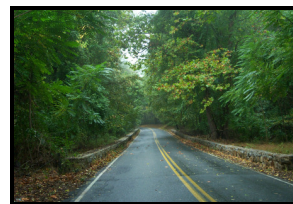
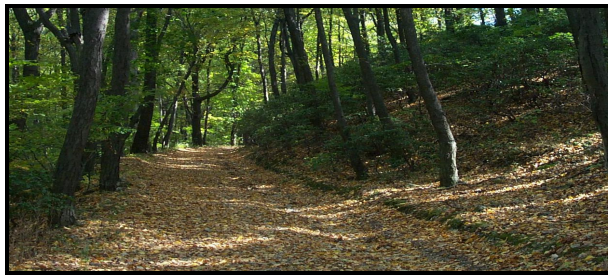


# ***THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN***

## ***LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP MOUNT PENN BOROUGH***

***2006***



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This document was largely financed by Berks County's Federal Community Development Block Grant Program. Berks County has established a policy for funding local planning with CDBG funds that implements the principles defined in the Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision. A major objective is to promote joint municipal planning, intergovernmental and regional cooperation. As a result, the County initiated a Local Planning Partnership Fund, to fund the preparation of local comprehensive plans for municipalities that engage in joint planning efforts. The County commends municipal officials of Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough, as well as the joint committee members, for their participation in this program.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

#### **Why a Comprehensive Plan?**

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to proactively work to assure that the future of Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township will be shaped by the municipalities' own vision, rather than by reactions to forces acting upon the Borough and the Township.

The Borough and the Township have prepared individual comprehensive plans in the past. This Comprehensive Plan is the first joint planning effort by the two municipalities, and was initiated because of the recognized need to examine overall planning for the area in light of development trends and pressures in the region; determine common goals and objectives for land use, circulation, community facilities, housing, open space and recreation, natural resources, municipal services, and resource preservation; analyze interconnections with and connections to surrounding municipalities; coordinate land use and traffic planning; and recognize the Comprehensive Plan for Berks County.

#### **What does a Comprehensive Plan Accomplish?**

The Comprehensive Plan contains a vision of what the Borough and the Township want to be and includes goals and objectives for realizing that vision.

The Comprehensive Plan is an educational document, providing discussion of conditions, strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, and identifying resources that are worthy of protection and preservation.

The Comprehensive Plan contains policies for land use, circulation and community facilities which will serve as a guide for public and private decision-making to accomplish the goals and objectives, and thus the vision, for the Borough and the Township.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a basis for implementation techniques, such as land use ordinances, official maps and capital improvements programs, which will implement the policies contained in this plan.

## **Benefits of Multi-Municipal Planning**

- Provides a regional planning approach and allocation of land uses
  - Where
  - How much to accommodate population projections
  - Patterns of development
- Establishes growth areas and future growth areas regionally
  - Coordination with infrastructure
  - Opportunities for infill
- Provides coordinated planning along the common boundaries of the municipalities
- Supports existing centers rather than weaken them
- Coordinates road corridor planning, standards, and management
- Provides for linkages between municipalities
- The Plan and implementing ordinances are considered by state agencies in permitting decisions
- Addresses review of “developments of regional impact”
- Identifies opportunities for future joint efforts
- Promotes common land use designations and definitions
- Establish goals for economic character over the entire Region
- Provides support for municipalities in zoning challenges
- Enables Transportation Impact Fees across municipal boundaries
- Enables Transfer of Development Rights across municipal boundaries
- Enables priority consideration in state funding programs
- Provides opportunity to learn from neighbors’ shared experiences
- Enhances the Region’s attractiveness to quality development

- Enables developing a “specific plan” for an area designated for non-residential development, preparing regulations for that area, and streamlining the approval process

### **This Comprehensive Plan is a Living Document**

This Comprehensive Plan is just a start. It is the foundation for the attainment of the goals and objectives established within the plan, which can be accomplished only with the support of the municipal governments, municipal commissions, boards and committees, area businesses, area residents, and surrounding municipalities and regional planning groups.

The objective has been to prepare a plan which will not sit on a shelf and gather dust, but a plan that will be implemented and used by municipal governing bodies, Planning Commissions and other groups within the municipalities to guide their actions in attaining the goals of this Plan.

This Plan presents a strategy to guide municipal officials and other agencies in making decisions that will assure that the Borough of Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace Township will continue to be attractive places in which to live and work. This Comprehensive Plan is not an ordinance or regulation, but is a basis for proposing regulations and undertaking specific functional plans designed to implement the policies established within this plan.

### **Need for Continuing Planning**

Planning is an ongoing process and this Comprehensive Plan must be continually reviewed in light of development trends, the state of the economy, unforeseen influences, changes in community goals, and the appropriateness of the Plan's objectives, policies, and implementation program.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **VISION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **VISION FOR MOUNT PENN – LOWER ALSACE**

Mount Penn-Lower Alsace will consider merging when economically beneficial for the residents of both municipalities. The Borough and the Township will remain an attractive, stable, fiscally sound community in which to live and do business. Large natural areas such as Neversink Mountain, Mount Penn, and the Antietam Lake area will be preserved for park, recreation and open space purposes, and accessible to area residents. Existing residential neighborhoods will be maintained and enhanced and home ownership stabilized. Existing business areas, such as those along Perkiomen and Carsonia Avenues, will be physically enhanced and their vitality increased. Major fiscal issues facing the community, such as infiltration in the sewer system, storm water management, school taxes, and dam improvement will be addressed through appropriate analysis, planning and implementation in a cooperative, community-based manner.

#### **Natural and Scenic Resources**

**Goal:** Protect, preserve and enhance the natural and scenic resources of Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough for current and future generations, and provide for physical access by Township and Borough residents for recreational and educational use.

#### ***Objectives:***

- Protect and retain water resources within the municipalities to assure the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater for recreational use, wildlife habitats, fire protection, and water supply. Of particular concern will be Antietam Lake, the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, Antietam Creek, the wetlands and floodplains along the creek, and steep slopes draining to the creek.
- Protect groundwater and surface water from pollution and excessive withdrawal.
- Protect and manage woodlands within the municipalities.
- Protect the steep slopes within the Township and Borough.

- Encourage the retention of existing desirable trees in the Borough and Township and the planting of additional trees as part of a tree planting program.
- Protect watersheds and wellhead areas for Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority and Pennsylvania American Water Company water supplies.
- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to create a permanent, large open space and recreation area on Neversink Mountain.
- Encourage the preservation of the scenic road corridors and views along them within Lower Alsace Township by limiting the encroachment of development.
- Support the efforts of Berks County to create a permanent, large open space and recreation area around Antietam Lake.
- Encourage creation and retention of a greenway along the Antietam Creek.
- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to retain the Earl Trust properties for permanent open space and recreation resources for the community.

## **Historic and Cultural Resources**

**Goal:** Identify, preserve and enhance the historic, architectural and cultural resources of the Township and Borough.

### **Objectives:**

- Encourage the preservation, protection, and enhancement of historic and architectural resources and their context.
- Support efforts to restore the fire observation tower on Mount Penn.
- Support efforts of Friends of Antietam Lake to restore historic and cultural resources such as the valve house and nature center.
- Require new development to reflect and consider the history, architecture and development patterns of the municipalities; discourage inappropriate development near historic resources; require impact studies for development near historic resources; and require mitigation of any potential adverse impacts on historic resources.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures where appropriate.

## **Open Space and Recreation**

**Goal:** Provide open space and recreation in Mount Penn and Lower Alsace by protecting and preserving Neversink Mountain, the Antietam Lake area, Antietam Creek, the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, Earl Trust properties, Mount Penn, and remaining wooded, rural areas in the Township and by retaining and planning recreation areas.

### **Objectives:**

- Concentrate the limited growth in the Township near existing developed areas to reduce pressure on existing open spaces.
- Promote infill development in existing developed areas and maintenance and restoration of existing housing resources to reduce development of open space.
- Limit and plan infrastructure extensions in order to not encourage development in areas desired as open space.
- Link recreation areas and natural areas within the Region through open space, greenway and trail systems.
- Support efforts of the Berks County Conservancy and Berks County to preserve Neversink Mountain, Antietam Lake, and Earl Trust lands for open space and recreational purposes.
- Encourage the City of Reading to retain current open space areas in Lower Alsace Township as open space.
- Plan, facilitate, and identify a trail connection between Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake.
- Encourage the continued availability of the A-Field to area residents.
- Work toward provision of additional recreational fields on Earl Trust land along Hill Road and assure they will be available for use by Township and Borough residents.

## **Land Use and Housing**

**Goal:** Retain the existing character of the Borough and the Township by preserving natural, scenic, and open space resources; enhancing the tax base; enhancing streetscapes; and assuring the continued desirability of the municipalities as places to live.

### ***Objectives:***

- Identify growth areas which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development in the Stony Creek Mills and Friedensburg Road areas, have appropriate access, can be efficiently served by the circulation system, and can be efficiently served by public sewer and water systems.
- Direct new development in the Township and Borough to the growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal which cannot be feasibly sewered.
- Encourage preservation of the Neversink Mountain, Mount Penn, the Antietam Lake area, Earl Trust lands, Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, and City of Reading open areas as open space.
- Encourage compact business development patterns along Perkiomen Avenue.
- Minimize conflicts between non-residential and residential uses through allocation of land use and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards. Discourage proximity of incompatible land uses within the area and along municipal boundaries.
- Recognize the variety of housing needs of area residents.
- Allow a variety of housing densities and attractive residential housing types in appropriately designated areas, consistent with the natural resources, service constraints and existing character of the municipalities.
- Encourage owner occupancy of dwelling units in the Borough and Township.
- Encourage retention of dwelling units within commercial areas to provide for mixed and continued use of these areas.
- Appropriately allocate land use on a regional rather than municipality by municipality basis.

- Maintain community character.
- Provide for suitable, attractive and compatible commercial and office uses at appropriate locations, consistent with existing land use patterns, support services, and the transportation system.
- Encourage additional commercial development along Carsonia Avenue at designated locations and encourage use of the vacant Mobil site.
- Encourage development at the filtration beds site along Perkiomen Avenue which will contribute to the tax base of the Borough.
- Assure continued use of the St. Catherine's property which will be an asset to and serve the needs of the community.
- Work to retain existing and attract new desirable businesses in the community, and foster the viability of the Perkiomen Avenue, North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Howard Boulevard commercial area through vitalization efforts and streetscape improvements.
- Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents.
- Provide for the maintenance and any necessary improvement of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate land use controls and enforcement policies and programs.
- Establish appropriate policies for residential conversions within the area which will be consistent with retention of the character, stability, and upkeep of residential neighborhoods and provision of adequate parking facilities.
- Plan land uses and densities which will be consistent with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the area, and have manageable tax structures.



## **Circulation**

**Goal:** Plan for a circulation system comprised of road, transit, and pedestrian facilities, which will allow safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian travel throughout Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.

### ***Objectives:***

- Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- Improve the safety of intersections along Perkiomen Avenue.
- Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the area as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT.
- Monitor impacts on roadway capacity from new development and require developers to address projected increased traffic volumes in the road system by improving the existing system.
- Investigate providing additional parking opportunities in Mount Penn and along Friedensburg Road in the Township.
- Assure adequate access management occurs along the major road corridors such as Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road, to minimize the number of access points to the road system.
- Facilitate pedestrian circulation within the business areas of the community through such means as benches, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities.
- Preserve the scenic road corridors and vistas within the Township.
- Monitor the need for appropriate traffic control at the Perkiomen Avenue-27<sup>th</sup> Street intersection.
- Maintain and upgrade the existing road system as necessary and encourage PennDOT to improve state-controlled roads and intersections.
- Institute appropriate traffic calming techniques along Fairview Avenue.
- Encourage and support the development of a network of trails linking residential areas to open space and recreation resources, surrounding municipalities' trail systems, and means of access to any future Schuylkill Valley metro stations.

- Work with BARTA to assure adequate bus service to the area and the appropriate location and attractiveness of bus stops.
- Encourage maintenance and improvement of sidewalks and curbs, completion of gaps in the sidewalk system, and extension of the sidewalk system.
- Expand the pedestrian system to the area of the High School-Junior High School and Stony Creek Mills.
- Relieve congestion at the Antietam Road-Carsonia Avenue-Friedensburg Road intersection.
- Determine the merits of and appropriate locations of park and ride facilities and other multi-modal facilities.

### **Community Facilities, Services and Development**

**Goal:** Provide essential facilities and services to meet the existing and future needs of residents consistent with the financial capabilities of the Borough and Township.

#### ***Objectives:***

- Identify services and facilities which can be provided on a cooperative basis and work toward intermunicipal cooperation.
- Continue a dialog on the potential for merger of Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Continue to evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded or improved community services and facilities and plan for the efficient and economical provision of those services and facilities.
- Encourage upkeep and restoration of the infrastructure of the area such as Skyline Drive and its walls and the Antietam Creek channel.
- Review proposed developments to ensure that required infrastructure and properly planned and located recreation facilities are constructed by developers.
- Address school tax issues on a community-wide basis.
- Review opportunities for sharing of equipment, service and facilities.

- Investigate the possibility of establishing a coordinated emergency services plan for the area.
- Foster a spirit of community within the Borough and Township.
- Support community-wide activities, events and resident participation in government.
- Encourage communication and cooperative efforts among Borough government, Township government, the School District, community organizations, residents and businesses to assure the continued vitality of the area.
- Successfully address the sewer infiltration problem.
- Provide efficient police service to the region.
- Investigate opportunities for cooperation among municipalities and the school district in providing and making available facilities and programs to area residents.
- Provide for additional athletic fields for area youth through cooperative efforts in the region.
- Require developers to adequately manage stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation.
- Successfully address the area's storm drainage problems and reduce flooding.
- Assure that the scale of development in the area is consistent with the capacity of the area's infrastructure and fiscal capacities.
- Coordinate sewer and water planning with land use policies.
- Encourage cooperation among the fire companies in the Township and Borough to address the fire protection needs of the community.
- Assure that renovation and reuse of the high school building will not adversely affect the surrounding community and that parking is adequately addressed.

## **Economic Development**

**Goal:** Sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the Township and the Borough, while maintaining the small-town character.

### ***Objectives:***

- Enhance the quality of life in Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Encourage appropriate re-use of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Support programs and efforts to promote economic development in Berks County and to retain, replace, and increase jobs for County residents.
- Provide for additional, appropriate commercial development at designated areas along Carsonia Avenue.
- Provide linkages to major open spaces such as Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake and the regional transportation system, to increase the attractiveness of the region as a residential and business location.
- Investigate use of the income tax to fund the school district.
- Plan for adequate parking facilities
- Facilitate pedestrian access to businesses.
- Encourage streetscape improvements along Perkiomen Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Howard Boulevard, and Carsonia Avenue.
- Foster municipality and business community cooperation in promoting economic development, community attractiveness, and activities and events.
- Foster home ownership, maintenance of the building stock, increase of the tax base, stability of neighborhoods and community, and fiscal soundness of local government and school district.

## **Planning**

**Goal:** Guide the decision making of Township and Borough officials and commissions by identifying an effective action plan in this Plan.

### ***Objectives:***

- Encourage acceleration of regional Act 167 stormwater management planning for the Antietam Creek and Schuylkill River watersheds.
- Encourage the municipalities to continue to meet to discuss planning issues of common concern which arise in the future. Yearly, review the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan, their continued relevance, the extent to which they have been accomplished, and the need for revision, and establish a work program for implementation of the Plan.
- Work with surrounding communities, regional planning and development organizations and PennDOT to address vehicular, pedestrian, and transit, circulation, land use, community facility and economic development issues which impact Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Encourage community-based, long term planning for school facilities.
- Support and participate in the Berks County Conservancy planning efforts for Neversink Mountain and Earl Trust lands.

## **Implementation**

**Goal:** Accomplish the goals, objectives and policies of this Comprehensive Plan through identified appropriate implementation techniques.

### ***Objectives:***

- Identify techniques to manage and control growth in the Township.
- Identify opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan.
- Participate in State grant programs which will aid in the implementation of this Plan.

- Participate in Berks County and State programs designed to encourage intermunicipal cooperation.
- Establish the basis for land use regulations which will implement this Plan.
- Encourage PennDOT and Berks County cooperation in achieving transportation objectives.
- Secure funding for unfunded government mandates.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

In the course of developing this Comprehensive Plan, planning questionnaires were sent out to 30 households in Mt. Penn Borough and 15 households in Lower Alsace Township. The people to receive questionnaires in each municipality were identified by Joint Planning Committee members from the municipality. The results of each questionnaire are contained in Appendix I. The highlights of the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace questionnaire results are given below.

#### **Questionnaire Results Highlights**

1. Respondents appear willing to continue to accept new residential growth in the Region at moderate rates of growth.
2. The preferred types of development are conservation development and retirement communities.
3. A clear majority of respondents are in favor of efforts to preserve Neversink Mountain for open space and recreation.
4. Most respondents are in favor of efforts to acquire Antietam Lake from the City of Reading in order to preserve the area for open space.
5. Respondents are not in favor of new industrial areas being developed.
6. Respondents are evenly split in favor of new commercial areas being developed.
7. Respondents are very positive towards preserving what agricultural land is still left.
8. A clear majority of respondents favor the development of light passenger rail service in the area.
9. A majority of respondents also support programs to increase landscaping, decorative lighting, benches and other similar amenities along Perkiomen Avenue and Carsonia Avenue.
10. The major transportation concerns are intersection improvements, inadequate road maintenance, congestion, lack of bikeways, and poor condition of sidewalks.

11. A majority of respondents would use new biking and hiking trails and see a need for these trails to connect existing recreation facilities.
12. A majority of respondents feel that additional public recreation facilities should be provided in the area.
13. A majority of respondents believe the level of commercial development in the area should remain the same along Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road. A small majority of residents in Mt. Penn believe that commercial development along Perkiomen Avenue should be increased.
14. A majority of respondents believe that the Borough and the Township should identify additional opportunities for working together to provide services and facilities for area residents.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ISSUES FACING THE TOWNSHIP AND BOROUGH**

#### **Neversink Mountain**

The Township of Lower Alsace and the Borough of Mount Penn are two of the six municipalities that make up the area of Neversink Mountain. The mountain is defined by the Schuylkill River on the west, Perkiomen Avenue and Neversink Road on the east, and the Schuylkill River and river plain on the south. On the north, Neversink Mountain is joined to Mount Penn by a saddle that forms the Perkiomen Gap. The mountain is approximately two miles long, east to west, and one mile wide, north to south.

Because of the unique location of Neversink Mountain at the end of the Reading Prong formation, a point where the Schuylkill River changes direction and where the characteristics of the river change from a large mountain stream to a meandering, lazy river; its juxtaposition to the dense urban environment of the City of Reading and surrounding communities; and its unusual land forms and historic features, the Mountain offers scenic features and experiences different from those of Mount Penn, South Mountain, and the Blue Ridge. It is estimated that at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the residents of Berks County can see Neversink Mountain from their home, path of travel, or place of work.

Neversink Mountain has been identified as a high priority area for protection from development in the Berks County Natural Areas Inventory due to populations of animal and plant species. For all of the above reasons, Neversink Mountain has been a high priority for land preservation activities in Berks County.

In 1979, the Berks County Conservancy acquired its first parcel of land on Neversink Mountain with the goal of protecting the parcel for use as open space and recreation. Since this first acquisition, the Berks County Conservancy has protected approximately 292 acres on the mountain, 204 of which are located in Lower Alsace Township. An additional 127 acres on Neversink Mountain were owned and protected by the Earl Trust. The goal of this preservation activity is to provide residents and Berks County visitors with permanently preserved open space to be used for educational and recreational activities as defined in the Feasibility Study for Neversink Mountain completed in 1997. The Long Range Plan, outlined in the Feasibility Study, proposes that about 950 acres be included for a Neversink Mountain Park.

Presently the access and circulation facilities on Neversink Mountain consist of existing paved public streets, public trails, access lanes for utilities, access lanes to private properties, and trails on private lands. Often, lands have multiple uses, such as a utility land that is also used as an access to a private property and/or as a hiking trail. The

mountain is accessible from the Borough of Mount Penn by 20<sup>th</sup> Street, which serves as the primary access for the residents of the mountain. The long-range plan also identifies access via a hiking trail from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Mount Penn, which seems to be an acceptable access point to the members of the joint planning committee representing the community. This hiking trail would connect the mountain with 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and the local neighborhoods in Mount Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township. Mount Penn Borough residents may also have the opportunity to utilize nearby hiking/biking access to the mountain through a proposed St. Lawrence Access point at 27<sup>th</sup> Street that would utilize an existing land extended from Fairview Avenue.

There are several Lower Alsace Township residents who reside on Neversink Mountain. A few of these residents have expressed concerns related to promoting more public use of the mountain. Trespassing, dumping, and trail erosion due to excessive use of all-terrain vehicles continue to be problems in some areas of the mountain and they feel that these problems will increase with the more people who are familiar with the mountain. When and if the Neversink Mountain Park is realized, proper management, signage, fencing, and parking areas will alleviate the residents' concerns.

In the long run, Neversink Mountain Park could become an integral part of other open space areas and recreation facilities, particularly for the residents of Mount Penn Borough, Lower Alsace Township, and nearby communities. By creating an urban trail along the east side of 19<sup>th</sup> Street (just one block over the Mount Penn Borough line into the City of Reading), the trail system could be continued through Pendora Park, the historic Mineral Spring Park, and Egelman's Park to the 1500-acre Mount Penn Reserve and Antietam Lake.

### **Antietam Lake Reservoir**

Currently, the approximate 560-acre Antietam Lake Reservoir property offers numerous recreational opportunities, including trails that connect to Mount Penn. In 2001, a grassroots organization formed to encourage the use and preservation of the Antietam Lake Reservoir. This organization, Friends of Antietam Lake, consists of a Board of Directors and numerous members, many of which are from the immediate communities of Lower Alsace and Mount Penn. This 560-acre property should continue to be maintained and used as a public recreational facility and open space, and Friends of Antietam Lake will continue to generate community support for its preservation. The Lake is owned by the City of Reading and the dam creating the Lake is controlled by the Reading Area Water Authority.

Antietam Lake faces two major threats. One is the effort of the PaDEP to have the dam at the Lake removed because PaDEP considers the dam unsafe, that it could fail in a major flood, and could pose a danger to downstream residents. The Authority has contested the PaDEP position, and the issue has not been resolved.

A second threat is the potential that the City of Reading could sell the Lake and nearby properties for development. This would eliminate a major county recreation resource. Berks County has offered to buy the 560 acre Lake property for a County park, but the offer was not accepted by the City.

Development of City-owned property in Lower Alsace would have a devastating impact on the Region, as infrastructure is not in place to accommodate development of the area, including transportation, storm drainage, school, and sewage disposal.

### **Earl Trust Properties**

The Clinton F. Earl Trust was set up by the Executor of the Earl estate under a provision of his Will dated July 11, 1921. The Will stipulated that 25% of the residue of the estate be used *“for purchasing nearby property for Park purposes preferably woodland on Mt. Penn or Neversink Mountain”*. This Trust was established with a bank that became First Union (now Wachovia).

A majority of the Earl Trust properties are located in Lower Alsace Township and on Neversink Mountain. Approximately 127 acres of Earl Trust land is located on the western end of Neversink Mountain, and about 239 acres of Earl Trust land are located elsewhere in Lower Alsace Township.

Since the Earl Trust land must remain as recreational and/or open space land, it provides the Borough of Mount Penn and Lower Alsace Township with the opportunity to coordinate the use of these lands into their overall Open Space and Recreational Resources Plan. A majority of the Earl Trust land is woodland, with the exception of the Hill Road property previously known as the Community Gardens. This property had been used by the City of Reading for community gardens and now sits vacant. The joint planning committee members identified this site as a potential location for active recreational fields for the community, provided however, that any potential future owners of this land would be open to this recreational development.

**Infiltration/Inflow within the Sanitary Sewer System** - The Antietam Valley Municipal Authority, which serves the Borough and the Township, continues to address infiltration/inflow problems, which result in flows exceeding rated sewer plant capacity. One area of concern is inappropriate connections of sump pumps, roof drains, and driveway drains.

**Stormwater Management/Flooding** - The region has severe stormwater management problems and flooding concerns, because of flows from Neversink Mountain and surrounding hills, including flow from development in adjoining municipalities; collection systems with inadequate capacity; and open drainage channels in the region. Flooding occurs in a number of areas, and continues to occur more frequently and rapidly. This results in flooded streets, yards, and basements, and affects housing values.

Some of the areas of concern include the High School-Junior High School complex; at the base of Neversink Mountain and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street; Park Lane; the area of the Primary Center; the general vicinity of Endlich, Philmay, Brighton, Cumberland, and Filbert; Friedensburg Road; and Carsonia and Brooke.

There is no Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan for the region, and wider regional cooperation is necessary to address concerns.

**Tree Removal** - Tree removal occurs during development/redevelopment and by property owners who do not wish to continue to maintain them. This can affect Borough appearance, microclimate, and water runoff.

**Traffic Flow, Parking, Pedestrian Safety in Vicinity of Community Facilities** - Particularly in the Borough, parking facilities on-site are limited near community facilities. On-street parking is also limited in some areas, and this results in inconvenience to residents. Where limited parking facilities, narrow streets, buses, and waiting parents converge near schools, safety concerns result.

**Tax Burden on Residents** - The Antietam School District is very small, is experiencing enrollment increases, and is supported by a limited commercial tax base. This results in a very high school tax rate. The Borough's higher property tax rate, increasing County taxes, along with unfunded governmental mandates, such as storm drainage improvements, further place a burden on homeowners. This tax burden puts pressure on low and/or fixed income residents to sell their single family homes, which are often converted to apartments. The conversion to apartments can lead to the destabilization and more transient nature of residential neighborhoods and loss of residents who actively participate in community affairs.

The level of communication between the school district and the municipalities which are affected by school district policies and resultant tax rates, is in need of improvement.

**Upkeep of Properties within and at Gateways to the Community** - Appropriate codes and enforcement, as well as cooperation of property owners, is needed to maintain the attractiveness of the region, stability of neighborhoods, and impression of the region upon entering it.

Public infrastructure is also in need of maintenance, such as the channel walls for Antietam Creek near the schools, walls along Skyline Drive, and the Fire Tower.

### **Finding Appropriate Residential Use for the City of Reading's Filter Bed Property**

**Potential for Merger of Borough and Township** - Consideration was given to merging the municipalities, but it was decided not to merge at the time. The municipalities should continue to monitor whether merging would be appropriate in the future.

Opportunities for additional intermunicipal cooperation should be monitored, as well as merging/cooperation among organizations in the region, such as fire companies.

**Areas of Transportation Concern** - Some of the areas of concern include through traffic on Perkiomen Avenue, an interregional arterial, and the difficulty of some turning movements onto Perkiomen Avenue, such as at 27<sup>th</sup> Street, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Street, and Endlich Avenue/Butter Lane; narrowness of Friedensburg Road, compounded by parking along the road; through traffic on Fairview Avenue, an alternate route to Perkiomen Avenue and other east-west roads; running of stop signs on Fairview Avenue; through traffic on Bingaman-Angora-Antietam-Friedensburg or Carsonia route; congestion at the Antietam-Friedensburg-Carsonia intersection and difficulty of turning movements to the schools.

**Trail Linkages** - Assuring linkages are provided to the trail system in the St. Lawrence-Exeter-Amity region, and thus any potential Schuylkill Valley Metro stops; between Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn, and Antietam Lake trail systems; and to other trail systems outside the region.

**Improving the Sidewalk System Within Developed Areas** – Of particular concern is providing safe pedestrian access to the Senior and Junior High Schools and Stony Creek Mills. In addition, gaps in the sidewalk system should be completed, curb should be provided where sidewalk is constructed, and condition of sidewalks improved.

**Increasing Recreation Opportunities for All Regional Residents** – Recreation opportunities within the region which are open to all residents throughout the day are very limited. Additional fields, such as soccer fields, are a particular need. Rotary Park is only for City use. Camp Lily is not for general use. Elementary school facilities are locked after school and subject to vandalism. The A-Field must be available for school use. Opportunities for additional recreation facilities are Neversink Mountain, Earl Trust land, and the Antietam Creek Watershed.

It is important to facilitate access to open space outside existing developed areas through new trail connections and making it understandable how to access recreation areas through the developed areas.

**Promoting Economic Vitality** – The region can be enhanced by maintaining connections to any Schuylkill Valley metro stops and enhancing streetscapes along Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Carsonia Avenue. Some of the issues along Perkiomen Avenue include lack of a true commercial core; hills which make walking difficult for some residents; narrow planting strips and lack of landscaping; lack of benches; loss of commercial continuity at Antietam Academy, St. Catherines, and residential blocks; old sidewalks and low curbs; and slope on the south side.

As properties along the major commercial streets would be redeveloped or further developed, property owners should work with the municipalities to encourage appropriate uses at appropriate intensities of development.

Maintaining the stability of neighborhoods and housing values is important to keeping the region an attractive one in which to invest.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FUTURE LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN**

The Future Land Use Plan establishes policies for guiding future land use within the region and serves as a guide on which to base regulatory controls, such as municipal zoning maps and zoning ordinances. The zoning ordinances and maps adopted by the municipalities will establish zoning district boundaries, permitted land uses and the permitted density of development. In the land use categories established below, the types of land uses recommended in each category will be indicated, as well as the proposed density range.

The goal for land use and housing is to retain the existing character of the Borough and the Township by preserving natural, scenic, and open space resources; enhancing the tax base; enhancing streetscapes; and assuring the continued desirability of the municipalities as places to live. Objectives for land use and housing are to:

- Identify growth areas which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development in the Stony Creek Mills and Friedensburg Road areas, have appropriate access, can be efficiently served by the circulation system, and can be efficiently served by public sewer and water systems.
- Direct new development in the Township and Borough to the growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal which cannot be feasibly sewered.
- Encourage preservation of the Neversink Mountain, Mount Penn, the Antietam Lake area, Earl Trust lands, Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, and City of Reading open areas as open space.
- Encourage compact business development patterns along Perkiomen Avenue.
- Minimize conflicts between non-residential and residential uses through allocation of land use and utilization of performance and design standards and buffer yards. Discourage proximity of incompatible land uses within the area and along municipal boundaries.
- Recognize the variety of housing needs of area residents.

- Allow a variety of housing densities and attractive residential housing types in appropriately designated areas, consistent with the natural resources, service constraints and existing character of the municipalities.
- Encourage owner occupancy of dwelling units in the Borough and Township.
- Encourage retention of dwelling units within commercial areas to provide for mixed and continued use of these areas.
- Appropriately allocate land use on a regional rather than municipality by municipality basis.
- Maintain community character.
- Provide for suitable, attractive and compatible commercial and office uses at appropriate locations, consistent with existing land use patterns, support services, and the transportation system.
- Encourage additional commercial development along Carsonia Avenue at designated locations and encourage appropriate use of vacant existing buildings.
- Encourage development at the filtration beds site along Perkiomen Avenue which will contribute to the tax base of the Borough.
- Assure continued use of the St. Catherine's property which will be an asset to and serve the needs of the community.
- Work to retain existing and attract new desirable businesses in the community, and foster the viability of the Perkiomen Avenue, North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Howard Boulevard commercial area through vitalization efforts and streetscape improvements.
- Provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents.
- Provide for the maintenance and any necessary improvement of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate land use controls and enforcement policies and programs.
- Establish appropriate policies for residential conversions within the area which will be consistent with retention of the character, stability, and upkeep of residential neighborhoods and provision of adequate parking facilities.



- Plan land uses and densities which will be consistent with the need to preserve open land, manage traffic, maintain the quality of life in the area, and have manageable tax structures.

## **Land Use Categories**

The following is a summary of the categories shown on the Future Land Use Plan:

*Open Space and Park* - This category is shown in the north and northwestern as well as the southern portion of the Township. The intent is to preserve critical natural areas and major open spaces in the region, including Antietam Lake and Creek and their watershed; Neversink Mountain; Mount Penn; and the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority property. It will provide for predominantly passive recreation facilities for regional and other County residents.

*Rural Conservation* - This category is intended to protect woodlands and steep slopes on privately-held land interspersed among Open Space and Park land. It will permit very low density residential development which will not adversely affect the natural features of these areas. A density of one dwelling unit per five acres, utilizing on-lot sewer and water is anticipated.

*Rural Residential* - This category is intended to protect areas of woodlands and steep slopes between Hill Road and Friedensburg Road which, if developed, could create severe storm drainage and erosion and sedimentation problems in existing developed areas of the region. One dwelling unit per two acres with on-lot sewer and water, except if development occurred where public sewer and water lines now exist, is anticipated. Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space.

*Low Density Residential* - This category will allow for low density residential development, provided such development recognizes and protects the natural resources within these areas. A density of one dwelling unit per acre with on-lot sewer and water is anticipated. Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space.

*Medium Density Residential* – Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods of single family detached dwellings and allow consistent development of the few remaining undeveloped parcels. Maximum density of up to eight dwelling units per acre, utilizing public sewer and water.

*High Density Residential* – Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods. Maximum density of up to eight dwelling units per acre, though maximum densities of up to sixteen dwelling units per acre may be permitted, depending upon the municipality and zoning district. Public sewage disposal and water supply are utilized.

*Town Center Mixed Use* - This area in the center of Mt. Penn, generally along Perkiomen Avenue, though with some extensions (23<sup>rd</sup> Street), will continue to permit a mix of residential, neighborhood-serving commercial, and community facility uses, where such a mix of uses now exists, in order to promote continued vitality of the Borough Center. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas. Maximum density of sixteen dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type of dwelling. Public sewer and water will be utilized.

*Neighborhood Commercial* - These areas, found in the Township along Carsonia Avenue, permit the continuation and expansion of two commercial areas, which serve the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas. A minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet would be required and public sewer and water facilities utilized.

*Commercial* - The Commercial areas provide for commercial uses, which are automobile oriented and which serve highway and neighborhood uses, where such uses now exist. A minimum lot size of 4,000 square feet would be required and public sewer and water facilities utilized.

*Light Industrial* - These areas are intended to permit the construction of several existing light industrial and heavy commercial uses in a limited, concentrated area in Lower Alsace. A minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet would be required and public sewer and water would be utilized.

*Public or Public Protection* - This includes recognized existing and proposed public and public protection uses, such as municipal buildings, schools, fire halls, police stations, and authority uses.

*Recreation* - This includes recognized existing and proposed public recreation facilities such as the A-Field, Antietam Valley Recreation Center, and potential recreation fields along Hill Road.

*Institutional* – This area recognizes the cemetery along the western end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough.

Mount Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township

**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Recommended Land Uses</b>	<b>Recommended Densities</b>
Open Space and Park	<p>Preserve critical natural areas and major open spaces in the region, including the Antietam Lake and Creek and their watershed; Neversink Mountain; Mount Penn; and the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority reservoir area.</p> <p>Provide for predominantly passive recreation facilities for regional and other County residents.</p>	Parks and open space reserves.	
Rural Conservation	<p>Protect woodlands and steep slopes on privately-held land interspersed among Open Space and Park land.</p> <p>Permit very low density residential development which will not adversely affect the natural features of these areas.</p>	<p>Parks and open space reserves.</p> <p>Conservation uses.</p> <p>Recreation uses</p> <p>Crop farming</p> <p>Single family detached dwellings.</p>	1 dwelling unit per 5 acres, utilizing on-lot sewer and water.
Rural Residential	<p>Protect areas of woodlands and steep slopes which, if developed, could create severe storm drainage and erosion and sedimentation problems in existing developed areas of the region.</p>	<p>Parks and open space reserves</p> <p>Conservation uses</p> <p>Recreation uses</p> <p>Crop farming</p> <p>Single family detached dwellings</p>	<p>1 dwelling unit per 2 acres. On-lot sewer and water would be used, except if development occurred where public sewer and water lines now exist.</p> <p>Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as</p>

Category	Objective	Recommended Land Uses	Recommended Densities
Low Density Residential	Allow for low density residential development, provided such development recognizes and protects the natural resources within these areas.	Single family detached dwellings Crop farming Conservation uses Parks and open space preserves Public recreation uses	conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space.  1 dwelling unit per acre.  Net-out provisions will be used to protect critical natural resources. Development techniques such as conservation development, cluster development, and lot averaging will be encouraged to protect natural resources and conserve open space.  On-lot sewer and water would be used.
Medium Density Residential	Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods of single family detached dwellings and allow consistent development of the few remaining undeveloped parcels.	Single family detached dwellings Community facilities Public recreation	Maximum density of up to 8 dwelling units per acre, utilizing public sewer and water facilities
High Density Residential	Maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods	Depending on the zoning district and municipality: Single family detached dwellings Single family semi-detached dwellings Two family dwellings Townhouses Apartments Community facilities Public recreation	Maximum density of up to 8 dwelling units per acre, though maximum densities of up to 16 dwelling units per acre may be permitted, depending upon the municipality and zoning district. Public sewage disposal and water supply are utilized.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Recommended Land Uses</b>	<b>Recommended Densities</b>
Town Center Mixed Use	Continue to permit a mix of residential, neighborhood-serving commercial, and community facility uses along Perkiomen Avenue and 23 <sup>rd</sup> Street where such a mix of uses now exists, in order to promote continued vitality of the Borough Center. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas.	Commercial uses and offices serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents. Single family detached dwellings Single family semi-detached dwellings Two family dwellings Townhouses Residential conversions Businesses and dwellings in combination Community facilities	Maximum density of 16 dwelling units per acre, depending upon the type of dwelling. Public sewer and water utilized.
Neighborhood Commercial	Permit continuation and expansion of two commercial areas in the Township which serve the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. Performance standards are established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas.	Commercial uses and offices serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents.	Minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. Public sewer and water utilized.
Commercial	Provide for commercial uses which are automobile oriented and which serve highway and neighborhood uses, where such uses now exist.	Commercial uses and offices serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents.  Automobile and highway-oriented commercial uses.	Minimum lot size of 4000 square feet, public sewer and water facilities utilized.
Light Industrial	Permit the construction of several existing light industrial and heavy commercial uses in a limited, concentrated area in Lower Alsace Township.	Light industrial activities carried on in completely enclosed buildings  Heavy commercial uses.	Minimum lot size of 5000 square feet, public sewer and water facilities utilized.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Recommended Land Uses</b>	<b>Recommended Densities</b>
Public or Public Protection	Recognize existing and proposed public and public protection uses, such as municipal buildings, schools, fire halls, police stations, and authority uses.		
Recreation	Recognize existing and proposed public recreation facilities such as the A-Field, Antietam Valley Recreation Center, and potential recreation fields along Hill Road.		
Institutional	Recognizes the cemetery along the western end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough.		

## **Open Space and Park**

The open space and park areas within the region include critical natural areas and important recreation areas, including Neversink Mountain, the Antietam Lake and Creek Watershed, and Mt. Penn Preserve. Their on-going protection as open space is critical to protecting ecosystems, providing County-wide recreational resources, and managing water runoff.

Open Space and Park Areas, now generally in public or semi-public ownership, should be preserved as open space by the County, the City of Reading and other organizations. Donation to or the granting of conservation easement to conservation groups such as the Berks County Conservancy could help to assure this. Acquisition of areas for County parkland is encouraged.

## **Rural Conservation**

Rural Conservation areas are shown in the northern portion of the Township, along Angora Road, and in areas at the base of Neversink Mountain. Some of the land has restrictions to development because of steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands. Much of the land is wooded. As each site would be proposed for development, the density of development which could be accommodated on that land would have to be established through analysis of the natural, scenic, and historic features and resources of each site. On privately held land, single family detached dwellings would be permitted, but at a density of one dwelling unit per five acres of land, depending upon land characteristics. Limited development should occur in this area in order to protect the watersheds, protect vulnerable wooded, steep slopes, protect woodlands, maintain rural character adjoining major open spaces, and conserve ecosystems by helping maintain an adequate critical mass.

## **Rural Residential**

The Rural Residential area is found primarily between Friedensburg Road to the east and Hill Road to the west in the Township. Rural Residential areas contain woodlands, steep slopes and very low density residential development. Some of the land has restrictions to development because of steep slopes. It is expected that single family detached dwellings would be permitted at a density of two acres per dwelling unit.

## **Low Density Residential**

Low Density Residential areas are found in the Township between Spook Lane to the south and Haag Road to the north and in the extreme northeast portion of the Township. Typically, Low Density Residential Development reflects residential development that has occurred along existing Township roads. Land adjoining existing development which

is considered appropriate for expansion of low density residential development because of the absence of severe building limitations has also been included in this category. It is intended that single family dwellings at a density of one dwelling unit per acre would be permitted.

### **Medium Density Residential**

Medium Density Residential areas are found around the core area of Mt. Penn Borough, along Fairview and Highland Avenues, in the portion of Lower Alsace Townships adjoining the Borough and to the west of Brighton Avenue and south of Montgomery Avenue. The Medium Density Residential areas contain existing developed areas and infill development could occur. The Medium Density Residential areas are within existing service areas of public sewer and water. Residential development for single family at a maximum density of up to eight dwelling units per acre is anticipated in the Medium Density Residential areas.

Allowing infill growth near areas where the road system is most developed can help reduce traffic pressures on rural roads not intended for higher traffic volumes. Most road improvements within the area are proposed within the developed areas in order to facilitate circulation in those areas. A nucleus of community facilities is found near the existing development in the Medium Density Residential areas.

### **High Density Residential**

High Density Residential areas are found in the central portion of Mt. Penn Borough, on the fringe of the Town Center Mixed Use area located along Perkiomen Avenue and along Carsonia Avenue bounded to the east by Brighton Avenue and to the west by Friedensburg Road in the Township. The High Density Residential areas have been developed for a mixture of one family, two family and multiple family development at a density ranging from eight to sixteen dwelling units per acre. Such a pattern of development will be permitted in the future.

### **Town Center Mixed Use**

A Town Center Mixed Use area is found in the center of Mt. Penn, generally along Perkiomen Avenue and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The Town Center Mixed Use area currently contains a mixture of one and two family homes and apartments, commercial uses, and community facilities, and it is intended that a mixture of residences at high density, commercial uses intended to serve the day-to-day needs of residents of the area, and community facilities will continue in this area.



The intent is to foster commercial development in the center of Mt. Penn which can serve the residents of the Borough and the Township on a day-to-day basis. In Chapter 7, methods of encouraging economic vitality in the center of Mt. Penn are discussed.

### **Neighborhood Commercial**

The Neighborhood Commercial areas in the Township along Carsonia Avenue near the intersections with Park Lane, Parkview Avenue and at the junction with Antietam and Friedensburg Roads reflect existing mixes of residential and commercial uses, and would allow a mix of such uses in the future. The commercial uses would be those designed to meet the day-to-day needs of the nearby residential areas. Performance standards would be developed to ensure adverse impacts to nearby residential areas are minimized.

### **Commercial**

Commercial areas are found along Howard Boulevard, and at the far eastern end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough adjoining St. Lawrence Borough. The Commercial areas contain existing commercial concentrations. Commercial and office uses located here would be automobile oriented and accommodate highway and neighborhood uses, where such uses now exist.

### **Light Industrial**

A Light Industrial area is found in the eastern portion of Lower Alsace Township (along Brighton Avenue between Melrose and Woodland Avenues), where existing light industrial and heavy commercial are concentrated, would allow a mix of such uses in the future.

### **Public or Public Protection**

This category includes uses such as the elementary schools, municipal buildings, utility uses and fire companies, which are further discussed in the Community Facilities Plan.

### **Recreation**

This includes existing and proposed recreation areas in Lower Alsace such as the A-Field, Antietam Valley Recreation Center and potential recreation fields along Hill Road.

### **Institutional**

This category reflects the existing cemetery along the western end of Perkiomen Avenue in the Borough.

## **Designated Growth Area**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code addresses the concept of a Designated Growth Area, which is a region within a multi-municipal plan that preferably includes and surrounds a borough or village, and within which residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned for densities of one unit to the acre or more, commercial, industrial and institutional uses are permitted or planned for and public infra-structure services are provided or planned. The intent of the designated growth area is to provide for orderly and efficient development to accommodate the projected growth of the area within the next 20 years, provide for the economic and employment needs of the area and insure that the area has an adequate tax base.

In Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace, the designated growth area includes land within the Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Town Center Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial and Light Industrial land use categories. The Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Town Center Mixed Use areas are intended to accommodate Residential, and in the case of the Town Center Mixed Use area, Mixed Residential and Commercial, development over the next 20 years. The density of development would range from eight to sixteen dwelling units per acre with utilization of public sewer and water facilities. The Town Center Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial and Light Industrial areas will allow for economic development and job formation and contribute to the tax base in the area.

## **Future Growth Area**

The recent amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code also introduce the concept of future growth area, which is an area of a multi-municipal plan outside of and adjacent to a designated growth area where Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Institutional uses and development are permitted or planned at varying densities and public infrastructure services may or may not be provided, but future development at greater densities is planned to accompany the orderly extension and provision of public infrastructure services. The future growth areas include the Low Density Residential areas, which would be logical extensions of the designated growth areas.

## **Public Infrastructure Service Areas**

The Designated Growth Area within the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region is considered as a public infrastructure service area. Outside the Designated Growth Area the municipalities will not assure the extension of public infrastructure services to and for developments. Public sewer and water facilities may become available in the Future Growth Areas.

## **Rural Resource Areas**

Rural resource areas are areas described in a multi-municipal plan within which rural resources including, but not limited to, agriculture, timbering, mining, quarrying and other extractive industries, forest and game lands and recreation and tourism are encouraged and enhanced, development that is compatible with or supportive of such uses is permitted, and public infrastructure services are not provided. Rural resource areas are further categorized as areas where: (1) rural resource uses are planned for; (2) development at densities that are compatible with rural resource uses are or may be permitted; (3) infrastructure extensions or improvements are not intended to be publicly financed by municipalities, unless the participating or affected municipalities agree that such service should be provided to an area for health or safety reasons or to accomplish one or more of the purposes set forth in Section 1101 of the Municipalities Planning Code. No rural resource areas have been designated in this Comprehensive Plan because no areas appropriately fit all the criteria which have been established.

## **Considerations for Future Residential Development**

As development occurs in the Township, particularly in the Rural Conservation and Rural Residential areas, which contain the greatest extent of sensitive environmental resources, and to a lesser extent in Low Density residential areas, care must be taken to preserve and protect the resources identified within each tract of land.

- An ongoing awareness of and sensitivity toward the natural resources of the area should be encouraged.
- Development should be concerned with geologic stability, soils suitability, groundwater supplies and stream flows.
- Groundwater resources should be protected against depletion and contamination.
- Methods of encouraging replenishment of the groundwater supply should be encouraged.
- Streams, ponds and wetlands should be protected against pollution from point sources and runoff.
- Floodplains and wet soils should be protected from encroachment.
- The loss of topsoil should be minimized.

- The retention and establishment of trees and other vegetation should be encouraged to control erosion, shade surface waters, control stormwater flow, create wind breaks, provide animal habitats and provide visual amenities.
- The preservation of scenic viewsheds and scenic road corridors should be encouraged.
- Steep slopes should be avoided.
- The protection, preservation and enhancement of historic resources should be encouraged.
- The adaptive reuse of historic structures should be encouraged where appropriate.
- Innovative land development techniques should be used to minimize land consumption, preserve ecosystems, and preserve natural resources and open space.
- The provision of open space and recreation areas for active and passive recreation should be encouraged. Visual and physical access to the open space system should be provided.
- A system of pathways should be encouraged.
- Incorporation of resources into development plans should be encouraged.
- Flexible approaches to site design to recognize resources should be encouraged.

## **Housing**

The goal for housing is to provide for adequate, safe and sound housing for present and future residents, to allow for a variety of housing densities and attractive residential housing types in appropriately designated areas within the natural and service constraints of the municipalities, and to provide for maintenance of the character of existing residential areas and housing stock through appropriate land use controls.

Provision for a variety of housing densities and housing types in appropriately designated areas is accomplished through the Land Use Plan, which makes provision for low to very low densities of single family development in Rural Conservation, Rural Residential and Low Density Residential areas; medium density development in the Medium Density Residential areas; and the highest density residential development for single family, two family, and multiple family dwellings in the High Density Residential area. Areas of

mixed commercial and residential development are allowed within the Town Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood Commercial areas.

Maintenance of the existing housing stock can be accomplished through enforcement of building codes and utilization of housing and property maintenance codes.

As taxes and housing costs rise, there is always concern for maintaining home ownership. Long term residents of the area can find themselves in positions where it is increasingly difficult to maintain or keep their properties. The municipalities should work with residents to identify various programs that are available to help them meet their housing expenses and retain their homes. Programs to address and provide for the housing needs of the elderly should be considered.

A particular concern in the region is to reverse the trends of conversion from owner-occupied to center occupied units and conversion of single family homes to apartments.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN**

The goal for community facilities and services is to provide essential facilities and services to meet the existing and future needs of residents consistent with the financial capabilities of the Borough and the Township.

The following are the objectives which have been established for community facilities and services.

- Identify services and facilities which can be provided on a cooperative basis and work toward intermunicipal cooperation.
- Continue a dialog on the potential for merger of Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Continue to evaluate the need and opportunity for additional, expanded or improved community services and facilities and plan for the efficient and economical provision of those services and facilities.
- Encourage upkeep and restoration of the infrastructure of the area such as Skyline Drive and its walls and the Antietam Creek channel.
- Review proposed developments to ensure that required infrastructure and properly planned and located recreation facilities are constructed by developers.
- Address school tax issues on a community-wide basis.
- Review opportunities for sharing of equipment, service and facilities.
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a coordinated emergency services plan for the area.
- Foster a spirit of community within the Borough and Township.
- Support community-wide activities, events and resident participation in government.
- Encourage communication and cooperative efforts among Borough government, Township government, the School District, community organizations, residents and businesses to assure the continued vitality of the area.

- Successfully address the sewer infiltration problem.
- Provide efficient police service to the region.
- Investigate opportunities for cooperation among municipalities and the school district in providing and making available facilities and programs to area residents.
- Provide for additional athletic fields for area youth through cooperative efforts in the region.
- Require developers to adequately manage stormwater runoff and erosion and sedimentation.
- Successfully address the area's storm drainage problems and reduce flooding.
- Assure that the scale of development in the area is consistent with the capacity of the area's infrastructure and fiscal capacities.
- Coordinate sewer and water planning with land use policies.
- Encourage cooperation among the fire companies in the Township and Borough to address the fire protection needs of the community.
- Assure that renovation and reuse of the high school building will not adversely affect the surrounding community and that parking is adequately addressed.

Goal and Objectives for Open Space and Recreation are as follows:

**Goal:** Provide open space and recreation in Mount Penn and Lower Alsace by protecting and preserving Neversink Mountain, the Antietam Lake area, Antietam Creek, the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, Earl Trust properties, Mount Penn, and remaining wooded, rural areas in the Township and by retaining and planning recreation areas.

**Objectives:**

- Concentrate the limited growth in the Township near existing developed areas to reduce pressure on existing open spaces.
- Promote infill development in existing developed areas and maintenance and restoration of existing housing resources to reduce development of open space.

- Limit and plan infrastructure extensions in order to not encourage development in areas desired as open space.
- Link recreation areas and natural areas within the Region through open space, greenway and trail systems.
- Support efforts of the Berks County Conservancy and Berks County to preserve Neversink Mountain, Antietam Lake, and Earl Trust lands for open space and recreational purposes.
- Encourage the City of Reading to retain current open space areas in Lower Alsace Township as open space.
- Plan, facilitate, and identify a trail connection between Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake.
- Encourage the continued availability of the A-Field to area residents.
- Work toward provision of additional recreational fields on Earl Trust land along Hill Road and assure they will be available for use by Township and Borough residents.

The Goal and Objectives for Planning are as follows:

**Goal:** Guide the decision making of Township and Borough officials and commissions by identifying an effective action plan in this Plan.

***Objectives:***

- Encourage acceleration of regional Act 167 stormwater management planning for the Antietam Creek and Schuylkill River watersheds.
- Encourage the municipalities to continue to meet to discuss planning issues of common concern which arise in the future. Yearly, review the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan, their continued relevance, the extent to which they have been accomplished, and the need for revision, and establish a work program for implementation of the Plan.
- Work with surrounding communities, regional planning and development organizations and PennDOT to address vehicular, pedestrian, and transit, circulation, land use, community facility and economic development issues which impact Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.



- Encourage community-based, long term planning for school facilities.
- Support and participate in the Berks County Conservancy planning efforts for Neversink Mountain and Earl Trust lands.

The Goal and Objectives for Implementation of this Plan are as follows:

**Goal:** Accomplish the goals, objectives and policies of this Comprehensive Plan through identified appropriate implementation techniques.

***Objectives:***

- Identify techniques to manage and control growth in the Township.
- Identify opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan.
- Participate in State grant programs which will aid in the implementation of this Plan.
- Participate in Berks County and State programs designed to encourage intermunicipal cooperation.
- Establish the basis for land use regulations which will implement this Plan.
- Encourage PennDOT and Berks County cooperation in achieving transportation objectives.
- Secure funding for unfunded government mandates.

**Coordination of Sewer and Water Facilities and Land Use Planning**

It is important that policies on provision of public sanitary sewer and water facilities be coordinated with the Future Land Use Plan. The municipalities should work with the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority and the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority with regard to water and sewer to assure coordination of policies. If sanitary sewer and water systems are expanded, expansion outside the high and medium density residential areas, Town Center Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial, and Light Industrial areas shown on the Land Use Plan should only be to serve Low Density Residential areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal. Public sanitary sewer and water facilities in general should not be extended into Resource Conservation, Rural Residential and Open

Space areas. Extension to Low Density Residential areas could be appropriate if such areas are next to Medium Density Areas, would not increase development pressure on areas not intended for intensive development, and would not increase the density established in this Plan for Low Density Residential Areas.

### **Cooperative Efforts**

The municipalities should continue to review opportunities and/or needs for regional cooperation in the provision of services and facilities as demands for services and costs increase. Municipalities can also work with the school district in providing facilities and programs to area residents.

Fire companies are finding it more difficult to get adequate numbers of volunteers, and cooperation among and management and staffing of fire companies in the area to address the fire protection needs of the community should be encouraged. Where appropriate, the interconnection of water systems within the region will be encouraged to address emergency situations and provide improved service to area residents. Water planning should also involve fire companies in the area to insure that there will be adequate fire hydrants and volume and pressure of water to provide adequate fire protection.

Other potential opportunities for regional cooperation which could be investigated over time include purchase or use of equipment, such as road equipment. If new school facilities are proposed by the school district, the municipalities should work with the school district to assure that school facilities are located to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. For instance, it would be desirable to consider location of school facilities in areas, where development has or is expected to take place, rather than locate school facilities in Rural Residential, Rural Conservation and Open Space areas, which are intended to preserve the rural and open space character of the area. In those instances where school facilities could lack adequate facilities, such as public sewer and water, the feasibility of extending necessary facilities should be investigated.

To facilitate implementation of this Comprehensive Plan, and to address the needs and possibilities for cooperation in the future, municipalities should formalize the joint planning process that has begun with formation of the Joint Municipal Planning Committee. A committee comprised of representatives from Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township should be created which will meet on a regular basis to review the Comprehensive Plan and to identify what steps should be taken to foster realization of the Plan.

## **Monitoring of Needs**

Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace should continue to monitor the needs and opportunities for additional, expanded, or improved community services and facilities. The municipalities should plan for the efficient and economical provision of services and facilities and determine what efficiencies can be obtained in the provision of services either on an individual basis or in cooperative efforts. It is necessary to monitor needs municipality-and region-wide, but also for specific groups, whether it be the elderly, the youth, or families. Provision of needed services to and facilities for area residents can be coordinated with community agencies within the area and those serving larger geographic areas.

For preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, a committee composed of Township and Borough residents was created. This concept of using committees composed of area residents to address major issues of concern within the area could be used on other issues.

## **Recreation and Open Space**

On the Future Land Use Plan, areas around Antietam Lake, Neversink Mountain, and Mount Penn have been indicated as Open Space and Park. In the Berks County Open Space and Recreation Plan, Neversink Mountain is indicated as open space area to be protected and the Antietam Lake area is indicated as existing open space and recreation. Creation of County Parks at these two areas is supported.

There is a need for additional recreational fields available to all the region's residents, and development of such fields on open Earl Trust land along Hill Road is recommended.

## **Trail and Greenway Planning**

### **Introduction**

A proposed trail system within the region has been planned. The trail system would accomplish several things, including providing a recreational resource for bicycling and walking; providing connections to Antietam Lake and trails in the vicinity, to existing trails on Neversink Mountain, and thus the trail system in Exeter Township and to the trail system in City owned land on and near Mt. Penn; and providing an alternative circulation system throughout the area which would provide access between developed areas, access to businesses and jobs, and access to community facilities and recreation facilities. Connections will be made to the existing sidewalk system within the Borough and Township.

Eventual connections would be available to the Thun Trail being developed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, the Horseshoe Trail which passes through the

southern portion of Berks County, and the Appalachian Trail which passes through the northern portion of Berks County, by connecting to trail systems in adjoining municipalities.

It should be emphasized that this is a Conceptual Plan, and it will be necessary to refine the Plan.

### **Issues to Address in Detailed Planning for a Trail System**

The first item to address is establishing destinations for the trail system. The conceptual trail plan has generally done this, but the destinations to be reached would have to be finalized and prioritized.

It also has to be determined what routes would be used to reach the destinations. The trail system could follow roads, creeks, railbeds, pipeline rights-of-way, sanitary sewer easements, electric company rights-of-way, and drainage easements.

It will also be necessary to determine the users to be accommodated, whether it be hikers, walkers, bikers, or horseback riders, or a combination.

Trail design studies would be necessary to actually design the trails. These studies would determine the actual locations, the extent to which existing pathways and sidewalks would be incorporated into the system, materials of the trails, the width of trails.

It will be necessary to determine costs, including construction costs, land costs, and maintenance. It will also be necessary to determine what method would be used to control the area necessary for the trail, including usage of existing or dedicated road rights-of-way, donations, easements, lease or purchase.

Sources of funding for trail construction would have to be identified, such as Keystone Grants, TEA, and Land and Water Conservation Fund.

If roadside lanes will be utilized, standards for road design should be established. The following typical bicycle lane cross-sections are from *Pennsylvania Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*.

It will be necessary to determine whose responsibility trail planning will be, whether it be individual Recreation Boards, or preferably, a joint recreation board or a trail commission or the entire area.

The planning agency will have to determine what are the primary trail routes and secondary routes. Once the trails are prioritized, if it is determined that some trails will be within PennDOT rights-of-way, PennDOT should be approached for assistance in

providing the trails. Bicycle lane width and shoulder width will vary with the average motor vehicle operating speed for a road, the average annual daily traffic volume, and the adequacy or inadequacy of sight distance along the road. PennDOT could be requested to pave wider shoulders where the rights-of-way permit.

### **Plan for the Reliable Supply of Water**

The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority serves the Borough, developed portions of Lower Alsace Township, St. Lawrence Borough, and portions of Exeter Township. Wells are located between Hill Road and Spook Lane. Pennsylvania American Water Company wells are located between Friedensburg Road and Butter Lane in Lower Alsace Township. The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority also maintains water storage facilities. These facilities are located adjacent and in close proximity to the Authority's wells between Hill Road and Spook Lane. Existing water facilities are shown on the map in Chapter 13. The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority system is interconnected to the Reading Area Water Authority and Pennsylvania American Water Company systems. Some areas of Lower Alsace Township are served by private wells.

Open Space and Park and Rural Conservation areas have also been designated on Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn and between Mt. Penn and Antietam Lake. Berks County Conservancy, Mt. Penn Preserve, Earl Trust, Mt. Penn Borough Authority, and City of Reading lands are included within these areas. Retaining this public and quasi-public owned land in open space and allowing only very low density development of privately-owned land will help protect the watersheds of watercourses and water supplies, protect vulnerable steep slopes, protect woodlands, minimize stormwater runoff and erosion, and maximize infiltration of rainfall.

In Rural Residential and Low Density Residential areas in the northern portion of Lower Alsace Township, the density of development would be established through analysis of the natural, scenic and historic features and resources at each site, and steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands would be protected.

Where residential developments, businesses, or other uses propose to utilize ground water or surface water supplies in substantial amounts, hydrologic studies should be required and the party causing the extraction should be required to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on the water supplies of other entities in the region.

Any public access to and usage of watershed areas should be consistent with the need to protect water supplies.

Zoning Ordinances should contain provisions to protect sources of water supply through the following techniques:

1. Natural Resource Protection standards (net out provisions) protecting floodplains, wetlands, wetland margins, steep slopes, watercourses, water bodies, and lake and pond shores.
2. Lot averaging provisions to allow flexibility in lot layout so houses can be sited away from natural features and resources.
3. Conservation zoning in Rural Residential and Low Density Residential areas to protect natural resources.
4. Steep slope protection provisions to minimize erosion and sedimentation resulting from impervious surfaces and tree clearance.
5. Woodland protection provisions to maintain tree cover.
6. Wetlands, wetland margin and hydric soil protection provisions to protect groundwater and surface water supplies from contamination and allow infiltration.
7. Floodplain protection provisions to protect surface water quality and quantity.
8. Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning to protect surface water from adverse impacts from development and other nearby disturbance.
9. Aquifer protection standards to protect groundwater supplies from contamination through use and impervious restrictions and design standards.
10. Wellhead protection provisions to protect central water supplies by restricting and regulating potential contaminating substances and uses.
11. Minimizing impervious cover.
12. Environmental performance standards and environmental assessment requirements for developments.

Zoning strategies should be coordinated with efforts of the Berks County Conservation District, Penn State Cooperative Extension and Berks County Conservancy to fence stream banks and use other Best Management Practices to protect stream quality. Development of impervious surfaces should be limited, riparian buffers established, and stream habitats improved.

When development plans are reviewed, developers should be required to adequately manage storm water runoff and erosion and sedimentation in manners consistent with the protection of water resources in the area. Storm water management should be considered

as part of the hydrologic cycle with less emphasis on detention, more emphasis on infiltration, reducing pollution, and reducing thermal impacts through BMPs. Recommendations and ordinances pursuant to adopted Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans should be implemented.

Developers should also be required to identify the resources within their tracts, analyze the impacts of development and mitigate those impacts. Natural resources should be incorporated into the open space system.

It should be noted that lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities. Commercial agricultural production impacts water supply sources and Best Management Practices should be applied to mitigate the impact on water supply sources.

The formation of new watershed associations and municipal environmental advisory councils should be supported.

Environmental Advisory Councils should be charged with protecting water resources in the region.

Public education programs should encourage the community to be aware of potential sources of water supply in their watersheds and to exercise good “housekeeping” and stewardship practices to help protect them.

Landscape management programs can be formulated to encourage residents to reduce nutrients and pesticides reaching streams and ground water. A regular program of household hazardous waste collection and public education programs should be maintained.

Pursuant to the State’s Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), source water areas of public water systems have been identified, potential pollution sources identified, and vulnerability of water supply to pollution sources assessed. The program also encourages and provides a tool for water suppliers, municipalities, and the public to develop methods and programs which reduce or eliminate the contamination of water used for drinking water supplies. Within the Region, the municipalities, watershed associations, and water suppliers should work together to develop a program to protect watersheds.

Drought contingency plans should be prepared by all water suppliers to establish how water supplies will be continued during times of drought. Elements to address include alternative sources of supply, interconnections between systems, emergency water transfer agreements, and water conservation provisions.

Even outside times of drought, water suppliers should implement water conservation programs for both the system and individual users.

### **Wellhead Protection**

Wellhead protection programs are an element of protecting groundwater sources and should be implemented. Key elements of wellhead and watershed protection programs include:

- delineation of critical recharge areas surrounding groundwater sources;
- adoption and enforcement of ordinance provisions to ensure compatibility of land use with groundwater protection within delineated critical recharge areas;
- groundwater quality monitoring surrounding water supply sources;
- inventory of contaminant activities surrounding groundwater supply sources;
- coordination with EPA and DEP regarding enforcement of permitting, registration, or emergency planning requirements for contaminant activities; and
- creation of agreements with the County conservation district for routine inspection of land development erosion and sedimentation plans within delineated critical recharge areas.



## PROTECTING WATER SUPPLIES

Stream Corridor Protection	Aquifer Protection	Groundwater Resource Protection Provisions	Hydrogeologic Impact Analyses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrict development and impervious surfaces</li> <li>• Require riparian vegetative buffers</li> <li>• Encourage use of best management practices</li> <li>• Encourage stream habitat improvement</li> <li>• Encourage conservation easements/donations/dedications</li> <li>• Protect wetlands and wetland margins</li> <li>• Require floodplain and wetland studies where not identified</li> <li>• Restore stream banks and crossings</li> <li>• Greenway development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review development plans to prevent groundwater pollution</li> <li>• Limit impervious surfaces</li> <li>• Establish performance standards for commercial and industrial uses</li> <li>• Protect aquifers through controlling uses and potential polluting activities</li> <li>• Utilize appropriate sewage disposal and water supply techniques, with appropriate standards and management</li> <li>• Protect headwaters and groundwater recharge areas</li> <li>• Best Management Practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellhead Protection</li> <li>• Increase watershed awareness</li> <li>• Regulation/restriction of potential contaminating uses</li> <li>• Performance standards</li> <li>• Design standards</li> <li>• Operating requirements</li> <li>• Review process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed supply locations</li> <li>• Geologic conditions, recharge rate, degree of renovation</li> <li>• Aquifer characteristics; groundwater movement, use, yield, quality, quantity, well interference</li> <li>• Test well results and impacts</li> <li>• Plan to protect groundwater system underlying and adjacent to the site: prevention, remediation, emergency management</li> <li>• Monitoring of groundwater quality and quantity</li> </ul>

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The goal for economic development is to sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the Township and the Borough, while maintaining the small-town character.

The objectives which have been established are:

- Enhance the quality of life in Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.
- Encourage appropriate re-use of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Support programs and efforts to promote economic development in Berks County and to retain, replace, and increase jobs for County residents.
- Provide for additional, appropriate commercial development at designated areas along Carsonia Avenue.
- Provide linkages to major open spaces such as Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake and the regional transportation system, to increase the attractiveness of the region as a residential and business location.
- Investigate use of the income tax to fund the school district.
- Plan for adequate parking facilities.
- Facilitate pedestrian access to businesses.
- Encourage streetscape improvements along Perkiomen Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Howard Boulevard, and Carsonia Avenue.
- Foster municipality and business community cooperation in promoting economic development, community attractiveness, and activities and events.
- Foster home ownership, maintenance of the building stock, increase of the tax base, stability of neighborhoods and community, and fiscal soundness of local government and school district.

## **Overall Approach**

The existing tax burden of the region's residents and infrastructure improvement costs are major concerns in the region. One way to address the issue of increased costs is more cooperative efforts of the municipalities and volunteer organizations to try to control costs of services. Another approach to addressing increased costs is to try to increase the tax base within designated commercial areas. The Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences Cooperative Extension has published a study entitled, "Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses, the Pennsylvania Experience." Eight Pennsylvania townships were studied to determine the potential fiscal impact of land uses. For residential, commercial, industrial and farm and open land uses, the ratios of revenues to expenditures were calculated. Residential land, on average, contributed less in revenue to the municipality and school district than it required in expenditures. Much of the negative fiscal impact was because of school expenses. Commercial, industrial and farm and open land provided more revenue than they required in expenditures. The study also indicates that these results are consistent with other states' experiences. In all but one Township, farm and open land had the best ratio of income to expenses among commercial, industrial, and farm and open land uses.

The Open Space and Park designation on the proposed Future Land Use Plan makes sense from a fiscal point of view. More importantly, preservation of those areas protects critical natural resources, provides open space and recreation facilities, enhances the quality of life in the region, and can make the region more attractive for economic investment in existing commercial areas.

In the Future Land Use Plan, provision is made for light industrial uses in the eastern portion of Lower Alsace Township where such uses now exist. The Light Industrial area would allow light industrial activities carried on in completely enclosed buildings and also heavy commercial uses as well. The intent is that the existing residential land uses around this area will not be adversely impacted.

Provision is made for commercial development along Business Route 422, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Howard Blvd. in Mt. Penn Borough and portions of Carsonia Avenue and Stony Creek Mills in the Township. The Plan provides for commercial, business, and office uses serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents, along with a mix of residential uses, along Perkiomen Avenue and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to promote continued vitality of the Borough Center. Neighborhood Commercial areas have been expanded along Carsonia Ave. to allow for additional commercial development within the Township. Performance standards will be established to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas. Commercial, business and office uses serving the day-to-day needs of the region's residents are promoted.

As noted elsewhere in this plan, providing for connections to potential Schuylkill Valley Metro stations is considered important. Connections to Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn, and Antietam Lake which are easily identified are even more important to the desirability of the Commercial Areas in the region.

Pedestrian scale and additional human interaction can also be fostered by development of the trail system throughout the region and connections to outside the region. The trail system can provide bicycle and pedestrian access to commercial areas in the Township and the Borough. This trail system can link destinations to businesses and commercial establishments. It would be desirable to have appropriate bicyclist and pedestrian-friendly facilities, including bike racks, sitting places, and plazas at businesses which could be accessed by trail users.

### **Encouraging Economic Vitality**

While economic vitality can be approached directly, such as providing land zoned for commercial development, providing opportunities for adaptive reuse of older buildings, fostering municipal/business partnerships to support the business community, marketing opportunities within the area, strengthening the streetscape of the commercial areas along Perkiomen Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Howard Boulevard, and Carsonia Avenue, and strengthening entry images at entrances to the municipalities, this is not the entire approach.

It is important to preserve residential neighborhoods which support the commercial areas and provide a workforce. Planning to achieve a desirable quality of life makes economic sense, as it can encourage additional investment in the area. Preserving community architecture, history and culture helps maintain a sense of place and attracts people and businesses to the area. "A sense of place" is a term used more and more in community planning. To say that there is a sense of place is to say that there is a location which is distinctive, to which people attach meaning, where there is a sense of a physically defined area, and where past and future experiences can be shared with other people.

To maintain a sense of place, it is necessary to maintain human scale and provide places for people to live, work and play safely and securely. This involves maintaining pedestrian scale, recognizing streets are for people not just for cars, providing adequate parking opportunities, providing for trees and attractive streetscapes, and encouraging humane architecture which is pleasing to and does not overwhelm people. Throughout the region, it is necessary to provide safe neighborhoods; provide convenience to jobs and necessary services; provide opportunities for human interaction by providing for open space, recreation, public places, pedestrian ways and sitting areas, community facilities and special events; providing diversity and experience in sensory involvement; providing awareness of history; maintaining unique characteristics; and recognizing the boundaries of the community.

### *Business Route 422 Corridor*

Encouraging development that enhances the visual character of the Business Route 422 Corridor and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street – Carsonia Avenue Corridor makes economic sense, as it can help prevent decline of the corridors in the future. Attention should be given to the entrances to the corridors as well as aesthetic treatments along the length of the corridors. Design principles for commercial and residential development should be established. Such design principles would result in continuity in the design of development along the corridors and take into account such factors as signage, screening, landscaping, setbacks, architecture, and streetscape improvements.

Parking opportunities in commercial areas should be monitored and investigated to their feasibility in the future, especially if there are changes in land use to increase the density of commercial development. The need to encourage sharing of underutilized parking areas should be monitored. Along Perkiomen Avenue it is important to keep available traffic lanes open to facilitate traffic flow because of heavy use of the road. The need to facilitate traffic flow complicates the ability to make streetscape improvements and facilitate increased on-street parking. It would be desirable to improve the pedestrian friendliness and landscaping of the Perkiomen Avenue—23<sup>rd</sup> Street intersection in particular, but this is a very heavily traveled area. The shallow nature of the lots along this route presents some limitations as to size of parking areas.

### **Improving Commercial Corridors**

The following are key elements in efforts to strengthen commercial corridors:

- **Improving the image by enhancing physical appearance**

This includes enhancing the appearance of buildings, streetlights, window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, benches, landscaping, trash receptacles, utility poles and lines, graphics and public phones. Design in the area should recognize existing desirable physical elements, be compatible with the area's character, and be unified.

- **Securing a consensus and cooperation among the groups that are involved in Business Development**

Parties that should be involved include elected officials, businessmen, bankers, real estate agents, customers, the media, residents and civic groups.

- **Promoting the Corridors**

The unique characteristics should be promoted to customers, investors, existing businesses and potential new businesses. A positive image can be fostered through appropriate special events, and other programs. A brochure promoting businesses could be prepared.

- **Strengthening the Economy of the Corridors**

If the economy is strong, it is possible to maintain and upgrade the buildings in the area. Existing businesses should be helped to expand, new businesses could be recruited, and increased use of any underutilized buildings should be promoted.

- **Affecting Attitudes towards the Corridors**

Consumers and investors have more positive attitudes toward areas as they see changes taking place such as building improvement projects and new street furniture. Owners of buildings will be more likely to make improvements to their buildings.

Specific tasks to help maintain economic vitality can include:

- Helping businesses identify new sales opportunities
- Promoting the corridors as cohesive areas to market groups
- Listing potential new businesses
- Keeping track of prospective businesses
- Improving the quality of downtown businesses by helping them be more customer responsive and competitive
- Having coordinated business hours that meet consumer needs
- Encouraging attractive window and interior merchandise displays
- Maintaining information on the corridors
- Marketing and promoting businesses
- Helping to maintain existing businesses and encouraging patronage of those businesses

- Working with financial institutions to establish loan pools
- Maintaining a good working relationship between public and private sectors
- Finding new uses for any underutilized or vacant downtown buildings
- Recruiting businesses to complement the corridor's mix of uses
- Identifying sources of grants for physical improvements or providing matching grants for such improvements
- Assuring promotional activities create a consistent, positive image for the corridor, consistent with community characteristics and history
- Understanding the region's history
- Managing parking spaces
- Scheduling events to bring people into the corridors
- Working with developers to assure attractive, well-planned development, which has an appropriate intensity of development and makes appropriate use of limited commercial land
- Enhancing alternatives to auto traffic, including enhanced transit service and pedestrian walkways
- Landscaping standards
- Enhancing the pedestrian system and coordinating with open space and recreation and greenway planning
- Managing road corridors
- Protecting remaining natural resources
- Encouraging appropriate mixed use
- Incorporating public spaces so they are visible and accessible, in order to humanize areas
- Addressing parking needs

- Recognizing the assets and defining characteristics of a corridor and enhancing and building upon those features. Examples are building stock, variety of available services, walkability, and traditional development patterns.



In conjunction with corridor improvement programs, an economic development strategy table like the following could be prepared.

<div> <div>Economic Development Task →</div> <div>Economic Development Incentive</div> </div>	Lighting Improvements	Sidewalk/Curb Improvements	Cross Walk Unique Identifier	Establish New Traffic Patterns/Traffic Improvements	Additional Trash Receptacles	Tree Replacement/Planting Program	Color Selection Coordination	Size Selection Coordination	Style Selection Coordination	Bandwidth Improvements	Overhead to Underground Conversion/Placement	Directional Signage	Deferred or Excused Payment Requirement	Commercial Development Recruitment	Create and Advertise Community Venues	Promote Adaptive Reuse Opportunities
Main Street Revitalization	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X
Additional Parking Improvements	X	X		X								X				
Recreation Program Expansion	X	X			X	X					X	X			X	
Public Safety Improvements	X	X	X	X	X						X					
Façade Coordination/Design/ Specification							X		X							
Signage Coordination							X	X	X							
Trash/Debris Increased					X											
Communication/Internet Enhancements										X	X			X		
Flat-pad Ready to Build Sites										X	X			X		
Tax Abatement Programs													X	X		X
Utility Incentives										X				X		X
Tourism Recognition													X		X	
Transportation Access				X												

As development occurs in the region, consideration should be given to the following:

- respecting architectural traditions of the region
- retaining the character and integrity of historic neighborhoods and buildings
- retaining a sense of place in neighborhoods and business areas
- enhancing gateways to the region
- limiting building heights to what is deemed appropriate and consistent with existing buildings
- attracting commercial uses which enhance the commercial character of the region
- providing greenspace
- encouraging owner-occupation, controlling conversions, and addressing parking needs in residential areas
- making the region more walkable and bikeable
- providing people-oriented spaces
- having appropriate signage control
- enhancing stream-side areas, providing parkland along creeks utilizing greenways and trails to draw people to the region
- Connecting to trails and bikeways throughout the region and facilitating wayfinding

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CIRCULATION PLAN**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The goal for circulation is to plan for a circulation system comprised of road, transit, and pedestrian facilities, which will allow safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian travel throughout Mount Penn and Lower Alsace.

Objectives are to:

- Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- Improve the safety of intersections along Perkiomen Avenue.
- Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the area as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and PennDOT.
- Monitor impacts on roadway capacity from new development and require developers to address projected increased traffic volumes in the road system by improving the existing system.
- Investigate providing additional parking opportunities in Mount Penn and along Friedensburg Road in the Township.
- Assure adequate access management occurs along the major road corridors such as Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road, to minimize the number of access points to the road system.
- Facilitate pedestrian circulation within the business areas of the community through such means as benches, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities.
- Preserve the scenic road corridors and vistas within the Township.
- Monitor the need for appropriate traffic control at the Perkiomen Avenue-27th Street intersection.
- Maintain and upgrade the existing road system as necessary and encourage PennDOT to improve state-controlled roads and intersections.
- Institute appropriate traffic calming techniques along Fairview Avenue.

- Encourage and support the development of a network of trails linking residential areas to open space and recreation resources, surrounding municipalities' trail systems, and means of access to any future Schuylkill Valley metro stations.
- Work with BARTA to assure adequate bus service to the area and the appropriate location and attractiveness of bus stops.
- Encourage maintenance and improvement of sidewalks and curbs, completion of gaps in the sidewalk system, and extension of the sidewalk system.
- Expand the pedestrian system to the area of the High School-Junior High School and Stony Creek Mills.
- Relieve congestion at the Antietam Road-Carsonia Avenue-Friedensburg Road intersection.
- Determine the merits of and appropriate locations of park and ride facilities and other multi-modal facilities.

### **Future Functional Classification of Roadways**

The future roadway classification is as follows:

**Major Arterials include:** Business 422, Howard Boulevard, Dengler Street, Carsonia Avenue-23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Friedensburg Road (from Carsonia Avenue to the northern boundary of the Township).

**Minor Arterials include:** Friedensburg Road (from the intersection of Carsonia and Filbert Avenues in the Borough to the intersection with Antietam Road in the Township), Spook Lane-Park Lane, and Antietam Road-Angora Road.

**Major Collectors include:** Filbert Avenue, Glen Road, Harvey Avenue, Antietam Road (from Angora Road to the northern boundary of the Township and in the vicinity of the High School), Fern Street, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Street, and Cherrydale Avenue.

**Minor Collectors include:** Endlich Avenue, Butter Lane, Old Friedensburg Road, Hill Road, List Road, and Angora Road from List Road to the Alsace Township Line.

**Local Access Roads include:** all other roads.

## **Proposed Improvements**

Proposed improvements are shown on the Circulation Plan.

### *Intersection Improvements:*

- Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street intersection, where turning movements and traffic calming should be improved;
- Perkiomen Avenue and 27<sup>th</sup> Street, where the need for turning limitations should be monitored.
- Perkiomen Avenue, Butter Lane, Endlich Avenue, and 26<sup>th</sup> Street, where offset and acute angle intersections create undesirable turning patterns.
- Carsonia Avenue, Friedensburg Road and Antietam Road, where the alignment and sight distance of the intersection should be improved, and need for signalization determined.
- Perkiomen Avenue, provide traffic calming and intersection enhancement the entire length running through Mt. Penn;
- Fairview Avenue, provide traffic calming the entire length running through Mt. Penn;

### *Improvements to Existing Areas of Concern*

The Traffic Circulation Plan also shows additional roadway concerns, including areas with parking concerns and circulation concerns (around the schools and churches in Mount Penn and Friedensburg Road in the Township) and areas with access management concerns as well as areas recommended for streetscape improvements and transit enhancements (Perkiomen Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Howard Boulevard, Carsonia Avenue). The municipalities should continue to work toward improvement of these areas through adoption of multi-year road improvement plans and cooperation with PennDOT. The cooperation and contribution of BARTA should be sought when the areas of concern involve transit improvements.

## **Scenic Roads**

Scenic roads are an important element of the circulation system within Lower Alsace Township. Maintenance of the system of scenic roads will be encouraged. The Future Land Use Plan proposes concentrating most future growth in areas where development

has already occurred, and proposes substantial Open Space and Park areas, and this will help maintain the scenic road system. In Rural Conservation areas, builders will be encouraged to incorporate natural features and resources into sites and to site homes with consideration of the natural features and resources.

The Township should consider adopting scenic road overlay zoning along scenic roads. Within such overlay areas, greater setbacks along the roads could be required, additional landscaping and screening requirements could be established, and design standards for siting of buildings could be established in order to minimize visual impacts of any development.

Discouraging intensive development along the scenic roads also has another benefit. This can lessen traffic volumes and driveway intersections along roads which are typically not suited for intensive traffic volumes.

### **Mass Transit**

Congestion on Perkiomen Avenue is a concern. No major improvements to the road is proposed by any governmental agency, so incremental steps will have to be taken to improve conditions. One of those incremental actions is encouraging use of the BARTA bus system.

An objective will be to maintain and then expand service. Elements in trying to expand service will be well-located stops, attractive and safe stops with shelters, connections to the transit hub in Reading and the Schuylkill Valley Metro, if constructed, and bicycle and pedestrian routes to stops with bicycle shelters and racks. The trail system is designed to provide connections between the sidewalk system, recreation areas and existing BARTA routes.

Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace and surrounding municipalities should work with BARTA to encourage BARTA to provide adequate suburb-to-suburb bus routes serving major residential, employment and retail areas, with cooperation with and support from the local business community.

Providing park and ride systems should be encouraged if land could be secured in the region or nearby.

The use of carpooling throughout the area should be encouraged. Businesses within the area could take the lead in encouraging employees to carpool.

## **Access Management**

Access management will be a concern along all roads within the area, but particularly along Perkiomen Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Howard Boulevard, Dengler Street, Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road, and the collector road system. The municipalities should consider working with PennDOT to develop an access management plan for the area.

The major elements in access management include the following:

- Driveway design standards
- Reduce number of road entrances
- Traffic Impact Analysis where development is proposed
- Appropriate provision for turning movements
- Adequate parking lot/internal circulation design
- Shared access to properties
- Interconnect properties along roads
- Improve intersection design
- Control of access
- Prohibit inappropriate turning movements

## **Transportation Development Districts**

The Transportation Partnership Act (Act 47 of 1985 as amended) allows municipalities to create Transportation Development Districts to assist in the financing of transportation facilities and services. Roads, railroads, and public transit are eligible. If municipalities propose a district, property owners who represent more than 50 percent of the assessed valuation within a proposed district must be in favor of the district. The creation of the Transportation Development District allows municipalities to impose assessments upon benefited properties within the District to construct transportation improvements.

While the Transportation Development District approach may not be appropriate at the present time, the appropriateness of it along Perkiomen Avenue should be monitored.

## **Congestion Management System Strategies**

The major elements are:

- Employee trip reduction plans to increase average vehicle occupancy
- Creation of transportation management associations in which municipalities work with local business community in identifying travel demand reduction measures such as:

- reducing vehicle concentrations at peak periods by staggering work hours;
- encouraging commuting by carpool and public transit rather than by single occupancy vehicles;
- eliminating unnecessary commutes;
- funding informal para-transit/vanpool operations; and
- hiring a transportation coordinator to organize transportation alternatives.

There are no major employers within the Borough and the Township, but major employers in adjoining regions where area residents work could be encouraged to use these techniques.

- Internalizing trips within an area

### **Impact Fees and Negotiated Financial Contributions**

The Municipalities Planning Code allows municipalities to assess a traffic impact fee provided municipalities have adopted a traffic impact fee ordinance. With a traffic impact fee system in place, a municipality can collect fees to finance improvements to the road system. Neither municipality has a traffic impact fee system. Two possible districts which could be investigated are Carsonia Avenue, Angora Road, Friedensburg Road and Antietam Road, and Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Dengler Street. It is unlikely such impact fees would be feasible in the region, given the cost of the initial studies, as long as land designated Open Space and Park on the Future Land Use Plan remains open.

Where traffic impact fee systems are not in place, financial contributions from developers for road improvements should be negotiated. Developer-financed road improvements at existing intersections and along road segments could help address current concerns and mitigate traffic increases associated with new development.

### **Shoulder Improvements**

In areas where sidewalk will not be constructed, developers should be required to improve shoulders along the frontages of their tracts when they develop. In addition, the Township could take it upon itself to improve shoulders along existing roads. Shoulders should be a minimum of 4 ft. wide, but should be the minimum width necessary to provide for trails in accordance with the guidelines in the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.



## Gateways

Gateways should be considered at the entrances to the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region along Perkiomen Avenue. A gateway is an entrance corridor that defines the arrival point as a destination. Gateway planning concerns arranging the landscape and visual experiences to help create a sense of arrival at the destination and provide a positive image of the destination. Municipalities can work with property owners to enhance the entrances.

Along the length of Perkiomen Avenue and in other commercial areas, property owners can be encouraged to enhance the commercial areas through coordinated landscaping, signage, lighting, street furniture, paving materials, design of site improvements, building facades and window displays. When new development occurs, developers could be required to comply with performance and design standards, which would require them to address these elements. Parking facilities should be landscaped.

Signage should be minimal, and appropriate to the character of the region.

Property owners should be encouraged to maintain and improve properties, particularly those that may have negative impacts on surrounding properties. Where the rear of commercial properties face or abut residential properties, attention should be paid to the appearance of the commercial property and its impact on the residences.

Design guidelines addressing the following elements could also be applied or developers could be asked to address them voluntarily:

- discouraging the use of drive-thru facilities where they do not now exist
- encourage new development to be compatible with and integrated into existing streetscapes, by addressing:
  - maintaining appropriate siting patterns, such as setbacks of buildings on lots
  - respecting the massing (volume created by sections of the building) within the neighborhood
  - using materials of similar appearance and texture to those on existing attractive buildings
  - using similar architectural treatments as other attractive buildings in the neighborhood

- Maintaining the scale and proportion of buildings near the building. Scale deals with the relationship of each building to other buildings in the area and proportion deals with the relationship of the height to the width of a building and with the relationship of each part to the whole.
- Using similar roof shapes
- Maintaining similar footprints of buildings and rooflines (matching facade masses with existing buildings)
- Using similar building heights
- Having store fronts and upper facades of commercial buildings compatible with existing buildings
- Using colors which are harmonious throughout the area

The use of coverage, density, intensity and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, street furniture, open spaces and desired parking designs could be considered along Perkiomen and Carsonia Avenues. The intent of bonuses is to provide incentives to developers, not just regulation, to allow economic use of property.

### **Pedestrian Circulation**

Pedestrian circulation has been discussed previously, but inter-relationships with the street system should be mentioned. As streets are maintained and improved, walkability should be addressed, including sidewalk improvements and the radii at intersections. Limiting radii at intersections to the minimum necessary to allow safe traffic flow can make intersections more pedestrian friendly. Pedestrian crossings at street intersections, particularly along the major trail routes within the area, should be facilitated through crosswalks, stop signs, limitation of cartway radii and the use of pedestrian buttons and cycles that signalize street intersections.

### **Traffic Calming**

The purpose of traffic calming is to manage movement through an area in a way that is compatible with the land usage in the vicinity of the road. Two fundamental principles of traffic calming are that streets are not just for cars and that residents have rights. Streets should be safe for pedestrians and local drivers and traffic should not adversely affect the quality of life along the streets. Traffic calming can be appropriate in residential areas which experience excessive volumes or speeds, typically because of through traffic, or

along rural roads which are not intended for high speed and volume because of the rural nature of the roads (narrow, windy, hilly).

Candidate streets in the region include Fairview Avenue, Perkiomen Avenue, Howard Boulevard, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Carsonia Avenue, Friedensburg Road, Antietam Road, Angora Road, and Spook Lane.

The general methods of traffic calming include:

- Active speed reduction (construct barriers to traffic movements)
- Passive speed reduction (installation of signage)
- Streetside design (landscaping changes the appearance of the area and driver attitudes)
- Regional planning efforts (external traffic directed to other routes) (trip reduction and congestion management strategies)
- Opportunities for use of alternative modes (mass transportation, pedestrian, bicycle)

Regional planning efforts and opportunities to use alternative modes have been discussed. The methods available along local streets include active speed reduction, passive speed reduction and streetside design. The need for these techniques should be monitored.

1. *Active Speed Reduction (Construct barriers)*

- a. Speed bumps and speed tables are raised areas in the street surface, which extend across the width of the street. Speed bumps present liability and are also annoying to local residents. Speed tables, which are really raised pedestrian crosswalks, could be more successful. They would be most appropriate in areas with substantial pedestrian traffic.
- b. Changes in roadway surface - This could include rumble strips, milling, and special roadway surfaces. These techniques can increase noise in areas and raise objections by area residents.
- c. Intersection Diverters - This could involve a barrier placed across an intersection, typically to alter travel plans, such as permitting right turns only, to make travel through a neighborhood more indirect.

- d. Channelization - This could involve provision of pedestrian refuge areas, providing protected parking bays through landscaped islands, altering motor vehicle traffic movements, and restricting movements at intersections by narrowing the space available for vehicular movement.

The active controls require changes in driver behavior. While the active methods send the message that the street is not just for through traffic, the methods are costly, and likely to be viewed negatively by some of the local users of the streets.

## 2. *Passive Methods of Control*

- a. Traffic signs such as Do Not Enter, Stop, Not a Through Street, Local Access Only, No Trucks, or signs establishing speed limits, indicating one-way nature of street, or prohibiting turns.
- b. Traffic Signals
- c. Pavement markings, including crosswalks, edgelines, and use of different materials for pedestrian crosswalks
- d. Permitting on-street parking
- e. Speed watch

These methods have lower costs and can be applied to certain times of the day, if appropriate. However, signs are often ignored in usage, and enforcement is necessary.

## 3. *Changing Driver Attitudes Within Neighborhoods*

Building design, street trees, landscaping, street furniture, lighting, paving, and land use can change the driver's perception of a road as not just an area to drive, but as a shared space with pedestrians and other occupants of the area. The intent is to have the driver recognize the street as not just a wide-open roadway designed for benefit of a car, but as a place where residents of a neighborhood will also be using the street. Any designs for streets should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood. Landscaping should be easy to maintain and not affect clear sight triangles.

## *Implementation*

Prior to implementation of any traffic calming program, it is necessary to clearly identify the specific problems which are to be addressed, identify and evaluate the alternative techniques and their drawbacks, benefits, and cost; identify alternative traffic patterns that could result from implementation of the techniques and the effects of those patterns on other streets and neighborhoods; and involve citizens of the community in the evaluation and selection of techniques. Techniques should not detract from the character or attractiveness of a neighborhood.

### *Primary Emphasis on Passive Techniques*

Primary emphasis should be given to the passive traffic calming techniques. The use of active traffic calming techniques should be employed only if passive techniques are not successful because of the cost and inconvenience to residents.

One area where more active traffic calming could be considered is Perkiomen Avenue where bumpouts could be considered at some street intersections. The bumpouts would physically protect parking and shorten the distance across the road for pedestrians.

### *Optimization of Traffic Signalization along Perkiomen Avenue*

In order to increase system capacity and reduce intersection delays, traffic signal timing along Perkiomen Avenue should be kept current.

Consideration should be given to implementing a closed loop system to enhance the operation of coordinated signalized intersections in the Business Route 422 corridor. Presently the signals in the Borough could be coordinated with those in St. Lawrence Borough and Exeter Township. Currently there are several closed loop systems in operation within PennDOT District 5-0. The systems will require hardware (vehicle detectors) in the field as well as a computer, software and communication lines to a municipal office and to the PennDOT District Office. They will also require a consultant or employee trained to monitor the system. Although the system would allow for real time signal timing adjustments, PennDOT policy currently allows timing adjustments to be made only by PennDOT. This inhibits the ultimate effectiveness of the closed loop system; however as these systems become more prevalent, we expect that PennDOT will respond with a more effective policy.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Natural resources are identified in Chapter 14, where floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, streams, steep slopes, wooded areas and natural features of special interest are discussed; Chapter 16, where aquifers are discussed; and Chapter 17, where scenic resources are discussed. Historic Resources are discussed in Chapter 22.

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The following goals and objectives have been established for natural resources, historic resources and agricultural resources.

##### **Natural Resources**

**Goal:** Protect, preserve and enhance the natural and scenic resources of Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough for current and future generations, and provide for physical access by Township and Borough residents for recreational and educational use.

##### **Objectives:**

- Protect and retain water resources within the municipalities to assure the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater for recreational use, wildlife habitats, fire protection, and water supply. Of particular concern will be Antietam Lake, the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority Watershed, Antietam Creek, the wetlands and floodplains along the creek, and steep slopes draining to the creek.
- Protect groundwater and surface water from pollution and excessive withdrawal.
- Protect and manage woodlands within the municipalities.
- Protect the steep slopes within the Township and Borough.
- Encourage the retention of existing desirable trees in the Borough and Township and the planting of additional trees as part of a tree planting program.
- Protect watersheds and wellhead areas for Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority and Pennsylvania American Water Company water supplies.

- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to create a permanent, large open space and recreation area on Neversink Mountain.
- Encourage the preservation of the scenic road corridors and view along them within Lower Alsace Township by limiting the encroachment of development.
- Support the efforts of Berks County to create a permanent, large open space and recreation area around Antietam Lake.
- Encourage creation and retention of a greenway along the Antietam Creek.
- Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy to retain the Earl Trust properties for permanent open space and recreation resources for the community.

When residents were asked if they would support efforts to preserve Neversink Mountain for open space and recreation purposes, 21 people were in favor of supporting it, while only one person was opposed. The questionnaire also asked the question whether or not the residents would support efforts to acquire the Antietam Lake area from the City of Reading in order to preserve the area as open space, 20 people responded in favor of supporting such efforts, while only 1 person opposed the idea.

### **Antietam Lake Watershed**

State Senator Michael A. O’Pake presented a State grant check in the amount of \$10,000 to the Friends of the Antietam Lake and the Berks County Conservancy on April 11, 2001. He secured these funds in the 2000-2001 state budget to support the purchase of a conservation easement from the City of Reading to protect the 560-acre lake and watershed from development.

During this speech, Senator O’Pake said,

*“Just a few decades ago, the Antietam Valley was considered a place to get away from the hustle and bustle of our City. There was a popular amusement park (Carsonia Park), "vacation bungalows," and Antietam Lake and the surrounding forest. Today, the only area that remains in tact is the Antietam Lake and its watershed. Residential and commercial development has gobbled up much of the land in the valley, as well as in many areas throughout our county. That is why it so important that this beautiful lake and watershed be preserved and that is what makes this area so unique. Less than a mile from the city limits, as the crow flies, this scenic and pristine area offers hiking trails, a nature center, very popular fishing sites, a habitat for wildlife, and*



One of the feeder streams into Antietam Land. Photo from Berks Watch Website

*tremendous natural beauty. Each day many people hike the trails in the watershed. It is not uncommon to see anglers braving frigid winter weather to ice fish on the frozen water of the lake. And with the opening of trout season this weekend, the area will be filled with still more fishing enthusiasts—father and son, mother and daughter... This is a win-win situation for all parties involved. The City will gain financially while still maintaining ownership of the Lake and watershed and the citizens of Reading and Berks County, and future generations, will enjoy the area's scenic beauty. If we allow this gem of nature to be developed now, we will never get it back.”*

It is important that preservation efforts continue and the region should support organizations such as “Friends of Antietam Lake” working to preserve such an important resource for the area.

### **Antietam Creek and its Tributaries**

Antietam Creek is an important stream corridor. One way to protect this stream and its tributaries is to establish a Stream Corridor Preservation Overlay District in Zoning Ordinances. This District could require riparian buffers along the watercourses and help to establish and maintain greenway corridors. In the Berks County Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Antietam Creek corridor is identified as an open space area to be protected.

A riparian buffer is an area of vegetation that is maintained along the shore of a water body to protect stream water quality and stabilize stream channels and banks.

Buffers provide the following benefits:

- filter runoff – Rain that runs off the land can be slowed and infiltrated in the buffer, settling out sediment, nutrients and pesticides (nonpoint source pollution) before they reach streams.
- take up nutrients – Fertilizers and other pollutants that originate on the upslope land are taken up by tree roots. Nutrients are stored in leaves, limbs and roots instead of reaching the stream. Through a process called “denitrification,” bacteria in the forest floor convert nitrate to nitrogen gas, which is released into the air.
- provide shade – The leaf canopy’s shade keeps the water cool, allowing it to retain more dissolved oxygen, and encouraging growth of plants and aquatic insects that provide food for fish.



- contribute leaf food – Leaves that fall into the stream are trapped on fallen trees and rocks where they provide food and habitat for organisms critical to the aquatic food chain.
- provide habitat – Streams that travel through woodlands provide more habitat for fish and wildlife. Woody debris provides cover for fish while stabilizing stream bottoms.
- provides migration corridors for wildlife.
- safeguard water supplies by protecting groundwater recharge areas.
- provide flood control.
- provide stormwater management potential – natural vegetation provides a basis for innovative stormwater management systems. Stormwater flows from retention basins can be directed to, and allowed to flow through, buffers to reduce nutrient and sediment loads.
- improve water and air quality.
- stimulate economic opportunities such as by providing valuable open space which may increase land values and, therefore, the tax base.
- provide some federal tax incentives to landowners (depending on a landowner's financial situation) willing and able to place some of their lands under conservation easement.
- reduce grounds maintenance.
- provide recreational opportunities, and associated economic benefits for recreation-related businesses.
- provide educational and research opportunities for local schools and colleges.
- provide windbreak, shade and visual buffer.

## **Highlands**

Two features in the Region, Mt. Penn and Neversink Mountain, have been described by the Highlands Coalition as Critical Treasures in the Highlands.

The Highlands Coalition has described the Highlands as follows:

Pennsylvania's Highlands wander through parts of Chester, Berks, Bucks, Montgomery, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties. Streams flowing from these hills supply water to Allentown in the north and Reading, Pottstown, and the Delaware Valley to the south.

Located in the backyard of the nation's most densely populated region lie two million acres of forested ridges, pure streams, lakes, and reservoirs known as the Highlands. These ridges stretch from Reading, Pennsylvania through northern New Jersey, southern New York, and western Connecticut. This eastern-most extension of the Appalachian Mountains forms a vital link with the Berkshires to the North, and the Shenandoahs to the South.

The Highlands are an essential source of drinking water, clean air, critical wildlife habitat and abundant recreational opportunities for nearly twenty-five million people who live within one hour's travel of the region. . .

Undisturbed forests protect water quality in Highlands' reservoirs, watersheds, aquifers, and waterways, reducing the need for costly artificial water treatment facilities. Forested watersheds in the Highlands also help prevent costly downstream flooding and soil erosion. . .

The Highlands region is a beautiful tapestry of cool forests, scenic mountains, sparkling waterways and productive farmlands, which enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike. . .

The beautiful natural landscapes of the Highlands provide a high quality of life for our families and our future. . .

The Highlands are home to a remarkable diversity of life, nourished by verdant forests, lush wetlands and clean waterways. . .

Forests also provide life-giving fresh air, moderate temperature and combat global warming. . .

The Highlands are under an intense assault by suburban sprawl and industrial development.

The Highlands Coalition has identified sixty-seven "Critical Treasures", or priority conservation areas, where additional lands need to be preserved. In order to protect these special places from suburban sprawl and industrial development, increased funding for land conservation is needed through federal programs

including Forest Legacy, the Farmland Protection Program, the Land & Water Conservation Fund and others.

The Federal Government must partner with state and local governments in the Highlands region to protect the Critical Treasures of this nationally significant landscape.

Protecting these missing links will help maintain the integrity of the entire Highlands ecoregion and secure the protection of watersheds, forests, wildlife and the quality of life for millions of people. . .

Unless bold steps are taken, the future of this region of water, beauty and life is in serious danger. Poorly planned sprawl and industrial development will consume the forest and farmlands of the Highlands, threatening the drinking water supplies for millions, destroying important wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and marring the beauty and quality of life of this backyard paradise.

To safeguard the vital resources of this nationally significant region an innovative state and federal partnership is needed to preserve and connect the Critical Treasures of the Highlands as a network of wildlands. Only an interconnected network of protected lands will ensure the ecological integrity of the Highlands in an increasingly fragmented landscape.

We still have an opportunity, and a responsibility, to secure this thriving greenbelt surrounding the nation's most densely populated metropolitan areas – a place where millions of people can live in close proximity to forested ridges and valleys that provide abundant clean water, clean air and places to recreate and enjoy the beauty of nature.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO LAND USE PLAN**

Open Space & Park, as well as Rural Conservation areas have been identified throughout the most southern portion of Lower Alsace Township, which includes Neversink Mountain, and northwestern portion of Lower Alsace Township, which includes Mt. Penn Preserve and the Antietam Lake/watershed area. Only limited development will be allowed in the Rural Conservation areas, now privately owned, in order to not adversely affect watershed, steep slopes, and potential park and recreation areas and trails. Limiting development will also protect watercourses, water supplies, and vulnerable wooded areas and conserve ecosystems by maintaining an adequate critical mass through connecting ecosystems.

The Open Space & Park areas are not intended for development. They include environmentally sensitive areas, including Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn Preserve and

some of the Earl Trust properties. Neversink Mountain Preserve and Mt. Penn Preserve are identified as components of the County open space system in the County Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Future Land Use Map is consistent with and supports efforts of Berks County and the Berks County Conservancy to protect Mt. Penn Preserve, Neversink Mountain Preserve, and the Antietam Lake Watershed.

## **ACTIONS TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES**

The following actions should be taken to protect the natural resources within Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township:

1. Update zoning maps and zoning ordinances or enact a joint zoning ordinance to reflect Rural Conservation, and Open Space and Park areas.
2. Update zoning ordinances to reflect the Future Land Use Plan and Goals and Objectives of this Plan to include:
  - a. Natural Resource Protection Standards and Net Out Provisions
  - b. Steep Slope Protection
  - c. Watershed and Wellhead Protection
  - d. Groundwater and Surface Water Protection
  - e. Tree and Woodland Protection, Management, and Planting
  - f. Wetland, Wetland Mitigation and Hydric Soil Protection
  - g. Floodplain Protection from further encroachment of development
  - h. Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning, Riparian Buffers
  - i. Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed Overlay zoning
3. Work with the Berks County Conservancy and other conservation groups to encourage acquisition through conservation easements, fee simple, donation and dedication of key natural areas.
4. Consider creation of an Environmental Advisory Council to work to preserve key tracts of open space and natural resources.
5. Support efforts of the Berks County Conservancy, Berks County Conservation District, and other agencies to manage stream corridors through cooperative efforts with landowners for riparian buffers, best management practices, and stream bank improvements. Cooperate in securing easements along streams.
6. Encourage formation of groups within the community to adopt a stream and provide monitoring and oversight along stream corridors.

7. Form a watershed association for the Antietam Creek and encourage watershed planning under the Growing Greener initiative and other programs.
8. Discourage extension of public sewer and water into areas containing critical natural resources.
9. Encourage Act 167 Stormwater Management Planning, stormwater management, and use of Best Management Practices.
10. Utilize zoning techniques such as Conservation Zoning and lot averaging to protect natural resources on tracts.
11. Support implementation of the Long-Range Plan for Neversink Mountain contained in the Neversink Mountain Feasibility Study, November 1997, prepared for the City of Reading in cooperation with the Berks County Conservancy with the assistance of Robert E. Bartman. See Appendix 5.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

**Goal:** Identify, preserve and enhance the historic, architectural and cultural resources of the Township and Borough.

***Objectives:***

- Encourage the preservation, protection, and enhancement of historic and architectural resources and their context.
- Support efforts of Friends of Antietam Lake to restore historic and cultural resources such as the valve house and nature center.
- Require new development to reflect and consider the history, architecture and development patterns of the municipalities; discourage inappropriate development near historic resources; require impact studies for development near historic resources; and require mitigation of any potential adverse impacts on historic resources.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures where appropriate.

## **State Grants Available to Help Fund the Preservation of Historic Resources**

Guidelines pertaining to the PHMC's three primary grant programs are found in this section. The programs and eligibility criteria are described in detail. Prospective applicants may determine how the Commission's multiple funding opportunities can best meet their needs and the needs of their constituents and can best serve the people of Pennsylvania. Guidelines can be obtained for each grant type on the PHMC's website. The Bureau for Historic Preservation awarded competitive grants based on the recommendations of independent review panels, which evaluated hundreds of applications. Since 1995, the PHMC has awarded more than 2,300 grants – totaling more than \$45 million- in communities across the state. Grants are awarded to museums, historical societies, municipal governments, and local institutions to support their programs and operation, preserve historic properties and districts, and assist in a wide variety of projects designed to interpret and protect PA's cultural heritage.

### **The following are the PHMC's available grants to preserve historical resources:**

1. **Certified Local Government Grant Program** – Funding under this program is limited to federally designated Certified Local Governments. There is only one type of grant.
  - Competitive
  - Matching
  - Maximum Award \$25,000
  - Funding in the Categories of Cultural Resource Surveys, National Register Nominations, Technical and Planning Assistance, Educational and Interpretive Programs, Staffing and Training, and Pooling CLG Grants and Third Party Administration.
2. **Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program** - Funding under this program is available to nonprofit organizations and local governments for capital improvements on historic resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. (Private property owners are not eligible for funding under this program and may wish to refer directly to PHMC Programs of Interest for information on investment tax credits and historic homesites program.) There is one type of grant.
  - Competitive
  - Matching
  - Maximum Award \$100,000
  - Funding in the Categories of Preservation, Restoration, and Rehabilitation.

3. **Pennsylvania History and Museum Grant Program** - Funding under this program is designated to support a wide variety of museum, history, archives and historic preservation projects, as well as nonprofit organizations and local governments. There are 10 types of grants listed below with descriptions of each following:
  - Archives and Records Management Grants
  - General Operating Support Grants for Museums
  - General Operating Support Grants for Official County Historical Societies
  - Historic Preservation Grants
  - Historical Marker Grants
  - Local History Grants
  - Museum Project Grants
  - Statewide Conference Grants
  - Statewide Organization Grants
  - Technical Assistance Grants
4. **Archives and Records Management Grants** - PHMC grants help communities share Pennsylvania's rich and diverse history.
  - Organizations and local governments can bring historical documents and records to life for their communities with grants for archival care and accessibility.
  - Organizations and local governments can contribute to a community's understanding of its heritage through oral and written histories, public programs of all types, historical research, and educational programs for students of all ages.
5. **General Operating Support for Museums Grants** - Museums are eligible to apply for grant funding to support their general operations.
  - Noncompetitive
  - Matching
  - Maximum Award \$10,000
  - No Special Categories
6. **General Operating Support Grants for Official County Historical Societies Grants** - Official county historical societies receive general operating support grants as a way to recognize the outstanding work these societies do for their communities. These grants are:
  - Noncompetitive
  - Matching
  - Maximum Award \$10,000
  - No Special Categories

**7. Achieves and Records Management Grants are:**

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000
- Matching to \$20,000
- Maximum Award \$20,000
- Funding in the Categories of Access and Preservation Programs, and County Records Improvement Programs

**8. Historic Preservation Grants** - Applicants may apply for grants that cover every aspect of historic preservation, including:

- restoration and rehabilitation of historic properties
- cultural resource surveys
- historic preservation studies and plans
- educational and interpretive programs
- nomination to the National Register of Historic Places
- archaeological research

**Historic Preservation Grants are:**

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000
- Matching to \$15,000
- Maximum Award \$15,000
- Funding in the Categories of Cultural Resource Surveys, National Register Nominations, Planning and Development Assistance, Educational and Interpretive Programs, and Archaeology

**9. Historical Markers Grants are:**

- Selective
- Matching
- Maximum Award \$650
- No Special Categories

**10. Local History Grants are:**

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000
- Matching to \$15,000
- Maximum Award \$15,000
- Funding in the Categories of Public Programs, Research and Writing, and Educational Programs

**11. Museum Project Grants are:**

- Competitive
- No Match Required to \$5,000



- Matching to \$15,000
  - Maximum Award \$15,000
  - Funding in the Categories of Institutional Development, Collections Management, and Educational and Interpretive Program
12. **Statewide Conferences Grants** - Organizations planning to sponsor conferences with a statewide, regional or national audience may apply for “seed” money to assist with conference preparation.
- Selective
  - No Match Required
  - Maximum Award Generally Does Not Exceed \$5,000
  - No Special Categories
13. **Statewide Organizational Grants are:**
- Selective
  - No Match Required
  - Maximum Award Generally Does Not Exceed \$100,000
  - No Special Categories
14. **Technical Assistance Grants** - Offer options to a wide range of applicants for solving institutional problems, developing staff skills, and increasing overall professionalism. The grants bring experts in the field to the organizations’ sites or provide staff training. These grants are:
- Competitive
  - No Match Required
  - Maximum Award \$1,500
  - No Special Categories

#### **Action Steps for Protection of Historic Resources:**

1. Appoint an historical commission.
2. Support the activities of individuals and groups, such as the Berks County Conservancy, which identify, document, evaluate and protect historical resources and increase public awareness of the area’s history and historic resources.
3. Support the planning of trails to link historic sites and erect informative markers and exhibits at historic resources.
4. **Evaluation of Historic Resources** - *A reconnaissance survey of historic resources* for Lower Alsace Township and the Borough of Mt. Penn was conducted by the Berks County Conservancy in 1987. This survey identified thirty-six (36) individual buildings significant for their architecture and



contribution to local history. In addition, seven (7) groups of buildings were identified as typical of housing styles prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These resources should be reviewed and one or more historic contexts developed as a precursor to conducting a *comprehensive survey of historic resources*. An historic context is defined as a broad pattern of historical development in a community that may be evidenced in the historic resources. Potential historic context in these municipalities may include:

- a. **Friedensburg Road** –19th century farmhouses and buildings associated with the vineyards that predominated land use in this area before 1876.
  - b. **Stony Creek Mills** - residences and industrial buildings related to the woolen mills that operated at Friedensburg Road and the Antietam Creek from 1865 to the 1940s.
  - c. **Suburban Development of the 1920s** - Trolley lines from the City of Reading brought patrons to the resorts and amusement parks that existed at the turn of the 20th century on Mt. Penn and Neversink Mountain. From 1887 to 1929, developers divided old farmstead into housing developments representing an eclectic mix of Spanish, Colonial Revival and Craftsman architecture in a traditional neighborhood pattern.
5. **Solicit Citizen Support** - The Historical Society of Berks County and local historical associations can provide assistance in identifying historic resources and developing an educational outreach for broad-based community support.
  6. **Historic Overlay Zoning** - Individual sites and clusters documented and identified on a Historic Resource Map may be protected from inappropriate development that would destroy the character of the historic neighborhoods. Zoning ordinances could require buildings similar in type and scale to those already existing. Requirements to replicate the existing building line, and height and bulk would also help to preserve existing neighborhood character.
  7. **Cluster or Open Space Development** - Open space and cluster provisions in the zoning ordinance can allow for the preservation of historic resources on parcels being subdivided for new housing. The required open space may contain the historic buildings and prevent their demolition.
  8. **Designation of National Register Historic Districts** – the comprehensive historic resource survey may identify areas suitable for *determination of eligibility* and possibly *nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*. Listing in the National Register would allow contributing resources to qualify for Historic Tax Credits as well as State and Federal Grant programs.

9. **Certified Local Historic District** - requires appointment of an historic architectural review board to advise the local governing body on the appropriateness of the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings in the district-contributing and noncontributing. Evaluate the potential for historic districts and support their creation if warranted. If created, support the adoption of Design Guidelines and Sign Controls for Historic District(s).
10. Encourage property owners to restore and/or adaptively reuse historic structures and discourage removal of historic structures.
11. Conceive programs, events and interpretive signage and exhibits, which emphasize the history of the region.
12. Identify contemporary sites for future preservation.

This plan for the protection of natural and historic resources is not intended to be inconsistent with and exceed the requirements imposed under acts identified in Section 301.(a).(6) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, nor prohibit the conduct of forestry operations.

***Historic Resources for Lower Alsace / Mt. Penn***  
**Properties Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places**  
**Information from the Berks County Conservancy**

<p>Wm Penn Memorial Fire Tower</p> 	<p>Skyline Drive</p>	<p>Fire observation tower and tourist attraction built in 1939 on the Tower Hotel foundation (1889 –1924). The William Penn Fire Tower is near where the Stone Tower stood. Skyline drive has replaced the Gravity Railroad. Only the Summit House remained; however, it was demolished in 1959. Photo from BCHS website.</p>
 <p>Antietam Lake</p>	<p>Antietam Road</p>	<p>City of Reading bought properties surrounding Ohlinger's Dam to create the first purchased watershed in the U.S. New dam completed in 1879.</p>

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **ACTION PLAN**

The following actions should be addressed in order to implement this Comprehensive Plan:

1. Consider preparation of a joint zoning ordinance and map for the Borough and the Township or update individual municipal zoning ordinances and maps.
  - A. Update zoning maps to reflect the Future Land Use Plan.
  - B. Update zoning ordinances to reflect the Future Land Use Plan and Goals and Objectives of this Plan.
    - (1) Natural Resource Protection Standards and Net Out Provisions
    - (2) Steep Slope Protection
    - (3) Watershed and Wellhead Protection
    - (4) Groundwater and Surface Water Protection
    - (5) Tree and Woodland Protection, Management and Planting
    - (6) Wetland, Wetland Margin and Hydric Soil Protection
    - (7) Floodplain Protection
    - (8) Stream Corridor Overlay Zoning
    - (9) Historic Resource Overlay Zoning
    - (10) Demolition by Neglect Provisions
    - (11) Town Center provisions regarding scale; uses; intensity; signage; aesthetics; pedestrian amenities; parking; landscaping; access management; and use, coverage, density, intensity, and yard bonuses for architectural treatments, building design, amenities, street furniture, open spaces, and parking designs consistent with Plan objectives.

- (12) Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed Overlay Zoning
  - (13) Home Employment Provisions
  - (14) Housing for the Elderly
- 2. Update Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances
  - A. Trails and greenways
  - B. Stormwater Management and Best Management Practices
  - C. Impact Studies (Traffic, hydrogeologic, environmental, scenic, historic, cultural)
  - D. Access Management
  - E. Resource identification and protection
  - F. Open Space and Recreation
  - G. Street furniture
- 3. Administrative Actions for Resource Protection and Enhancement
  - A. Coordination with DEP to retain Antietam Lake. Build support from Berks County government.
  - B. Coordination with Berks County Conservancy, Berks County, Friends of Antietam Lake, and the Earl Trust to preserve Neversink Mountain, the Antietam Lake area, and Earl Trust landholdings as permanent open space and park facilities
  - C. Encourage the City of Reading to retain all landholdings in Lower Alsace Township as permanent open space and park facilities
  - D. Maintain the scenic road system in the Township through the activities in A, B, and C above and Scenic Road and Scenic Viewshed overlay zoning
  - E. Plan for a greenway and riparian buffer along the Antietam Creek
  - F. Establish a tree planting program

- G. Establish an Environmental Advisory Council
  - H. Establish an Historical Commission
    - (1) Identify and evaluate historic resources
    - (2) Investigate participation in Certified Local Government Program
    - (3) Investigate creation of historic districts
    - (4) Inform and involve public
    - (5) Encourage retention, restoration, enhancement and appropriate adaptive re-use of historic resources and discourage removal of historic structures
    - (6) Conceive programs and interpretive signage and exhibits which emphasize the history of the region
  - I. Support efforts of groups such as Friends of Antietam Lake and the Berks County Conservancy which are working to preserve resources in the community
  - J. Adopt an Open Space and Recreation Plan component of this plan in order to charge recreation fees for new development and subdivision
  - K. Continue and initiate additional wellhead protection and watershed planning opportunities under the growing greener initiative and other programs. Consider creation of an Antietam Creek Watershed Association.
4. Actions to Address Stormwater Management Problems
- A. Encourage Berks County to initiate Act 167 stormwater management planning for the Antietam Creek/Schuylkill River Watershed as soon as possible.
  - B. Coordinate watershed-wide planning with plans to address local flooding problems and efforts to secure funding to address local problems
  - C. Require land developers and subdivisions to manage stormwater runoff and work with adjacent municipalities to encourage them to have property owners address stormwater affecting the region.

5. Continue to address infiltration problems in the sanitary sewer system.
6. Actions to assure availability of and access to recreation facilities for the region's residents.
  - A. Support efforts to develop County parks on Neversink Mountain and at Antietam Lake.
  - B. Work with the School District to assure retention of existing facilities and their availability to the region's residents.
  - C. Work to accomplish the acquisition of Earl Trust property along Hill Road for permanent recreation fields for all the region's residents.
  - D. Encourage further development of trail systems on Neversink Mountain, at Antietam Lake, in City of Reading open space and recreation land, and along Antietam Creek.
  - E. Facilitate access to the recreational trail system and access to community facilities by completing links within the Borough and Township as shown on the Pedestrian Facilities Plan. Identify and enhance an appropriate pedestrian route connecting Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake.
7. Actions for Economic and Community Development
  - A. Enhance Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Howard Boulevard through streetscape improvements in coordination with PaDCED and PennDOT. Prepare a Streetscape Plan.
  - B. Establish policies for home employment in the zoning ordinance.
  - C. Expand neighborhood commercial zoning at appropriate locations along Carsonia Avenue.
  - D. Coordinate with BARTA and trail and circulator planning in St. Lawrence – Exeter – Amity to facilitate access to employment opportunities, the circulation system, and any Schuylkill Valley Metro Station.
  - E. Work with the Antietam School District to investigate use of the income tax to fund the School District.

Establish regular communication among the Borough and Township governments, school district, community and business organizations,

residents and businesses to address the school tax burden and school planning in the community.

- F. Continue cooperation and dialog between the Township and the Borough and community entities such as the fire companies, authorities, and school district on provision and sharing of services, equipment, facilities and programs; comprehensive planning; implementation of this plan; emergency services planning; and the potential merger of Lower Alsace and Mount Penn.
- G. Work with the city of Reading, the school district, and state agencies to maintain and restore the infrastructure and appearance of the region, such as the Antietam Creek channel and the Skyline Drive area.
- H. Bring together citizens, the business community, and the school district to plan and organize community-wide activities, events, and programs to foster community spirit, economic development, and community attractiveness.
- I. Establish a program to increase availability and sharing of parking facilities; facilitate pedestrian and bicycle circulation; and facilitate transit access in commercial areas in the region through cooperation with area businesses, PennDOT, and BARTA.
- J. Work with potential land developers to achieve appropriate scale, signage, aesthetics, pedestrian amenities, and intensity and types of commercial development when development occurs in the commercial areas of the region, and provide for the commercial needs of the community. Address design and performance standards, access management, permitted uses, and area and bulk regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.
- K. Adopt, maintain and enforce adequate building, housing and property maintenance codes and zoning ordinance provisions to maintain the building stock and properties within the region and reverse the trend of conversion from owner occupied to renter occupied units.
- L. Continue to allow residential uses in the Town Center area to provide for a mixed-use environment.
- M. Enhance the gateways to the region and the sense of identity of the communities.



- N. Work with residents of the region to identify programs that are available to help them maintain and enhance their properties, and meet housing expenses and retain their homes as owner-occupied single family residences.
  - O. Involve the region's residents and business community in committees to address major issues of concern within the region.
  - P. Investigate programs to address and provide for the housing needs of the elderly in the community.
  - Q. Jointly monitor availability of grants for planning and implementation and pursue such grants.
  - R. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a community center in the region within existing community facilities, such as a primary center or a church building.
  - S. Identify and support activities to promote the region, retain existing businesses, attract and recruit desired new businesses, and enhance existing businesses. Bring the business community and residents together in efforts to do this.
  - T. Promote and support efforts of community organizations to provide recreational facilities and programs for area residents and services and programs for the elderly and children.
  - U. Monitor policies on extensions of public sewer and water facilities to assure they are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
8. Actions for Transportation Enhancement
- A. Work with PennDOT and land developers to improve the safety and functioning of intersections along Perkiomen Avenue.
  - B. Consider adoption of a Transportation Impact Fee ordinance and require land developers to address needed transportation improvements in the region.
  - C. Establish a program to improve parking, safety, and circulation near community facilities in the region. Investigate ways of providing additional parking opportunities in the Borough and along Friedensburg Road. Encourage the school district and churches to provide additional

parking at their facilities. Enact appropriate parking and traffic regulations in the vicinity of school and church facilities. Work with the school district and churches to establish appropriate bus and car circulation, pick-up and discharge patterns. Prepare a program to improve the management of parking spaces in the region.

- D. Institute traffic calming techniques along Fairview Avenue and Perkiomen Avenue.
  - E. Prepare Sidewalk Improvement Program and Policies which will improve pedestrian access to the area of the High School-Middle School through extension of the sidewalk system; enhance pedestrian circulation through amenities such as benches; complete gaps in the sidewalk system; extend the sidewalk system, provide for maintenance and improvement of existing sidewalks, and facilitate pedestrian crossings at street intersections.
  - F. Cooperate with BARTA to assure adequate bus service and the appropriate location and attractiveness of bus stops. Coordinate in the provision of park and ride facilities and multi-modal facilities where appropriate.
  - G. Prepare a plan for relieving congestion at the Antietam Road-Carsonia Avenue-Friedensburg Road intersection.
  - H. Establish a program and policies for provision of curb where it does not exist in the region and improvement of substandard curbing.
  - I. Prepare multi-year programs for street maintenance.
  - J. Work with PennDOT to keep traffic signal timing current and monitor the need for a closed loop signalization system along Route 422.
  - K. Develop an access management plan in cooperation with PennDOT to address access to major roads and access design standards. Encourage cooperative efforts of landowners to manage and share access.
  - L. Require developer-financed street improvements.
- 9. Prepare a Capital Improvements Program.
  - 10. Consider adoption of Official Maps.
  - 11. Each year formulate a Work Program to implement this Comprehensive Plan.

## **PRIORITY ACTIONS**

Upon adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the highest priority is to execute an Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement to implement the Plan. A Regional Planning Committee is established by that agreement.

The municipalities have two years from the adoption of the Plan to make sure that their zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, Act 537 plans, capital improvement plans, and official maps are generally consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. The municipalities may act individually, cooperate to draft consistent zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance language, or prepare a joint zoning ordinance. Achieving this general consistency with the plan is the next priority after executing the Agreement.

Other actions to consider in the first two years after Plan adoption are the appointment of a historical commission and environmental advisory council (EAC). These groups can help achieve implementation of the Action Plan.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING AND OFFICIAL MAP**

Two major potential tools in implementing this Plan are capital improvements planning and adoption of an official map, as detailed below. The discussion of the official map is based upon the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

### **Capital Improvements Planning**

Capital improvements planning includes financial analysis of past trends in the community, present conditions, and a projection of the community's revenues and expenditures, debt limit and tax rates, to determine what the financial capabilities of the municipality are. It also includes a capital improvements program which establishes a system of priorities. The final element is a capital budget which lists the schedule of improvements over a 5-year period based on the community's financial capacity and availability of grant money.

In the capital improvements program, capital expenditures are separated from operational expenditures. Operational expenditures are those for administration, salaries, maintenance and similar functions, and are short term. Capital expenditures are for assets which have a substantial value compared to the total municipal budget and are expected to provide service for a number of years. The purchase of land or the construction of a building is an example of a capital expenditure.

The capital improvements program schedules the purchase of capital items in a systematic manner rather than allocating a large amount of money for all expenditures in

one year. Based on the assessment of future needs, future expenditures are planned so that the municipality can anticipate these major expenditures prior to the budget year. The program is based on identified capital needs, goals for capital acquisitions, and a priority list of all proposed capital expenditures.

A time frame is established for the capital improvements program. Five-year programs are typical. Every year the schedule for capital improvements must be revised and updated as necessary, based on the current municipal priorities. For each project included in the program, estimated costs must be established and a budget prepared.

Benefits of capital improvements programs include:

- It helps assure that projects will be based upon the ability to pay and upon a schedule of priorities determined in advance.
- It helps assure that capital improvements are viewed comprehensively and in the best public interest of the municipality as a whole.
- It promotes financial stability by scheduling projects at the proper intervals.
- It avoids sharp changes in the tax structure by the proper scheduling of projects.
- It facilitates the best allocation of community resources.

### **Official Maps**

The governing body of each municipality has the power to make an official map of all or a portion of the municipality which may show elements of the Comprehensive Plan with regard to public lands and facilities, and which may include, but need not be limited to, the following elements:

1. Existing and proposed public streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widenings, narrowings, extensions, diminutions, openings or closings.
2. Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds, and open space reservations.
3. Pedestrian ways and easements.
4. Railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements.
5. Flood control basins, floodways and floodplains, stormwater management areas and drainage easements.

6. Support facilities, easements and other properties held by public bodies undertaking the elements described in the Comprehensive Plan.

Each municipality should prepare an official map, but regional cooperation should occur on mapping of projects such as roadways, parks, and trails which will be located in more than one municipality.

The governing body may make surveys and maps to identify the location of property, trafficway alignment or utility easement by use of property records, aerial photography, photogrammetric mapping or other method sufficient for identification, description and publication of the map components. For acquisition of lands and easements, boundary descriptions by metes and bounds must be made and sealed by a licensed surveyor.

The adoption of any street lines or other public lands as part of the official map does not constitute the opening or establishment of any street nor the taking or acceptance of any land, nor does it obligate the municipality to improve or maintain any such street or land. The adoption of proposed watercourses or public grounds as part of the official map does not constitute a taking or acceptance of any land by the municipality.

For the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the official map of the municipality, no permit shall be issued for any building within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground shown or laid out on the official map. No person shall recover any damages for the taking for public use of any building or improvements constructed within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground after the same shall have been included in the official map; and, any such building or improvements shall be removed at the expense of the owner. However, when the property of which the reserved location forms a part, cannot yield a reasonable return to the owner unless a permit shall be granted, the owner may apply to the governing body for the grant of a special encroachment permit to build.

The governing body may fix the time for which streets, watercourses and public grounds on the official map shall be deemed reserved for future taking or acquisition for public use. However, the reservation for public grounds shall lapse and become void one year after an owner of such property has submitted a written notice to the governing body announcing his intentions to build, subdivide or otherwise develop the land covered by the reservation, or has made formal application for an official permit to build a structure for private use, unless the governing body shall have acquired the property or begun condemnation proceedings to acquire such property before the end of the year.

## **GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS**

The following is a list of some of the County, state and federal programs for community and economic development. Programs can be modified or eliminated over time, so it is necessary to contact the responsible agency for availability and eligibility information.

#### **▪ BERKS COUNTY**

- Joint Comprehensive Planning Program
- Joint Zoning Ordinance Program
- Agricultural Zoning Incentive Program
- Berks County Open Space and Recreation Grant Program

#### **▪ PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DCED)**

- **Communities of Opportunity** – This program is for state-funded grants for community revitalization and economic development and the development or rehabilitation of low-income housing.
- **Infrastructure Development Program** – This program provides grants and low interest financing for the construction of public and private infrastructure needed for business to locate or expand to a specific site. It also provides financing for infrastructure costs to redevelop former industrial sites, including site clearance costs.
- **Industrial Sites Reuse Program (Brownfields)** – This program provides grant and low interest loan financing for environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites.
- **Community Revitalization Program** – This program is intended to fund infrastructure improvements, community revitalization, building rehabilitation, and demolition of blighted structures, in order to increase community tax base and promote community stability.
- **New Communities/Main Street Program** – This program is intended to help a community's downtown economic development effort.
- **Elm Street Program** – This program is intended to help revitalize residential neighborhoods near Main Street areas.

- **HOME Program** – This program provides loan and technical assistance to municipalities for expanding the housing supply for low income persons.
- **Small Business Development Centers** – Work with small firms to help them compete and grow.
- **Small Business First Program** – This program provides low interest loans for projects such as site acquisition, building construction, machinery, and working capital for small businesses of less than 100 employees.
- **Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program** – This program provides low interest loans for equipment and municipal facilities.
- **Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP)** – This program provides grant funds for the preparation of community comprehensive plans and the ordinances to implement them.
- **Regional Police Assistance Grant Program** – This program provides grants for the start-up of consolidated police departments.
- **Shared Municipal Services Program Code Enforcement Initiative Grants** – This program assists local governments in the initial administrative expenses of a shared or multi-municipal codes enforcement program.
- **Shared Municipal Services Program** – This program provides matching grants for cooperative municipal efforts to increase the efficiency of public services.
- **Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (LERTA)** – Local municipalities, school districts, and counties can offer tax abatements on improvements to property for up to 10 years.
- **Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA)** – Low-interest loan financing through industrial development corporations for land and building acquisition, construction and renovation resulting in the retention or the creation of jobs. Loans up to \$1.25 million (\$1.75 million for areas within Keystone Opportunity Zones, Act 47 Communities, Brownfield Sites, and Enterprise Zones).

- **Floodplain Land Use Assistance Program** – Provides grants and technical assistance to encourage the proper use of floodplains. Local governments may apply for up to 50% of eligible costs.
- **Weatherization Assistance Program** – Works to minimize the adverse effects of high energy costs on low-income, elderly, and handicapped citizens. Local governments and non-profit organizations are eligible.
- **Enterprise Zone Grant Program** – Provides grants to financially disadvantaged communities for business development strategies within Municipal Enterprise Zones. Municipal and redevelopment authorities are eligible.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** – Provides grant and technical assistance to aid municipalities in community and economic development efforts.
- **Emergency Shelter Grants** – Provides grants to local governments and non-profit organizations to create or rehabilitate shelter space for the homeless.
- **Act 47 – Municipalities Financial Recovery Act** – Provides loans and grant funds to financially distressed local governments and technical assistance to formulate financial recovery Plans
- **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY**
  - **Pennsylvania Conservation Corps (PCC) Project Grant Program** – Grants for projects related to recreation, conservation, and historic preservation. Municipalities and school districts must provide a 25% match.
- **PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY (PCCD)**
  - **Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Program** – Provides local governments with funds to hire and train additional law enforcement personnel; establish special task forces; and establish crime prevention programs.
- **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES** – The Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) includes the following elements:



- **Community Recreation Grant Program** – This program provides grants for comprehensive recreation and park planning, greenways and master site development planning. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for the rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities and acquisition of land for park and conservation purposes.
- **Rivers Conservation Grant Program** – This program provides grants for river conservation plans and non-acquisition, non-development implementation projects. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for land acquisition and the development of river conservation projects.
- **Heritage Parks Grant Program** – This program promotes public/private partnerships to preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism. Grants are awarded for purposes such as feasibility studies, development of management action plans, specialized studies, and implementation projects and management grants.
- **Recreational Trail Program** – This program provides matching funding for the acquisition, development and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails.
- **Rails to Trails, PA Program** – This program provides matching grants for feasibility studies, plans, acquisition and improvement of former railroad lines for recreational trails.
- **PA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP)**
  - **Stream Improvement Program** – This program provides design and construction projects to eliminate imminent threats due to flooding and stream bank erosion.
  - **Stormwater Management Program** – This program provides grants for cooperative watershed level planning and municipal implementation programs.
  - **Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program** – This program provides funding for projects that implement innovative practices to control non-point source pollution for impaired waters.

- **Pennsylvania Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAP)** – This program provides grants for wellhead protection and watershed protection,
- **Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Grant Program** – This program makes funds available to protect and restore watersheds.
- **Pennsylvania Green Project Bank** – This program is an interactive online marketplace where organizations seeking funding for environmental projects can be matched with organizations seeking to fund such projects.
- **Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant** – Grants for municipalities for costs associated with implementing alternative fuel program.
- **New or Innovative Technology Grants** – Funds to improve existing drinking water and sewage treatment facilities through new or innovative technology.
- **Sewage Management Grants (Act 537)** – reimbursements for municipalities completing sewage facilities planning and enforcement.
- **Recycling (Act 101)** – Municipalities are eligible for 90 percent reimbursement toward establishing a recycling program.
- **Act 108 (HSCA) Host Municipality Siting** – Payments to municipalities serving as hosts for hazardous waste facilities.
- **Act 198 Resource Recovery Development Fund** – Grants for municipalities and authorities to establish new and innovative resource recovery demonstration projects.
- **Waste Tire Remediation and Market Development Grants** – Reimbursement for cleanup and / or reuse of waste tires.
- **Formation of Water Authorities Grant Program** – Available to two or more municipalities or counties interested in forming a joint water authority.
- **Small Water Systems Regionalization Grant Program** – Reimbursement for feasibility studies by small water systems to study regionalization.

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION**

- **Keystone Historic Preservation Grants** – This program provides matching grants to local government and nonprofit organizations that are rehabilitating or restoring historic properties on or eligible for the National Register.
- **Certified Local Government Grants** – This program provides matching grants and technical assistance to protect historic resources.
- **Historical Marker Program** – Nominations for historical markers are reviewed. When approved, staff works with nominator to prepare text and arrange ceremonies. Limited matching grants are available for markers.

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

- **Software Licensing Program** – Program for local governments to save money on software purchases.
- **Cooperative Purchasing Program (Act 57 of 1998)** – Permits local governments to jointly participate in contracts for supplies, services, or construction.

▪ **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

- **Transportation Enhancements Program (TEA 21)**

The program provides funding for programs such as provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles; acquisition of scenic easements or historic sites; landscaping or other scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities.

- **Transit Assistance Programs** – A variety of programs provide assistance for Public Transportation
- **Home Town Streets** – This program includes a variety of streetscape improvements that are vital to reestablishing downtown and commercial centers. These projects include activities undertaken within a defined “downtown” area that collectively enhance that environment and promote positive interactions with people in the area. Projects may include sidewalk improvements, planters, benches, street lighting, pedestrian crossings,

transit bus shelters, traffic calming, bicycle amenities, kiosks, signage and other visual elements.

- **Safe Routes to School** – This program is designed to work with both school districts and pedestrian and bicycle safety advocates to make physical improvements that promote safe walking and biking passages to schools. Collectively, these efforts would save on school busing costs and promote a healthy lifestyle for children. In addition, some funding may be used for pedestrian education efforts. Examples of these types of improvements include: sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes or trails, traffic diversion improvements, curb extensions, traffic circles and raised median islands.
- **PENNSYLVANIA INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AUTHORITY** – PENNVEST provides financing for drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater projects.

**PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE PROGRAM** – This program provides discretion to State legislators to award limited amounts of State funds for pro

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **PLAN INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

#### **RELATIONSHIP OF PLAN COMPONENTS**

The Future Land Use Plan allocates land uses and indicates the recommended types of land uses and density range for those uses. The availability of sanitary sewer and water facilities plays an extremely important role in the shaping of development patterns, including location and density. It is necessary to coordinate land use and utility planning so future land use reflects the availability of public sewer and water facilities and public sewer and water facilities are not planned for areas not intended for intensive development.

Through land use planning, such as designation of the Open Space and Park and Rural Conservation areas, watersheds and wellhead protection areas for community water supplies can be established. Intensive residential development is not proposed where there are not sewers and the soil is not suitable for on-site sewage disposal.

It is important that community facilities, including recreation and open space, are available to serve the residents of the municipalities. The Community Facilities Plan notes existing recreational facilities and potential areas for recreational facilities. The Circulation Plan shows a series of trails for recreational purposes and to better connect residential areas to community facilities. Future public facilities should be sited to be consistent with the objectives of the Land Use Plan, such as maintaining open space and recreation uses.

The Future Land Use Plan can promote economic vitality by providing areas for commercial development. Preservation of residential neighborhoods can provide support for local businesses and provide a work force. Providing for open space and preservation of community resources contributes to the quality of life in the area and can encourage additional investment.

It is necessary to maintain a road system which can accommodate generated traffic volumes. In turn, future development should not adversely affect the circulation system. Land use decisions are influenced by the existing circulation system, while at the same time those land use decisions affect circulation systems and the functions which the roads are expected to perform. Existing rural and residential areas should be protected as much as possible from the impacts of through traffic, which can be in part addressed by proposed improvements to the circulation system.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO BERKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2020**

The revised Comprehensive Plan for the County, Berks Vision 2020, designates most of the land which is not Existing Development as Permanent Open Space/Recreation. Undeveloped land not in public ownership is designated Rural Conservation. There are no Designated Growth and Future Growth areas. The Future Land Use Plan for Mount Penn and Lower Alsace is generally consistent with the County Plan.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES**

The existing and proposed development of Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace is in most cases compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous municipalities. Where there are disparate uses, buffers are recommended.

The St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity Joint Comprehensive Plan is also discussed in the chapter on Regional Setting, Chapter 20. The plan for land use along the eastern boundary of the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region is generally consistent with the area immediately east in St. Lawrence Borough and Exeter Township. While the area in the northern portion of Lower Alsace Township has been designated Low Density Residential and the area adjacent in Exeter Township has been designated Rural Preservation, both areas are recommending low densities for development. The developed High Density Residential Area in Lower Alsace adjoins a Medium Density area in Exeter Township which has been developed at a similar density. The Industrial Area in St. Lawrence which abuts a residential area is already developed for industrial, office, or institutional use. The Rural/Institutional Area in Exeter Township which abuts Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace contains a large memorial park.

The proposed land uses in Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace to the west are also generally consistent with those found in the City of Reading, except where R-1A land in the City adjoins Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace near Neversink Mountain Road and R-1 zoning in the City abuts Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace near Oak Lane.

General Industrial land in Cumru Township is buffered by the Schuylkill River.

Adjoining land in Alsace Township is consistent, except for R-2 and R-4 land in Alsace which abuts Open Space and Park land in Lower Alsace.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **EXISTING LAND USE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The base Existing Land Use Map for Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace was supplied by the Berks County Planning Commission. The existing land use mapping for both the Borough and the Township was updated by the consultant through windshield survey performed in 2001.

The categories shown on the Existing Land Use Map include Residential Single-Family, Residential Multiple-Family, Residential/Commercial, Commercial, Industrial, Farm/Rural, Public, Quasi-Public, and Open.

#### **Overall Land Use Pattern**

Most of Mt. Penn has been developed, primarily for residential purposes. Even though Lower Alsace Township experienced some of the first substantial population growth and residential development extending from the City of Reading, much of the Township still remains rural. Much of the undeveloped land is in public or quasi-public ownership on Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn Preserve, Antietam Lake Watershed, Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority land, and City of Reading land.

In Lower Alsace Township, much of the farm/rural land is wooded land, with some pasture and cultivated lands interspersed.

#### **LAND USE CATEGORIES**

##### **Residential Single-Family**

Most of the residential uses within the region are Residential Single-Family. These uses are found throughout the Borough of Mt. Penn. In Lower Alsace, most single-family homes are found north of Mt. Penn, along Highland Avenue, scattered in the western portion of the Township, north of Antietam Road to the boundary with Alsace Township, and in the vicinity of Haag and Hill Roads.

For assessment purposes, fee simple owned townhouses are considered single family dwellings.

## **Residential Multi-Family**

In Mt. Penn, Multi-Family Residential uses are mixed in with residential single-family uses and are not concentrated in any one area. In Lower Alsace Township, multiple family uses are primarily along Carsonia Avenue in the central portion of the Township. Conversions of single family homes to apartments and creation of apartments above commercial uses have occurred at a number of locations in the Borough.

## **Residential/Commercial**

These are a mix of residential and commercial, typically with the residential use above or adjacent to the commercial use. In Mt. Penn, mixed uses are primarily located along and near Perkiomen Avenue and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. In Lower Alsace, residential/commercial uses tend to be scattered in the central portion of the Township.

## **Commercial**

Much of the commercial development in the region has occurred along Perkiomen Avenue (Business Route 422), Howard Boulevard, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Carsonia Avenue. In Lower Alsace, commercial uses are also scattered in the Township, with most of these along Spook Lane or Friedensburg Road. In Mt. Penn Borough, examples of uses include an auto service and transmission service, a gas station/mini market, sandwich shops, a hardware store, a restaurant, a bank, real estate offices, a music shop, and a sports card shop. In Lower Alsace Township, examples of uses include an auto service business, towing service, a sandwich shop, a restaurant and two private clubs.

## **Industrial**

Industrial development has been very limited and generally scattered. The nearest example of a cluster occurs in the Township along Columbia, Melrose, and Oak Avenues.

## **Farm/Rural**

The Farm/Rural areas include lands that are cultivated, pasture, and wooded, further differentiated on the Land Cover, Agricultural Security Areas, Conservation Easements, and Clean and Green Lands Map. Only one small parcel of farm/rural is located in Mt. Penn along Highland Avenue.

## **Public and Quasi-Public**

Public and Quasi-public uses are found throughout both municipalities. Many of these are indicated on the Community Facilities Map in Chapter 24. The largest areas are Earl Trust land, Berks County Conservancy owned and leased land, and City of Reading land.



## **Vacant**

Vacant land is scattered within the region. Typically, these parcels are lots which are not improved and which may be able to be developed.

## **Trends**

Little development has occurred in the region in recent years. Data from Berks County Data Book indicates one (1) new housing unit was added to assessment roles in the Borough from 2000 to 2003. Twenty-four (24) housing units were added in Lower Alsace Township. From 1998 to 2000, there were no permits issued for residential construction in the Borough. Seven (7) permits were issued in the Township. Commercial activity has typically been renovations rather than new construction.

Commercial development continues outside the region along the Route 422 Corridor in Exeter Township. Development has included shopping centers, banks, as well as a number of chain stores, restaurants, and gas stations. The impact of this commercial development in Exeter Township can affect commercial activity in Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace.

Trends which have occurred, and some towns have tried to reverse, is the relocation of businesses which serve the day-to-day needs of residents to shopping centers and larger nationwide chains locating in the areas where once local small businesses served residents. In many cases it is difficult for the small local businesses to compete.

## **CHAPTER 13**

### **PUBLIC SANITARY SEWER AND WATER FACILITIES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Public sanitary sewer and water facilities are discussed in a separate chapter from community facilities because of the importance of sewer and water facilities in shaping land use patterns. The greatest concentrations of residential development in the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region are served with public sanitary sewer and water facilities, including the entire Borough and residential areas in Lower Alsace north of the Borough, west of Friedensburg Road and south of Lewis Road.

Availability of sanitary sewer and water facilities plays an extremely important role in the shaping of development patterns, including location and density. One of the major concerns of the Comprehensive planning effort will be to coordinate land use and utility planning so that future land use concentrations would reflect the availability of public sewer and water facilities, while assuring that sewer and water planning in the region would not be at odds with the goals for future land use reflected in the future Land Use Plan. For instance, if areas are proposed for Open Space and Park and Rural Conservation, it is not desirable to extend the public sewer and water service to those areas.

#### **Public Sanitary Sewer Facilities**

Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace are served by two sanitary sewage collection systems. Most of the sewage service area is treated by the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority with a sewage treatment plant located in nearby St. Lawrence Borough. A small western portion of the sewage service area is conveyed to the City of Reading sewage collection system with a plant located on Fritz Island in the Schuylkill River.

The Antietam Valley Municipal Authority continues to address infiltration problems within its system. Flows to the plant can exceed the rated capacity of the plant.

#### **Soil Suitability for On-Site Sewage Disposal**

Most of the unsewered areas are considered as having severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal in Lower Alsace Township based on United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service rating of limitations for septic tank absorption fields.

## **Public Water Supply Facilities**

Generally, areas served by public sanitary sewers are served by public water supply. The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority serves the Borough of Mt. Penn, Lower Alsace Township as well as St. Lawrence Borough and portions of Exeter Township. Community wells are located between Hill Road and Spook Lane.

The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority also maintains water storage facilities. These facilities are located adjacent and in close proximity to the Authority's wells between Hill Road and Spook Lane.

## **CHAPTER 14**

### **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

Land cover and agricultural resources within Lower Alsace Township and Mt. Penn Borough are shown on the map which shows Agricultural Security areas (none), Agricultural Conservation Easements (none), Clean and Green Lands, and Land Cover, including areas that are cultivated, developed, pasture, and wooded.

Lower Alsace and Mount Penn Borough over the years has developed into a suburban area due to its proximity to the Reading City limits. Most of the employment of the residents lies outside the region. The 2000 Census indicates the number and percent of persons working in agriculture related fields. Only 5 people, or 0.3% of Mt. Penn Borough's population, worked in the agricultural industry. Fourteen (14) persons from Lower Alsace Township, or .5% of the total population, worked in the agricultural industry. These are low percentages compared to Berks County as a whole, which has 3,215 persons, or 1.8% of the County population, in the agricultural industry.

A majority, (67%) of the Lower Alsace Township residents responding to the Community Questionnaire, believed that remaining agricultural land in the Township should stay as agricultural land. They were split between wanting farmland available for future generations to farm, like to view farmland, and wanting to limit development which occurs in the community as the reason for keeping farms. Comments included in questionnaire responses were that the new generation should be encouraged into farming with lowered taxes and that farmland is viable open space for the community and needs to be carefully planned and maintained.

Farmland preservation is not a high priority for the community; however, keeping some rural flavor in the region while also having access to farm goods and services was desired. Angora Farms orchard was mentioned to be unique to the area and worth preserving.

#### **Agricultural Resources in the Area**

As seen on the Land Cover, Agricultural Security Areas, Conservation Easements, and Clean and Green Lands Map, there are limited cultivated and pasture lands within the region. The Borough and the Township have not designated agricultural security areas, and in turn agricultural conservation easements have not been purchased within the region. Cultivated and pasture land is scattered in the northern portion of the Township and between Hill Road and Friedensburg Roads.

Both municipalities have zoning ordinances, however, neither municipality has a designated agricultural zone. On the Future Land Use Plan, there is no recommendation for an establishment of this type of category for the region. The Plan designates Open Space and Park, Rural Conservation, Rural Residential, and Low Density Residential for land within Lower Alsace Township that is currently enrolled in the Clean and Green Program.

## **CHAPTER 15**

### **NATURAL FEATURES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Three maps showing natural resources have been prepared. The first is a composite map showing natural resources including streams, wetlands, hydric soils (which are potential wetlands), 100-year floodplains; areas of steep slope, including slopes of 15% - 25% and slopes greater than 25%; and wooded areas. The second map showing water related features, includes streams, floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, and watersheds (the Antietam Creek, Bernhart Creek, and Schuylkill River watersheds). The Historic Properties and Natural Areas Inventory Sites map in Chapter 22 shows two major Natural Areas Inventory Sites in Lower Alsace (Neversink Mountain and Antietam Lake Watershed) from the Berks County Natural Areas Inventory.

There are areas where natural resources provide limitations to development in Lower Alsace Township. Wooded areas with steep slopes found along two mountains in the Township (Mt. Penn and Neversink Mountain) and in a band in the central portion of the Township are not conducive for development.

Wooded areas are also found within the Antietam Lake Watershed and on open space land in the northwestern portion of Lower Alsace Township. Some of these areas also have steep slopes. These wooded areas should be preserved as a valuable resource for the preservation of the steep slopes and to minimize the erosion, mud or land slides that could occur if disturbed by clear cutting and/or development.

On the Proposed Antietam Lake Easement Map, areas for a proposed easement are shown in yellow. There are also properties shown in green which include already conserved areas around the proposed easement owned by the Berks County Conservancy and the Earl Trust Property. These properties can play a key role in conserving valuable open space and preserving the recreational use of the lake.

On the Neversink Mountain Project Status map, Neversink Mountain is broken down into individual parcels. There is an area depicted with a red line which outlines the proposed reserve area. Within this area there are parcels already acquired by the Berks County Conservancy and ones that have been leased to the Conservancy. There are lands that are owned by the City of Reading, the County, and the Earl Trust.

The Earl Trust Property map provides an overview of Earl Trust and City owned properties in the Township.

A Neversink Mountain Feasibility Study was completed for the Berks County Conservancy in 1997. This Study included a Long Range Plan for the Mountain. Details can be seen on the Proposed Long Range Plan, Project Phasing Plan and Improvements Plan. (See Appendix 5) A detailed analysis of the Mountain is provided in the study.

## **FLOODPLAINS**

One hundred-year floodplains are shown from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Maps. Floodplains are areas adjacent to watercourses which are covered by floodwater during times of flooding. A 100-year floodplain is the area which has a 1% chance of being flooded during any one year, and which is typically used for regulatory purposes. It is best if the floodplains are not developed, because development within the floodplains results in danger to persons and property. If development occurs within the floodplain, this may constrict the area over which floodwaters may flow, resulting in increased flood damage downstream because of resultant increased flood velocities downstream. Outdoor storage of materials within floodplains is not desirable because of the possibility of the materials entering the stream when flooding of the banks occurs.

Care must be taken in disturbing areas along watercourses because increased sedimentation within the stream (increased depositing of soil within the stream) can occur. Increased impervious cover along watercourses typically increases the storm water runoff in the streams. The runoff can erode stream banks and channels. If sedimentation is increased, filling of streambeds can occur, which could cause floodwaters to cover a larger area, meandering of streams, and choking of life within the stream, detracting from the aesthetic value of the stream.

It is desirable to keep pervious surfaces on stream banks, as opposed to impervious surfaces such as paved areas. As surface runoff moves toward streams, water can be absorbed into the ground if the surface is pervious. Increased absorption can result in replenishment of groundwater and also in decreased flood peaks because less water reaches the stream from the surface of the land. Inadequate supply of groundwater can result in an inadequate flow of water to the stream during dry months. The inability to sustain stream flow can mean a greater concentration of pollutants at periods of low flow.

The floodplains along the watercourses within the Antietam Creek Watershed should be preserved and serious consideration should be taken to restrict development on hydric soils. The floodplains and hydric soils act like a sponge when floodwaters rise, and can filter nutrients and pollutants to protect the surface and ground water that feed the Antietam Lake and Creek.

On-site sewage disposal systems should not be located within areas subject to flooding because of the danger of contamination of the stream and the groundwater because of the proximity of the stream and the presence of the high water table. There may not be an

adequate distance between the on-site facility and surface water to permit renovation of sewage effluent prior to its reaching the stream. In some instances, soils found in the floodplains are very porous and the movement of sewage effluent is too rapid to allow for the renovation of the effluent prior to reaching the groundwater table or the stream. In other situations, the soil near the surface may be saturated with water or become readily saturated with sewage effluent, resulting in effluent remaining near or rising to the surface of the land. When flooding occurs, sewage effluent could then contaminate the surface water. The efficiency of filter fields of septic tanks can be impaired or destroyed as a result of flooding.

## **WETLANDS**

The wetlands shown are from the National Wetlands Inventory, prepared by the Office of Biological Services, U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. The wetlands inventory was prepared by stereoscopic analysis of high altitude aerial photographs, with the wetlands identified on the photographs based on vegetation, visible hydrology, and geography. A detailed on the ground and historical analysis of any site may result in a revision of the wetland boundaries, and it is possible that small wetlands and those obscured by dense forest cover may not be identified. Limited wetland areas are identified, primarily along the southern boundary of Lower Alsace Township.

Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. During on-site investigation, wetlands can sometimes be identified when they are saturated with permanent or semi-permanent standing water and contain common wetlands plants such as cattails and willows. If wetlands cannot be identified by hydrophytes (plants adapted to life in saturated soil conditions), soils may be investigated to determine whether wetlands are present. Hydric soils mapping can be used to identify potential wetlands sites. Hydric soils are discussed below.

To try to put wetlands into less technical terms, often low lying land that remains wet for considerable periods of the growing season, land that can not be farmed because it is too wet or can only be farmed every few years, or low-lying land that can only be developed by filling are likely to be wetlands. These areas store water which can replenish groundwater and surface water supplies.

Wetlands can be areas rich in plant growth and animal habitat. They often serve as breeding places for many organisms. In addition to providing a home and a source of food for organisms, wetlands can protect water sources and can help keep water sources clean by acting as natural filters and removing pollutants such as bacteria and sediment from water. This occurs as plants growing in and around wetlands trap pollutants.



In general, no developmental activity or placement of fill material may occur within wetlands without obtaining a DEP permit.

## **HYDRIC SOILS**

The hydric soils have been mapped from soils information provided by United States Department of Natural Resources Conservation Service and indicate areas of potential wetlands. Hydric soils developed under conditions sufficiently wet to support the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation and are soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions (an anaerobic situation is one in which molecular oxygen is absent) in the upper part.

Criteria for identifying hydric soils include somewhat poorly drained soils that have water table less than 0.5 ft. from the surface for a significant period (usually a week or more) during the growing season; are poorly drained or very poorly drained and have either water table at less than 1.0 ft. from surface for a significant period during the growing season if permeability is equal to or greater than 6.0"/hr. in all areas within 20", or have water table at least 1.5 ft. from the surface for a significant period during the growing season if permeability is less than 6.0"/hr. in any layer within 20"; soils that are ponded for long duration (from 7 days to 1 month) or very long duration (greater than 1 month) during the growing season; or soils that are frequently flooded for long duration or very long duration during the growing season.

The areas of hydric soil are more extensive than the areas of wetlands, and are generally found in the vicinity of the watercourses within the Township. There also are several isolated areas of hydric soil, also within the Lower Alsace Township, as displayed on the Water Related Features Map.

## **STEEP SLOPES**

Areas that have slopes greater than 15% have severe limitations to development. In general, this land is too steep for residential subdivisions and cultivation. Development of steep slopes can result in hazardous road conditions, costly excavation, erosion and sedimentation and storm water runoff problems. These slopes are quite prone to erosion, and protection of them is particularly important for water resource protection when watercourses are nearby. Development should be limited, vegetative cover maintained to the greatest extent possible, and erosion controls instituted. Without absorptive vegetation, runoff can rapidly erode the slopes, especially on the two mountains and hills located in Lower Alsace Township and around Antietam Lake, as shown on the Natural Resources and Slope Map.

## **WOODED AREAS**

Wooded areas are scenic amenities and habitats for wildlife and home to most of the native species in the County. They provide visual relief from developed land areas. In addition, they increase capacities for absorption of storm water runoff, diminishing flood potentials and decreasing erosion. Wooded areas are especially valuable when on steep slopes, playing the important role of reducing runoff and erosion and sedimentation by binding the soil.

Maintenance of wooded areas on steep slopes is of even greater importance when the steep slopes are near streams, which could be disturbed through sedimentation, and experience greater flood peaks if they are swelled by increased surface runoff. Wooded areas are in some cases in proximity to the watercourses within the Township, sometimes on steep slopes.

When wooded areas are retained, the quantity and quality of groundwater can be better maintained than if woods are removed, because the natural cover allows for infiltration of rainfall into the groundwater system. Retention of wooded areas will also preserve the home of most of the native species in the County.

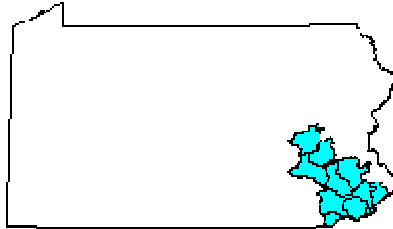
Wooded areas also have recreational potential, whether for individual lot owners or, when within public recreational facilities, for the population as a whole.

## **ROLE IN OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**

Streams, mountains, hills, and woodlands in the Township are important elements in the open space system, which is valued by residents of the entire region and people who live outside the region. The preservation of these resources is very important for natural processes as well as recreation.

## STREAMS AND WATERSHEDS

The watersheds and streams in the region are shown on the Water Related Features map. Natural functions of watercourses and the areas along the watercourses have been discussed above. It is also important to note that streams also provide a recreational resource.



DEP Watershed website map

### Natural Areas of Special Interest

The following Natural Areas Inventory sites are found in the region and shown on the map in Chapter 22.

**Neversink Mountain** – This mountain provides open space in an urban setting and provides habitat for four rare species. Although there is a small residential development on the mountain, it does not appear to be influencing the species of special concern there. What is of concern is the use of herbicides and pesticides to control plants on the powerline right-of-way and for gypsy moth control in the surrounding woods. Herbicide use should be limited to control of tree saplings to ensure survival of the food plants used by two rare butterflies. The electric utility company and Berks County Conservancy have made progress toward this end. Aerial spray for gypsy moths should be avoided because the two butterflies are susceptible to the same chemicals.

It will be important to manage habitat on the mountain to limit the further spread of exotic plant species and maintain the small dry, rocky openings on the south slope that are important for the rare plant limited to this habitat. No logging has occurred recently but it should be completely discouraged in the future.

There is potential for Neversink to be a low-impact recreational asset to Reading and surrounding towns. The former trolley line offers opportunities for environmental education and nature observation, and walking and horseback riding.

The mountain is one of the four most important sites identified in Berks County.

**Antietam Lake Watershed** – SP525 marks a fair population of a state-rare plant growing near Antietam Reservoir in Lower Alsace Township on property owned by the City of Reading. Although the area is safe from development, trampling by hikers who use a nearby nature trail could be a problem. To avoid this unnecessary disturbance, trail-maintenance crews should avoid re-routing the trail through the population and cutting trees and brush in the area. The land manager is aware of the population and working to protect it.

**Protected Use Status of Antietam Creek** – Antietam Creek protected use designation is Cold Water Fishes, CWF:

**CWF** *Cold Water Fishes* – Maintenance and/or propagation of fish species including the family Salmonidae and additional flora and fauna which are indigenous to a cold water habitat.

## CHAPTER 16

### GEOLOGY AND AQUIFER YIELDS

#### INTRODUCTION

A Geology and Aquifer Yield by Formation Map of Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough has been produced indicating geologic formations and aquifer yields. This map depicts the boundaries of the geologic formations in the area as well as the aquifer yield range in gallons per minute (gpm) for each formation. The map gives typical aquifer yields in gallons per minute in order to determine where, in general, the most productive aquifers in the area can be found.

In the details of each formation, porosity and permeability will be indicated. Below are the definitions of each term.

**Porosity** – the quality of being porous, full or abounding in pores. The porosity of rocks is the ratio or percentage of the total volume of the pore spaces (minute interstices through which liquids or gases can pass) in relation to the total volume of the rock. Sand, gravel, and sandstones, with open textures and coarse grains, are typical porous rocks. Porosity is quite different from perviousness. Dry clay, for example, is highly porous and will hold much water in its pores, but when saturated the small spaces between the grains become blocked with water held by surface tension, preventing the passage of water. To be an aquifer or source of water a rock must be both porous and pervious. Porosity may be increased by leaching or decreased by compaction.

**Permeability** – is capable of being wholly penetrated by a fluid, of allowing the passage of a fluid, of being saturated. The opposite condition is termed “impermeable”.

**Permeable Rock** – a rock that allows the free passage of water through it owing to its porosity, e.g., sandstone, oolitic limestone. Some authors include also rock with joints, bedding planes, cracks, fissures, etc. that allow the free passage of water, defining the porous rock as being of primary permeability, the rock with joints etc. of secondary permeability. Other authors distinguish the secondary group as being pervious.

## **INFLUENCE OF GEOLOGY**

For planning purposes, we are concerned about the way that geologic formations determine soils types and potential groundwater supplies. We have previously discussed suitability of soils for onsite sewage disposal. It is desirable to identify the areas with the most potential for groundwater yields to determine where a particular effort should be made to protect groundwater supplies.

### **Limestone Fanglomerate**

The highest aquifer yields are found in the Limestone Fanglomerate (limestone) with a yield of 200 gpm areas in the southernmost portion of Lower Alsace Township, next to the Schuylkill River. Fanglomerate is composed chiefly of limestone and dolomite pebbles and angular fragments which are yellow-gray to light medium gray, and up to 8 inches in diameter. The limestone and dolomites can be completely dissolved in places, leaving an uneven hole in the rock.

This formation has good surface drainage and the joint and solution openings provide a moderate secondary porosity and moderate to high permeability. The potential for large groundwater yields is coupled with an increased potential for pollution of the groundwater because seepage from on-site sewage disposal systems or other sources of pollutants may reach underground channels and pollute the ground water supply. Underground channels, which frequently extend over long distances, are formed when a chemical interaction of air and water forms a weak carbonic acid solution, which in conjunction with humic acid formed from the decayed vegetation slowly dissolves the limestone.

Because of the potential for groundwater solution in the limestone areas, development, which does occur should be served by public sanitary sewer facilities. The initial Master Sewer and Water Plan for Berks County noted, "The limestones and dolomites appear to be the best aquifers within the County, based primarily on the fact that they are subject to solutioning by subsurface waters and therefore the secondary structures have been enlarged to a greater extent than other type rocks. This produces greater reservoir areas and increased permeability for transmitting water to the wells."

### **Leithsville Formation**

This formation encompasses most of Mt. Penn Borough and extends into the easternmost area of Lower Alsace Township. This formation has the second highest yield for groundwater, with a median yield of 100 gpm. This aquifer can be easily contaminated and turbidity is a common water-quality problem. The water is relatively hard as well.

This formation is dark-gray to medium-gray dolomite with some calcareous shale and sandy dolomite and is approximately 1,500 feet thick. It is moderately resistant to weathering. Its

topography has undulating valley of low to medium relief, natural slopes are gentle to moderately steep and stable. Most of the area within this formation is developed and existing public sewer and water facilities serve the area.

### **Granite Gneiss**

This is a light buff to light pink with primary minerals being quartz, microcline, hornblende (5 to 10%), and occasional biotite, and is the predominate formation in Lower Alsace Township. This rock formation is highly resistant to weathering and has topography of hills of medium to high relief; natural slopes are steep and stable.

This formation has good drainage and has a very low secondary porosity and low permeability, providing a median yield less than 20 gpm, but wells should be at least 100 feet deep and not over 200 feet deep for maximum yield. Most of this area is not currently serviced by public sewer or water facilities.

This rock is difficult to excavate because it has a slow drilling rate. This rock is commonly used in road material, riprap, building stone, embankment facing and used as fill material.

### **Hardyston Formation**

This is a light-gray quartzite and weathers to a yellow brown color. This formation is found on Mt. Penn and Neversink Mountains in Lower Alsace Township, with a little appearing in Mt. Penn Borough. The rock in this formation is highly resistant to weathering, usually slightly moderately weathered to shallow depth. The topography is rough mountains of medium to high relief with natural slopes that are steep and stable.

This formation has good surface drainage with joint-and cleavage-plane openings to produce a secondary porosity of low magnitude and low permeability. The median yield is 20 gpm and water is usually soft and of good quality, however iron may be a problem.

It is very difficult to excavate because it has a slow drilling rate, in part due to many quartz veins that exceed 12 inches in width and boulders may also be a special problem. This rock is a good source of road material, riprap, building stone, and embankment facing; in some localities, provides material for refractory brick, and, where intensely fractured and weathered, sand.

### **Hornblende Gneiss Formation**

This formation, found in central portions of the Township, is dark-gray to black in color with hornblende making up approximately 50% of the rock. The other 50% is labradorite (feldspars). This rock is extremely resistant to abrasion and very resistant to rupture, but may be susceptible to crumbling. It is moderately resistant to weathering, but is highly and deeply weathered in many places, resulting in a rubble that contains small-to-medium-sized rectangular fragments. The topography is undulating hills of medium relief containing natural slopes that are moderately steep and stable.

This formation generally has good surface runoff, and has extremely low primary porosity and low permeability, however in highly weathered areas, near surface rock may have high porosity. Permeability is low. The median yield of reported wells in this formation is only 10 gpm; yields of 35 gpm or more may be obtained from wells properly sited and developed.

The ease of excavating ranges from highly weathered rocks being moderately easy to excavate, to unweathered rocks being difficult to excavate, however the formation has a fast to moderate drilling rate. This rock is a good source for fill.



## CHAPTER 17

### SCENIC RESOURCES

The Scenic Resources Map indicates scenic roads and scenic views by highlighting the roads in green and pointing out the vistas with green arrows.

The scenic roads are roads which are particularly pleasant to drive because of the views along the roads. Identified roads include: Skyline Drive, Angora Road, Antietam Road, List Road, a section of Hill Road, Neversink Mountain Road, and Old Spies Church Road, in Lower Alsace Township. Scenic views are available from Skyline Drive.



Skyline Drive from Pagoda Skyline, Inc. website.

The entire Skyline Drive Area is part of the City of Reading Park System. The park closes at sunset. The stone wall was constructed in part by stone from a rock quarry located on the eastern slope of Mount Penn. It is approximately 2 feet wide by 3 feet high and extends for about two and one-half miles.

There are three lookouts located on the road, which provides a view of the City of Reading.



Due to natural erosion and general wear with age, the wall has been crumbling in some areas and needs repair work. The restoration will involve stabilizing the bank with 3:1 slopes. At these locations, the wall must be dismantled to allow placement of fill and re-establishment of ground cover. With the new foundation in place, the wall can be

rebuilt.

The other scenic roads are through wooded areas, remaining rural areas, and along Antietam Creek and Antietam Lake.

#### Planning Implications

Preservation of scenic resources can be accomplished through broad land use policies such as open space and woodland preservation and through attention to developments as they are proposed. Performance and design standards for developments, including sighting of buildings, and protection of woodland, can encourage retention of scenic areas.



View of the City of Reading from Skyline Drive. (from the Pagoda Skyline, Inc. Website.)

## **CHAPTER 18**

### **EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**

A map has been prepared showing the pedestrian system within Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township. The map indicates the location of existing sidewalks, as well as a proposed trails system throughout the region. There are gaps in the existing sidewalk system, and areas where sidewalk is provided along one side of the street but not the other. Some sidewalk is not in good condition. Of particular concern is lack of sidewalks to the Junior-Senior High Complex.

The municipalities have the opportunity to explore the possibility of a trail system that would link existing sidewalks and trails to important community facilities and natural treasures. Some trails now exist on Neversink Mountain, on Mt. Penn, around Antietam Lake, and on City-owned land in between. The Berks County Conservancy participated in a Feasibility Study for Neversink Mountain, presented in part in Appendix 5. The Delaware Valley Orienteering Association maintains orienteering maps of the Mount Penn Pagoda and Mount Penn-Antietam area, which identify existing trails in those areas.

## **CHAPTER 19**

### **POPULATION AND HOUSING**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will look at population and housing trends for Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township, Berks County as a whole, and surrounding municipalities. The focus will be on past population trends and projections.

Additional population and housing data has been collected and is found in Appendix 2. The tables found in Appendix 2 include:

- Gender
- Land Area and Population Density Per Square Mile
- Racial Characteristics
- Average Persons Per Occupied Housing Unit
- Income, Poverty and Education Characteristics
- Persons by Age
- Employment by Industry
- Employment by Occupation
- Housing Occupancy, Tenure and Value
- Housing Type
- Households by Type
- Age of Householder Per Occupied Dwelling Unit
- Means of Transportation to Work

#### **Population and Housing Trends**

Table 1 gives total population for Mt. Penn Borough, Lower Alsace Township and Berks County in 1980, 1990 and 2000.

**TABLE 1**  
**TOTAL POPULATION**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>			<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>			<b>Berks County</b>		
	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Number Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Number Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Number Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
1980	3,025	-	-	4,906	-	-	312,497	-	-
1990	2,883	-142	-4.6	4,627	-279	-5.6	336,523	24,014	7.6
2000	<b>3,016</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4,478</b>	<b>-149</b>	<b>-3.2</b>	<b>373,638</b>	<b>37,115</b>	<b>11.0</b>

**Source: U.S. Census**

From 1980 to 1990, the population of Mt. Penn Borough decreased 4.6%, however, from 1990 to 2000, the population increased by 4.6%. Lower Alsace Township decreased 5.6% from 1980 to 1990 and 3.2% from 1990 to 2000. The Berks County increases were 7.6% from 1980 to 1990 and 11.0% from 1990 to 2000.

Table 2 gives total population in 1980, 1990 and 2000 and the percentage of change from 1990 to 2000 for Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township, Berks County and adjacent municipalities.

**TABLE 2**  
**TOTAL POPULATION**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH, LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**  
**BERKS COUNTY AND ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES**  
**1980-2000**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change 1990-2000</b>
Alsace Township	3,456	3,459	3,689	6.6
Cumru Township	11,474	13,142	13,816	5.1
Exeter Township	14,419	17,260	21,161	22.6
<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>	4,906	4,627	4,478	-3.2
<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>	3,025	2,883	3,016	4.6
Muhlenberg Township	13,031	14,127	16,305	15.4
Reading City	78,686	78,380	81,207	3.6
Robeson Township	4,729	5,954	6,869	15.3
St. Lawrence Borough	1,376	1,542	1,812	17.5
<b>Berks County</b>	312,497	336,523	373,638	11.0

**Source: U.S. Census**

A number of municipalities grew at a faster rate than the County as a whole. St. Lawrence Borough and Exeter, Muhlenberg and Robeson Townships all grew at a rate faster than the County from 1990 to 2000, with increases of 17.5%, 22.6%, 15.4% and 15.3%, respectively.

Table 3 indicates Total Housing Units for Mt. Penn Borough, Lower Alsace Township and Berks County in 1990 and 2000 and the Percent Change from 1990 to 2000.

**TABLE 3**  
**TOTAL HOUSING UNITS**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY**

**2000**

	Total Housing Units		Change 1990-2000	
	1990	2000	Number	Percent
<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>	1,303	1,335	32	2.5
<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>	1,984	1,956	-28	-1.4
<b>Berks County</b>	134,482	150,222	15,740	11.7

**Source:** U.S. Census

The total number of housing units increased at a rate less than that of population for Mt. Penn Borough. From 1990 to 2000, the increase in housing units was 2.5%, while the population increased 4.6%. In Lower Alsace Township, the total number of housing units decreased. The decrease in housing units was 1.4%, while the population decrease was 3.2%. In Berks County, the increase in housing units was 11.7%, while the population increase was 11.0%.

Table 4 provides population projections for Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township for the years 2010, 2020 and 2030. Two projection techniques have been used to provide a range of possible population outcomes for the region. Due to a number of variables that can affect population projections, a single projection cannot be viewed as the sole source on which to base planning decisions. For this reason a range of population levels calculated to 2030 is provided.

The Low Range projections use the average rate of growth per decade for each municipality from 1980 to 2000. The High Range projections use the average rate of growth per decade for each municipality from 1990 to 2000.

**TABLE 4**  
**POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2000-2030**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**

	2000	2010	2020	2030
<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>				
Low Range	3,016	3,011	3,007	3,002
High Range	3,016	3,154	3,299	3,450
<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>				
Low Range	4,478	4,264	4,050	3,836
High Range	4,478	4,255	4,043	3,841

**Source: U.S. Census, SSM 2001.**

In the Low Range, Mt. Penn Borough is projected to decrease in population to 3,011 for 2010, to 3,007 for 2020, and to 3,002 for the year 2030. In the High Range, the Borough is projected to increase to 3,154 in 2010, to 3,299 in 2020, and to 3,450 in 2030. Given the limited amount of land available in Mount Penn, an increase to 3,450 in 2030 could be difficult to achieve, particularly if conversions of single family units to apartments can be decreased. Lower Alsace Township is projected to decrease in population to between 4,255 and 4,264 for 2010, to between 4,043 and 4,050 for 2020, and to between 3,836 and 3,841 for the year 2030.

Table 5 provides residential construction information for Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township in 1998, 1999 and 2000, as published by the Berks County Data Book.

**TABLE 5**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**

**NEW HOUSING UNITS ADDED TO ASSESSMENT ROLLS 2000 TO 2003**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>Total 2000 to 2003</b>
Mount Penn Borough	0	1	0	0	1
Lower Alsace Township	3	8	6	7	24

**Source:** U.S. Census

From 2000 to 2003, the Borough had one (1) unit added to the assessment rolls. The Township had 24.

**U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates**

The following are U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for 2001, 2002, and 2003.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2001 Estimate</b>	<b>2002 Estimate</b>	<b>2003 Estimate</b>	<b>Change 2000 to 2003</b>
Lower Alsace Township	4,478	4,464	4,465	4,456	-22
Mount Penn Borough	3,016	2,996	2,984	2,970	-46

Based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the population of both municipalities is decreasing, even with construction of 24 dwelling units in Lower Alsace Township. If the estimated trends from 2000 to 2003 continue, the population of Mount Penn will decrease to 2,863 by 2010 and the population of the Township will decrease to 4,405. The population of the Borough would be lower than population projections, including the low range. The population of the Township would be higher than projections, but still would be lower than in 2000, continuing the trend in previous decades.



## **CHAPTER 20**

### **REGIONAL INFLUENCES**

#### **ROAD SYSTEM**

Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough both adjoin the City of Reading. Business Route 422 goes through the center of Mt. Penn Borough, creating an easily accessible route to and from the City for the Borough and the Township, as well as municipalities east of the region. Business 422 connects to the Warren Street Bypass and West Shore Bypass, located west and south of the City of Reading, which link to U.S. Route 222 and Business 222 (North and South), Route 61 North, and Route 183 North. Carsonia Avenue, Angora Road, and Friedensburg Road carry significant through traffic in Lower Alsace Township north to Alsace and Oley Townships and Route 73, north to Alsace and Muhlenberg Townships, and south to Perkiomen Avenue. This road system links the region to places such as Philadelphia, King of Prussia, Harrisburg, and Hershey.

#### **LAND USE**

Lower Alsace and Mt. Penn are between the developed urban core of Reading and rapidly growing and suburbanizing Exeter and Amity Townships. Reading continues revitalization efforts, which would increase movement into the City. The Civic Center is operating, the Goggle Works has been proposed, and efforts are being made to plan for the riverfront.

Mount Penn Borough is predominantly developed, with higher density residential neighborhoods, generally developed in a grid pattern. The Borough lacks a strong commercial core, due in part to the close proximity to the City of Reading and commercial development to the east. The hilly nature of Borough streets and slopes in the vicinity of Perkiomen Avenue also play a role, as pedestrian movement is difficult for some and the topography limits the extent of development and parking.

Lower Alsace is a township of contrasts. The Pennside area is highly developed. The Township also contains major open space areas such as Mt. Penn Reserve, Neversink Mountain, and the Antietam Lake region. Much of the open space is owned by the City of Reading. Much of the population within the Township is found along Carsonia Avenue, and roads that intersect Carsonia Avenue. This area also developed in a grid pattern.

## **St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, and Amity Township Joint Comprehensive Plan**

A Comprehensive Plan is being prepared for St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, and Amity Township. The future land use plan for this area, compared to Lower Alsace and Mt. Penn's future land use plan, indicates a general consistency (see Chapter 11). Exeter Township is designating the land within Neversink Mountain as Rural Preservation, to help preserve the mountain area and its setting.

Mount Penn and Lower Alsace recognize the potential for the Schuylkill Valley Metro to stop in the adjoining region, and the planned trail system will connect to trails in Exeter which will lead to the metro. Park and ride facilities which will facilitate use of the metro are also considered important.

### **Adjoining Zoning**

Zoning of adjacent municipalities is mapped in Chapter 11.

## **CHAPTER 21**

### **PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Parks and open space can enhance the quality of life within an area by preserving natural and cultural features for the enjoyment of all residents and strengthen the sense of community by providing opportunities for residents to interact. Some leisure activities, such as hiking, fishing and boating are directly dependent upon natural resources. Recreational activities can also be enhanced by the cultural features of a community. For instance, historic resources in the area can play an educational role for residents and be incorporated into hiking and bicycle trails.

#### **Existing Parks, Recreation and Open Space System**

A number of major recreational facilities are available in Berks County to serve residents in Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace. Some of these recreational facilities include:

Blue Marsh Lake Recreational Area  
French Creek State Park  
Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center  
Tulpehocken Creek Park System  
Mount Penn Preserve  
Daniel Boone Homestead  
French Creek State Park  
State Gamelands  
Appalachian Trail  
Kaercher Creek Park  
Kernsville Recreation Area  
Conrad Weiser Park  
Camp Joy  
County Youth Recreation Facility  
Allegheny Aqueduct  
Horseshoe Trail  
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary  
Neversink Mountain Preserve

Recreation resources in close proximity to Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace include:

Lorane Hollow Community Park - Exeter Township  
Exeter Golf Course - Exeter Township  
Antietam Valley Recreation and Community Center - Exeter Township  
Angelica Park - Reading  
Baer Park - Reading  
Centre Park - Reading  
City Park - Reading  
Dana Memorial Park - Reading  
Egelman's Park - Reading  
Heritage Park - Reading  
Hillside Playground - Reading  
Keffer Park - Reading  
Mineral Spring Park - Reading  
Pendora Park - Reading  
Riverfront Park - Reading  
Riverdale Park - Reading  
Schlegel Park - Reading  
Schuylkill River Park - Reading  
Exeter Community Park – St. Lawrence  
Township Park - Alsace  
Poplar Neck Park - Cumru  
Lock House Park - Cumru  
Hunter's Run Park – Exeter  
Trout Run Recreation Area – Exeter  
River Bend Park - Exeter

### **Types of Recreation Facilities**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has prepared a classification scheme for use by municipalities in creating and evaluating a park and open space system. It is intended to serve as a planning guide and can be modified to address the recreational needs unique to each municipality. The NRPA classification scheme is divided into two categories: (1) park and open space areas that are considered to be "local" or "close-to-home" due to their smaller size and close proximity and (2) park and open space areas that are considered "regional" due to their larger size and broader service area. Within each category, there are various types of parks and open space areas that can be identified according to their specific characteristics, as described in Table R-1. Overall, the NRPA recommends that municipalities have between 6.25 and 10.5 acres of local park land and open space per 1,000 residents. This land, considered the "core" of a municipal park and open space system, should be suitable for intense development and used primarily for active recreational purposes. In addition,

municipalities should also provide between 15 and 20 acres per 1,000 residents of "regional" park and open space areas that can be used as open space, active or passive recreational areas. Sufficient regional park and open space is and could be available in the Mt. Penn Preserve, Antietam Lake and Neversink Mountain areas.

**TABLE 1**

**NRPA PARK; RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME  
LOCAL/CLOSE-TO-HOME SPACE = TOTAL OF 6.25 TO 10.5 ACRES OF  
DEVELOPED OPEN SPACE PER 1,000 PERSONS**

Type of Park Service Area	Desirable Site Size	Acres/1,000 Persons
<b>Mini-Park</b> Less than ¼ mile Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated radius or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.	1 acre or less	0.25 to 0.5 acres
Neighborhood Park/Playground ¼ to 1/2-mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000 persons Area for intense recreational activities such as field sports, court games, crafts, playground (a neighborhood) activities, skating, picnicking, swimming, etc.	15+ acres	1.0 to 2.0 acres
<b>Community Park</b> Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational neighborhoods. I to facilities such as athletic complexes and/or 2-mile radius. large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon the site suitability and community needs.	25+ acres	5.0 to 8.0 acres

Source: National Recreation and Park Association - Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines

**TABLE 1- Continued**

**NRPA PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME  
REGIONAL SPACE = TOTAL OF 15.0 TO 20.0 ACRES FOR 1,000 PERSONS**

Type of Park	Service Area	Desirable Site Size	Acres/1,000 Persons
<b>Regional/Metropolitan Park</b> Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation (such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses)	Several communities.  1-hour driving time.	200+ acres	5.0 to 10.0 acres
<b>Regional Park Preserve</b> Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation (such as viewing/studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping and trail uses) which may include, active play areas. Generally, 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management, with less than 20% used for recreation development.	Several communities. 1-hour driving time	1,000+ acres or sufficient area to encompass the resource to be preserved and managed.	Variable
<b>Community Park</b> Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes and/or large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon the site suitability and community needs.	Several neighborhoods. 1 to 2-mile radius.	25+ acres	5.0 to 8.0 acres

Source: National Recreation and Park Association - Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines

## **Parks, Recreation and Open Space System in Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace**

### *Mt. Penn Borough*

Mt. Penn currently does not have a Borough park. A playground with limited availability is located at the Mt. Penn Elementary School.

### *Lower Alsace Township*

Recreation facilities in Lower Alsace Township include:

The Antietam Valley School District Athletic Fields. These fields include baseball fields, field hockey fields, soccer fields, softball fields, tennis courts and a track.

Rotary Park. This park includes a baseball field, football field and a nature study area. The field is for the use of City of Reading residents only at this time.

The Antietam Valley Recreation and Community Center adjoins the Township, in Exeter Township.

### **Neversink Mountain**

The Township of Lower Alsace and the Borough of Mount Penn are two of the six municipalities with land on Neversink Mountain.

In 1979, the Berks County Conservancy acquired its first parcel of land on Neversink Mountain with the goal of protecting the parcel for use as open space and recreation. Since this first acquisition, the Berks County Conservancy has protected approximately 292 acres on the mountain, 204 of which are located in Lower Alsace Township. An additional 127 acres on Neversink Mountain are owned and protected by the Earl Trust. The goal of this preservation activity is to provide residents and Berks County visitors with permanently preserved open space to be used for educational and recreational activities as defined in the Feasibility Study for Neversink Mountain completed in 1997. The Long Range Plan, outlined in the Feasibility Study, proposes that about 950 acres be included for a Neversink Mountain Park.

Presently the access and circulation facilities on Neversink Mountain consist of existing paved public streets, public trails, access lanes for utilities, access lanes to private properties, and trails on private lands. Often, lands have multiple uses, such as a utility land that is also used as an access to a private property and/or as a hiking trail. The mountain is accessible from the Borough of Mount Penn by 20th Street, which serves as the primary access for the residents of the mountain. The long-range plan also identifies access via a hiking trail from 23rd Street in Mount Penn. This hiking trail would connect

the mountain with 23rd Street and the local neighborhoods in Mount Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township. Mount Penn Borough residents may also have the opportunity to utilize nearby hiking/biking access to the mountain through a proposed St. Lawrence Access point at 27th Street that would utilize an existing lane extended from Fairview Avenue.

In the long run, Neversink Mountain Park could be better linked to other open space areas and recreation facilities. By creating an urban trail along the east side of 19th Street, the trail system could be continued through Pendora Park, the historic Mineral Spring Park, and Egelman's Park to the 1500-acre Mount Penn Reserve and Antietam Lake.

### **Antietam Lake**

Currently, the approximate 560-acre Antietam Lake Reservoir property offers recreational opportunities, including trails that connect to Mt. Penn. In 2001, a grassroots organization formed to encourage the use and preservation of the Antietam Lake Reservoir.

### **Earl Trust Properties**

The Clinton F. Earl Trust was set up by the Executor of the Earl estate under a provision of his Will dated July 11, 1921. The Will stipulated that 25% of the residue of the estate be used *“for purchasing nearby property for Park purposes preferably woodland on Mt. Penn or Neversink Mountain”*. This Trust was established with a bank that has now become Wachovia.

A majority of the Earl Trust properties are located in Lower Alsace Township and on Neversink Mountain. Approximately 127 acres of Earl Trust land is located on the western end of Neversink Mountain, and about 239 acres of Earl Trust land are located elsewhere in Lower Alsace Township.

A majority of the Earl Trust land is woodland, with the exception of the Hill Road property previously known as the Community Gardens. This property had been used by the City of Reading for community gardens and now sits vacant. The Joint Planning Committee members have identified this site as a potential location for active recreational fields for the community.

### **Recreation Programs**

Programs are available within the Antietam Valley School District, YMCA located in the City of Reading and the Stony Creek Recreation Association.



## **Recreation Acreage Needs Analysis**

The following table presents a recreation acreage needs analysis for Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace Township.

The Recreation Acreage Needs Analysis indicates for each municipality its projected population in the years 2000, 2010 and 2020, and local recreation requirements applying the National Recreation and Park Association Standards. A range is given, the lower number for the NRPA standard of 6.25 acres per 1,000 population and the higher figure for the high end range of 10.5 acres per 1,000 population. Public recreation acreage in 2000 is indicated as well as projected public acreage in 2020, the 2000 deficit in acres, and the projected 2020 deficit in acres.

No deficit is indicated in Lower Alsace Township in 2000 for the low range need. A deficit of 12 acres is indicated for the high range need. Recreational lands that are accessible to Township residents within the Township total 35 acres, including the Antietam School District athletic fields and the Antietam Valley Recreation Association grounds, which are in Exeter Township but adjoin Lower Alsace Township.

Mt. Penn Borough has a deficit of 16.8 to 29.6 acres in 2000 and a deficit of 16.8 acres to 29.6 acres in 2020.

If one looks at the year 2020, there is no deficit in Lower Alsace Township, if Hill Road athletic fields are added to the available acreage. Total available acreage in 2020 would be 91.

If the region is looked at as a whole, in 2020 there is a deficit of 12 acres at the low range need and 43 acres at the high end need. In 2020, there would be no deficit at the low range and high range needs.

**PENN & LOWER ALSACE  
RECREATION ACREAGE NEEDS ANALYSIS**

	Projected Population			Local Recreation Requirements Applying Projected Population NRPA Standards of 6.25 to 10.5 Acres per 1000 Population			Acreage 2000	Projected Public Acreage 2020	2000 Deficit in Acres	Projected 2020 Deficit in Acres
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>				
Mt. Penn	3,016	3,011	3,007	18.8 to 31.6	18.8 to 31.6	18.8 to 31.6	2.0 <sup>1</sup>	2.0	16.8 to 29.6	16.8 to 29.6
Lower Alsace	4,478	4,264	4,050	27.9 to 47.0	27.9 to 47.0	27.9 to 47.0	35 0 <sup>2</sup>	91 <sup>2</sup>	0	0

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<sup>1</sup> Includes Elementary School

<sup>2</sup> Includes School District Athletic Field, Antietam Junior/Senior High School, Antietam Valley Recreation Assn. In 2020, Hill Road acreage is included.

## CHAPTER 22

### HISTORIC RESOURCES

#### Introduction



One of the Mt. Penn Gravity Railroad's locomotives in the station at Mineral Springs Park.

Preserving historical resources helps to enhance our understanding of the formation and development of the region. These resources give residents a “porthole” back to a time that was much different than today’s culture and society. Preserving these resources, whether it be a site, an object, or a building, can help connect today’s generation to yesterday’s way of life.

To preserve historic resources, laws have been enacted and grants have been earmarked to implement those laws. The history of historic preservation efforts, legislation, and grants are discussed in Appendix 3 and Chapter 9.

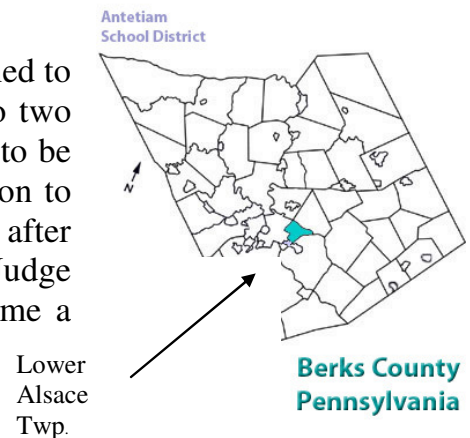
This Chapter 22 provides a look at Lower Alsace Township and Mt. Penn Borough’s rich history and influential historic resources. The discussion of the history of the two municipalities is based upon Mount Penn “The Friendly Borough” From Early Times Through 1994 by John A. Becker; information on the Berks County Historical Society Webpage <http://www.berksweb.com/histsoc/histsoc.html>; and Heritage from Lower Alsace Township.

Specific sites identified by the Berks County Conservancy are shown on the enclosed Historic Properties and Natural Areas Inventory Sites Map. These sites are identified by red points on the map. These points are listed in tables at the end of this Chapter provided by the Conservancy. Other historic sites which have been identified are noted in blue. See A Feasibility Study for Neversink Mountain, Berks County, Pennsylvania, at the Conservancy for a discussion of the history of Neversink Mountain.

#### Establishment of Lower Alsace Township

On December 2, 1774, a petition was submitted to Philadelphia County’s Court of Quarter Sessions stating that land had been settled sufficiently enough to establish the area as an official township. The request was to name the area “Elsace,” because a large number of the settlers’ German heritage. By March 4, 1775, the area was surveyed and had become Alsace Township.

In May of 1888, the Courts of Berks County were petitioned to place on the ballot the division of Alsace Township into two parts. This division would separate the southern section to be named “Lower Alsace Township” and the northern section to remain as “Alsace Township.” On November 8, 1888, after 246 votes for division and 78 votes against division, Judge James N. Ermentrout approved that Lower Alsace become a separate municipal government.



The Township developed primarily as an agricultural community. Agriculture, once a prominent part of the local economy, declined as suburban-type development took place in the area over the years. Small sawmills and grist mills were of some importance in the region’s early history and were dependent on water for power. Water supplies were diminished and could no longer viably support mills. The last of the water-powered mills ceased operations when the City of Reading established Antietam Reservoir as a water supply. The only other important manufacturing operation still existing at the time Lower Alsace Township was established in 1888 was the Louis Kraemer Company, a cotton and woolen goods manufacturing firm. This establishment was comprised of a collection of buildings which gave the appearance of a village along Stony Creek.

### Development of Transportation in the Area

The earliest form of transportation throughout the area was the stage route that Martin Hausman started in 1789 to carry mail and passengers to and from Reading and Philadelphia. In 1828 the route was extended to Harrisburg. The first toll gate on this Philadelphia Pike was located at what is now 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Perkiomen Ave. In 1896 it was located at 19<sup>th</sup> and Perkiomen then moved to the east end of the Aulenbach Cemetery. In 1902 the toll gate was abolished. Another stage route through the area was the Reading, Pottsgrove and Philadelphia line which was started by William Coleman around 1800. George Washington stayed along this route on October 1, 1794 at the Black Bear Inn, which was located at the juncture of the Old Oley Turnpike and Perkiomen Avenue.



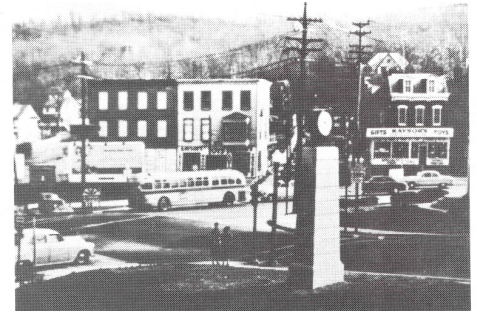
Map of Gravity Rail Road for Area. Photo courtesy of Berks County Historical Society website.

With the construction of railroads, the stages began to decline. A railroad began to run between Philadelphia and Reading by December 5, 1839, and carried goods, mail and passengers. In May 1889 the East Reading Electric Railway Company ran a line from Perkiomen Ave. out South 14<sup>th</sup> St. to Fairview and then over to Woodvale Junction, now 23<sup>rd</sup> and Fairview Ave. The Woodvale Inn, which still stands as an apartment building on the southwest corner, was a popular dining place. On the northwest corner still stands the building that housed the substation for the electric trolley lines. The trolley then

extended to Black Bear and went south over the Neversink Road to Gibraltar, then eastward to Birdsboro. During 1890 system was extended from Fairview over 23<sup>rd</sup> St. and Carsonia Ave. to Stony Creek Mills.

### **Establishment of Mt. Penn Borough**

Suburban type of development began in Stony Creek Mills and in Woodvale, known today as Mt. Penn. Development in the area was spurred in part by John Rigg of the Union Traction Company purchasing the 145 acre farm of William Schweitzer and creating Carsonia Park, which became a thriving amusement park, in 1896. Carsonia Park was named after Robert N. Carson, a Philadelphia financier who had a financial interest in the Union Traction Company of Reading. Mt. Penn became so highly developed that in 1902 a group of residents and landowners petitioned the court to create the Borough out of 242 acres and 166 perches of Lower Alsace Township, thus dividing the Township of Lower Alsace into two separate parts – that which lies to the south of Mt. Penn on Neversink Mountain and the balance of the Township which lies to the north and east of Mt. Penn. On January 7, 1903 the Borough of Mount Penn came into existence as a suburban community and has remained as such throughout the years. One account in 1909 stated that the Borough had 140 dwelling units, a population of 400 persons, two churches, a two story brick school building, two carriage works, a coal yard, and organ factory, a factory to make paper flour sacks and a number of stores, shops and hotels.

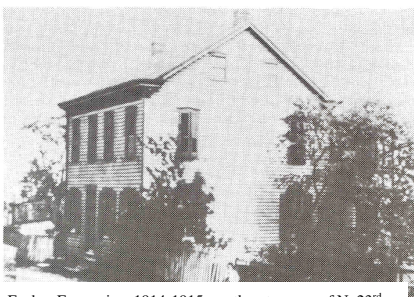


Intersection of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Perkiomen Ave., circa 1953.  
Photo courtesy of Mount Penn "The Friendly Borough"  
Compiled by John A. Becker

On June 6, 1937 an annexation of another portion of Lower Alsace Township took place – a portion bounded by Butter Lane, the northwest side of Brighton, and the northwest side of Philmay Terrace. On October 3, 1940, another portion of Lower Alsace Township was annexed, which consisted of the areas of Butter Lane to High Street, and the west side and south side of 27<sup>th</sup> Street. The Borough at this time reached the current size of 262 acres and 112 perches, approximately four-tenths of a square mile in area.

### **Community Services and Utilities in the Borough**

In 1903, one of the first actions of Borough officials was to grant the Mount Penn Suburban Water Company the right to provide service to the Borough. Also in 1903, the Consolidated Telephone Company of Pennsylvania was given permission to erect poles and string wires to provide phone service to the residents of the community.



Eaches Farm, circa 1914-1915, southeast corner of N. 23<sup>rd</sup> St. and Filbert. Former site Mount Penn Fire Company.

Fire hydrants were required to be maintained by the water company in 1904. Council also established locations for six electric arc lights. The Reading Gas Company was granted

rights to supply gas to the residents in 1905. That year the Council also recognized the newly formed Mount Penn Fire Company.

On November 7, 1935 a sewer district was created. The infrastructure had been financed with local funds and money from the Public Works Administration of the Federal Government. This system was designed to serve not only the Borough, but also portions of the adjacent communities. The system became a joint operation between Mount Penn and Lower Alsace Township, and was changed to the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority in 1982. In 1938, the Mt. Penn Recreation Board was created to provide activities for the community during the months of the summer season. The Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority was formed in 1940 and in 1941, the Authority purchased the Mount Penn Suburban Water Company.

In 1950, the Borough was among the first municipalities to provide 24 hour police protection. The police department was disbanded in 1993 when the Borough joined with Lower Alsace Township in the creation of a regional police force, the Central Berks Regional Police Department.

### **Carsonia Park**



The Thunderbolt and the Pretzel, late 1940's  
(image from Berks County Historical Society Website).

The suburban boom of the 1920's and 1930's brought intense residential development in the Pennside and Stony Creek areas. Carsonia Park, occupying an area between Harvey and Parkview Avenues and Carsonia Avenue, beyond Byram Street into Exeter Township, attracted people by trolley lines into the area daily during the summer months. People enjoyed rides, band concerts, and picnic areas.

The Crystal Ballroom replaced the original dance hall in 1968. The ballroom burned in 1968 and was never replaced.

The Beer Garden was also a place to go and socialize, and still exists as part of a restaurant at Navella and Byram Streets. Carsonia Park was closed in 1951 and was purchased by Byron Whitman, a local realtor, who developed the area for residences.



Crystal Ballroom's 15,000  
square foot dance floor (image  
from Berks County Historical  
Society Website).



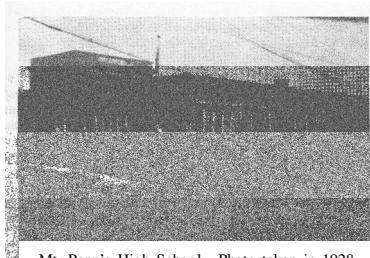
## The Majestic



The Majestic Theater was a local landmark for many years. The building was built in 1923 and the auditorium served as a basketball court as well as a place for various functions such as fund raising events. In 1939, the Wilmer and Vincent Theater chain leased it from the fire company. They placed a new floor over the court to create downward sloping seats from the rear of the theater towards the screen. In 1955, Wilmer and Vincent withdrew and Eugene H. Deeter leased the theater from the fire company. It was operated as a theater until 1984.

## The Schools

The public school system began in this region when the land at the intersection of what is now Friedensburg Road and Carsonia Avenue was donated to Alsace Township by Jesse B. Wentzel in the late 1860's. This school was known as the Wentzel Public School. In the 1880's, the Wentzel School was vacated after the construction of the Woodvale Primary School at 2319 Perkiomen Ave. In 1895 the Lower Alsace Board of School Directors erected what would eventually become the south side of the Elementary School building on the northwest corner of Grant and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets.



Mt. Penn's High School. Photo taken in 1928.  
Photo courtesy of Mt. Penn "The Friendly Borough" compiled by John A. Becker.

When Mt. Penn Borough was established, the Borough created its own School Board. In 1907 a two-year high school course was established in the building at 24<sup>th</sup> and Grant Streets. In 1904 a four-year curriculum was established. In January 1924, the high school classes were moved from the school at 24<sup>th</sup> and Grant Streets to the new high school at 25<sup>th</sup> and Filbert Avenue.

When the Mount Penn and Lower Alsace School Boards combined and became the Mount Penn and Lower Alsace Joint School Board, the district also had the Pennside School at 705 Friedensburg Road and Woodrow Wilson School on Antietam Road. Eventually the Antietam School District was formed.

## Mt. Penn Gravity Railroad

Mt. Penn was home to resort hotels and wineries around the turn of the century. In the days before cars were commonplace, there were no roads on the hill and it was mostly untouched. In 1890 the Chamber of Commerce decided to build a railway system on the mountain, and thus was born the Mt. Penn Gravity Railroad. There were two hotels built on the summit of Mt. Penn, the Tower Hotel and later the Summit House. A steam engine would pull trolley cars to the top of the hill. The "South Turn," where the railroad came up and turned onto what is now Skyline Drive, was the first scenic overlook south of the summit. The railroad climbed from Haig Road and Angora Road, (up what is now a closed paved road to the summit), veered off into the woods, then, when it reached what is now Skyline Drive at the overlook, made a virtual U-turn onto Skyline Drive, and then climbed to the summit. At the summit locomotives would separate and the trolleys would coast down using gravity.



One of the two Shaygeared Locomotives that moved the cars up the mountain until 1898 when the Gravity Railroad was electrified. Photo courtesy BCHS website.

Mineral Springs Park Station was within easy access by street cars from all parts of the city and railroad stations. People would board a Shaygeared Locomotive until 1898, when the gravity railroad was electrified. There was a mountain climb, two and a half miles to the summit of Mt. Penn to what was known as "the Black Spot".



One of the Mt. Penn Gravity Railroad's locomotives in the station at Mineral Springs Park. Photo from BCHS website.



A Gravity Railroad car coasting down Mount Penn. Photo courtesy of the Berks County Historical Society website.

The tour would include a stop at the solid Stone Tower on the mountain top, from which tourists could experience a view of the city of Reading, the Schuylkill and Lebanon Valleys, and the distant ranges and peaks of the Blue Mountains. Large pavilions and a restaurant were also attractions for tourists. The trolleys' descent from the summit was a rapid decline powered by nothing other than gravity for 5 miles. The ride would take the passengers over a road of light grades, through groves, attractive summer resorts, picnic grounds, vineyards, and mountain farms back to the Mineral Springs Park Station. Kuechler's Roost was a popular winery on Mt. Penn in the late 1800's and early 1900's. It was also a stop on the Gravity Railroad run.



**Sites Listed with Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission as Historic Resources:**

***Early farms and vineyards***

* Levan Farm	112 Butter Lane	Issac Levan's in 1860s
* DeHart Farm	132 Butter Lane	Brick farmhouse with Italianate features
* Cox House	Old Friedensburg Rd & Butter Lane	1 1/2 story stone house circa 1790
* Reininger Farm & Winery	Hill Road	
* Pleasantview Hotel	900-1000 Friedensburg Road	Historic hotel and vineyard with wine vault, auxiliary buildings
* Friedensburg Road	500-800	6 houses in 1862; 12 in 1876; vineyards and truck gardens
* Barth Farm and Vineyard	300 Friedensburg Rd	Three story farmhouse of Eberhart Barth; Jonathan Fehr owned surrounding vineyard in 1850s
* John Hill house	607 Friedensburg Rd	Stone 2 1/2 story house circa 1871 - miller's house from 1876 map
* Spuhler Farm	2613 Hill Road	
* Schaeffer Farm	251 Endlich Ave	Original settlement in this area with German Vernacular to home.
Aulenbach's Cemetery	Perkiomen Avenue	Established 1850.

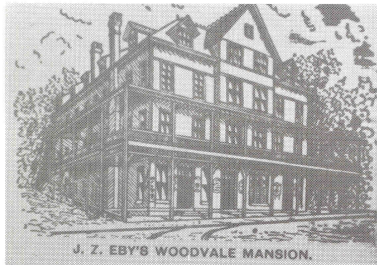
\* Historic District Overlay; \*\* 20th Century Suburban Development

## Additional Historic Resources for Lower Alsace/Mt. Penn Identified by The Berks County Conservancy

### *Stony Creek Mills*

* Louis Kraemer House	102 Kraemer Lane	Victorian with Italianate features; mill race and vaulted roof cellar on property
* Louis Grebe House	103 Kraemer Lane	Victorian frame built by partner in woolen mills
Louis Kraemer & Co	Kraemer Lane	Barn part of farm for Stony Creek Woolen Mills, house built in 1910
* Bixler's Lodge	1465 Friedensburg Rd	Barn converted to tavern in 1939; part of Stony Creek Woolen Mill complex
* Bethany Lutheran Church	Friedensburg Road	
* Stony Creek Mills	1400 Block Friedensburg Rd	Mansard, Queen Anne and Gothic Vernacular styles in core of village
* Wanners & Hartman's Mill	1518 Friedensburg Rd	former gristmill and later textile mill
* Burkhart Forge/Phillip Seidel	108 Angora Road	One of earliest buildings in township; site of forge?
* Jacob Wentzel House	545 Friedensburg Road	Gothic Revival
Renninger Orchards	Lewis Road	Large stone duplex house built in 1879

### *Mt. Penn (Dengler's 1875-99)*

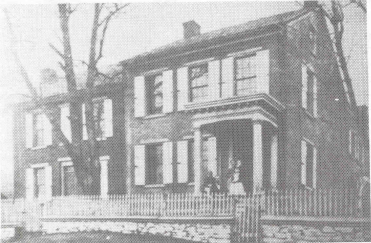


South 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and  
Fairview

Only remaining Neversink Mt.'resort';  
built in 1875 also known as the  
Pennhurst Mansion.

Woodvale Mansion

Name Unknown	2537 Fairview	Typical of Berks County farmhouse, appears to be oldest house on Fairview.
--------------	---------------	--

	2152 Perkiomen	Brick farmhouse c. 1875; Dengler family began selling off lots in 1877.
	Dengler House	
Victorian Vernaculars	2204 -14 Perkiomen	Variety of Victorian styles built 1875-99 on former Dengler land.
Dengler's	2220 Perkiomen	Victorian with Queen Anne features and cut block walls.
* Dr. Bertollette House	2232 Perkiomen	Brick house with Italianate features - home of local physician who was one of the founders of the borough.
* Leinbach's Hardware	2235 Perkiomen	Frame Victorian building - one of the original Leinbach hardware buildings.
* Chestnut Hill Garage	Dengler Street	2 story brick garage with corbelled brick wall design built before 1903 by Dengler's.
Name Unknown	2504 Perkiomen	Two remaining buildings of eight shown on 1876 atlas.

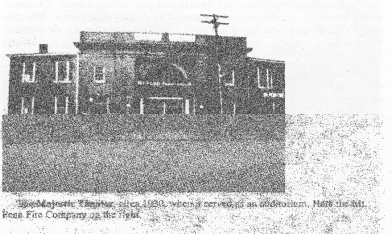
### ***Churches***

* Pennside Presbyterian Church	25 <sup>th</sup> St. & Endlich	Rough stone church with buttressed wall and Romanesque arch stained glass windows built in 1917.
* Faith Lutheran Church	25 <sup>th</sup> Street	Wood meeting-style house of worship built in 1925, bell tower erected in 1987.

### **\* Historic District Overlay; \*\* 20th Century Suburban Development**

#### ***20th Century Suburban Development***

* Green Mansion	1954 Fairview St.	Typical early 20th century summer cottage built by prominent area family.
* Mauer Tract	104 N. 23rd St.	Hillside manor house built c 1900 by local developer and builder.
** Name Unknown	200 Block Friedensburg Rd	Suburban development with Victorian, Box and Spanish style houses.

** Name Unknown	300 Block Carsonia Avenue	Duplex homes with Spanish and Colonial features.
** Name Unknown	400-600 Carsonia Avenue	Spanish style and four square house in early suburbs
** Earle Gables	25th & Filbert Sts.	Spanish Revival cottages around a courtyard, best example of Spanish architecture popular in Mt. Penn in 1920s.
** Endlich Avenue	Butter Lane to Philmay Tr.	Boulevard with 20th century revival homes and cottages built in 1920s.
* Bungalow	2244 Clover Avenue	Hillside bungalow on steep slope.
Brick house from 1930s	2140 Perkiomen	Typical of 1930s houses in Mt. Penn area
* Stokesay Castle	Spook Lane	
Commercial District	North 23rd Street	Main Commercial district of new borough
* Mt. Penn Fire Company	23rd & Filbert Sts.	Brick building built in 1923 as auditorium, borough office, and fire company headquarter.
		
* Mt. Penn High School	25th & Filbert Sts.	Neighborhood school built in 1925.
** Row houses	20th Street	Row houses built by different developers between 1900 and 1924.
* Lutz Funeral Home	21st & Perkiomen	Brick, colonial revival funeral home built in 1931.
Mt. Penn Filtration System	Perkiomen Avenue	Concrete filtration beds and stone pumping station built in 1905 for water coming from Lake Antietam.

**\* Historic District Overlay; \*\* 20th Century Suburban Development**

## **CHAPTER 23**

### **TRAFFIC CIRCULATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Land use and circulation are interlinked. A community's quality of life is highly dependent on the efficient use of land as well as effectiveness of its circulation network. In order for a network to adequately serve adjacent land uses, it must be regularly evaluated as new development or redevelopment occurs. Different land uses require different road characteristics, and addressing future transportation needs is dependent on a sound understanding of the current network. Future development should not result in patterns, which will adversely affect the transportation system.

The transportation system within a community can have an important influence on the type and location of development which may occur. Residential, commercial, and industrial development in turn can influence the function or classification of roads, their design and their condition. In addition to influencing the development of a community by influencing land uses, the character of a community is influenced by the transportation system itself. In areas where development does not respect the limitations of the transportation system, the perception can be one of poor planning and result in frustration for users of the system.

Some of the factors outside the region which can affect transportation and circulation in the region include potential improvements to the Route 422 Corridor to the east, which could affect traffic volumes in both Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace; potential development of the Schuylkill Valley Metro, which could also affect traffic volumes; the improvement of the Route 724 and I-176 interchange project in Cumru, which will affect traffic volumes in the area; and the use of roads within the region to carry thru traffic trying to avoid Route 422 congestion.

#### **Composition of the Circulation Network**

Lower Alsace Township had a total road mileage of 30.1 miles; this is 42<sup>nd</sup> overall for townships in the County. Mt Penn Borough had a total of 9.9 miles of roads, 18<sup>th</sup> overall for boroughs in the County. The circulation system in Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace consists of a variety of roads, from the very high volume Business 422, to moderately high volume Carsonia Avenue, to minor arterials such as Antietam Road and Spook Lane, to local residential streets in the Borough and Township. Most of the roads are two-lane. Road mileage is indicated below.

**TABLE 1**

**ROAD MILES OF ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES,  
MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>State Miles</b>	<b>Municipal Miles</b>	<b>Total</b>
Alsace Township	15.01	26.53	41.59
Cumru Township	33.76	60.82	94.58
Exeter Township	37.35	94.83	132.18
Lower Alsace Township	6.44	23.66	30.10
Mt. Penn Borough	2.19	7.74	9.93
Muhlenberg Township	31.17	72.09	103.26
Reading City	34.25	131.76	166.01
Robeson Township	35.13	57.09	92.24
St. Lawrence Borough	2.67	5.19	7.86

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Roadway Inventory Summary, 2000.

*East-West Transportation Corridors*

The highest volume road passing through the area is Business 422, with a 2003 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 19,294, which is the primary east-west transportation corridor in the region. Since the completion of the West Shore and Pottstown Bypasses, US 422 functions as a limited access highway in many areas, providing uninterrupted travel from Lebanon in the west to the outskirts of Philadelphia in the east. Since this road bisects the region, its influence is quite significant because it allows easy access to employment centers, the Reading City area, and rapidly developing suburban areas.

Other roads carrying east-west traffic include: Spook Lane, List Road, Park Lane, Harvey Avenue, Fairview Avenue, Highland Avenue, Dengler Street, Filbert Avenue and Endlich Avenue,

*North-South Transportation Corridors*

Because most of the travel through Berks County has been historically east-west oriented, the number of north-south routes is more limited. This phenomenon is particularly evident within the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace region. Important roads in terms of north-south travel in the area are Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road. These roads link local residents with Business Route 422 and to US 422 to the west, as well as carry through traffic from the north and northeast.

Summit Avenue, Glen Road, Hill Road, Angora Road, Antietam Road, Carsonia Avenue, Old Spies Church Road, Old Friedensburg Road and 25<sup>th</sup> Street extend through the area and are locally-oriented north-south routes. They primarily serve intra-municipal travel.

### **Existing Roadway Classification**

The definitions of the road classifications are as follows, developed from the classification in the Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision:

Arterial Street – Arterials provide for the movement of large volumes of traffic over longer distances; however, these highways generally operate at lower speeds than arterial expressways due to the presence of traffic control devices and access points.

Collector Street – Collector streets serve moderate traffic volumes and act to move traffic from local areas to the arterials. Collectors, too, can be subdivided into subcategories. Major Collectors provide for a higher level of movement between neighborhoods within a larger area. Minor Collectors serve to collect traffic within an identifiable area and serve primarily short distance travel.

Local Street – Local streets are, by far, the most numerous of the various highway types. These streets provide access to individual properties and serve short distance, low speed trips.

The Berks County Comprehensive Plan contains the following recommended design features for the various highway functional classifications:

## HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS AND RECOMMENDED DESIGN FEATURES

<u>Classification</u>	<u>General Provisions</u>	<u>Right-of-Way Width (ft.)</u>	<u>Cartway Width</u>
Expressway	55+ MPH Limited Access No Parking Noise Barrier/Buffer (where required)	Minimum 120; however, may be wider based on local conditions and design	Minimum four 12' wide travel lanes with 10' wide shoulders capable of supporting heavy vehicles
Arterial	35-55 MPH Some access controls to and from adjacent development. Encourage use of reverse and side street frontage and parallel access road. No Parking	80	48-52 feet; 12' wide travel lanes with shoulders in rural area and curbing in urban areas
Collector	25-35 MPH Some access controls to and from adjacent development. Parking permitted on one or both sides.	60	34-40 feet; 12' wide travel lanes with stabilized shoulders or curbing; 8' wide lanes provided for parking.
Local	15-35 MPH No access control to and from adjacent development. Parking permitted on one or both sides.	53	28-34 feet with stabilized shoulders or curbing; cartway widths can be reduced based on interior traffic patterns.



Roads are classified on the existing Traffic Circulation Conditions map. The following is the list of each type of functional road:

**Major Arterials include:** Business 422, Howard Boulevard, Dengler Street, Carsonia Avenue-23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Friedensburg Road (from Carsonia Avenue to the northern boundary of the Township).

**Minor Arterials include:** Friedensburg Road (from the intersection of Carsonia and Filbert Avenues in the Borough to the intersection with Antietam Road in the Township), Spook Lane-Park Lane, and Antietam Road-Angora Road.

**Major Collectors include:** Filbert Avenue, Glen Road, Harvey Avenue, Antietam Road (from Angora Road to the northern boundary of the Township and in the vicinity of the High School), Fern Street, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Street, and Cherrydale Avenue.

**Minor Collectors include:** Endlich Avenue, Butter Lane, Old Friedensburg Road, Hill Road, List Road, and Angora Road from List Road to the Alsace Township Line.

**Local Access Roads include:** all other roads.

## **Scenic Roads**

Scenic roads are generally found in wooded areas, along Skyline Drive, and near Antietam Creek and Lake. Scenic roads are discussed in Chapter 17, Scenic Resources.

## **Traffic Volumes**

Traffic volumes are determined through traffic counts taken at specific locations within a transportation corridor. The volume is usually portrayed in terms of average annual daily traffic (AADT). This represents the average count for a 24 hour period, factoring in any fluctuations due to the day of the week or month of the year. The AADT is an important factor that, in conjunction with the previous factors outlined, helps in determining the functional classification of a road.

Information available on traffic volumes is important in determining the potential for capacity problems. Roads that are not used for the purpose for which they are intended can experience capacity problems. This is particularly evident in areas experiencing a significant amount of new development without concurrent upgrades to the transportation corridors. Capacity problems become particularly evident when the number of lanes are reduced and traffic is funneled from a roadway with a higher number of lanes to one with a lower number of lanes.

Although the Mt. Penn and Lower Alsace area is highly populated, capacity on the area roads is influenced by traffic originating outside the area. Roads most likely to experience capacity problems are Business Route 422, Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road. All of these roads are carrying local as well as regional traffic, and increasingly higher volumes.

### **2003 ANNUAL AVERAGE TRAFFIC VOLUMES**

Business Route 422 (Perkiomen Avenue)	19,294, 10,634
Howard Boulevard	20,979, 8,983, 15,093
22 <sup>nd</sup> Street	5,391
Dengler Street	3,401
Carsonia Avenue	7,193, 7,194
Friedensburg Road	994, 1,752
Spook Lane	1,251
Harvey Avenue	1,251
Antietam Road	5,504
Angora Road	3,495

### **Access Management**

Access management problems are situations where conflicts between mobility and access are, or will be, intense and result in congestion and safety problems. Access management problems typically occur on roads serving high volumes, high speed traffic, and abutting intense trip generating uses, such as Route 422. An example of an access management problem would be where commercial development occurs on a road and the mobility of traffic is adversely affected by the increase in driveways from adjacent land to the road on which the land fronts. As the number of driveways increases, the safety and efficiency of the road can decrease. Access management will be an increasing concern Business Route 422 in the future.

### **Corridor Segments**

Corridor segment problems are usually found in more densely developed areas when congestion, access and safety issues are all present. Corridor segment problems can include those roads that may possess maintenance issues or exhibit structural problems. Because of a number of access and safety concerns, Business Route 422 and Friedensburg Road are key corridors requiring attention.

## **Pedestrian Circulation**

A separate chapter, Chapter 18, has been provided on pedestrian circulation.

## **Bus Service**

Capitol Trailways provides daily and weekend service between Reading, Lebanon and Harrisburg. Capitol Trailways utilizes the inter-city bus terminal at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Penn Streets in Reading. BARTA service also provides regular daily service to Mt. Penn and Pennside in the Township via Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue and Butter Lane.

## **Rail Service**

A study is underway to explore the development of a 62-mile passenger rail service between Reading and Philadelphia. Schuylkill Valley Metro stops have been proposed for Exeter and Amity Townships. With the future development of passenger rail service in Exeter and Amity Townships, planning for public transportation links that are conducive and supportive of this mode of transportation will be important.

## **CHAPTER 24**

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Community facilities provide necessary and important services to residents of the region. The community facilities, which have been mapped on the enclosed map include: the Lower Alsace Township Building and Garage on Carsonia Avenue and the Mount Penn Borough Hall located on North 25<sup>th</sup> Street. The Mount Penn Streets Department maintains its garage on Butter Lane in the Borough. The Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority offices are in the Borough Hall. The Authority's watershed is off Spook Lane. The Central Berks Regional Police Department is located on Perkiomen Avenue.

Mt. Penn Elementary School is located on Cumberland Avenue in Mt. Penn Borough. The Antietam Senior High and Junior High Schools are located along Antietam Road. The Primary Center is located across from the Borough Hall.

The Lower Alsace Township Community Volunteer Fire Company and the Beneficial Association is located on Columbia Avenue, while the Fire Department of Mt. Penn is located on Grant Street in St. Lawrence. The Lower Alsace Ambulance is located along Harvey Avenue in the former Township Building.

Religious resources available in the municipalities include the Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Open Bible Baptist Church, Trinity Learning Center in Lower Alsace Township and the Pennside Presbyterian Church, Faith Lutheran Church, Trinity United Church of Christ, St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church, and St. Catherine's School in Mt. Penn Borough.

The VFW is located along Carsonia Avenue in Lower Alsace Township.

The Mount Penn post office is located in St. Lawrence Borough on St. Lawrence Avenue.

Antietam Academy, Aulenbach's Cemetery, and a health care facility are located along Perkiomen Avenue. A Montessori school is located along Fairview Avenue.

#### **Educational Facilities**

Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township are part of the Antietam School District, which is the smallest of 18 school districts in Berks County. The Junior-Senior High School, formerly the Stony Creek Middle School, on Antietam Road was renovated in

1988. The Mt. Penn Elementary School is located on Cumberland Avenue. The former High School is being renovated as a primary center. Mt. Penn Elementary School currently serves 544 students, while the Junior-Senior High School serves 503 students.

The school district bought back and is renovating the former High School located at 25<sup>th</sup> and Filbert Streets in Mt. Penn for use as additional classroom space. The continued growth in the school district, particularly in Mt. Penn Borough, has made it necessary to expand current facilities. Upon completion of the renovations, the new classroom space will be used to accommodate kindergarten and first-grade classes and alleviate increased enrollment at the Elementary School.

### **Police Protection**

Established in 1993, the Central Berks Regional Police Department currently serves Mt. Penn Borough and Lower Alsace Township; it is headquartered in the Borough on Perkiomen Avenue at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.

### **Ambulance and Emergency Medical Service**

Ambulance and emergency medical service in Lower Alsace Township is provided by the Lower Alsace Volunteer Ambulance Association, which has a station on Harvey Avenue, and by various other providers such as Reading and St. Joseph Hospitals. Mt. Penn Fire Department provides emergency medical service to Borough residents, while ambulance service is provided by Reading-area hospitals, Lower Alsace and the Exeter Ambulance Association.

### **Library Service**

Library service is provided by the City of Reading, which is open to people with a Berks County library card. The main library is located on South 5<sup>th</sup> Street in the City, with branches located at Schuylkill Avenue and Windsor Street in the northwest, 11<sup>th</sup> and Pike Streets in the northeast and 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Perkiomen Avenue in the southeast.

### **Fire Protection**

The Lower Alsace Community Volunteer Fire Company in Lower Alsace and the Mt. Penn Fire Company serve the region. These fire companies are volunteer companies, and a concern exists regarding volunteer companies and a continuing need for sufficient number of volunteers to allow them to provide adequate fire protection. Fire companies provide mutual assistance to each other in fire emergencies, but it may be necessary for the fire companies and municipalities to work more closely together in the future to assure continued adequate fire protection.

## **Public Water and Sewage Systems**

The Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority provides public water to Mt. Penn Borough, Lower Alsace Township, and portions of St. Lawrence Borough and Exeter Township. The areas served in Lower Alsace include the more densely populated areas of Pennside and Stony Creek Mills.

The Antietam Valley Municipal Authority provides public sewage disposal to residents of Mt. Penn, Lower Alsace, and portions of Exeter Township and St. Lawrence Borough. Similar to public water, only areas of the Township which are more densely populated are served by this system.

**APPENDIX 1**

**PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

**MOUNT PENN-LOWER ALSACE PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. From 1990 to 2000, the population of Mount Penn and Lower Alsace decreased by 16 people. In the future, would you like to see the population of the area:

Stay the same	<u>8</u>
Decrease	<u>0</u>
Increase slightly	<u>13</u>
Increase substantially	<u>2</u>

2. If further residential development occurs, are you in favor of it happening as:

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Large individual lots scattered throughout the Township along existing roads	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>
Conservation developments in which conservation areas containing the special features of a tract are identified first (typically 50 to 80% of the tract remains in open space), houses are located to maximize views of the open space, and road systems and lot lines are established to conform to open space and house locations.	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>
Developments involving a mixture of single family homes, townhouses and apartments	<u>6</u>	<u>13</u>
Single family and two family homes on ¼ acre lots	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>
Retirement communities	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>
Single family homes on one acre lots along new streets built by subdividers	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>

3. Do you support efforts to preserve Neversink Mountain for open space and recreation purposes?

Yes	<u>21</u>
No	<u>1</u>



4. Do you support efforts to acquire the Antietam Lake area from the City of Reading in order to preserve the area as open space?

Yes	<u>20</u>
No	<u>1</u>

5. Do you feel that the community needs an industrial area?

Yes	<u>8</u>	*Not at expense of lake area; *Limited Light Industrial
No	<u>14</u>	

6. If you answered Yes, indicate what types of industrial development you feel are needed in the community.

Light Manufacturing	<u>7</u>
Offices	<u>5</u>
Warehousing	<u>1</u>
Research Labs	<u>6</u>
Other	<u>                    </u>

7. If you answered Yes, indicate what pattern of industrial development should take place.

Small Industrial park	<u>5</u>
Individual sites	<u>4</u>
Other	<u>                    </u>

8. Do you feel that the community needs more commercial areas?

Yes	<u>10</u>
No	<u>10</u>

9. If you answered Yes, what types of commercial development do you feel are needed in the community?

Grocery Stores	<u>3</u>
Supermarkets	<u>4</u>
Video Stores	<u>1</u>
Drug Stores	<u>4</u>
Discount Stores	<u>1</u>
Mini Storage Facilities	<u>0</u>
Restaurants & Entertainment	<u>5</u>
Appliance/home furnishing/hardware stores	<u>2</u>
Day Care Centers	<u>3</u>
Service Stations	<u>0</u>



4 I think farmland should be converted ONLY when density is limited to 1 house per 20 acres.

\*7-10 acres: 1

\*nice industrial park: 1

14 I think farmland should NOT be converted to other uses.

14. If light rail passenger service became available in Exeter Township with construction of the Schuylkill Valley Metro....

Yes

No

- a. Would you use the rail service?

16

5

- b. Do you think the rail service would be an asset to the region?

18

4

15. Are you in favor of programs to increase landscaping, decorative lighting, benches, and similar amenities along Perkiomen Avenue and Carsonia Avenue?

Yes 20

No 2

- a. If these improvements were made, would you frequent businesses along Perkiomen Avenue and Carsonia Avenue more often?

Yes 17

No 6

16. Are there intersections or road designs in the area you would like to see improved?

Yes 12

No 7

17. If Yes, which intersections or road designs need improvements?

see page 2

18. Check any of the following which you think are transportation problems in the area:

Intersections with Perkiomen Avenue 10

Intersections with Carsonia Avenue 4

Intersections with Friedensburg Road 5

Inadequate parking	<u>6</u>	*very bad: 1 *parking too close to intersections: 1 *Sundays on 25 <sup>th</sup> St.: 1
Inadequate public transit	<u>0</u>	
Inadequate road maintenance	<u>4</u>	
Lack of walking trails	<u>3</u>	
Lack of bikeways	<u>5</u>	
Through traffic on local roads	<u>1</u>	
Lack of sidewalks	<u>2</u>	
Poor condition of sidewalks	<u>7</u>	
Steep slope of sidewalks	<u>1</u>	
Congestion along Perkiomen Avenue	<u>10</u>	
Other	<u>see page 3</u>	

19. If additional hiking and bicycling trails were available in the community, would you use those trails?

Yes	<u>12</u>
No	<u>9</u>

20. If yes, from where to where would you like to see trails?

	<u>Origin</u>	to	<u>Destination</u>
1.	<u>see page 4</u>		
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

21. Do you feel that additional public recreation facilities should be provided in the region?

Yes	<u>12</u>
No	<u>10</u>

22. If yes, what new recreational facilities would you like to see?

see page 5

23. If yes, where should they be located?

see page 6

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24. Do you feel that the level of commercial development along Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue, and Friedensburg Road should.....

	<u>Perkiomen Avenue</u>	<u>Carsonia Avenue</u>	<u>Friedensburg Road</u>
Remain the same	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
Increase	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>
Decrease	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>

25. How long have you lived in your municipality?

5 years or less	<u>0</u>
6-10 years	<u>0</u>
11-20 years	<u>5</u>
more than 20 years	<u>17</u>

26. How much land do you own?

Less than 3,000 square feet	<u>10</u>
Between 3,000 and 10,000 square feet	<u>3</u>
Between 10,000 and 20,000 square feet	<u>2</u>
Between 20,000 square feet and 1 acre	<u>3</u>
1 to 5 acres	<u>2</u>
5 to 50 acres	<u>0</u>
More than 50 acres	<u>0</u>
None, I rent	<u>0</u>

27. What is the age of the head of your household?

18-24	<u>0</u>	45-64	<u>13</u>
25-44	<u>1</u>	65 and older	<u>8</u>

28. What would be the best future use of the water filtration beds site along Perkiomen Avenue?

see page 7

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29. In which municipality do you live?

Mount Penn Borough	<u>23</u>
Lower Alsace Township	<u>0</u>

30. What do you like most about the Mount Penn-Lower Alsace area?

see page 8

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31. What are the most important issues facing the Mount Penn-Lower Alsace area today?

see page 9

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32. What kind of community do you want the Mount Penn-Lower Alsace area to be in the future?

see page 10

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33. Do you think the Borough and Township governments should try to identify additional opportunities for working together to provide services and facilities for area residents?

Yes	<u>19</u>	*prefer Mt. Penn merge with Exeter: 1
No	<u>3</u>	

34. Please list any additional comments:

see page 11

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***MOUNT PENN - LOWER ALSACE PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE***

1. From 1990 to 2000, the population of Mount Penn and Lower Alsace decreased by 16 people. In the future, would you like to see the population of the area:

Stay the same	<u>3</u>
Decrease	<u>0</u>
Increase slightly	<u>5</u>
Increase substantially	<u>1</u>

2. If further residential development occurs, are you in favor of it happening as:

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Large individual lots scattered throughout the Township along existing roads	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
Conservation developments in which conservation areas containing the special features of a tract are identified first (typically 50 to 80% of the tract remains in open space), houses are located to maximize views of the open space, and road systems and lot lines are established to conform to open space and house locations.	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Developments involving a mixture of single family homes, townhouses and apartments	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Single family and two family homes on ¼ acre lots	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>
Retirement communities	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>
Single family homes on one acre lots along new streets built by subdividers	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>

3. Do you support efforts to preserve Neversink Mountain for open space and recreation purposes?

Yes	<u>7</u>
No	<u>2</u>



4. Do you support efforts to acquire the Antietam Lake area from the City of Reading in order to preserve the area as open space?

Yes 7  
No 2 \*except for immediate lake area: 1

5. Do you feel that the community needs an industrial area?

Yes 2  
No 7

6. If you answered Yes, indicate what types of industrial development you feel are needed in the community.

Light Manufacturing	<u>1</u>
Offices	<u>2</u>
Warehousing	<u>1</u>
Research Labs	<u>1</u>
Other	<u>                    </u>

7. If you answered Yes, indicate what pattern of industrial development should take place.

Small Industrial park	<u>1</u>
Individual sites	<u>2</u>
Other	<u>                    </u>

8. Do you feel that the community needs more commercial areas?

Yes 4  
No 5

9. If you answered Yes, what types of commercial development do you feel are needed in the community?

Grocery Stores	<u>1</u>
Supermarkets	<u>1</u>
Video Stores	<u>2</u>
Drug Stores	<u>3</u>
Discount Stores	<u>1</u>
Mini Storage Facilities	<u>2</u>
Restaurants & Entertainment	<u>1</u>
Appliance/home furnishing/hardware stores	<u>3</u>
Day Care Centers	<u>2</u>
Service Stations	<u>4</u>



3 I think farmland should be converted ONLY when density is limited to 1 house per 20 acres.

5 I think farmland should NOT be converted to other uses.

14. If light rail passenger service became available in Exeter Township with construction of the Schuylkill Valley Metro....

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a. Would you use the rail service?	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>
b. Do you think the rail service would be an asset to the region?	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>

15. Are you in favor of programs to increase landscaping, decorative lighting, benches, and similar amenities along Perkiomen Avenue and Carsonia Avenue?

Yes 7  
No 2

- a. If these improvements were made, would you frequent businesses along Perkiomen Avenue and Carsonia Avenue more often?

Yes 4  
No 2

16. Are there intersections or road designs in the area you would like to see improved?

Yes 4  
No 3

17. If Yes, which intersections or road designs need improvements?

see page 2  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Check any of the following which you think are transportation problems in the area:

Intersections with Perkiomen Avenue	<u>0</u>	lights: 1
Intersections with Carsonia Avenue	<u>2</u>	
Intersections with Friedensburg Road	<u>1</u>	
Inadequate parking	<u>1</u>	

Inadequate public transit	<u>0</u>
Inadequate road maintenance	<u>2</u>
Lack of walking trails	<u>2</u>
Lack of bikeways	<u>2</u>
Through traffic on local roads	<u>1</u>
Lack of sidewalks	<u>1</u>
Poor condition of sidewalks	<u>0</u>
Steep slope of sidewalks	<u>0</u>
Congestion along Perkiomen Avenue	<u>2</u>
Other	<u>see page 3</u>
	<u> </u>
	<u> </u>

19. If additional hiking and bicycling trails were available in the community, would you use those trails?

Yes	<u>8</u>
No	<u>1</u>

20. If yes, from where to where would you like to see trails?

	<u>Origin</u>	to	<u>Destination</u>
1.	<u>see page 4</u>		
2.	<u> </u>		
3.	<u> </u>		
4.	<u> </u>		
5.	<u> </u>		

21. Do you feel that additional public recreation facilities should be provided in the region?

Yes	<u>4</u>	*natural areas only: 1
No	<u>4</u>	*Antietam Rec. Center is valuable & Twp. needs to support it

22. If yes, what new recreational facilities would you like to see?

see page 5

23. If yes, where should they be located?

see page 6

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24. Do you feel that the level of commercial development along Perkiomen Avenue, Carsonia Avenue, and Friedensburg Road should.....

	<u>Perkiomen Avenue</u>	<u>Carsonia Avenue</u>	<u>Friedensburg Road</u>
Remain the same	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Increase	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Decrease	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

25. How long have you lived in your municipality?

5 years or less	<u>0</u>
6-10 years	<u>0</u>
11-20 years	<u>4</u>
more than 20 years	<u>5</u>

26. How much land do you own?

Less than 3,000 square feet	<u>0</u>
Between 3,000 and 10,000 square feet	<u>2</u>
Between 10,000 and 20,000 square feet	<u>2</u>
Between 20,000 square feet and 1 acre	<u>1</u>
1 to 5 acres	<u>3</u>
5 to 50 acres	<u>1</u>
More than 50 acres	<u>0</u>
None, I rent	<u>0</u>

27. What is the age of the head of your household?

18-24	<u>0</u>	45-64	<u>5</u>
25-44	<u>3</u>	65 and older	<u>1</u>

28. What would be the best future use of the water filtration beds site along Perkiomen Avenue?

see page 7

29. In which municipality do you live?

Mount Penn Borough	<u>0</u>
Lower Alsace Township	<u>9</u>

30. What do you like most about the Mount Penn-Lower Alsace area?

see page 8

31. What are the most important issues facing the Mount Penn-Lower Alsace area today?

see page 9

32. What kind of community do you want the Mount Penn-Lower Alsace area to be in the future?

see page 10

33. Do you think the Borough and Township governments should try to identify additional opportunities for working together to provide services and facilities for area residents?

Yes	<u>9</u>
No	<u>0</u>

34. Please list any additional comments:

see page 11

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## **#12 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- like to eat as does everyone
- reform present existing properties
- diversity
- Angora Farms orchard is unique to area

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- we have to eat
- encourage new generation into farming especially with lowered taxes
- open space needs to be carefully planned and maintained



## **#17 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- 2200 block of Fern – speeding: 1
- N. 23<sup>rd</sup> & Dengler – don't stop at red light before going right: 1
- Carsonia – still think it's still 2 lanes: 1 (need some yellow outer guide lines to show 1 center lane)
- Carsonia & Dengler: 1
- Perkiomen & 24<sup>th</sup> Street: 1
- Fairview & 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> – don't stop at stop sign on Fairview: 2
- at grade school in Mt. Penn – gridlock @ 8:00 & 3:00: 1
- Five Points intersection (Carsonia, Friedensburg, Antietam, etc.): 1
- Intersection of Endlich, Perkiomen, Butter and other street: 2
- Howard Blvd./Dengler/22<sup>nd</sup> St.: 1
- 23<sup>rd</sup> & Perkiomen – hang street signs across light standards: 4
- 26<sup>th</sup> & Perkiomen: 1
- 422 East
- Restore 2-way traffic in all directions from Perkiomen & 23<sup>rd</sup> on both Perkiomen and Howard: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- High & Filbert St. – need stop signs: 1
- 23<sup>rd</sup> & Dengler – green arrow for 23<sup>rd</sup> St. traffic: 1
- Old Friedensberg & Butter Lane – need enforcement at stop sign: 1
- Carsonia & Harvey – install traffic light: 1
- Five Points intersection (Carsonia, Friedensburg, Antietam, etc.): 1
- The two intersecting side streets on either side of TLC on Friedensburg Rd.: 1

## **#18 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- pulling out from 27<sup>th</sup> onto Perkiomen: 1
- lack of police patrols & monitoring at stop signs: 1
- more parking on 25<sup>th</sup> Street – esp. on Sundays – 3 churches in 2 block area: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- make Mineral Spring one way in and Perkiomen one way out of Reading: 1

## **#10 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- individual specialty shops: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- 23<sup>rd</sup> Street: 1
- Mineral Spring Road: 1

## **#20 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- continue to use trails on Mt. Penn & Neversink Mtns.: 2
- Fairview up Neversink Mtn.: 1
- Along Mt. Penn from Antietam Lake to fire tower: 1
- Mt. Penn to Antietam Road (Dam): 1
- Mt. Penn to Schuylkill River: 1
- Mt. Penn to South Reading – Canal St.: 1
- Carsonia Lake to Oley: 1
- Around Antietam Lake: 2
- Mt. Penn to Neversink Mtn.: 2
- City garden area: 1
- Mt. Penn watershed: 1
- Antietam Lake to Mirror Lake along the creek to Exeter Community Park: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- Around Carsonia Lake: 1
- Pennside to Antietam Lake: 1
- continue to use trails on Mt. Penn & Neversink Mtns.: 2
- around Antietam Lake: 3
- Neversink Mountain: 1

## **#22 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- County buy city land for recreation: 1
- frisbee Golf Course: 1
- youth soccer fields: 2
- community park: 1
- rec. hall: 3
- skate park for skateboards: 1
- indoor swimming pool: 2
- open space: 1
- community center (recreation, meeting, classes): 1
- elderly: 1
- tennis courts: 1
- improve Carsonia Park: 1
- ball fields: 1
- things for teenagers to do: 1
- hike and bike trail: 1
- outdoor basketball: 1
- outdoor ice skating: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- youth soccer fields: 1
- ball fields: 1
- skateboard park: 1

## **#23 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- existing mountains: 2
- old reservoir on Perkiomen Avenue: 4
- old garden tract on Hill Road: 2
- municipal parking lot – 2300 block of Perkiomen Ave.: 1
- Carsonia Park: 2
- near Antietam Valley Rec. Center: 3
- old high school: 2
- fix existing tennis courts at Carsonia Park: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- Antietam Lake area: 1
- old reservoir on Perkiomen Avenue: 1

## **#28 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- housing: 2
- open space: 3
- recreation: 7
- elderly housing: 3
- offices: 3
- apartments/townhouses: 5
- single family homes: 6
- high rise hotel: 1
- commercial development – strip mall or shops: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- open space: 1
- recreation: 3
- offices: 1
- commercial development – strip mall or shops: 3

## **#30 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- Borough had prominent citizens: 1
- sense of community: 9
- safe: 4
- good schools: 1
- availability of social services: 1
- wide variety of homes: 1
- small school district: 1
- public transportation: 1
- neighborhoods: 1
- clean, maintained: 1
- natural beauty (hills/trees): 2
- accessibility to goods and services, downtown, retail centers: 13
- friendly neighbors: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- proximity to trails and nature: 4
- semi-rural flavor with easy access to goods and services: 7
- sense of community: 5
- safe: 2
- non-commercialization: 1

## **#31 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- merger: 1
- fair distribution of expenses if merger occurs: 2
- police coverage: 2
- saving the lake: 1
- wastewater treatment – infiltration into sewer system: 2
- maintain sense of today: 2
- adequate funding for schools: 3
- taxes: 7
- Borough residences supporting an 11 man police dept.: 2
- enforce ordinances better: 3
- form a watchdog committee: 1
- infrastructure: 1
- no room for expansion: 1
- school board – selling then buying back school: 1
- Brighton Apartments: 1
- former Mt. Penn High School building – reopen as school but prefer tax base development: 1
- repairs to Aulenbach cemetery: 1
- old high school
- type of people moving here: 1
- noise: 1
- littering: 1
- traffic on Perkiomen: 1
- aging community: 2
- loss of natural landscape (woods/farms): 1
- community pride on Perkiomen Avenue: 1
- more rental properties:

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- keeping crime at a minimum: 1
- more school programs – arts, music: 1
- invest in existing areas that will benefit community in the future: 1
- taxes: 7
- schools: 2
- development of the Lake: 1



## **#32 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- safe: 8
- progressive: 3
- similar to today: 4
- neighborhood where people know each other: 3
- self-sufficient community – businesses supported by area residents: 2
- lower taxes: 2
- main street commercial development: 1
- quiet residential area with neighborhood identity: 1
- friendly: 1
- old fashioned: 1
- solvent: 1
- suburban: 1
- preserve existing open lands: 1
- quiet and enjoyable as it used to be: 1
- increase sense of community pride: 1
- place which welcomes people of varying economic needs: 1

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- merge with a larger school district – better opportunities for children: 1
- clean residential areas surrounding commercial arteries: 1
- no trailer park areas: 1
- family oriented: 1
- similar to today: 4
- neighborhood where people know each other: 2

## **#34 comments**

### **MOUNT PENN**

- community-wide activities like ones at rec. center and A-fields are great
- start a tradition of a community day on a summer holiday
- Mt. Penn should contract with Exeter for police coverage to keep taxes down and not contract with Lower Alsace
- Borough Council take a more direct interest in community and enforce ordinances in a stronger manner: 3
- would it be financially wise to merge with Oley School District?
- an ordinance to replace a tree for every one removed
- no more multi-rental units
- enforce landlords to clean up and take better care of rental properties

### **LOWER ALSACE**

- Antietam rec. center and pool have a lot of potential – lake, level field, pool
- Stony Creek Pool and surrounding area could be cleaned up and utilized for recreation
- Mt. Penn, Lower Alsace, St. Lawrence & Exeter under one plan and/or govt.
- combining community labor to help reduce taxes
- merge Mt. Penn, Lower Alsace & St. Lawrence

**APPENDIX 2**

**POPULATION AND HOUSING DATA**

**TABLE 1**

**GENDER**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,  
BERKS COUNTY**

**2000**

	Total Population	Males		Females	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mt. Penn Borough	3,016	1,442	47.8	1,574	52.2
Lower Alsace Township	4,478	2,183	48.7	2,295	51.3
Berks County	373,638	182,956	49.0	190,682	51.0

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 2**

**LAND AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY**  
**PER SQUARE MILE**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**  
**BERKS COUNTY**

**1990-2000**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Land Area</b>
Mt. Penn Borough	7,207.5	7,540.0	0.4 sq. mi.
Lower Alsace Township	873.0	844.9	5.3 sq. mi.
Berks County	387.8	432.3	864.3 sq. mi.

**Source: Berks County Data Book**

**TABLE 3**

**RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**

**BERKS COUNTY**

**1990-2000**

	1990			2000		
	All Persons	Non-White Persons		All Persons	Non-White Persons	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Mt. Penn Borough	2,883	65	2.2	3,016	80	2.7
Lower Alsace Township	4,627	41	0.8	4,478	121	2.7
Berks County	336,523	21,962	6.5	373,638	38,568	10.3

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 4**

**AVERAGE PERSONS PER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNIT**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**

**BERKS COUNTY**

**1990-2000**

	Average Persons Per Household					
	1990		2000			
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner	Occ	Renter	Occ
Mt. Penn Borough	2.46	1.78	2.49		1.97	
Lower Alsace Township	2.55	2.02	2.52		1.89	
Berks County	2.67	2.25	2.65		2.27	

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 5**

**INCOME, POVERTY AND EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**

**BERKS COUNTY**

**1990**

	Mt. Penn Borough	Lower Alsace Township	Berks County
Median Household Income	33,033	28,165	32,048
Percent Persons Below Poverty Level	4.0	2.0	7.7
Income Type Households			
With wage and salary income	950	1,381	97,741
With nonfarm self-employment income	132	196	12,336
With farm self-employment income	4	12	1,702
With interest, dividend or net rental income	664	1,133	64,944
With social security	478	695	39,548
With public assistance income	24	37	6,268
With retirement income	204	384	23,279
Percent College Graduates	19.3	19.9	15.1
Percent High School Graduates	75.2	74.3	70.0

**Source: U.S. Census**



**TABLE 5**

**INCOME, POVERTY AND EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**

**BERKS COUNTY**

**2000**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>	<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>	<b>Berks County</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$41,326	\$42,708	\$44,714
<b>Percent Persons Below Poverty Level</b>	4.4	3.9	9.4
<b>Income Type (Households)</b>			
With Earnings	1,015	1,455	112,868
With Social Security Income	394	709	41,120
With Supplemental Security Income	29	32	4,612
With Pubic Assistance Income	45	6	3,346
With Retirement Income	270	402	27,001
<b>Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>	18.4	19.7	18.5
<b>Percent High School Graduate or Higher</b>	82.5	85.2	78.0

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Table DP-3 and Table DP-2. Profile of Selected Economic and Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.**

**TABLE 6**  
**PERSONS BY AGE**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**  
**1990-2000**

	Mt. Penn Borough				Lower Alsace Township			
	1990 Population		2000 Population		1990 Population		2000 Population	
Age	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Under 5	6.3	183	6.6	198	6.2	270	5.1	227
5-9	6.3	183	6.9	209	5.3	246	6.0	268
10-24	14.9	432	17.8	538	16.3	756	17.5	780
25-34	16.4	473	14.9	448	14.7	683	12.6	565
35-44	13.8	399	15.8	478	15.0	698	15.8	708
45-54	10.1	293	13.4	405	10.8	501	14.5	649
55-64	10.3	297	8.2	247	11.9	551	9.2	410
65-74	11.8	342	7.7	233	12.0	555	9.8	439
75+	9.7	281	8.7	260	7.9	367	9.7	432

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 7**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**  
**1990**

<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>		<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	5	0.3	14	0.5
Mining	0	0	7	0.2
Construction	55	3.6	180	7.5
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	122	8.1	140	5.9
Manufacturing, durable goods	120	8.0	375	15.8
Transportation	27	1.8	51	2.1
Communications and other public utilities	12	0.8	94	3.9
Wholesale trade	90	6.0	97	4.0
Retail trade	330	22.0	456	19.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate	139	9.2	143	6.0
Business and repair services	11	0.7	106	4.4
Personal services	49	3.2	52	2.1
Entertainment and recreation services	16	1.0	57	2.4
<b>Professional and related services</b>				
Health services	197	13.1	196	8.2
Educational services	106	7.0	204	8.6
Other professional and related services	145	9.6	133	5.6
Public administration	65	4.3	65	2.7
Employed persons 16 years and over	1,499		2,370	

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 7**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**  
**2000**

<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>		<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	16	0.4	11	0.5
Construction	68	4.4	185	8.2
Manufacturing	336	21.7	416	18.4
Wholesale	100	6.5	62	2.7
Retail trade	156	10.1	277	12.3
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	63	4.1	79	3.5
Information	44	2.8	29	1.3
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	134	8.6	198	8.8
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	146	9.4	182	8.1
Educational, health and social services	233	15.0	439	19.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	107	6.9	181	8.0
Other services (except public administration)	94	6.1	119	5.3
Public administration	63	4.1	80	3.5

**Source: DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000 U.S. Census**

**TABLE 8**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**  
**1990**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>		<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>	
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Managerial and professional specialty occupations				
Executive, administrative, & managerial occupations	83	5.5	282	11.8
Professional specialty occupations	261	17.4	356	15.0
Technical sales & administrative support operations				
Technicians & related support occupations	41	2.7	60	2.5
Sales occupations	278	18.5	210	8.8
Administrative support occupations, including clerical	276	18.4	392	16.5
Service occupations				
Private household occupations	0	0	5	0.2
Protective service occupations	27	1.8	35	1.4
Service occupations, except protective & household	179	11.9	286	12.0
Farming, forestry & fishing occupations	5	0.3	7	0.2
Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	135	9.0	279	11.7
Operators, fabricators and laborers				
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	114	7.6	195	8.2
Transportation and material moving occupations	41	2.7	104	4.2
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, & laborers	49	3.2	159	6.7
Employed persons 16 years and over	1,499		2,370	

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 8**

**EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**

**2000**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>		<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>	
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Management, professional, and related occupations	506	32.6	717	31.8
Service occupations	168	10.8	349	15.5
Sales and office occupations	446	28.8	605	26.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	-	-	-	-
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	125	8.1	231	10.2
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	305	19.7	356	15.8
<b>Source: Table DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000 Census</b>				

**TABLE 9**

**HOUSING OCCUPANCY, TENURE AND VALUE**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**

**BERKS COUNTY**

**2000**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>		<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>		<b>Berks County</b>	
<b>OCCUPANCY</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Total Housing Units	1,335	100.00	1,956	100.00	150,222	100.00
Occupied	1,278	95.7	1,881	96.2	141,570	94.2
Vacant	57	4.3	75	3.8	8,652	5.8
<b>TENURE</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Occupied Housing Units	1,278	100.00	1,881	100.00	141,570	100.00
Owner-Occupied	952	74.5	1,462	77.7	104,719	74.0
Renter Occupied	326	25.5	419	22.3	36,851	26.0
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Unit	\$81,900		\$95,400		\$121,600	
Median Contract Rent	\$540		\$631		\$505	

Source: U.S. Census Table DP-4. Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics: 2000.

**TABLE 10****HOUSING TYPE****MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,  
BERKS COUNTY****1990**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>		<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>		<b>Berks County</b>	
<b>TYPE</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Single Family Detached	444	34.0	1,284	64.7	68,688	51.0
Single Family Attached	599	45.9	340	17.1	33,036	24.5
2-4 Unit Structure	142	10.8	107	5.3	13,594	10.1
5-9 Unit Structure	77	5.9	43	2.1	4,446	3.3
10 or more Unit Structure	32	2.4	196	9.8	7,836	5.8
Mobile Home and Others	9	0.6	14	0.7	6,882	5.1
Total	1,303		1,984		134,482	

**Source: U.S. Census**



**TABLE 10**  
**HOUSING TYPE**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP,**  
**BERKS COUNTY**  
**2000**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>		<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>		<b>Berks County</b>	
<b>TYPE</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Single Family Detached	531	39.8	1,238	63.2	81,581	54.3
Single Family Attached	568	42.6	372	19.0	34,822	23.2
2 Unit Structure	45	3.4	41	2.1	6,587	4.4
3 or 4 Unit Structure	95	7.1	82	4.2	7,813	5.2
5 to 9 Unit Structure	72	5.4	54	2.8	4,893	3.3
10 to 19 Unit Structure	16	1.2	59	3.0	3,350	2.2
20 or More Unit Structure	6	0.5	106	5.4	5,446	3.6
Mobile Home	-	-	6	0.3	5,650	3.8
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	-	-	-	-	80	0.1
Total	1,333	100	1,958	100	150,222	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Table DP-4. Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics: 2000.

**TABLE 11**  
**HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE**  
**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**  
**2000**

	Mt. Penn Borough	Lower Alsace Township
Family households (families)	830	1,250
With own children under 18 years	386	510
Married-couple families	644	1,046
With own children under 18 years	272	405
Female householder, no husband present	143	140
With own children under 18 years	86	70
Nonfamily households	448	631
Householder living alone	378	522
Householder 65 years and over	175	266
Households with individuals under 18	410	554
Households with individuals 65 years and over	358	631
Total households	1,278	1,881

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 12**

**AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER PER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNIT**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**

**2000**

	Mt. Penn Borough		Lower Alsace Township	
Age of Householder	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied Units	1,278	100.0	1,881	100.0
15 to 24 years	48	3.8	67	3.6
25 to 34 years	224	17.5	248	13.2
35 to 44 years	280	21.9	398	21.2
45 to 54 years	235	18.4	352	18.7
55 to 64 years	151	11.8	230	12.2
65 years and over	340	26.6	586	31.2
65 to 74	150	11.7	274	14.6
75 to 84 years	151	11.8	253	13.5
85 years and over	39	3.1	59	3.1

**Source: U.S. Census**

**TABLE 13**

**MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**

**1990**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>	<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>
<b>Means of Transportation to Work</b>		
Car, Truck or Van, Drove Alone	1,133	1,864
Car, Truck or Van, Carpooled	165	305
Using Public Transportation	63	50
Other Means	14	21
Walked or worked at Home	85	89

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau.**

**TABLE 13**

**MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK**

**MT. PENN BOROUGH AND LOWER ALSACE TOWNSHIP**

**2000**

	<b>Mt. Penn Borough</b>	<b>Lower Alsace Township</b>
<b>Means of Transportation to Work</b>		
Car, Truck or Van, Drove Alone	1,256	1,862
Car, Truck or Van, Carpooled	164	193
Using Public Transportation (including taxicab)	8	44
Walked	42	27
Other Means	-	29
Worked at Home	46	61
<b>Total Commuting to Work (workers 16 years and older)</b>	1,516	2,216
<b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b>	22.6	21.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Table DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **NATIONAL AND STATE EFFORTS AND LEGISLATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

## **NATIONAL EFFORTS AND LEGISLATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Federal programs encouraging historic preservation include:

- Maintenance of the National Register of Historic Places.
- Section 106 Review of federally funded or assisted projects that impact historic resources.
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits on federal income tax for qualifying rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings used for income-producing purposes.
- The Certified Local Government Program was created to facilitate historic preservation at the local level.

The earliest Federal preservation statute was the Antiquities Act of 1906, which authorized the President to set aside historic landmarks, structures, and objects located on lands controlled by the United States as national monuments. It required permits for archeological activities on Federal lands, and established criminal and civil penalties for violation of the act.

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 was the second major piece of Federal historic preservation legislation. This act declared it national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance and directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct various programs with respect to historic preservation.

In 1964, The United States Conference of Mayors undertook a study of historic preservation in the United States. The resulting report, "With Heritage So Rich," revealed a growing public interest in preservation and the need for a unified approach to the protection of historic resources. This report influenced Congress to enact a strong new statute establishing a nationwide preservation policy: The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

## National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)

The National Historic Preservation Act (1966) and its subsequent amendments established a legal basis for the protection and preservation of historic and cultural resources. Historic resources are defined as *"any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structures or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register; the term includes artifacts, records, and remains which are related to such a district, site, building, structure or object"*.

The Act promoted the use of historic properties to meet the contemporary needs of society. It directed the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, Native Americans, and the public, to take a leadership role in preservation. First, the Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to expand and maintain the National Register of Historic Places. This is an inventory of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant on a national, State, or local level in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Once a property is eligible to be placed on the list, the property, site, or object can be qualified for Federal grants, loans, and tax incentives.

Second, NHPA encourages State and local preservation programs. States may prepare and submit for approval, programs for historic preservation to the Secretary of the Interior. Approval can be granted if they provide for the designation of a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to administer the State preservation program; establish a State historic preservation review board; and provide for adequate public participation in the State program. The SHPO must identify and inventory historic properties in the State; nominate eligible properties to the National Register; prepare and implement a statewide historic preservation plan; serve as a liaison with Federal agencies on preservation matters; and provide public information, education, and technical assistance. The NHPA also authorized a grant program, supported by the Historic Preservation Fund, to provide monies to States for historic preservation projects and to individuals for the preservation of properties listed in the National Register.

Since 1966, Congress has strengthened national preservation policy further by recognizing the importance of preserving historic aspects of the Nation's heritage in several other statutes, among them the National Environmental Policy Act and several transportation acts, and by enacting statutes directed toward the protection and preservation of archeological resources. These laws require Federal agencies to consider historic resources in their planning and decision-making and overlap with provisions of NHPA.



### ***Section 106 Review***

Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and provide the Council an opportunity to comment on Federal projects prior to implementation. Section 106 review encourages, but does not mandate, preservation.

To successfully complete Section 106 review, Federal agencies must:

- Determine if Section 106 of NHPA applies to a given project and if so, initiate the review;
- Gather information to decide which properties in the project area are listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- Determine how historic properties might be affected;
- Explore alternatives to avoid or reduce harm to historic properties; and
- Reach agreement with the SHPO/tribe (and the Council in some cases) on measures to deal with any adverse effects or obtain advisory comments from the Council, which are sent to the head of the agency.

The Executive Branch has also expressed support for preservation through several Executive Orders. Examples include Executive Order No. 11593 President Nixon signed in 1971, which instituted procedures Federal agencies must follow in their property management activities. In 1996, President Clinton signed another important Executive Order No. 13006, which put forth support for locating Federal offices and facilities in historic districts and properties in the Nation's inner cities. Executive Order No. 13006 also directs Federal agencies to use and rehabilitate properties in such areas wherever feasible and reaffirms the commitment to Federal leadership in the preservation of historic properties set forth in NHPA. Another 1996 Executive Order, No. 13007, expresses support for the protection of Native American sacred sites.

### **Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Buildings**

According to the Tax Reform Act of 1986, a property owner is eligible for a 20% tax credit, along with a 27.5 to 31.5% straight-line depreciation for the substantial rehabilitation of historic buildings for commercial, industrial and rental residential purposes (but not owner-occupied buildings), and a 10% tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of nonresidential buildings built before 1936. The 10% tax credit is not available for rehabilitations of certified structures.

Two Federal Tax Incentive Programs currently apply to preservation activities in Pennsylvania: the rehabilitation investment tax credit and the charitable contribution deduction.

**Rehabilitation investment tax credits** are the most widely used incentive program. Certain expenses incurred in connection with the rehabilitation of an old building are eligible for a tax credit. Rehabilitation investment tax credits are available to owners and certain long-term leases of income-producing properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are two rates: 20% for historic buildings and 10% for non-residential, non-historic buildings built before 1936.

The **charitable contribution deduction** is taken in the form of a conservation easement and enables the owner of a "certified historic structure" to receive a one-time tax deduction. A conservation easement usually involves the preservation of a building's facade by restricting the right to alter its appearance.

The Federal Tax Incentive Programs are coordinated through the State Historic Preservation Office, Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in conjunction with the National Park Service. Federal Historic Preservation Certification Applications are available on-line.

### **The National Park Service "Certified Local Government" (CLG) Program**

This program was created in 1980 under the National Historic Preservation Act and administered in the Commonwealth by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; the Certified Local Government Program provides additional benefits to municipalities interested in historic preservation. Once certified, the local government is then eligible to:

- Participate directly in the federal historic preservation program.
- Have greater access to Historic Preservation Funds;
- Have greater level of information exchange with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO);
- Get technical assistance and training from the SHPO;
- Have a higher degree of participation in statewide preservation programs and planning.

#### **Several critical requirements for CLG designation are:**

- Adopt and enforce appropriate legislation for designation and protection of historic properties;
- Establish a qualified historic preservation commission;

- Enact a system for surveying historic properties;
- Enact a public participation component as part of the local program;
- Adequately perform duties and responsibilities delegated through the certification process.
- Continuing in-service historic preservation training for Historical Architecture Review Board (HARB) and Historical Commission members (8 hrs training annually per member);
- Regular attendance at HARB or Historical Commission meetings;
- A good faith effort by the governing body to appoint HARB members with professional qualifications and historic preservation backgrounds;
- Submittal of an annual report of the municipality's historic preservation activities;
- Continuing enforcement of the historic district ordinance

This was established to allow local governments to participate directly in the national historic preservation program and to provide funding to local governments to carry out their historic preservation responsibilities (survey, inventory, designation and protection of their historic resources). To achieve "certified local government" status in Pennsylvania a municipality applies to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's Bureau for Historic Preservation.

All states are required to set aside 10% of their federal historic preservation grant funds to CLGs. These grants are presently offered as a ratio of 60% funding from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and 40% match from the CLG.

### **Pennsylvania State Legislative Response to Historic Preservation: Historical and Museum Commission Act 1945**

Act No. 446, approved June 6, 1945, amending the Administrative Code to consolidate the functions of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, The State Museum and the State Archives, created the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is responsible for the following historic preservation activities in the Commonwealth:

- State Historic Preservation Office for *Determination of Eligibility* and nominations to the National Register, of Historic Places;
- Section 106 Review;
- Administering Historic Preservation Grants;
- Assisting local governments with the Certified Local Government Program.

The Commission is an independent administrative board, consisting of nine citizens of the Commonwealth appointed by the Governor, the Secretary of Education ex officio, two members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore and Minority Leader, and two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker and Minority Leader. The Executive Director, appointed by the Commission to serve at its pleasure, is an ex officio member of the Environmental Quality Board, County Records Committee and the Local Government Records Committee.

As the official agency of the Commonwealth for the conservation of Pennsylvania's historic heritage, the powers and duties of the Commission fall into these principal fields; care of historical manuscripts, public records, and objects of historic interest; museums; archaeology; publications; historic sites and properties; historic preservation; geographic names; and the promotion of public interest in Pennsylvania history.

The Commission is funded partially through an annual legislative appropriation, various grants provided by Federal programs, and private donations. Officially recognized local historical organizations may benefit financially through the Commission's eligibility to receive matching funds from various federal programs. The PHMC is active in many phases of historic preservation. The PHMC also conducts a landmark identification program, presenting identification plaques to property owners for attachment on structures included in the PA Inventory of Historical Places. The landmark identification program also includes the placement of roadside historical signs at various sites and locations having statewide and national historic significance. Today nearly 1,900 markers are placed along city roads and highways to represent sites of historical significance in Pennsylvania.

An executive order went into place to require the Office of Historic Preservation of the PHMC to approve all proposals involving the demolition of a state building. The Office of Historic Preservation was also directed to develop and implement a program that will assist the public and private sectors in implementing the Commonwealth's policy to "protect and enhance our irreplaceable resources." The Office has since implemented a five-point program to achieve the executive order as follows:

1. Registering historically or architecturally significant sites and structure on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places;
2. Advising and guiding individuals and organizations regarding historic preservation and its funding;
3. Reviewing applications for federal preservation grants;
4. Working for legislation at the state level as an effective tool in historic preservation; and

5. Working with other governmental agencies to review the impact of projects, such as highways, on the Commonwealth's historic resources.

The Contact information for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is as follows:

Commonwealth Keystone Bldg.  
2nd Floor  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093

(717) 787-3362  
fax: (717) 783-9924  
[www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us)

### **Pennsylvania's Bureau for Historic Preservation (Bureau)**

The Bureau is part of the PHMC and serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The PHMC is the Commonwealth's official history agency and the Executive Director is designated as the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The Bureau provides technical assistance for the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings throughout Pennsylvania. The Bureau reviews architectural plans and specifications and provides comments on historic building projects for state and federal compliance. They also assist in code-related issues and accessibility programs in the form of letters of support for variances to historic buildings. In an effort to inform the general public, public agencies, local governments and other stewards of historic properties, the Bureau assists in the development and distribution of material on applying the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, preservation planning and the appropriate treatment and repair of historic building materials.

The Bureau also administers the Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) program in partnership with the National Park Service. The tax credit program is one of the most successful and cost-effective programs that encourage private investment in rehabilitating historic properties such as office buildings, rental housing, hotels and retail stores. According to PHMC's website, since its inception in 1976, Pennsylvania has been a national leader in certified tax credit projects, completing over 1,800 projects and generating over \$2.5 billion in qualified rehabilitation expenditures. The Bureau provides technical assistance throughout the application process.

They can provide property owners with publications and technical assistance that discuss the appropriate treatment of historic buildings according to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*.

The Bureau administers the state's historic preservation program as authorized by the Pennsylvania History Code and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is guided by advisory boards and The Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Plan. A board of Commissioners, appointed by the Governor, provides oversight of the Commission.

The Pennsylvania General Assembly is in the process of considering legislation to establish a Historic Homesites Grant Program. Once established, this legislation will provide funds to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to support rehabilitation grants (up to \$6,000) to individuals owning and residing in a historic residential building, as well as to individuals intending to purchase and reside in a historic residential building.

The buildings must serve as the owner's principal residence, must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places or be determined to be a contributing building in a listed National Register Historic District, or be located in an Act 167 historic district, or be designated as a historic property under the local ordinance or city code in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. All work on a historic homesite must conform to the U.S. Secretary of Interior's "Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties."

### **The Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Plan**

The PHMC is gearing up to create a PA Historic Preservation Plan. Below states the agenda and goals of the plan. The agenda of the plan is to:

1. Educate Pennsylvanians About Our Heritage and Its Value
  - Bring Pennsylvania heritage alive for our children
  - Get the preservation message out
  - Reach out to elected officials and key professionals in the public and private sectors
2. Build Better Communities Through Preservation
  - Strengthen and expand preservation planning at the local and regional levels
  - Expand the use of preservation as an economic development strategy
  - Make technical assistance more available and useful to citizens and local governments
3. Provide Strong Leadership At The State Level
  - Seek increased financial support for historic preservation
  - Lead by example
  - Build strong partnerships

## **Historic District Designation in Pennsylvania**

To establish a designation of a Historic District on the local level requires an assessment of the present status of the community's historic resources, knowledge of past historic preservation efforts, and a list of goals and objectives to be obtained in the future.

Taking advantage of historic preservation incentives available at the national, state, and local governmental levels, such as grants, income tax credits for historic rehabilitation, low-interest loans, and local tax abatements will help in the success and acceptance of preserving historic buildings in the community.

It is useful to relate local historic preservation efforts to state and national programs, which will provide a broader perspective by identifying national, state and local historic preservation organizations and government agencies as resources.

### **Act 167- Establishing Historical Districts**

Act 167 was adopted in 1961 and amended in 1963. This Act authorizes "counties", cities, boroughs, ... and townships to create historic districts within their geographic boundaries; provides for the appointment of Boards of Historical Architectural Review; empowers governing bodies of political subdivisions to protect the distinctive historical character of these districts and to regulate the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings within the historic districts." It provides the necessary authority for municipalities to adopt and implement historic preservation programs.

### **Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Act 247**

The State Legislature enacted Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code, in 1969. The Act, as enabling legislation, authorizes local governments (counties, cities, township, and boroughs) to establish by ordinances, local planning commissions, zoning regulations and subdivision regulations; and by resolution adopt a municipal comprehensive plan. In particular, Article VI, Zoning, Section 605, states:

*"The provisions of all zoning ordinances may be classified so that different provisions may be applied to different classes of situations, uses and structures... Where zoning districts are created, all provisions shall be uniform for each class of uses or structures, within each district, except that additional classifications may be made within any district:*

*...For the regulation, restriction, or prohibition of uses and structures at or near... (vi) places having unique historical or patriotic interest of value... ”*

The combination of Act 167 and Act 247 provides the constitutional authority and legislative framework for local governments to develop, adopt and implement historic preservation programs, in conjunction with a municipal comprehensive plan based on sound planning and legal principles. The legislative authority is provided, expert legal and planning advice is available, however; local governments must yet be sold on the necessity and benefits of historic preservation.

### **Historic Preservation at the Local Level**

Two state laws provide the legal foundation for municipalities to adopt historic ordinances and regulatory measures.

**1. Act 247 - Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC):** In 2001, two new amendments to the MPC, Act 67 and 68 strengthened the ability of local government to provide for the protection of historic resources in their comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and subdivision ordinances.

*Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans shall consider the conservation and enhancement of natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic resources in their municipalities [§1106 (a) (6)].*

*Zoning ordinances may promote and preserve prime agricultural land, environmentally sensitive areas, and areas of historic significance. [§603 (C) (7)]*

*Zoning ordinances are required to protect natural and historic resources [§603 (G) (2)].*

*The governing body of each municipality may enact, amend and repeal provisions of a zoning ordinance in order to fix standards and conditions for traditional neighborhood development. In the case of either an outgrowth or extension of existing development or urban infill, a traditional neighborhood development designation may be either in the form of an overlay zone, or as an outright designation, whichever the municipality decides. Outgrowths or extensions of existing development may include development of a contiguous municipality. [Article VII-A §702 (1) (ii)].*

A Historic Overlay Zoning District, unlike the protection offered through the establishment of an Act 167 Historic District, can include individual sites as well as clusters, as long as the resources are well documented and identified on an historic



resources map. An historic overlay district could require new buildings to be similar in type and scale to those already existing. Setbacks should be consistent with the common building setback. Requirements to replicate the existing building line, and height and bulk could help to preserve the existing neighborhood character.

**2. Act 167 - The Historic District Act (1961):** Townships and boroughs may create historic districts within their municipalities to protect the historic character through regulation of the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings within the district. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission must certify districts, including a *determination of eligibility* for the National Register of Historic Places: Therefore historic districts established through Act 167 are afforded the same protection from federal projects associated with National Register Properties. Act 167 requires appointment of an historic architectural review board, or HARB, to advise the local governing body on the appropriateness of building activity in the district.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **GROWING GREENER WORKBOOK**

#### **MODEL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LANGUAGE DESCRIBING ORDINANCE IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT CONSERVATION PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

# Model Comprehensive Plan Language

## Describing Ordinance Improvements

### Needed to Implement Conservation Planning Objectives

#### Outline Of Contents

##### A. ZONING ORDINANCE REFINEMENTS

1. "Menu" of Options Offering a Variety of Densities and Conservation Requirements
2. Natural Features Conservation Standards
3. "Density Zoning"
4. "Landowner Compacts"
5. Traditional neighborhood Model
6. Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)
7. Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs)

##### B. SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE REFINEMENTS

1. *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Maps*
2. Pre-Sketch Conference and Site Visit
3. *Voluntary Sketch Plans*
4. *Two-Stage Preliminary Plans* (Conceptual and Detailed)
5. Conservation Subdivision Design
6. Four-Step Approach to Designing Land-Conserving Subdivisions

# Model Comprehensive Plan Language

## Describing Ordinance Improvements

### Needed to Implement Conservation Planning Objectives

#### A. ZONING ORDINANCE REFINEMENTS

In order to protect the community's existing open space network municipal officials should consider amending the zoning ordinance to include the following special techniques for "creative development":

##### 1. "Menu" of Options Offering a Variety of Densities and Conservation Requirements

The first zoning technique discussed here provides landowners with a "menu" of options to encourage land-conserving subdivision designs, and to discourage land-consumptive layouts that needlessly divide all the acreage into suburban houselots and streets. In its most basic form, this "menu" of five choices consists of two low-density options, one "density-neutral" option, and two higher-density options.

The "density-neutral" option would yield the same number of lots attainable under the pre-existing zoning. To attain full density, developers would have to submit a "conservation design" in which lots are reduced in area in order to permanently conserve half the unconstrained land. Developers willing to leave a greater percentage of the unconstrained land as undivided open space would receive a density bonus through a second layout option.

To encourage landowners to consider creating rural "estates" or mini-farms (at one principal dwelling per 10 acres, for example), a "Country Properties" option is included. Several incentives are offered for those who choose this alternative, including special street standards for gravel-surfaced "country lanes", and the ability to add two accessory dwellings per lot (subject to certain size limits and design requirements for harmonizing with the rural landscape). Another low-density option of four-acre lots is provided for developers who feel that there is a strong local market for executive homes on large lots, but which are smaller than the 10-acre mini-estates.

The fifth, highest-density option would involve a significant density bonus, doubling the pre-existing yield to produce well-designed village layouts in a neo-traditional manner, including architectural standards for all new construction, tree-lined avenues, village greens, parks,

playgrounds, and broad perimeter greenbelts or conservancy areas in which mini-farms could be situated. (For additional details about this design option, please refer to #5 below.)

## 2. Natural Features Conservation Standards

The zoning technique known as *Natural Features Conservation Standards* typically excludes certain environmentally sensitive lands from development activities. Depending upon the fragility of the resource, restrictions can prohibit construction, grading, and even vegetative clearing (especially when steep slopes co-occur with highly erodible soils). "Net-outs", which subtract constrained land from the acreage on which building density is calculated, often accompany *Natural Features Conservation Standards* and effectively reduce the maximum allowable density when environmentally constrained lands occur. The percentage of constrained land which is subtracted typically varies according to the severity of the building limitation imposed by the site feature involved. This variation on *Natural Features Conservation Standards* is sometimes called "density zoning" or "performance zoning", described below.

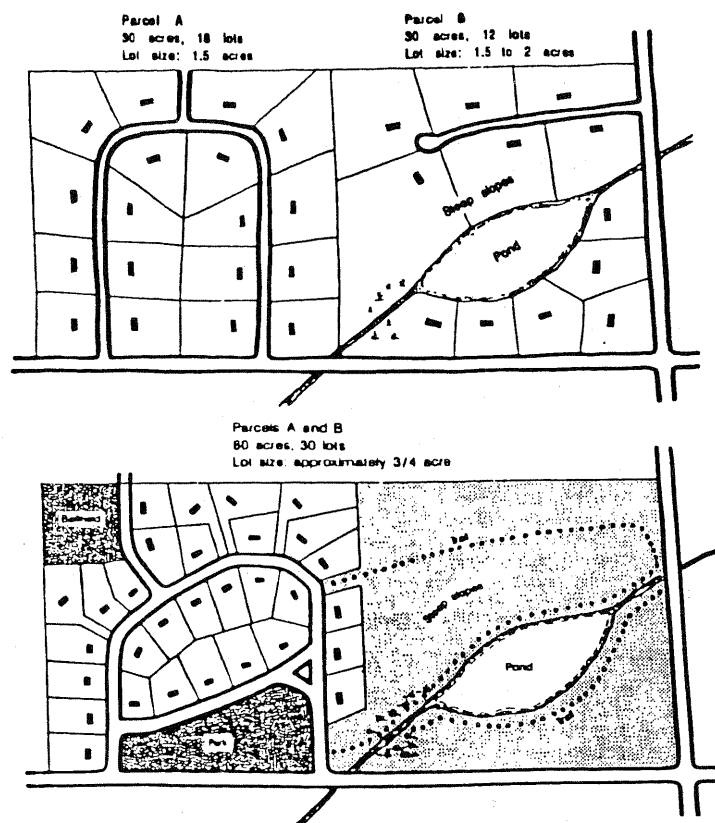
## 3. "Density Zoning"

This approach, frequently referred to as "performance zoning", was first promoted actively in Bucks County during the early 1970s, and an excellent publication by that name is still available from the county planning department in Doylestown. Under "density zoning", the permitted intensity of development directly relates to the ability of the site to safely accommodate it. This tool provides municipalities with a highly defensible way to regulate building density, in contrast to conventional zoning which designates entire districts for a single uniform lot size. While the latter "blanket" approach is defensible at higher densities in serviced areas, this more finely-grained "performance" approach, which responds to the constraints present on individual parcels, is legally more sustainable in outlying areas where a community wishes to place stricter limits on new development for a variety of sound planning reasons. Courts which have rejected attempts to zone entire districts for two-, three-, or five-acre lots in Pennsylvania have upheld ordinances that place similarly restrictive density limitations on land that is steeply sloping, shallow to bedrock, or underlain by a seasonally high water table. (The definitive court decision on this issue is *Reimer vs. Upper Mt. Bethel Twp.*, 615 Atlantic Reporter, 2nd, 938-946.)

Under this approach, various "density factors" are applied to different kinds of land to objectively calculate the true area of unconstrained, buildable land within any given parcel. In that way, tracts of good flat, dry land would be eligible for full density, while other parcels of the same overall size but with fewer buildable acres would qualify for proportionately fewer dwellings. However, for more effective control over the location of house-sites and to limit the percentage of the development parcel that is converted from woodland, meadow, or farmland to suburban lawn, density zoning must be combined with other land-use techniques encouraging or requiring "conservation subdivision design", described under "Subdivision Ordinance Refinements", below.

#### 4. "Landowner Compacts"

Although this approach is not currently prohibited, neither is it encouraged (or even mentioned in the zoning as an option for people to consider) in most communities. Simply put, a "landowner compact" is a voluntary agreement among two or more adjoining landowners to essentially dissolve their common, internal, lot lines, and to plan their separate but contiguous landholdings in an integrated, comprehensive manner. Areas for development and conservation could be located so that they would produce the greatest benefit, allowing development to be distributed in ways that would preserve the best parts of the combined properties. Taking a very simplified example, all the development that would ordinarily occur on two adjoining parcels could be grouped on the one containing the best soils or slopes, or having the least significant woodland or habitat, leaving the other one entirely undeveloped. Two landowners would share net proceeds proportionally, based upon the number of houselots each could have developed independently. The accompanying illustration shows how a "landowner compact" might occur on two hypothetical adjoining properties.



**Figure 14-10.** These sketches illustrate contrasting approaches to developing two adjoining parcels, each 30 acres in area. Parcel A contains very few site constraints and could easily be developed into the maximum number of lots permitted under local zoning: 18 lots. Parcel B contains some steep slopes, a pond, and a small wetland area, but could still be divided into 12 lots. However, much of parcel B is also covered with some rather special stands of trees, which would be completely unprotected under local regulations: mature hemlock groves around the pond, and numerous large beeches on the hillside. The landowner compact approach would allow the common boundary between the two parcels to be erased, so that an overall plan could be created for distributing houselots in a manner that would preserve all the important natural features on parcel B. The entire development of 30 homes could be located on parcel A, together with a natural park/buffer along the public road, and a ball field in one corner. Net proceeds would typically be divided in a proportional manner between the two owners, for example, 18/30ths (60 percent) for the owner of parcel A, and 12/30ths (40 percent) for the owner of parcel B.

## 5. Traditional Neighborhood Model

When it is deemed necessary or desirable to accommodate a diversity of housing sizes and types, including semi-detached and multi-family dwellings at a variety of price ranges, that development can best be handled through the creation of new neighborhoods designed along traditional lines, rather than as suburban-style "Planned Residential Developments" with garden apartments and townhouse condominiums (where the central organizing principle typically appears to be the asphalt parking lots). Accordingly, the zoning ordinance should be amended so that higher-density development will be guided by detailed design and layout standards regarding lot size, setbacks, street alignment, streetscape design, on-street parking, the provision of interior open space as well as surrounding greenbelt areas, etc. Where appropriate, high density development should be allowed in a manner that reflects the best of traditional villages and small towns in the Commonwealth, such as Bellefonte in Centre County and Lititz in Lancaster County. (An excellent resource in preparing such zoning design standards can be found in *Crossroad, Hamlet Village, Town: Design Characteristics of Traditional Neighborhoods, Old and New*, by Randall Arendt, American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report, 1999.) Zoning standards for traditional neighborhoods should always include numerous illustrations including aerial perspectives, street cross-sections, building elevations, photographs, and streetscape perspectives, so that intending developers will know what the municipality expects before they prepare their proposals.

## 6. Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)

Another technique that might ultimately help to conserve some of the Township's undeveloped lands is known as the "transfer of development rights" (TDRs). Under this approach, a zoning ordinance amendment would authorize developers to purchase the rights to develop one parcel of land and to exercise those rights on another parcel within the township. Such an ordinance would determine the areas from which those rights may be "sent" and those which would "receive" them, either by designating special districts for such purposes or by establishing certain objective criteria to be met in each case.

When most rural lands are already zoned at suburban densities (one-half to two acres per dwelling), the number of potential units that would need to be accommodated within TDR "receiving districts" becomes extremely high, unless only a small part of the rural area were to be protected in this manner. The experience of TDRs in several Pennsylvania townships is that the "sending districts" (to be preserved) should therefore be relatively modest in scale, so that they will not overwhelm the "receiving districts" with more dwelling units than they could reasonably handle. For this reason, *in areas zoned for suburban densities* (e.g. 0.5 to 2.0 dwellings/acre), TDRs are inherently limited to playing only a partial role in conserving a community's undeveloped lands, and they should therefore be viewed as a tool mostly for use on an occasional basis. An exception to this general rule in Pennsylvania is Lancaster County, where numerous townships have -- with the political support of their Amish and Mennonite farmers -- down-zoned much of the agricultural land to base densities of 20 or more acres per dwelling. Once those local political decisions were

made, it became relatively easy to draw "urban growth boundaries" around the remaining parts of those townships and to designate them as TDR "receiving areas".

In West Bradford Township, Chester County, the TDR technique was used successfully in 1997 to protect the scenic and historic Albertson-Yerkes farm at the edge of the historic village of Marshallton, from which the majority of development rights were transferred to a wooded tract several miles away. The success of this transaction was largely due to the general public consensus that preserving the scenic viewshed around Marshallton was extremely important to conserving the Township's rural character, and the broad support which existed among residents for employing this special technique to achieve that objective gave the Supervisors and Planning Commission the backing they needed to adopt this special procedure. Areas that are designated to receive the TDR development rights must be appropriate in terms of general location, accessibility, and public water/sewer service or soils suitable for community water and sewage treatment systems. To gain greater political acceptability at the local level, it is important that the TDR technique should be combined with detailed design standards to control the appearance of the areas designated to receive the additional development rights, so that they will resemble historic hamlets and villages with traditional streetscapes and neighborhood greens (as advocated in A.5 above), rather than higher-density groupings of attached housing arranged in a suburban manner around cul-de-sacs and large parking lots.

In West Vincent Township, also in Chester County, the Supervisors saw a large proposed golf course subdivision with its own new spray irrigation sewage treatment system as an incredible opportunity to save pristine farmland elsewhere in the municipality. By identifying that project site -- a lovely gentlemen's farm already targeted to be bulldozed and developed -- as a TDR "receiving area", West Vincent could, in effect, "turn lemons into lemonade". With conservation uppermost in their minds, officials strongly suggested that the applicant buy a large number of development rights from farmers in other parts of the Township previously identified as TDR "sending areas". In this way the developer could significantly increase the number of units over which it could spread its fixed costs (sewage system, golf course, etc.), while at the same time playing a very major role in conserving many acres of productive farmland elsewhere in the community, where rural preservation was much higher on the municipal agenda.

Common characteristics of these two examples are the outstanding vision and leadership shown by local officials who pro-actively led developers in new directions and had the courage to pursue this course amidst the inevitable objections of abutters in the "receiving areas". Another common thread is the laser-like focus of these officials on preserving certain well-defined, very special areas, for which there existed broad agreement and popular support. Where these two communities succeeded, others had previously failed, often because their TDR "sending area" boundaries had been drawn far too generously, encompassing considerably more acreage than could possibly be saved without creating new developments that would be much larger or denser than local residents could comfortably accept as the price of preserving land elsewhere in their township.



In other words, TDR policies should be pursued -- at least at first -- in a "baby step" fashion producing modest but solid successes, and avoiding large-scale "fantasyland" notions of preserving entire rural landscapes with a TDR "silver bullet". Better to register a respectable gain with a relatively small project than to experience an embarrassing defeat from an idealistic attempt to accomplish too much, too fast. Such was the sad case in Kennett Township, also in Chester County, where local officials tried to preserve 700 acres of farmland by compressing that many acres of development onto a 55-acre site. The tightly-packed model village plan they commissioned an urban design team to produce was vociferously rejected by large numbers of residents who judged the proposed layout containing hundreds of rowhouses, twins, and occasional single-family homes as more appropriate to Philadelphia than to their quiet rural community. Some residents suggested that the Supervisors turn their energies instead into actively promoting conservation subdivision design -- as exemplified in the successful "Ponds at Woodward" project which had preserved a 50-acre orchard and a 10-acre woodland, while not increasing overall density above the two-acre/dwelling standard in that district. A well-balanced approach would include both strategies, in addition to PDRs and landowner stewardship (such as easement donations to land trusts). Unfortunately, the political firestorm ignited by the Township's overly ambitious TDR/village initiative effectively killed any further interest in that approach in that community, at least in the foreseeable future.

Inter-municipal TDRs could alleviate problems typically associated with finding areas of the community where designation of higher-density "receiving areas" is politically acceptable, provided the *Municipalities Planning Code* were amended to authorize such transfers. However, transferring development rights between jurisdictions would require a much higher degree of cooperation and coordination than typically exists among local governments. Another consideration is that Pennsylvania communities cannot rely upon TDR provisions to meet their conservation objectives, as the MPC prohibits municipalities from mandating this technique.

## 7. Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs)

As with TDRs, this technique is inherently limited as an area-wide protection tool by suburban zoning densities, which create land values that are beyond the affordability range of most communities. However, PDRs (like TDRs) provide an excellent way for a municipality to conserve an entire parcel on an occasional basis, and for this reason they can become an important element in protecting individual properties of great local significance, from time to time. As with TDRs, PDRs can potentially play critical supporting roles to other techniques that hold more promise as a method for protecting the majority of unbuilt lands in the community, such as conservation subdivision design (see B.5 ). Their advantage is that they protect typically whole properties, while conservation subdivision design (CSD) protects 40-70 percent of each parcel. (However, CSD can protect interconnected networks of open space, while PDRs usually save isolated parcels.)

## B. SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE REFINEMENTS

The subdivision and land development ordinance should be specifically amended to include the following six items:

### 1. *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Maps*

Base maps showing fundamental site information (such as topography, and the boundaries of floodplains and wetlands) have long been required as part of the subdivision review process. In recent years several municipalities have substantially expanded the list of features to include many resources identified in their open space plans. The new kind of base map that has emerged from this evolution, sometimes called an *Existing Resources and Site Analysis Map*, identifies, locates, and describes noteworthy features to be designed around through sensitive subdivision layouts. These resources include many otherwise "buildable" areas such as certain vegetation features (including mature, undegraded woodlands, hedgerows and copses, trees larger than a certain caliper), farmland soils rated prime or of statewide importance, natural areas listed on the *Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI)* or which support flora or fauna that is known to be threatened or endangered, unique or special wildlife habitats, historic or cultural features (such as farmhouses, barns, springhouses, stone walls, cellarholes, Indian trails, and old country roads), unusual geologic formations, and scenic views into and out from the property.

Even in conventional large-lot subdivisions a few of these natural and cultural features can occasionally be conserved through sensitive street alignment, and by drawing lot lines so that particularly large trees, for example, are located near lot boundaries and not where houses, driveways, or septic systems would be likely to be sited. However, flexible site design in which lot dimensions can be substantially reduced offers the greatest potential to conserve these special places within new subdivisions. It is recommended that this kind of approach be more strongly and effectively encouraged through updated zoning provisions (such as those which offer a combination of density bonuses for sensitive land-conserving layouts to encourage this conservation design approach -- and also density *disincentives* to discourage conventional land-consuming layouts).

### 2. Pre-Sketch Conference and Site Visit

Subdivision applicants should be encouraged to meet with officials or their staff informally to discuss ideas for their properties prior to the submission of a Preliminary Plan, and to walk the land with the *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Map* in hand at this formative stage. As state law does not specifically authorize Sketch Plans, these steps should be included within the subdivision procedures section as optional but strongly recommended. Developers interested in expediting the review process will often take advantage of this option, as it helps everyone become better acquainted with the issues earlier in the process. Developers can obtain clearer insights into what local officials are looking for, in terms of conserving particular site features, or wanting to avoid (in terms of impacts) by walking the property with them early in the planning process and identifying the noteworthy features.

### 3. Voluntary Sketch Plans

*Sketch Plans* are simple and inexpensive drawings illustrating conceptual layouts of houselots, streets, and conservation areas. They should ideally be based upon the *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Map*, and comments received from local officials during the pre-sketch conference and on-site visit. As with that conference and visit, municipalities currently lack authority under state law to require that applicants submit *Sketch Plans* *per se*, because such a requirement would expand the subdivision process from a two-stage procedure (with 90 days each for the Preliminary and Final Plans) to one involving a third stage and additional time. However, some developers have found the sketch plan process to be time well spent, because it helps them to identify and address community concerns prior to spending large sums on detailed engineering typically required for so-called "Preliminary Plans" (where about 90% of the total engineering effort is often expended). The voluntary *Sketch Plan* helps all parties avoid the extremely common situation in which developers first pay to engineer expensive "Preliminary Plans" and then understandably refuse to modify their layouts in any substantial manner. The final nature of the highly-engineered Preliminary Plan, as the first document which local officials see, deeply flaws the subdivision review process by limiting dialogue and information exchange at the very point when it is most needed -- during those first crucial months when the overall layout should be examined and be open to modification.

### 4. Two-Stage Preliminary Plans (Conceptual and Detailed)

Many developers perceive sketch plans as adding to their time and costs (which is generally true only in the short run), and generally forego this opportunity to start the process with an informal sharing of ideas. To ensure that concepts are sketched out and discussed with local officials early in the process, before plans become heavily engineered and "hardened", it is highly recommended that subdivision ordinances be amended to split the 90-day review period authorized under state law for Preliminary Plans into two phases. Those applicants who decide *not* to submit voluntary sketch plans would be required to prepare a *Conceptual Preliminary Plan* during the first 30 days, and a *Detailed Preliminary Plan* during the following 60 days. The former would closely resemble the voluntary sketch plan in its requirements, while the latter would essentially encompass the requirements for the standard "Preliminary Plan". By the end of the first 30 days the Planning Commission or its staff must complete their informal but detailed review, specifying the kinds of modifications needed to bring the proposal into compliance with the applicable zoning and subdivision ordinance requirements. As with standard Preliminary Plan applications, in those instances where additional time is needed, a mutually-agreed extension should be signed by the applicant.

### 5. Conservation Subdivision Design

The term "conservation subdivision design" describes a relatively new breed of residential development where, in addition to wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes, the majority of

flat, dry and otherwise buildable land is protected from clearing, grading and construction by reducing lot sizes in order to achieve full-yield density. Conservation subdivision design offers the single most cost-effective way for municipalities to conserve their natural lands and the other significant resources identified in their Comprehensive Plans. It is seen as a potentially very useful tool for augmenting the land protection efforts possible through state and county funding programs, which are quite limited in scope. This design approach avoids the "taking" issue because developers can -- as of right -- achieve the full density allowed on their properties under the zoning ordinance, and because the land not converted to suburban houselots remains privately owned, typically by homeowner associations (although in some instances developers have preferred to donate those portions of their subdivisions to local land trusts).

Conservation subdivision design differs from "clustering" in three important ways. First, it sets much higher standards for the quantity, quality and configuration of the resulting open space. Where cluster ordinances typically require only 25 or 30 percent open space to be set aside, conservation subdivisions designate at least 40 (and usually 50 or more) percent of the land as permanent, undivided open space. Unlike most cluster provisions, this figure is based only on the acreage that is high, dry, flood-free, and not steeply sloped. In this way important farmland or woodland resources (including terrestrial habitat), and historic or cultural features can usually be included within the minimum required open space.

Second, municipalities can exercise greater influence on the design of new conservation subdivisions. Rather than leaving the outcome purely to chance, this flexible design approach can be strongly encouraged or even required where the Comprehensive Plan has identified the location of noteworthy resources. That encouragement could take the form of strong density disincentives to actively discourage land-consuming layouts of large lots, combined with density bonuses for land-conserving design exceeding the minimum 50% open space requirement. In certain overlay districts where the resources are critically important or particularly sensitive, the ordinance could simply require all plans to follow the principles of conservation subdivision design. Those principles are described below, in #6.

Third, the protected land is also configured so that it will, wherever practicable, contribute to creating an interconnected network of open space throughout the community, linking resource areas in adjoining subdivisions, and/or providing buffers between new development and pre-existing parklands, state forests, game lands, wildlife refuges, or land trust preserves.

## **6. Four-Step Approach to Designing Land-Conserving Subdivisions**

The majority of subdivisions across the Commonwealth are prepared by civil engineers and land surveyors whose professional training and experience has typically not included a strong emphasis on conserving the wide range of natural and cultural features essential the successful design of this new kind of subdivision. Therefore, subdivision ordinances should be updated to explicitly describe the steps involved in designing conservation subdivisions. A

simple-four-step design approach has been devised by Natural Lands Trust as a way of clarifying the process for all parties involved, including the landowner, the developer, and local officials.

The sequence of these four steps is critical and reflects their relative importance, with the first and most significant one being the identification of conservation areas. These include both the unbuildable land (wet, floodprone, steep) which are classified as "Primary Conservation Areas", as well as noteworthy site features which would typically not be highlighted as elements to be designed around in conventional subdivisions. Among those "Secondary Conservation Areas" would be mature woodlands, hedgerows, large trees, prime farmland, natural meadows, upland habitats, historic buildings, geologic formations, and scenic views (particularly from public roads). In other words, this design approach seeks to conserve those special places that make each community a distinctive and attractive place and, in that regard, is a tool that is uniquely well-adapted to implementing both the letter and the spirit of the municipal open space plans. Identifying these conservation areas is a fairly easy task, once the *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Map* (described above) has been carefully prepared.

Once the primary and secondary conservation areas have been identified (which comprise the most critical step of the process), house sites are located to enjoy views of, and often direct access to, the protected open space—which enhances their desirability and value. Siting the homes in this manner provides developers with a strong marketing advantage, compared with layouts where homes are boxed in on all sides by other houselots. The third step, aligning streets and trails, is almost a matter of "connecting the dots" for vehicular and pedestrian access, while the fourth and final step of drawing in the lot lines typically involves little more than marking boundaries midway between house locations.

It is virtually impossible to design a truly bad subdivision when following this simple four-step approach. Conservation subdivision design and the four-step approach can be institutionalized in municipal ordinances, providing communities with a ready tool to help them implement their open space conservation objectives even when parcels cannot be protected in their entirety, through donations, purchases, or more sophisticated planning techniques such as TDRs.

(Note: In laying out hamlets, villages, and other forms of traditional neighborhoods such as TDR "receiving areas", Steps Two and Three are reversed, signifying the increased importance of streetscapes, terminal vistas, and public squares in such developments.)

**APPENDIX 5**

**LONG RANGE PLAN  
FOR  
NEVERSINK MOUNTAIN**

## LONG-RANGE PLAN

### Overall Development

It is proposed that the plan for the Neversink Mountain Park, as shown on the accompanying map, incorporate many of its unique features and environments. The park would provide opportunities for passive recreation, nature study, wildlife sanctuary, and a variety of historic features. Recreation facilities would include hiking and biking trails, scenic overlooks, some areas for family picnicking and play. Supporting facilities would include access lanes, parking areas, service roads, maintenance facilities, a visitors' center and exhibit area, and rest facilities.

The park would include all three zones of the mountain - the crest with its peaks and ridges, the steep, mid-level slopes, and the mountain foothills. The park would extend to all sides of Neversink Mountain, and from its highest peak to its lowest point on the Schuylkill River. Park lands would approximate 950 acres. Within the park, about 87 acres would remain under private control, and nearly 185 acres of park land would share use with various utilities, access lanes, and service roads.

There are more than 30 miles of existing trails on Neversink Mountain. It is proposed that nearly half of the trail mileage be closed and that closed trails be allowed to revert to areas of natural vegetation. Closing trails would leave a more simplified trail system but still provide adequate access to all important areas. Closing trails will also create larger, uninterrupted tracts for wildlife sanctuary.

Much of the proposed trail system would utilize the existing bed of the former Neversink Mountain Railroad and many of the already established access lanes and woodland trails. It may be necessary to reestablish sections of the railroad bed that have been obliterated over more recent years, so as to complete the system of trails.

A few new sections of trails would provide linkages to various features and points of access and would provide short-cut connections between the major trails. Most all trails would be improved to allow for comfortable use and for the use of lightweight maintenance and security vehicles. The majority of the trail system will accommodate the handicapped.

Hiking trails that have been used for many years to connect local neighborhoods to Neversink Mountain would be incorporated into the plan for the park. Trails from Reading, Mount Penn, and Reiffon are important social as well as physical linkages to the community.

The ultimate development of park facilities would provide about 11.5 miles of trails and lanes for biking or hiking and about 5 miles of trails to be exclusively used for hiking; or, a total of 16.5 miles of trails.

Some trails would also be used as access lanes for utility maintenance or access to a few residences. These trails would be of heavier construction to accommodate heavier vehicles.

It is proposed that there be seven points of access for the motoring public; four points of access from regional hiking/biking trails; and three accesses for hiking only. The points of access are from all directions and every community.

The plan envisions that vehicular access to Neversink Mountain would be limited to the perimeter of the mountain and to the 20th Street road that leads to the top of the mountain. Vehicular accesses would be accompanied by small but adequate areas for parking. Parking areas would be fully landscaped. Access points to the park would be gated so that the general vehicular traffic would be controlled and limited to the hours of operation. Some private access lanes and public ways would be eliminated or converted to park roads or trails.

It is proposed that the centrally located Mount Penn Access (20th Street) provide convenience to a cluster of park features, including the historic McIlvain Pavilion, the proposed visitors' center, picnic area, the promenade (scenic walk), and the spectacular panorama at the quarry overlook. This would allow many who do not wish to hike or who are limited in their physical activities to also enjoy much of the park.

In addition to scenic trails, overlooks, and nature areas, it is proposed that there be several areas developed for family recreation. These would include facilities for picnicking and general play areas for romping, frisbee toss, softball, volleyball, etc. Seasonal rest facilities would be provided. Family recreation areas would be located near the Reading Access at 10th Street and the Exeter Access on reclaimed quarry land. In the distant future, a third family recreation area could be provided at the South Meadow on the southwestern foothills.

It is proposed that many of the remaining historic features of Neversink Mountain be preserved, restored, and enhanced. The most obvious historic feature to preserve and restore is the Neversink Mountain Railroad. The railroad bed would be used as a major part of the trail system. Preservation of the railroad way could include reconstruction of the wooden trestle that crossed the Klapperthal Creek ravine (at the throat) and reconstruction of a small, wooden bridge that carried the Neversink Mountain Railroad over the inclined railway that provided access to the Highland House hotel (near 13th Street). The way could be enhanced by the addition of story board signs that relate historic information about the railroad and Neversink Mountain.



The parklike area at Klapperthal Creek (in the throat) could be restored by thinning some of the vegetation, restoring the pond and stone dam at Klapperthal Pond, and reconstructing a hillside gazebo.

Within the Cove, the ice pond could be restored. The outline of the foundations of the Glen Hotel could be made more evident, and the stone-lined spring hole could be restored. Further up the Cove, the cold cellar and foundations of the former farm house could be stabilized. On the north rim, the wine cellar and foundation structure of the Greaff Hotel/Berks County Tuberculosis Sanitarium could be cleared of brush, stabilized, and made safe for exploration.

At the eastern peak, it is proposed that maintenance of the McIlvain Pavilion be continued and that the half-mile loop of the scenic promenade walk be restored.

At the west end of the mountain, the ruins of the Whitehouse Hotel could be cleared of vegetation and stabilized. At river level, the towpath of the Schuylkill Canal could be cleared and restored to function as a continuation of the River Trail in Reading.

The plan suggests that many areas that are now cleared of natural vegetation be reclaimed by planting indigenous trees and plants and be allowed to return to a naturalized state. It is further suggested that owners of private lands within and surrounding the park be encouraged to develop landscaping sympathetic to the natural environment. Less than 1% of the park land would be landscaped. The landscaped areas would be at the visitors' center, as well as picnic and family recreation areas.

Some wooded areas would be selectively thinned and pruned so as to open scenic overlooks. At other overlook locations, decks or towers would be constructed so that important vegetation would be preserved.

### **Ridge Top Development**

Development at the crest would consist of a hiking/biking trail that would run the length of the mountain ridge with loops at the eastern ridge and the western peak. Access to the crest would be via existing 20th Street (Neversink Road). Some portions of the ridge top trail system would share use as access lanes to private properties. An area at the top of 20th Street would provide parking for the mountain pavilion, quarry overlook, and a picnic area and visitors' center.

Hiking trails at the eastern peak would provide access from the parking area to the pavilion and to the rim of the quarry. There are outstanding panoramic views from the pavilion and quarry rim. An existing overgrown trail that encircles the eastern peak at the level of the pavilion would be cleared to function as a promenade with many vistas. The

Gibraltar Overlook Trail gives access to a panoramic view of Gibraltar Hill to the south. Observation towers would be provided at the end of the eastern ridge and at the site of the former Highland House hotel on the Reading side of the western peak. At "Lookout Point," the highest point on the Neversink Mountain Railroad (on the south side of the central peak), an observation deck would provide a panoramic vista of the Schuylkill Valley.

### **Mid-Slope Development**

Development on the mid-level slopes would feature a hiking/biking trail (Neversink Trail) that would begin at the eastern peak, loop to the west, encircle most of the mountain, and return to the peak via the north rim of the Cove. This trail would also be accessed by a number of feeder trails from the base of the mountain.

Looping to the west, Neversink Trail would afford overlooks and places to enjoy at: the underground reservoir at 10th Street; the panoramic viewing area above Whitehouse Road; the very scenic rocky cliffs on the south slope at the river loop; the rock garden-like area of the throat; the trestle over the ravine; a deep woods trail through a forest of mountain laurel; the rocky cliffs of the abandoned quarry at the Exeter Access; a panorama of the hills to the south from the top of the cliffs in the quarry; and the ruins of the sanitarium at the northwest rim of the Cove. From there, the trail would return to the eastern peak.

The Neversink Trail would afford views of Mount Penn, Reading, Wyomissing Hills, Angelica Lake, the Schuylkill River, Flying Hill, Gibraltar Hill, and Klapperthal Creek and would pass through a wide variety of habitation.

A hiking trail through the Cove on the Glen Trail would provide a nature walk through wetlands, along branches of Klapperthal Creek, through the quietness of the tall trees, and past the historic remnants of the Glen Hotel and a farm house. The Glen Trail would cross the Neversink Trail and continue northeasterly to connect with the Reiffton Trail, another hiking trail. The Reiffton Trail would begin at the Reiffton Access (at the end of Reservoir Road) and head northerly toward the base of the eastern ridge, where it would connect with the Glen Trail. The Reiffton Trail would then head northeasterly along the base of the ridge to a scenic environment of large boulders, then descend a steep slope to Neversink Road in Reiffton.

The Huffing and Puffing Trail provides a connection between the Glen Trail at the base of the eastern ridge to the Ridge Top Trail. It is a short but rigorous climb.

On the north side of the eastern ridge, the St. Lawrence Trail would provide a hiking/biking trail from the St. Lawrence Access (27th Street) to the west end of the eastern ridge. The trail would follow the service lane for the electric transmission lines. The trail would pass along open field habitat and the edge of a mature woods. Bird watchers and students of nature will find many things of interest.

A hiking trail, the Northeast Trail, would provide a quick way to reach the observation tower at the end of the eastern ridge from the St. Lawrence Trail, near the point of access. The trail would pass through mature woodlands and an area of mountain laurel. From the trail, there are glimpses of Mount Penn, St. Lawrence, and Guldin Hill.

Near the intersection of the Ridge Top Trail and the St. Lawrence Trail, the Laurel Trail, a hiking trail would connect with 23rd Street and the local neighborhoods in Mount Penn Borough and Lower Merion Township. The trail passes through a mature woodland with a dense understory of mountain laurel.

Near the Mount Penn Access, a short but important hiking/biking trail would connect between a curve on 20th Street and the end of 19th Street. This trail, the Mineral Spring Trail, would provide a link to a system of trails in the Mount Penn Reserve. Upon leaving the Neversink Mountain Park, it is proposed that an urban trail would follow along the east side of 19th Street, cross Perkiomen Avenue at the traffic signal, and enter Pendora Park. From there, an existing trail could be followed through historic Mineral Spring Park and Egelman's Park and enter the 1,500 acres of the Mount Penn Reserve, where there are many other features and areas to enjoy.

Hiking up slope from the East Reading Access (18th Street), the Quarry Crest Trail provides a link between the Neversink Trail and the Ridge Top Trail. The Quarry Crest Trail passes among rock formations to the rim of the abandoned quarry, where there is a panoramic view of Reading and views of Mount Penn. Above the quarry, the trail passes through dense patches of mountain laurel and blueberry.

Hiking down slope from the East Reading Access, the Neversink Playground Trail provides a connection between the playground and the Neversink Trail. The Neversink Playground Trail and the paralleling 13th Street Trail are hiking trails that are used by neighborhood residents. The trails pass through mature, open woodland.

The Reading Trail provides an arduous climb from the 10th Street Access and Reading Recreation Area to the observation tower and Ridge Top Trail on the western peak. It functions as a short cut trail and as a traditional link to a City neighborhood. The trail passes through a burned area that is now returning to forest. There are a variety of plants and flowers to be seen. Further up slope, there are views of the City.

A hiking/biking trail, the West End Trail, follows the railroad bed and provides an important connection between the Ridge Top Trail and the Neversink Trail on the south side. The trail passes through hardwood forest. There are many views to the west and south to be enjoyed.

A spur hiking/biking trail links the Whitehouse Access with the Neversink Trail. There are pleasant views of the Schuylkill River from this short trail.

At the South Access, a hiking trail would provide a short cut between the South Access and the West End Trail. There are fine views to the southwest from here.

### **Foothills Development**

Development at the mountain base would feature the Schuylkill River environment and points of access from the surrounding communities.

A hiking/biking trail, Klapperthal Trail, would connect with the Neversink Trail at the trestle; double back through the throat and pass beneath the trestle; connect with the Klapperthal Access; and, continue to the Schuylkill River. The Klapperthal Trail would follow Klapperthal Creek along the floor of the throat, along the shaded western edge of the Forest Hills Memorial Gardens, and through a wildflower area to the river. At the river, a hiking trail would lead upstream to a rock cut on the river loop. A downstream hiking/biking trail would link to the historic site of the Lewis Dam and the ruins of the power station. Along the way, many wildflowers and views of the river rapids may be enjoyed. It is proposed that the trail be continued downstream as part of a regional Schuylkill Valley trail system.

The Klapperthal Trail would be accessed by a short hiking/biking trail that extends from the parking area at the Klapperthal Access along the bed of Klapperthal Road. Another short hiking trail would link the parking area to the Neversink Trail, east of the trestle.

The Exeter Access leads from Klapperthal Road to the mid-slope area where there would be a family recreation area. The lower level of an abandoned quarry would be for parking and a shaded picnic area. The upper level would be developed as a scenic overlook and would have a turfed area for various play activities.

From Reservoir Road in Reiffon, a park road would lead to the Gechter Access. A small parking area would be developed on a level area on the eastern rim of the Cove. From there, there would be easy access to the Neversink Trail and the Glen Trail.

The Reiffon Access would be located at the end of Reservoir Road. A small parking area would give access to the hiking trails along the eastern ridge, including the Reiffon Trail, the Huffing and Puffing Trail, and the Glen Trail. The access road would also continue as a private lane for maintaining the Citizens Water Company reservoir site.

The St. Lawrence Access would utilize an existing lane extended from Fairview Avenue. From a small, shaded parking area, connections may be made to the St. Lawrence Trail and the Northeast Trail.

The 10th Street Access leads to the Reading Recreation Area and connections to the Neversink Trail and the Reading Trail to the western peak. A parking area and picnic grove would be on a wooded level area, just down slope from the underground reservoir, located there. A turfed play area would be developed over the reservoir. Because of the steady breezes that blow over the west end of the mountain, this site traditionally has been a site for flying kites and for viewing the City below.

Whitehouse Road has always provided access along the western end of the mountain and to the meadows south of the western peak. It is proposed, for the purposes of park security and maintenance, that Whitehouse Road be terminated somewhere near the Reading/Cumru municipal boundary. A cul-de-sac turnaround and a gate would be provided at that point. It is proposed that the section of Whitehouse Road south of the proposed cul-de-sac be made a park road that would lead to a small parking area near the historic remnants of the Whitehouse Hotel and the Whitehouse Access Trail; the South Access parking area at the edge of an existing quarry; and the South Meadow Recreation Area.

From the South Access, there would be linkages to the Neversink Trail and a shortcut to the West End Trail. The access lane would also allow service to electric utility lines. A parking area located near the South Meadow would service the South Meadow Recreation Area and would be a trail head for the Meadow Edge Trail. This hiking trail skirts the base of a steep slope along the edge of open fields. As the trail nears the railroad junction, it dips down to cross a small stream. There is a small wetland on the upstream side. The trail enters a mature woodland, then turns northward, climbing a steep slope to reach the Neversink Trail.

From the South Meadow parking area, the bed of Whitehouse Road would be developed as the Whitehouse Trail. The Whitehouse Trail would cross over the Conrail tracks, pass through a broad, open field, and connect with the regional Ferdinand K. Thun Trail that now runs from Reading to the Village of Gibraltar.

Along the west end of the mountain, the River Trail in Reading's Riverfront Park and Heritage Park would be extended downstream, along the former towpath of the Schuylkill Canal. After passing beneath the West Shore Bypass, it would connect with the Ferdinand K. Thun Trail. The Thun Trail would also provide access to a hiking trail downstream from the Titus Power Station. The Titus Trail would be a path along the river plain, where many wildflowers and flowering trees can be found. There are also excellent views of the river bend and of Neversink Mountain from here.

## **Long-Range Coordinated Development**

In the long run, Neversink Mountain Park could become an integral part of other open space areas and recreation facilities.

By creating an urban trail from the Mineral Spring Trail at 19th Street, the wilderness trail system could be continued through Pendora Park and Mineral Spring Park to the 1500-acre Mount Penn Reserve and Antietam Lake, and the many trails of the Reserve.

By extending a trail along the abandoned section of Whitehouse Road and rebuilding a bridge over the Conrail tracks, Neversink Park could be linked with the existing Ferdinand K. Thun Trail. From Thun Trail, there could be connections with a river trail that would extend from the River Park in Reading to Cumru Township Park at Titus, to the Girard Canal at Poplar Neck and to Allegheny Aqueduct at Gibraltar; or, connect with Angelica Park on the west side of the river. The Thun Trail would also provide access to Schlegel Park in the City of Reading.

By extending Klapperthal Trail down river, Neversink Mountain Park could be linked with the Exeter Township Park system and with other downstream communities.

Connections with existing trails in Reading provide access to Berks County's Stonecliff Park, Tulpehocken Creek Park, Gring's Mill, the Berks County Heritage Center, and to the Blue Marsh Lake and Recreation Area.