

CHAPTER THREE: GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

SECTION 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Plan is intended as a guide for future growth and land development in the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Planning Area. Several months of background research and analysis, monthly meetings with the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee, focused resident surveys, and Public Information Meetings described in Chapter One, form the basis for the Plan. It reflects not only a comprehensive set of goals and policies for development, but also attempts to embody shared community wants and aspirations.

The Growth Management Plan is composed of several elements pertaining to land use, circulation, housing, community facilities, utilities, conservation, and environmental protection. Prior to discussion of the elements, Section 2 presents a summary of goals, objectives, and policies upon which the Plan has been structured. The remainder of the chapter develops the components of the recommended development pattern for the Joint Planning Area.

The Growth Management Plan represents a guide to be followed by Centre Township, Centerport Borough, the Schuylkill Valley School District, other public and quasi-public organizations, and by private developers in order to address important issues and problems related to the Joint Area's overall development. Many of these problems and issues are interrelated, so that effective resolution of one cannot take place without simultaneous efforts to resolve others.

An especially significant aspect of the Growth Management Plan is the close coordination and mutual-reliance between the Land Use Plan (Section 3) and Circulation Plan (Section 4). The character of the land use concepts outlined in Section 3 are closely tied to the circumstances and potentials of the road network, and the recommended circulation improvements respond to and advance the framework for development embodied in the Land Use Plan.

Other mandatory planning processes, such as requirements for municipalities to complete Act 537 sewage facilities plans, are fundamental in the presentation of the various elements of the Growth Management Plan.

The Growth Management Plan is focused on the location, character, and

timing of future development. In particular, the Plan proposes that future development be directed to locations and in a manner that allows the phasing-in of specific transportation and water and sewer service systems improvements. The emphasis on the incremental processes of development are also primary concerns of the Plan with reference to resource conservation and park creation.

The Growth Management Plan provides opportunities for growth. Under Pennsylvania statutory law, the right of approval for subdivision and land development is (with limited exceptions) exercised by municipalities, and not, for example, by counties, as it often is in some neighboring states. Under Pennsylvania case law, all municipalities must provide land development opportunities for all reasonable uses. The only alternative to providing growth opportunities to all municipalities is through the joint municipal planning and zoning provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, whereby several municipalities can join together, produce joint ordinances, and limit growth to a few locations within the joint area.

The Growth Management Plan for the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Planning Area is the manifestation of such joint planning efforts. By planning together (and by following through with joint zoning regulations) the township and borough can both benefit from the joint municipal planning and zoning provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Neither municipality, individually, has to provide growth opportunities for all types of development. Municipalities have more opportunity to tailor prospective development more closely to their existing character and desired future than in traditional municipality-by-municipality planning. The overall pattern of development and quality-of-life of the entire community should be of a higher caliber as a result of these kind of cooperative, mutually-beneficial planning efforts.

SECTION 2: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

A. Development Pattern

GOAL: Achieve a future overall development pattern that is responsive to the economic, social, and cultural needs of residents of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Area, and that considers the realities of regional trends.

GOAL: Preserve and enhance the physical and environmental characteristics that make the Joint Area a distinctive and identifiable place, while at the same time provide for the needs of existing and prospective residents.

GOAL: Ensure that development occurs in ways that minimize degradation of natural and cultural environments.

GOAL: Conserve open areas of the Joint Area.

GOAL: Ensure that development occurs in an efficient and logical manner, and in ways that minimize short- and long-term costs to the public and private sectors.

Objective: Designate a growth area that is adequate and appropriate to accommodate expected development and that can be served over the planning period mostly by municipal central water and sewer systems and by an upgraded existing network of roads, as well as other public services.

Objective: Direct residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development to the designated growth area, where sewer, water, transportation, and other improvements can be phased in concert with new development.

Objective: Identify areas within the designated growth area for future development, even if not immediate candidates for municipal central sewer and water systems, where such future development would be appropriate for the protection of the overall community character.

Objective: Allocate sufficient land to accommodate most of the Joint Area's projected population within the designated growth area, allowing for flexibility in real estate markets.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall establish a designated growth area focused upon the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville for the greatest concentration and mix of land uses in the Joint Area.
2. The designated growth area shall also include areas for low density residential development around and near the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville that have good access to these centers and to the bridges over the Schuylkill River and that have some potential to be served by municipal central water and sewer facilities over the planning period.
3. The Township and Borough shall limit the amount, intensity, and character of any residential or other urbanizing uses outside of the designated growth area.

B. Economic Base

GOAL: Expand and diversify opportunities for local businesses.

GOAL: Maintain the economic viability of existing settlements.

Objective: Provide opportunities for local residents to obtain convenient services.

Objective: Locate businesses and employment centers close to transportation corridors in order to maximize accessibility for employees and clients and limit traffic impacts on the rest of the Joint Area.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall direct new consumer-oriented service businesses to the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville, while at the same time ensuring the compatibility of all commercial enterprises with the character of these places.
2. Employment centers with characteristics not compatible with the borough/village atmosphere but otherwise fitting for the Joint Area shall be directed to appropriate locations within the designated growth area, readily-

accessible to the bridges over the Schuylkill River, as indicated in the Land Use Plan.

GOAL: Protect and enhance the local agricultural economy.

Objective: Assist and encourage agricultural industry by conserving agricultural land and by limiting the encroachment of urbanizing uses into agricultural areas.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall enact effective agricultural zoning for that portion of the Joint Area intended primarily for agriculture.

C. Agricultural Resources

GOAL: Preserve productive farmland in the Joint Area for agricultural use.

GOAL: Maintain agriculture as a primary component of the Joint Area's economic base.

Objective: Minimize scattered urbanization, which causes conflicts with farming, such as additional vehicular traffic and land use incompatibilities.

Objective: Discourage the conversion of highly-productive farmland to non-farm uses.

Objective: Protect farming operations in Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) from incompatible, non-farming-related uses.

Objective: Encourage local participation in the "Clean and Green" Act (preferential tax assessment), the PACE program (purchase of development rights), and private land preservation activities.

Objective: Ensure that Joint Area roadways continue to accommodate agriculturally-related traffic.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall specify that portion of the Joint Area outside of the designated growth area primarily for agriculture, in conformance with the Land Use Plan.
2. The Township and the Borough shall direct residential, commercial, and industrial uses to designated growth areas.
3. The Township and the Borough shall direct central sewer, water, and road system improvements to facilitate residential, commercial, and industrial development only within the designated growth area.
4. The Township and Borough shall enact effective agricultural zoning for that portion of the Joint Area intended primarily for agriculture.
5. The Township and Borough shall enact appropriate development regulations to ensure logical and effective transitions between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.

D. Circulation

GOAL: Achieve a safe, efficient, and pleasant circulation system that is compatible with the character of the Joint Area and that will best serve both necessary and pleasure trips.

Objective: Encourage traffic generated by new development to use major collector roads within the designated growth area and discourage dispersion of this traffic into the designated agricultural areas of the community.

Objective: Control traffic volumes and speeds through the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville.

Objective: Identify existing and potential intersections and roadway segments with safety problems, along with methods of eliminating these deficiencies.

Objective: Minimize costs (construction, maintenance, social, and environmental) associated with the development of new and improved roadway segments.

Objective: Identify and generally set priorities for projects that are appropriate for inclusion on PennDOT's Twelve-Year Highway Program.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall regulate the number and spacing of access driveways and intersecting streets to collector routes so as to maintain free-flowing, safe, vehicular movement.
2. The Township and Borough shall review all development proposals for appropriate vehicular access in keeping with the road classification system.
3. The Township and Borough shall support upgrading of roads and intersections where increasing traffic and/or dangerous conditions warrant circulation system improvements.
4. The Township and Borough shall consider the creation of bypass loop roads to alleviate traffic safety problems on the main roads through the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville.
5. The Township and Borough shall direct the construction of sidewalk improvements, including extensions to the system, in the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville and in other areas where pedestrian traffic warrants change and where discontinuities in the current sidewalk network exist.

Objective: Encourage opportunities for travel in the Joint Area by means other than private automobiles.

Objective: Promote the goals of the Clean Air Act Amendments.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall promote pedestrian-oriented service-commercial uses in the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville, encouraging pedestrian circulation in these centers.
2. The Township and Borough shall encourage ride-sharing among local residents and identify locations that might be used for commuter park-and-ride lots.

3. The Township and Borough shall consider low-cost physical improvements to new roads and roads undergoing upgrading to accommodate bicyclists.

E. Community Services

GOAL: Provide public services, facilities, and utilities in the most cost-effective manner, taking into account community needs and environmental factors.

Objective: Maintain services and facilities that are consistent with the designated growth area concept.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall review all development proposals to determine their probable effects on public service systems, including schools, emergency services, utilities, recreation, and administrative services, and shall consider approval of such proposals only when they are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective: Direct development to areas that have the potential to receive municipal central sewer and water service, even if not immediately.

Objective: Support efforts of wastewater treatment and water supply authorities to plan ahead for expansion of capacities and extensions of the areas of service in accordance with growth projections and the designated growth area of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall implement the first municipal central sewer systems for the Joint Area, one for Centerport and vicinity and one serving the Mohrsville and Dauberville area.
2. The Township and Borough shall conduct long-range sewer system planning with a view toward expansion of the service areas and treatment plant capacities as development proceeds in the designated growth area of the Comprehensive Plan.

3. The Township and Borough shall monitor the municipal sewage treatment and disposal systems through the planning period and shall direct needed upgrading of system components to meet State standards for effluent quality, to reduce inflow and infiltration into transmission lines, and to maintain system efficiency.

4. The Township and Borough shall support the installation of central sewage disposal systems that do not discharge into municipal sewer lines in concert with new development only when such systems can be demonstrated to be efficient, effective, and environmentally-sound.

Objective: Provide an adequate supply and mix of parks, playgrounds, and other recreation facilities, both active and passive, to serve the projected population of the Joint Area.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall promote the concept of residential clustering for a more efficient use of land, conservation of natural resources, and creation of usable open space and recreation lands.

2. The Township and Borough shall build into the zoning code development incentives to encourage private conservation, development, and/or maintenance of open space land.

3. The Township and Borough shall work to establish a park facility on Township-owned land on Bucks Hill Road.

F. Housing

GOAL: Provide a diversity of housing opportunities, in harmony with existing development and the historical and natural environments.

Objective: Facilitate a range of housing types, sizes, and price levels, to respond to changing housing needs and to provide housing for various stages of the life cycle, household configurations, and income levels.

Objective: Ensure a high level of housing quality, both for new construction and for the existing housing stock.

Objective: Identify policies that will provide for the housing needs of elderly and handicapped residents.

Objective: Maintain borough and village residential neighborhoods and expand housing opportunities close to these centers.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall facilitate the development of single-family attached and multi-family housing, as well as small-lot single family detached dwellings, in and close to the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville.
2. On tracts undergoing residential development, the Township and Borough shall promote the concept of residential clustering for a more efficient use of land and infrastructure, preservation of farmland and natural and historic resources, and creation of usable open space and recreation lands.
3. The Township and Borough shall conserve the existing housing stock of the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville to maintain their residential character, historic identities, and housing affordability.
4. The Township and Borough shall, with the assistance of the County, monitor the available sources of federal and state funding for housing rehabilitation, low- and moderate-income housing construction, and infrastructure improvements, and shall consider participation in these programs.
5. The Township and Borough shall enforce local building and housing codes.

G. Resource Protection

GOAL: Protect and enhance environmentally-sensitive and culturally-significant areas of the Joint Area.

Objective: Protect groundwater, floodplains, streams, wetlands, mature woodlands and specimen trees, steep slopes, ridge lines, scenic viewsheds, and other environmental features of the Joint Area.

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall enforce regulations in order to ensure that development in areas of environmentally-sensitive resources is undertaken in a manner that minimizes their destruction or impairment.
2. The Township and Borough shall continue to enforce regulations to restrict the construction of any structures for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional use in floodplains.
3. The Township and Borough shall continually monitor private sewage treatment and disposal systems and shall enforce system upgrades or mandate connection to municipal systems, as required, to prevent environmental degradation.
4. The Township and Borough shall consider mandating the submission of comprehensive environmental assessment statements with applications for approval of substantial land developments.

Objective: Preserve and enhance the significant historical, archaeological, and cultural resources of the Joint Area.

Objective: Reinforce the character and ambience of historic settlements.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall devise and implement special controls over development in areas of historic- and culturally-valuable resources to minimize their destruction or impairment and promote their sensitive reuse and maintenance.
2. The Township and Borough shall consider the preparation of design guidelines for new development in association with historic sites and areas and the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville.
3. The Township and Borough shall consider a variety of techniques, including density bonuses, revised development standards, limited tax or sewer tap-in fee abatements, fee-in-lieu amendments, and historic overlay district creation to promote historic resource protection objectives.

H. Aesthetics

GOAL: Protect the Joint Area's aesthetic assets, as well as enhance the image of the community.

Objective: Protect and enhance the natural amenities of newly-developing tracts.

Objective: Discourage strip development.

Objective: Identify roadways with particularly strong visual characteristics as well as scenic vistas that are worthy of outstanding special preservation efforts.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall develop and enforce regulations governing development in harmony with the natural landscape, including maintenance of existing and planting of new trees and other vegetation, retention of topsoil, landscaping of setbacks, and perpetuation of views.
2. The Township and Borough shall enforce development standards in order to ensure the compatibility of new development with adjacent and neighboring uses and to maintain a setting that anticipates and accommodates subsequent development.
3. The Township and Borough shall consider the adoption of special corridor frontage development standards for all major and minor collector roads in the Joint Area, limiting frequency of driveways and mandating landscaping and tree planting along property frontages for new developments.

I. Planning

GOAL: Put in place a variety of approaches, mechanisms, and tools appropriate for dealing with the challenges posed by growth.

Objective: Continue to coordinate planning and development efforts between Centre Township and Centerport Borough.

Objective: Continue to coordinate planning activities with Berks County and with adjacent and neighboring municipalities, the Schuylkill Valley School

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

District, area institutions, and State and Federal agencies.

Policies:

1. The Township and Borough shall prepare updated Joint Area zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to implement the recommendations of the new Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Township and Borough shall work with the County, the Commonwealth, and with other local municipalities toward resolving regional planning issues.

SECTION 3: LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan (Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2) ties together all the elements that make up the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan. It thus becomes the primary reference against which land use decisions, as well as decisions on major public expenditures, can be measured for the next ten to twenty years. The Land Use Plan is concerned with the proposed location, intensity, and amount of different uses. It strives to be in harmony with trends affecting economic development in the Joint Area and its environs, the county, and the region, while mirroring the values, needs, and expectations of the residents of Centre Township and Centerport Borough.

The Land Use Plan, as well as the other specific elements of the Growth Management Plan, is oriented toward planned development of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Planning Area through 2016, and reflects continuing steady population growth, stable local employment levels, a balanced land-use mix, conservation of natural and cultural resources, efficient utilization of the existing local road network, and the initiation of central sewer facilities. The Growth Management Plan is based upon a 2016 Joint Area population of between 5,200 and 5,400 persons, and an increase of about 650 to 730 housing units above the present inventory.

General Description

The Land Use Plan incorporates a growth-area concept to provide for the orderly extension of development. Growth is directed primarily toward the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville for the greatest concentration and mix of land uses in the Joint Area. The designated growth area also includes areas around and near the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville that have good access to these centers and to the bridges over the Schuylkill River and that have some potential to be served by municipal central water and sewer facilities over the planning period.

The intent is to direct growth to areas with community facilities, having a high level of accessibility, and with potential for central water and sewer systems, and to limit the amount, intensity, and character of any residential or other urbanizing uses outside of the designated growth area. The growth-area concept provides an efficient and economical way to allow new growth to occur while limiting urban uses spreading throughout the still-largely rural and

agricultural portions of the Joint Area. The majority of the residential development, as well as any new commercial, industrial, and institutional development, is intended to take place within the designated growth area. Areas outside the growth area are planned primarily for agricultural use, as well as natural resource protection and low-intensity recreational and open space uses.

Growth areas are focused on the existing communities of the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville, with their residential neighborhoods, community facilities, and prospects for public utilities. The expectation that these three areas will receive central sewers in the near future has been a significant factor in determining the location and extent of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan designated growth area. In turn, it is important that municipal Act 537 sewage plans adopted by the Township and the Borough support the growth-area concept of the Land Use Plan.

Care should be taken in relating the picture of future development in Figure 3.3.2 to expected development through the planning horizon of about twenty years. The Land Use Plan has built-in slack; rather than being a strict representation of the twenty-year "build-out", it illustrates those areas in which particular land uses can be supported by the policies of the Growth Management Plan.

Features

- Three-part *designated growth area* to receive most of the expected development over the planning period in the Joint Area:
 1. Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville for the greatest concentration and mix of land uses;
 2. Areas surrounding the borough and the villages for medium density residential development;
 3. Areas that have good access to these centers and to the bridges over the Schuylkill River for low density residential development.
- *Designated rural and agricultural area* for all of the Joint Area outside of the designated growth area.

area. The buffer zones are intended to:

- Ensure logical and effective transitions between agricultural and non-agricultural uses;
- Limit uncontrolled expansion of the growth area;
- Provide a permanent open space and recreational resource for residential developments;

Implementation of the buffer concept would come about principally through the land development process (see below).

The *Environmental Protection Areas/Significant Buffers* classification in the Land Use Plan is based on existing natural features such as floodplains associated with the Schuylkill River, Irish Creek, Plum Creek(s), Leshner Run, and their tributaries. This designation of future land use can be said to be to a large extent already established; in many instances floodplain and wetlands regulations administered by the Township and Borough and by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, already prohibit or restrain development. The objectives of Joint Area planning and implementation should be to tie this system together and to give it recognition and permanent protection.

In the context of an area undergoing significant growth, the long-term protection of these sensitive resources will depend on concerted efforts by the Township, Borough, other public agencies, and private citizens. (Watershed associations and other community voluntary groups that often take an active role in promoting stream valley preservation can also have a prominent role.) Natural-feature corridors, combined with projected linear buffers, are an important feature of the Land Use Plan, and are seen as the primary mechanism to simultaneously protect Joint Area natural resources and to offer these long-term benefits to the community:

- Reduction of stormwater flood drainage;
- Maintenance of stable groundwater levels;
- An attractive amenity that can be a help in gaining high-quality development;

- Enhancement of property values for bordering and neighboring residences;
- Maintenance of wildlife habitat.

The Land Use Plan, the first identification and formal recognition of a Joint Area-wide environmental protection area, should lead directly toward programs for its preservation. Through Plan implementation, the Township and Borough need to act as facilitators for appropriate protective efforts. These actions include promoting conservation easements and enacting new development regulations.

Regulations governing land development are extremely important in helping to ensure the protection of environmentally-sensitive lands and in creating the important buffers previously described. Zoning alternatives such as residential clustering, which concentrates a tract's potential development on a small portion of the overall property, leaving the remaining area as permanent open space, should be available to developers in the designated growth portion of the Joint Area. A primary method by which the protection of environmentally-sensitive lands and the creation of important buffers would be achieved is the use of residential cluster development zoning provisions by landowners, in combination with existing and potential new regulations limiting development of environmentally-sensitive lands.

Agricultural, Resource Conservation, and Very Low Density Residential Areas

The extent of the Joint Area that qualifies neither for growth nor for strictest preservation is intended primarily for agricultural use. A major goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to conserve agricultural land. The Land Use Plan formally apportions the Joint Area into growth and low-growth areas, with the intent of limiting development outside the growth area and encouraging continuing agricultural production, as well as the protection of the Joint Area's historic and rural landscape. The portion of the Joint Area outside of the designated growth area additionally permits low-intensity recreational and residential uses, but only to the extent that new development does not lead to a diminution of important agricultural lands or a degradation of areas of scenic beauty or environmental sensitivity. Except for agricultural-related enterprises, new commercial and industrial uses should be prohibited in agricultural portions of the Joint Area.

The Land Use Plan implies a general discouragement of development within the rural and agricultural area, coupled with incentives to develop within the designated growth areas. Various Plan implementation techniques are intended to be applied within the Joint Area to bring about the desired result. Discouragement of development in rural areas may be achieved through the promotion and enactment of agricultural conservation easements and the adoption of some form of agricultural zoning (see Section 7 of this chapter and Chapter 4). At the same time, directing road improvements, new central sewer systems, and community facilities to the designated growth area can serve to encourage development in places supported by the policies of the Plan.

The Land Use Plan does recognize that some residential development will occur outside the designated growth area. Given that prospect, it is important that various types of land development controls be adopted that will ensure that when development does take place outside growth areas, it is of high quality, and that the process of development actually contributes to long-term conservation of land. Examples of this include situations where the exercise of a development right to build in an agricultural area is coupled with regulations limiting the area for non-farm residences to only a small piece of the tract of land, thereby preserving most of the acreage for agriculture in perpetuity.

In general, the Land Use Plan can support some types of residential land development in the designated rural and agricultural portion of the Joint Area, but only if these approaches support the basic principle of conserving land for agriculture. Very low overall densities only should be permitted, such as in legitimate agriculture zoning. Clustering of permitted units on a small portion of a tract, while the rest is left open in perpetuity for agricultural or other, legitimate resource conservation purposes, is fundamental. Central sewage disposal systems (not discharging into municipal sewer lines) that are demonstrably environmentally-sound should also be part of any multiple-unit residential development outside the designated growth area.

Residential Uses

The housing element of the Growth Management Plan (see Section 5 of this chapter) explains in detail the intended locations for residential use, incorporating a gradation of densities from very low to moderately high. Distinctions among residential categories are made according to gross density limits rather than by specific housing types, to increase flexibility in responding to natural site conditions, public recreational needs, and market demands for a range of housing types and site sizes. On newly-developing tracts, it is

intended that this flexibility should lead toward open space conservation, as well as the opportunity for development of a range of housing types to meet the needs and desires of the present and future residents of the Joint Area.

In general, very low-density residential development is proposed for the northern tier and southwestern quarter of the Joint Area, reflecting the primary agricultural, resource-protection, and low-intensity recreational uses intended. Higher densities are proposed, ranging from medium-low through to high densities, in the designated growth area, focused upon the Borough of Centerport and villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville, but including much of the central-east and southeastern one-third of the Joint Area.

Commercial Uses

The Growth Management Plan directs all commercial development to the Joint Area's designated growth area. ("Commercial" refers primarily to consumer-oriented retail activity, but also most office uses as well.) A major goal of the Plan is to reinforce the Borough of Centerport and villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville as centers for Joint Area community life, including locally-oriented businesses, while simultaneously conserving rural landscapes and reducing demands on the local road network. Directing commercial activities to the Borough of Centerport and villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville supports these goals.

Local centers for services and community facilities increases the possibility that current and new residents in the Joint Area will be able to find what they need close at hand, and not be required to head directly out of the area for shopping, recreational, and social needs. Residents should be able to spend less time driving and reduce their gasoline consumption. Less traffic congestion on the roads providing access to the bridges over the Schuylkill River and to PA 61 should result, compared to the sharply increased traffic volumes that would accompany residential growth and a population obliged to drive out of the Joint Area for most trips.

Some additional commercial uses in the borough and the villages also ensures their long-term economic viability, which is the critical component toward maintaining community functions and character. If carefully planned and designed, new uses in older communities can enhance their aesthetic harmony and ambience. The combination of new and existing residential areas focused on traditional community and business functions of the boroughs and villages allows for close links between residences and services and opportunities for

short-distance trips by automobile or alternate means, such as by bicycle or on foot.

Figure 3.3.2 indicates the *Borough/Village Center (Mixed Use)* classification of land use for the Borough of Centerport and villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville. This category encompasses settings for small-, moderate-, and medium-sized retail, office, and combined retail-office, retail-residential, and office-residential facilities. Included in these areas are residences that are not necessarily combined with commercial uses in the same structure, but are found interspersed with commercial uses or close to them. These mixed-use areas follow the precedent of traditional boroughs and villages by keeping a variety of different, reasonably-compatible uses together in a closely-knit setting. Retention of existing buildings should be promoted through development regulations that also provide for home occupations, mixed-use structures, and new, appropriately-scaled "infill" development. (Also see "Industrial Uses", below.)

Industrial Uses

The Land Use Plan indicates two primary areas as appropriate for industrial uses. The first is the former mushroom plant south of Centerport, accessible from Centerport Road, currently used by the Alpha Packaging Corp. corrugated cardboard company. The second, larger, location is the area between Dauberville and Mohrsville, between Railroad Road and the railroad tracks.

This latter location is preferred as a site for new industry, given its proximity to the Dauberville and Mohrsville bridges over the Schuylkill River (with direct access to PA 61), potential servicing from the rail line, pending central sewer service, generous acreage, and extensive frontage along Railroad Road. This site's overall potential could be enhanced by providing a new access road from Bellemans Church Road near the Schuylkill River bridge northward, paralleling the railroad. (Conceivably, this access way could be part of a general local bypass road of the Bellemans Church Road-Railroad Road intersection in Dauberville.) As well, a service road through the tract paralleling the railroad would permit flexibility in parcelization of the site for multiple industrial lots.

Another category of industrial use in the Joint Area is suggested by the precedent of the Linden Knitting Mill in Mohrsville. Relatively small-scaled light manufacturing, assembly, and warehousing operations, such as the knitting mill, are appropriate uses for *Borough/Village Center (Mixed Use)*

areas of the Land Use Plan, especially when reuse of an existing structure is involved.

In the case of prospective new industrial enterprises in the borough and the villages, a paramount question would be the compatibility of any proposed new industrial use with the prevailing character of the settlement. Since traditional "heavy" or "smokestack" industry has generally given way to enclosed manufacturing, assembly, and warehousing facilities that are not noxious and present similar appearances to office or commercial structures, the top target industries for the Joint Area (including, for example, communication equipment, electronic components, medical instruments and equipment, measuring devices, furniture and fixtures, printing and publishing, electric lighting and wiring equipment, and food preparations) could be generally in harmony with a setting in Centerport, Dauberville, or Mohrsville. The scale of any new buildings or structures associated with a prospective new industrial use is significant; large single-floor structures are clearly incompatible with the physical fabric of the borough and the villages. Traffic impacts, including those from employees, visitors, and truck servicing, are also highly-relevant considerations, as are the water and sewer servicing needs and impacts of the potential use.

Institutional Uses

Institutional uses are prominent in the life of the community (see Chapter 2, Section 8), but not so conspicuous in the Land Use Plan, owing to the small physical scale of most sites where institutional uses are found. The largest existing area of institutional use is the Bellemans Church complex, readily apparent in the west-central portion of the Land Use Plan. The other clearly-evident location for institutional use is the Township-owned sixteen-acre parcel on Bucks Hill Road at Centerport Road. Over the planning period development of this site is to occur for a new Township municipal building and Township park (see Section 6 of this chapter).

The former public school building on Main Street, east of Shoey Road, is currently vacant, but remains a community resource with which many residents still strongly identify. This structure should be adaptively-reused as an educational institution, community center, or similar publicly-oriented function.

Table 3.3.1
Quantities of Land Area Shown in the Land Use Plan Map

<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Area (acres)</u>	<u>Area (percent)</u>
Agriculture, Resource Conservation, & Residential - Very Low Density	6,918	48
Low Density Residential	3,929	27
Medium Density Residential	841	6
Institutional	28	-
Industrial	112	1
Environmental Protection Areas & Significant Buffers	2,036	14
Borough/Village Center (Mixed Use)	315	2
Parks	135	1
TOTAL	14,314	99*

* Does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Fiscal Impacts of the Land Use Plan

Greater efficiencies for local governments in providing services, especially transportation and public safety, have been a central factor in shaping the Land Use Plan.

As discussed in Chapter 2, recent growth trends have promoted a development pattern with an inherent tendency to increase traffic volumes across the entire Joint Area -- nearly all roads in the network become affected by the new

development. In contrast, a coalescing of residential development into specified areas, as recommended in the Land Use Plan, should reduce the extent of the roadway network affected by new development. Long-range municipal cost savings in the form of snow plowing, road maintenance, and road improvements should accrue if the principles of the Land Use Plan are followed.

In a similar vein, a relative intensification of new residential development in the eastern part of the Joint Area, as opposed to more widely-spread new dwelling units all across the township, should make more economically feasible the installation of central water and sewer systems. The ability to install such systems is essential to avoid long-range, and costly, environmental consequences of failing on-site sewage treatment and disposal systems across the entire Joint Area.

As well, a somewhat greater concentration of new residential development in the eastern part of the Joint Area, as opposed to widely-spread new dwelling units across the township, should make more economically feasible the creation of centers in Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville for commercial services and community facilities. Recent growth trends have led a development pattern that tends to promote long distance trips for shopping and services, and, once in their vehicles and prepared to travel some ways, new residents are more likely to head directly out of the Joint Area for their shopping, recreational, and social needs. However, the combination of new and existing residents in and around Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville can represent a potential "captive" market for locally-oriented businesses in these centers. The insertion of appropriate types of commercial businesses, at a scale that is sensitive to the historic character of these places, would add to the tax base of the community and generate local employment opportunities..

Finally, a pattern of more-concentrated rather than less-concentrated development should be easier and cheaper to provide with police and other emergency services, as well as school bussing, mail delivery, and solid waste collection.

Relationship of the Land Use Plan to Local and County Plans

A total of eight municipalities borders the Joint Area, including Penn Township to the west and the southwest, Upper Bern Township to the northwest, Tilden Township to the north, Perry Township to the northeast and east, Shoemakersville Borough to the east, Ontelaunee Township to the southeast, Leesport to the

south-southeast, and Bern Township to the south (see Figure 2.1.1).

Centre Township, Centerport Borough, and the surrounding municipalities are all located in Berks County. The land use recommendations for the Joint Area that are embodied in this chapter are consistent with current development patterns and future plans in these related jurisdictions.

West of the Schuylkill River, the four municipalities that border the Joint Area (Penn, Upper Bern, Tilden, and Bern Townships) are quite similar to Centre Township, with a predominantly agricultural character interspersed with low-density residential development. Current uses that abut the Joint Area are either agricultural or low-density residential, with future land uses for these adjoining areas basically limited to agricultural-preservation, conservation, and low-density-residential designations.

Penn Township's 1994 comprehensive plan, for example, calls for *Agricultural Preservation* and *Rural Conservation* uses along the border with Centre Township, except for limited areas of *Low Density Residential*, mostly adjoining the similarly-designated area in Centre Township along Rake Road. Upper Bern Township's Future Land Use Map - 2010 designates the entire boundary area alongside Centre Township for *Agricultural Preservation*, consistent with the Joint Area's designation for this part of Centre Township. Tilden Township has their bordering area zoned for low density residential uses, ones that match, for the most part, the Joint Area's Land Use Plan designations for the Tilden Road area.

Of the four municipalities cited, only Bern Township appears to have any land use regulations that could conflict with the Joint Area's Land Use Plan. While most of the bordering area has zoning designations for *Agricultural Business* (the township's only "agricultural" designation) and *Rural Residential*, a one-mile long distance westward from the Schuylkill River to Bossler Road (partly alongside Leesport Borough) has the designation *Urban Residential*. It is essential that Bern Township keep Centre Township and Centerport Borough apprised of any potential development activities in this part of Bern Township, so that adequate opportunities may be provided for consultations concerning uses and, in particular, buffering, along the boundary line with the Joint Area's *Low Density Residential* and *Open Space* uses.

The other municipalities mentioned in the first paragraph of this section (Perry Township, Shoemakersville Borough, Ontelaunee Township, and Leesport Borough) are all on the opposite side of the Schuylkill River from the Joint Area. (Leesport does extend to the western side of the river, but a sliver of

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

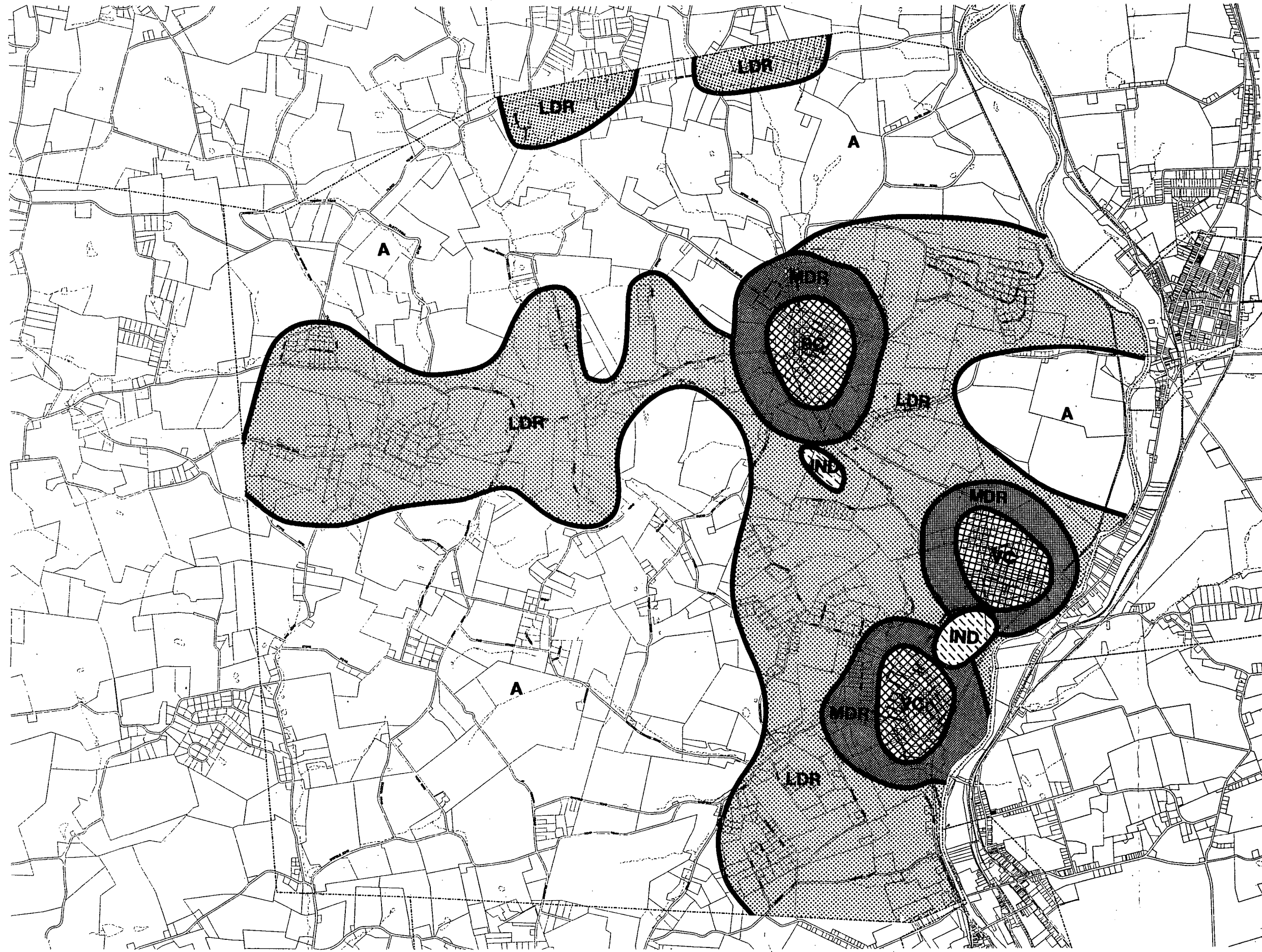
Bern Township is interposed between Centre Township and this part of Leesport.) The Schuylkill River acts as an effective buffer between the uses on either side of the waterway, as do the *Open Space* and *Parks* areas alongside the river on the Joint Area side and the *Conservation* designation for the other side on the Future Land Use Map of the newly-completed draft Leesport-Ontelaunee-Perry joint comprehensive plan.

The Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision, adopted in December 1991, is intended to serve as an overall guide for land development and public services at the county level. The County Comprehensive Plan Revision accommodates appropriate development densities where infrastructure currently exists or is proposed to occur, with the balance of the county intended mainly for preservation of agricultural land and environmentally-sensitive areas.

The Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision's Land Use Plan 2010 shows most of the Joint Area designated as *Agricultural Preservation Areas*, with *Future Growth Areas* and *Limited Development Areas* shown around Centerport; to the east of Centerport, closer to the Schuylkill River; around Mohrsville; and south of a Bellemans Church Road-Garfield Road alignment, including Dauberville.

While the areas designated for *Future Growth Areas* and *Limited Development Areas* in the County Comprehensive Plan Revision's Land Use Plan 2010 are more limited in extent than those shown as the Joint Area's designated growth area in this document's Land Use Concept (Figure 3.3.1), the principles followed in devising the Land Use Concept echo those of the Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision. The desire, in both cases, has been to accommodate appropriate development densities where infrastructure currently exists or is proposed to occur, with the balance of the jurisdiction intended mainly for preservation of agricultural land and environmentally-sensitive areas. The Joint Area's own Land Use Plan designates a growth area slightly larger than that indicated in the County Comprehensive Plan Revision's Land Use Plan 2010.

Figure 3.3.1



LAND USE CONCEPT

- A** Agriculture, Resource Conservation & Residential Very Low Density.
- BVC** Borough/Village Center
- LDR** Low Density Residential 0.4-1.0 DU/Acre
- MDR** Medium Density Residential 1-4 DU/Acre
- IND** Industrial

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Barke County, Pennsylvania



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



FIGURE

DATE:

Figure 3.3.2

Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan ties together all the elements that make up the Joint Comprehensive Plan. It thus becomes the primary reference against which land use decisions, as well as decisions on major public expenditures, can be measured for the next ten to twenty years. The Land Use Plan is concerned with the proposed location, intensity, and amount of different uses. It strives to be in harmony with trends affecting economic development in the Joint Area and its environs, the county, and the region, while mirroring the values, needs, and expectations of the residents of Centre Township and Centerport Borough.

The Land Use Plan is oriented toward planned development of the Joint Planning Area through 2016, and reflects continuing steady population growth, stable local employment levels, a balanced land-use mix, conservation of natural and cultural resources, efficient utilization of the existing local road network, and the initiation of central sewer facilities. The Land Use Plan is based upon a 2016 Joint Area population of between 5,200 and 5,400 persons, and an increase of about 650 to 730 housing units.

The Land Use Plan incorporates a growth-area concept to provide for the orderly extension of development. Growth is directed primarily toward Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville for the greatest concentration and mix of land uses. The designated growth area also includes areas around and near the three centers that have good access to these places and to the bridges over the Schuylkill River and that have some potential to be served by municipal central water and sewer facilities over the planning period.

The intent is to direct growth to areas with community facilities, having a high level of accessibility, and with potential for central water and sewer systems, and to limit the amount, intensity, and character of any residential or other urbanizing uses outside of the designated growth area. The growth-area concept provides an efficient and economical way to allow new growth to occur while limiting urban uses spreading throughout the still-largely rural and agricultural portions of the Joint Area. The majority of the residential development, as well as any new commercial, industrial, and institutional development, is intended to take place within the designated growth area. Areas outside the growth area are planned primarily for agricultural use, as well as natural resource protection and low-intensity recreational and open space uses.

Growth areas are focused on the existing three communities, with their residential neighborhoods, community facilities, and prospects for public utilities. The expectation that these three areas will receive central sewers in the near future has been a significant factor in determining the location and extent of the designated growth area. In turn, it is important that municipal Act 537 sewage plans adopted by the Township and the Borough support the growth-area concept of the Land Use Plan.

Care should be taken in relating the picture of future development shown in the Land Use Plan to expected development through the planning horizon of about twenty years. The Land Use Plan has built-in slack; rather than being a strict representation of the twenty-year "build-out", it illustrates those areas in which particular land uses can be supported by the policies of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.



The Land Use Plan is composed of 8 major identity areas:

- A** **Agriculture, Resource Conservation, & Residential – Very Low Density.**
The Land Use Plan formally apportions the Joint Area into growth and low-growth areas, with the intent of limiting development outside of the growth area and promoting continued agricultural production as well as the protection of the Joint Area’s historic and rural landscape.
- LDR** **Low Density Residential.**
Portions of the Joint Area that have good access to Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville and to the bridges over the Schuylkill River are indicated for low density residential development in the range of 0.4 to 1 dwelling unit per acre. Clustered and conventional single-family detached houses would predominate.
- MDR** **Medium Density Residential.**
Areas surrounding the borough and the two villages are intended for medium density residential development in the range of 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre. Mostly small-lot single-family detached dwellings would be built in these areas.
- BC/VC** **Borough/Village Center (Mixed Use).**
The Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville are intended for the greatest concentration and mix of land uses within the Joint Area. A mix of residential and commercial uses, compatible with the character of these places, should reinforce them as centers for Area community life, including local businesses.
- INS** **Institutional.**
Institutional uses include the Township-owned 16-acre parcel on Bucks Hill Road, the former public school on Main Street, the Bellemans Church complex, and many other smaller sites in the Joint Area.
- IND** **Industrial.**
Two primary areas are indicated for industrial use. The first is the vicinity of the former mushroom plant south of Centerport, and the second, larger, location is between Dauberville and Mohrsville.
- OS** **Environmental Protection Areas & Significant Buffers.**
These areas, to remain permanently open and undeveloped, run throughout the Joint Area and provide for the protection of natural features and logical and effective transitions between major land use areas.
- P** **Parks & Public Open Space.**
Included are existing parks and playgrounds and areas designated for future public open space, such as: Parts of the Township lands on Bucks Hill Road; an extension of the Central Berks Fire Company property; a new park along the Schuylkill River by the Dauberville Bridge, with a westward extension to include the dam area; and parkland along the river by the Mohrsville Bridge, including the creek floodplain that leads to the Mohrsville Athletic and Playground Association open space area.

SECTION 4: CIRCULATION PLAN

The road system of the Joint Area consists of the following elements:

- Two Rural Major Collector roads, Main Street-Shartlesville Road and Shoey Road, connected by bridges over the Schuylkill River to PA Route 61 at Mohrsville and Shoemakersville respectively;
- Four Minor Collector routes, including one, Bellemans Church Road, connecting to a bridge over the Schuylkill River to PA Route 61 at Dauberville;
- A web-like network of local rural roads throughout Centre Township;
- Tightly-knit "urban" street grids in the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville;
- Residential streets constructed in conjunction with new developments, mostly since about 1980.

The Circulation Plan proposes to upgrade the safety, convenience, and efficiency of the system, principally within the eastern and southeastern one-third of the Joint Area designated for growth. The broad extent of the network of existing local roads throughout the Joint Area (the third element cited above) and the pervasive rural condition of those roads (narrow cartways, lack of shoulders and guard rails, tight turns, steep grades, limited sight distances, and absence of lighting) translates into a potential overwhelming need for circulation improvements, should a pattern of widespread land development persist across the Joint Area through the planning period. The Land Use Plan, however, directs growth to those portions of the Joint Area in, around, and near the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville; locations that have good access to these centers and to the bridges over the Schuylkill River and that have some potential to be served by municipal central water and sewer facilities over the planning period.

As mentioned in Section 1 of this chapter, an especially significant aspect of the Growth Management Plan is the close coordination and mutual-reliance between the Land Use Plan and the Circulation Plan. The character of the land use concepts selected for inclusion in the Land Use Plan are closely tied to the circumstances and potentials of the road network, and the recommended circulation improvements in this Section respond to and advance the

framework for development embodied in the Land Use Plan.

Recommended improvements (Figure 3.4.1) are basically of two types -- safety improvements and recommended new links.

Safety Improvements

Recommended safety improvements consist of intersection upgrades and the straightening of dangerous curves along roadways in the Joint Area. Individual intersections and road segments have been examined based on the locations identified through previous planning studies and the 1996 Comprehensive Plan questionnaire and documented in Figure 2.7.2 as "Road Hazards". In many, if not most instances, circumstances at the identified locations would seem to preclude, or at least strongly inhibit, making significant improvements. It is difficult to straighten a curve where existing development or topographic or other conditions are such that houses would need to be demolished, major earthmoving initiated, or severe environmental consequences risked. Existing development is often found tightly arranged around roadway intersections, effectively limiting options for intersection improvements.

Two intersections where safety improvements are urgently needed are actually outside the limits of the Joint Area, but these locations form the "front doors" to the Area, and circumstances at these intersections are so dangerous that action is needed immediately. 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. A separate, dedicated left turn lane is needed for each of the two intersections, as are adequate lighting and signage (see "Other Potential Future Road Improvements" on page 3-4-5).

A tight curve on Centerport Road, south of the Borough of Centerport, is identified as a high accident area on Figure 2.7.2. This condition has the possibility of being alleviated, since the location is relatively unconstrained by natural or man-made features. Improvements could be implemented in conjunction with an expansion or intensification of industrial uses at and/or adjacent to the former mushroom plant, which has its access driveway near this

point on Centerport Road.

New Links

The Circulation Plan proposes a variety of new roadway links, consistent with the pattern of future development outlined in the Land Use Plan. As shown in Figure 3.4.1, these new roads provide accessibility to the areas around the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville, establishing an expansion of the Joint Area's network of local streets and, in general, servicing those areas of the Land Use Plan intended for medium density residential development through the planning period.

The new links shown around Centerport and Mohrsville are intended to achieve two different kinds of objectives. First, the new links clearly "open up" areas for development, providing access to parcels of land intended for residential development. Second, the new links establish a circumferential pathway around each settlement, putting in place locally-oriented roadway connections that do not exist at present. This latter aspect is important to the future well-being of each locale, since both Centerport and Mohrsville possess only one main street. As development in the Joint Area occurs, these sole thoroughfares may become more congested. The new circumferential pathways allow for local bypasses of the main route and more convenient and safer connections from one part of the community to another. (The new pathways are not regionally-oriented bypasses that could encourage more pass-through traffic.)

Of particular note is the proposed new short link from Centerport Road to Main Street, just south of the present intersection of these two roads in Centerport Borough. The new link would allow two-way travel, and would provide a new "T" intersection between these two roads, in addition to their present acute-angle intersection near Irish Creek Road. Travel along Centerport Road between the existing acute-angle intersection and the location of the new link would be limited to southbound vehicles. Northbound vehicles on Centerport Road would be obliged to turn onto the new link and reach Main Street via the new "T" intersection. The result would be a much safer set of circumstances for vehicular movement in the southern part of the borough, with the road system here able to accommodate more-comfortably the expected traffic volumes.

These roads may end up being created by a variety of entities. It is quite likely that most of the new links will be built by private developers in the course of

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

constructing new residential developments. The key is the inclusion of the recommended new links within the Comprehensive Plan, indicating the community's desire to see these roadway system additions occur over the planning period in the configuration shown. All prospective development within the Joint Area should be cognizant of the Comprehensive Plan's intentions for circulation system expansion and should be consistent with it. It is expected that each new link, when built, will become part of the Township or Borough systems of local public roads.

Circumstances at Dauberville are somewhat different than at Centerport and Mohrsville. Existing development, the railroad, and natural features (Irish Creek, its dam, and topography toward the western side of the village) effectively preclude a circumferential pathway system as envisioned for Centerport and Mohrsville.

The sharp turn on Bellemans Church Road, west of the intersection with Railroad Road, and the poor sight distance at that intersection are two hazardous conditions in Dauberville. In the former situation, existing development east of the turn and a hill on the west would appear to thwart road straightening. A possible solution to the intersection problem would be the construction of a new north-south link paralleling Railroad Road and the rail line, just to the east of the tracks. This link would intersect with Bellemans Church Road, just west of the bridge over the Schuylkill River, and connect to Railroad Road where it bends to the west at the north end of the existing village. Future traffic from the Schuylkill River bridge, Schuylkill Hill Road, and Bellemans Church Road could bypass the Bellemans Church Road-Railroad Road intersection by using the new link.

This proposed new link also dovetails with the *Industrial* designation indicated on the Land Use Plan for the area between Dauberville and Mohrsville. Truck access to this location from PA Route 61 via Mohrsville is inhibited by the narrow and low railroad underpass just west of PA Route 61 on Main Street-Shoemakersville Road and the tight turn from this road onto the Mohrsville bridge. Access via Dauberville, at present, demonstrates its own difficulties, with the previously-mentioned problem intersection at Bellemans Church Road and Railroad Road and the requirement for traffic to pass through much of the village before reaching the indicated industrial area. The new link from Bellemans Church Road northward at the Schuylkill River bridge, however, effectively bypasses the village.

The new link at Dauberville is also proposed to connect to another new link, this one paralleling the railroad on its western side from the Railroad Road turn

in Dauberville to Railroad Road just southwest of its intersection with Main Street in Mohrsville. This is primarily a service road for the proposed industrial area, permitting it the flexibility to be subdivided into lots in a variety of ways.

Construction of the new Bellemans Church Road-to-Railroad Road link would not necessarily be a simple or inexpensive undertaking, since it entails a new bridge over Irish Creek and an at-grade railroad crossing. Building such a road may, however, make sense to an investor in the industrial area in the context of new industrial facilities there.

Other Potential Future Road Improvements

As described above and in Chapter 2, Section 7, the roads in most of the Joint Area are rural in nature, with frequent narrow cartways, sharp turns, lack of shoulders and guard rails, steep grades, and limited sight distances. While sentiment may exist to try and improve a large number of roads to eliminate these conditions, there are two important reasons why this is unlikely to occur. The first is the extremely limited public resources to make such improvements, at both the State and local level. The second reason is to recognize the traffic volume implications and growth inducement aspects of road improvements. For example, significant upgrades to the Main Street-Shartlesville Road will likely serve to induce more through traffic to use this route. And widespread improvements to local roads in the western part of the Joint Area would increase the pressure to develop that area.

One PennDOT project that has been in the planning stage for a number of years is an upgrading of PA Route 61 from Reading to at least Interstate 78 at Hamburg. Conceivably, this road improvement project could entail the construction of a median barrier down the center of the highway, with "jughandles" at traffic signals in lieu of permitting left turns. Were such changes to be proposed by PennDOT, it is imperative that the two southerly access points to the Joint Area, at Dauberville and at Shoemakersville/Mohrsville, be retained with full vehicle movement options. Were one of these two points of access to have its vehicle movement options reduced (say, its left turn prerogative from northbound PA Route 61 eliminated), this would severely compromise access to the Joint Area.

A PennDOT project along PA Route 61 that is somewhat more limited in scope than the wholesale upgrading cited above is currently in the planning stages, with construction slated to begin in late 1997. This project involves

signalizing the intersection of the highway with Bellemans Church Road and building a protected left-turn lane from northbound PA Route 61 to Main Street/Shoemakersville Road.

Access Management Standards

In the Joint Area, responsibility for roadway ownership falls either to PennDOT, Centre Township, or Centerport Borough. In addition to maintenance responsibilities, each jurisdiction also is responsible for controlling street and driveway access to the roadways. At the present time, each jurisdiction considers access questions on a case-by-case basis but, over time, this has led to inefficient and frequently hazardous access to public rights-of-way. It is therefore recommended that access management standards be considered for roadways in the Joint Area.

PennDOT is currently developing access management standards for the state highway system. When promulgated, these standards should be applied to all applicable roadways. In the interim, the following general principles should be applied when considering applications for access:

- Regulate the frequency of driveways along roadways to reduce the occurrence of traffic conflicts between turning and through traffic;
- Regulate the minimum separation between driveways to curtail the safety risks of decelerating traffic on through traffic;
- Regulate corner clearance -- the distance from the nearest roadway intersection to the driveway;
- Regulate building and parking setbacks to ensure adequate lines of sight at driveways;
- Establish minimum lot width requirements to reduce the number of driveways;
- Establish "ultimate rights-of-way" for developing areas to ensure sufficient room for future roadway widenings;
- Where access is available to a minor intersecting roadway, access to the major roadway should be curtailed or denied;

- Consolidate access to adjacent properties; cross easements, frontage roads, and joint driveways should be strongly encouraged.

The application of the above access management principles will vary in type and degree based upon the level of current development, the type of current and proposed land use, the type of road, and other factors, such as posted speed limits.

Public Transportation

As a semi-rural area, demand for public transportation services in the Joint Area is not comparable to more urban places. Nonetheless, some respondents to the Comprehensive Plan's questionnaire mentioned their personal lack of a car and limitations on their mobility as a result. The pattern of future land development in the Land Use Plan does suggest a configuration of population better-matched for some sort of public transit, even if that amounts to a type of dial-a-ride service, rather than traditional fixed-route buses. The County should coordinate transit-demand monitoring activities with local municipalities to determine the need for transit services in the Joint Area over the planning period.

Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian circulation will continue to be associated primarily with the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville. "Infill" in these places and new development around them, as indicated in the Land Use Plan's designed growth area for the Joint Area, should incorporate sidewalks and other pedestrian pathways to connect new residential areas to adjacent and neighboring residential areas and to school bus stops, shopping, recreational, and employment locations. The road and sidewalk/pathway systems for the borough, the villages, and their surrounding new developments need to be designed in such a way as to make these areas as "pedestrian-friendly" as possible.

Bicycle Circulation

Similar to the provisions for pedestrian circulation, consideration for bicycles should also be made. New roadways should be built with paved shoulders to accommodate bicycles. Pathway and trail systems that may be established in

designated locations for parks and public open space areas of the Joint Area should also consider provisions for bicycle connections from residential areas to recreational facilities, as well as to adjacent neighborhoods.

Figure 3.4.1

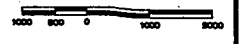
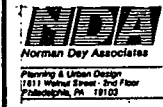


CIRCULATION PLAN

- - - - Safety Improvements
- Recommended New Links

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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



FIGURE

DATE:

SECTION 5: HOUSING PLAN

The goal of the housing element of the Growth Management Plan is to provide the opportunity for a range of housing types and sizes within the Joint Area to meet diverse housing needs while at the same time supporting the other major goals of the Plan.

The housing element of the Plan explicitly recognizes the division of the Joint Area into growth and low-growth areas. The low-growth area includes most of the western and northern tiers of the Joint Area, and is proposed primarily for agriculture and environmental protection. The growth area is designated as the primary location for housing development. The Growth Management Plan recommends that the implementation tools of zoning regulations, central water and sewer system creation and extensions, road improvements, and community facilities development be employed in concert to promote residential development within the growth area as opposed to the rural and agricultural portion of the Joint Area.

The Plan permits realistic opportunities for land development, to be implemented through applicable zoning and subdivision and land development regulations. The Land Use Plan does recognize that some residential development will occur outside the designated growth area. The Land Use Plan can support some types of residential land development in the designated rural and agricultural portion of the Joint Area, but only if these approaches support the basic principle of conserving land for agriculture. Very low overall densities only should be permitted. Clustering of permitted units on a small portion of a tract, while the rest is left open in perpetuity for agricultural or other, legitimate resource conservation purposes, is fundamental.

Cluster Development

The housing element recognizes the goal of the Plan to conserve agricultural land by recommending residential clustering as a technique to achieve a more efficient use of land. Clustering reduces the amount of land consumed for residences when compared with conventional development methods, while at the same time preserving a portion of development tracts for agricultural or permanent open space uses.

The Plan recognizes that cluster development can also be a significant method for the growth area as well as the low-growth area of the Joint Area, since

there is a need to accommodate natural features protection, designated buffers, and provisions for open space uses in both areas. Clustering reduces the amount of land consumed for residences when compared with conventional development methods, while at the same time preserving a portion of development tracts for permanent protection of natural resources and for open space uses. "Clustering" can refer to any development design technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on a site to allow the remaining land to be used for agriculture, preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas, permanent buffers or open space, or recreational uses. Clustering can involve only modest set-asides of land for these uses, or can involve set-asides of ninety percent or more of the whole tract being considered for development. From the point of view of the Land Use Plan, the latter kind of clustering is essential in agricultural and rural areas.

Clustering is recommended for the low-growth area and for the growth area, where residential uses are indicated on the Land Use Plan around the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville. Within these newly-developing areas, residential clustering to achieve set-asides of permanent open space for recreational and resource protection purposes is a significant objective.

One way to achieve increased set-aside of environmentally-sensitive areas is to combine residential clustering opportunities in the regulations of a zoning ordinance with ones permitting the developer flexibility in the selection of housing types to be constructed. Density limits based on gross density ("units per acre") classifications, rather than specific housing types and individual lot-size requirements ("minimum 22,000 square-foot lots") will be more likely to achieve the set-aside of environmentally-sensitive areas of tracts undergoing development. Greater development flexibility may also result in increased creation of permanent open space lands that preserves the Joint Area's semi-rural atmosphere and a housing-type mix that is better tuned to the needs of Joint Area residents as they pass through the various stages of the life cycle.

Residential Classification -- Very Low Density

Residential development for about 2/3 of the extent of the Joint Area should reflect very low densities. This area corresponds to the designated rural and agricultural portion of the Land Use Plan, and is in keeping with the need to encourage continuing agricultural production, as well as the protection of the historic and rural landscape and the preservation of environmentally-sensitive resources (see "Agricultural, Resource Conservation, and Very Low Density

Residential Areas" in Section 3, Land Use Plan, of this chapter).

The chief tools toward achieving very low density residential development outside designated growth areas are development regulations such as zoning. The Township and Borough need to work cooperatively with area farmers to achieve suitable regulations that will permit some degree of residential development in the low-growth area, but not at the expense of the primary functions indicated for this area in the Plan. Regulatory flexibility is recommended; giving property owners a variety of choices if they choose to develop their land and containing various economic inducements to build compactly and to support the long-term goals and objectives of the Plan for the designated rural and agricultural portion of the Joint Area.

Development regulations for the low-growth portion of the Joint Area should be based on the principle of very low densities. However, density gains could be achieved by landowners who consent to develop compact arrangements of dwelling units, rather than widely-spread homes. Eligibility to pursue alternative ways of developing, such as clustering of units, could be conditioned upon the owner's agreement to construct a street off of the existing frontage road to serve the new lots, with the number of points of access to the frontage road restricted in order to minimize traffic conflicts and the use of the Joint Area road network as subdivision streets. Provisions for some form of central water and sewer service (presumably common wells and "package" sewage treatment plants) could also be employed to affect lot size and density requirements.

The economic incentives built into the zoning regulations and the options offered to the landowner among provisions for residential clustering, minimum and maximum lot sizes, required permanent agricultural-use and open space areas, and central water and sewer services would be designed to encourage developers to build in a concentrated portion of a tract, leaving the rest preserved in perpetuity for agricultural or other open space uses.

Other land development controls should be employed to help maintain the agricultural character of the designated low-growth area. For example, even where conventional lot-by-lot development might be pursued, ample rear-yard building setbacks could be required on each lot to effect a transition space between the developed lots and the agricultural uses that would abut residential development.

Residential Classification -- Low and Medium Densities

Residential development within the designated growth area should occur at significantly higher densities when compared to the rural and agricultural portion of the Joint Area. The enactment of zoning ordinances supporting this idea, along with central water and sewer system creation and extensions, road improvements, and community facilities development, are the principal measures by which the Township and Borough can promote development within the designated area as opposed to the rural and agricultural portion of the Joint Area.

Low residential densities are indicated on the Land Use Plan for the perimeter of the Centerport-, Dauberville-, and Mohrsville-centered growth areas. This would include the southeastern quarter of the Joint Area, the Shoey Road corridor (excluding the major agricultural-use conservation tract south of Shoey Road and west of the railroad), major portions of the Irish Creek Road corridor, and individual existing developments within the southwestern quarter of the Joint Area and along Tilden Road, at the Joint Area's extreme north end.

Recommended densities for low density areas are 0.4 to 1.0 dwelling units per acre, translating to single family detached dwellings (in conventional configurations) on lots from about 1 to 2½ acres.

Medium residential densities are indicated on the Land Use Plan for areas around the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville. These areas represent the logical extensions of those settlements and are presumed to be closely associated in terms of street connections, potential central water and sewer systems, and community facilities.

Recommended densities for medium density areas are 1.0 to 4.0 dwelling units per acre, translating to single family detached dwellings (in conventional configurations) on lots from about ¼ acre to 1 acre.

For both the low and medium density portions of the designated Joint Area growth area the housing element of the Growth Management Plan recommends opportunities to construct residences in cluster development configurations. Cluster development remains an important prospect for development within the growth area, in addition to the rural/agricultural portion of the Joint Area. First, residential clustering encourages developers to set aside the most environmentally-sensitive areas of tracts undergoing development. Second, this type of residential development creates permanent open space lands usable for recreation. Third, clustering may produce

construction economies in the form of reduced lengths of roads and sewer mains, and operational economies in service systems. Fourth, this kind of development can help the community retain much of the semi-rural landscape (vistas of stream courses, woodlots, fields, etc.) with which most residents strongly identify. Finally, a recent study of clustered housing in Loudoun County, Virginia, suggests that clustering does not undercut housing values; land values for clustered housing were as high as for conventional suburban tract housing on three-acre lots.

Cluster development, then, is essential for environmental protection and land conservation, can make land available for recreational purposes, can help perpetuate a semi-rural atmosphere in the area, has the potential to make housing more affordable, and does not undercut property values. As with the rural/agricultural parts of the Joint Area, regulatory flexibility and zoning incentives in low and medium density areas are recommended. Municipalities may offer landowners conventional zoning for large-, moderate-, and small-lot residential construction, and a variety of options, including special conditions and associated benefits, for cluster development.

Cluster development in low and medium density areas should have at least twenty percent of a tract for open space, with density incentives to encourage set-asides of sixty percent (or more) of a tract for open space. For low density areas, even with clustering, single-family detached dwelling units can be expected to be the exclusive structural type. But in medium density areas, however, especially in cases where a high percentage of the total tract area is proposed to be preserved as permanent open space, opportunities to construct other housing types, such as twins and townhouses, should also be available.

Residential Classifications -- Medium-High Density

Areas close-in to the traditional central business districts and mature neighborhoods of Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville are recommended for medium-high density residential use. These settlements, with their existing development at medium-high densities, accessibility to the region, street and sidewalk networks, and community facilities, are well-suited to accommodate compatible "infill" development on vacant sites and some additional development at the perimeter of the *BC/VC Borough/Village Center* areas.

Medium-high density residential development should include a wide variety of structural types, including small-lot single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached (twins and townhouses), and multi-family (garden apartment,

mid-rise apartment) units. A diversified housing mix, attractive to various household types and income levels, should be pursued for these locales.

Medium-high density residential development is an important component of the mixed commercial-residential character of the borough and villages. These residential uses should be reinforced as part of efforts to maintain the economic and social viability of the traditional settlements of the Joint Area. As outlined under "Commercial Uses" in Section 3, a major goal of the Plan is to reinforce borough and village centers as business districts. New residential development in and around these districts is a critical component in support of this goal, but this development must be undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to the respective character of Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville.

The open space and recreational needs of current and prospective residents of the borough and the villages stands in contrast to the situation represented by development in very-low, low, and medium density residential areas. Outside the more highly-developed areas, these kinds of needs may be mostly accommodated within individual developments, especially when in the cluster form. In Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville, however, provisions for neighborhood permanent open space and recreational facilities are more critical. For this reason, the Land Use Plan recommends the creation and expansion of park and recreation facilities in these areas, as outlined in Sections 3 and 6.

Affordable Housing

Housing affordability in the region is formally assisted through a combination of privately- and publicly-operated facilities (none within the Joint Area) and publicly-administered programs for low- and moderate-income families and individuals. These facilities and programs, however, still only represent a small percentage of housing units. For most area residents, housing affordability questions must be addressed without the availability of formal subsidies.

Traditionally, affordability in the Joint Area has been assisted by a good stock of older but still serviceable dwellings in Centerport Borough and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville and relatively low costs for raw land and on-site services in the more rural parts of Centre Township.

Centerport Borough and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville are the local service centers for the Joint Area and their continued viability is a critical component of the Growth Management Plan. The Township and Borough,

with the assistance of the County, should continue to monitor the available sources of federal and state funding for housing rehabilitation, low- and moderate-income housing construction, and infrastructure improvements, and should participate in these programs.

In general, the Plan proposes to increase opportunities for affordable housing principally by providing new settings for housing construction at medium and medium-high densities within the designated growth area. At the same time, housing opportunities may be expanded through more efficient use of the current housing stock. Provisions for residential conversions, accessory apartments, and shared housing should be addressed through Plan implementation. ("Accessory apartment" refers to a separate dwelling unit contained within and subordinate to a single-family dwelling unit. "Shared housing" refers to individuals not related by blood or marriage sharing the same dwelling unit.)

SECTION 6: COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

The goal of the community facilities element of the Growth Management Plan is to provide the complement of facilities and services necessary to serve the residents of the Joint Area through the planning period. Public school, park and recreation, community, administration, and emergency services facilities are reviewed in this section.

Schools

The Schuylkill Valley School District, of which the Joint Area is only a part, recently consolidated its primary, intermediate, and high schools at one campus, in Ontelaunee Township. Over the planning period, residential development and accompanying population increases in the Joint Area and in the school district as a whole will translate into a need for expanded school physical plants. However, with the recent decision to close district elementary schools in Centre Township and Bern Township and bus primary school students to the Ontelaunee Township site, it is probably safe to assume that all of the district's main primary, intermediate, and high school facilities will be at the single campus, outside the Joint Area, for the foreseeable future.

The former Centre Township Elementary School on Main Street, just east of Shoey Road, now stands vacant, but to many residents of the Joint Area it remains a notable local landmark and an important community asset. The building has the potential to be reused in a number of different ways, but, given its significance to the community, a public or quasi-public role would seem most appropriate. Since the facility functioned until 1994 as a school, this use is a logical one for its future. As an educational institution of some sort, the building would retain a symbolic connection to its past life in the community. Other attractive reuse possibilities include a community center, day-care operation, library, or Centre Township Municipal Building.

With respect to the active facilities of the Schuylkill Valley School District, the Borough, Township, and school district should undertake cooperative efforts in order to ensure that district school facilities are true community resources, with opportunities for use by the general resident population as well as by enrolled children.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), municipalities should be provided with three types of parks -- playlots, neighborhood parks, and community parks -- in the following ranges:

<u>Type of Park</u>	<u>Acreege Range per 1,000 Population</u>
Playlot	1
Neighborhood Park	1 - 2
Community Park	<u>5 - 8</u>
TOTAL	7 - 11

For a 2016 Joint Area population of 5,200 to 5,400 (see Section 3 of this chapter and Chapter 2, Section 6), some 35 to 60 acres of parkland would be required, according to the NRPA standards. For the Joint Area, however, the NRPA standards may be less applicable than for a more heavily urbanized community. (The 1994 Berks County Open Space and Receation Plan notes some of the factors that support this premise.) As well, if new residential developments are constructed over the planning period according to cluster design principles, many of the playlot and neighborhood park needs will be able to be met at the level of individual developments, and will not constitute a direct responsibility of governmental units or community organizations.

Nonetheless, with the present inventory of Joint Area park and recreation areas totaling less than ten acres, it is clear that more acreage will be required for these uses over the planning period. As a start, part of the sixteen acres Centre Township owns at Bucks Hill Road and Centerport Road should be developed as parkland. Additional areas designated by the Growth Management Plan for the creation of parks and public open space to serve the growing population of the Joint Area include:

- Expansion of the existing open space area comprising a portion of the Central Berks Fire Company property by extension to the south and east, thereby creating a substantial open space area within the Borough of Centerport;
- Creation of new park areas along the Schuylkill River to the north and to the south of the Dauberville Bridge, with a westward extension to include

the Dauberville Dam on Irish Creek and former impoundment area upstream from the dam;

- Creation of new park areas along the Schuylkill River to the north and to the south of the Mohrsville Bridge, with a westward extension at the north end to include the creek floodplain, leading to the Mohrsville Athletic and Playground Association open space area.

These locations are well-matched with the projected population concentrations for the Joint Area in, around, and near to the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville.

The aforementioned sites may become available for park and recreation use through several means:

1. Outright purchase by a unit of government or by a private, not-for-profit organization among whose purposes is the conservation of open space land and/or operation of park and recreation facilities;
2. Dedication of property to the Township or Borough through the land development process;
3. Acquisition of an easement for open space and/or park and recreation uses by a unit of government or by a private, not-for-profit organization among whose purposes is the conservation of open space land and/or operation of park and recreation facilities; or
4. Donation of property or easements to a unit of government or to a private, not-for-profit organization among whose purposes is the conservation of open space land and/or operation of park and recreation facilities.

Funds for municipal purchase of sites for recreational purposes or easements for recreational use can come from the mandatory "fee-in-lieu" provisions that Centre Township already has in place and that Centerport Borough should adopt as well. As enabled by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, municipalities may require developers to either contribute land for recreational purposes or pay a fee representing the proportionate costs of a municipality to provide recreation facilities and/or improvements. In 1996, Centre Township adopted provisions requiring a contribution of \$ 500.00 per residential unit from land developers for recreational purposes.

The utility of the land development process to gain usable open space for the community as a whole should not be ignored. As presented in Sections 3 and 5 of this chapter, the cluster form of residential development within the designated growth area has several potential public benefits, including making land available for community park and recreation purposes. Particularly with respect to the prospective expansion of the existing open space area comprising a portion of the Central Berks Fire Company property, creation of permanent open space lands through the land development process and the dedication of such lands to Centerport Borough may be the most efficient and cost-effective means of gaining additional community parkland.

Another source of funds, this time for recreational facility development, is Recreational Improvement and Rehabilitation Act Program (RIRA) grants, allocated to municipalities by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, usually with county involvement.

It is important to note the interest of the Schuylkill River Greenway Association in open space preservation and parkland creation along the Schuylkill River. The Greenway Association should be encouraged to acquire or gain easements over areas designated in the Land Use Plan for *Parks and Environmental Protection Areas & Significant Buffers* along the river and, in consultation and cooperation with Centre Township, Centerport Borough, Berks County, the Mohrsville Athletic and Playground Association, and other affected groups, to develop the *Parks*-designated areas.

When projecting future demands for recreational facilities and programs, it is necessary to consider not only existing circumstances but also evolving demographic changes, land use forecasts, and broad cultural trends as well. While population growth and new residential development imply increased demands for recreational facilities, population shifts toward older age groups suggest the need for a greater variety of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, and the increased number of women's sports teams, in response to a general societal shift, places additional demands on community and school facilities. Multiple-use facilities and shared-use, community-oriented buildings and sites should be pursued as a cost-effective way to maximize recreational opportunities in the Joint Area.

Before proceeding much further toward any kind of parkland acquisition and/or development, the Township and Borough should survey resident recreational preferences. Through this process the kinds of facilities actually needed in the Joint Area may be identified. For example, while there is likely

some interest in additional sports fields, municipal and county recreational preference surveys often reveal the most preferred types of recreational facilities for residents to be things like "hiking, biking, jogging, and equestrian trails" and "open space/natural habitats." Were a Joint Area recreational preference survey to demonstrate such a selection locally, then opportunities for hiking/biking as well as nature appreciation would need to be provided as sites for recreation became available.

Municipal Administrative Facilities

The Centre Township Building, at Bucks Hill Road and Tower Road, has served the township well for many years, but, as the municipality's administrative center, dates from a time when the township had a much smaller population and the administrative functions of the township government were far fewer and less complex. The township is already in need of larger and better-appointed facility; over the planning period this need will become more pronounced.

Centre Township owns a sixteen-acre parcel of land northeast of the present Township Building that is well-located and very suitable for a new Township Building. This site is also large enough to accommodate other community functions, such as a township park. A sketch plan has been prepared that demonstrates the basic feasibility of locating a Township Building, parkland, and ancillary functions on this site. These plans should be developed further, and the Township should work toward implementation of such a scheme over the next few years. Alternatively, the Township should seriously consider acquiring and adaptively-reusing the former Centre Township Elementary School on Main Street, just east of Shoey Road, as a Township Building, and then using the sixteen-acre Bucks Hill Road property primarily for a park.

Centerport Borough lacks a municipal building and uses the Central Berks Fire Company facility for Council meetings and other Borough business. In conjunction with anticipated future land development at the southeastern end of the borough, the Growth Management Plan recommends the expansion of the existing open space area comprising a portion of the Central Berks Fire Company property by extension to the south (see "Parks and Recreation Facilities", above). In the course of a land development project in this vicinity, a parcel could be made available for community purposes, including a Borough Hall. Alternatively, expanded facilities of the Central Berks Fire Company could contain space specifically for Borough administration.

Emergency Services

The Central Berks Fire Company is extremely well-located within the Joint Area -- virtually at its geographic center. The fire company possesses adequate manpower and equipment to provide emergency services to the community, but updated equipment will be needed over the course of the planning period and additional vehicles and associated apparatus will be necessary as further development occurs in the Joint Area and the rest of the fire company's service area.

The all-volunteer status of the fire company and ambulance corps may produce increased staffing problems in the future. These community-based emergency service providers must compete with a variety of other agencies, activities, and programs for residents' time and interest. Volunteers must submit to greater time demands due to more sophisticated training procedures, and widely-dispersed work locations coupled with traffic congestion make it difficult for adequate numbers of volunteers to reach emergency scenes quickly during regular business hours. Additional paid firefighters and paramedics may be needed in the Joint Area and its vicinity over the planning period.

Semi-rural places with growing populations, such as the Joint Area, usually find themselves subject to increased demands for police services. This is not so much a reflection of the actual gain in numbers of residents, although obviously more people can translate directly into a need for more police, as it is a reflection of the expectations of the new residents and sometimes even changed attitudes on the part of some long-time residents.

With the growth and change in such an area usually comes real or merely perceived increases in the crime rate, and the incoming resident population frequently brings with it high expectations of a high level of police services. These factors all combine to put pressure on a municipality to provide increased policing.

On these grounds, it is probably reasonable to assume that, over the next ten to twenty years, the local police force in the Joint Area will need to be expanded to serve a growing and increasingly affluent population. This will mean increased staff, new facilities, and new equipment.

It is assumed that the future will still mean a single local police force for both Centre Township and Centerport Borough, whether the Borough continues to subcontract from the Township for police services or whether a full jointly-operated force evolves. Regardless, the police facilities at the Centre

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Township Building will not be adequate to house the larger police operations anticipated over the planning period. Their needs must be considered in combination with plans for a new Township Building (see "Municipal Administrative Facilities," above).

The most suitable location for the police is probably with a new Centre Township Municipal Building. Either prospective location for that use, the sixteen-acre site that Centre Township owns at Bucks Hill Road and Centerport Road or the former Centre Township Elementary School, is well-located for the police, with good accessibility to all of the Joint Area.

Conceivably, the Centre Township police force could be amalgamated with another existing local force or reconstituted as a force under the control of both the Township and Borough (and, possibly, some other jurisdictions as well). Then the headquarters locational issue may become more complex, but accessibility to all parts of the service area would remain a key issue.

**SECTION 7: CULTURAL, HISTORIC, & LANDSCAPE RESOURCES
CONSERVATION PLAN**

Agricultural Resources

The general goal for agricultural resources has two interrelated parts: To maintain a strong agricultural industry and to protect farmland for agricultural use. If the farming industry is to continue, it is necessary that its land resource base be maintained. On the other hand, the protection of the land base will not assure that the agricultural industry will remain profitable. If farming is not profitable, there will not be an economic reason to protect the land resource. Many of the policies advocated to advance one objective, then, also advance the other.

If the general goal for agriculture can be achieved, Joint Area residents will be able to enjoy numerous benefits in addition to the maintenance of the agricultural economy and the agricultural land resource. The social, economic, and environmental disadvantages of sprawl can be avoided and the possibility will be enhanced of achieving a development pattern that is more convenient and less expensive. Another benefit will be the continuation of the Joint Area's traditional culture and landscape.

Maintaining a Strong Agricultural Industry

Many factors that affect the agricultural industry are beyond the control of Pennsylvania municipalities (for example, foreign competition, federal farm policies and programs). The Growth Management Plan concentrates on more local factors, addressing the facts that nearby urbanization often results in additional financial costs to farmers and in conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors.

As an area develops, owners of farmland and other undeveloped land typically face higher tax bills. Land prices rise and assessments follow. Non-farm residents who move into the formerly rural area demand and get urban-level services and public expenditures rise. When utility lines are extended through rural land, owners of land they pass through are typically assessed on a front-foot basis to pay for the "improvement" that the utility line represents. The Plan advocates a number of programs and measures that offset these monetary costs.

Property owners within the designated rural and agricultural portion of the

Land Use Plan should be encouraged to participate in the State differential assessment program (Act 319 of 1974, commonly known as the Clean and Green Act). Enrollment in Act 319 assures the property owner that his land will be assessed at its farm use value instead of at its development value. To qualify for agricultural use, a property must have produced an agricultural commodity for three years prior to application and must be at least 10 acres or have a demonstrable annual agricultural income of \$2,000. Lands qualifying as forest or agricultural reserve are also eligible for differential assessment. If the use of land enrolled under Act 319 is changed to an ineligible use, the owner must pay rollback taxes for the seven most recent years and interest on the rollback taxes of 6 percent. Rollback taxes are the taxes saved under differential assessment.

To the extent that non-farm development is limited in areas planned for farm use, the demands for urban-level services are also likely to be limited. Utility lines should not be extended through farmland area, because they will greatly increase the pressure for development.

Often when non-farmers move into a farming area, they are annoyed by noisy, dusty, or smelly farm operations and bring pressure on the municipality to enact ordinances that will restrict farming operations, and thus cause farmers to use more costly operating techniques. The Pennsylvania Agricultural Security Areas Law prevents municipal governments from passing ordinances that restrict normal farming practices or structures in Agricultural Security Areas. Participation in the Agricultural Security Areas program is already widespread within the Joint Area (see Figure 2.5.2).

Another approach to limiting conflicts is to give notice that agriculture is the primary industry in the area and that landowners may be subject to inconvenience or discomfort arising from accepted agricultural practices. Such notices should be entered in agreements of sale and deeds of all land in the designated rural and agricultural portion of the Land Use Plan. As a result, potential buyers who are not prepared to live in the environment of commercial agriculture are not likely to buy in the area, but those who find agricultural activities compatible will not be deterred and are likely to be good neighbors when they move in.

Conflicts occur between farmers and non-farm neighbors for a number of reasons. The Growth Management Plan has both physical and non-physical remedies to prevent such conflicts. Additional traffic through the farm area is a basic problem. It can be remedied by locating new non-farm development where it will cause the least increase in traffic. The growth-area concept

outlined in the Land Use Plan (Section 3) and the new roadway links recommended in the Circulation Plan (Section 4) are systems intended to direct non-farm development to selected areas and to limit traffic effects on farm areas.

Non-farm neighbors must be protected against pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals that farmers find it economically necessary to use. Therefore, a buffer of 100 to 125 feet should be required on parcels to be developed that are adjacent to any parcel in an area planned for continuation of agricultural use.

Extremely high capital costs -- for land and for equipment -- make it difficult for young people to enter the farming business. In areas experiencing growth pressures the cost of land is generally much higher than what would be justified based on agricultural income from the land, but the cost of land under an agricultural conservation easement is an exception. When it comes on the market, land under easement should sell at a price comparable to farm use value, because such an easement prevents the development or improvement of the land for other than agricultural purposes. Experience elsewhere indicates that the availability of farmland under easement makes it possible for beginning farmers to acquire land. A study of 279 participants in farmland purchase of development rights programs in Massachusetts and Connecticut found that all persons who bought land already under easement said they bought it for agricultural use; 84 percent said they were able to purchase it only because the easement had reduced the value; and 44 percent said they had never owned farmland before.

Because agricultural conservation easements make farmland affordable for farming, in addition to protecting the land from development, the Comprehensive Plan favors their acquisition, both through the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement program and through donation of easements to conservancies.

A private conservancy could also help young farmers to enter farming by maintaining a registry of young farmers wishing to buy farms and farmers considering selling their farms immediately or bringing a young farmer into their operation and transferring ownership over an extended period of time. The Lancaster Farmland Trust now operates such a matching service for farmers in Lancaster County.

Protecting Farmland

Land in stable agricultural areas is typically in large tracts. As land is divided into smaller tracts, its price per acre generally rises, and as a result, it becomes less affordable by farmers who have to derive their income from the land. Because smaller tracts are available, the total cost of a piece of land may decrease, even though the price per acre increases. Thus, the smaller tracts may be more attractive to non-farm buyers, and they will push farmers out of the market.

In order to maintain a land market in which farmers can compete, the division of land should be limited so that parcels created will not be smaller than is appropriate for continuation of the existing types of commercial farming in the area. Limitations on land division in agricultural areas can be set by local municipalities. For example, the zoning ordinance of Hopewell Township, York County, allows division of agricultural land into two or more parcels only if each resulting parcel contains at least 100 acres. If the original parcel is less than 100 acres, land from it may be transferred to another parcel so long as the second parcel, after transfer, is at least as large as the original parcel was before transfer. The standard of 100 acres was based on the fact that typically farm cores in the township were 100 acres or larger. The farm core is the area of a farm, excluding outlying tracts, and is the part of a farm that is most efficient to operate, has the most permanence, and thus forms the economic basis of the farm.

Note that the limitation on division of land into tracts of less than 100 acres does not preclude the creation of one-acre lots under sliding scale agricultural zoning (which is discussed below).

The measures outlined so far provide incentives to keep land in agriculture, but they do not prevent it from being developed. They are not enough to ensure that areas planned for agriculture will remain as viable agricultural areas. A small amount of scattered development within an agricultural area can lead to land use conflicts that make the continuation of farming difficult if not impossible. It is necessary to adopt measures that will prevent the conversion of farmland to non-farm uses.

The most effective measure for preventing the development of farmland is the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements. These are legally binding instruments, which go with the deed, that prevent development forever.

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program is the

best-known program for easements. The program is well underway in the county; as of March 1997 the County Commissioners had already approved the purchase of easements on 64 farms involving more than 8,100 acres, although no properties as yet within the Joint Area. The Comprehensive Plan strongly endorses the PACE program, but recommends a change in the rating system used for choosing properties on which easement offers are to be accepted. The Plan recommends that the eligibility requirements be expanded to require that the property be in an area indicated for agricultural use in the Land Use Plan (Figure 3.3.2). Thus, properties planned for other than agricultural uses (such as properties in the designated growth area) would not be eligible for the PACE program.

A second method for acquiring easements is through donation to nonprofit conservancies. Landowners who donate easements can count the value of the easement as a charitable donation that can be deducted from income for federal income tax purposes, thus lowering their tax liability. Landowners may also make partial donations through "bargain sales" of easements to conservancies. The two tracts of land the Joint Area with conservation easements have the easements owned by the Berks County Conservancy.

Acquisition of easements through the PACE program and through conservancy action, however, will not be able to cover all Joint Area farmland. For most Pennsylvania counties PACE allocations might be able to cover about 3 percent of the land in farms, with conservancy action perhaps accounting for another 3 percent. Other techniques must be used if the vast bulk of farmland in the Joint Area is to be protected from development.

The most promising, and well-tested, technique is strong agricultural zoning. Strong agricultural zoning strictly limits land uses to agriculture and related uses and limits residential development to no more than one dwelling per 20 acres on average. Such zoning is common in York and Lancaster Counties and has been adopted by Maiden creek, Oley, Perry, Richmond, Union, and Washington Townships in Berks County.

To qualify as "strong" (and thereby prove effective), agricultural zoning should have the following characteristics:

1. Overall, it should permit no more than five non-farm dwelling units per 100 acres.
2. It should be the area-based allocation variety of agricultural zoning. Area-based allocation limits the number of houses that can be built on a

property given its area, instead of simply setting a large minimum lot size. It establishes an overall permissible density, such as one dwelling unit per 20 acres, but requires each house to be built on a small lot, for example, one acre, and located in a place that will interfere as little as possible with agricultural activities on the remainder of the tract. The area-based allocation form makes possible much more flexibility in siting and leaves much more extended and uninterrupted areas in one ownership and available for farming.

3. Desirably, it should be the sliding scale form of area-based allocation zoning. The sliding scale form, which has been upheld by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court (Boundary Drive Associates v. Shrewsbury Township, 1984), allows somewhat higher densities of development for smaller parcels than for larger ones. This is justified because smaller parcels are less suitable for farming and often their owners have investment-backed expectations for developing them. Usually they account for a relatively small total area and so their development at somewhat higher densities does not add an excessive number of dwelling units to the agricultural zone.

A sliding scale schedule almost identical to the schedule upheld by the Commonwealth Court in the Boundary Drive case follows:

<u>Size of Parcel</u>	<u>No. of Dwelling Units Permitted</u>
Less than 2 acres	0
2 - 5 acres	1
6 - 10 acres	2
11 - 30 acres	3
31 - 60 acres	4
61 - 90 acres	5
91 - 120 acres	6
121 - 150 acres	7
151 - 180 acres	8
181 - 210 acres	9
211 acres & over	10

For the Joint Area, a sliding scale similar to the one recommended by the Centre Township Agricultural Committee to the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee in September 1996 may be the most applicable:

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

<u>Size of Parcel</u>	<u>No. of Dwelling Units Permitted</u>
Less than 2 acres	0
2 - 20 acres	1
21 - 40 acres	2
41 - 60 acres	3
61 - 80 acres	4
81 acres & over	5

4. The allowable units should be grouped together instead of stretching along the road frontage of the tract.
5. The sizes of individual parcels are the sizes as of a given date, preferably a date well before the adoption of the ordinance.
6. The uses allowed in the zone should be strictly limited to uses that are supportive of agriculture or at least highly compatible with it.
7. Farm stands should be allowed in agricultural zones so that farmers can capture some of the retail markup on their produce. The farm stands, however, should be limited to seven months operation per year and to about 600 square feet in floor area. Otherwise, they may become intense year-round markets that bring excessive activity into the agricultural zone that conflicts with farming activities.
8. A simple and foolproof system should be instituted to keep track of the number of dwelling rights initially assigned to each parcel, the number of building permits granted, and the resulting number of rights remaining for dwellings to be built in the future.

In lieu of the sliding-scale form of agricultural zoning, some other types of the area-based allocation variety of agricultural zoning may be pursued. In all cases, however, only non-farm residential development that has overall very low densities should be permitted in agricultural areas, with strong limitations on the percentage of a tract permitted to be disturbed for development.

One possible scenario for non-farm development in agricultural areas provides a series of incentives in the form of density bonuses to encourage landowners to develop compact arrangements of dwelling units, rather than widely-spread houses. The incentives in the form of density bonuses would promote developers to proceed under cluster and compact cluster provisions of a zoning

ordinance, further reducing the potential land area disturbed in development. Such a system of incentives could conceivably culminate with a transfer of development rights (TDR) option.

Under a transfer of development rights (TDR) option, the agricultural area could become a "sending" area for development rights that are exercised within the designated growth area of the Joint Area valley instead of in the agricultural area. Under TDRs, an owner of a tract of land can separate the rights to develop that land from the property in question and transfer those rights to a different tract of land. As a general growth management tool, TDRs can be very useful to a community, since it can designate areas that it would like to keep relatively undeveloped as "transferring-out" or "sending" areas for TDRs and areas appropriate for more intensive development as "transferring-in" or "receiving" areas for TDRs.

It should be noted that TDRs are conceived of as a development alternative for a landowner, to be exercised by him at his option. Landowners in "sending" areas receive compensation for transferring development rights to growth areas, and the system is one whereby the financial benefits of generally rising land prices in a community may be equitably distributed to landowners in designated growth and low-growth areas alike. It should also be emphasized that, in addition to selling his development rights for compensation, the "sending" area landowner also retains the right to use his land for non-urban uses, such as agriculture.

In Pennsylvania, the 1988 re-enactment and update of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) officially sanctioned "Transferable Development Rights" under Article VI, Section 619.1 and Article VII, Section 702.1.

While there are a variety of ways toward achieving the Plan's goals for agricultural resources, the following policies are key:

- Reduce development pressure on farmland by controlling the location of road improvements and the extension of water and sewer lines and other new infrastructure;
- Enact effective zoning;
- Prevent the division of farmland into small tracts;
- Encourage the acquisition of conservation easements on farmland and

focus their location;

- Reduce potential conflicts between farmers and non-farm residents in areas planned for agriculture.

Landscape Resources

Closely associated with the agricultural component of the Cultural, Historic, & Landscape Resources Conservation Plan is the landscape component. The distinctive scenic character of the Joint Area is derived from its rolling rural countryside, punctuated by superb vistas of agricultural fields, farmsteads, and small settlements (see Figure 2.5.1).

A fundamental emphasis of the Land Use Plan's growth-area concept is the retention of much of the rural parts of the Joint Area that define its setting. In order to preserve this legacy to the maximum extent, growth and development is proposed to occur: 1) Mostly to the east and southeast, close to the bridges over the Schuylkill River to PA Route 61 and to the existing settlements of Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville; and 2) When associated with low-growth areas, at a lower density and in more compact and less disruptive forms than those normally associated with conventional suburban and semi-rural development. Taken together, these two ideas are intended to protect the major landscape/scenic element of the Joint Area.

Historic Urban Areas

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. The Plan's approach to these settlements is recognition of their innate character, appreciation for the continuing importance of these places to the economic and social life of the Joint Area, and reinforcement of their viability through various revitalization efforts.

The Growth Management Plan proposes the sensitive integration of new small-to moderate-scaled commercial and residential additions to the historic communities in the Joint Area, thereby strengthening local economic

opportunities and supporting the social organization of these places. These kinds of insertions of new development into historic communities are not seen as conflicting with or threatening the resources found there; rather the new development is envisioned as a revitalizing component. The continuing economic life of historic places is essential to their retaining their social structure and their physical resources.

The advantages that traditional settlements areas hold for new development include: Existing infrastructure (road systems and, in the case of Mohrsville, a central water system); accessibility; community facilities; employment; and commercial services. Any new development in a historic context, however, does need to be sensitively done. Various kinds of commercial development, because of their regional orientation, need for large single-floor selling spaces, and other inherent characteristics, are not suitable for insertion into the historic places in the Joint Area. These kinds of uses and other similar ones are more appropriate for locations along PA Route 61. On the other hand, relatively small-scaled light manufacturing, assembly, and warehousing operations, such as the Linden Knitting Mill in Mohrsville, are appropriate uses for *Borough/Village Center (Mixed Use)* areas of the Land Use Plan, especially when reuse of an existing structure is involved.

The Land Use Plan also establishes Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville as three focal points for the *Medium Density Residential* and *Low Density Residential* areas that are the location for most of the expected residential growth in the Joint Area over the planning period. The three settlements are therefore well-positioned to be centers for community commercial and social activities.

Historic Sites

Another type of cultural, historic, and landscape/scenic resource is represented by discrete historical sites and areas, outside of the urbanized areas already discussed.

Where these sites are known to exist, they have been identified in Figure 2.5.1. A new inventory and assessment of these resources might be pursued, however. Municipalities can apply for Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) funding to conduct inventories and assessment, with County coordination and assistance. A new, detailed Joint Area inventory might include an overview of community history; a review of common themes that tie the historic resources together; an assessment of individual resources

and of the resources as a whole; the preparation and filing of PHMC Historic Resource Survey Forms; and the mapping of historic resources and correlation of resources with lot numbers.

Identification and assessment of resources are important, in part, as a basis for using land development regulations, such as zoning, to protect the resources. The employment of development regulations does not necessarily translate into additional restriction on development; they may instead provide a variety of incentives for developers to protect community resources.

A widely-employed measure to protect historic resources that the Township and Borough should consider is the adoption of historic overlay district regulations. First, it must be emphasized what historic overlay zoning is not. It is not the establishment of a historic district and does not require the creation of a historic architectural review board.

Historic overlay zoning involves the identification and mapping of scattered historic resources throughout a community. Historic overlay zoning protects the character of historic resources by regulating the subdivision and land development review process. It clearly communicates to developers the desire of the community to preserve historic resources and contexts, and it identifies those resources and contexts. Historic overlay zoning requires a developer to assess the impact of a proposed subdivision or land development plan upon the historic resources on the tract being developed as well as upon adjacent affected tracts. Mitigation of the impact is required and/or negotiated through the exploration of design alternatives, buffering, landscaping, design standards, and other appropriate measures. Lot sizes and configurations as well as the design and location of improvements are controlled to preserve the integrity of the historic resource and its context. Demolition of historic resources can be delayed or denied by the ordinance to allow for acceptable alternatives to demolition to be negotiated. Adaptive reuse of historic resources is encouraged through the provision of special "use alternatives" not normally permitted in the underlying zoning district. Historic overlay zoning has been successfully applied in a number of municipalities in Pennsylvania.

SECTION 8: UTILITIES PLAN

For many communities, the availability of central water and sewer is a major determinant for growth -- both the amount of growth and where it takes place. Where sewer facilities exist and have sufficient capacity to allow new development, there is incentive for growth to occur; likewise where they are not available growth will be relatively discouraged. The critical element, in most cases, is the excess sewage treatment plant capacity above that which is now being used, and is thus available for future development. Similarly, governmental decision-making with respect to utility service network extensions and upgrades can be employed as a growth management device; the extension of water and sewer service to designated locations is, along with development regulations such as zoning, a major planning implementation tool.

For the Joint Area, circumstances have been a little different. Notwithstanding the basic lack of central sewer facilities and the extremely limited availability of central water facilities, the community has seen rapid growth in new residential developments (see Chapter 2, Section 3). Development has been able to proceed, despite the lack of central water and sewer facilities, because of the low intensity (large lots) of most of the new developments, permitting on-site septic tank and tile field sewage disposal systems for individual lots, and because of the emergence of the small "package" systems for central (multiple-unit) sewage service.

As this development has continued, however, problems have emerged:

- The resulting growth pattern is one of sprawling development across most of the Joint Area, generating the series of problems elucidated in other sections and chapters of the Plan, especially conflicts with farming activities and new developments' inherent mismatch with a rural circulation system;
- The process of development has not helped to alleviate an existing and pressing utilities problem; namely, failing on-site septic systems in the Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville.

Just as significantly, recent growth has revealed its potential for other problems to emerge later:

- Installation of so many new on-site septic tank and tile field systems runs the risk of large problems for the community should these systems fail;

- Installation of so many new “package” sewage treatment systems runs the risk of large problems for the community should these systems fail.

Pending Initiation of Municipal Sewage Treatment

Concurrent with the preparation of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan, each of the two municipalities is preparing updates of their Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537) Plans. The main feature of these Act 537 Updates is their inclusion of plans to construct the first municipal sewage collection and treatment facilities within the Joint Area.

For Centerport Borough an independent municipal system of sewer lines and treatment plant is envisioned. Only existing developed areas of the municipality would be served. Main Street residences and businesses would be served by lines along the backs of properties (via Pear Alley to the east and Plum Alley to the west), with lateral lines on Centre Street, Maple Street, and Cedar Alley. The southern end of the developed area of the borough would also be served (Figure 3.8.1). The sewage treatment plant for this system would not, however, be within the borough itself but rather within Centre Township, south of Main Street, just west of its intersection with Shoey Road. Discharge of the treated effluent would be into Irish Creek.

Centre Township’s first municipal sewer system is planned to serve parts of the existing built-up areas of the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville exclusively, with a sewage treatment plant between the two settlements (Figure 3.8.2).

For Dauberville, the main sewer trunk would run along Railroad Road, paralleling the rail line, with lateral lines 700 feet along the east-west leg of Railroad Road and on Grimm Avenue, Kissinger Avenue, and Shore Drive. Another lateral would run west from Railroad Road, skirting the southern end of the Dauberville Dam’s impoundment area, to reach Bellemans Church Road at Bossler Road. Similarly, short lines perpendicular to the main trunk would run just to the north and just to the south of Bellemans Church Road. Excluded from the system would be lines in the Dalton-Barton and Ashland-Eaton sections of Dauberville.

For Mohrsville, the approach to servicing Main Street would be similar to that proposed for Centerport; Main Street residences and businesses would be served by lines along the backs of properties (via Cherry Alley to the south and Heffner Park Road to the north along Main Street’s east-west alignment and unnamed alleys along the backs of properties that front on Main Street as it

takes a more north-south alignment heading toward Centerport). Pear Road, Railroad Road and an alley north of Miriam Street would also receive sewer lines.

The Centre Township municipal sewage treatment plant would treat effluent from both Dauberville and Mohrsville, with discharge into the Irish Creek just below the Dauberville Dam.

Projected Expansion of Municipal Sewage Treatment

For the Joint Area, the key to implementing the vision-of-the-future embodied in the Land Use Plan will be the employment, in concert, of three distinct elements:

1. Sewage treatment system construction, extensions, and expansions within the designated growth area to accommodate expected growth and remedy current sewage treatment problems;
2. Development regulations, particularly zoning, that control the amount of non-farm residential construction outside of the designated growth area;
3. Roadway improvements that are directed fundamentally to the designated growth area in lieu of the designated rural and agricultural portion of the Joint Area.

The Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan strongly endorses the initiation of municipal sewage treatment collection and treatment facilities in the Joint Area as a critical step toward addressing deficiencies with existing sewage treatment systems and as a first stage of implementation for the Comprehensive Plan's designated growth area.

The Land Use Plan's identification of *Borough/Village Centers* and *Medium Density Residential* areas as primary areas for future growth is dependent to a large degree on the phasing-in of central sewer systems within this area. The pending initiation of municipal sewage collection and treatment systems is therefore in complete accord with an emphasis in the Growth Management Plan on the incremental processes of development. It is crucial, however, that both municipalities and their sewage authorities to recognize the prospect for extensions and expansions to these municipal sewage collection and treatment systems. Treatment plant capacities and capabilities and sewer main sizes

should be designed cognizant of the amount, location, and intensity of future development identified in the Comprehensive Plan, and all parties should plan for the incremental phasing-in of system improvements needed to accommodate the Comprehensive Plan's growth forecasts.

Act 537 Updates

It is further recommended that Centerport Borough and Centre Township formally amend their Act 537 Sewer Plans to make them consistent with the Land Use Plan and this Utilities element of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan, with future central sewer service indicated for areas designated *Borough/Village Centers*, *Medium Density Residential*, and *Industrial* in the Land Use Plan.

Central Water Systems

Those parts of the Joint Area already identified for municipal sewage collection systems by the Act 537 Updates currently underway and the designated *Borough/Village Centers*, *Medium Density Residential*, and *Industrial* areas classified by the Land Use Plan should achieve central water supply systems through the planning period. The intensity of development existing in and proposed for these areas is appropriate for such service, putting in central water supply lines at the same time as sewer collection lines are installed makes establishing such systems more economical, and providing central system water lines in conjunction with new construction obviates the need for a municipality to deal with the often intractable problem of contamination of private individual wells.

As it happens, there is a fitting precedent for how to proceed right within the Joint Area. The Mohrsville Water Association was compelled into being in 1966, owing to contaminated wells in Mohrsville. Thirty years later, it has proven a success and shows the way for Centerport, Dauberville, and future *Borough/Village Centers*, *Medium Density Residential*, and *Industrial* areas.

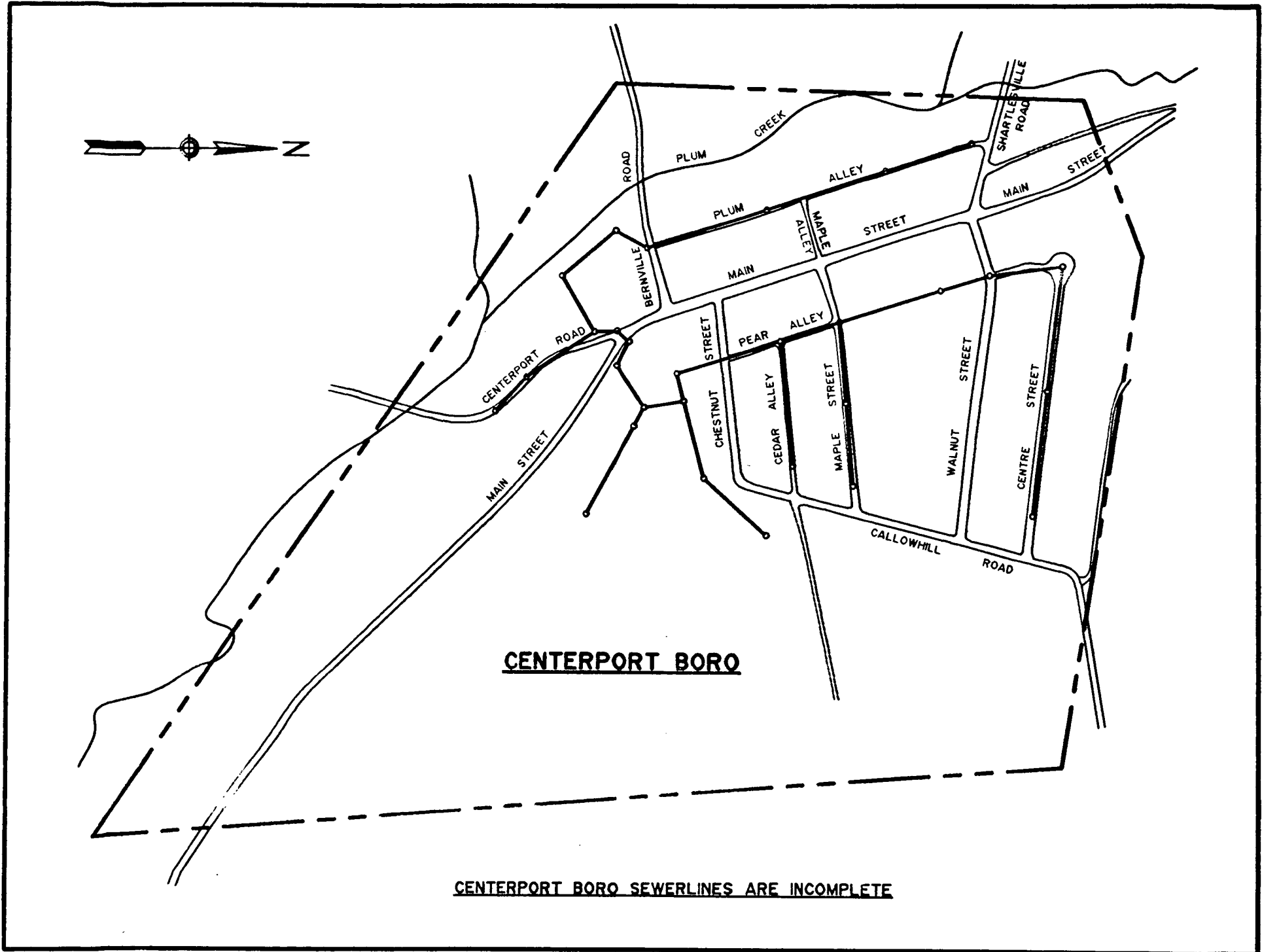
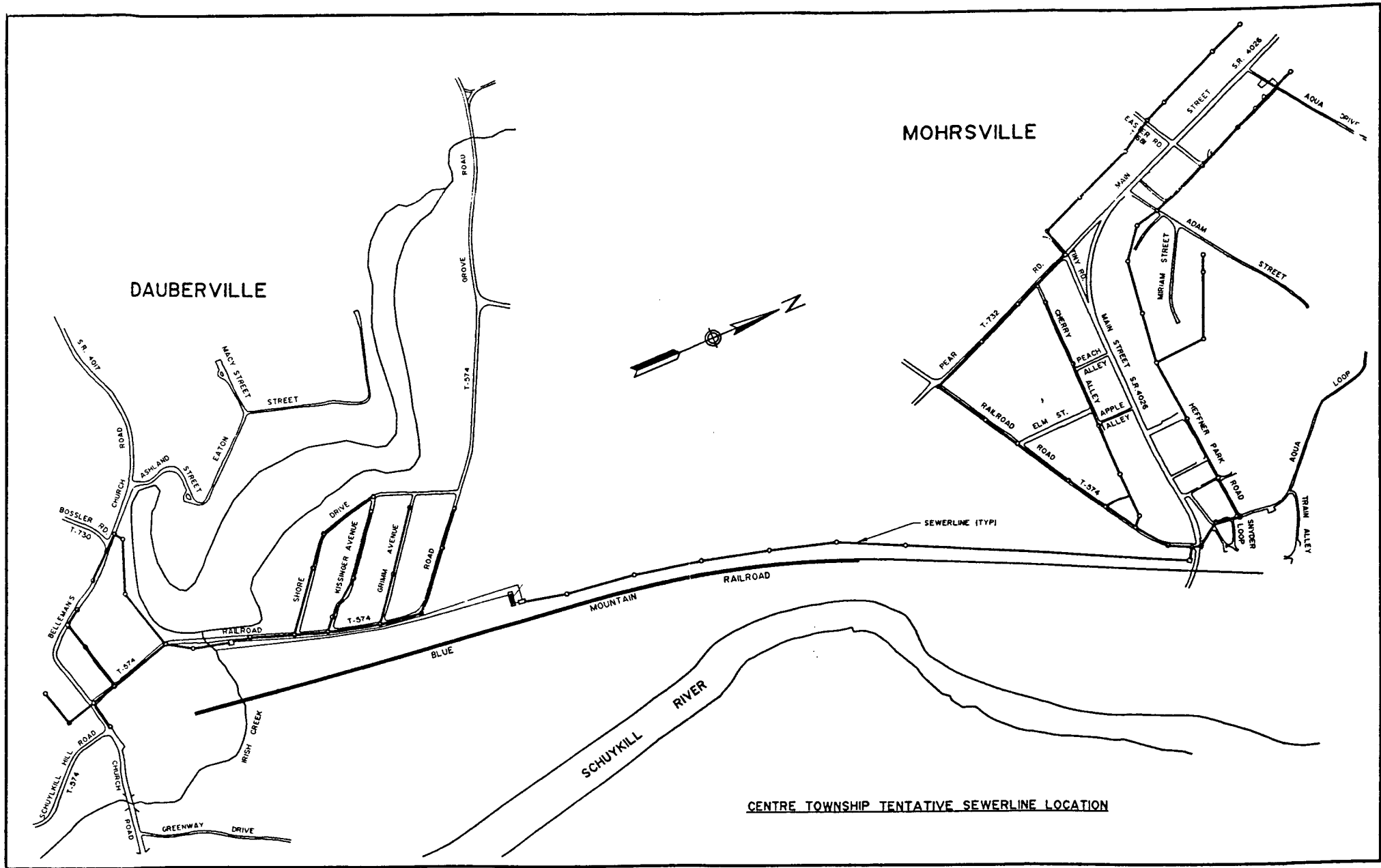


Figure 3.8.1



CENTRE TOWNSHIP TENTATIVE SEWERLINE LOCATION

Figure 3.8.2

SECTION 9: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PLAN

The Environmental Protection element of the Growth Management Plan identifies specific areas in the Joint Area that are environmentally sensitive, based on several sources: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 100-Year Floodplain designation prepared for the National Flood Insurance Program; the National Wetlands Inventory undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (now Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection); the 1970 Soil Survey of Berks County prepared by the U. S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service; United States Geological Survey quadrangle series maps; and April 1992 aerial photography. Areas that have been mapped include floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, steep slopes, and woodlands (see Figures 2.4.1 and 2.4.3).

These classes of environmentally-sensitive features are not uniform in their impact on development potential nor in what they represent as hazards to human life and property. There are levels of sensitivity, suggesting corresponding levels of response.

Floodplains/Stormwater Management

The first and most specific level is represented by the 100-year floodplain designated by the federal government (Figure 2.4.1). There is clear authority for a complete prohibition of residential development within the designated floodplain, and a set of standards for regulating the design and construction of non-residential development within the floodplain so as to prevent exacerbation of the flood hazard. Flood prone soils, identified by the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey, at times do not correspond precisely with the federal floodplain designations. The flood prone soils, so classified because of their alluvial nature, indicating that they were deposited by floodwaters, reflect not only 100-year floods but also floods of lesser frequency. Where flood prone soils lie outside the federally-designated areas, the burden of proof should be on land developers to demonstrate by specific on-site tests, engineering analysis, and analysis of effects of impervious cover percentages of upstream development that could alter flow levels, that the generalized soil classification is in error for the specific site or that any construction will be designed to avoid any possibility of creating a hazard to human life and property or exacerbating local flooding. Thus as a matter of policy the flood prone soils initially should be subject to all of the development restrictions of

the land within the 100-year floodplain.

The Hydrology (Figure 2.4.1) and Composite Constraints (Figure 2.4.3) maps are an extremely important resource for the Joint Area. The information represented, particularly with respect to floodplains, is a strong determinant for land use planning and was significant in shaping the Land Use Plan (Figures 2.4.4, 3.3.1 and 3.3.2) for the Joint Area. Implementation of the Land Use Plan, as well as the preservation of environmentally-sensitive resources, will rely to a considerable degree on the protection of the network of floodplains within the Joint Area.

With the recent experience of acute flooding in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (January 1996), Centre Township and Centerport Borough should be vigilant in ensuring that new development does not occur in floodplains or flood prone areas unless specific special construction methods are employed. Regional efforts to control flooding should be supported.

Stormwater management and flood and erosion control along the Schuylkill River and its tributaries are necessarily closely linked to upstream land development and stormwater management policies and practices, and it is essential that local regulations promulgated in the Joint Area and in all surrounding municipalities be based on watershed-wide considerations. Maintenance of stream water quality is also an increasingly large concern in areas experiencing growth.

Close inter-municipality and County-initiated cooperation on all stormwater management issues will need to continue over the coming years. The County, with funding assistance from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, should coordinate an Irish Creek watershed study with the participation of the affected municipalities. This study should focus on potential effects of land development upon discharge rates into creeks and streams, and should lead to local development regulations to assure that developments use the best available technology to minimize off-site stormwater runoff, increase on-site infiltration, minimize off-site discharge of pollutants, and encourage natural filtration functions. (Best available technology may include measures such as detention and retention basins, recharge trenches, porous paving and piping, contour terraces, and swales.)

Wetlands

A second level of environmental sensitivity is represented by wetlands;

generally areas within forested lands with a high water table and poor drainage, and having some degree of surface ponding during the year (Figures 2.4.1 and 2.4.3). Under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, there is at the present time a steadily evolving regulatory framework concerning wetlands in Pennsylvania, mandating wetland surveys by developers of land and controlling the degree and type of wetland disturbance permitted.

Municipalities can provide long-term wetlands protection by directing development away from these areas, by encouraging clustered construction on higher ground surrounding wetlands, and by purchasing wetlands important to protecting local floodplains or ecological systems. The Land Use Plan (Figure 3.3.2) incorporates a variety of natural resource areas, including floodplains and significant wetlands, where known, under the designation *Environmental Protection Areas & Significant Buffers*.

Aquifer Recharge Protection

Groundwater is the source of all of residents' drinking water in the Joint Area. It is essential that the extensive aquifer recharge area be protected. The Land Use Plan (Figure 3.3.2) illustrates how areas for commercial, industrial, and medium-high and high density residential development are kept in discrete locations and are of limited size. Furthermore, extensive permanent open space throughout the Joint Area (the *Environmental Protection Areas & Significant Buffers* referenced above) assures a permanent framework for recharge areas even as development may proceed into the future. The Joint Area municipalities should employ this framework for protection through the adoption of land use regulations, including incentives for clustered residential development and the establishment and maintenance of well-head protection zones. A key element is an overall limitation on development throughout most of the recharge area and the maintenance of extensive woodlands in the *Environmental Protection Areas & Significant Buffers* portion of the Joint Area.

Wildlife and Plants

Except for occasional transient species, no federally- or state-listed or proposed threatened or endangered species are known to exist in the Joint Area. As further studies are conducted, including possibly a complete natural areas inventory for the township and borough, appropriate measures to protect

sensitive habitat should be incorporated into the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan and municipal land use regulations.

The Land Use Plan (Figure 3.3.2) describes an extensive, interconnected network of protected open space areas incorporating a wide variety of sizes and types of landscapes and habitats. The continuous corridors of open space are a significant aspect of the system, providing for essential movement, dispersion, and migration of wildlife. Especially important to wildlife are the maintenance of natural corridors such as stream valleys and wooded hillsides and ridgelines.

Other Natural Features

A further level of environmental sensitivity includes areas affected by the following constraints: mature woodlands (Figure 2.4.3); areas of steep slopes (also Figure 2.4.3); and areas having a seasonal high water table within six inches of the soil surface (Figure 2.4.1). These features, especially when occurring in combination (Figures 2.4.3 and 2.4.4), suggest that little or no development should take place within the areas exhibiting these conditions or that development should be severely curtailed and closely regulated.

The thrust of the Land Use Plan is the broad protection of these sensitive features. Affected areas are designated generally as open space or for very low density residential uses.

The policy of the Joint Area municipalities toward these environmentally-sensitive areas should be one of discouraging development wherever possible to prevent destruction of important resources or to protect residents of the township and borough from future problems.

The chief instrument that Joint Area municipalities will have at their disposal to protect these areas will be the encouragement of cluster development and the flexible gross density development approach in newly-developing residential areas. Essentially, the maximum number of units that would be permitted on a tract should be calculated based on the developable acreage of the tract (gross acreage minus existing rights-of-way, easements, floodplains, wetlands, and perhaps some proportion of steep slopes and woodlands). Having arrived at a figure for the total number of units permitted, the size and configuration of individual house lots becomes a much less critical issues than in conventional development, and these may be smaller or larger depending on the occurrence,

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

extent, and significance of natural or cultural features that may be found on the tract. In turn, by requiring developers to base the number of dwelling units allowed to be built on the gross developable acreage of their development parcels, areas designated by the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan and any ensuing studies as being environmentally-sensitive are more likely to end up being set aside.

It must be recognized that the maps of Joint Area environmentally-sensitive areas are accurate to a general level only. Developers should be required as a matter of municipal policy to undertake more detailed field studies of specific parcels proposed for development that will verify or modify the precise location of the sensitive features on the Comprehensive Plan or other, similar maps. By requiring such studies, especially where there is a strong suspicion or known presence of environmentally-sensitive features, developers will be more aware of the need to protect scarce resources and to avoid future problems at an early point in the development process, leading to better land planning and design solutions in the long run.