%)	4,918	5,159	5,342
Persons per Household	2.8	2.8	2.8
Occupied Housing Units	1,756	1,843	1,908
Vacant Units (3%)	54	57	59
Total Housing Units Required	1,810	1,900	1,967
Existing Stock, Year-Round Hsg. Units, 1990	1,254	1,254	1,254
Net Additions to Housing Stock	556	646	713
Replacement of Existing Stock (3%)	17	19	21
Conversions (1%)	-6	-6	-6
Total Housing Units to be Constructed	567	659	727
Average # of Housing Units to be Constructed per Year	28	25	24

Employment Trends and Projections

Employment trends and projections are important in planning for future growth. While population projections and housing data can be translated into approximations of the future need for housing units and land for new housing construction, employment projections for a given locale may be converted into estimates of potential demand for land for new commercial and industrial establishments. Both kinds of projections may give clues as to the future need for varying kinds of community facilities and services.

Unfortunately, employment data for smaller geographic areas are not as readily available as population data. While the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census conducts a Census of Business every five years, it does not cover all economic sectors and the data it reports are riddled with gaps

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

because of the disclosure rules under which it operates. A more complete accounting of employment patterns has recently become available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, but the county is the smallest unit for which those data are available. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor receives highly-detailed employer and employee information in the course of administering an unemployment insurance fund, but the agency will not release information for municipalities with populations under 25,000.

In the absence of census results or other reliable employment data, secondary sources of information are often used. Many municipalities impose an occupational privilege tax of \$10.00 on each employed person in the township or borough (there is usually a minimum threshold of around \$1000 worth of annual wages to qualify). Yearly revenues from this kind of tax can then be translated into number of persons employed in the municipality, but these data can be misleading and must be used with caution. Total occupational privilege tax revenues typically reflect a proportion of seasonal, temporary, and limited-shift employees. Double and triple counting of individuals employed at several businesses may also occur. For Centre Township and Centerport Borough, however, these caveats are moot -- neither municipality imposes an occupational privilege tax.

For the Joint Area, then, only the roughest kind of employment estimates can be made. The Linden Knitting Mill in Mohrsville is probably the largest employer in Centre Township, with thirty to fifty employees. Alpha Packaging Corporation, in the former mushroom-packing plant south of Centerport on Centerport Road, has around twenty to thirty employees, as does Kissinger Business Systems in Centerport Borough. In a 1980 survey of employment in Centre Township and Centerport Borough, twenty-six total employees were counted in Centerport, but this number included representation from several businesses, like the furniture store, that have since closed. The same survey counted 60 employees in Centre Township, excluding the mushroom plant, the Mohrsville knitting mill, and Alpha Packaging's (then) Dauberville operation.

Total 1996 employment in the Joint Area is very roughly 150 to 200 persons. It is extremely difficult to forecast employment trends with such small numbers of employees as a base. The impact of the arrival of even one significantly-sized business could propel these numbers much higher, but whether the appearance of such a business is imminent is impossible to say.

For the purposes of estimating land area requirements for new commercial and industrial development, a generally conservative approach should be made.

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Given the employment trends of the last fifteen to twenty years, there is no reason to believe that there will be very large demands for land for new commercial and industrial development over the next fifteen to twenty years. An allocation of fifty to one hundred acres should be adequate to accommodate any prospective new commercial and industrial development for the Joint Area.

SECTION 7: CIRCULATION

A community's transportation system has a direct influence on the location and intensity of development. The Joint Area is no exception to this -- for both Centre Township and Centerport Borough the establishment of transportation routes and facilities have been important determinants for growth.

The area's main regional transportation links occur in a north-south corridor along the township's eastern flank and consist of water, road, and rail modes. The Schuylkill River would have been the area's original transportation thoroughfare, followed chronologically by trails along the riverbanks that, in this case, evolved into a major highway, PA Route 61. In the mid-nineteenth century, the two parallel links, river and road, were joined by a third, the Philadelphia and Reading Rail Road.

Significantly, the two villages in the Joint Area, Dauberville and Mohrsville, are located at the points where bridges were erected to span the Schuylkill River, permitting access to the township from PA Route 61, and where the bridge access roads crossed the railroad. The third major settlement, Centerport, is at a major junction of routes along the Shartlesville Road, an important roadway link to the northwest.

Up until the late twentieth century, the proximity of Centerport and the eastern portion of Centre Township to the bridges spanning the Schuylkill River and linking to PA Route 61 made these parts of the Joint Area the most attractive for new residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Today, the transportation network continues as one of the primary determinants in the location of residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Mobility, however, has changed a lot over the years, with most households now having one, two, or three (or even more) private vehicles. As has been suggested in Section 3 of this chapter, the high degree of mobility and the web-like network of local rural roads running throughout Centre Township tends to make all places in the Joint Area nearly equal in accessibility, in turn making each parcel of land nearly equally suitable to be developed. The resultant pattern of land development engenders certain problems, as Section 3 enumerates.

This circulation analysis provides a description of the basic road network for Centre Township and Centerport Borough. The jurisdictional and functional

classifications of the various segments of the road network and bridges and traffic demands on major roads are of particular concern. The circulation analysis focuses on those streets and highways that are now, or may be in the future, providing for continuity of travel within and through the Joint Area, as opposed to neighborhood or subdivision streets that have the primary purpose of providing access to residences.

Jurisdictional Classification

Road jurisdictional classifications for the Joint Area are indicated on Figure 2.7.1 and represent traffic routes on two levels, state highways and township/borough roads. Several traffic routes are controlled and maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Route 61, although technically outside of the township, provides regional access to Reading to the south and to Interstate 78 and Pottsville to the north. State highways within the Joint Area include some important links but also some relatively minor ones. State highways within the Joint Area include Main Street-Shartlesville Road, Shoey Road, Bellemans Church Road, Garfield Road (including a small piece of Quarry Road), Berne Road (including the southern end of River Road), Tilden Road (including the extreme westerly end of Irish Creek Road), and North Boundary Road. With the exception of a few private roads, all other roads in the Joint Area are under the jurisdiction of either Centre Township or Centerport Borough.

Bridges too may be classified by jurisdiction (see Figure 2.7.1), and in this instance there is a third player, Berks County. There are a total of thirteen state bridges, two county bridges, five township bridges, and no borough bridges within the Joint Area.

Functional Classification

Road systems comprise a hierarchy of highways and streets that perform different functions. The major classifications are expressway, arterial, collector, and local roads. Expressways are limited-access highways designed to move large volumes of through traffic at high speeds. At each succeeding level in the hierarchy, traffic volumes and speeds decrease, average trip lengths become shorter, and there is increased access to abutting properties.

Road functional classifications for the Joint Area, as determined by PennDOT, are indicated on Figure 2.7.1. PA Route 61, although actually beyond the

municipal boundaries of Centre Township and Centerport Borough, is the area's only Principal Arterial. Main Street-Shartlesville Road and Shoey Road qualify as Rural Major Collectors. PennDOT-designated Minor Collectors include Bellemans Church Road (eastern end only), Garfield Road (including the small piece of Quarry Road mentioned above), Irish Creek Road, River Road, and Rake Road-Plum Road.

Despite the hierarchy suggested by PennDOT's functional classification, many of the roads named above possess characteristics that are decidedly rural. Pervasive conditions along these roads include narrow cartways, lack of shoulders and guard rails, tight turns, steep grades, limited sight distances, and absence of lighting (also see *Road Hazards*, following).

Traffic Volumes

Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes (AADTs), as measured by PennDOT for 1988 and 1995, are shown in Figure 2.7.2. The highest volumes were on Main Street-Shartlesville Road, with about 1,900 to 2,400 cars per day on the section between PA Route 61 and Centerport, and 1,200 cars per day on the northwesterly link between Centerport and Tilden Township. The second-highest volumes were on Bellemans Church Road, just west of Dauberville, with about 1,800 cars per day.

This section of Bellemans Church Road appears to be experiencing the most rapid rate of traffic growth, with an increase of 133 percent over only seven years. Also experiencing extremely fast growth in traffic volume is Irish Creek Road, with an increase from 782 to 1217 cars per day (56 percent) over the same period. Volumes on Main Street in Centerport rose 26 percent, those along Main Street toward Mohrsville increased 24 percent, and those on the northwesterly link of Shartlesville Road between Centerport and Tilden Township went up 5 percent. Traffic growth in the Joint Area is continuing, and the effect of increased volumes on the character and quality-of-life in Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville is a mounting concern.

Road Hazards

Also of mounting concern are the widespread number of road hazard areas, including high accident locations, dangerous road segments, railroad grade crossings, and flood prone areas. These locations were determined, in part, from previous planning studies and responses to the 1996 Comprehensive Plan

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

questionnaire, and are recorded on Figure 2.7.2.

Two intersections indicated as high accident areas are actually outside the limits of the Joint Area, but these have been included in the Road Hazards figure because the locations form the "front doors" to the Joint Area, and because circumstances at these intersections are so dangerous. The two locations are the intersection between PA Route 61 and Bellemans Church Road and the intersection between PA Route 61 and Main Street-Shoemakersville Road. At both intersections, northbound traffic on PA Route 61 destined for the Joint Area must negotiate left turns directly from the passing lane of the Principal Arterial highway. Motorists are left exposed to be rear-ended as they await the two lanes of southbound traffic to clear the intersection, permitting completion of the left turn movement. Compounding the dangerous situation is the lack of adequate lighting and signage.

Figure 2.7.1



ROAD FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

- Principal Arterial
- Rural Major Collector
- Minor Collector

Source: PennDOT, 1994

ROAD JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

- ROAD NAME State Highway
- Road Name Township & Borough Road

BRIDGES JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

- State
- County
- Township

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office



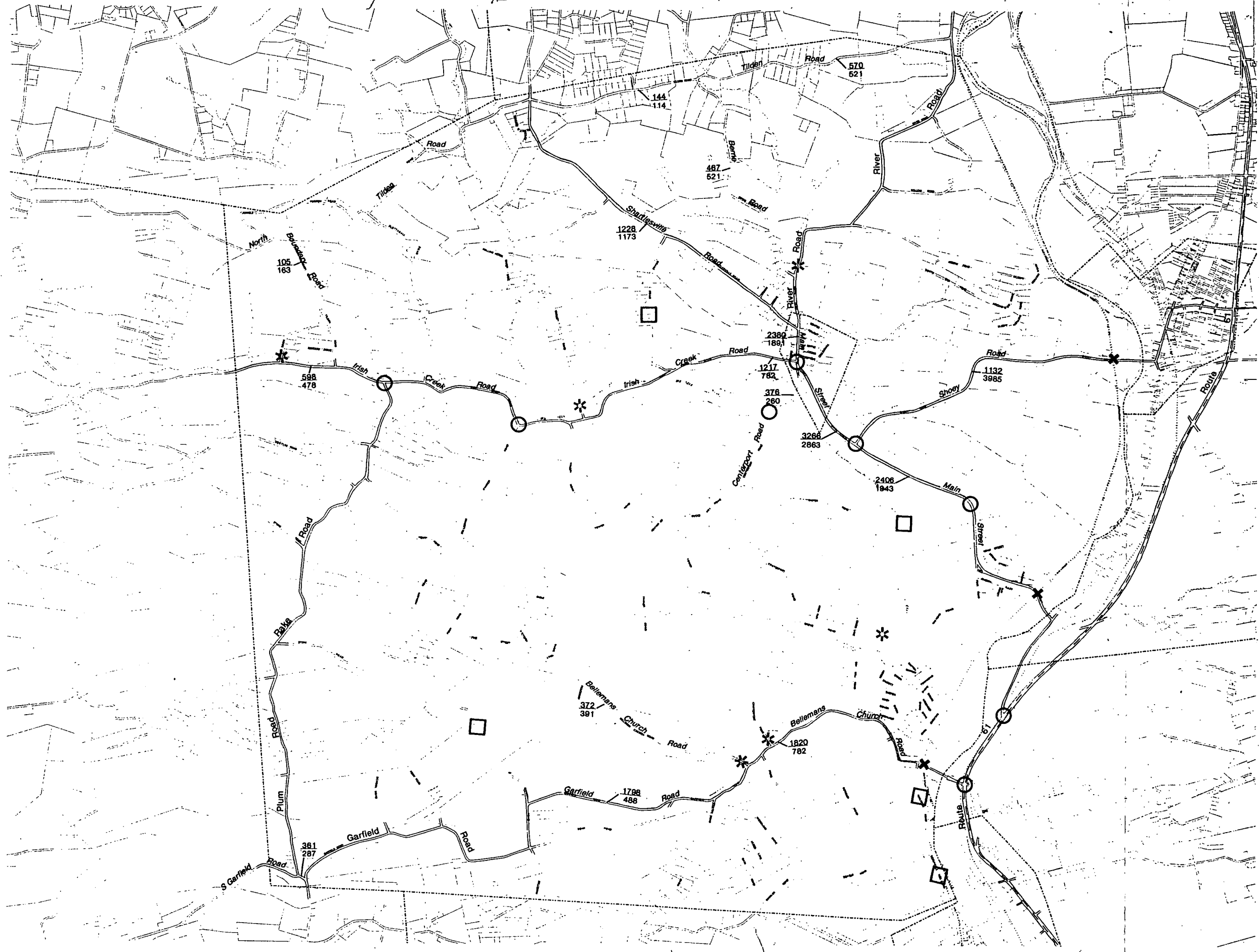
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1871 Walnut Street - 1st Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102



FIGURE

DATE

Figure 2.7.2



TRAFFIC VOLUMES

XXX 1985 AADT
XXX 1988 AADT
AADT = Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

ROAD HAZARDS

- High Accident Area
- Hazardous Road Area
- × Railroad Crossing
- * Flood Prone Area

Source: 1980 Comprehensive Plan & 1990 Comprehensive Plan Questionnaire

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office



Norman Day Associates

Planning & Urban Design

1611 Walnut Street - 2nd Floor

Philadelphia, Pa. 19102



FIGURE

DATE:

SECTION 8: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Community Facilities

The Historic, Scenic, & Community Resources map (Figure 2.5.1) shows a range of local institutions, from municipal facilities to post offices, the fire station, recreational facilities, churches, and the service area and facilities of the Mohrsville Water Association.

Centre Township has a Township Building, at Bucks Hill Road and Tower Road, to house municipal functions, including the township police department. Centre Township also has a public works storage garage a short distance down Bucks Hill Road from the Township Building, near Centerport Road. Centerport Borough, on the other hand, lacks a municipal building, and uses the Central Berks Fire Company facility for Council meetings and other Borough business.

Centre Township provides police services, under contract, to Centerport Borough and to Tilden Township. Centre Township also provides contractual services to the Borough for roadway snow plowing.

The volunteer Central Berks Fire Company, located in Centerport, serves the entire Joint Area. The fire company can also receive assistance from the Union Fire Company in nearby Leesport, and the Shoemakersville Fire Company in Shoemakersville, just to the east. Ambulance service is provided by the Schuylkill Valley Ambulance in Leesport.

The Joint Area has three post offices, one each in Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville. Residents in certain parts of Centre Township receive mail delivery from post offices just outside the Joint Area. The nearest public library is the Schuylkill Valley Community Library in Leesport.

Recreation facilities in the Joint Area are not extensive. The Mohrsville Athletic and Playground Association operates six acres of ballfields behind the Linden Knitting Mill in Mohrsville. The Borough of Centerport has a 0.2-acre public field area across the street from the Central Berks Fire Company fire station. Residents of the Joint Area are, however, close to the 6,194-acre federally-operated Blue Marsh Lake facility in adjacent Penn Township and in North Heidelberg and Lower Heidelberg Townships. There are also extensive sports facilities at the school district properties in Ontelaunee Township.

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For many years elementary school students from the Joint Area attended the Centre Township Elementary School on Main Street, just east of Shoey Road. However, the Schuylkill Valley School District, of which the Joint Area is only a part (the district consists of Centre, Ontelaunee, and Bern Townships and Centerport and Leesport Boroughs), recently consolidated its primary, intermediate, and high schools at one campus, in Ontelaunee Township. Now, all public school students resident in Centre Township and Centerport Borough are bussed to the Ontelaunee Township site.

Neither Centre Township nor Centerport Borough have central sewer systems. These could, however, be arriving shortly (see Chapter 3, Section 8). Both jurisdictions are without central water supply systems too, except for the village of Mohrsville. The Mohrsville Water Association service area and pump location are shown on the Historic, Scenic, & Community Resources map.

Residents and businesses within the Joint Area receive electric service from Metropolitan Edison. Telephone service for most of Centre Township and all of Centerport Borough is provided by Commonwealth Telephone. The northwestern quadrant of Centre Township receives telephone service from General Telephone (GTE).

A major Metropolitan Edison 500-kilovolt power line crosses the central portion of the Joint Area, as shown in Figure 2.8.1. Also shown are the twin eight-inch underground petroleum pipelines of Atlantic Pipeline, slicing across the western half of the township in a north-south alignment, and a similar alignment for the underground natural gas pipeline of Allied Gas in the eastern half of the township.

Municipal Finances

Centre Township is funded largely through a 0.5 percent earned income tax levied on all township residents with earned income. Out of a 1996 total general fund municipal budget of roughly \$ 515,000, some 45 percent, or about \$ 230,000, came from the earned income tax. In contrast, real estate taxes, often thought of as the principal source of revenue for local government, constituted only about 7½ percent (\$ 38,000) of the general fund budget.

Other sources of local funding include a 0.5 percent realty transfer tax (budgeted at \$ 18,000 or 3½ percent of the total general fund), and a \$ 5.00 per capita tax (budgeted at \$ 9,500 for fiscal 1996). Sources of revenue other than local taxation include Federal grants (\$ 53,000), providing for-fee police

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services to Centerport Borough and Tilden Township (\$ 54,000), and the sale of building and other permits.

A significant source of revenue for Township road maintenance is State grants of more than \$ 100,000. A special Street Light Fund gains its revenue from front foot assessments of \$ 0.35 (1996 budget of \$ 4,700).

On the expenditures side, a substantial amount in the 1996 budget (nearly \$ 130,000) was designated for road construction, although this amount is technically part of the State Highway Aid budget and not part of the general fund. Within the general fund municipal budget of about \$ 515,000, the largest expenditures were for policing (\$ 188,000 or 36½ per cent); fire protection (\$ 68,000 or 13 percent); liability insurance, medical insurance, Social Security, gasoline, and other general services (\$ 56,000); planning and zoning (\$ 38,500); salaries, legal services, and general government (\$ 38,000); road equipment repair and maintenance (\$30,000); capital purchases and other building-related items (\$26,000); road repairs (\$17,000); and snow removal (\$15,000).

Centre Township lives within its means; it enjoys no bonded indebtedness. The Township has a "guaranty obligation" from 1995 with respect to a note issued by the Centre Township Municipal Authority for about \$ 458,000 for central sewers.

At about \$ 33,000, Centerport's general fund municipal budget is less than 7 percent of Centre Township's. Also in contrast to Centre Township is the borough's relative reliance on real estate taxes: \$ 15,500 or about 46 percent of revenues was budgeted to come from real estate taxes for 1996 versus \$ 13,500 (41 percent) from the earned income tax. (Centerport's earned income tax is levied at 1.0 percent.) The borough's 0.5 percent realty transfer tax netted only \$ 872.00 in 1995 and the \$ 5.00 per capita tax generated \$ 675.50. Federal grants for 1996 were budgeted at \$1,450.

The largest borough expenditure is for public safety (budgeted at \$ 16,200 for 1996), consisting for the most part of police services contracted from Centre Township. Other costs include \$ 11,400 for general government services, including legal consulting.

Centerport's State Highway Aid fund was budgeted at around \$ 3,700 in revenues for 1996, with a similar figure applied toward expenditures for roads.

Like Centre Township, Centerport has no bonded indebtedness.

Figure 2.8.1

PIPELINES & TRANSMISSION LINES


- Oil Pipeline
- Gas Pipeline
- Electric Transmission Line

Pipeline and transmission line locations are shown for general planning purposes only and are approximate. Actual locations shall be determined only by a field verification approved by the appropriate company.

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

Planning & Urban Associates
1211 Walnut Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102



FIGURE

