

Centre Township & Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Adopted July 1997

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Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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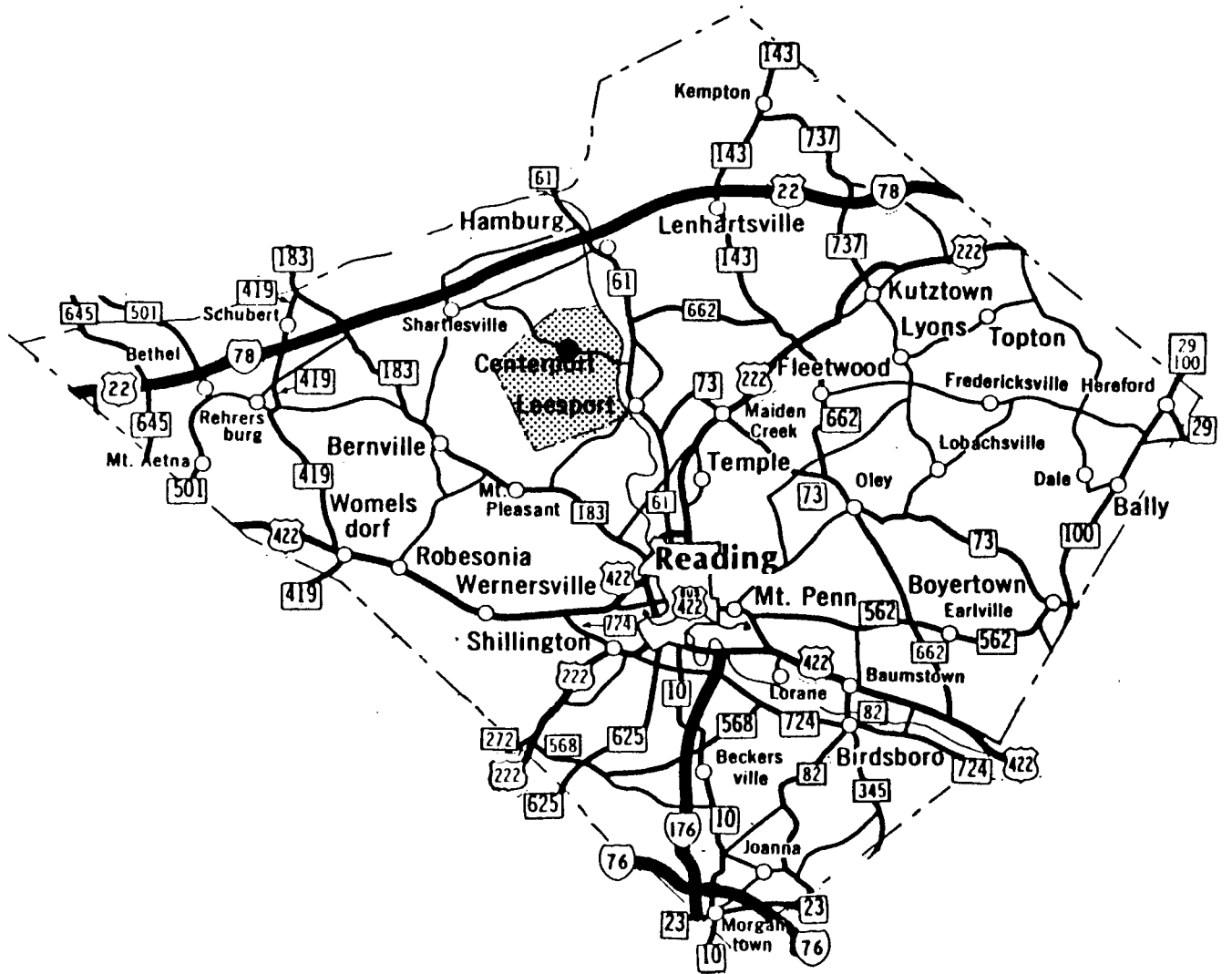


Figure 1.1 Location of Centre Township and Centerport Borough in Berks County.

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND/PLANNING PROCESS

Growth Trends and Issues

Centre Township, in which Centerport Borough is embedded, is located in north-central Berks County, approximately eleven miles north of the City of Reading (Figure 1.1). The township measures a little less than five miles in both the east-west and north-south directions and contains about 22 square miles of land. The borough is geographically small by comparison, measuring only one-half mile by three-quarters of a mile. The combined 1990 population of the two municipalities was 3,438; the borough containing 284 persons and the township 3,154 persons.

Centre Township lies to the west of the Schuylkill River, which forms the eastern boundary of the township and separates it from PA Route 61, paralleling the river. The township consists mostly of rolling and sometimes hilly terrain, the pattern of which is dominated by Irish and Plum Creeks, which carve through the landscape en route to the Schuylkill River.

Historically, the township has been sparsely built-up, with the exception of two older urban settlements of modest size, Dauberville and Mohrsville. Centerport Borough constitutes another older, compact, and relatively dense urban settlement.

Centre Township had a comprehensive plan prepared in the 1970s, making the document 25 years old by the mid-1990s. Centerport Borough never had a comprehensive plan prepared prior to 1996. The two municipalities, however, have shared a zoning ordinance for some years and both municipalities have subdivision regulations and active planning commissions.

Development activity in the township and the borough (together, the two municipalities are commonly referred to as the "Joint Area" in this document) had been nominal over the years, largely due to the absence of major roads, only three modest bridge connections to PA Route 61, and the almost total lack of central sewer and water facilities anywhere in the Joint Area.

Recently, however, as a result of new industrial and commercial development just to the east and southeast of the Joint Area near Shoemakersville and Leesport and further south along PA Route 61, as well as the continuing residential suburbanization of the City of Reading, there has been more development activity in the township. This new wave of development began in

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the 1970s in the form of small, scattered subdivisions stripped along parts of the many roads of the township, although tending to be found near the Schuylkill River crossings. A few ten-to-twenty-unit subdivisions also were constructed. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the pace and extent of residential development picked up, with larger developments occurring in a mostly-scattered pattern throughout the township. This suburban-style residential development has now become a significant feature of the township, despite its still-present rural character.

This recent development activity and its anticipated continuation concern the two municipalities in terms of the adequacy of the existing road system, the lack of central sewer and water utilities, and the potential effects of this development on the agricultural atmosphere and way-of-life in the countryside and the character and integrity of Centerport, Mohrsville, and Dauberville.

By early 1996, when the consultant and the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee began to work together, the following issues and challenges to be addressed in the comprehensive planning process had been identified:

- Development pressures on Joint Area from PA Route 61 highway corridor;
- New residential development and land speculation harm farming activities;
- Local road system is inadequate to accommodate all the traffic from new residential developments occurring in Centre Township;
- Traffic from new local developments and from regional growth affects older settlements, such as Centerport, Dauberville, and Mohrsville;
- New residential development has strong fiscal impact on Schuylkill Valley School District;
- No central sewers, but could be here soon;
- Potential public health problems in older settlements, such as Centerport, Dauberville, and, to a lesser extent, Mohrsville, due to on-lot water and sewer systems;
- Existence of and possible increase in number of 'package' sewage treatment plants;
- Limited park and recreation facilities for a growing population.

The 1996-97 Joint Comprehensive Plan

The purpose in preparing an updated Comprehensive Plan is fourfold. First, the data base for the Joint Area has been brought up to date. Chapter Two includes surveys of natural and cultural features, the current land-use pattern, the road system, and the systems of public services and utilities; analyses and projections of population and housing; and an examination of the rate and types of change in the Joint Area over the last fifteen to twenty years. Second, the Plan identifies the basic direction and structure recommended for the future development of the Joint Area, derived from explorations of alternative development patterns. Third, the Plan specifies the goals, policies, and individual elements that will form the basis for the development of the Joint Area. Finally, the Plan lays forth a specific implementation strategy and program to aid the Township and the Borough in achieving the goals of the Plan.

A joint comprehensive plan for Centre Township and Centerport Borough has the potential to provide a highly-effective planning tool that will support day-to-day decisions about future development so that they may be thoroughly rational and consistent and at the same time move the Joint Area in a desirable direction in terms of agricultural and open space conservation, historic preservation, traffic management, utilities and recreation facilities development, and fiscal balance.

A Plan that is fully responsive to the needs of the residents of the Joint Area needs to contain both long-range and short-range programs, must balance local needs and perceptions with regional requirements and perspectives, and contain its own logic and strategy for implementation. A good Plan can also serve as a "road map" for Centre Township and for Centerport Borough, both in terms of informing and improving the process of reviewing and approving development plans, and in projecting a coherent and mutually agreed-upon development framework and visual image of the Joint Area. A new Comprehensive Plan should serve as an everyday working document to be referred to regularly in the review of development proposals and in the planning of long-range capital improvements.

A joint comprehensive plan for Centre Township and Centerport Borough needs to relate to and be coordinated with the newly-adopted Berks County Comprehensive Plan, but at the same time must reflect the unique characteristics and setting of the two municipalities and the point of view of the residents. The joint comprehensive plan must also be responsible to the requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning

Code (MPC) as to content and the procedure for the preparation and adoption of municipal comprehensive plans.

The Comprehensive Planning Process

Growing local concerns about the location, pace, and character of recent and future development in the two municipalities coincided with the desire of the Berks County Planning Commission to have modern, up-to-date comprehensive plans prepared and adopted throughout the county to provide for orderly urban growth, protect the natural environment, and furnish a rational basis for planning for open space and recreation facilities and strategic infrastructure (water, sewer, and road) improvements throughout the county.

The Berks County Planning Commission has been promoting cooperative sub-regional planning throughout the county for the past several years and has succeeded in sponsoring a number of multi-municipal planning efforts, including a joint planning program involving Leesport Borough and Ontelaunee and Perry Townships, just across the Schuylkill River, begun in early 1995. The decision of Centre Township and Centerport Borough to cooperate for the purpose of preparing a joint comprehensive plan was therefore consistent with the spirit and method of the Berks County planning program and, in addition, afforded the opportunity to coordinate the preparation of a new comprehensive plan with the three communities across the Schuylkill River to the east.

As has been the approach in other areas of the county, a Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee consisting of representatives from Centre Township and Centerport Borough was formed to act as a unified "client" with which the consultant selected to prepare the plan would interact.

During the course of the preparation of the Plan, February through December 1996, the planning consultant met with the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee on a monthly basis and held three Public Information Meetings -- April 15, June 18, and October 15. In addition, a joint Public Hearing was held on the completed Draft Comprehensive Plan in early 1997, for independent adoption actions by the Centerport Borough Council and Centre Township Board of Supervisors, which took place in July 1997. The Work Program Schedule (Figure 1.2) outlines graphically the Comprehensive Plan process that was observed, consisting of three distinct phases.

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

The Public Hearing formal review process rounded out an extensive community participation program, including the three aforementioned Public Information Meetings and a questionnaire survey undertaken during the early part of the study. Community participation was a hallmark of the comprehensive planning process, in order to fully inform Joint Area residents and to create a strong consensus as to the most desirable and achievable common future for Centre Township and Centerport Borough.

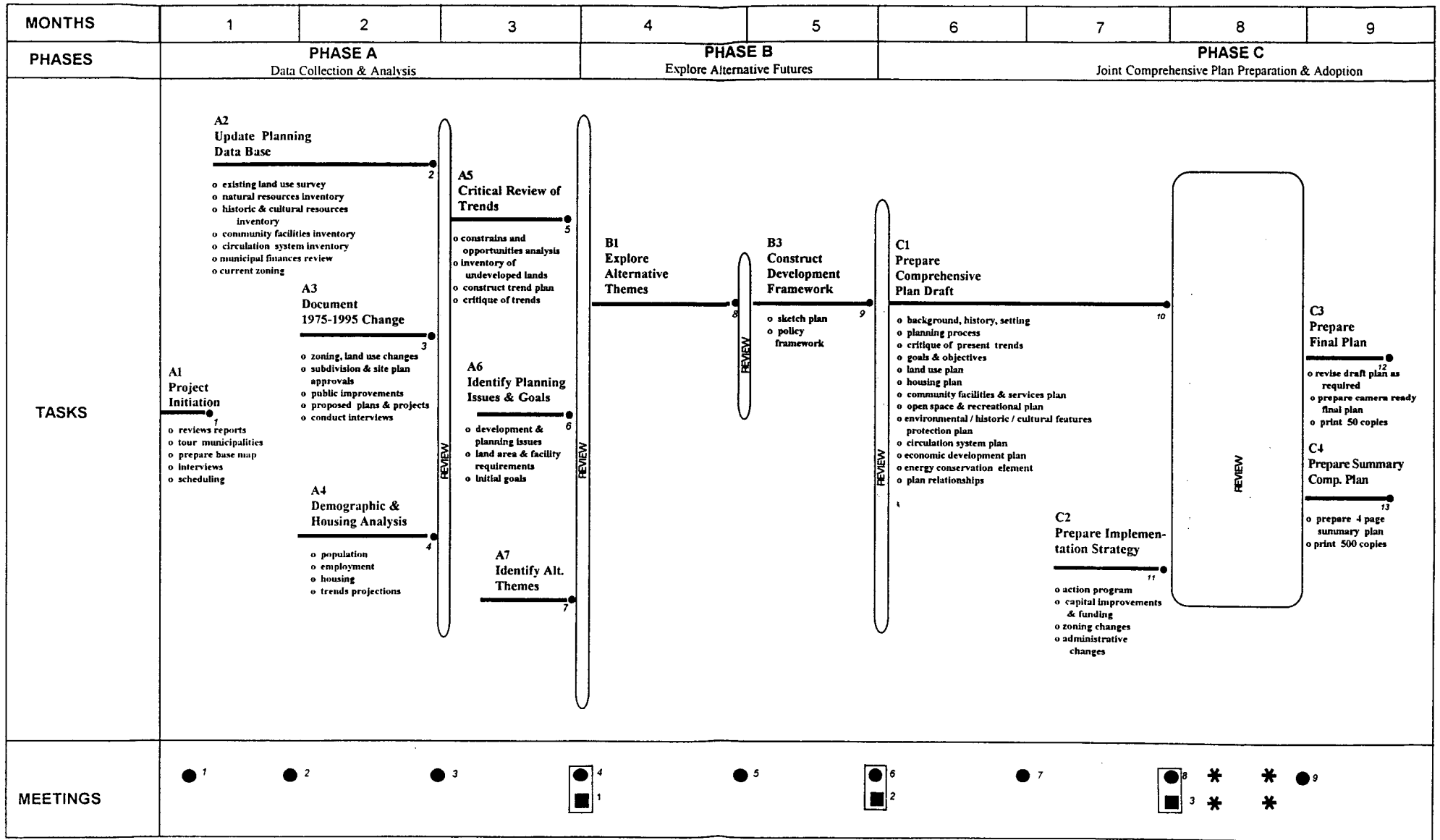
The first phase of the Plan preparation was primarily devoted to background data collection and the documentation of change in the Joint Area during the last fifteen-to-twenty years. Tasks within this phase included a review of earlier planning documents and data, creating the base maps of the Joint Area for the study, an inventory of natural and cultural features and development limitations, documentation and projections of demographics and development activity, a land-use field survey, documentation of water and sewer facilities, and documentation of physical change.

As a foundation for the work in Phase B, Phase A concluded with the setting of preliminary goals and objectives for the Plan. Phase B itself incorporated a systematic exploration of a variety of planning and development issues and alternative development patterns, culminating in the definition of preliminary development plan recommendations based upon on the approach to the future development of the area selected by the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee.

The third phase focused on the actual preparation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan for Centre Township and Centerport Borough. The Plan was prepared as preliminary drafts, reviewed by the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee, and revised to final draft form. The end of Phase C encompassed the period of public reviews and hearings on the final draft of the Plan. Revisions were made based on those reviews and hearings and a camera-ready original of the Plan was prepared for printing and public distribution.

WORK PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Centre Township / Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan



● Joint Municipalities Planning Committee Workshops ■ Public Information Meetings * Public Hearings ● Study Products

Figure 1.2

CHAPTER TWO: EXISTING CONDITIONS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

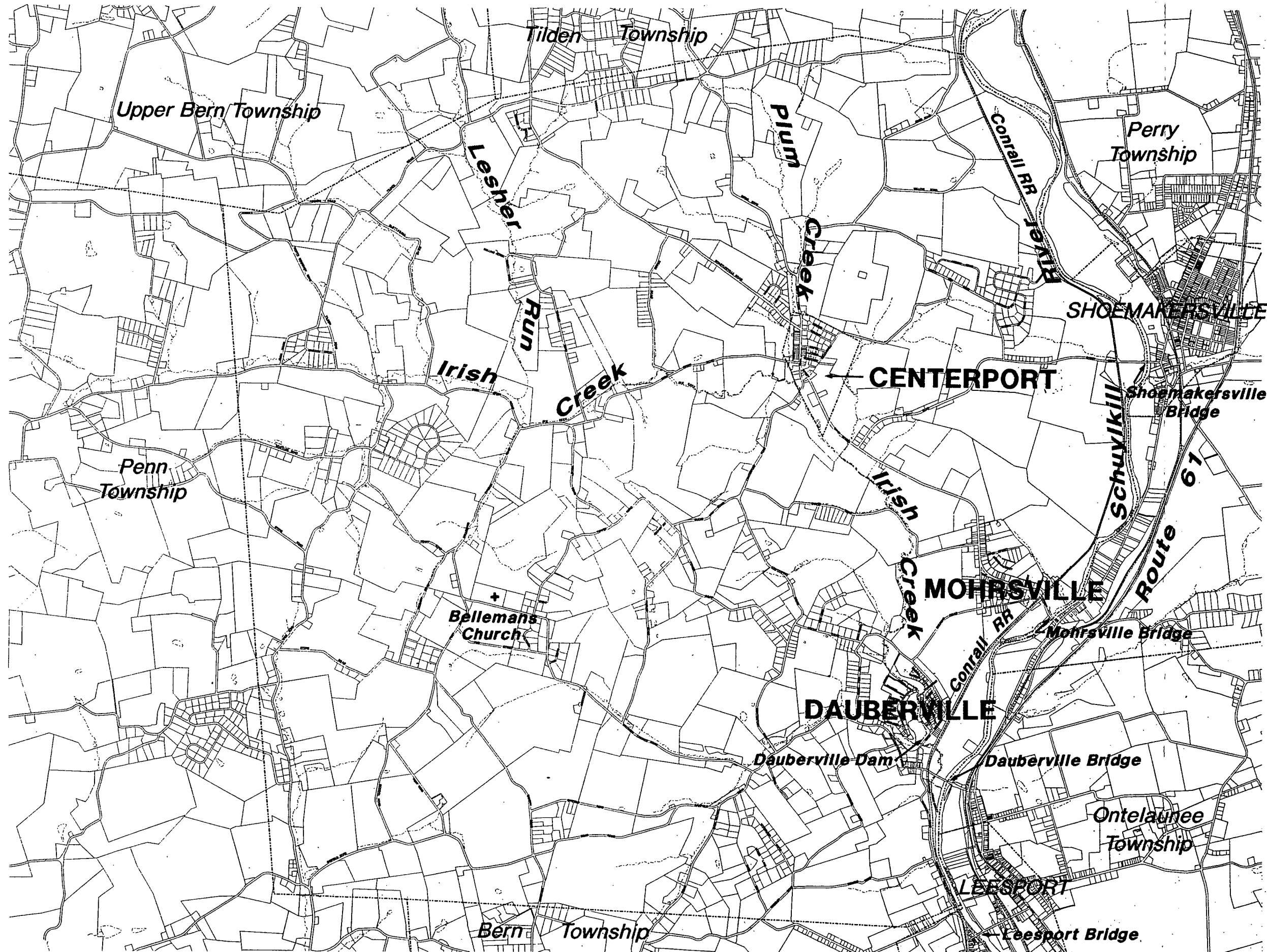
The purpose of this chapter is to analyze existing conditions in Centre Township and Centerport Borough. In particular, this chapter seeks to develop a clear understanding of the Joint Area's physical, demographic, social, and economic conditions, based on current circumstances and historical development.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

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

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

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

Figure 2.1.1



**SELECTED
COMMUNITY
FEATURES**

**Centre/
Centerport
Joint
Comprehensive Plan**

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



1000 500 0 500 1000



FIGURE

DATE:

SECTION 2: EXISTING LAND USE

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

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

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

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 2.2.1



EXISTING LAND USE

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

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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



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



FIGURE

DATE:

Centerport EXISTING LAND USE

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

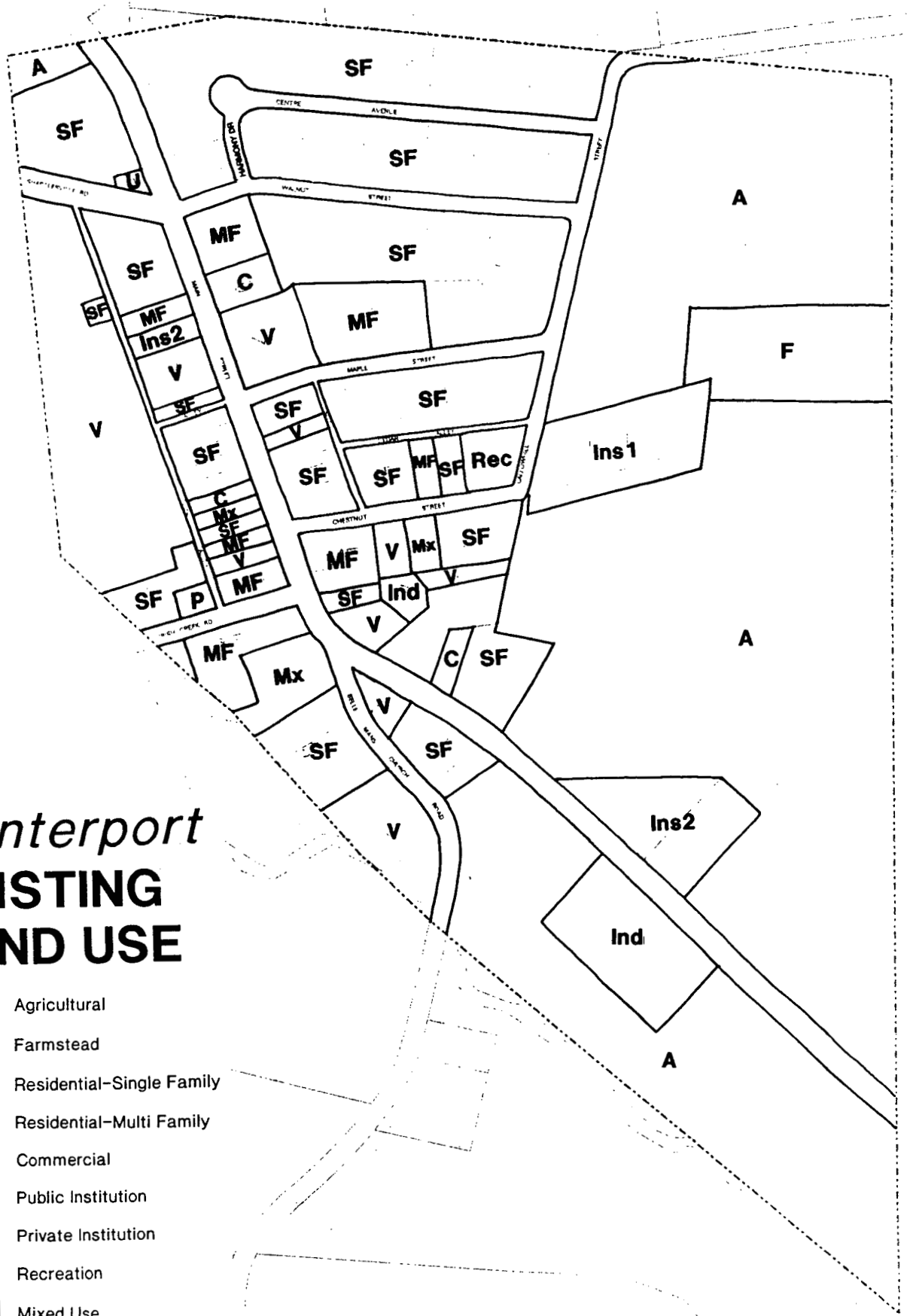


Figure 2.2.2

SECTION 3: PATTERN OF CHANGE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

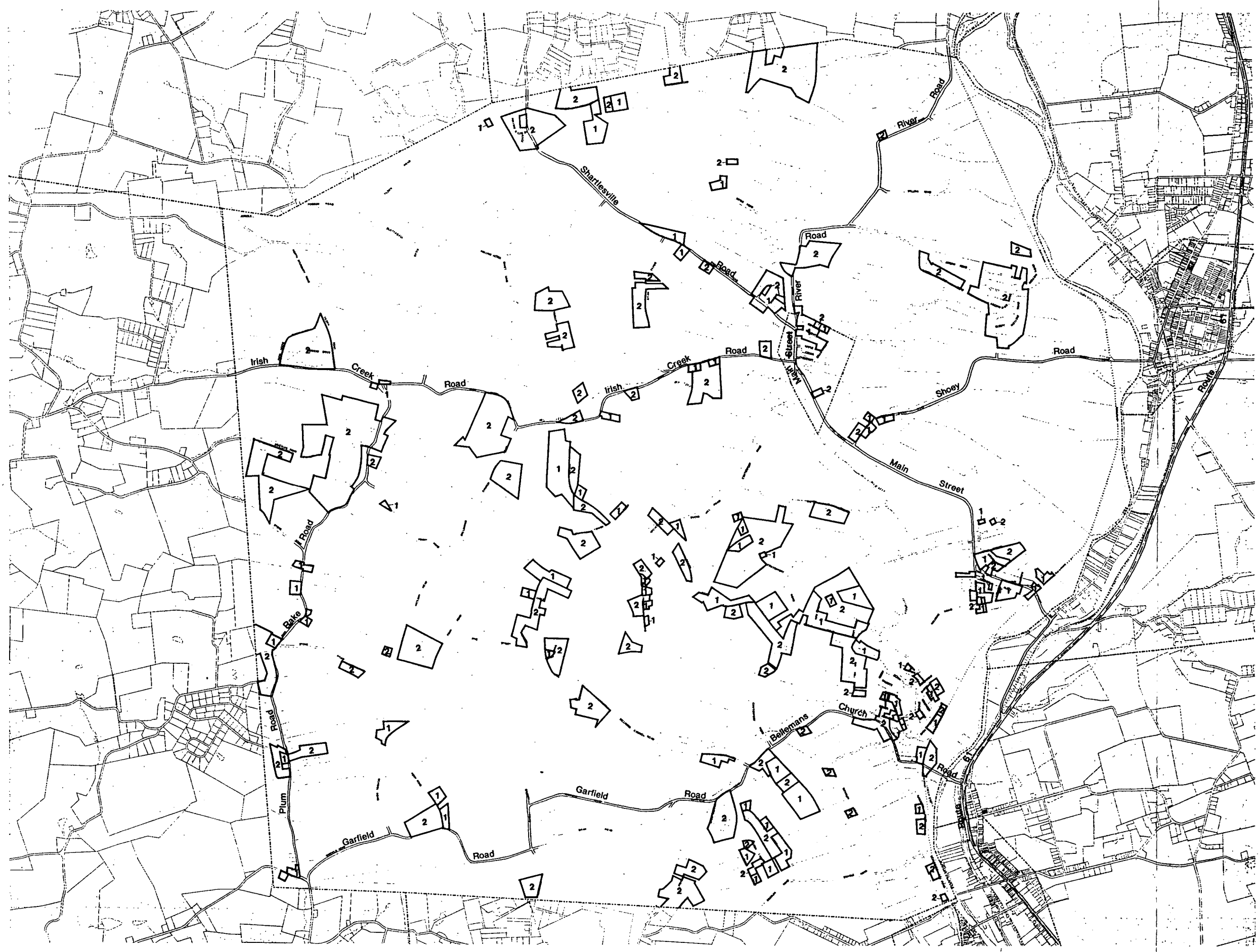
Central sewer services: If these kind of facilities already existed in one or more places in the Joint Area, new development would likely be attracted to some

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

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

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

Figure 2.3.1



LAND DEVELOPMENT

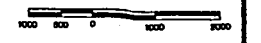
- 1 1971 - 1980
- 2 1981 - 1995

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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



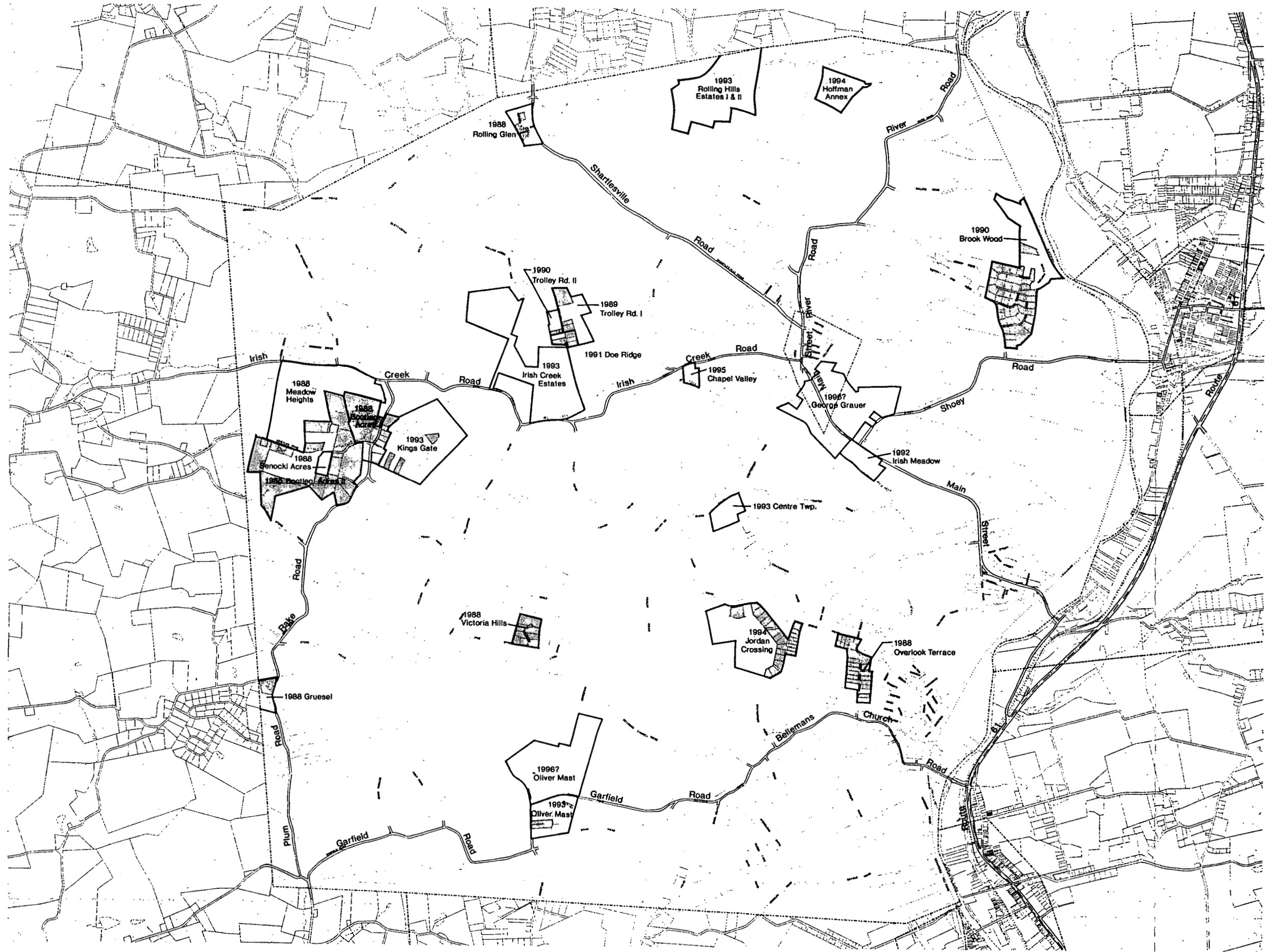
Norman Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
1811 Walnut Street - 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103



FIGURE

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Figure 2.3.2



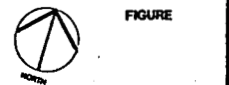
PENDING & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Completed / Under Construction

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office

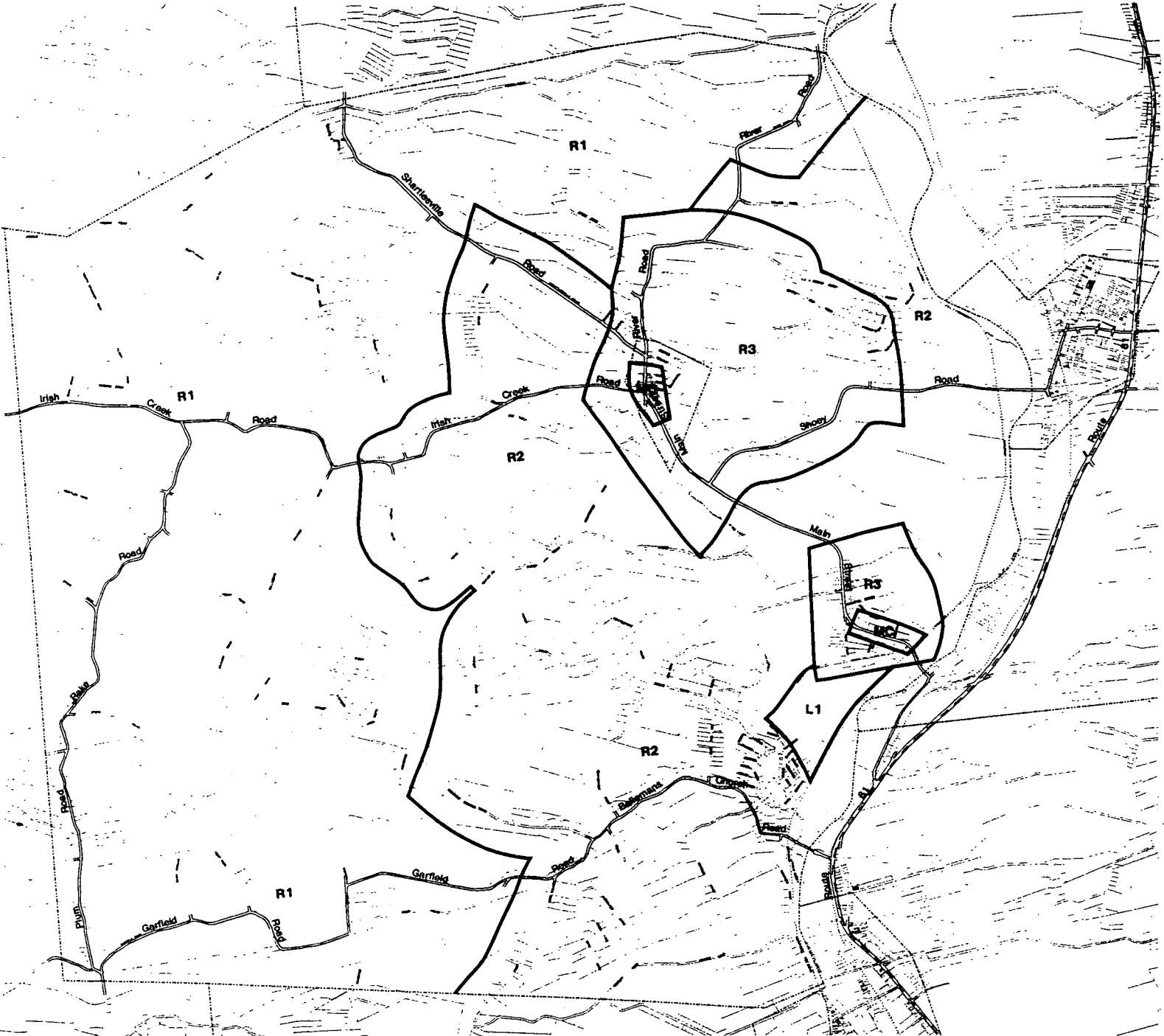


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Figure 2.3.3

EXISTING ZONING

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



**Centre/
Centerport**
Joint
Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania
1997-2015



FIGURE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

features.

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

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

Hydrology

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

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

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

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Soils

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prime Agricultural Land/Agricultural Land of Statewide Importance

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

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

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

Topography

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

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

Vegetation and Wildlife

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

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

Composite Constraints

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

Suitability for Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

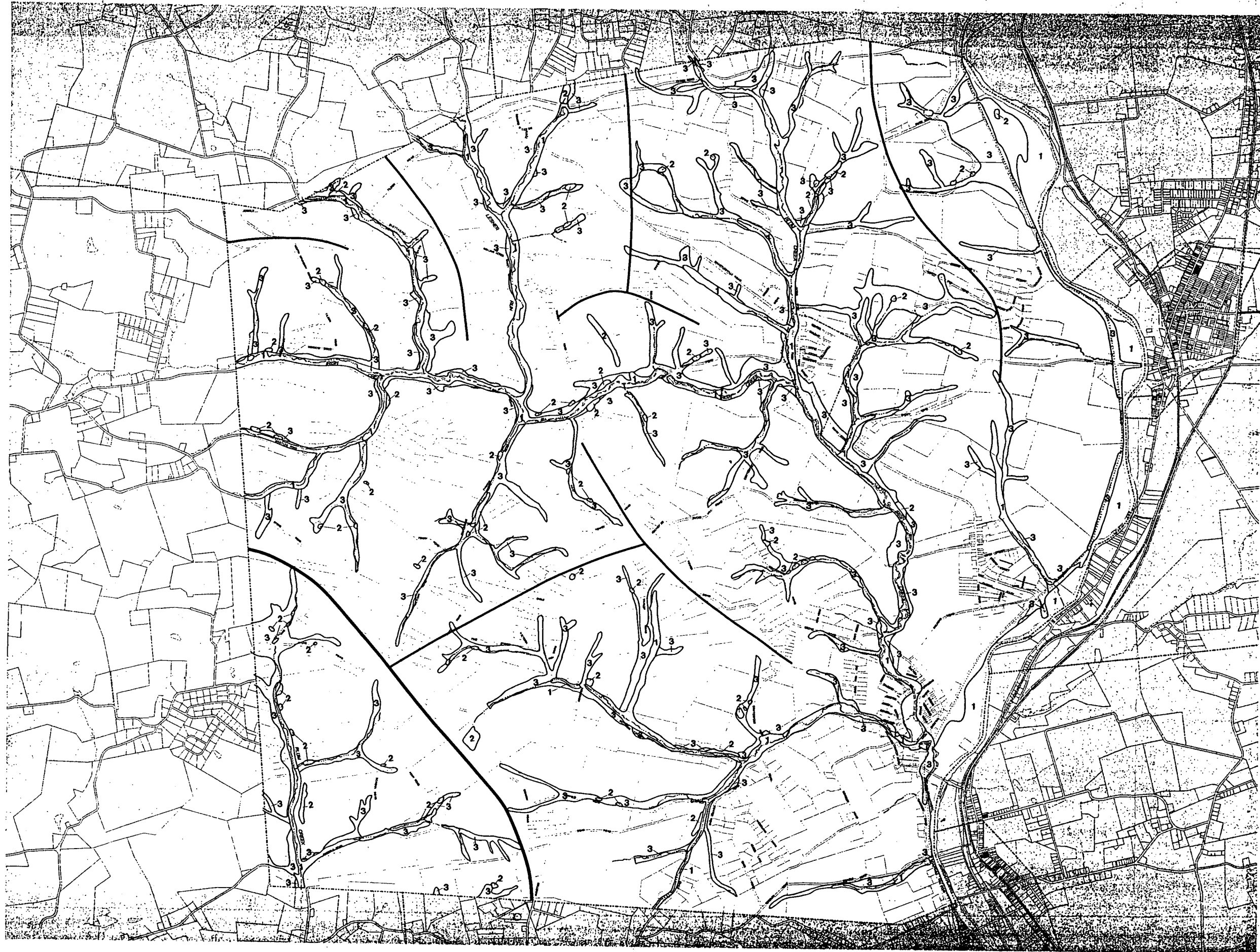
TABLE 2.4.1 SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT INDEX				
Composite Constraints	Accessibility and Servicing Factors			
	Accessibility 1		Accessibility 2	
	Service 1	Service 2	Service 1	Service 2
	C. C. Slight	Good	Moderate	Moderate
C. C. Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Very Limited
C. C. Severe	Limited	Very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

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







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

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

Figure 2.4.1



HYDROLOGY

-  Open Water
-  1 100 - year Floodplain
-  2 Wetlands **
-  3 Hydric Soils ***
-  Major Watershed Divider
-  Minor Watershed Divider

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

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

1000 500 0 500 1000



FIGURE

DATE:

Figure 2.4.2



**PRIME
AGRICULTURAL
LAND**

Source: USDA - NRCS State Soil Database

**Centre/
Centerport
Joint
Comprehensive Plan**

Berks County, Pennsylvania
2022-2028 Planning and Comprehensive Plan

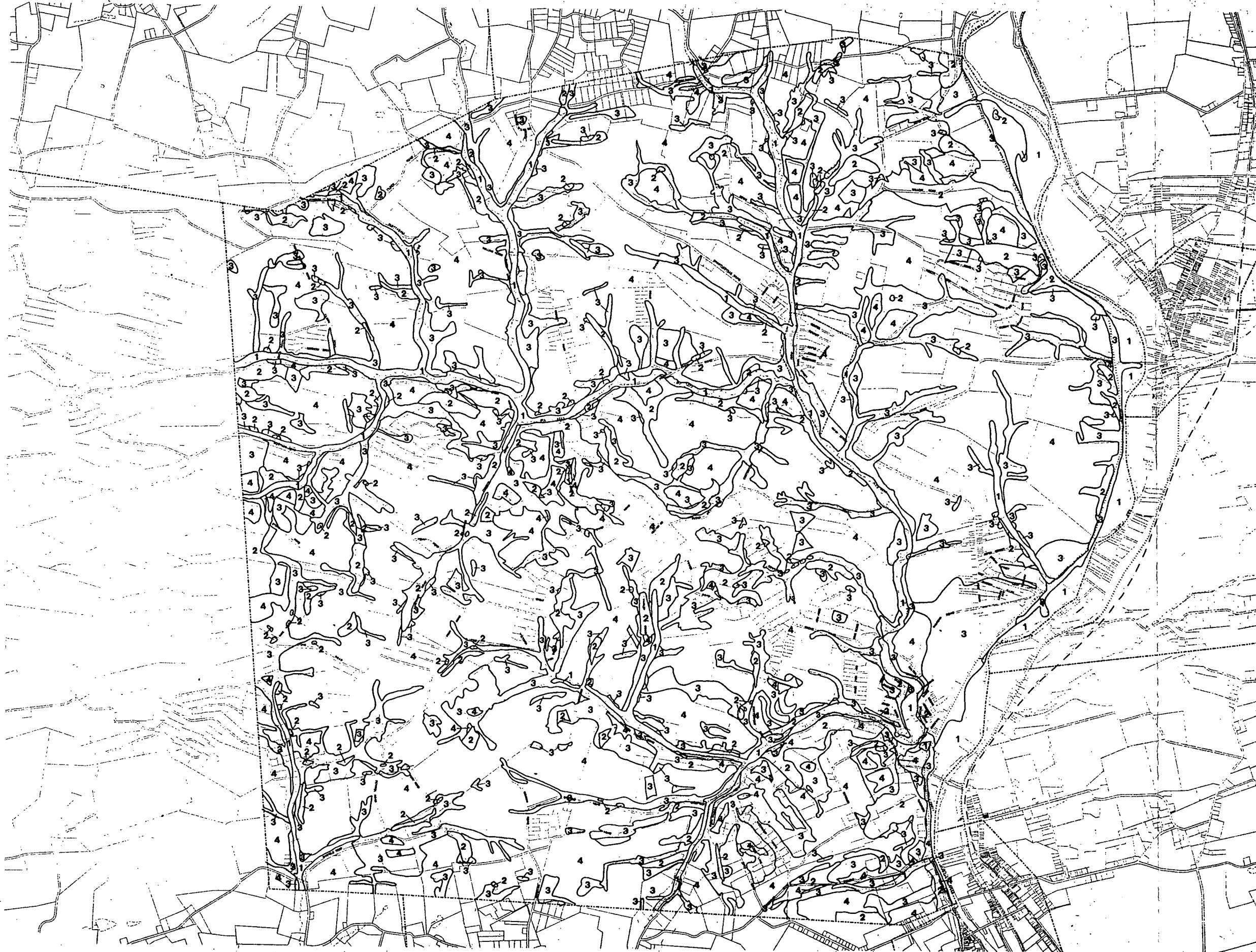
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Figure 2.4.3



COMPOSITE CONSTRAINTS

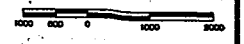
- 1 Very Severe (Floodplain)
- 2 Severe (Wetlands, Slopes Over 25%)
- 3 Moderate (Hydric Soils, Woodlands, Slopes 15-25%, Prime Ag. Soils)
- 4 Slight

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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



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



FIGURE

DATE:

Figure 2.4.4



SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

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

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

NDA
Norman Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
111 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor
Pottsville, PA 17870

1000 500 0 1000 5000



FIGURE

DATE:

SECTION 5: CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND LANDSCAPE RESOURCES

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

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

Table 2.5.1
Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Table 2.5.1 (continued)

Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Table 2.5.1 (continued)

Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

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

Table 2.5.1 (continued)

Historic Resources of Centre Township and Centerport Borough

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

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

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

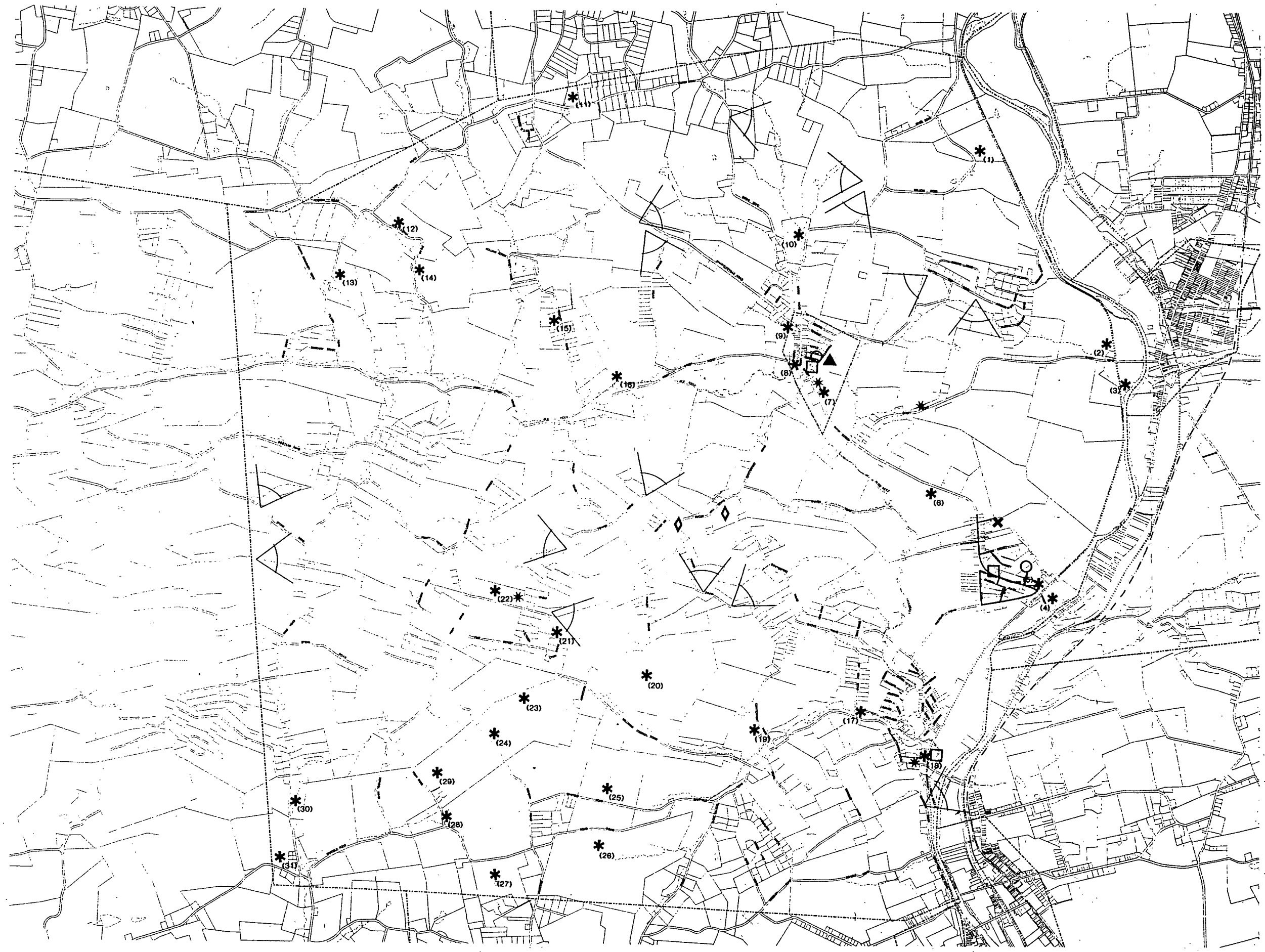
Three important techniques are now being used to protect farmland in the Joint Area: Differential assessment, Agricultural Security Areas, and purchase of agricultural conservation easements.

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

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

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

Figure 2.5.1



HISTORIC, SCENIC & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

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

1000 500 0 500 1000






FIGURE

Figure 2.5.2

AREAS WITH AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION DEVICES

February 1996

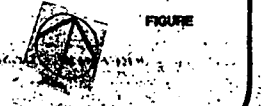
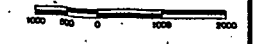
-  Agricultural Security Area
-  Conservation Easements
-  Ag. Security Area/Conserv. Easement



Source: Berks County Planning Commission

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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



SECTION 6: POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT

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

Population Trends for Centre Township, Centerport Borough, & Vicinity

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

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

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

TABLE 2.6.3
Centre Township
Population by Age Groups

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

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

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

TABLE 2.6.4
Centerport Borough
Population by Age Groups

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

Population Projections

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

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

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

TABLE 2.6.5
Centre Township and Centerport Borough
Alternative Population Projections

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

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

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

Housing Units to be Constructed

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

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

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

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

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

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

Employment Trends and Projections

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

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 7: CIRCULATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jurisdictional Classification

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

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

Functional Classification

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

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

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

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

Traffic Volumes

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

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

Road Hazards

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan




questionnaire, and are recorded on Figure 2.7.2.

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

Figure 2.7.1



ROAD FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION




-  Principal Arterial
-  Rural Major Collector
-  Minor Collector

Source: PennDOT, 1994

ROAD JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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

BRIDGES JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

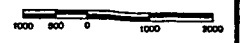
-  State
-  County
-  Township

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

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



Planning & Urban Design
1571 Walnut Street - 11th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102



FIGURE

DATE:

Figure 2.7.2



TRAFFIC VOLUMES

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

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

ROAD HAZARDS

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

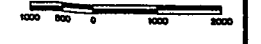
Source: 1980 Comprehensive Plan & 1990 Comprehensive Plan Questionnaire

Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

Base Map Prepared by Berks County Mapping Office

NDA
Norman Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
1611 Walnut Street - 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, Pa. 19102



FIGURE

DATE:

SECTION 8: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Community Facilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

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

Municipal Finances

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

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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

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

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

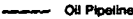


The largest borough expenditure is for public safety (budgeted at \$ 16,200 for 1996), consisting for the most part of police services contracted from Centre Township. Other costs include \$ 11,400 for general government services, including legal consulting.

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

Like Centre Township, Centerport has no bonded indebtedness.

Figure 2.8.1

PIPELINES & TRANSMISSION LINES

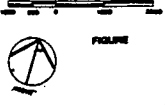
-  Oil Pipeline
-  Gas Pipeline
-  Electric Transmission Line

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

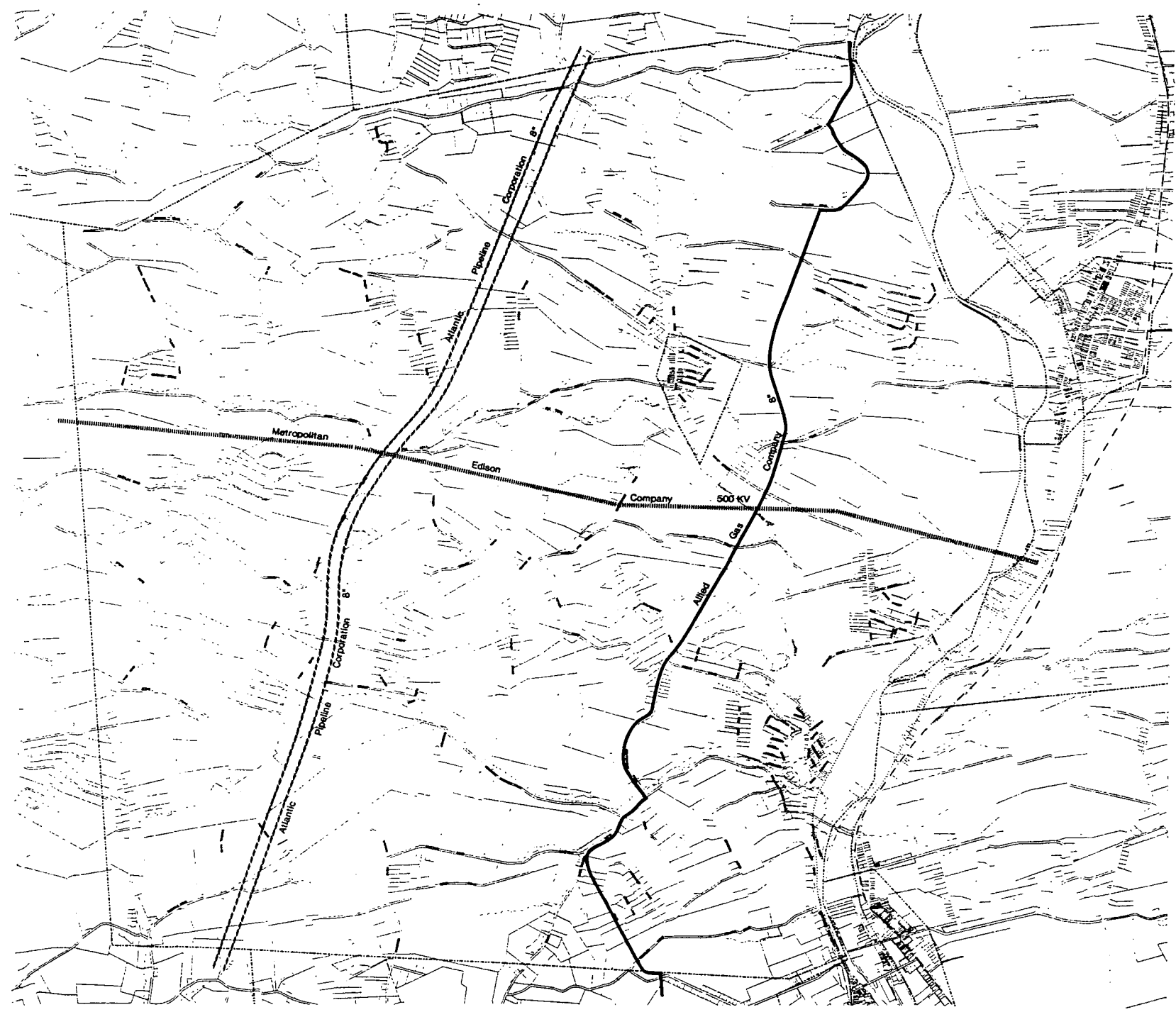
Centre/ Centerport Joint Comprehensive Plan

Berks County, Pennsylvania

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



FIGURE



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.

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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

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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

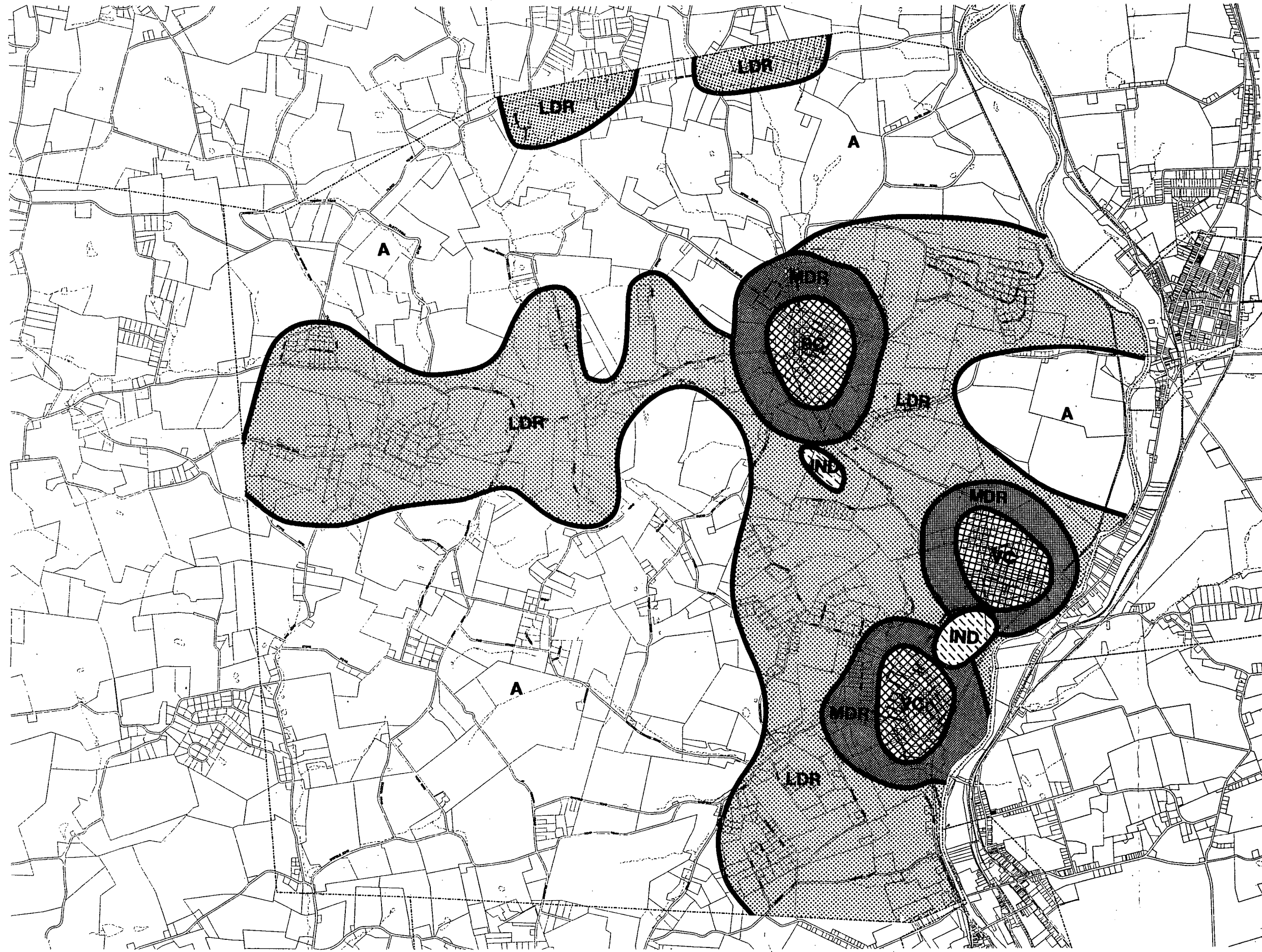
Bern Township is interposed between Centre Township and this part of Leesport.) The Schuylkill River acts as an effective buffer between the uses on either side of the waterway, as do the *Open Space* and *Parks* areas alongside the river on the Joint Area side and the *Conservation* designation for 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

Berks 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

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

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



DATE:



FIGURE

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

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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:

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<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.

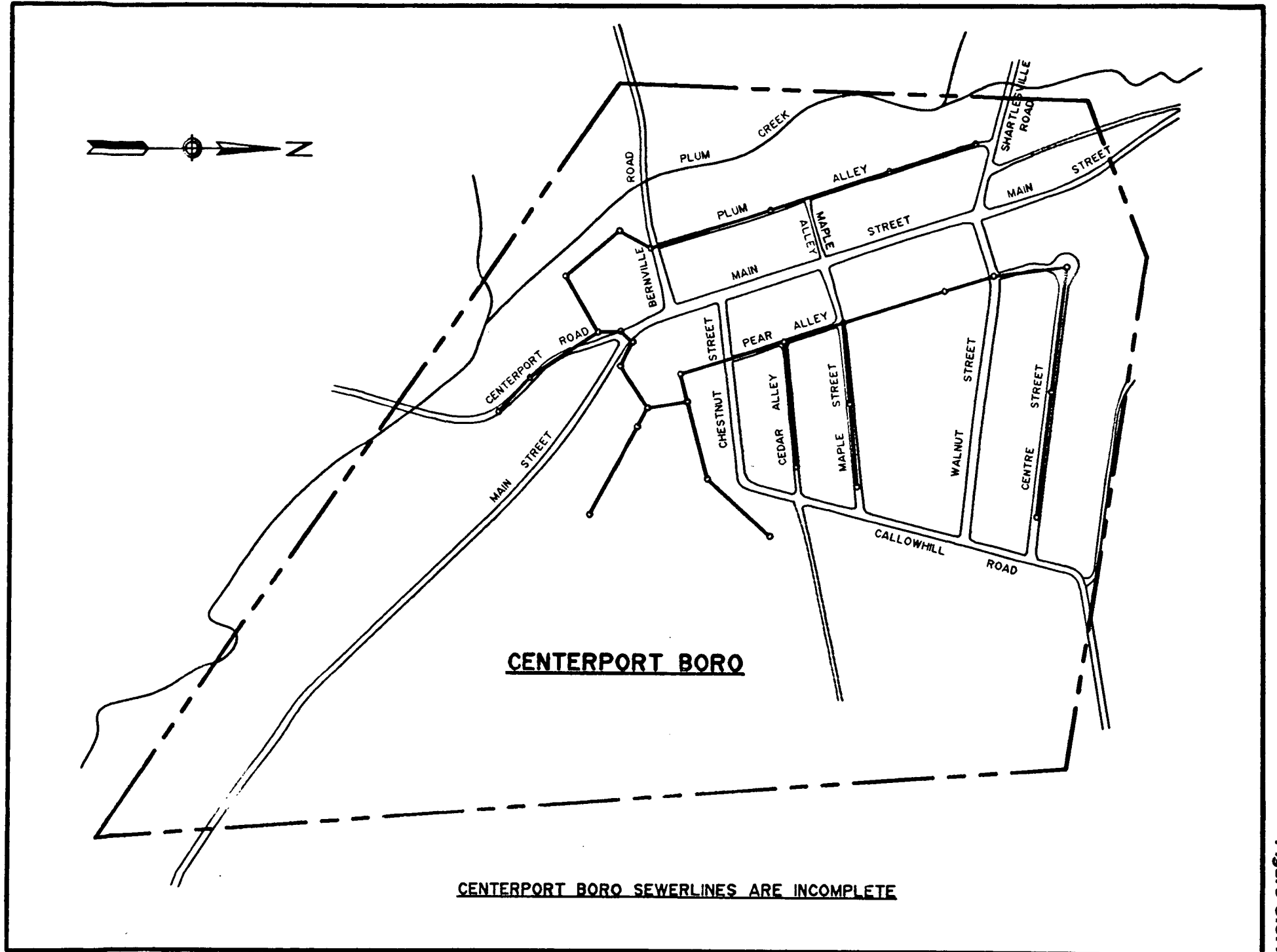
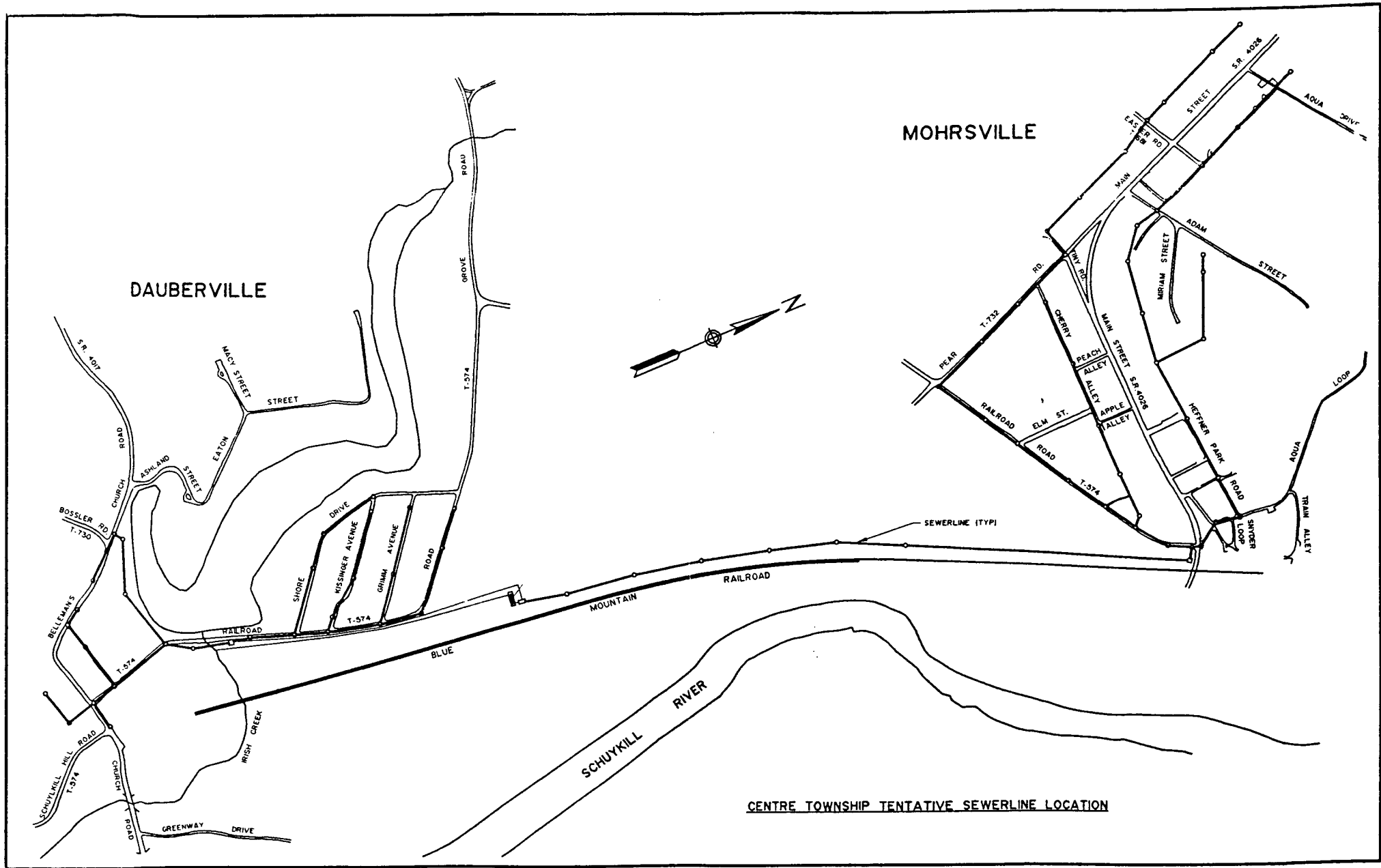


Figure 3.8.1



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,

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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.

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan provides an overall guide and framework for the future development of the Joint Area. The Plan anticipates and accommodates a variety of opportunities for growth in the township and borough, while at the same time striving to protect the area's natural features and agricultural heritage. The Plan designates appropriate locations for all land uses expected to be in the Joint Area over the next ten to twenty years. The Plan also sets the stage for specific actions that are necessary by all the different kinds of decision-makers in the township, borough, school district, county, and State, in order to implement the Plan's recommendations.

This Plan must be used as a primary reference for evaluating and influencing future change in Centre Township and Centerport Borough. The procedures and actions in this chapter are provided, among other things, as the instructions for use of this Plan by the planning commissions, governing bodies, zoning hearing boards, and staffs of the two municipalities.

Adoption of the Plan

The first and most basic step in the implementation of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan is its official adoption by the Township Board of Supervisors and Borough Council. The Comprehensive Plan will then form the policy foundation for day-to-day decisions concerning development, as well as the framework for the zoning and subdivision ordinances that are the primary administrative tools for the control of growth and development in the Joint Area.

It is particularly important that the Plan be understood and endorsed by the officials of the township and borough. Without such understanding and support, the Plan will not be useful nor will it be followed. Since, under Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), the right of approval for subdivision and land development is (with limited exceptions) exercised by municipalities, it follows that successful implementation of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan relies to a very great extent on municipal follow-through on the ideas presented in the Plan. The identification of every planning commission, governing body, zoning hearing board, and municipal staff member with the recommendations of this Plan is a prerequisite for their implementation. If no one "signs on" to the

Plan, its recommendations can't be put into effect.

Amendments to Municipal Land Development Regulations

The Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan's recommendations with respect to land use, transportation, housing, community facilities, agriculture, cultural resources, natural features, and other areas of concern also provide a basis for changes to the development regulations for the two municipalities. Zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance changes are among the most significant implementing tools for the Plan, translating its sometimes broad concepts into specific regulations with which to guide future development.

Zoning Changes

Zoning of land use is the single most important legal tool available to the Township and Borough for management of growth and development. The Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance should be updated and revised to reflect the goals, objectives, and policies of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, and to effect its implementation. An updated Zoning Ordinance is the most efficient and effective device for ensuring that rezonings and subdivision and land development approvals are in conformance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan. A number of revisions to the current zoning ordinance are recommended to contribute to the implementation of the Growth Management Plan. These are summarized below.

A most basic change to the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance would be new regulations that correspond to and implement the clear differentiation between designated "growth" and "low-growth" areas presented in the Land Use Plan. At present, for example, the maximum intensity of development in the "R1 Farm District" is about 1½ dwelling units per gross acre (minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet) versus 2 dwelling units per gross acre (minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet) in the "R2 Suburban Residence District". As Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter 2 of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan make plain, such minute distinctions are ineffective in establishing a pattern of development that is discernible from one district to the other. If there is to be a clear difference in the intensity of development between the designated growth area and the low-growth area, and the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan's Growth Management Plan makes it clear there should

be, then there must be corresponding zoning district development regulations that will effectively fulfill the Growth Management Plan's intentions.

The content of such district regulations for low-growth areas can take a number of forms; these choices are outlined in Section 7 of Chapter 3. (The implications of various kinds of zoning alternatives for the "low-growth" areas of the Joint Area were looked at in some depth in the course of the Comprehensive Plan preparation. Some illustrations of zoning alternatives examined are shown in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.) Regardless of which form of these zoning options is pursued, it is essential that it recognize and reinforce the distinctions, in terms of overall intensity of residential development permitted, between tracts of land in low-growth areas versus tracts in the designated growth portion of the Joint Area.

Another important recommendation is to change the emphasis of the requirements in the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance's very-low, low, and medium residential zoning categories from minimum lot size requirements (for example, "minimum lot size 20,000 square feet") to overall density limits ("maximum density 2 dwelling units per acre").

The intention is to permit greater development flexibility, leading to increased preservation of sensitive environmental features, ensuring logical and effective transitions between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, providing a permanent open space and recreational resource for new residential developments, reducing areas susceptible to stormwater flooding, maintaining stable groundwater levels, maintaining wildlife habitat, providing amenity value for the community that can be a help in gaining high-quality development, and enhancing property values for bordering and neighboring dwellings.

The chief implementation tool for permitting this greater development flexibility is the availability of residential clustering development options in the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance for all *Low Density Residential* and most *Medium Density Residential* areas of the Joint Area identified in the Land Use Plan (see Section 3 of Chapter 3). As well, depending on the type of zoning regulations selected for the low-growth portion of the Joint Area, clustering options can be a key ingredient toward preserving agricultural use while simultaneously ensuring a more equitable distribution of the financial benefits of land development to property owners in the designated low-growth portion of the Joint Area (see Section 7 of Chapter 3).

As a corollary to the above points concerning overall residential tract density

limits, the Township and Borough may wish to consider changes to the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance that would embrace the concept of "developable" tract acreage, as opposed to gross acreage. Developable acreage may exclude floodplains and wetlands from consideration in determining base site area density calculations, and may also integrate consideration of a site's extent and type of steep slopes and woodlands in the calculation.

The present Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance has only an "R2 Suburban Residence District", permitting lot sizes of a minimum of 20,000 square feet, between the "R1 Farm District" and more intensive "R3 Urban Residence District". Given the Land Use Plan's recommended range of densities from 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre for *Medium Density Residential* areas, the "R2 Suburban Residence" type of district may need to be considered as two districts, one representing the more intensive end of the *Medium Density Residential's* range and the other the less intensive range.

Similarly, the Land Use Plan's recommended range of densities from 0.4 to 1 dwelling unit per acre for *Low Density Residential* areas probably should be reflected within the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance as two or more districts, one representing the more intensive end of the *Low Density Residential's* range and the other the less intensive range.

On the other hand, the inclusion of cluster development options along with by-right regulations within the district zoning texts for *Medium Density Residential* and *Low Density Residential* areas should allow for a range of densities to coexist within the same district, depending on the type of residential ("basic", "cluster", or "compact cluster") being pursued by a developer. As an incentive for developers to elect to use the cluster or compact cluster options small density bonuses may be offered within the respective district regulations.

Zoning Map Changes

The Land Use Concept (Figure 3.3.1) and Land Use Plan (Figure 3.3.2) define a growth area for the township and borough, including:

- The Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville for the greatest concentration and mix of land uses (*BC/VC* designation);
- Areas surrounding the borough and the villages for medium

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density residential development at about 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre (*MDR* designation);

- Low density residential areas, at about 0.4 to 1 dwelling unit per acre 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 (*LDR* designation);
- Industrial areas at the general location of the former mushroom plant south of Centerport and between Dauberville and Mohrsville (*IND* designation);
- Institutional areas at the site of the former Centre Township Elementary School and at the 16-acre Township-owned site on Bucks Hill Road at Centerport Road (*INS* designation).

The zoning map for Centre Township/Centerport Borough should reflect these land use designations. Changes to the map, at the very least, would entail:

- Replacing the current zoning boundary line between the "R1" and "R2" districts with one that reflects the boundary between *A* and *LDR* as shown on Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2;
- Replacing the current zoning boundary line between "R2" and "R3" districts with one that reflects the boundary between *LDR* and *MDR* as shown on Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, including the creation of an area of *MDR* around Dauberville;
- Replacing the current zoning boundary line between the "R3" and "MC" districts with one that reflects the boundary between *MDR* and *BC/VC* as shown on Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, including the creation of an area of *VC* for Dauberville;
- Creating an area zoned for industrial use at the general location of the former mushroom plant south of Centerport;
- Creating an area zoned for institutional use at the site of the former Centre Township Elementary School and at the 16-acre Township-owned site on Bucks Hill Road at Centerport Road.

Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations are second only to the zoning ordinance as a tool for managing growth, especially in influencing the quality of new developments. These regulations detail the standards of any required improvements accompanying construction. The Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan makes several recommendations which affect street access and curb cuts, landscaping and open space, and other improvements. Adoption of these recommendations within the Borough of Centerport Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and the Centre Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance will implement better quality development. In addition, requiring Environmental Assessment Statements for major new land developments may now be warranted in the Joint Area.

Potentially wide-ranging changes to Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance standards are suggested by the Plan's recommendations with respect to *Borough/Village Center* areas. For these special identity areas, standards that are distinct from those appropriate in the rest of the Joint Area may be desirable. For example, a more pedestrian-oriented area should have road right-of-way and cartway widths that are different from for conventional areas, sidewalk requirements, tighter horizontal curve radii, and revised parking regulations and sight distance standards, similar to those outlined in the American Society of Civil Engineers, National Association of Homebuilders, and Urban Land Institute publication Residential Streets, 2nd ed. and increasingly followed in many municipalities trying to create more "pedestrian-friendly" neighborhoods.

The Township and Borough should also prepare "Ultimate Right-of-Way" maps for all roads in the township and the borough respectively. Ultimate rights-of-way shown for each street should be appropriate for its functional classification, projected traffic volumes, land uses of abutting properties, and general neighborhood or district character. These maps should be incorporated into the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances and all applicants for subdivision and land development approval should be expected to indicate a willingness to dedicate lands between the existing right-of-way line and ultimate right-of-way to the Township, Borough, or State in order to accommodate future road widenings. Ultimate Right-of-Way maps are a valuable long-range planning tool, appropriate to anticipate and accommodate road improvements that will be needed over time.

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

Using the Plan

After official adoption of the Comprehensive Plan (as well as the zoning and subdivision ordinance revisions) the use of the Comprehensive Plan as a reference document on a frequent basis becomes the most important part of the Comprehensive Plan implementation program. Neither the Growth Management Plan nor the zoning and subdivision ordinances can completely anticipate or absolutely control the future growth of the Joint Area. Future development will be determined by day-to-day decisions made by the Township Board of Supervisors and Borough Council, the planning commissions, zoning hearing board, and municipal staffs, largely in response to proposals made by private developers. In each situation where the Township and Borough must respond to a specific development proposal, the Comprehensive Plan should be used as a reference to guide the Township and Borough in the evaluation of the proposal.

The natural resource maps, part of the Comprehensive Plan, are one of the first sources to be referred to in considering any development proposal. The maps should be able to identify potential problem areas. In some cases, the developer will be required to supply more precise information on the natural and manmade determinants of development suitability. The technical expertise of Township, Borough, County, and State agency staff and consultants will be needed to determine whether any potential problems so identified can be overcome.

The Land Use Plan should be consulted early in the review of any development proposal. If the proposed use corresponds to that shown on the Land Use Plan, the major issues will concern design considerations, technical questions, and guarantees of performance on the part of the developer. If the proposed use differs from that shown on the Land Use Plan, the proposal will require the most careful kind of scrutiny. Despite the effort to make the Growth Management Plan as "comprehensive" as possible, it is conceivable that uses will be proposed in the Joint Area over the planning period that do not fit comfortably into one of the eight use categories outlined in the Land Use Plan. It is critical that, in this event, both municipalities consider fully all of the planning implications of any such proposed uses.

A list of criteria that the planning commissions, governing bodies, and others may use in review of applications is included in this document (Appendix I). This tool may serve as a structure for review to ensure that all plans are treated with similar thoroughness and deliberation. Recommendations from the planning commissions to their respective governing bodies should refer to the

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proposal's satisfaction or shortcomings with respect to the evaluation criteria along with any additional facts relating to the application.

There are a number of tools available, beyond the zoning and subdivision ordinances, for evaluating specific proposals and for controlling development. The ability of the Township and Borough to limit the extent and type of growth to areas defined by the Land Use Plan or by subsequent studies, is reinforced through prospective Township and Borough management of the central sewer system. Direction, extent, and type of growth may be effectively implemented through the combination of zoning and subdivision regulations, including new conservation standards for wetlands, woodlands, and steep slopes, and control of sanitary sewer service. Any extension of municipal sewer services should be conditioned on landowners' consent to the general land-use and zoning guidelines recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

Information Gathering, Processing, Storage and Retrieval

The Township and Borough methods for processing, storing, and retrieving information filed as part of applications for subdivision and land development approvals and rezonings should be computerized, coordinated, and systemized. Applications should be coded by number, with corresponding paper and computer-based files, including standardized forms for recording basic information such as the location and dimensions of the tract, the characteristics of the proposed development, and the application and review status. Submitted plans and other pertinent documents should be microfilmed and/or scanned and stored on computer files.

Planning commissions should ensure that they submit annual reports to their respective governing body, summarizing development activities in the municipality. The compilation and publication of the following data would be useful in documenting the character and quantity of change in the Joint Area over time and would be extremely useful in the day-to-day administration of its planning and zoning activities. The items recommended for inclusion in the report are:

- Population estimates
- School population
- Employment estimates

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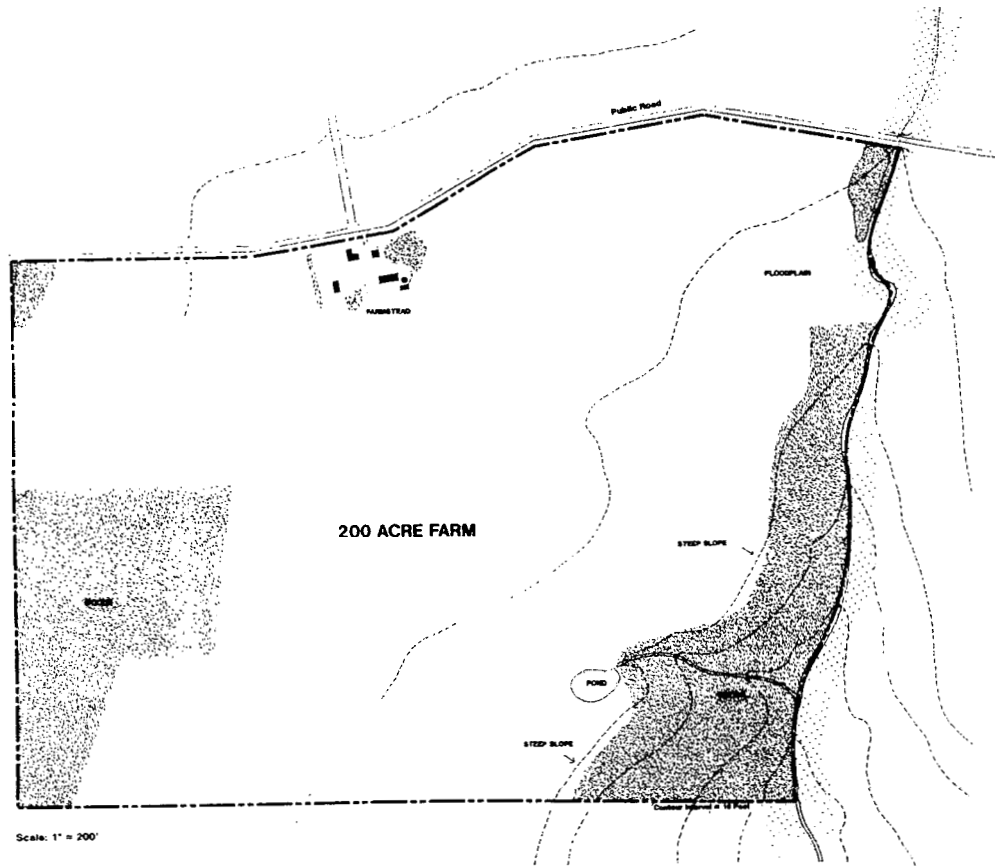
- Development activity summary (new development & redevelopment)
 - Residential development
 - New housing units, by type
 - Acres of residential development
 - Acres of private and dedicated open space
 - New nonresidential construction
 - Acres of new development by land use
 - Gross floor area by use
 - Changes of zoning

Planning Commission Annual Reviews

The planning commissions should, as an annual agenda item, formally review the annual long-range capital improvements program for the municipality to ensure that physical improvements that are being programmed are in accordance with the overall intent of the Comprehensive Plan. The review should also include consideration of items which are called for by the Comprehensive Plan. A formal review and recommendation concerning the long-range capital improvements program should be forwarded to the governing body prior to consideration of the adoption of the long-range capital improvements program.

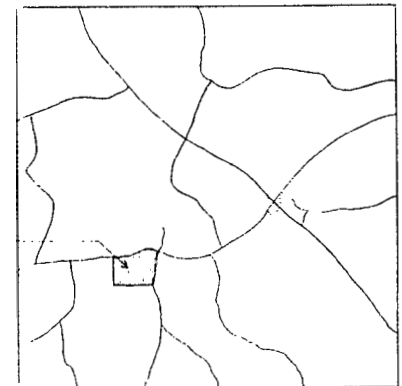
A second annual agenda item should be the Planning Commission Annual Plan, which should:

- Review the degree of accomplishment of the previous year's objectives;
- Summarize studies or projects finished or underway;
- Identify Comprehensive Plan recommendations that are planned to be addressed in the next year;
- Plan for future projects or studies, including issues that the Planning Commission intends to review or initiate and ordinances that require review.



Scale: 1" = 200'

Area of
Development

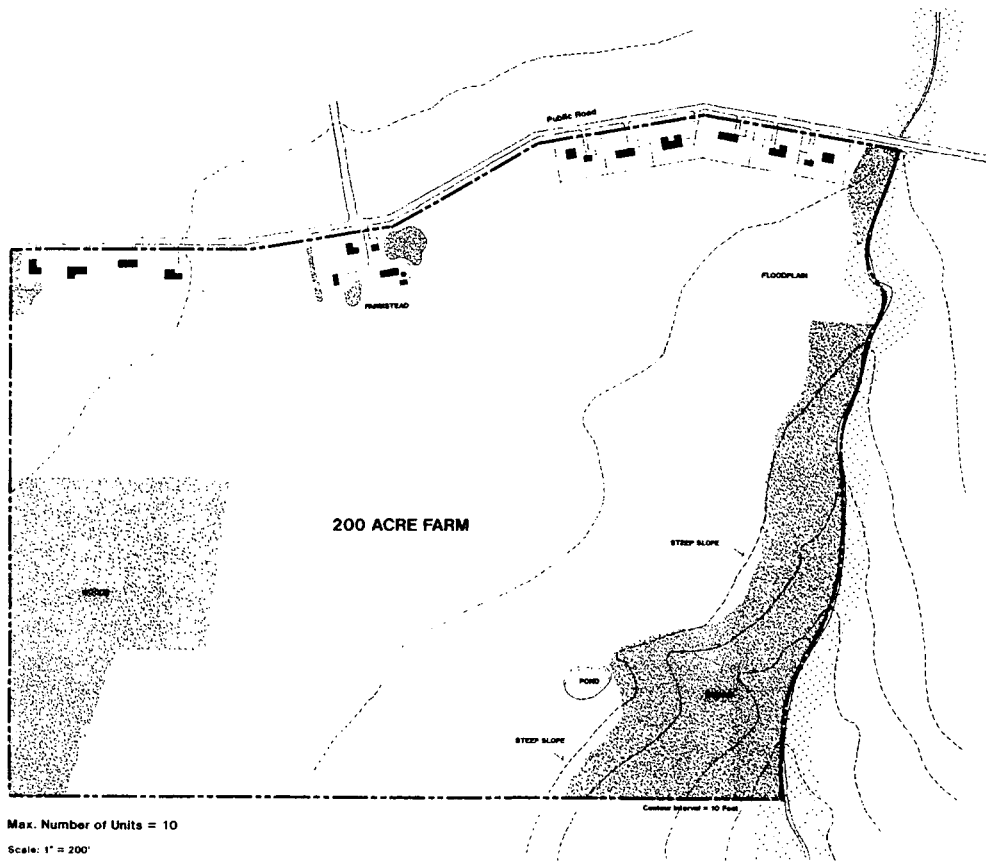


Area Map

Rural Area
Existing Conditions

CENTRE TOWNSHIP / CENTERPORT BOROUGH JOINT
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION





Max. Number of Units = 10
 Scale: 1" = 200'

Basic Zoning - sliding scale agricultural zoning

Size of Parcel		DU/Acre	Acre/DU
Less than 2 acres			
2 - 5 acres	1	0.5	2 - 5.00
6 - 10 acres	2	0.33	3 - 5.00
11 - 30 acres	3	0.27	3.67 - 10.00
31 - 60 acres	4	0.13	7.75 - 15.00
61 - 90 acres	5	0.082	12.2 - 18.00
91 - 120 acres	6	0.066	15.17 - 20.00
121 - 150 acres	7	0.058	17.29 - 21.43
151 - 180 acres	8	0.053	18.88 - 22.50
181 - 210 acres	9	0.05	20.11 - 23.33
211 acres & over	10	0.047	21.1

Rural Area
 Basic Agricultural Zoning

CENTRE TOWNSHIP / CENTERPORT BOROUGH JOINT
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

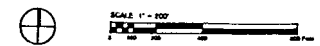
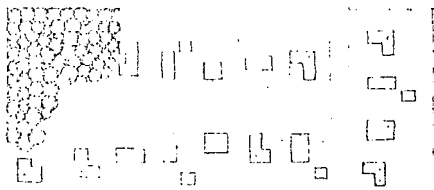
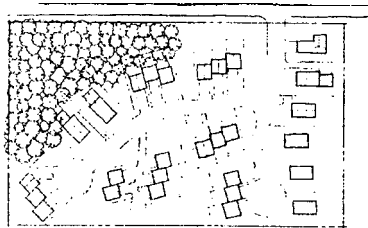


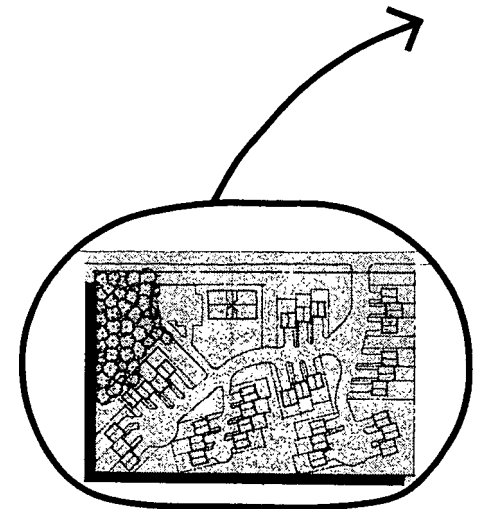
Figure 4.2



Cluster



Compact Cluster



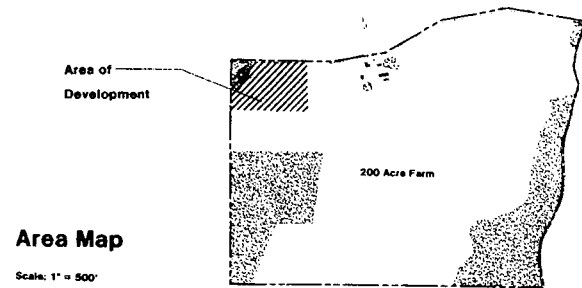
Transfer of Development Rights

	CLUSTER	COMPACT CLUSTER	TDR
MAX. PERMITTED DENSITY	0.83 DU/AC	1.4 DU/AC	2.5 DU/AC
SIZE OF PARCEL	12 AC/DU	7 AC/DU	4 AC/DU
MAX. NUMBER OF UNITS	16	28	36
MAX. DEV. AREA	1 1/2 AC/DU	1/4 AC/DU	0 AC

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES MATRIX

Rural Area

Single Farm Development



NDA
Norman Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
1811 Walnut Street, 2nd Floor
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15103

CENTRE TOWNSHIP / CENTERPORT BOROUGH JOINT
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



**EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF
SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AND
REZONING APPLICATIONS**

1. Is the proposed use in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Plan ?
2. Is the proposal supportive of the goals and objectives for the overall Plan and for the Land Use element that applies to this kind of development?
3. Is the development suitable for the location requested with respect to soil limitations, steep slopes, woodland, and floodplains?
4. What will the impact be of the proposed development on safety and present capacity of public services such as schools, roads, sewers, water storm drainage, solid waste system capacity, or police or fire protection?
5. Has adequate evidence been submitted that demonstrates the developer's intent to minimize or eliminate possible negative effects on the natural environment, community services, adjacent properties, and the surrounding neighborhood?
6. Are there any historic features on or near the property? What effect will this proposal have on such sites?
7. What effect will the proposed use have on the character and rate of future development? Will this effect inhibit or encourage the achievement of the Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Objectives?
8. If the developer is proposing to dedicate open space to the Township and/or Borough, is this open space fulfilling a useful purpose as described in the Comprehensive Plan, or is the dedication of this open space area a convenient way of isolating land which is difficult or unfit to develop. Dedicated open space should add to the inventory of recreation assets, benefit the residents of the development and the municipality through preservation of natural features, and/or create a needed buffer between incompatible uses.

Design of open space must include provision for future maintenance.

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Adequate vehicular access routes must be provided to all open space that may require some maintenance, including natural areas, and especially stream or water areas.

If land is to be used for recreation, is it large enough to be realistically used for the kind of recreation it is offered for, and is it "front yard" type space with ample public accessibility? If it is small, what kind of recreation activities is it to be used for that cannot be accommodated in the private yards of the residents of the development? Is the open space highly observable from public areas? Is it highly fragmented or does it serve as an extension of private yards? Does the open space back up to numerous private yards where noise or activity in the open space may reduce the privacy of the private property? If the open space is a linear element to be used for walking, cycling, jogging, and other similar activities, is it along public areas, or does it run along the lot lines of private yards?

What precautions or design features will ensure that the open space boundaries will be respected by the adjoining property owners?

If the land is dedicated as a buffer, is a buffer really needed? If the buffer is needed, is the location of the buffer an effective one? Buffers may be useful between land uses or activities that generate adverse acoustic or visual effects. They are not desirable in situations where the uses are simply different scales of similar kinds of land use. Linear buffers should be continuously accessible from public streets or create borders that are contiguous to public or semipublic open space.

Is land set aside to preserve special environmental features contiguous to other similar areas on adjacent parcels? How important is the natural feature or condition being set aside? Is the natural area part of a larger dedicated open space parcel? How will natural areas be preserved and maintained? Is there a legal document that describes the limits of future clearing or disturbance that will be allowed?

If the land is to be set aside as a landscape feature, who will maintain it? Is the feature one that will be a public amenity? Is the feature one that will improve the appearance of the township and/or borough as well as that of the development?

Are there any landscape features that exist on the land now that will be destroyed by the proposed development? Are those features more

important or attractive than the ones being proposed, and if so, can the existing features be incorporated?

9. If the site is not suitable for the proposed use, but the use is particularly desirable or necessary in the township and/or borough, is there any other land available that would be more suitable? Conversely, is there a better use for the land proposed for development?
10. If the proposal involves redevelopment of an existing property, what impact does the project have on the existing character of the neighborhood? Are the existing structures or landscape elements worth retaining and how can they be integrated into the proposed development?