CHESTER HEIGHTS BOROUGH

Comprehensive Plan

Delaware County, Pennsylvania

2013

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FOR THE

CHESTER HEIGHTS BOROUGH

2013

Prepared for the Citizens of the Borough of
Chester Heights
By the
Delaware County Planning Department

This project was funded in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development, under the Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program, and with funding from the Community Development Block Grant Program under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, P.L. 93-38 (as amended).

Please note, on an ongoing basis programs at the federal, state and local level receive reductions in funding or are discontinued altogether while at other times new funding programs may be created.

For the most current and accurate information on available funding and technical assistance sources please consult the online version of the Delaware County Urban Revitalization Resource Guide at:

http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning/countyregionalplanning/urbanresourceguide.html

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS, DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION 06-13-A

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CHESTER HEIGHTSCOMPREHENSIVE PLAN, DATED JUNE, 2013 AS PREPARED FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE DELWARE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT AND THE CHESTER HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, the Borough of Chester Heights utilizes a Comprehensive Plan, a long- range planning tool, to guide future development of land within the municipality; and

WHEREAS, The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Article III, 53 P.S. Sections 10301-10307 allows for a municipality to provide for and adopt, modify, a comprehensive plan setting forth policies that govern the future physical development of the municipality which may be reviewed and updated , in whole or in part, after public comment, as deemed appropriate by the governing body; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Chester Heights appointed a special "Task Force" consisting of the Mayor, members of Council , Planning Commission , Zoning Hearing Board and Historic Commission , all of whom spent many diligent hours and most appreciative effort ; and

WHEREAS, The Borough and Task Force sought the guidance of the Delaware County Planning Department which prepared a draft of the Comprehensive Plan which includes an Introduction, Community Profile, description of Community Facilities and Services, Housing, Historic Preservation, Transportation needs, overview of Parks, Recreation and Open Space, Land Use, Plan Implementation, two (2) year Action Agenda, Tables , Figures , Maps and Appendices; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Chester Heights' Comprehensive Plan was considered by the Borough's Planning Commission, Delaware County Planning Commission, all contiguous municipalities and the municipality's school district for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Chester Heights received no substantial changes from the contiguous municipalities, Delaware County Planning Commission which recommended approval on April 18, 2013, nor the Garnet Valley School District within forty-five (45) days of submission of the Borough of Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan has been made available in the Chester Height's municipal offices; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing by the Borough's governing body was advertised and published on April 19, 2013 and April 26, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Chester Heights governing body held a public hearing pursuant to public notice on the comprehensive plan on May 7, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the comments received at the May 7, 2013 public hearing were duly noted; and

WHEREAS, after thorough consideration of comments received, the Borough of Chester Heights has determined that the Borough of Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan, as originally set forth in the attached Exhibit "A", should not be substantially revised in whole or in part; and

WHEREAS, the Council for the Borough of Chester Heights has found the Borough of Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan to be beneficial to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Chester Heights; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Council for the Borough of Chester Heights does hereby approve and adopt the following:

Section I - The Borough of Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan dated June, 2012 as attached hereto as Exhibit "A" which includes an Introduction, Community Profile, description of Community Facilities and Services, Housing, Historic Preservation, Transportation needs, overview of Parks, Recreation and Open Space, Land Use, Plan Implementation, two (2) year Action Agenda, Tables , Figures , Maps and all Appendices pursuant to Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

Section II – The Borough of Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan dated April, 1965 is hereby repealed to the extent that it is inconsistent herewith.

RESOLVED this 3rd day of June, 2013 by Council of the Borough of Chester Heights.

RESOLVED: this Resolution shall take effect immediately

BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS

Susan M. Timmins
Secretary/Treasurer

Michael Pierce, President

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan is a long-range planning tool used to guide the future growth and development of a community. It expresses a community's vision and goals for the future, sets forth strategies and recommendations to achieve them and a plan for implementing them. Comprehensive plans address to what uses land in a community should be put, how the movement of people and goods should take place, how housing should be provided and maintained, how the community should provide services to its citizens, and how the community should interact with neighboring communities. This plan, once adopted by Chester Heights Borough, will serve as a guide for Council's future decisions concerning development and redevelopment, as well as a guide for implementing ordinances and programs.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Code (MPC) requires comprehensive plans to include a statement of the community's future development goals and objectives, as well as plans for land use, transportation, community facilities, housing, the environment and historic preservation. In addition to these required plan elements, this plan contains sections about the Borough's history, demographic characteristics, specialized sections on open space preservation and sewerage infrastructure and general funding and technical assistance sources to accomplish the plan's objectives. The goals, objectives, and recommendations outlined in the plan are based on the combined input from elected and appointed officials of the Borough, Borough staff, members of local boards and community organizations, local residents, representatives of the Borough business community and the Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD) Community Assistance staff.

Comprehensive plans in Pennsylvania are advisory and as noted above are designed to act as guides for future policies, decisions and implementing actions. The adoption of this plan will require the Borough Planning Commission to review certain proposed actions related to planning and development in Chester Heights for consistency with it. These proposed actions are listed on the first page of Chapter 10, Implementation. However, as only an advisory document, no action or proposed action of the Borough Council may be declared invalid, or challenged or appealed on the grounds that it might be inconsistent with any provisions of this plan.

CHESTER HEIGHTS BOROUGH PLANNING HISTORY

Before the adoption of this plan, the Borough used a comprehensive plan created in 1967. Though a useful document with pertinent recommendations, it was in need of an update due to its age and noncompliance with the latest requirements of the MPC. Chester Heights engaged the Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD) to assist the Borough in attaining a state Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP) grant. Upon successfully receiving the grant, DCPD was contracted to complete this planning project.

PLANNING PROCESS

This plan is the result of an extensive effort by many persons. County staff performed much of the research and drafted the text in coordination with a Task Force appointed by Borough Council. This Task Force and County staff met regularly to exchange information and to review the work performed by the County.

This document contains significant data describing conditions in the Borough, representing "snapshots" of conditions in 2010 and in previous decades. Much of the information was obtained from an analysis of U.S. Census documents, regional, County, and Borough Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board records, and County subdivision reviews, parcel records, and maps.

VISION STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Chester Heights is a primarily residential community, though the development is generally of a low-density, low-impact nature. Many single-family homes are built on one acre or significantly larger lots. There are also a number of large open space tracts where the natural features and landscapes of the rolling countryside of the Borough have been preserved. Areas that contain higher density residential development or contemporary commercial buildings are generally proscribed to certain locations and/or shielded with natural, landscaped buffers, berms or plantings.

The Comprehensive Plan Task Force identified the rural, open space character as a critical aspect of the Borough and an essential component of the community's vision for the future. A vision statement describes in general terms a community's overall opinion of and commitment to its ideal community. It in turn helps to establish and influence the community's goals and objectives and the plan recommendations found in each chapter.

The Chester Heights vision is to:

> ***Be an economically and socially diverse community that values and preserves its rural, open space heritage and character while fostering safe, human-scaled, contemporary development in selected, discrete locations of residential, commercial and social activity.***

While the vision statement provides the broad concept of the Borough's long-term vision, some elaboration, in the form of the guiding principles below, is necessary to provide a clearer picture of the community's ideal. Similar to the community vision, the guiding principals help to inform the goals, objectives and recommendations of the plan.

Those who live and work in the Borough seek a community:

- Where local residents remain or move back to Chester Heights out of choice because the community offers a healthy and enriching environment in which to live and raise a family.

- Where stable and attractive residential areas provide assurance to residents and homeowners that they can live and invest in the area with comfort and security.

- Where significant remaining open space areas and resources are preserved for the present and future benefit of the public.

- That values its cultural resources by preserving historically significant buildings and the Borough's traditional rural landscapes.

- Where an efficient and well-maintained infrastructure is supportive of a variety of residential neighborhoods and a range of commercial activity.

- With a convenient and accessible centralized village area which residents and visitors frequent for commercial and recreational purposes.

- With attractively landscaped entranceways and streetscapes that encourage the use of pedestrian and biking transport and contribute to attractive and accessible commercial shopping areas.

- That offers age-appropriate recreational facilities and programs to residents of all abilities.

HOW TO USE THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This plan is intended to be read both from cover to cover and used as a reference book. The reader can flip to any chapter, read the existing conditions for the topic discussed, and continue to the recommendations designed to improve the situation. Funding program and/or technical assistance resources follows each recommendation, where applicable. In many cases, municipalities can, and should fund certain projects and services with local tax and other revenues. These municipal funds may then be used as the "local match" required, to secure additional federal, state, and private funding. In an effort to avoid the repetitive placement of "local" as a funding program, where no funding option beyond these Borough resources is applicable, there is none listed. In

cases where there are multiple funding sources, however, municipal revenues through budgeting and appropriations could be used, the term “Borough funds” has been inserted. In many cases, municipalities ignore their own comprehensive plan that contains valuable information on how to approach, treat, and make decisions on the very topics with which they are having difficulty. Therefore, the plan should be used as a reference tool in providing guidance on a wide variety of issues, problems, and challenges facing the community. Chester Heights Borough Council should therefore consult this plan when considering policy matters.

CHAPTER 2

MUNICIPAL PROFILE

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SETTING

Chester Heights Borough is located in southwestern Delaware County, west of the Philadelphia International Airport and Interstate 476 (the Blue Route). The Borough is contiguous with four other County municipalities: Concord Township to the southwest, Thornbury Township to the north, Middletown Township to the northeast, and Aston Township to the southeast. The Borough covers 2.1 square miles and is approximately 20 miles from Center City Philadelphia, and 15 miles from Philadelphia International Airport and Wilmington, Delaware. Map 2-1 highlights the location of the Borough in relation to the remainder of the County and the region as a whole.

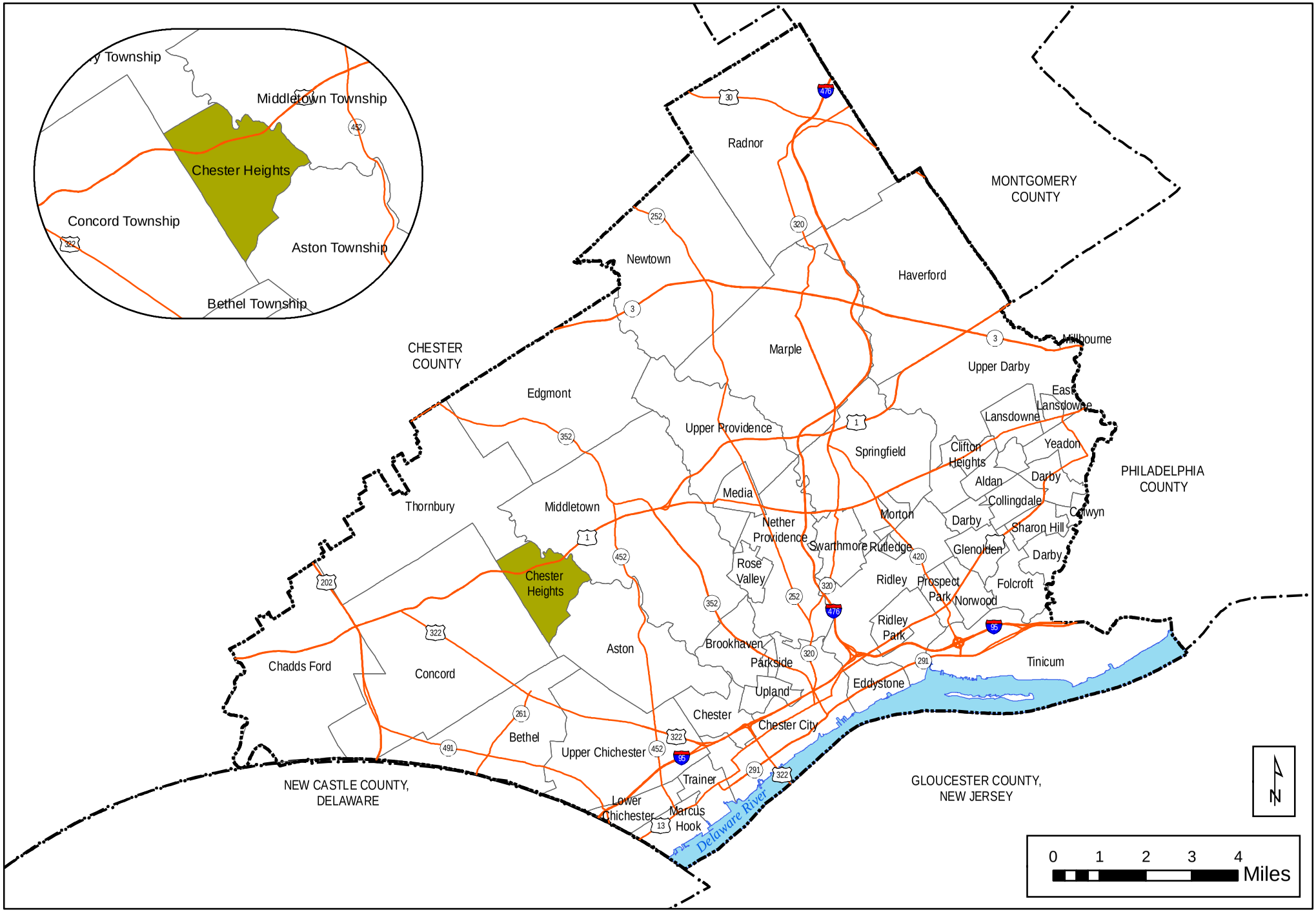
The Borough is predominately a newer suburban community having been incorporated in the mid-20th century, however the roots of the area's founding and settlement date back to the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Residents of Chester Heights have easy access to major County and interstate roads and highways with US Route 1, (Baltimore Pike), which bisects the northern portion of the Borough being the major arterial in the area. It heads southwest through the Borough passing through Concord Township and intersecting US Route 322 and US Route 202 and northeast towards Interstate 476 (the Blue Route). The interchange for I-476 is approximately six miles from Chester Heights, providing access to I-95 to the south and I-76 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the north. Route 1 also intersects with Valleybrook Road, the Borough's secondary arterial running directly north and south through the Chester Heights.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Originally part of the northernmost section of Aston Township, Chester Heights developed as a unique agrarian and rural industrial region. Inland from the Delaware River, the rich soil and open land in Chester Heights was conducive to farming. In addition, in the mid-19th century, this portion of Aston Township served as a busy thoroughfare for new transportation systems connecting rural areas to the main arterials of Philadelphia. As Chester Heights experienced economic and population growth, residents identified this section of Aston as a unique community and successfully formed the Borough of Chester Heights in 1945.

17th Century

Too far inland to attract Swedish settlers and with limited records of Lenni Lenape village sites, Chester Heights' first permanent residents came under William Penn. Predominantly English and Quaker settlers, they incorporated a variety of vernacular



Chester Heights

Map 2-1
Regional Setting

Disclaimer
This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.

Prepared by
Delaware County
Planning Department
January 2010

architectural traditions, borrowing from their country of origin, but using local materials and traditions to create a unique architectural style.

Although the land had been surveyed during the 1680s, it is not certain how promptly this area developed. By 1690, construction of Valleybrook Road ("the Chelsea Road") had been completed and families moved inland up the creek valleys to settle tracts of land. River tier residents invested in sites along the creeks; for example miller Caleb Pusey investigated and bought a mill seat location, which he later sold to the Thatcher family. Contemporary accounts indicate that most of these early structures were built from timber. Unfortunately, few known examples survive anywhere in the region.

18th Century

By the early 18th century, area residents had settled the area near the intersection of Baltimore Pike and Valleybrook Road. Continuing the building tradition from the previous century, most residents constructed homes out of logs and timber. Even though none of the log buildings remain the area is still referred to as "Logtown" because of the previous concentration of 18th century log structures formerly at the site. Today a number of stone structures are left from Logtown's colonial period. Another 18th century hamlet, never named but located in the vicinity of the former Griffith-Lundgren Mills, also has some surviving buildings. These two sites, as well as scattered farmsteads, reflect the sparsely populated rural characteristics of the colonial period in Chester Heights.

19th Century

The 19th century brought a number of changes to Aston Township and the area that would become Chester Heights, beginning with a boundary line change and subsequent dispute. The original township boundaries of Aston, Thornbury, Concord, Middletown, and Edgmont remained undisturbed until 1842. On July 20, 1842, "…the Assembly enacted a law changing the line of Aston, so that part of the old township lying above the Stony Bank Schoolhouse – a direct line drawn thence eastward from Concord township-line to Chester Creek" was annexed to Thornbury Township. Again, in 1870, an effort was made by the citizens of the upper end of Aston to divide the present township, the difficulty growing out of the alleged disproportion of the number of schools and the unequal division of the taxes for road purposes. A petition was presented to the court, but at the election held, under order of court, October 18th of that year, "the project was defeated at the polls" (Ashmead, 294).

While township lines fluctuated, transportation improvements and industrial developments advanced during the second half of the 19th century. With the improvement of the Baltimore Turnpike and the development of the Octoraro line of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the mid-19th century, the wooded hills of Chester Heights became more accessible to nonresidents. The railroad encouraged further industrial development of mills and other rural industries. A number of prosperous professionals established summer homes and transformed active farms into estates. Throughout the summer, excursionists came to the Methodist Camp Meetings, and by the 1880s Chester Heights experienced an expansion of summer tourists retreating to resort hotels. While these new

visitors did not alter the agrarian base of Chester Heights, the prosperity did bring new construction and alterations to standing structures. Renovations occurred as a reflection of the steady gain in economic and social prestige of the families living in Chester Heights.

20th Century

The 20th century history of Chester Heights saw the growth and development of the Wawa Dairies and corporation. The dairy plant is located just over the boundary in Middletown, however as the company expanded and diversified, the corporate offices were developed in Chester Heights. In addition, the family estates of the Woods who owned and operated the company were located in the Borough.

Population growth of the area at the turn of the century caused the construction of a new 1910 Chester Heights School on the site of the 18th century Martin's School at Valley Brook and Llewellyn Roads. The enclaves of homes on Station Road southwest of the former Wawa rail station were mostly built in the first two decades of the 20th century.

After nearly two centuries of discontent with township boundaries, Chester Heights successfully formed as a separate borough in 1945. The Borough of Chester Heights experienced little postwar subdivision until the 1970s when the Valleybrook townhouse complex and later, new single and multi-family development doubled the Borough's population in that decade and led to substantial increases in the 1980s. During the decade of the 1990s population growth in the Borough leveled off significantly, although some modest growth continued.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In order to assess the present and future needs of the Borough, a variety of factors should be considered. Historic population trends, future forecasts and age distributions can develop a better understanding of the direction of present and future growth and development. An examination of the Borough's demographics and selected economic information can provide insight into the types of services and amenities that might be required or desired by Borough residents as well as helping to provide a context for the community's future position within the County.

Population Trends and Forecasts

Figure 2-1 shows the overall population trend in the Borough from 1950 to 2010 with population forecasts for 2020 through 2030. The population of the Borough remained relatively stable during the mid-20th century, in the range of 500 to 600 residents. Large increases occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, when the population increased nearly four-fold. Growth leveled substantially in the 1990s through to the year 2000 with approximately two hundred new residents being added to the Borough total.

The population of the Borough appears to be close to a plateau with only fifty new residents being added from 2000 to 2010, which is well below the growth rates of the

1970s, 80s and even the 90s. However, this increase was more than had been forecast by the regional planning commission which had shown less than a ten-resident increase from 2000 to 2010, and raised the present-day Borough population over that of the totals forecast for 2020 and 2030. Given the 2010 count exceeding the 2010 forecast, it would not be unreasonable to assume the same for 2020 and 2030 Censuses. Table 2-1 and Figure 2-1 shows the population trends and forecasts for the Borough and the County as a whole in absolute numbers with the accompanying percentage changes from 1950-2030.

TABLE 2-1
POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS, 1950-2040

Year	Chester Heights	Pct. Change	County	Pct. Change
1950	474	N/A	414,234	N/A
1960	534	12.7%	553,154	33.5%
1970	597	11.8%	603,461	9.1%
1980	1,302	118.1%	555,023	-8.0%
1990	2,273	74.6%	547,651	-1.3%
2000	2,481	9.2%	550,864	0.6 %
2010	2,531	2.0%	558,979	1.5%
2020*	2,540	0.4%	560,986	0.4%
2030*	2,573	1.3%	567,976	1.2%
2040*	2,582	0.3%	569,983	0.4%

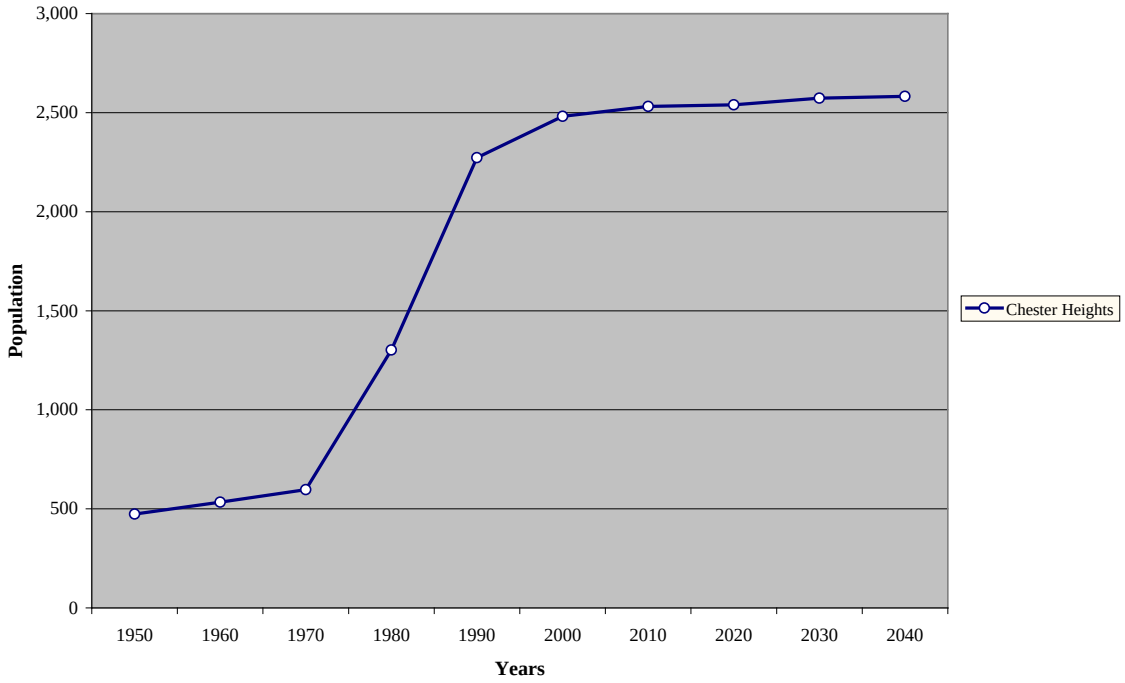
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census
*Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission – Population Forecasts, 2012

Age Distribution

The age distribution of a community can suggest some of the types and levels of services and amenities required and desired by its residents. Figure 2-2 compares the age distribution of the Borough between the 2000 and 2010 Censuses in terms of the percentage share of the total Borough population of various age cohorts.

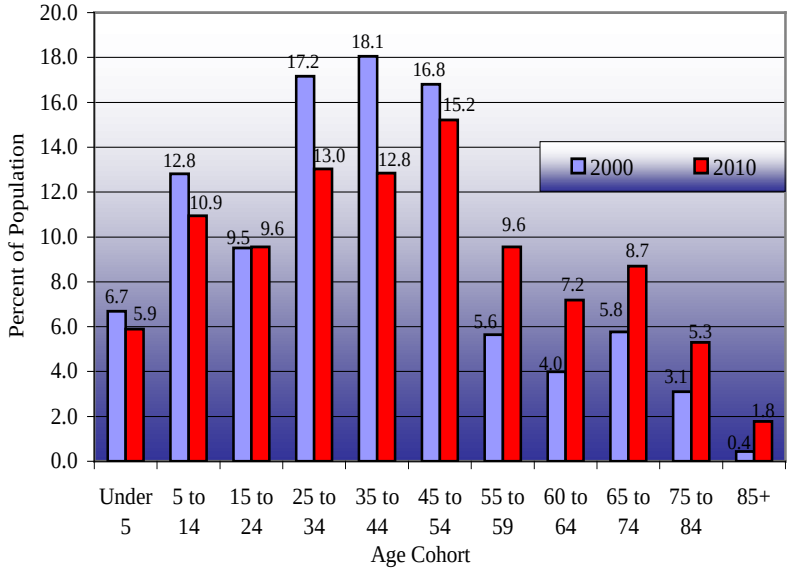
Since 2000, the Under 5 and the 5 to 14 year old age groups have experienced decreases in their totals and percentage shares which indicates a decrease in the number of new families in the Borough. This decrease in new families can be attributable to the fact that the prime childbearing age group (20 to 34) decreased substantially from 2000 to 2010. This steep drop in adults in their twenties and thirties is a significant trend for the Borough and should be followed closely moving forward.

FIGURE 2-1
POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS, 1950-2040



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 2010
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2012)

FIGURE 2-2:
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 2000 AND 2010



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990-2000

In fact, the age groups that experienced the largest percentage share declines were the 25 to 34 year cohort, and the 35 to 44 year cohort. While the 15 to 24 year old age group saw a very slight increase the 45 to 54 year cohort declined, although not as much as the 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 year old cohorts.

In contrast, the largest increases were seen in all of the age groups over 55 years old. The population trends for the Borough show a clearly aging population with an outmigration of adults in their prime earning and family-starting years.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

An analysis of the racial and ethnic composition of the Borough as shown in Table 2-2, reveals a trend towards a more multiracial and multiethnic community that mirrors trends in the County and nation as a whole. The White population makes up a majority of the Borough's residents and increased by only six persons from 2000 to 2010. The overall percentage of residents who were white also decreased a small amount, from 93.7 percent to 92.1 percent, as there were steady, modest increases in the Black, Asian, Other and Multiracial populations in the Borough.

TABLE 2-2
RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION, 2000-2010

	Chester Heights				Delaware County			
	2000	**Percent**	**2010**	**Percent**	**2000**	**Percent**	**2010**	**Percent**
White	2,324	93.7%	2,330	92.1%	442,449	80.3%	405,233	72.5%
Black	57	2.3%	84	3.3%	79,981	14.5%	110,260	19.7%
Asian	47	1.9%	81	3.2%	18,103	3.3%	26,277	4.7%
Other*	12	0.5%	5	0.1%	3,775	0.7%	5,211	0.9%
Multiracial	41	1.6%	30	1.2%	6,556	1.2%	10,979	1.9%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2000 and 2010
* The category "Other" includes Native Americans, Alaskan Natives and Aleuts, and Pacific Islanders

While these changes mostly mirror those of the County, the percentage increases in the Borough of groups other than the white population were a little below those Countywide and reflect somewhat less diversity in the Borough than some other municipalities of Delaware County.

Family Income

The U.S. Census Bureau has two aggregated categories for income: household and family. Household income is the income of the head of household and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related or not. Because a household can consist of one person, household income is usually less than family income. Family income is the total income of all members 15 years old and over related to the householder and is treated as a single amount. Table 2-3 shows the average median family income over the five-year period of 2006-2010 and the percentage of

families below the poverty level for that same period in Chester Heights, the surrounding municipalities and for Delaware County.

The median family income in the Borough is substantially greater than the median for the County as a whole and indicates that Chester Heights contains a high percentage of educated and skilled workers employed in well-paying positions. The percentage of families below the poverty line is low compared to the County as well as increased in the Borough as it did in the County and nation as a whole. The Borough's percentage increase of 34.3 percent was below that of the County and surrounding municipalities as well.

Compared to its neighboring municipalities, the Borough's median family income is slightly less than four of the five surrounding Townships. However, the number of families living below the poverty line is less than or equal to those of its neighbors. These figures suggest a lower level of unemployment or at least less families in lower paying employment in Chester Heights. The Borough's need to proactively address issues related to low or no-income families and households is most likely less than other neighboring localities.

TABLE 2-3
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME, 2006-2010
(Five Year Average)

Municipality	Median Family Income	Percentage of Families Below the Poverty Line
Chester Heights	$102,679	0.8%
Aston	$ 90,467	1.7%
Concord	$121,389	4.0%
Middletown	$105,663	0.8%
Thornbury	$118,614	1.5%
Delaware County	**$ 77,879**	**6.9%**

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2006-2010

Housing Occupancy

Table 2-4 shows the number and percentage of owner-occupied, renter-occupied and vacant units in the Area and the County for 2000 and 2010 and the change during that decade.

TABLE 2-4
HOUSING OCCUPANCY, 2000 AND 2010

	Chester Heights					Delaware County				
	2000	**Percent**	**2010**	**Percent**	**Pct. Change**	**2000**	**Percent**	**2010**	**Percent**	**Pct. Change**
Total Housing Units	1,117	100.0%	1,263	100.0%	13.1%	216,978	100.0%	222,902	100.0%	2.7%
Vacant Housing Units	61	5.5%	106	8.4%	73.8%	10,658	4.9%	14,202	6.4%	33.3%
Total Occupied Units	1,056	94.5%	1,157	91.6%	9.6%	206,320	95.1%	208,700	93.6%	1.2%
Owner Occupied	756	71.6%	809	69.9%	7.0%	148,384	71.9%	147,212	70.5%	(-0.8)
Renter Occupied	300	28.4%	348	30.1%	16.0%	57,936	28.1%	61,488	29.5%	6.1%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2006-2010

Chester Heights experienced the construction of approximately one-hundred new housing units from 1990 to 2000. This averages to about ten new units a year, which is reasonable given the small size of the Borough and an expressed desire to preserve a rural character. The percentage of homeowners in the Borough increased 22.3 percent during this period while there was a significant decrease of 9.6 percent in renter-occupied units. The percentage of homeowners versus renters can be a useful indicator of neighborhood stability as homeowners often take greater stock in their neighborhoods and place a higher priority on maintaining and improving their homes. Also during this period, vacant housing units decreased by 7.6 percent in the Borough.

Compared to the County as a whole, housing trends for the Borough over the past decade were quite favorable as the County experienced a much smaller percentage increase in the construction of new units, an increase in vacant units, a much smaller percentage increase in owner-occupied units and an increase in renter-occupied units.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The various public services and facilities provided by a municipality can have a significant impact on the lives of its residents. They represent local efforts to improve the quality of life. These facilities and services can be either physical or programmatic and provided by public, private or quasi-public institutions. A critical decision in the provision of public services and construction of new facilities is the balance between need and cost. The cost of providing the quantity and quality of community facilities desired can often exceed local financial resources. However, with careful planning, inter-municipal cooperation and potentially the securing of additional funding for projects through the state or outside sources the gap between the levels of service desired and the amount which residents are willing to pay can be narrowed.

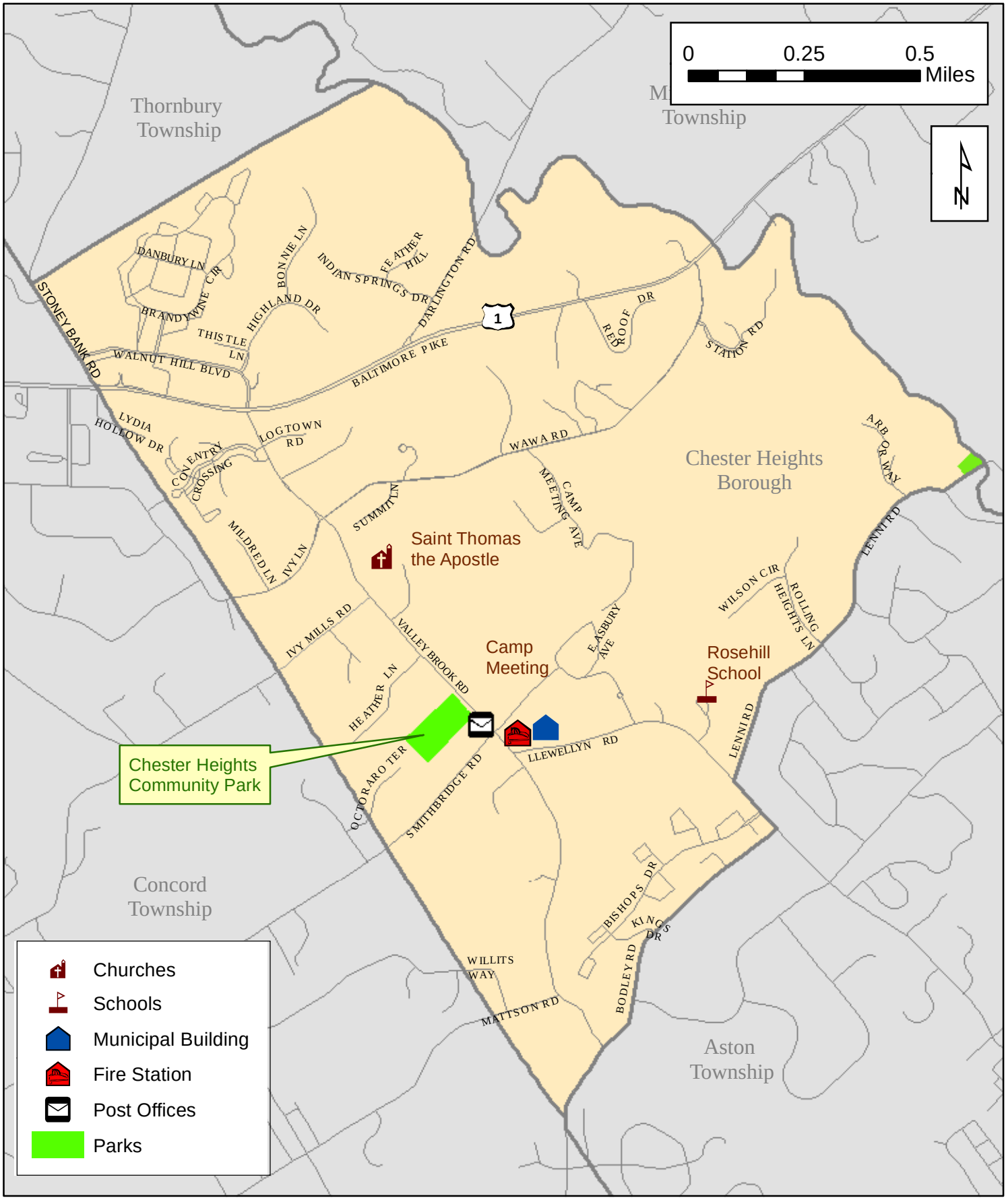
This chapter discusses and analyzes the existing community facilities and services in Chester Heights and offers recommendations for their continued effective operation and improvement. Map 3-1 identifies the location of community facilities in Chester Heights Borough.

GOAL:	PROVIDE FOR THE OPTIMUM USE OF BOROUGH FACILITIES AND THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVE 3-1: TO PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES WHICH MEET THE NEEDS AND DESIRES OF THE BOROUGH'S RESIDENTS AND COMMERICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ENTITIES

The Pennsylvania Constitution gives local units of government the right to operate under the laws of the Commonwealth. Local municipalities are empowered by the State to levy taxes, borrow money, authorize expenditures, make policy decisions and direct the administration of their governments by appointees. Local municipal functions can include police and fire protection, the maintenance of local roads and streets, traffic control and the provision of parking, the provision of parks and recreational facilities and programs, library services, the maintenance and upkeep of a water supply and sewage conveyance infrastructure, trash collection and recycling services, and licensing, code enforcement, and planning and zoning services.



Chester Heights Borough	Map 3 - 1 Community Facilities	Disclaimer This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.	Prepared by Delaware County Planning Department February 2010

A seven-member Council and Mayor govern Chester Heights Borough in what is called a "weak mayor" form of government. The Mayor is elected to a four-year term and the Council members, who are responsible for setting policy and making official decisions on behalf of the Borough are elected at large, to four-year overlapping terms. A Borough secretary/treasurer, solicitor, engineer, tax collector, fire marshal, building and plumbing inspector, sewer enforcement officer, zoning officer and zoning solicitor all support the Council and Mayor. These staff persons provide day-to-day administrative services such as handling citizen inquiries, the Borough's finances and payroll, receiving and processing various applications for permits and licenses and other traditional municipal responsibilities.

The Borough has a separate fire department, Company #71 that provides protection services while police services are provided by the state police, which operate out of a barracks in Middletown Township. The Borough Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board provide recommendations on planning and development issues, and reviews and decisions on special use permits and variance requests.

Municipal Facilities

The Borough administrative office and council meeting room are located in a one-story building at 222 Llewellyn Road that was built in the 1940s and is owned by the Borough fire company. The majority of the building is used as the Borough fire station with engine bays and equipment rooms, while the municipal office is located in a later addition to the building. The office and council meeting room, which the Borough rents from the fire company, both occupy the same space and the overall quarters are quite cramped. The interior condition of the offices aging and worn and would benefit from renovation and a reconfiguration and expansion of the space. Plan Task Force members indicated there is a need for additional space. This need could be met if the fire department is able to locate to a new facility or if an addition to the building is made.

(Chester Heights Borough Hall)

An alternative option would be the construction of a new municipal building that would include more space for the Council meeting chambers, administrative staff, and also visitors to the facility that have business with the Borough. The construction of a new municipal building, if it were to occur might also include some type of community center and meeting space or other community facilities and services. The Borough is actively searching for more property to expand its facilities to meet current and future needs. The financial feasibility of such a project would need to be assessed and would likely be a significant obstacle for such a project. If the Borough were able to find a way to make the financials

work it would likely consider the parcel fronting the Camp Meeting site at Valleybrook and Camp Meeting Roads were it to be available.

Other municipal properties include the three-acre community park at Valleybrook Road just north of the old Octoraro rail line, and the old Schoonmaker property in the southeastern corner of the Borough near the Chester Creek. The latter is approximately a half acre and is presently undeveloped. Task Force members indicated a desire to turn the parcel into a small creekside park.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOROUGH ADMINISTRATION

3-1 Examine the cost and feasibility of renovating and expanding the existing municipal offices or constructing a new facility.

Funding Sources: Local Government Capital Loan Program (DCED)
Technical Assistance: Borough Engineer

3-2 Pursue environmentally sustainable 'green' and energy saving building methods and technologies for municipal construction projects, such as a possible new municipal building to reduce long-term energy costs and environmental impacts.

Technical Assistance: Delaware Valley Green Building Council

EMERGENCY SERVICES

OBJECTIVE 3-2: TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BEING OFFERED BY THE BOROUGH'S FIRE COMPANY AND NEIGHBORING MUNICIPAL COMPANIES.

The Delaware County Emergency Services Department operates its Communications and Management divisions from Lima, Middletown Township. Requests for police, fire, and ambulance assistance from a majority of County's townships and boroughs are received here and routed to the appropriate local department. In extreme cases, the departments of surrounding municipalities or even those outside of the County respond after being called via a common radio frequency.

The County as well as the Borough, maintain emergency response plans. The Borough Fire Marshal acts as the local Emergency Services/Management Coordinator and coordinates the local response with all other entities and has authority to initiate actions such as evacuations. The County Emergency Services Training Center in Darby Township that opened in 1992 provides course instruction, training grounds, and facilities for 78 volunteer fire companies, 33 ambulance services and 31 municipal police departments in Delaware County. Facilities include an indoor pistol range, a burn building, a confined space training facility, a three-story live fire training building, a propane training area, a flashover simulator, a driver's training area, and six classrooms.

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

(Chester Heights Fire Company 71)

The Chester Heights Fire Company 71 provides fire protection services to Borough residents. The company is autonomous from the Borough with its own board of directors, administrative officers and financial oversight. As is the case throughout most of Delaware County, the Borough fire department is comprised entirely of volunteers. As noted above, the Borough employs a fire marshal to review building plans, enforce codes, conduct arson investigations, handle hazardous materials accidents and maintain the emergency management plan. Mutual aid agreements for fire protection services exist between Chester Heights and some of the surrounding municipalities including Concord, Aston and Middletown Townships.

The fire company station house is centrally located at 222 Llewellyn Road at the intersection with Valleybrook Road. The company was founded in 1947 to serve the Borough of Chester Heights and its surrounding communities. The Company was one of the first in the state to offer Quick Response Services (QRS) and to have a state certified Rescue. It was also one the earliest companies in the region to utilize an automated external defibrillator (AED), and the first in Delaware County with a certified dive team.

Presently, the company has 25 volunteers who are required to complete 180 hours of Firefighting Level 1 which is the national certification required of all firefighters. Of the 25 volunteers, approximately four typically respond to an incident. Although there are mutual aid agreements with the neighboring municipalities of Concord, Aston, and Middletown, the fire companies have not sought to regionalize their efforts.

The fire chief indicated that the current facility house has inadequate space for the current station functions and renovations will be needed in the future. He noted specifically that fire trucks and equipment have grown larger and barely fit in the facilities. Also a separate facility for training and meetings would be appropriate in lieu of their current space-sharing situation with the Borough.

The main equipment of the fire company includes the following:

- 2008 Pierce Quantum PUC Engine
- 2000 Pierce Quantum Rescue
- 1999 Chevrolet Suburban 2500 4x4
- 1995 GMC Pickup

The fire chief indicated the equipment is satisfactory but should be updated on a 5-year interval as recommended by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) regulations. The fire company receives funding through a combination of regional, state and federal monies and grants, various associations and fundraising events, as well as from the Borough. The fire department has an operating budget and purchases vehicles themselves through various state and bank loans provided by their financial planners.

For emergency medical services, the Chester Heights Fire Company shares the operation of a Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support ambulance (BLS/ALS) with the Concordville Fire Company and Aston Beachwood Fire Company between different halves of the Borough. The fire chief noted that the response times are adequate when these units are responding from their respective stations. However, when they are responding from outside the area the response times are inadequate. The chief stated that the primary ALS service for Chester Heights should not be coming from Crozer Hospital located in Upland Borough.

Police Protection

Police Protection services in the Borough are provided by the State of Pennsylvania, not a typical arrangement found in the County, although five other municipalities in the western end of the County in addition to the Borough also receive these services. In addition to Chester Heights, Chadds Ford, Concord, Edgmont, Middletown, and Thornbury Townships also utilize state police coverage. The combined population of these municipalities and Chester Heights is 42,659 residents.

(State Police, Media Barracks)

The state police operate out of the Media Barracks on Route 1 about a half mile south of Route 452. The Barracks are a substation of State Troop K, which is headquartered in Philadelphia. The station maintains mutual aid agreements with neighboring municipalities for additional police support when needed.

The Media substation consists of 74 full-time officers and six support staff. Patrols operate 24 hours a day and seven days a week and the department includes a number of detectives and communications and community service officers. The substation utilizes 30 fully equipped vehicles and also has a seasonal tactical bike patrol. The barracks police chief indicated that the coverage was adequate based on the regular number of incidents.

Recently there has been some discussion in the state legislature about requiring residents of Pennsylvania municipalities with populations over ten thousand that use state police services to pay a fee for this coverage. The bill that was introduced in 2009 was referred

back to committee for further review and was not voted on and no additional action has been taken in the two subsequent years. Given the population of Chester Heights, its residents would not be affected if such a measure were passed. However, the Borough should be aware that some sentiment is present in the legislature for requiring payment for the provision of state police coverage and should be prepared to consider any potential impacts of a required tax or levy from neighboring municipalities for the continuation of such services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

3-3 Plan for the expansion of the fire department either through the relocation of the Borough municipal offices, or the development of a new station house.

3-4 Consider implementing the use of regional approaches in addition to mutual aid agreements, for the provision of fire protection services to increase efficiencies, offset rising operating costs and maintain adequate volunteer staffing levels. This process could be started by the formation of regional fire safety committee with representatives from each of the participating municipalities. These bodies could evaluate equipment and staffing needs that might appropriately be shared on a regional basis.

Funding Programs:	Shared Municipal Services Program (DCED) U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance
Technical Assistance:	Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs DCED

EDUCATION

OBJECTIVE 3-3: TO CONSTRUCTIVELY ENGAGE WITH THE GARNET VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT TO PROVIDE HIGH LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN THE AREA AS WELL AS ADEQUATE AFTER-SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

Garnet Valley School District

The Garnet Valley School District (GVSD) was founded on July 1st 1965 and is the governing body for education in the Borough of Chester Heights and the Townships of Bethel and Concord. The District offers a set of core academic disciplines and additional learning opportunities in physical education, music and art, guidance and library science as well as athletic teams and facilities. There are 5 schools within the district ranging from grades K through 12 that employ 413 full-time teachers, 22 administrators and 388 part-time and full-time support staff. There are however, no district schools currently located in the Borough. The district's middle school and high school received a federal Blue Ribbon award in 1999, 2000 and 2001, which is a U.S. Government Department of Education Award designed to recognize schools with high levels of academic

achievement or that have experienced substantial gains in student achievement within a specified time period.

(Garnet Valley High School)

The administrative offices for the District are located in Glen Mills, Concord Township, and along with the five district schools in the Township they represent a substantial physical investment in the community. Recent renovations to the district have made the schools adequate in terms of size and design for the efficient and effective functions of a modern school system. Technology has also been fully integrated into every building in the district. There are four computers in every elementary classroom and the Middle School and High School have been noted to have adequate computers for their departmental needs. Every building has one or more computer labs as well as ceiling-mounted projectors in every classroom in addition to Interactive Whiteboards and mobile workstations. To compliment this inclusion of technology, each building is fixed with Internet and wireless capabilities. The technology initiative has also lead to enhancements to the district web site and better online communication with students, faculty and parents.

The District has noted their facilities for being adequate for their current student body population of 4,753 with no outstanding staffing needs for the students. All of the schools located in the District fall below the state average of 16:1 student-to-teacher ratio with a ratio of 13 students for every teacher. All of the buildings located in the school district are either newly built or renovated and with no more plans for renovations in the future. The school district has recently expanded on the Garnet Valley Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, in 1999, 2005, and 2006 respectively. The newest addition to the school district is the Bethel Springs Elementary School in 2002 and the Concord Elementary in 2006.

Although the amount of space for students is generally adequate, there are times when finding space for multiple after-school and community events is becoming a slight issue. Due to an increasing number of requests and a finite number of fields and indoor facilities, planning for the use of the district facilities by community groups or planned events can become an issue, although often the school district can accommodate the various needs.

A review of enrollment levels of the past few years show an overall increase in the number of students enrolled in the district. During the 2009-2010 school year, the enrollment was 4,753 and the school district expects the enrollment to increase through 2014-2015. The racial composition of the student body in 2009-2010 was 90 percent Caucasian, two percent African American, one percent Hispanic, and seven percent Asian

or Pacific Islander. The overall dropout rate for the district is below one percent, along with only a few other school districts in the County.

At the same time that enrollments have been increasing, the annual district budget has also been rising. From 2009 to 2010, the budget increased from $78,470,972 to $80,478,604, and is projected to increase to $83,639,775 for 2010-2011 school year. The majority of the school district budget is funded from local property taxes and various state and federal grant and loans.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION

3-5 Remain apprised and continue to monitor the growing student body enrollment in the Garnet Valley district and where possible contribute to the planning for an effective use of district properties.

Technical Assistance: Pennsylvania Department of Education
DCED

LIBRARY SERVICES

OBJECTIVE 3-4: THE CONTINUED FUNDING AND EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THE NEIGHBORING RACHEL KOHL LIBRARY IN CONCORD TOWNSHIP

Rachel Kohl Library

(Rachel Kohl Library)

The Rachel Kohl Library is located at 687 Smithbridge Road in Concord Township. The library, which was built in 1989 and contains approximately 6,000 square feet of floor space, is open to patrons approximately 55 hours per week. Currently, the building is handicapped accessible. The director noted that generally while there is always a need for additional space, particularly to accommodate additional public access computers, there are not currently any pressing needs to expand.

The library is a member of the Delaware County Library System (DCLS). Through the DCLS, library patrons can take advantage of the interlibrary loan program with a linked card catalogue system. This makes the entire County collection accessible to residents, usually within 48 hours. Another benefit of the interlibrary loan program is that it relieves the need for expansive storage space to house a complete literary collection.

The library currently employs three full-time and ten part-time staff persons including the director. The library houses 45,000 catalogued items available to 12,317 registered users with 1.58 books per capita. There are presently six public computers in the library that provide patrons with internet access, with three more computers to search for library materials. Additionally, the library regularly offers a variety of educational, informational and recreational programs for a variety of ages. Programs are scheduled to target specific groups with programs for older adult programs generally held during daytime hours. Examples of these programs include Opera Appreciation and Beginners Yoga. Programs for children and teens are held late in the afternoon and evening. A variety of story times are scheduled for various times during the day to encourage caregivers of infants/preschool children to attend and accommodate for morning and afternoon kindergarten schedules.

Certified science instructors conduct an annual *Science in the Summer* program for one week during every summer, as well as a themed summer reading program that begins the week after school ends and continues through mid-August. The library schedules entertainers and gives out weekly prizes to children who participate by either reading books or having books read to them on a weekly basis.

Currently, the Library is funded mostly through State and contributing municipal aid that comprises approximately 76 percent of the total budget. The remaining funds are provided through the County of Delaware, fund drives and library operations, which has allowed the budget to range from $285,000-$370,000 in the last several years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are presently no recommendations relating to Libraries.

UTILITIES

OBJECTIVE 3-5: TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF THE NECESSARY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES AND SERVICES OF SEWAGE TREATMENT, WATER SUPPLY AND SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL.

Sewerage Facilities

The Borough of Chester Heights recognizes the *Delaware County Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Revision, Western Plan of Study* (2004) as its official municipal Act 537 sewer plan. This plan catalogs the existing treatment facilities in each of the municipalities in the western service area of the County and addresses future needs to continue effectively treating and conveying their wastewater. The plan of study indicates that 75 percent of the Borough is served by on-lot systems, more than the next closest municipality, Thornbury with 60 percent of the Township using on-lot systems. In order for additional growth and development to occur in the Borough, it will be important to consider existing facilities and environmental conditions as they relate to the potential to serve new development in the future.

Existing Sewer Areas

Sewers serve only specific developed areas of the Borough, and only two of those areas are connected to public conveyance and treatment systems; the remainder are served by localized "package treatment plants" that serve specific residential and commercial developments. Table 3-1, which corresponds to Map 3-2, Chester Heights Sewered Areas, describes the facilities, their capacities, and costs for treatment (when available).

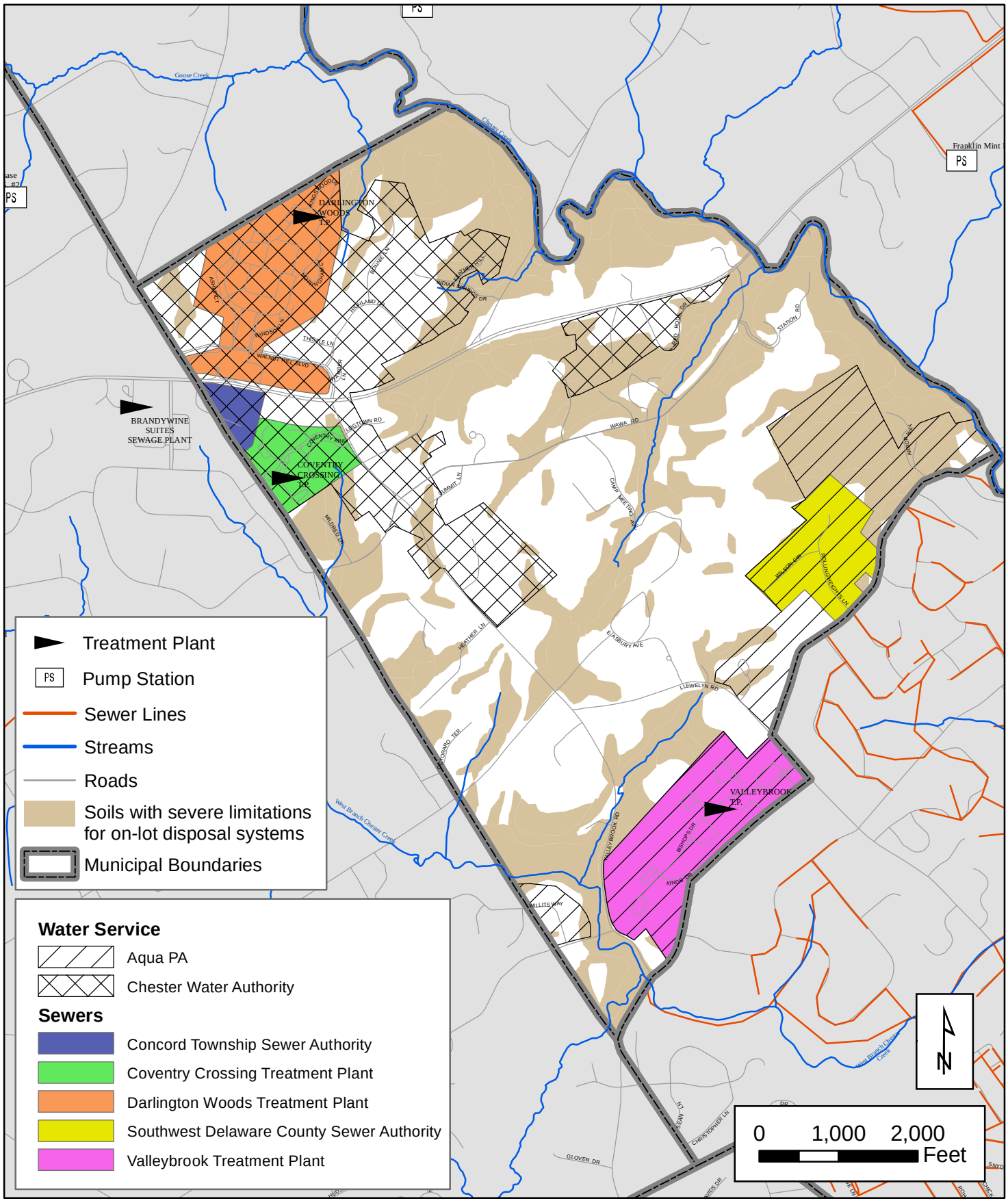
The sewer system serving the Rolling Heights neighborhood of the Borough is tributary to the Southwest Delaware County Municipal Authority (SWDCMA) system, which currently operates the Baldwin Run Pollution Control Plant, located on a tributary to Chester Creek in Aston Township. In addition, wastewater from four homes on Bodley Road and several homes on Lenni Road is also conveyed to the SWDCMA plant. The 2004 Act 537 plan for all SWDCMA tributary municipalities is currently being revised to address the phase out of the Baldwin Run plant and subsequent conveyance of its flow to the DELCORA Western Regional Treatment Plant in the City of Chester. This project will result in improved water quality in Baldwin Run/Chester Creek and the potential for additional conveyance and treatment capacity in the system.

TABLE 3-1

AREAS WITH SEWER SERVICE

Areas Served by Private Wastewater Treatment Plants				
Name	**Receiving Water**	**Apx. # Units**	**Capacity MGD**	**Cost per Unit**
Coventry Crossing	Tributary to W. Branch Chester Creek	224	0.04	Included in apartment rental
Darlington Woods and Shopping Center	E. Branch Chester Creek	380	0.15	Included in HOA fee
Valleybrook	W. Branch Chester Creek	264	0.07	$341/yr. (exclusive of major capital improvements)
Areas Served by Public Sewers				
Name	**Sewer Authority**	**Apx. # Units**	**Apx. # EDUs**	**Cost per Unit**
Rolling Heights Estates, Others	Southwest Delaware County Authority	Total of 35 EDU's @ 350 gal/EDU		$101 per quarter
Hollows at Fox Valley and Wawa	Concord Sewer Authority	Total of 86 EDUs @ 248 gal/EDU		Included in HOA fee (exclusive of capital improvements)

Source: DCPD, 2010



Chester Heights Borough	Map 3 - 2 Sewer and Water Infrastructure	NOTES:	Disclaimer This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.	Prepared by Delaware County Planning Department Date

Sewage flows from the Wawa store on Route 1 near the Stoney Bank Road intersection and the neighboring Hollows at Fox Valley development are directed to the Concord Township Sewage Treatment Plant, which has available capacity to accept additional flow, if necessary.

Most of the package sewage treatment facilities serving the Borough are relatively new and are not experiencing any operational or capacity problems. However, the Valleybrook Sewage Treatment Plant is very old and is nearing the end of its operational life. This will become an issue in the near future relative to its ability to meet new total maximum daily load (TMDL) water quality requirements, a new discharge standard being implemented by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Given its location with respect to the SWDCMA sewer line, a connection appears to be physically possible, but could be costly for residents.

Areas without sewers

Areas of the Borough that are not sewered rely on individual on-lot sewer systems. The 2004 Act 537 Plan states the following with regard to on-lot sewers in the Borough: "On-lot systems that experience problems are typically located in low spots near streams. Soils in the Borough are generally acceptable for on-lot systems. Known on-lot system replacements included old septic tanks (installed prior to 1967) and those that were poorly maintained. The main threat to groundwater is posed by cesspools, which are generally a minimum of 8 feet deep."

On-lot systems generally appear to be a viable method of sewage treatment given the large lot sizes and low density of the development in portions of the Borough utilizing these systems. The Township Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) indicated that on-lot system failures do not present a major problem in the Borough, and that, if they fail due to age or other problem, they are replaced. Isolated lots in the Highlands area have connected to the Darlington Woods Sewage Treatment Plant. Map 3-2 shows soils with severe limitations for on-lot systems.

The Chester Heights Camp Meeting, which contains a number of small residential cottages as well as several larger community structures and buildings, does not have any sewage facilities with the exception of on-lot systems serving a community bath house and the caretaker's house. As such, seasonal residential use is no longer allowed in the cottages. The lack of sewage facilities on this site poses serious limitations on its future use, and any more active or intense use of the site would require installation or extension of adequate water and sewage facilities.

Conclusions

The current Act 537 plan identifies and recommends opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation for current and future wastewater conveyance needs. Generalized recommended alternatives for Chester Heights include:

- Correct inflow and infiltration (I & I) problems and develop a Capacity, Management, Operations & Maintenance (CMOM) program
- Private facility uniform inspection and maintenance program
- Regional balancing
- Reuse of reclaimed water
- Comprehensive plan update
- Municipal ordinance consistency with comprehensive plan
- On-lot disposal system (OLDS) management program

The 2004 Act 537 plan included a sewage demand growth estimate for public sewage systems based on a 95-gallon per day usage rate per person for residential development and a 20-gallon per day usage rate per person for commercial and light industrial uses. Based on 2000 Census figures and a Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) population forecast for 2025, the Borough will have a 58,639 GPD increase in demand for sewage treatment by the year 2025. It should be noted that more recent 2035 Population Forecasts (refer to Chapter 2 – Municipal Profile) are much lower; therefore, the Borough should closely monitor development trends to identify future needs as the projected 58,639 GPD increase may be too high given the lower 2035 population projections.

With the possible exception of the Valleybrook sewage treatment plant, the community sewage treatment systems and the connections to the Concord and SWDCMA public sewer systems appear to be adequate to serve the needs of existing development in the Borough. On-lot systems also appear to be a viable option in portions of the Borough with low-density development on good soils. However, depending on the proposed location and density of future development, the need for additional or replacement community treatment systems or the extension of public sewers and/or water to serve specific parcels may be necessary.

Water Service

Potable water is supplied to residences and businesses in the Borough from two different sources. Aqua Pennsylvania (Aqua PA), a subsidiary of Aqua America, and the Chester Water Authority (CWA) supply water to different areas of the Borough as shown in Table 3-2. Aqua PA obtains its water from several sources including Crum, Chester, and Ridley Creeks. In general, areas at the south end of the Borough, adjacent to Aston Township are in the CWA service area. The very large lot homes and farms in the center of the Borough obtain their water from private wells. There have been no documented trends of malfunctioning wells.

Chester Heights pays annual fees in the range of $15,000/year for the hydrants, although it does receive some reimbursements of these fees from Aqua PA. Hydrant flows are not metered, and there is no limit on their usage for fire protection.

TABLE 3-2
PUBLIC WATER SERVICE AREAS

	CWA Area	Aqua PA Area
Darlington Woods	**X**	
The Highlands	**X**	
Hamanasett	**X**	
Coventry Crossing	**X**	
Willits Way	**X**	
St. Thomas Church & School	**X**	
Baltimore Pike commercial properties - Red Roof Drive to Stony Bank Road	**X**	
Valleybrook Road from Baltimore Pike to Ivy Mills Road (few residences connected)	**X**	
Lenni Road		**X**
Rolling Heights Estates		**X**
Valleybrook		**X**
All other areas in the Borough are served by private wells		

Source: Borough Engineer

Solid Waste Management and Recycling

Solid waste collection in Chester Heights is the responsibility of each homeowner. Most homeowners contract with a private trash hauler. Commercial waste collection must also be privately contracted. All residential and commercial waste is taken to a County transfer station for subsequent transport to the Covanta "energy from waste" plant in the City of Chester, where it is incinerated to produce electricity. The residual ash from the plant is subsequently transported to a County-owned landfill in Berks County.

Recycling

PA Act 101 (Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act of 1988) requires municipalities with a population of over 5,000 to implement a source separation and collection program. Since it is under that threshold, Chester Heights Borough does not have a curbside collection program.

(Igloo recycling drop-off location at Darlington

The Darlington Woods community participates in the County Igloo Recycling Program that provides igloo containers for the drop off of recyclables. Both Darlington Woods and St. Thomas Church use Paper Retriever

dumpsters for paper drop-off recycling. Two private residential haulers in the Borough offer optional recycling pick-up. For the details concerning these services, see Table 3-3.

TABLE 3-3
RECYCLING SERVICES IN CHESTER HEIGHTS

Location / Customers	Service
Darlington Woods	Drop-off center: glass, cans, paper, plastic
St. Thomas Church	Drop-off center: newspaper only
Coventry Crossing	Drop-off center: commingled
Laxton Customers (Valleybrook)	Curbside pick-up: collected at an extra charge
Opdenaker Customers	Curbside pick-up: commingled, no extra charge

Source: Borough Engineer

The Delaware County Solid Waste Authority (DCSWA) reported that for 2009, the Borough delivered 399 tons of solid waste to the County's transfer station and recycled 193 tons. Table 3-4 below highlights the 2009 solid waste and recycling tonnage as well as the recycling rate.

TABLE 3-4
SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Chester Heights Borough	
2000 Population	2,481
Municipality-wide Curbside Recycling Program	None
Recycling Rate	12%
Total Municipal Solid Waste	399.1
Total Recycling	193
Total MSW + Recycling	592.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, DCWSA (2009 data in tons)

Solid Waste and Recycling Opportunities

Although the Borough does not have any involvement in the collection of solid waste, it can pass an ordinance to control when and how it is collected. The Borough is eligible for recycling performance grants from the state that would give the Borough additional revenue (potentially $10,000 annually) if a large enough percentage of total municipal solid waste were to be recycled. Passing a mandatory recycling ordinance would help to meet the goals of the performance grant. All residents and businesses would then be required by law to recycle through their contracted hauler.

It can be a nuisance to have garbage trucks running in various parts of the Borough all through the week. Receptacles sitting sporadically at curbside can be an eyesore and impediment to road travel. One way to remedy this is for the Borough to pass an ordinance regulating how many times per week garbage may be collected in each section

of the Borough. The ordinance can also stipulate that trash and recycling receptacles shall not be at curbside on noncollection days.

Yard Waste

The Borough does not provide residential pick-up of yard waste. Residents need to find their own way to dispose of whatever they do not compost in their backyard. However, residents can dispose of yard waste if they drop it off at the County Compost Farm in Chester Township on the third Wednesday of the month (January to September) when residential drop-off is allowed. All County residents are allowed to pick up compost that is created there for use in their backyards.

Many municipalities in Delaware County contract with a hauler to collect yard waste at curbside and send it to the County Compost Farm. If Chester Heights were to do this as well, it would make it less tempting for residents to dump leaves, tree and shrub clippings, and holiday trees in illegal and/or environmentally unfriendly ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UTILITIES

Public services such as sewage disposal, water supply and solid waste disposal are critical to public health. Therefore, in order to ensure the continued availability and effectiveness of these services, it is recommended that the Borough:

3-6 Continue to monitor development activity, and prepare studies as necessary to evaluate the adequacy of existing sewer systems and need for additional sewage treatment and conveyance options in the future.

Funding:	PA DEP
	PENNVEST
Technical Assistance:	Delaware County Planning Department
	PA DEP

3-7 Coordinate with residents to ensure that continued use of individual wells is adequate in areas with low density development and work closely with Chester Water Authority and Aqua PA to ensure continued effective service to existing and future development as needs arise.

3-8 Pass a mandatory recycling ordinance for all homes and businesses in the Borough and promote awareness of the importance of recycling in order to increase the recycling rate. Apply for state municipal recycling performance grants.

Technical Assistance:	Delaware County Solid Waste Authority
	PA DEP

3-9 Adopt an ordinance regulating how many times a week trash haulers may collect in each section of the Borough. The ordinance may also stipulate that trash and recycling receptacles shall not be at curbside on noncollection days

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Solid Waste Authority

3-10 Contract with a hauler for the curbside collection of yard waste to be sent to the County Compost Farm. Collection should occur monthly in winter, spring, and summer, and more often during the autumn leaf season.

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Solid Waste Authority
PA DEP

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENT

Chester Heights has a wealth of natural resources, including unspoiled woodlands, large tracts of farmland and shady creeks. Protecting the natural environment is an important consideration in the comprehensive planning process, since it can directly affect the type, location, and intensity of land use. Environmental policies in Chester Heights Borough must account for issues such as soils, topography, wetlands, floodplains, stormwater and water quality. The lands hosting these impressive natural features should be addressed accordingly in the comprehensive planning process. Given the amount of open space within the Borough, future policies should determine how to best preserve land, particularly in areas with woodlands, farmland soils and steep slopes.

GOAL: TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PRACTICES THAT PROTECT THE EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE AREA.

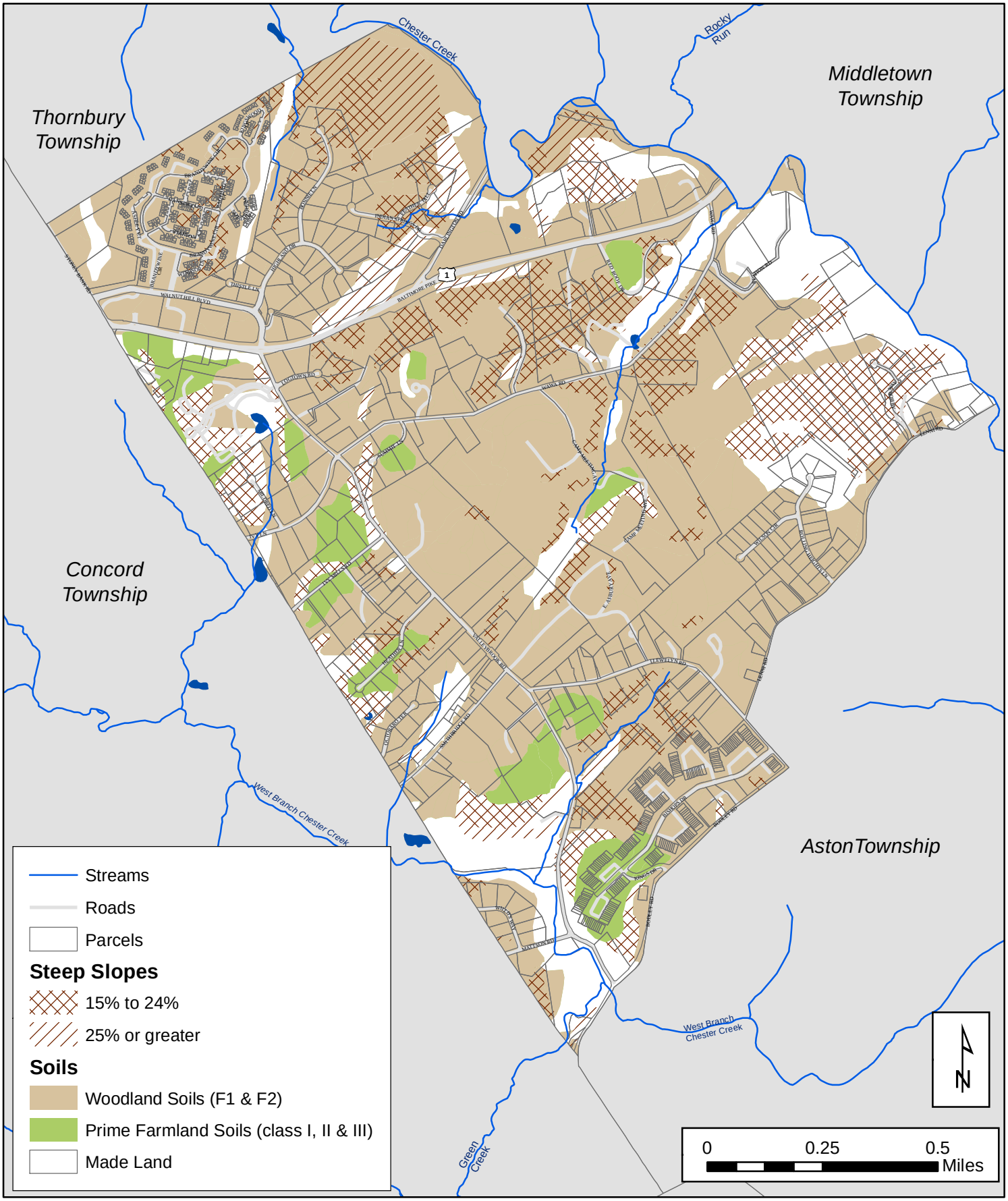
NATURAL FEATURES

OBJECTIVE 4-1: TO MANAGE NATURAL FEATURES SUCH AS SOILS, STEEP SLOPES, WOODLANDS AND WETLANDS IN A MANNER THAT PRESERVES THEIR PRODUCTIVITY AND FUNCTION, PROTECTS THE PUBLIC, AND PROVIDES FOR THE CONTINUED VIABILITY OF THE RESOURCES.

Soils and Topography

According to the *Soil Survey of Chester and Delaware Counties, Pennsylvania* (May 1963), the predominant soils within the Study Area are different types of silt loam. It is likely that most of the developed areas also contain "made land" soils. This category refers to a type of soil mixture, such as fill, that no longer has its natural properties. The amount of made land actually present within the Study Area is likely greater than the *Soil Survey* shows due to development that has occurred throughout recent decades. However, Chester Heights still contains areas that feature productive farmland and woodland soils. The soils within the stream valleys are predominantly hydric, or soils with hydric inclusions, indicating that the water table is at or near the surface and that wetland might be present. Map 4-1, Natural Features shows the distribution of soil classifications for the Plan Area.

Topography is analyzed by examining the nature and severity of slopes in a given area. Many parts of Chester Heights contain steep slopes, particularly along the banks of the



Chester Heights Borough	Map 4 - 1 Natural Features	NOTES: 1. NRCS - Soils	Disclaimer This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.	Prepared by Delaware County Planning Department February 2010

Chester Creek and along the Baltimore Pike corridor. Steep slopes can also be found on the undeveloped parcels off of Lenni Road and in the vicinity of the West Branch of Chester Creek. Because of their sensitivity to change, activities permitted on steep slopes should be restricted. Development on steep slopes removes stabilizing vegetation and leads to erosion. Where slopes occur along creek valleys, as is the case in the Borough, erosion adds to the amount of sediment in the creek. The lack of vegetation increases the rate of stormwater runoff, and contributes to downstream flooding. Construction on steep slopes can also negatively impact their visual character.

Woodlands and Agriculture

Due to the considerable amount of open space within its boundaries, Chester Heights is unlike most other municipalities in Delaware County. As mentioned in the previous section, the undeveloped parcels of the Borough feature woodland and farmland soils, and several of these areas also have intact stands of forest.

Preserving the remaining woodlands is particularly important because of the functions they serve for the natural environment. Woodlands are critical for regulating runoff during heavy rain events and for promoting water quality through infiltration and transpiration. When they are located near streams, flood risks are minimized as tree roots and vegetation help to slow stormwater runoff. The vegetation also filters pollutants before the runoff enters waterways. Land preservation efforts within the Borough should address parcels that preserve riparian buffers.

Vegetation found within woodlands serves as a source of food and habitat for birds, mammals, and other wildlife. When located along stream valleys, the tree canopy shades the water from the sun. Maintaining cooler water temperatures is imperative to the survival of many aquatic species. Woodlands also offer recreational opportunities to nearby residents. Furthermore, they enhance the visual character of urban landscapes. Due to the variety of functions provided by woodlands, every step should be taken to preserve their integrity.

Section 603(f) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), states that municipal zoning may not unreasonably restrict forestry activities. It further specifies that a zoning ordinance must be designed to "preserve prime agriculture and farmland considering topography, soil type and classification, and present use." Since the MPC requires zoning ordinances to be generally consistent with the comprehensive plan, it is important that this plan balances future development with the need to preserve woodlands and soils, which so characterize the landscape of Chester Heights. While neither forestry nor intensive agriculture is currently conducted in Chester Heights, consideration should be given to preserving the areas with woodlands and farmland soils for future generations.

Wetlands

Wetlands play a crucial role in the function of natural systems, including the ability to reduce flooding, improve water quality, and provide habitat for plants and animals. In addition, due to their aesthetic value and species diversity, wetlands offer opportunities for recreation and education. There are a limited number of wetlands identified in the 1991 National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), located in low-lying lands next to Chester Creek and also along its West Branch. Additional wetlands may be found in the many areas with hydric soils, including along Chester Creek and the West Branch, as well as adjacent to Octoraro Creek and Green Creek. Hydric soils and wetlands are shown on Map 4–2, Water Features.

Natural Areas

The 1992 Delaware County Natural Areas Inventory does not list any rare, threatened, endangered plant and animal species in Chester Heights. However, given the large amount of undeveloped open space in the Borough and the identification of resources in neighboring municipalities, species or habitats of concern may potentially exist here. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy prepared a new Natural Heritage Inventory, which was completed in 2011. Future land-use decisions concerning rare and endangered species, and unique landscapes should refer to this inventory when it is published.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATURAL FEATURES

Chester Heights possesses a wealth of undeveloped open space and well-preserved natural features. Many of the features discussed in this section provide important ecological functions and also serve as valuable public amenities. Protecting these resources to the greatest extent possible is important because of these roles as well as the visual relief that they provide. Development of a sensitive natural area containing a wetland, or on steep slopes, may compromise water quality or pose greater risks of flooding. Measures such as wetland management through the use of stream buffers, limitations upon intense development, and protection of forested areas can help natural resources serve as community assets. Land management efforts can build upon the Municipality's past efforts that have preserved a significant amount of its open spaces and natural features.

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

4-1 Preserve the integrity of the existing features such as wetlands, steep slopes, and natural areas through minimal disturbance and conservation practices. Enact specific ordinances or amend municipal zoning to protect these features.

Funding Programs: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
Community Conservation Partnership Program
Growing Greener Watershed Program

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD)
Delaware County Conservation District (DCCD)

4-2 Prioritize open space protection and preservation, particularly in areas with farmland soils and woodland soils.

Technical Assistance: DCCD
DCPD

WATER AND HYDROLOGIC ISSUES

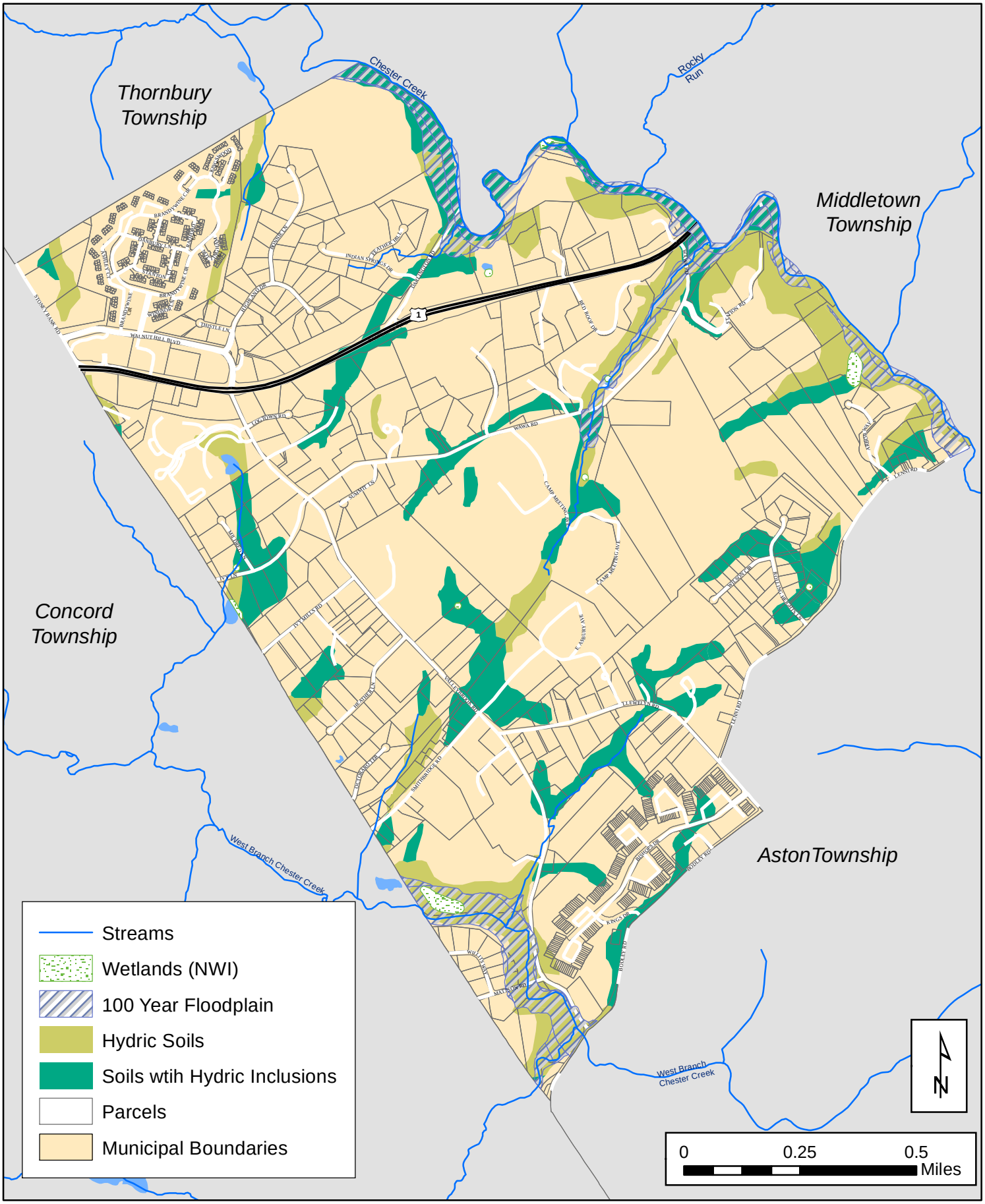
OBJECTIVE 4-2: TO PROTECT WATERSHED RESOURCES, MINIMIZE FLOODING AND PROMOTE WATER QUALITY THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES, AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WATERSHED ASSOCIATIONS

Chester Heights is located within the Chester Creek watershed. Chester Creek runs the length of the Borough's border with Middletown, while the West Branch of Chester Creek passes through the southern part of the Borough. Map 4–2, Water Resources shows the location of the streams, floodplains, wetlands and hydric soils within the Borough as well their relation to the surrounding townships. The cumulative effects of stormwater from areas upstream of the Municipality compound as these creeks flow toward the Delaware River. A high volume of uncontrolled stormwater runoff can result in flooding, property damage, and water quality problems. Additionally, high water velocity in the stream channel causes stream bank erosion, contributes to sediment load in the stream, and can even undermine roads and bridges. Consequently, recent state and federal initiatives seek to mitigate stormwater impacts and preserve water quality.

Floodplains

When rainstorms or snowmelt generate more runoff than watercourses can accommodate, streams spill over their banks and drain to adjacent low-lying areas. This condition is known as flooding. As this process occurs repeatedly over time, it creates a natural overflow area called a floodplain. Floodplains play an important role in maintaining water quality and supply. They can store runoff from floodwaters, provide wildlife habitat, and support vegetation. Any alteration of a floodplain, such as damming, stream diversion, or development, will disrupt natural flow and drainage patterns. Such disturbances are likely to increase the magnitude of flooding and thus threaten the health and safety of residents.

Floodplains are the most common natural feature regulated by municipalities. Congress passed the National Flood Insurance Act in 1968, providing federally subsidized flood insurance for structures that lie within floodplains. This was followed by Act 166, enacted by the State General Assembly in 1978. It requires flood-prone communities to



Chester Heights Borough

Map 4 - 2
Water Resources

NOTES:
1. FEMA - Floodplains
2. NRCS - Soils
3. NWI - Wetlands

Disclaimer
This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.

Prepared by
Delaware County
Planning Department
February 2010

regulate uses and activities in the floodplain through local ordinances meant to prevent loss of life and property.

Floodplain development in the Project Area is regulated through an individual municipal ordinance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved new floodplain maps for Chester Heights in November 2009. FEMA required the Borough to revise its floodplain ordinance to reflect the amended maps, prohibiting structures to be built, relocated, constructed, or altered in the floodplain. The ordinance complies with state and federal requirements, qualifying the Borough for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). NFIP allows property owners within floodplain areas to purchase federally backed flood insurance.

The Comprehensive Plan Task Force did not specify any flooding problem areas, with the exception of the southern end of the Valleybrook residential development. The Task Force stated that most development within the Borough has taken place outside of the floodplain. However, impacts related to the introduction of impervious surfaces in upstream areas can still increase the likelihood of flooding throughout the watershed.

Act 167 Stormwater Management

Stormwater, as defined by the Stormwater Management Act of 1978 (PA Act 167), is "drainage runoff from the surface of the land resulting from precipitation, including snow or ice melt." Although stormwater runoff occurs naturally, its quality, quantity, and velocity can be influenced by construction and other development activity. Typically, the more impervious surface within a watershed, the less precipitation is able to percolate into the ground, resulting in stormwater runoff flowing directly into streams. This stormwater is a primary source of pollution in waterways. Runoff picks up silt, soil, and lawn chemicals. As water runs across streets, parking lots, and driveways, it picks up road salts, oil, and gasoline, which are then deposited in waterways.

A major objective of Act 167 is to assure that the maximum rate of stormwater runoff is no greater after development than before. The Act also seeks to manage the quantity, velocity, and direction of stormwater runoff in a manner that protects health and property. Guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires stormwater management plans to specifically address the issues of streambank erosion, groundwater recharge, and water quality through the use of best management practices (BMPs), as well as overbank flooding, and extreme event management through other measures.

Act 167 mandates Pennsylvania's counties prepare stormwater management plans for each state-designated watershed within its boundaries; municipalities in these watersheds must adopt stormwater management regulations consistent with the plan. The Borough adopted an ordinance consistent with the Chester Creek Watershed Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan (2002). Recent changes in National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, Phase II (NPDES II) and total maximum daily load (TMDL) regulations will

necessitate the adoption of a new stormwater ordinance containing provisions addressing the requirements of these programs.

Water Quality

Due to its importance for maintaining the health of humans, animals, and plants, water quality is a key indicator for quality of life. Sources of urban water pollution are usually described as "point" or "non-point." Pollutants can include silt, chemicals, and thermal sources. Point sources are identifiable and confined, such as discharges into waterways from municipal and industrial sewage treatment plants and factories. Non-point sources are generally diffuse and unconfined, resulting when rain washes soil, oil, litter, fertilizers, or animal wastes from streets, parking lots, lawns, and farmlands into streams and rivers. Excess velocity in a stream channel can cause scouring, which contributes to an increased sediment load in the stream, resulting in siltation. Recent federal and state permitting programs now regulate some non-point storm sewer discharges as point sources (see section on NPDES II requirements).

DEP's 2008 303(d) Water Quality Assessment List indicates that the section of Chester Creek from the Borough's northern boundary down to Baltimore Pike is impaired relative to its aquatic life designation. DEP lists the primary sources of pollution as siltation and habitat modification. Given the documented impairment of streams within the watershed, DEP is in the process of developing a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for regulating pollutants, such as nitrogen and phosphorous which are released into Chester Creek. Upon enactment, Chester Heights and other municipalities in the Chester Creek watershed will be required to maintain their TMDLs below the thresholds set by DEP. At this time, no date has been set for the TMDL to take effect.

Clean streams can serve as valuable community assets if they are not polluted and are properly maintained. Since stormwater is known to contribute greatly to non-point source pollution, storm sewers are now regulated as point discharges. This is in recognition of the fact that a stream's water quality is most greatly impacted by the land uses within its watershed. The activities of one municipality can affect the water quality of others downstream. Therefore, the most effective way to manage water quality is through a watershed-based approach in which municipalities work together to promote the health of their streams.

NDPES II Requirements for Municipal Storm Sewer Systems

The Clean Water Act's Water Pollution Control Program requires small, urbanized municipalities, such as Chester Heights, to obtain a permit for their municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). This is a mandate of EPA's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II guidelines for storm sewer systems. DEP operates the permitting program, which requires municipalities to implement six minimum control measures (MCMs) designed to reduce pollutants transported through the system. These include:

- Public education and outreach
- Public participation
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site stormwater runoff control
- Post-construction stormwater management for new developments and re-development
- Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations and maintenance

As mandated by Act 167, Chester Heights has enacted regulations based on a model ordinance that addresses how stormwater quantity and quality from new construction and redevelopment is managed. The required water quality provisions included in the model ordinance help to satisfy the construction and post-construction stormwater requirements under the NPDES II program. However, MS4 ordinance requirements have changed since the Borough adopted the Chester Creek Act 167 ordinance provisions. The County is preparing a new stormwater management ordinance for the Crum Creek watershed that will meet current requirements. The Borough should consider adopting the specific language and applicable provisions of the Crum Creek ordinance into an updated Chester Creek ordinance.

In an effort to make compliance with the MS4 program easier and save money through multi-municipal coordination, some municipalities in Delaware County are exploring the possibility of working together on compliance activities. Such items could include hosting joint educational meetings, hosting MS4-related web sites, and purchasing water quality test kits together. Chester Heights could achieve savings through economies of scale if it partnered on its MS4 program with one or more neighboring municipalities, such as Aston, Concord or Middletown.

Watershed Protection and Coordination

The Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association (CRC) is an active nonprofit organization that seeks to protect water resources and the natural environment through initiatives such as stormwater management programs, rivers conservation plan (RCP) development and implementation, and watershed restoration. It also supports health, recreational, and quality of life benefits associated with healthy watersheds. As a major coordinator of volunteer labor, CRC organizes many stream cleanup activities, tree plantings, and maintenance events throughout the year. CRC serves as a great resource for sharing information and coordinating efforts to promote stream water quality.

The Chester Creek Conservation Plan (2001), which serves as the watershed's RCP, provides a framework for landowners, municipalities, and other stakeholders to enhance the long-term health of Chester Creek. In addition to making recommendations concerning flooding, stormwater, and water quality, it also outlines steps for land stewardship, land development, open space and trails.

An environmental advisory council (EAC) can be an important vehicle for implementing initiatives and recommendations made in the RCP. Under Pennsylvania law, an EAC is given a framework rather than a list of specific programs to undertake. This offers an EAC the flexibility to serve a number of important functions ranging from developing inventories of valuable natural resources to citizen outreach programs. The Chester Heights EAC, which was established in 2009, can advise the local planning commission and elected officials on stormwater education efforts, the value of riparian buffers, open space conservation, or other relevant environmental issues. The committee may also consider collaborating with other municipalities in the area that have active EACs, such as Thornbury Township.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATER AND HYDROLOGIC ISSUES

Mitigating flood impacts, promoting water quality, and controlling non-point source pollution from stormwater runoff is important for the health, safety, and welfare of the Borough. In addition to floodplain management, there are also federal and state programs that require municipalities to address other environmental issues in their communities, particularly as they relate to water quality.

Federal and state regulatory programs now emphasize improvement and maintenance of water quality through the control of non-point source pollution from stormwater. Act 167, NPDES II, and the upcoming TMDL program requirements address the importance of regulating water quantity and quality through their respective programs.

Since many environmental issues, particularly those concerning streams and other natural resources do not follow municipal boundaries, it is important that Chester Heights participate in joint programs and initiatives to address regional or watershed-based environmental concerns. By doing so, it is possible to avoid duplication of efforts, achieve better results, and be more cost effective.

The Chester Heights EAC is an ideal body to help with RCP implementation and to educate residents about stormwater management issues. Since the Borough does not have a shade tree commission, open space committee, or a parks association, there could be additional opportunities for the EAC to explore.

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

4-3 Regulate redevelopment in floodplains through strict enforcement of the municipal floodplain ordinance. Consider amending the floodplain ordinance to incorporate more stringent management standards that prohibit certain types of development in flood prone areas. Enact amendments as new Flood Insurance Rate Maps become available or regulations change.

Funding Program: Floodplain Land Use Assistance (FLUA) Program

Technical Assistance: Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
DCPD
DCCD
FLUA Program

4-4 Protect and restore riparian buffers in floodplain areas along Chester Creek, its tributaries and other unnamed streams in the area, with a focus on first order streams. Consider installing riparian buffers on all Borough-owned streamside properties.

Funding Programs: Growing Greener Watershed Program
Technical Assistance: CRC
DCCD
DCPD
Growing Greener Watershed Program

4-5 Update the Borough's stormwater management ordinance to reflect new NPDES Phase II requirements. Coordinate NPDES II permitting activities with DEP and adjoining municipalities to achieve cost savings in the implementation and administration of the program.

Technical Assistance: DEP
CRC
DCCD
DCPD

4-6 Consider protection of streamside parcels for stormwater management and/or public open space use through acquisition, easement, or zoning controls.

Funding Programs: CDBG Program
Community Conservation Partnership Program
Technical Assistance: DCPD
DCCD

4-7 Promote water quality by establishing regular maintenance and clean-out programs for all streams and any illegal dumping locations.

Funding Program: Growing Greener Watershed Program
Technical Assistance: DCCD
CRC

4-8 Partner with neighboring municipalities to implement the Chester Creek Conservation Plan, including recommendations concerning water quality, trails, and land stewardship.

4-9 Consider having the Borough EAC collaborate with the CRC and neighboring municipalities to address local environmental issues particularly in regard to RCP implementation, watershed management, non-point sources of pollution and public education.

Technical Assistance: DCPD
DCCD
CRC
Growing Greener Watershed Program
PEC

BROWNFIELD SITES, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND 'GREEN' BUILDINGS

OBJECTIVE 4-3: PROACTIVELY ADDRESS THE REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FEW ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED SITES IN THE BOROUGH AND INVESTIGATE NEW PROGRAMS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND BUILDING DESIGN IN EXISTING AND NEW MUNICIPAL FACILITES

Beyond natural and water resources, there are other environmental issues facing Chester Heights, such as brownfields and the need to reduce energy consumption. Brownfield remediation can provide opportunities to eliminate environmental hazards by cleaning up contaminated and neglected sites. Concerns regarding energy efficiency are becoming increasingly important to municipalities looking to save money while promoting environmental stewardship.

Brownfields

In 1980, Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as "Superfund." The primary purpose of this program was to facilitate cleanup of extremely contaminated sites by requiring all "potentially responsible parties" (PRPs) to contribute to its cost. A PRP is anyone who has ever owned, had a legal interest in, or disposed of materials at a property, and is liable for cleanup. Because of this liability, developers and banks are typically hesitant to purchase these sites for development or redevelopment. The process of identifying severe contamination at a site, getting the property on the National Priority Listing (NPL), identifying all PRPs, and actually cleaning the site is very lengthy, often taking many years.

In addition to these severely contaminated properties, there are many other sites throughout the County that presently or in the past manufactured or processed materials that could be considered hazardous by today's standards. As such, the possibility exists that through past disposal practices, storage methods, or accidents, certain areas may have become polluted. Such sites, which are or believed to be contaminated, are most commonly known as brownfields. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as a property in which the "expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." These

properties are often former commercial and industrial areas. Historically, these sites were left abandoned in favor of building on undeveloped land. Cleaning and improving these properties lessens pressure on undeveloped areas. In many instances it is more cost effective to develop brownfields because necessary infrastructure such as streets, sewers, and utilities is already present.

In May of 1995, Pennsylvania Governor Ridge signed into law three bills (Acts 2, 3 and 4), which constitute the state's Land Recycling Program. Referred to as Act 2, the Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act, is the primary piece of legislation that constitutes the Land Recycling Program. The program's major goal is to foster voluntary reuse and redevelopment of brownfield sites. The four major components of the Act include uniform cleanup standards, standardized review and time limits, financial assistance and liability relief. An Act 2 cleanup effort generally involves a private sector initiative to utilize the site for a profit-making venture.

Chester Heights has a few brownfields, including the Hilltop Tavern site along Route 1. This building sits on top of a former gas station and may still contain underground storage tanks. Additionally the task force identified the site of the Ennis auto body and detailing shop as being potentially contaminated from prior uses. The Task Force also identified potential brownfields at the former locomotive service facility along the Octoraro Line north of Smithbridge Road and on portions of the Westlake Plastics manufacturing site where Chester Heights, Middletown, and Aston intersect. It was also noted that the Wood family properties contain at least one underground tank.

It is important for the Borough to maintain reasonable expectations for the future use of brownfields, including others that may be discovered in the future. The potential to attract redevelopment must be recognized by Municipal officials. While it may be desirable to plan and zone for a land use which requires the lowest level of cleanup, this is not always the best option. Despite the negative connotation, brownfield sites remain valuable commodities that are worthy of a vision for their "highest and best use."

Energy Efficiency And 'Green' Building

Municipalities nationwide are exploring means to cut energy usage and focus on renewable sources. Reasons behind such initiatives include concerns about rising energy costs, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, and public pressure to become more environmentally friendly. Innovative solutions available for communities seeking to achieve cost savings and reduce their environmental footprints include, but are not limited to, constructing green buildings, adding hybrid vehicles to municipal fleets, and purchasing products that conserve energy.

Chester Heights should explore its options to best achieve energy efficiency. Conducting an energy audit can uncover opportunities for areas in which cost savings may be incurred by decreasing energy usage. Energy Star's Portfolio Manager offers a free online resource for municipalities to track energy consumption, demand, and costs over time. It also provides benchmarks to compare data against a national sample of similar

buildings. This basis for measurement helps to set priorities for future energy-related decisions. Other resources for measuring energy efficiency are available from the National Data Center Energy Efficiency Information Program, a partnership between the U.S. EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy.

There are a number of policies and practices available that serve the dual purposes of conserving energy and protecting the quality of the natural environment. Regulating temperature in municipal facilities with programmable thermostats, replacing expired light bulbs with compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs, and installing occupancy sensors can result in sizable reductions in energy usage. The Borough can build off its efforts to conserve energy by installing light-emitting diode (LED) traffic lights and upgrading street lighting to LEDs.

A workable strategy for the Borough to become more energy efficient and limit environmental impacts is green purchasing. This involves buying products and services that conserve energy (i.e. Energy Star appliances) and other natural resources. It also places emphasis on recycling and product life cycles, seeking to plan for the responsible disposal of materials when they are done being used.

Increasing the average fuel efficiency of municipal fleet vehicles represents another prospect for municipal cost savings. Upgrading the fleet over time provides a variety of options that will continue to change in coming years. The gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine with a battery-powered electric motor is currently the most popular hybrid option. Other emergent technologies include, but are not limited to, vehicles using electric, fuel cells, and biofuels. Fuel usage and emissions can be decreased by limiting unnecessary idling from municipal vehicles and school buses when they are not in use, as well as timing street lights to promote traffic flow.

Alternative choices for electricity are becoming much more accessible to municipal governments and residents alike. Rooftop solar panels are steadily developing a greater capacity to generate energy at a lower cost for buildings of all sizes. If Chester Heights decides to pursue solar power in the future, it should consider preserving solar access for existing buildings. Also, new developments should be designed in a manner that avoids solar conflicts. Although there is a large amount of open space in the Borough, southeastern Pennsylvania is not an ideal location for wind farms due to issues surrounding density and lower average wind speeds.

Many of these aforementioned practices are part of the growing trend of green building. This innovative type of development allows organizations to conserve natural resources while minimizing impacts on the environment. The U.S. Green Building Council established the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for environmentally sustainable building and development practices. Similar standards exist for redevelopment projects, as well. Chester Heights could consider looking at energy efficient options if it ends up developing a new Borough hall and other buildings in a municipal complex. The Borough could offer incentives, such as reduced building permit fees and expedited permitting, in order to promote green development.

The Borough can also focus on alternative transportation opportunities. Concentrating development and promoting building reuse near the village center would decrease the reliance on cars and create a pedestrian friendly environment. Greater access to mass transit cuts energy usage, while people will benefit from less traffic congestion and pollution. With SEPTA's extension of the Media-Elwyn train line to Wawa, there will be opportunities for residents to access the Regional Rail line via bus. The construction of a greenway along the Octoraro rail line would offer further alternative transportation infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists to connect from the village center eastward to Chester Creek and westward to Concord Township. Additionally, the proposed Chester Creek Rail Trail could provide bicyclists with a means to travel to the Wawa station and to trails in Middletown Township.

While green building efforts have become increasingly popular in recent years, the preservation and rehabilitation of historic building should not be overlooked. Many historic homes were designed to be energy efficient out of necessity. Furthermore, both demolition and construction activities use a considerable amount of energy and resources. Encouraging preservation and adaptive reuse of buildings in Chester Heights, such as historic Victorian homes, can take advantage of the existing energy that went into construction, while decreasing the consumption of additional resources.

Evaluating greenhouse gas emissions and reviewing municipal operations will help identify strategic opportunities to set improvement goals and create a long-term action plan. This plan can help guide municipal decisions for future investment in energy savings while also setting a precedent of environmental stewardship. While some of these practices have higher initial set-up costs, they pay for themselves quickly and provide lasting cost savings.

RECOMMENDATIONS BROWNFIELD SITES, ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND 'GREEN' BUILDINGS

While many environmental programs concentrate on the prevention and protection from pollution, the Land Recycling Program is different in that it focuses on the cleanup and reuse of contaminated land. The Borough should consider land use regulation and local policies that support both approaches to the management of the environment in their communities.

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

4-10 Remain apprised of legislation concerning brownfields and brownfield redevelopment. Pursue both economic and institutional opportunities for site assessment and redevelopment of known or potentially contaminated sites.

Technical Assistance: Land Recycling Program (DEP)
Delaware County Commerce Center
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
CDBG

Land Recycling Program (DEP)
Delaware County Commerce Center
Brownfield Action Team (DEP)

4-11 Conduct an energy audit to seek out alternatives that will provide greater energy efficiency and municipal cost savings.

Technical Assistance: DCPD
EPA
Office of Energy and Technology (DEP)

4-12 Review municipal codes for opportunities to upgrade policies to incorporate environmentally friendly practices.

Technical Assistance: DCPD
Department of Energy

4-13 Explore opportunities, such as grant programs and tax incentives, to introduce green building projects, such as a new Borough hall. Consult LEED guidelines and green building practices for the respective type of development.

Funding Program: Pennsylvania Energy Harvest Program (DEP)
Pennsylvania Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant (AFIG) Program
Technical Assistance: Office of Energy and Technology (DEP)
PEC
U.S. Green Building Council
EPA
DCCD
DCPD

CHAPTER 5

HOUSING

Strong residential neighborhoods are essential to creating and maintaining healthy and stable communities. This chapter examines existing housing conditions in Chester Heights and offers recommendations and strategies for maintaining and preserving the existing stock while examining the need for additional housing and how it might be accommodated.

Chester Heights is predominately a rural suburban community, meaning that the Borough has retained a sense of rural preservation and solitude compared to the more urban eastern Delaware County. Chester Heights contains more and larger areas of undeveloped open space and lots and homes are generally separated by greater distances than in other similarly sized municipalities in the County. Chester Heights also escapes the transit-oriented development trend found in the majority of boroughs in the more eastern portion of the County. Nevertheless over the past several decades the Borough has accommodated some new, higher density planned residential developments that have enabled continued growth in the population, added diversity to housing options and provided additional municipal revenues.

This chapter serves as a framework to organize the efforts of the Borough to preserve and enhance its housing stock, while providing a plan for new residential development in manner that will be compatible with the existing community character while also accommodating the Borough's fair share of regional growth.

GOAL:	MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK AND RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE BOROUGH WHILE PLANNING FOR SOME NEW DEVELOPMENT DUE TO AREA WIDE POPULATION GROWTH

HOUSING CONDITIONS

OBJECTIVE 5-1: MONITOR HOUSING CONDITIONS THROUGH THE CODE ENFORCEMENT PROCESS AND ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE THE USE OF HOUSING IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIR PROGRAMS AS NEEDED.

Types of Housing

The Borough contains all major housing types – single-family detached, attached (town homes), and multi-family dwellings. Table 5-1 shows the number and percentage of each housing type in the Borough and indicates that Chester Heights has the highest percentage of town homes or attached housing than any other category. The Borough's

lowest percentage is in the single-family detached category, which contrasts with the County percentages where single-family detached is the predominant style of housing. However, the difference can be linked to the larger plots of single-family detached homes typical of a traditionally lower density municipality alongside some newer townhouse and apartment developments.

TABLE 5-1
HOUSING TYPES, 2000

	Housing Type									
	Single-Family Detached		Twins-Duplexes		Townhomes-Rows		Multi-Family		Mobile Homes	
	Units	Pct.	Units	Pct.	Units	Pct.	Units	Pct.	Units	Pct.
Chester Heights	224	19.7%	10	0.9%	625	55.1%	271	23.9%	5	0.4%
Delaware County	95,708	44.1%	10,479	4.8%	68,189	31.5%	41,894	19.3%	669	0.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Age of Housing

The study area has a rich history that is reflected in some of the older, single-family homes and former farmsteads and an aging housing stock has implications for its condition. However, the Borough also has an inventory of newer, higher density single-family homes and multi-family units. Table 5-2 shows the overall age of the Borough's housing by comparing those units built prior to 1960 to those in the following decades. Due to the newer, higher density development from the 1970s and onward, a majority of the housing units in Chester Heights are relatively new and were found to be in good physical condition. The older single-family homes built prior to 1960 are also generally in good condition with a number of historic structures from the nineteenth century and earlier having been restored.

TABLE 5-2
AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

	Built Prior to 1960		Built 1960 to 1969		Built 1970 to 1979		Built 1980 to 1989		Built 1990 to 2000	
	Dwellings	Pct.	Dwellings	Pct.	Dwellings	Pct.	Dwellings	Pct.	Dwellings	Pct.
Chester Heights	84	7.4%	35	3.1%	266	23.4%	412	36.3%	338	29.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Field Surveys

In the spring of 2010, the Delaware County Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) and the Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD) performed a drive-by assessment of the housing stock throughout Chester Heights

Borough. The survey evaluated the condition of the housing stock based on the five criteria identified below.

Housing Conditions Survey Criteria

Foundation/ Structural	~ No cracks or signs of stress ~ Some cracks, holes, etc. ~ Severe cracks, holes, etc.
Exterior	~ No peeling or cracking paint/stucco, siding/capping in good condition, fascia boards in good condition ~ Some cracking/peeling in paint/stucco, missing siding and/or capping, worn fascia boards ~ Severe peeling/cracking in paint/stucco, missing siding and/or capping, and/or paint/stucco, missing rotting fascia boards
Roof	~ Appears in good condition, no sagging, and no missing or deteriorated shingles ~ Some sagging and/or deteriorating shingles ~ Severely deteriorating holes, missing shingles, etc.
Windows	~ No broken or boarded windows ~ Some broken or boarded windowpanes ~ Extensive broken windows or boarded up windows
Yards/ Sidewalks	~ No or minimal cracks in sidewalks, well maintained yards and common areas, no trash ~ Some cracks in sidewalks, some trash, some yards in need of maintenance ~ Extensive cracks in sidewalks, steps, trash, overgrown yards

Source: Housing Conditions Survey, DCPD/OHCD, 2010

Rather than conduct an in-depth evaluation of each house within the Borough, the survey analyzed housing by street and the overall condition and appearance of the area was noted. Overall, a substantial portion of the housing stock in the Borough is in good condition and well maintained. It should be noted that the survey did not cover the interior conditions of homes.

The survey generally observed foundations to be in exceptional condition showing no cracks or signs of stress. The exterior of dwellings also showed little signs of peeling or cracking. Roofs appeared to be well maintained with no signs of sagging or missing and/or deteriorated shingles. Lastly, lawns in the Borough are well maintained and showed signs of little to no overgrowth.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING CONDITIONS

Overall the condition of the Borough's housing stock is more than satisfactory. The Borough presently employs a part-time building inspector and zoning officer as well as a plumbing inspector and sewage enforcement officer on an as needed basis all of which appear adequate for the time being. However, the age of some of the older homes will

require ongoing monitoring for physical decline and the newer high-density residential communities for adequate rental housing conditions and maintenance.

For those homes that might require improvement in the future, the Borough and respective property owners could benefit from existing local, state and private sector funding programs designed to assist homeowners in making repairs and renovations. These housing improvements would serve to ensure that the overall housing stock remains attractive to prospective homeowners and can meet market demand.

Chester Heights should:

5-1 Publicize and utilize existing loan programs of public and private institutions to assist homeowners with home improvements and repairs.

Funding Source: Delaware County Housing Rehabilitation Program
Delaware County Minor Repairs Program
Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
Banks and other lending institutions and agencies

5-2 Consider allowing property tax relief on the value of improvements for property owners who rehabilitate and repair their residences.

Funding Sources: Borough and school district funds
Technical Assistance: DCED

5-3 Consider the hiring of a full-time codes official to enforce Borough property maintenance and other codes should this become necessary.

Funding Sources: Borough funds

5-4 Consider creating a citizen advisory housing committee made up of homeowners, renters and borough official(s) to develop a program to address present and future housing rehabilitation needs.

Technical Assistance: OHCD

HOUSING VALUES AND OCCUPANCY STATUS

OBJECTIVE 5-2: PLAN FOR CONTINUED COMMUNITY LIVABILITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS TO ENCOURAGE HOME OWNERSHIP AND SUPPORT STRONG HOME VALUES.

Home Ownership

A useful indicator of the stability of an area or neighborhood is the percentage of homeowners versus that of renters. While supply of affordable rental housing is an

important and necessary resource for every community, generally homeowners tend to take greater stock in their neighborhoods and place a higher priority on maintaining and improving their homes. Table 5-3 shows the number of owner-occupied units and their relative percentages in the borough and for the County as a whole.

TABLE 5-3
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNITS, (2000-2010)

	2000		2010	
	Number of units	Percent	Number of units	Percent
Chester Heights	756	71.6%	809	69.9%
Delaware County	148,384	71.9%	147,212	70.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 and 2010

From 2000 to 2010, the number of owner-occupied units in the Borough increased by 53 units although their overall share of occupied units decreased from 71.6 percent to 69.9 percent. The increase in the number of owner-occupied units differs from the trend in the County as a whole, which experienced in decline the number of owner-occupied dwellings. The increase in the actual number of owner-occupied units in the Chester Heights suggests that it is viewed favorably as a good place to reside and own a home and that the Borough has done a good job in encouraging and accommodating the development of attractive and affordable housing for residents of the County and region. The small percentage decline in the share of owner-occupied units reflects the Borough's continued development of multi-family, mixed rental and owner properties in its northern tier, predominantly along the Route 1 Corridor.

Table 5-4 shows the median sales price for dwellings in the Borough and the County from 2004 to 2008. In Chester Heights, the median sales price rose steadily from 2004 and 2005, however after 2005 the price fluctuated each of the following years within approximately the $220,000 to $235,000 price range. This trend is somewhat different from the County's trend, which steadily increased from 2005-2007 and then declined in 2008. However, the consistently higher Chester Heights median sales price suggests the overall quality and desirability of the housing stock is in the upper half of the County's inventory.

TABLE 5-4
MEDIAN SALES PRICES (2004-2008)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Chester Heights	$199,900	$232,500	$225,755	$233,250	$222,700
Delaware County	$180,000	$199,900	$202,500	$218,250	$207,500

Source: HomExpert Report – 2008 Year End Data

Table 5-4 also shows that the housing stock of the Borough continues to be fairly affordable to first-time and other homebuyers with the median sales price remaining well within range of the County's overall. However, the relatively higher median price

suggests that there are additional larger lot single-family detached dwellings or high-end apartment units in parts of the Borough which often sell at higher prices, than in other parts of the County. It also suggests the potential attractiveness of the housing stock to retirees, middle-aged residents such as older, married couples and families with children. These types of buyers will often consider locations further from the employment opportunities and amenities of a central city.

Table 5-5 shows the median value of owner occupied units in the Borough and the County in 2000 and 2010. From 2000 to 2010 the Borough, similar to the County saw an increase in median value of owner-occupied units. The Borough had an overall increase similar to that of the County reflecting the long term trend of increasing value for real estate, the recent economic downturn notwithstanding.

TABLE 5-5
MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED PROPERTIES (2000, 2010)

	2000	2010
Chester Heights	$133,900	$249,200
Delaware County	$128,800	$232,300

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 and 2010

Rental Housing and Conversions

Approximately 28 percent of Chester Heights housing stock is comprised of rental units, roughly the same percentage as in Delaware County overall. As shown in Table 5-6, as of 2010 there were 348 rental units in Chester Heights and almost 61,488 in the County. The rental vacancy rate in the Borough at 14.6 percent is higher than that of the County and suggests that a more than adequate supply is available to meet demand. Rental units, other than a few scattered in single-family dwellings are located in various apartment and townhome communities in the northern and western end of the Borough bordering Route 1.

(Coventry Crossing townhouse and garden apartment community)

TABLE 5-6
RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS (2010)

	Total Number of Occupied Rental Units	Rental Vacancy Rate
Chester Heights	348	14.6
Delaware County	61,488	* 9.6%

*Excluding Chester City
U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

Conversions are dwellings that have been transformed from single-family to two-family or multi-family dwellings. The Borough contains some older single-family homes that have been or could be converted. Given this situation, it is important to control the unregulated or inadequately regulated proliferation of conversions.

The benefits of conversions are that they provide low-cost housing – often to low and moderate income families and individuals – and provide the owners with a source of income that enables them to maintain the structure, which would otherwise deteriorate without the income derived from its conversion and subsequent rental. For some of the older, larger historic homes in the Borough, conversions might be a way in which owners could generate incomes to assist with the maintenance and preservation of these properties.

Additionally, some former large single and two-family homes can be converted to commercial uses on the ground floors with residential dwellings remaining above. This type of conversion has occurred in a few places along Smithbridge Road and there might be potential for some additional conversions.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of conversions are that they may aggravate parking problems and congestion and exert numerous other impacts on the adjacent neighborhoods because they are not properly controlled in terms of their location, lot size, off-street parking, number of units allowed and other considerations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING VALUES AND OCCUPANCY STATUS

Table 5-3 shows that over the past ten years, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units has increased in Chester Heights. Sales prices and median values have generally increased and declined in concert with the County as a whole with some modest divergences. The overall trend in the Borough is a positive one although prices and value have been impacted by the negative state of the economy over the past few years. Additional rental housing, were it needed might take the form of additional upper story apartments over commercial establishments in the vicinity of the Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads intersection, which acts as a de facto village center for the Borough.

Chester Heights should:

5-5 Actively plan for and promote the Borough as a livable and attractive community for first-time homebuyers and existing homeowners through the preservation of the existing rural-pastoral community character and the provision of new community amenities that will compliment it.

Technical Assistance: Borough funds
Classic Towns of Philadelphia

5-6 Consider developing a new mixed-use zoning district or amend the current B - Business district to allow for mixed uses in the form of apartments above

commercial establishments or on the upper stories of single-family homes that have a commercial enterprise on the ground floor. The latter provision might assist the long-term viability of some of the older large single-family homes on Smithbridge Road.

NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE 5-3: ACCOMMODATE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO THE DEGREE NECESSARY WHILE PRESERVING THE SEMI-RURAL, OPEN SPACE CHARACTER OF THE MAJORITY OF THE BORUOGH

Chester Heights should emphasize the retention of existing households and the preservation of existing open spaces and landscapes. The overall vision and goals of the Borough are to retain these spaces and landscapes and maintain the semi-rural and pastoral character of a majority of the community. The existing residential zoning in the Borough is designed to achieve this with minimum lot requirements of one acre or one and half acres per dwelling unit. The Borough also has voluntary lot averaging, or clustering provisions to further preserve open space. However some of the potentially developable parcels are quite large and the yield, even if built at the presently prescribed low densities could alter the existing character of those sites. Also, an existing owner or prospective buyer could request a rezoning of one of these sites to allow higher density residential uses.

The few potential opportunities in the borough for higher-density apartment development are located south of the commercial corridor of Baltimore Pike. This type of new development would probably have to take the form of mixed-use properties similar to the former borough market off Valleybrook Road where a retail commercial use was located on the ground floor and apartment units above. These types of locations represent older village centers that provide some amenities not found in strip-style suburban commercial development.

Residential Build Out Analysis

The Pennsylvania Courts have determined that municipalities in "the path of growth" must accommodate their fair share of regional development and as discussed in Chapter 9 - Land Use, Chester Heights would appear to be in a path of development that continues to spread through portions of western Delaware County. To help prepare the Borough to meet its 'fair share' of this growth, a residential build-out scenario was analyzed to estimate the amount of development Chester Heights might need to accommodate assuming present day forecasts turn out to be accurate.

Chester Heights experienced a modest increase in population of 50 new residents from 2000 to 2010. During that decade there were approximately 110 new residential dwellings developed in the Borough. The most recent population *forecasts* from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) released in 2011 project a minimal increase of 51 new residents in the Borough by 2040. However, as noted in

Chapter 2 the new population total from the 2010 census exceeded the population forecast by DVRPC for the same year.

Table 5-7 shows the most current population forecast for the Borough for 2040, the percent increase in the population from 2010 this would entail and also the average household size of the Borough in 2010.

TABLE 5-7
BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS (2010-2040)

Year	Population	% Change	Avg. Household Size	Required Dwellings
2010	2,531	N/A	2.1	N/A
2040	2,582	1.8%		24

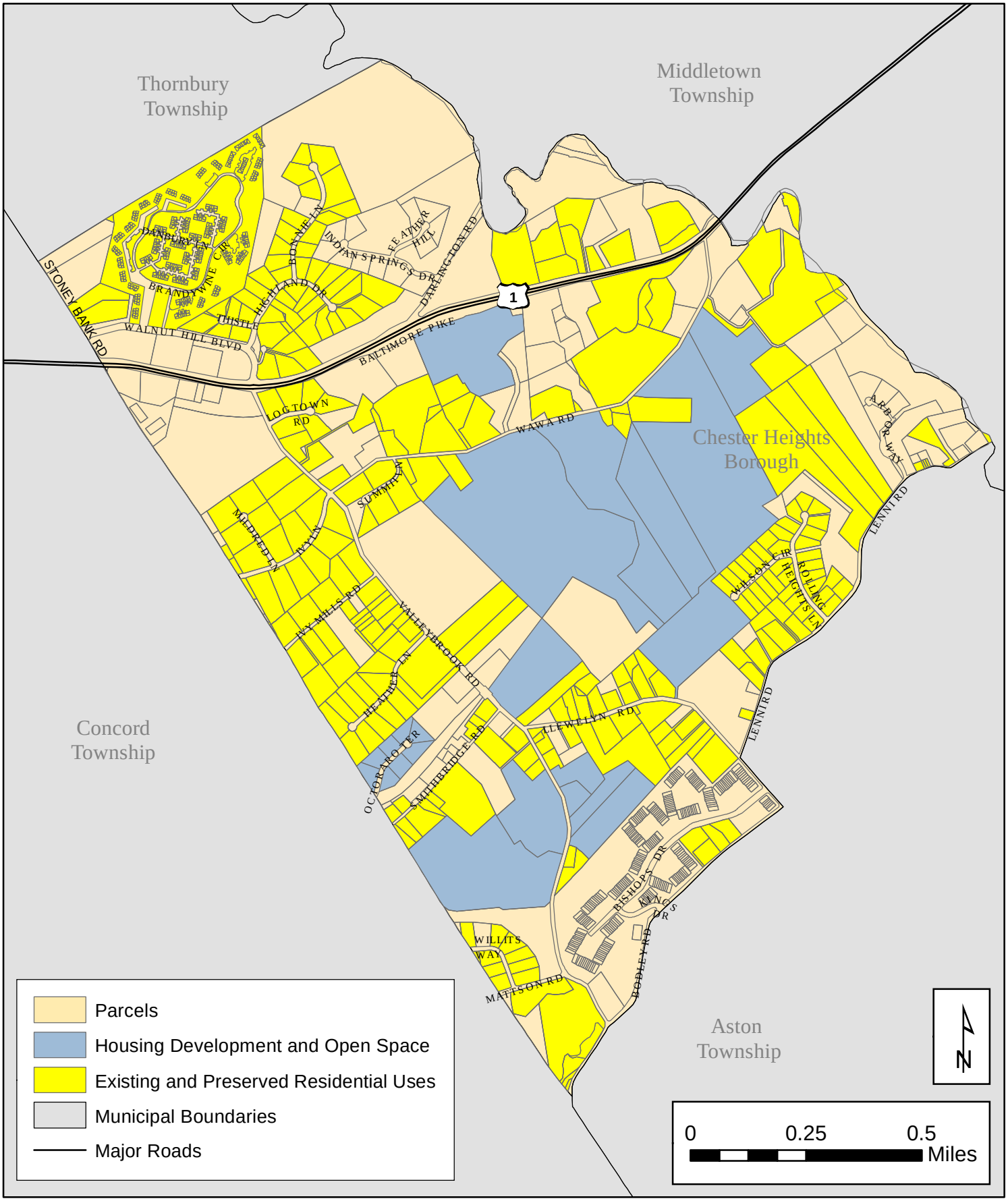
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010
DVRPC Population Projections, 2011

At the current persons per household size of 2.1, the Borough would need to allow the development of approximately 24 new dwelling units by 2040 to meet its fair share of regional housing growth. It is likely that updated forecasts will be issued by DVRPC at some point and it is possible they might show greater increases through 2040 than the present forecasts. However, given the overall trends in the Borough, they would not likely exceed by too much the present day forecast totals. As such, the required increase in the amount of units that would need to be accommodated would not likely be substantially greater than the 24 required. Map 5-1 shows some potential suitable undeveloped parcels, which based on their present zoning could provide a yield of 20 additional new dwelling units.

As noted earlier the Borough contains a healthy mix of residential dwelling types from older single-family homes to new townhomes and apartment developments. Presently the Borough has approximately 15 percent of its land zoned for residential types other than single-family detached including apartments, planned communities and mobile homes. Given the overall size of the Borough of approximately 1,423 acres, this is a reasonable amount of land zoned for these residential types and should be adequate to withstand a legal challenge, were that to ever happen related to the amount of land zoned for all the basic forms of housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chester Heights contains a mix of differing housing types and presents a nice inventory for potential buyers and renters. Additionally, the Borough appears to have an adequate amount of land zoned for additional residential uses to accommodate its share of regional growth. However, even the relatively low density zoning of these tracts allow a degree of development that could alter the Borough's predominantly open space character.



Chester Heights Borough

Map 5 - 1
Potential Housing Development

Disclaimer
This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.

Prepared by
Delaware County
Planning Department
February 2010

Chester Heights should:

5-7 Consider amending the existing R-1- 1/2 and R-1 zoning districts to make them 'cluster' zoning districts by *requiring* the use of the zoning ordinance's lot averaging provisions for new development.

Funding Sources: DCPD
Technical Assistance: DCPD

5-8 Consider amending the zoning of specified residential parcels on either side of Valleybrook Road so that those parcels east of Valleybrook are rezoned to R-1-1/2 and those west of Valleybrook to R-1.

Funding Sources: DCPD
Technical Assistance: DCPD

CHAPTER 6

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Chester Heights Borough's heritage is reflected in its many historic homes, natural landscapes, historic homes, and remnants of rural industry. Many older communities in Delaware County and the Philadelphia region recognize that if they are to thrive in the future, they should not ignore their heritage but embrace and build upon it. In doing so, these communities are preserving the unique character of their architecture and neighborhoods, while fostering community pride and encouraging the economic development potential of their historic resources. They are also providing a framework for making appropriate revitalization and design decisions for the future.

Historic preservation is the act of safeguarding resources that are fifty years old or older and are important to individuals, their communities, or possibly the nation. *Historic resources* can include any, all, or a portion of a community's built environment, be it a building, neighborhood or a district, but also other aspects of a community's culture beyond the built environments such as parks, landscapes and archaeological resources, which are artifacts of the past buried underground. Some of these resources beyond historic buildings can be significant, and their protection should also be considered.

Municipalities who value their roots foster a stronger sense of community identity. Since Chester Heights still exhibits much of its history through the built environment and its landscapes and desires to protect its unique character, the Borough should actively pursue historic preservation.

GOAL: IDENTIFY, MAINTAIN, AND ENHANCE THE FULL RANGE OF THE BOROUGH'S HISTORIC RESOURCES.

THE VALUE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic preservation is a series of actions that build on a municipality's existing features and uses them to make the entire community better. Preservation is not just about grand architecture or famous people, but also about the ordinary or vernacular historic development patterns and cultural resources that tell a community's unique story. Preservation is a means to enhance the local quality of life and to potentially improve a community's image and identity. This chapter contains information on the legal status of historic preservation at the various levels of government and a series of tools that can aid a municipality in preserving its historic resources.

Values

The initial idea of historic preservation often comes from a shared set of values in a municipality concerning the state of its historic and cultural resources. The driving force may be affection for certain buildings, landscapes, or historic settings; it can also be a pride in the lives and accomplishments of its citizens, past and present. These two values are especially important to Chester Heights.

Pride

Successful communities express a sense of pride and a common vision of what the future of their community can be. It is often helpful to have a symbol around which to rally which in the Borough's case might be the Camp Meeting site or St. Thomas Church. The presence of a property on the National Register of Historic Places, such as the Camp Meeting, can act as a catalyst in continuing the protection of the Borough's numerous other significant historic resources.

Economic Development

Economic benefits can at times be accrued by rehabilitating older sections of a community, as property values often rise in historic neighborhoods as a result. Residential property values generally increase, or at least stabilize, where a neighborhood has achieved historic preservation status through a local, state, or national designation. A municipality that pays attention to the variety of styles and ages of buildings is also a more visually interesting place in which to live, work, and recreate.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

OBJECTIVE 6-1: TO MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS WHICH HAVE SHAPED CHESTER HEIGHTS INTO ITS PRESENT-DAY CHARACTER.

The historic development patterns of Chester Heights can be attributed to broad social trends that have transformed not only the way people build houses, but also the evolution of public infrastructure and services that make up a modern-day municipality. Amidst dense development throughout the eastern portion of the county during the late 19th and early 20th century, Chester Heights maintained its rural character and historic developmental context. Documenting these contexts is a way of understanding what remains as evidence of the Borough's past. Proactive preservation tools act as the catalyst for further efforts to preserve those elements in the community that are currently endangered and could benefit from restoration or rehabilitation.

Development Patterns

Like many of the municipalities in the western portion of Delaware County, Chester Heights began as a small rural community. As some of the western townships of the

County gradually evolved into more developed communities, driven by the development of modern transportation systems, Chester Heights remained rural in character. Today, the scattered farmsteads in Chester Heights, formerly part of Aston Township, continue to dominate the landscape. However, pockets of modern residential development from the late 20th century border the majority of remaining open space and historic landscapes.

Early Chester Heights

Located within the northernmost section of Aston Township, the rural community of Chester Heights began as a series of small farms. Acreage totaling one thousand acres was surveyed to Thomas Brassey in 1684 and subsequently divided into smaller tracts by 1710. One of those tracts containing 119 acres bordering Concord Township was surveyed to Thomas Martin. In 1734, Martin constructed a large fieldstone farmhouse along Valleybrook Road that remained in the family until after 1870. Even after numerous additions to the Martin House, Sprucehaven Farm remains an iconic structure in Chester Heights as one of the original homesteads in the Borough. Also among the earliest landowners in Aston Township was Gilbert Woolman, whose 250 acre property extended northwest from Llewellyn Road. The Woolman Homestead is among the oldest surviving houses from the early 18th century.

While Thomas Martin, Gilbert Woolman and other early landowners such as John Pennell, William McCracken, Caleb Heyburn and J.W. Thatcher established residency in northern Aston Township, there were also instances of transient inhabitants. According to Ashmead, "as late as 1770, a family of Indians had a wigwam on the Aston side of Chester Creek, on or in the vicinity of the present farm of George Drayton, but they did not remain there constantly." During the American Revolution, the rural fields of northern Aston Township created a reprieve for soldiers, "a number of stragglers from the defeated American Army, hungry, demoralized and exhausted in their flight from the field at Brandywine, collected in the neighborhood of Logtown, where they passed the night, sleeping in the outbuildings and open fields." (Ashmead, 293).

Rural Industry

With the improvement of the Baltimore Turnpike and the development of the Octoraro Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, mills and other rural industries began to transform the primarily agrarian community of Chester Heights. Transportation enhancements on the Baltimore Turnpike and the Pennsylvania Railroad not only brought new industries into this rural region, but they significantly changed the landscape. Logtown Road or Valleybrook Road, one of the oldest roads and earliest routes from Chester to the interior of the county, realized an increase in residences along its route. Along the original alignment of the Baltimore Pike, "The Malsterer's" - reputedly a tollhouse for the turnpike - is situated to south of the roadbed. Then, on Christmas Day in 1833 the railroad made its first run through Chester Heights.

Rural industries including various milling endeavors flourished in Chester Heights. Joseph Thatcher, a well-known 18th century coach-maker built "Forge Hill" on an early

Pennell land grant. Thatcher also erected a tilt mill prior to 1811 on Chester Creek 100 feet north of Baltimore Pike, which was run by Enos Thatcher from 1812-1815. Together with Thomas Thatcher, Enos added a stone mill, but it remained idle during the recession after the second war with England. In 1841, Joseph and Isaac Thatcher revived the mill making self-sharpening plows. However, the mill was destroyed in the great flood of 1843 and never rebuilt. A small blacksmith shop next to the mill built circa 1820 survived the flood and continued to operate until 1884.

In 1797, John Lungren, a papermaker, purchased 80 acres of land and the rights for a mill to manufacture paper along Chester Creek in Aston Township. By 1799, a stone paper mill, dam, and stone dwelling known as "The Mansion" or "Stonehaven" were erected by John and Sarah Lungren. During the War of 1812, large amounts of paper money were required and Lungren Mills supplied paper for United States currency. After John Lungren's death, his sons, William and Charles operated the mills until 1823. William Martin purchased the mills and renamed the mill seat "Lenni Mills" after the Lenni Lenape Indians.

Located along Valleybrook Road, George Drayton operated a successful lumber mill. The remains of the Drayton & Sharpless Lumber Company lumberyard buildings have been incorporated into "Smithbridge Village" complex. Drayton & Sharpless more than likely provided the millwork for the two-story brick Drayton House. An 1881 renovation is dated by the carpenter's name and date found on the back of a stair riser.

Mid 19th Century

With the population increase in Chester Heights due largely to improved transportation and industry, social and religious institutions began to thrive in the mid-19th century. The original 1836 building rented to Aston for $2/month, known as the Logtown School changed its name to the Chester Heights School in 1880. The current stone located at the corner of Valleybrook and Llewellyn, is the replacement of the original schoolhouse.

The congregation of St. Thomas's church in Chester Heights is the oldest Catholic congregation in Pennsylvania. Worshippers first gathered in 1729 under the sponsorship of the Wilcox family, owners of the Ivy Mills paper mill in Concord. Services were held in the Wilcox family chapel, St. Mary's Chapel, built in 1837. In 1852, the cornerstone for the current church along Valleybrook Road was dedicated and blessed by St. John Neumann, Bishop of Philadelphia.

As Philadelphia's growing middle class sought resorts to visit and rural excursions as an escape from crowded urban lifestyles, rural summer residences became a popular destination. Built in 1850 as a summer residence, "Rose Hill" became a resort hotel in Chester Heights. In 1900 the Bond Baking Company purchased the large Queen Anne summer residence to serve as an executives' summer retreat. The building sits on a small knoll overlooking Llewellyn and Lenni Roads.

In response to Philadelphia's secular interests and vacation resorts, the Methodist Preacher's Meeting in Philadelphia considered the idea of establishing a site for camp meetings and excursions. The Preacher's Meeting appointed a site committee to locate, "a suitable grove in the country to which its members and Sunday School children might have ready access for social and religious purposes, without the danger of contamination from dens of vice, such as are too often found in connections with places of resort in the neighborhood of large cities" (Camp Meeting documents). The Camp Meeting obtained a charter from the Pennsylvania legislature in 1872 and purchased a 148 acre tract of land in Aston Township. The Camp Meeting consisted of Victorian open cottages and a tent shaped eclectic Classical Revival-style Tabernacle with a large portico as the focal point for services and worship.

20th Century: Chester Heights Borough

The transition into the 20th century brought many changes to Chester Heights, most notably the community's incorporation as an independent municipality in 1945. Changes also took place among many longstanding businesses. After a series of owners at Rose Hill, Anne Pope established a private boarding school for special needs adults in 1923. As Rose Hill estate transitioned into a school, a pump house and carriage barn was built in the 1920s with the latter redesigned in the late 1930s for classrooms and male dormitories. In 1937, William Fager became the owner-director of this highly respected facility.

In 1947, Stonehaven (Lenni Mills) was sold to the Pincins, who resided at the house and operated a fire extinguisher repair business. In March 1995, the Westlake family purchased the property to restore the house and now use it as a conference center and office for Westlake Plastics Company, whose headquarters are currently across the road in the old Lenni mill buildings.

In 1900, George Wood bought three adjoining tracts of land in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. One had remnants of buildings from the Rocky Run Dairy Farm and this became the nucleus of an expanded farm operation. Wawa Dairy Farms opened in 1902 to sell milk bottled under sanitary conditions from cows certified as healthy and free from disease. Wood catered to the growing urban market concerned with consuming safe milk. Efficient transportation on and off the farm made all the difference in bringing a perishable product to market. Bottles crated at the dairy and sent by wagon to the Wawa Station went for transport to Philadelphia markets and beyond. George Wood had a gentleman's agreement not to compete with small dairies near his Wawa farms and thus his milk was not originally distributed in the immediate vicinity.

By the late 1950s, the Wawa Dairy had expanded its home delivery business to include over 145 routes. The first Wawa Food Market opened on April 16, 1964 and today, the company is familiar to many as a chain of over 500 convenience stores in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE 6-2: TO IDENTIFY THE RESOURCES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE BOROUGH'S DEVELOPMENT AND TO ENCOURAGE COMPATIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

The historic character of Chester Heights as described in the preceding development patterns, is visually evident throughout the Borough. The housing stock varies by style, age, and type and entire streets are filled with excellent architectural resources, with homes dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. Residents of Chester Heights also enjoy the rural atmosphere retained by open spaces, parks, and rolling hills that provide the community a unique identity in Delaware County.

Resource Identification

Listed below in Table 6-1 and Map 6-1 are a list of significant and potentially significant historic resources that the Borough should actively consider and plan for preservation. Many of these resources are listed for their local significance, such as enhancing the character of an intact neighborhood or the overall identity of the Borough. To complete this inventory, DCPD staff conducted a windshield examination of the Borough, as well as atlas research, informal interviews, secondary historic research, and collaboration with the Chester Heights Historical Society. This inventory provides the groundwork for the more complete and official Historic Resources *Survey* which is presently being updated by the Chester Heights Historical Society.

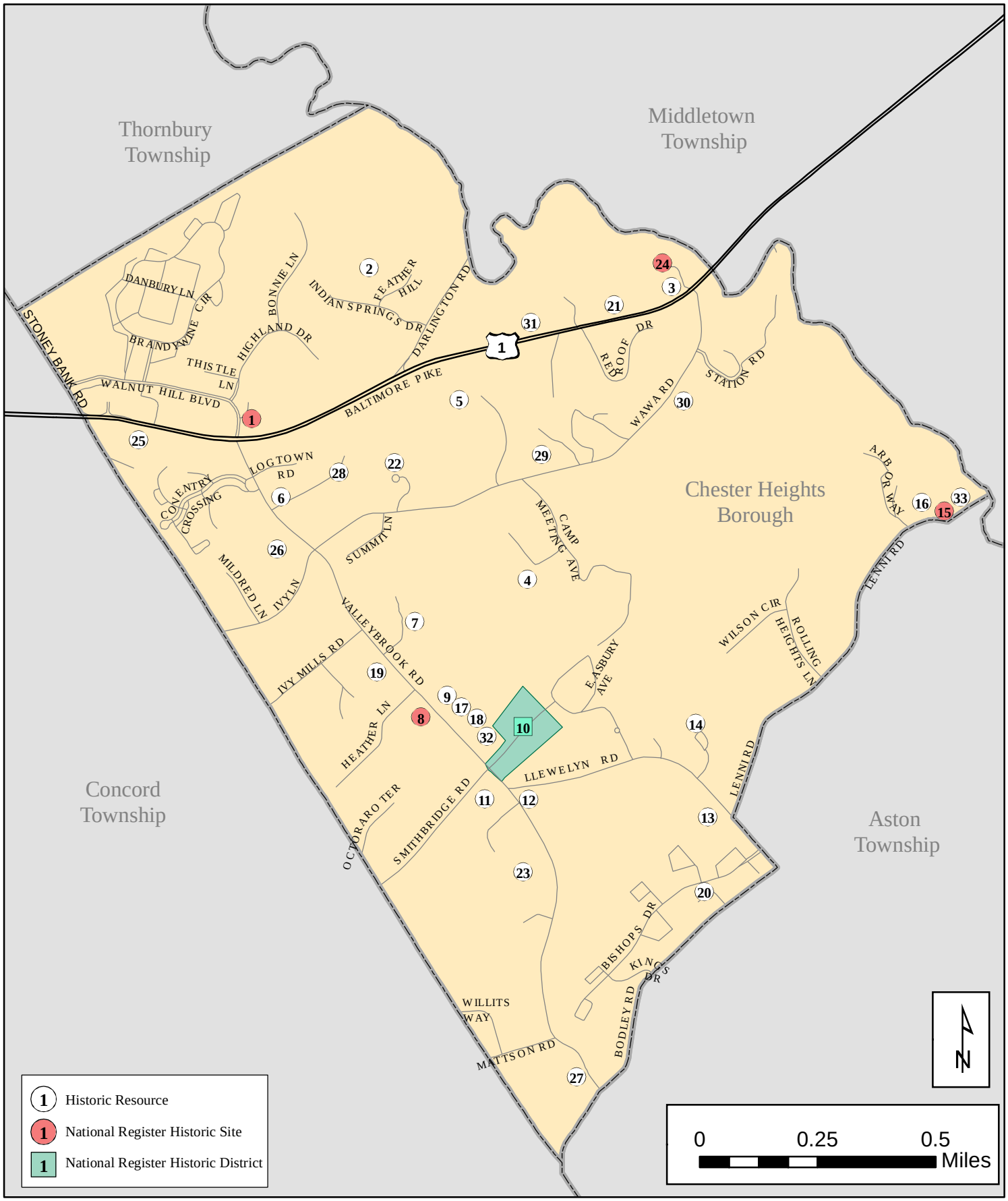
It is important to note that what is included in Table 6-1 is in no way the final or comprehensive designation of resources throughout the Borough. The inventory is meant to be a guide towards realizing the historic fabric of the Borough and is a sample of the official Historic Resources Survey being updated by the Chester Heights Historical Society. The updated survey is based on the 1983 survey completed by DCPD. Historic Resource Surveys attempt to provide comprehensive documentation of a municipality's historic resources but do periodically require updates.

Archaeological Resources

In 1990, DCPD contracted with Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc. (CHRS) to complete the *Delaware County Archaeological Resource Inventory and Management Plan*. Within the plan is an archaeological analysis of each municipality in Delaware County, based upon known resources and predictive archaeological models. Existing documentation is the key to identifying known resources, whereas the predictive model relies heavily on the identification and location of particular soils, water sources, and slopes.

TABLE 6-1
HISTORIC RESOURCES

Map #	Name/Location	Description
1	Hill of Skye, 1730 Walnut Hill	c. 1722 Vernacular, red and black glazed Flemish bond brick, **National Register**
2	Hamanassett, 725 Darlington	c. 1856 built from A.J. Downing's *The Architecture of Country Houses*
3	Little Forge Hill, 371 Baltimore Pike	c. 1790 Georgian, stone
4	Home Farm, 249 Wawa Road	c. 1800 fieldstone farmhouse
5	Blossom Hill, 240 Wawa Road	c. 1916 Tudor Revival, cut stone
6	Logtown Inn/Suzanne Taylor House, 490 Valleybrook Road	c. 1770 original Penn Plan, later additions
7	St. Thomas the Apostle, 364 Valleybrook Road	c. 1852 Gothic vernacular
8	Sprucehaven Farm, 363 Valleybrook Road	c. 1734 Federal vernacular, **National Register**
9	George Drayton House, 360 Valleybrook Road	c. 1881 Gothic Victorian
10	Chester Heights Camp Meeting, 320 Valleybrook Road	c. 1870 Folk Victorian cottages, **National Register Historic District**
11	Norman Powell Home, 8 Smithbridge Road	c. 1850 Folk Victorian
12	Chester Heights School, Llewellyn Road	
13	Shisler Landscaping & Nursery, Llewellyn Road	c. 1850 Gothic Victorian
14	Rose Hill, Llewellyn/Lenni Road	c. 1850 Queen Anne Victorian
15	Stonehaven, 484 Lenni Road	c. 1789 Georgian vernacular, **National Register**
16	Westlake Plastics, Lenni Road	
17	Parastudy, 354 Valleybrook Road	c. 1870 Folk Victorian
18	Wilson's Auction House, 344 Valleybrook Road	c. 1930
19	The Exchange, 391 Valleybrook Road	c. 1920 Brick bungalow
20	Woolman Homestead, 253 Bodley Road	c. 1725 with later additions Penn Plan
21	Locust Hill, 327 Baltimore Pike	c. 1786 Georgian Vernacular, fieldstone
22	White Oak, 186 Wawa Road	c. 1938 French Revival
23	Hannum House, 229 Valleybrook Road	c. 1811 Federal vernacular
24	Forge Hill, Baltimore Pike	c. 1780 original section Penn Plan, **National Register**
25	Crier in the Country, 52 Baltimore Pike	c. 1740 with multiple additions, Victorian Gothic
26	Logtown House/Jesse Walter House, 471 Valleybrook Road	c. 1814, Georgian vernacular
27	Peter's Tenant House, 103 Valleybrook Road	c. 1790 Georgian vernacular
28	The Malsterer's, 476 Valleybrook Road	c. 1800 Colonial, vernacular
29	Tipton House, 250 Wawa Road	c. 1800 Federal vernacular
30	Bungalow, 295 Wawa Road	c. 1920 Bungalow
31	Creek Farm, Baltimore Pike	
32	Groff House, Valleybrook Road	c. 1890 Second Empire
33	William Griffith House, Lenni Road	c. 1790, Georgian Vernacular, **National Register Eligible**



Chester Heights Borough	Map 6 - 1 Historic Resources	Disclaimer This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.	Prepared by Delaware County Planning Department February 2010

The predictive model used by CHRS indicates the majority of land within Chester Heights Borough has a high potential for prehistoric and archaeological sites. The southeastern portion of the Borough along Bishop's Drive experienced residential suburban growth in the 1960s and is excluded from the high sensitivity areas. CHRS identified five major areas in Chester Heights as archaeological resources; St. Thomas Catholic Church and Cemetery, Chester Heights Camp Meeting (also listed on the National Register of Historic Places), the Lenni Mill Complex, the cluster of buildings in Logtown, and the vast amount of open land acreage throughout the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Borough should:

6-1 Continue to assist the Chester Heights Historical Society maintain and update the historic resource survey and follow up with placement of potentially eligible historic resources on the National Register of Historic Places.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)

Seek to secure long-term conservation of open land throughout the Borough to protect archaeological resources as well as historic landscapes.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section
PHMC

PRESERVATION IN CHESTER HEIGHTS

OBJECTIVE 6-3: EVALUATE CURRENT PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH TO IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF BOROUGH PARTICIPATION MOVING FORWARD.

Historic preservation can be mandated or encouraged at various levels of government. No longer relegated to the few historically minded members of a community, preservation activities entered the realm of governmental actions with the enactment of the National Preservation Act of 1966. Preservation is most directly effective at the local level, since the municipality is the only body legally allowed to create and mandate preservation regulations. Not taking full advantage of these legal opportunities may result in the Borough losing its valuable historic fabric and community character.

Federal Involvement

National Register of Historic Places

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) manages the National Register of Historic Places for Pennsylvania. The program was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archaeology, and culture. National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards.

The National Register criteria recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and consideration in planning and development decisions. Listing in the National Register, however, does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage, or dispose of property. It often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources. However not all buildings and cultural resources that are worthy of the National Register are actually listed. Many places hold significance but have not entered the National Register process. Some places have received the preliminary level of National Register designation, deemed "eligible" for National Register listing by PHMC. This preliminary level also has some benefits including possibly making these places eligibility for grant funding for building and site rehabilitation or improvements. Chester Heights presently has five resources listed on the National Register and one eligible resource (see Table 6-1). However, there appears to be many more resources worthy of this distinction.

Having National Register status provides the following advantages:

- Recognition of the historic significance of the resource
- Special consideration if a federally funded project is found to affect the resource in any way
- Eligibility for federal tax credits
- Qualification for special funding from federal and state sources
- Prestige and status is given to the resource and community

Districts or clusters of historic buildings or resources (such as an industrial complex or a village of residences) may also be placed on the National Register as a district. In this case, each building that simply contributes to the district's historic significance is entitled to the same benefits enjoyed by an individual building on the National Register.

It should be emphasized that listing a property on the National Register is not a restrictive designation. Changes and alterations to a property listed on the National Register can be completed at the owner's discretion. In extreme cases inappropriate changes may result in the removal of the National Register designation status however generally the only time that changes to a National Register property are reviewed and potentially limited occurs when federal funding is involved in the project.

State Involvement

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code – Act 247

The Pennsylvania MPC, Act 247, specifically enables local regulation for preservation. However, simply having the MPC as a guide for local municipalities does not ensure protection. It is the responsibility of the Borough to become an active participant in preservation.

Pennsylvania Historic District Act – Act 167

Pennsylvania Act 167 (1961 PL 282) is the most important legislative tool for protecting *clusters* of historic resources in a community. The historic district does not need to be on the National Register of Historic places to be eligible for protection under the Act. Act 167 authorizes the municipal government to:

- Delineate an historic district defined by architectural and historical similarities in which proposed changes to structures are locally reviewed for consistency with guidelines
- Authorize additional regulations to the base zoning of the area
- Establish a Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) to make recommendations to local officials
- Determine guidelines to regulate physical changes including demolitions, additions and alterations as well as new construction within the district
- Create a review process leading to the granting or denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness for changes within the district

A community can create a local historic district with specific design guidelines and requirements that must be met. Historic districts establish design guidelines to assist homeowners with appropriate choices for exterior alterations. These design recommendations reflect the overall historic character of the district that the community values. Provisions established by the district guidelines vary depending on the particular age and architectural style of each community. Examples of what these guidelines and recommendations might address include building height, bulk, roof line, overall proportions, façade openings, architectural detail, building materials, and fences.

Historical Architectural Review Board

Beyond having an Historical Commission established to oversee a municipality's individual resources, a Borough could create a HARB to govern an Act 167 Local District. The principal duties of this Board are to review proposed changes within a local historic district and to recommend, either for or against, a Certificate of Appropriateness regarding proposed construction, alterations, or other work in the district. A community could also opt to have a Historical Commission and a HARB, or just one of these stewards of historic resources.

Municipal Involvement

Local governments have the ability to protect historic resources through the adoption of specific historic preservation ordinances, as specified in the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Historic ordinances can be created to protect the characteristics and values of the community. An ordinance can influence rehabilitation, demolition, new development, and financial incentives. The ultimate goal of such an ordinance is to maintain the shared character of the community. Chester Heights currently does not have any ordinances dealing with historic preservation, which leaves the municipality vulnerable to losing historic resources.

Historical Commission

A Historical Commission is the most common type of group that can be appointed by the municipality to formally oversee local preservation activities. Usual activities might include recording historical data, identifying significant community resources in a survey format, acting as a review board for historic ordinances, advising residents and officials on potential historical activities, proposed subdivision or land use plans, and recommending incentives and methods for preservation. Though not mandated by law, its Commission members are appointed by the municipal officials and should include local residents and officials. Another way to create a formally recognized advisory body could be by establishing a task force or subcommittee of a municipal Board or Council or the local Planning Commission.

Municipal Zoning Ordinance

Another appropriate medium for a municipality to use for addressing historic properties is the local zoning ordinance. An historic overlay can be incorporated into the municipal zoning ordinances to protect scattered resources in a municipality, which in the case of Chester Heights are abundant. Historic overlays can be drafted to include incentives for developers who utilize preservation-friendly rehabilitation methods. At the least, a mention and definition of historic properties in a zoning ordinance provides the basis for official recognition as a significant part of the community. The historical resources to be protected by a zoning overlay must be included in an official historical resources survey. The body reviewing activities in an historic overlay district is customarily the Historical Commission.

Historic zoning overlays authorize a municipal government to:

- Delineate historic resources – scattered or grouped, possibly covering the entire municipality
- Establish a group to oversee activities, i.e., Historical Commission or existing Planning Commission
- Determine design guidelines focused on development of properties adjacent or near existing resources, buffering or visual protection, and protection for archaeological sites.

There are instances in which incorporating zoning incentives can also encourage preservation. Incentives can include additional uses permitted by special exception or as a

conditional use. For instance, an historic house in a residential district in the historic overlay district could be used for a flower shop. Strict criteria could be established for these additional overlay uses. Similarly, by allowing the conversion of large single-family homes into higher-density multi-unit apartment structures (with appropriate performance standards), preservation can be encouraged and these historic structures kept as viable housing alternatives.

Local Landmark Designation Ordinance

Where an important structure is deemed to have special municipal significance a specific ordinance can be enacted for its protection. This ordinance would generally have two parts: one stating the significance of the structure, and the second establishing what actions would not be permitted to said landmark (such as the removal of an architectural detail) and/or other limitations placed on the structure. The advantages of a local landmark designation are that they can be used to protect the façades of outstanding individual structures; however the consent of the owner would be required prior to adopting such an ordinance.

Demolition Ordinance

As a minimum level of protection for historic resources, provisions to regulate demolition of historic structures can be enacted as part of the local zoning ordinance or as a separate ordinance. A "stay of demolition" ordinance provides time for a Historical Commission to seek alternative uses and/or buyers for an endangered resource. Municipalities can also regulate by refusing a request for the demolition of an historic resource if it meets certain specified criteria and/or structural analyses and an economic study indicate alternative uses may be feasible.

Demolition by neglect is a difficult situation to address and control, as its effects continue gradually over time. The institution of maintenance standards can be enforced to help control this type of "demolition." If the end result of this stay of demolition is the granting of a demolition permit, then adequate time may be added to the stay period for historical documentation of the building. This would require photographs, measurements, and site plans to be placed with the local historical group of the Borough for future reference.

Establishing a demolition ordinance can deny a demolition permit or provide additional time to the stay of demolition and allow time to find another use, another buyer, or consideration of alternatives to demolition. The required documentation that is collected also becomes an invaluable historic record if the structure should be demolished. Furthermore, by bringing awareness of the threat of demolition, it can bring a community together on historic preservation issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The Borough should:

6-3 Consider the creation of an official historic preservation advisory body such as a Historical Commission. Encourage joint planning and cooperation with neighboring municipalities on preservation projects and initiatives.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section

6-4 Draft a Preservation Plan that details the Borough's short and long-term goals for the preservation of the community's historic resources.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section
PHMC

6-5 Consider establishing an historic preservation overlay ordinance and/or a demolition ordinance.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section
PHMC

6-6 Create a voluntary design guideline document to distribute to developers or homeowners to encourage the maintenance of existing neighborhood architecture in order to preserve the historic nature of the housing stock. Distribute to those who request building permit applications, or who are submitting development plans.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section

CHESTER HEIGHTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Chester Heights Historical Society is a group of community members dedicated to the preservation of the Borough's historic resources and currently serves as the Borough's only formal historic preservation body. The Society is a private organization not under the guidance of the municipality and therefore does not satisfy the allowed action of the MPC in assuming the role of a formally recognized municipal advisory group. However, continued community-wide education on preservation issues and policies, especially through the on-going work of the Historical Society, will help to positively shape the preservation values of the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHESTER HEIGHTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society should:

6-7 Identify properties and sites to research for a Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Coordinate these efforts with an official Borough Historical Commission if one is established.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section
PHMC

6-8 Initiate Preservation Awards for the Borough to recognize preservation efforts within the community.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section

6-9 Continue to educate and promote the Borough's historic values through citizen involvement in the preservation planning process.

Technical Assistance: DCPD Historic Preservation section
PHMC

CHAPTER 7

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is critical to a well-functioning community. Transportation facilities are needed so employees can commute to jobs, customers can shop at businesses, goods can be delivered from production sites to stores, students can attend classes, and individuals can receive medical treatment and participate in social and recreational activities. A critical consideration in planning a transportation system for the next generation is its impact on the environment. For decades, the federal government has regulated air pollutants from cars and trucks. More recently, carbon exhausts from motor vehicles have been recognized as significant contributors to global warming.

A sustainable transportation system should be an overall goal of Chester Heights Borough's Comprehensive Plan. The system should provide for alternative modes of travel, as gasoline prices will likely increase during the timeframe of the Plan and environmental concerns will also likely intensify. Toward this end, strategies that reduce the demand for highways, automobile travel, and parking facilities should be aggressively pursued. These strategies would encourage the use of public transit, car-pooling, bicycling, walking and telecommuting, and reduce excessive parking requirements. Streets should be retrofitted for all users – bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, transit users, and those who are disabled. Critical to the success of these strategies are supportive land use and zoning policies.

GOAL: TO ENCOURAGE MOBILITY THAT IS SAFE APPROPRIATE AND SUSTAINABLE FOR THE CHARACTER OF CHESTER HEIGHTS

TRAFFIC ISSUES

OBJECTIVE 7-1: TO ENSURE ROADS AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARE IN ADEQUATE CONDITION, PROVIDE APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF SERVICE AND REFLECT POSITIVELY THE CHARACTER OF THE BOROUGH.

This section focuses on the road network in the Borough and considers how and where improvements could be made. Streets primarily are associated with vehicular traffic, but they also create a visitor's first impressions of the community. The principle roads in Chester Heights include Baltimore Pike (US 1) and Valleybrook, Smithbridge, Llewellyn, and Stoney Bank Roads.

Streets, Highways, and Bridges – Physical Conditions

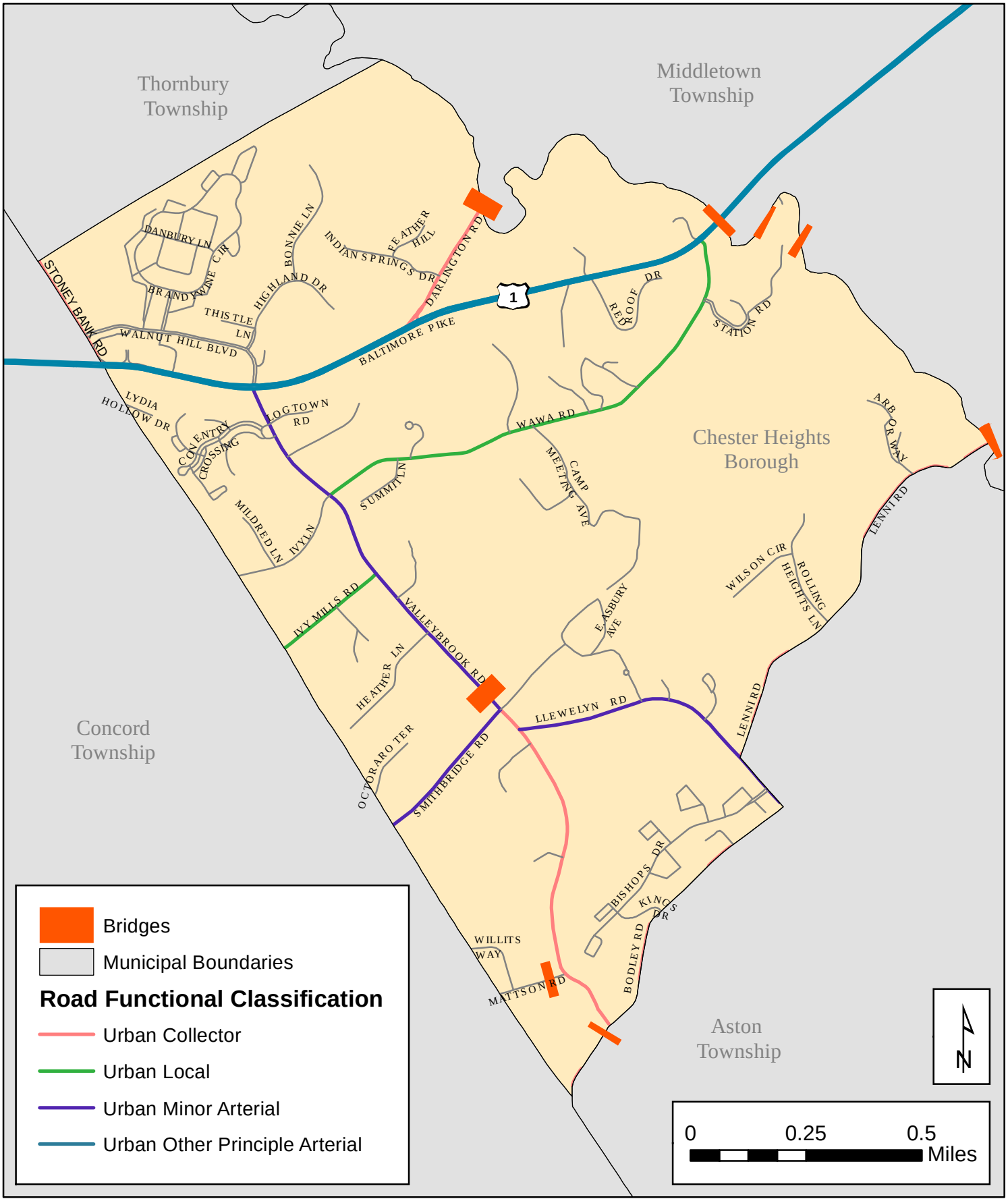
The network of streets, highways, and bridges is the core circulation system for vehicles in any municipality. In order to function optimally, this system must be properly classified and defined. It also must be properly maintained to safely accommodate users. There are 21 miles of roadway in Chester Heights. Of this total, there are 6.7 miles of state-owned roads. All other roadways are owned and maintained by the Borough or homeowners associations.

All roads are functionally classified to aid in prioritizing funding and improvements. Local roads service residential neighborhoods and are maintained by the Borough. Collector roads collect traffic from the residential areas and deliver it to the arterials. Minor arterials are meant to carry heavier volumes of traffic at slightly higher speeds, usually serving commercial uses, with an emphasis on easy access to land uses. Principal arterials are larger roads that feature higher speeds, some access control, are intended to serve longer-distance traffic, usually serve major employment and shopping centers, and feed into the freeway system. Normally, roads of a higher classification are expected to carry more traffic volumes than those of a lower classification. Map 7-1 shows the functional classification for streets in the Borough as established by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT).

Full understanding of the classification and ownership system is important because it directly relates to funding sources available for the repair and maintenance of roads. PennDOT typically owns roadways of higher classifications, as they are regionally important, but this is not always the case. PennDOT also owns segments of some lower classification roads. However, no roads owned by Chester Heights are part of the federal-aid highway system, eligible for federal funding. The federal-aid system roads are listed below, and shown on Map 7-2.

Chester Heights federal-aid network roads:
Baltimore Pike (SR 0001)
Stoney Bank Road (SR 4009)
Darlington Road (SR 4005)
Valleybrook Road (SR 3029)
Wawa Road/Ivy Mill Road (SR 3036)
Llewellyn Road (SR 3023)
Bodley Road (SR 3034)
Lenni Road (SR 3032)
Smithbridge (SR 3046)

The overall *condition* of the road network is adequate. The federal-aid roads are generally resurfaced every seven-to-ten years as part of PennDOT's surface treatment program. The one major road that traverses the Borough is Baltimore Pike. The condition of the pavement as of spring 2010 is not at its best, though it can be considered in acceptable condition for driving. A portion of the road was under construction (a bridge over Chester Creek), though this project has recently been completed. Within a couple of years the entire length of the roadway will be in need of a resurfacing. In the mean time, PennDOT



Chester Heights Borough

Map 7 - 1
Road Functional Classification

Disclaimer
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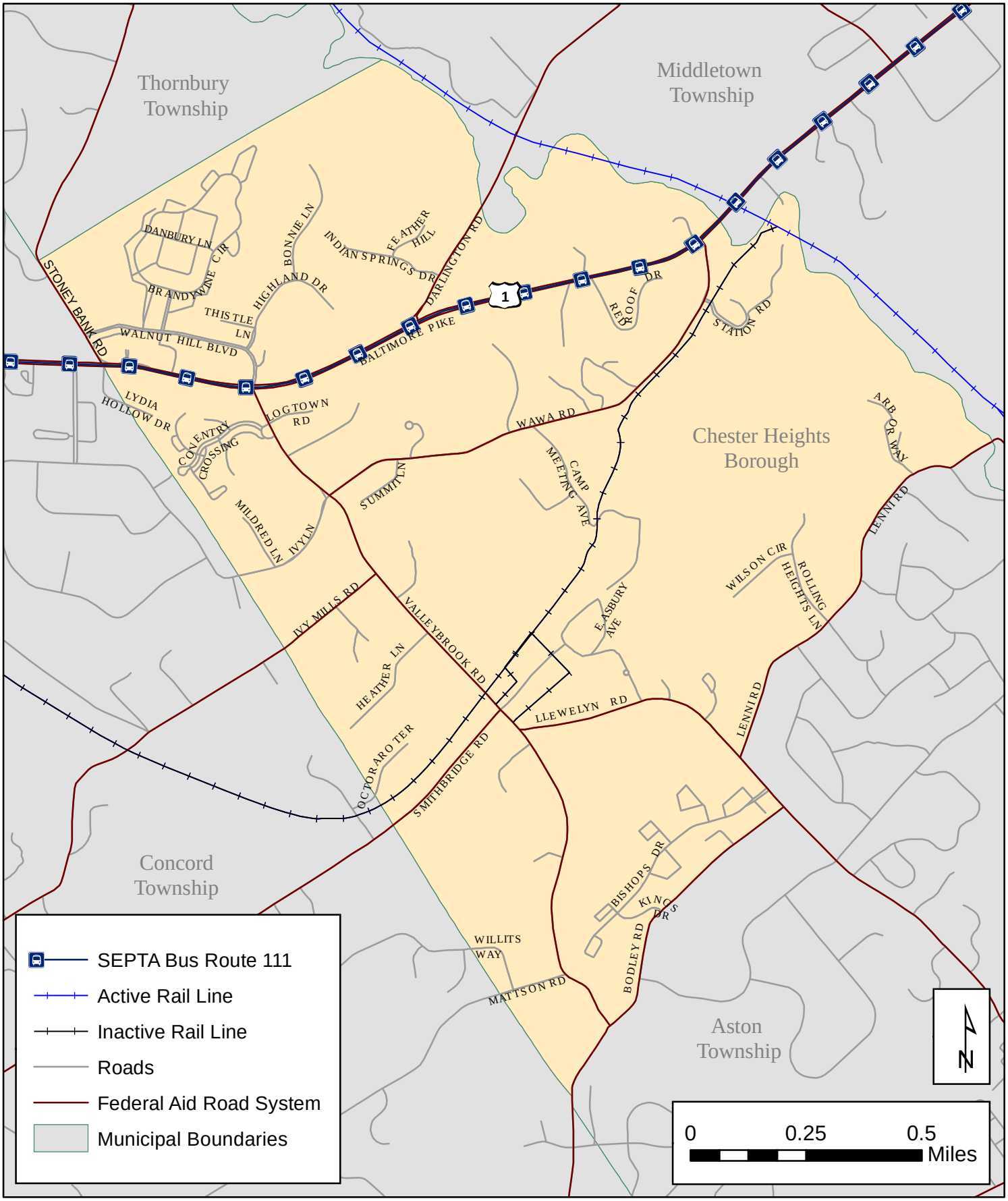
Delaware County
Planning Department
February 2010



Chester Heights Borough

Map 7 - 2
Transportation System

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February 2010

must maintain Baltimore Pike properly in order to inhibit further deterioration, which would accelerate the need for resurfacing. There were no roadways on the federal-aid network that were identified as being in poor condition.

The same routine maintenance holds true for locally maintained roads in the Borough. In communities within the borough that contain homeowners associations where residents pay association fees, the association maintains the condition of its roadways. All other roadways that are within the Borough that are not part of the federal aid network are the responsibility of the Borough to maintain and keep safe for road users.

The Borough considers the SEPTA bridge over Baltimore Pike (in Middletown Township near the boundary with Chester Heights) to be a major concern. It is barely wide enough to accommodate the four lanes of Baltimore Pike. There is no shoulder area, presenting a major safety issue to motorists whose vehicles break down, and any pedestrians who need to walk here. This bridge would need to be fully replaced in order to allow for widening of the roadway and shoulders. Currently, there are no plans to replace this bridge.

Bridges are a vital component of the transportation network. Bridges are features that must be regularly inspected and require a higher degree of maintenance than roads. Bridges are generally inspected every two years unless they have been identified as having structural deficiencies. Once deficiencies in the bridges have been identified, the inspection schedule is accelerated. The more structurally deficient a bridge is, the more frequently inspections must occur to avoid catastrophes. Structurally deficient bridges are commonly referred to as “posted bridges” because they are posted with weight limits and certain types of vehicle access may be restricted due to the posting.

In 2010, three structurally deficient bridges were identified in Chester Heights, all owned by PennDOT. By August 2012, one of the bridges has been replaced. The bridge that was replaced carries Baltimore Pike over Chester Creek, and one of the bridges in need of replacement carries Baltimore Pike over a Chester Creek tributary. The other structurally deficient bridge that has not been replaced carries Valleybrook Road over SEPTA’s inactive Octoraro rail line. No replacement plans are under way for the two remaining structurally deficient bridges, though significant state transportation funding has been diverted to replace and rehabilitate structurally deficient bridges in recent years.

Traffic signals are owned and maintained by the Borough. Light-emitting diode (LED) technology signals are much more energy efficient than incandescent lights that illuminate signals. There are three traffic signals within Chester Heights Borough: Baltimore Pike/Valleybrook Road, Baltimore Pike/Wawa Corporate Office entrance, and Valleybrook/Smithbridge Roads. There is also one signal on the border between Chester Heights and Concord Township at the intersection of Baltimore Pike and Stoney Bank Road; this signal is jointly owned and maintained by the two municipalities. These signals have already been upgraded to LED and will provide operational savings to the Borough through the use of far less electricity than the older technologies.

The Chester Heights/western Delaware County area contains several major highways that provide access to the municipalities, but also can cause problems. When major incidents

occur on US 322, US 202 or US 1, motorists detour and traffic increases on local streets. Detour routes should be established so that emergency service responders can react quickly and effectively to minimize the impacts of these incidents.

Traffic Congestion and Calming

A fundamental question regarding the proper operation and function of streets is whether the traffic volumes and speeds on Borough roads are appropriate. In situations where speeds and volumes are not consistent with the functional classification of the road, strategies detailed in this chapter can help improve conditions. Funding sources are also identified to pursue more detailed planning efforts to solve the problem.

Traffic congestion is an issue throughout the region. The road system was built before the introduction of Interstate highways, so the roads feeding US 202, US 322, I-95 and I-476 were designed for other purposes, typically as retail corridors, and need to continue to serve that purpose as well as providing access.

One strategy for improving flow on congested roads involves optimizing traffic signals. This can be done by retiming the current system, or upgrading the traffic signal system to a closed loop system which allows for a variety of timing plans that can be controlled from a remote location. The signals on Baltimore Pike at Stoney Bank and Valleybrook roads are sufficiently close together that there is a potential for better coordination.

A second way to improve traffic flow in already developed areas is by improving selected problem intersections. Intersection improvements can often make a large difference to traffic flow, as intersections are often the cause of congestion due to turning movements. If there is room for adding turn lanes, they can often pay major dividends in traffic flow.

The one primary intersection in the Borough that experiences congestion and delays during peak hours of travel is the intersection of Valleybrook, Smithbridge, and Llewellyn roads. This intersection also possesses an awkward geometry where Llewellyn Road enters Valleybrook Road. Its irregular geometry confuses drivers who are unfamiliar with it, thus creating a safety hazard. A realignment of this intersection could alleviate congestion and mitigate a safety issue within the Borough. This would require the Borough to purchase property and possibly relocate the fire station.

A third way to improve flow on corridors without road widening involves access management strategies, which control how vehicles can enter or exit a property or road. These strategies include consolidating and sharing driveways to have fewer potential points of motor vehicle conflicts on the road and the designation of parallel routes so that local traffic can avoid the congested through route. These strategies can be implemented over the long term as development or redevelopment occurs. Other components of access management include installation of a median or other restriction that prevents left turns across traffic or limits them to certain areas. Small and inexpensive signs can also be helpful access management tools. Posting “No Left Turn” signs at certain intersections helps maintain the flow of traffic on the through route.

Methods of slowing or limiting through traffic on streets are generally referred to as traffic calming. Traffic calming can be of particular interest on residential streets that drivers are using to cut-through to avoid traffic on congested arterial streets. The Institute of Traffic Engineers defines traffic calming as "…the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users."[1] There are many forms of traffic calming and they can vary widely in cost to implement from fairly inexpensive signs to expensive roadway reconstruction. Active traffic calming using police to ticket speeding motorists is effective however, it ties up police resources and is costly. Passive traffic calming involves physical characteristics of the roads that force motorists to drive slower. Some forms of passive traffic calming include the following:

Speed Tables are flat-topped speed humps that are inexpensive, yet effective in reducing vehicle speeds. They are also easier on large vehicles such as buses and fire trucks than conventional speed humps. Speed tables are typically avoided on arterial roads or roads with high traffic volumes.

Raised crosswalks at intersections would be useful to aid pedestrian crossings on roadways such as Valleybrook Road. These crosswalks calm through traffic and improve pedestrian safety and the look of the streetscape.

Intersection neck-downs involve roadway tapering and narrowing approaching an intersection. It improves safety for pedestrians crossing at the intersection and can provide aesthetic benefits.

Curb extensions or bulb-outs on residential streets provide a narrower roadway for the motorist to use causing them to drive slower while providing protection for pedestrians and parked vehicles. Chicanes are a series of alternating curb extensions staggered on a roadway at a mid-block location, forcing the motorist to weave through them.

Gateways are strategies used on local roads that are essentially a special treatment creating an entrance to a neighborhood or municipality. Sometimes this can include a small median with landscaping. Bulb-outs and raised crosswalks can also be used.

Borough residents are concerned about speeding on Valleybrook Road, which is used as a cut-through route to and from the state of Delaware. During morning and afternoon rush hours, safety issues arise because of speeding and poor sight lines. This makes it extremely dangerous for vehicles making turns at several intersections on Valleybrook Road, the two primary ones being Wawa Road/Ivy Lane and Ivy Mills Road. A simple strategy to mitigate those problems would be to convert these intersections to all-way stops. This will slow traffic along the main line as well as improve the safety of the vehicles turning to and from Wawa Road, Ivy Lane, and Ivy Mills Road.

1 *Traffic Calming, State of the Practice*, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1999.

Task Force members expressed concern about additional traffic congestion being potentially created by the proposed SEPTA Media-Elwyn station at Wawa on Baltimore Pike. The station entrance will have a traffic signal and will be another location where Baltimore Pike traffic will be stopped by a red light.

Streetscapes

The street, its landscaping, signs, and other associated components are often the first impression of a community for visitor and residents. A streetscape that does not represent the desired vision of the community has an undesirable and negative effect.

In commercial areas, inconsistent design characteristics create an unappealing streetscape. Working with local businesses to define the characteristics of a particular shopping area (such as downtown commercial or strip commercial) can help ensure appropriate streetscapes for the variety of commercial districts in the community while still allowing for a cohesive feel. The intersection of Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads and the stretch of Baltimore Pike between Stony Bank and Valleybrook Roads are prime candidates for improved streetscapes.

Professionally designed gateway signs on Baltimore Pike at both entrances to Chester Heights would serve to identify the community to travelers as well as welcome them to the Borough. The SEPTA railroad bridge at the northern end of the Borough on Baltimore Pike could be an ideal location for a sign for southbound travelers.

Signs serve as a navigation tool as well as dictate certain characteristics of a roadway. Signs that identify the names of streets should be appropriate for both the character of the area and the use of the street. On streets used for through traffic, large easily visible street signs that can be seen at high speeds should be used. On residential streets, smaller signs should be used to reflect the speed of road users and to avoid visual clutter. The design of street signs should be grouped by municipality, neighborhood, or development to convey a sense of place to both visitors and residents. Excessive signage can be a detriment to the community, confusing motorists, creating potential safety hazards, and cluttering the landscape. This is why sign standards should be created so signs conform to the desired look of the community.

Trees play a very important role in creating an appealing streetscape to most communities, but it is important to select trees that are right for their location. In addition to the environmental benefits of trees, they are also visually appealing and can provide physical prompts to drivers that they should slow down and drive safely. Efforts should be made to select trees that are columnar in tight commercial streetscapes so that they don’t impede on the sidewalk, roadway, or overhead wires. In parking lots and residential areas without overhead utilities, shade trees are more appropriate to help mitigate the heating effects of pavements.

Street furniture is also another important streetscape element. Consistent furniture design can be incorporated with streetlights and signs to create a sense of community. This can

be combined with bus rider shelters, tree grates, awnings and façades of buildings to create more consistency. When selecting the components of a streetscape, it is important to consider the durability and lifespan of each component. Furnishings, plantings and all components should be selected for their durability as well as their ease of maintenance.

Ongoing maintenance is an essential aspect of a streetscape. Without proper maintenance, facilities will eventually start looking run down. Once the improvements are in place, it is up to the community to maintain these facilities. A group of community volunteers, including business owners, could supplement Borough maintenance. The community's willingness to participate in this ongoing maintenance must be determined before the final stages of the streetscape design. If there is an overwhelming community response to assist, then there should not be many limitations on what is selected to be included in the final design. However, if it appears that there is limited support, then the amount of streetscaping must be tapered. In order to ensure that the volunteers follow through with their stated intentions to maintain the facilities, the municipality can enact a policy requiring volunteers to sign a form stating their intentions prior to construction.

Parking Issues

Parking facilities are needed to accommodate vehicles at business and employment sites. Off-street parking for motor vehicles is needed where on-street parking cannot accommodate a business or may lead to spillover parking into residential areas. Chester Heights officials have not identified any areas that currently have parking issues.

It is important to plan for future growth and have a strategy to avoid parking shortages, or conversely to avoid excessive paved parking areas. When businesses have different peak hours, shared parking facilities should be explored. As some businesses are busier during certain times of the year and can be seasonal, opportunities to share parking facilities benefit both parties and serve the greater good of the community.

Minimum parking requirements for *new* developments, which are based on maximum parking demand, lead to excessive pavement that usually sits unused. For retail uses, minimum parking requirements are based on maximum demand in December; most of these spaces go unused 90 percent of the year. This excessive impervious pavement represents significant construction and stormwater management costs to developers and businesses, which internalize these costs and pass them on to customers.

Due to the provisions made for vehicles, people are encouraged to drive and not walk, bicycle, or use public transit because plentiful free parking is provided. Excessive parking lots contribute to lower density sprawl, which spreads development out further than if there was less parking. This in turn encourages more driving because it's harder to walk to destinations and more difficult for public transit to provide efficient service.

A simple solution to this problem which can successfully work in some areas is revising text in the zoning ordinance stating that the parking space requirements are the recommended maximum number allowed. The parking space numbers in the ordinance

can remain the same. For example, Chester Heights' zoning ordinance provides a schedule for each land use and a recommended number of parking spaces starting on page 185:78. By simply changing the word "minimum" to "maximum" in the ordinance, the landowner has the option to provide less than the maximum number of spaces.

Maximum requirements would permit the developer, property owner, or business to provide the number of spaces that is currently required as a minimum, but not more than that, eliminating the possibility of an excessive number of spaces. A maximum requirement also would permit him or her to provide fewer spaces if it made business sense, which would also make environmental sense. A business owner will likely not provide fewer spaces than are needed to support the business. A maximum requirement would permit the owner to seek ways to reduce the number of spaces provided without hurting their business. For example, more than one business might try to share spaces if peak parking use time for the businesses occurs at different periods of the day. The owner could also take into account the amount of transit service to the property and if people where able to walk or bicycle to the site from nearby residential areas or if employees could telecommute then these practices should be encouraged by the landowner and employer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Traffic issues are always a major concern for municipalities and can be addressed through a systematic strategy of prioritizing improvements. Map 7-3, Transportation Improvements highlights potential road improvement projects identified by the plan task force as well as potential pedestrian, bicycling and public improvement projects that would benefit the Borough.

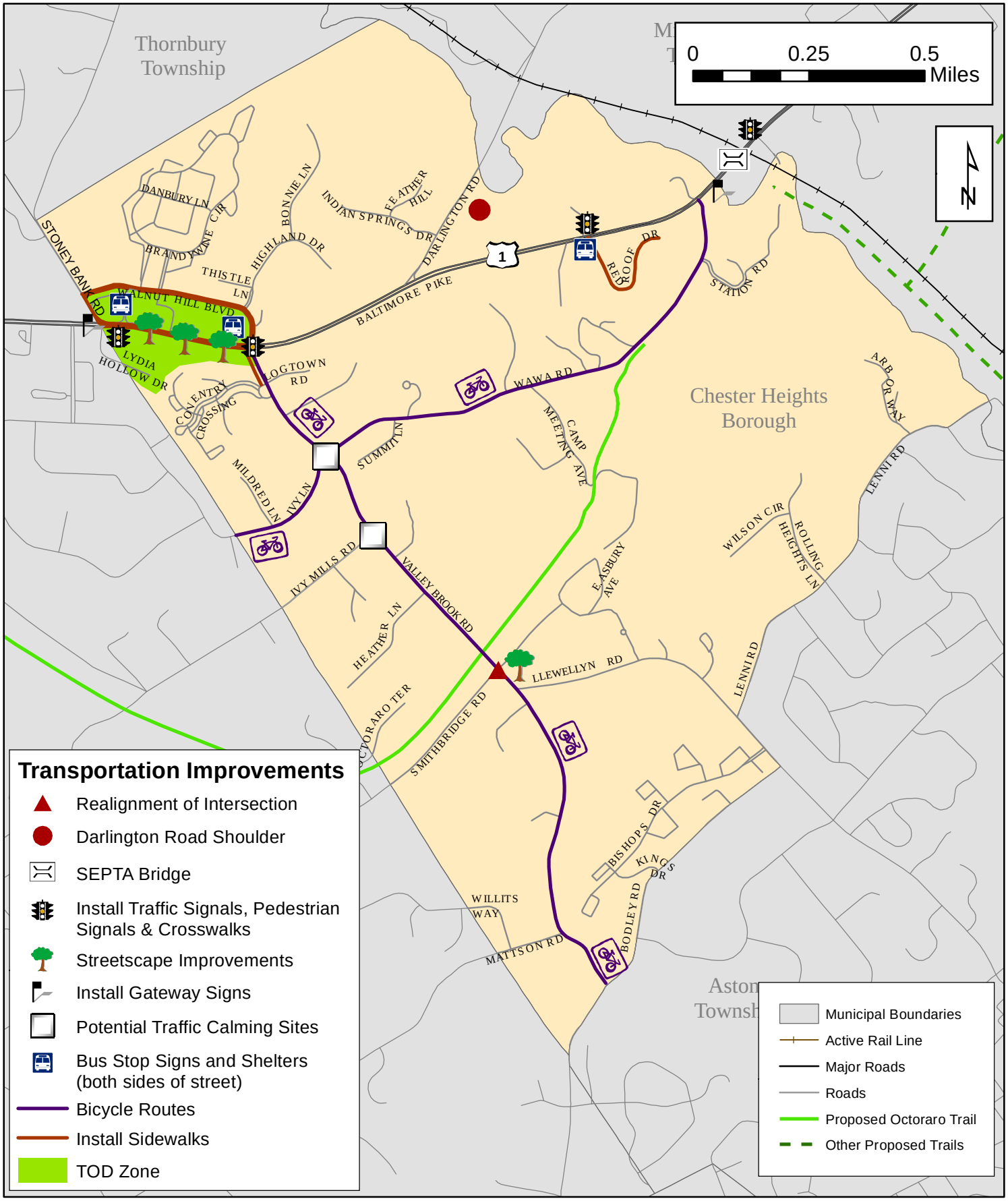
THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

7-1 Keep apprised of traffic volume reports available through PennDOT and DVRPC to ensure that the functional classifications of the Borough's roads stays consistent with the changing characteristics of their use.

Funding Program:	Borough staff time
Technical Assistance:	Borough Engineer
	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT

7-2 Strongly encourage PennDOT and SEPTA to widen the roadway and provide traffic shoulders and sidewalks under the SEPTA bridge over Baltimore Pike, when it is eventually replaced.

Funding Program:	SEPTA
	PennDOT



Chester Heights Borough

Map 7 - 3
Transportation Improvements

Disclaimer
This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.

Prepared by
Delaware County
Planning Department
February 2010

7-3 Work with regional planning and transportation bodies to better identify and improve detour routes for the US Highways 322, 202 and 1.

Funding Program:	PennDOT
Technical Assistance:	PennDOT
	DCPD
	DVRPC
	Delaware County Emergency Management Services
	Pennsylvania State Police
	Delaware County Incident Management Task Force

7-4 Determine if Baltimore Pike traffic signals at Stoney Bank and Valleybrook Roads can be better coordinated and monitor traffic conditions at entrance to new SEPTA Wawa station on Baltimore Pike.

Funding Programs:	State liquid fuels tax reimbursement
	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
	Surface Transportation Program (STP)
Technical Assistance:	Borough Engineer
	PennDOT

7-5 Study and improve Valleybrook/Smithbridge/Llewellyn Road intersection.

Funding Programs:	State liquid fuels tax reimbursement
	Federal/state highway funds for Federal aid streets
	Property owners
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT

7-6 Implement access management strategies for Baltimore Pike and Valleybrook Road.

Funding Programs:	DVRPC Special Studies
	Borough
	Property owners/businesses
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT
	Business Associations

7-7 Study locations with traffic issues and install traffic calming where appropriate, including Valleybrook Road intersections with Wawa Road/Ivy Lane and Ivy Mills Road.

Funding Programs:	State liquid fuels tax reimbursement
	STP
	Transportation Enhancements (TE)
	Hometown Streets (HTS)
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT
	Pennsylvania's Traffic Calming Handbook, PennDOT
	Traffic Calming, State of the Practice, Institute of Traffic Engineers

7-8 Work with businesses and residents to update and develop new street, commercial and professionally designed gateway welcome signage, including gateway welcome signs at both Borough entrances on Baltimore Pike.

Funding Programs:	TE
	STP
	HTS
	State Liquid fuels tax reimbursement
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	PennDOT
	SEPTA
	Borough Engineer

7-9 Work with business and residential groups to create a street tree program to install and care for appropriate trees.

Funding Programs:	Treevitalize
	DCNR
	HTS
	TE
	Utility companies
	Private developers
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT
	DEP
	DCNR

7-10 Create design standards for desired vision of corridors and adopt zoning amendments that reflect the desired vision.

Funding Programs:	TE
	HTS
	LUPTAP
	Developer or property owner funding
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT

7-11 Install improved streetscapes at the intersection of Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads and along Baltimore Pike between Stoney Bank and Valleybrook Roads; work with neighboring municipalities along Baltimore Pike to improve the signage and streetscape.

Funding Programs:	HTS
	TE
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT

7-12 Amend zoning ordinance by changing minimum parking space requirements to maximum parking space requirements. Change "minimum" to "maximum" parking requirements in the zoning ordinances (without any change in the actual numbers) in order to (1) allow flexibility where sharing of parking can occur or where there is transit service, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, or telecommuting potential, (2) reduce the cost of parking and stormwater management facilities, and (3) reduce sprawl.

Funding Programs:	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DVRPC

TRANSIT AND PARATRANSIT SERVICE

OBJECTIVE 7-2: PROVIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE TO ALL BOROUGH RESIDENTS AND AS A STRATEGY TO REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

Transit Service

SEPTA provides service to Chester Heights Borough by Regional Rail and bus services. The Media-Elwyn SEPTA Regional Rail line provides seven-day-a-week service from Philadelphia to Elwyn in Middletown Township, Delaware County, approximately two-

to-three miles from the Chester Heights Borough line. There are 29 inbound (to Center City) trains and 26 outbound weekday trains, 17 Saturday trains, and 14 Sunday trains that stop at Elwyn station in both directions.

Regional Rail Extension to Wawa

Chester Heights formerly had passenger rail service from 1858 to 1986 (at Wawa station), when SEPTA suspended service between Elwyn and West Chester due to deteriorating track conditions. In 1997, Delaware County Council requested restoration of service between Elwyn and Wawa. The Regional Rail extension to Wawa is the County's highest public transit priority.

The Elwyn to Wawa project will provide for a three mile extension of Media-Elwyn service, moving the terminus from Elwyn to Wawa. A new station will be built adjacent to Baltimore Pike, in Middletown Township across Chester Creek from Chester Heights. It will also be adjacent to the Franklin Mint development and will have vehicular and pedestrian connections. The new Wawa station will be ADA accessible, and will include a 500 parking space garage and a waiting room with ticket office. The Wawa station will give Chester Heights residents better access to commuter rail, as the station will border the Borough line.

Design is scheduled to be completed in 2010 and SEPTA has invested over $22 million into restoring service to Wawa up to this point. Funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), SEPTA performed initial construction work, including stabilizing areas of slope and realigning the track bed. However, SEPTA cannot complete the project because dedicated construction funding is not available.

Because the Federal Highway Administration rejected the state's proposal to toll Interstate 80, SEPTA will see an annual decrease of about $110 million in capital subsidies (about 25% of their capital budget) beginning in FY2011, which begins on July 1, 2010. Due to that reduction, the remainder of construction on the Regional Rail Wawa extension has been put on hold and moved into the future on SEPTA's FY2011-2022 Capital Plan, until a funding stream has been identified to pay for construction.

Bus Service

SEPTA bus route 111 travels on Baltimore Pike through the Borough and provides seven-day-a-week service. This route connects 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby Township with the Village Shopping Center at Painter's Crossing and the Chadds Ford Business Campus in Chadds Ford Township. In addition, Route 111 connects with several SEPTA bus routes, including the routes that connect at the Granite Run Mall and at 69th Street Terminal. SEPTA has three marked bus stops on southbound Baltimore Pike at Walnut Hill Boulevard and Stoney Bank Road and northbound Baltimore Pike at the Wawa Corporate office entrance.

The Borough should discuss with SEPTA, the Delaware County Transportation Management Association (DCTMA), and private companies the need for bus rider shelters at bus stops along Baltimore Pike. Benefits of shelters include security and weather protection for riders and advertising revenue for the Borough.

Clear Channel Outdoor, Inc. installs and maintains shelters at SEPTA bus stops in many of the suburban Philadelphia counties. Clear Channel places advertising on the shelter and it enters into a profit sharing agreement with the municipality. The DCTMA is a third party representative for member municipalities in working with Clear Channel and SEPTA to arrange for the shelters to be installed.

Bus shelters can be placed either within the PennDOT right-of-way or on private property. The Borough should identify through its records, or through PennDOT, where the right-of-way is along Baltimore Pike at each bus stop. If there is enough right-of-way to install the shelter, Chester Heights should have a shelter installed at that location.

Should the right-of-way be too narrow to install a shelter, it is up to Chester Heights to notify the private property owner of its decision to install a bus shelter. Chester Heights is responsible for obtaining permission to install the shelters either from the private property owner or PennDOT. Clear Channel Outdoor, Inc. will offer indemnification to the private property owner, if applicable.

Chester Heights Borough is encouraged to adopt a transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning overlay district along Baltimore Pike between Stoney Bank and Valleybrook Roads. The TOD zoning would permit mixed use development more supportive of SEPTA bus service, encourage better transit amenities, and require pedestrian accessibility to transit and the commercial developments. The TOD zoning would also encourage new development, occurring along Baltimore Pike to be transit, bicycle and pedestrian friendly so as to discourage single occupant vehicle usage by employees.

Paratransit Service

Community Transit of Delaware County (CTDC) provides paratransit service to Delaware County residents. Paratransit is customized door-to-door service required for individuals who are unable to use fixed-route transportation systems, such as senior citizens and physically or mentally impaired individuals.

The Pennsylvania Lottery provides funding for senior citizen reduced-fare transportation, which is provided by CTDC. CTDC also contracts with SEPTA to provide service for persons with disabilities, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), for those individuals who cannot use SEPTA's fixed-route bus system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

7-13 Request that SEPTA install bus stop signs on southbound Baltimore Pike at the Wawa Corporate Office traffic signal and on northbound Baltimore Pike at Stoney Bank and Valleybrook Roads.

Funding Program: SEPTA

7-14 Request the installation of bus passenger shelters at each bus stop along Baltimore Pike within the Borough. Improve the visibility of the SEPTA Route 111 bus stop signs at each of the locations if shelters are not installed.

Funding Program: SEPTA
Clear Channel Communications

7-15 Request SEPTA install way-finding signs along Baltimore Pike, directing commuters to the Wawa train station and its associated parking as part of the new station construction.

Funding Program: SEPTA

7-16 Adopt a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning overlay district for the area along Baltimore Pike between Stoney Bank and Valleybrook Roads.

Funding Program: Borough funds
DCPD
Technical Assistance: DCPD

7-17 Help publicize county paratransit providers to ensure that residents are properly informed and enrolled in appropriate programs.

Funding Program: Borough funds
CTDC

WALKING

OBJECTIVE 7-3: INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF WALKING IN CHESTER HEIGHTS AND IMPROVE FACILITIES TO ENABLE SAFER WALKING CONDITIONS.

Chester Heights does not have many sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities to permit safe walking. The subdivision and land development ordinance states on page 37 that "sidewalks may be required to be installed at the discretion of Borough Council." While it may not be practical to recommend that pedestrian facilities be installed along all streets in the Borough, there are specific areas that warrant sidewalks, crosswalks, and

pedestrian signals. By encouraging walking and providing adequate facilities for it, Borough residents will improve their health and drive less for these short trips, thus reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

Much of Chester Heights' development is on or near Baltimore Pike between Stoney Bank and Valleybrook Roads. Developments such as Darlington Woods and the apartment complex behind the Wawa convenience store are within walking distance of the stores and offices along Baltimore Pike. Several SEPTA bus stops are also on Baltimore Pike in this area and would benefit from better pedestrian access in the way of sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals.

The Borough is considering creating a village center at the intersection of Valleybrook, Smithbridge, and Llewellyn Roads, better pedestrian access to the area around this intersection would be needed. Sidewalks and crosswalks within a one or two block area of this intersection would improve pedestrian access and safety.

The Task Force also indicated that a shoulder is needed along Darlington Road leading to the Darlington Trail parking lot. Residents need a safe place to walk along the road to access the Trail.

Most categories of federal highway funds are eligible to pay for constructing, installing, or repairing sidewalks, crosswalks, and signals, according to Federal Highway Administration staff. Continental crosswalks, which are more visible to motorists, should be installed rather than less visible crosswalks which are two narrow paint stripes.

When the new Wawa train station is completed, it would help to have pedestrian access from the portion of Chester Heights adjacent to the station. A potential trail on SEPTA's inactive Octoraro rail line leading into the station is discussed in the Parks and Open Space chapter of this plan. This trail would also provide pedestrian access to the area around the intersection of Valleybrook, Smithbridge, and Llewellyn Roads.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

7-18 Develop multi-year capital program to construct sidewalks at the following locations:

- Both sides of Baltimore Pike from Stoney Bank Road to Valleybrook Road.
- The east side of Stoney Bank Road between Walnut Hill Boulevard and Baltimore Pike.
- At least one side of Walnut Hill Boulevard between Stoney Bank Road and Baltimore Pike (to supplement the existing sidewalk).
- Both sides of Valleybrook Road from Baltimore Pike to Coventry Lane/Logtown Drive.

- On Baltimore Pike at the Wawa Corporate Office entrance between the southbound bus stop (see recommendation 7-14) and the crosswalk (see recommendation 7-21).
- Request Wawa Corporate Office to install a sidewalk along its driveway for bus riders.

Funding Program:	Federal highway funds
	Property owners
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	PennDOT
	Borough Engineer

7-19 Install continental crosswalks and pedestrian signals on all legs of the Baltimore Pike/Stoney Bank Road and Baltimore Pike/Valleybrook/Walnut Hill Boulevard intersections, as well as one crosswalk across Baltimore Pike at the Baltimore Pike/Wawa Corporate Office driveway intersection. Request that PennDOT remove the "No Pedestrian" signs. These intersections currently have or should have SEPTA bus stops (see recommendation 7-14). Signal permits on file with PennDOT should be revised to accommodate this.

Funding Program:	Federal highway funds
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	PennDOT
	Borough Engineer
	DCPD

7-20 Install sidewalks along at least one side of Valleybrook, Smithbridge, and Llewellyn Roads leading to the intersections of those roads. Also, install continental crosswalks at intersections and pedestrian signals at the intersection of Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads.

Funding Program:	Federal highway funds
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	PennDOT
	Borough Engineer
	DCPD

7-21 Consider adopting pedestrian facility zoning overlay districts for the areas recommended for sidewalk construction in recommendations 7-20 and 7-22, which would require property owners to construct sidewalks within a specific timeframe or when properties are sold or developed.

Funding Programs:	Borough funds
	DCED
Technical Assistance:	DCPD

7-22 Request that PennDOT install a shoulder along Darlington Road leading to the Darlington Trail parking lot to provide safety for pedestrians walking to the Trail.

Funding Programs: STP
TE
Surface Treatment Program

BICYCLING

OBJECTIVE 7-4: DEVELOP SAFE ON ROAD FACILITIES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR AND ENCOURAGE BICYCLING AND CREATE CONNECTIONS NEW OFF-ROAD FACILITIES.

With air pollution, global warming, health issues, and increasing gas prices becoming greater concerns each passing year, a greater emphasis than ever is being placed upon alternatives to the automobile. Delaware County Council adopted the Delaware County Bicycle Plan on May 12, 2009. The plan identifies how the engineering of roads, provision of bicycle facilities and programs, education of road users, and enforcement of road rules can be improved to encourage bicycling in the County. Bicycling is the most efficient and environmentally friendly form of transportation for short trips. An increase in bicycling will reduce air pollution, global warming, traffic congestion, and health care costs, the last of which by improving personal health. Map 7-3, Transportation Improvements, identifies Baltimore Pike and Valleybrook, Darlington, Llewellyn, and Lenni Roads as part of the Tertiary On-Road Bicycle Improvement Network.

Presently, the streets of Chester Heights serve as the only facilities for bicycling. On low-traffic, low-speed residential streets, bicycle and automobile traffic can share space quite effectively. On the major streets, however, high traffic speeds and volumes may warrant the creation of facilities for adult bicycling, including the following:

- Striped Shoulders allow bicyclists to stay out of traffic while narrowing the travel lane for vehicles and providing for emergency pull off capacity. When PennDOT resurfaces its roads (Surface Treatment Program), it installs edge lines and narrows travel lanes to appropriate widths.
- Bicycle Lanes are portions of roadway striped with pavement markings and signed for exclusive use of bicycles. These must meet certain standards for width, striping, signing, and marking. Bike lanes increase bicyclists' sense of security, notify motorists of where to expect bicyclists, and show that bicyclists have a legitimate place on the road.
- Bicycle Boulevards are local streets modified to function as through streets for bicycles. Local access for automobiles is maintained, but through traffic is discouraged. Traffic calming as discussed in the Traffic Congestion and Calming section of this chapter is often applied on Bicycle Boulevards to avoid cut-through traffic and ensure that motor vehicles travel at speeds that are safe for bicyclists.

- Bicycle Routes are any combination of paths, lanes, trails, or streets that are designated for bicycle travel by mapping or signing as a preferential travel route for bicyclists, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes.
- Shared Use Paths are paved and used for two directional travel of bicyclists and pedestrians. They need to be separated from motor vehicle traffic, thus benefiting from limited at-grade crossings with that traffic.

On-Road Bicycle Facilities

Roads and streets are the current bicycle facilities in the study area. Sometimes the existing network is appropriate and often improvements can be difficult to obtain in already developed communities. However, small and affordable incremental changes can often make a big difference.

The preferred on-road bicycle facility is a designated bike lane. This is a four-to-five foot wide lane that is clearly striped and marked for bicycle use only with accompanying signs. The Task Force indicated that Valleybrook Road needed to be made bicycle friendly; bicycle lanes or clearly striped shoulders should be considered.

Due to the current traffic volumes along Baltimore Pike as well as the geometric constraints of the right-of-way, there may be significant difficulties accommodating bicyclists on this road; at the very minimum, a clearly striped shoulder is needed, where space permits, to provide for the safety of bicyclists whose trips begin or end on Baltimore Pike. In locations such as this where conditions exist that are unsafe or the geometry of the roadway does not permit, a bicycle boulevard along a parallel local street can be a viable alternative. A local study group of residents and bicycle enthusiasts could be formed to determine what the most effective and viable local roads are that would serve bicyclists in the most efficient and safe manner. Streets that could be considered for such an improvement are Ivy Lane and Wawa Road, which run parallel to Baltimore Pike and can provide a safe alternative to biking along Baltimore Pike.

In addition to designing on road facilities as mentioned above, there are several other ways the Borough can encourage bicycle use. Destination facilities could be required to provide bicycle parking through zoning updates to ensure that redevelopment accommodates bicycle use. Also, programs that encourage bicycle use, educate motorists and cyclists, and enforce motoring laws all play a role in having safe and effective bicycle transportation.

Off-Road Bicycle Facilities

Off-road paved trails can be difficult to build in already developed areas. Most off-road bicycle facilities are considered to be recreational in nature. However, they should be well-connected to destinations and the existing street grid so they can provide transportation alternatives for residents as well.

SEPTA is extending service on the Media-Elwyn line to Wawa (see Transit Service section). This train station is located at the terminus of the future Chester Creek Trail as well as the potential future Octoraro Branch Trail, both potential "rail trails" (trails on former rail lines). Transit is an excellent destination for bicyclists and serves as an example of how multi-modal transportation can be utilized in a low-density, suburban environment. Allowing residents of Chester Heights to access transit without the use of automobiles via off-road trails and on-road bicycle improvements makes the borough a desired destination for people looking to relocate to a sustainable and environmentally friendly community. (See the Parks and Open Space chapter of this plan for a discussion about a potential Octoraro rail trail.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

With improving the transportation network for bicyclists, improvements are made for all users, from joggers using off-road facilities to motorists who avoid congestion. By rationally and systematically looking at cost-effective programs to improve bicycle facilities in the communities, there is a chance to improve mobility for all users.

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

7-23 Form a local study group to recommend creation of bicycle routes and other bicycle facility improvements, such as on Valleybrook Road.

Funding Program:	Volunteer actions
Technical Assistance:	Delaware County Bicycle Plan
	DCPD
	DVRPC
	PennDOT
	Delaware Valley Bicycle Club (DVBC)
	Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia (BCGP)
	Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (1999)
	AASTHO

7-24 Improve bicycle routes with bicycle lanes, shoulder striping, and traffic calming where needed and appropriate; improve bicycle access on all streets.

Funding Programs:	PennDOT Surface Treatment Program
	State liquid fuels tax reimbursement
	STP
	TE
	HTS
	Safe Routes to School (SRS)
	Private developers
	Borough funds

Technical Assistance: Delaware County Bicycle Plan
DCPD
DVRPC
PennDOT
BCGP
DVBC
Pennsylvania's Traffic Calming Handbook, PennDOT, 2001
Traffic Calming, State of the Practice, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1999

7-25 Adopt zoning or land development code requirements for bicycle parking and shower facilities at work sites

Funding Programs: Borough
DCED
Technical Assistance: DCPD

7-26 Create bicycle related education, encouragement, and enforcement programs.

Funding Programs: SRS
School District funds
Borough funds
Technical Assistance: Delaware County Bicycle Plan
DCPD
DVRPC
PennDOT
BCGP

7-27 Implement off-road trails where feasible and link them with residential and commercial areas, schools, transit stops, and with neighboring municipalities. Leverage existing facilities such as abandoned rail corridors and utility easements.

Funding Programs: TE
CMAQ
SRS
Private developers & businesses
Borough funds
Technical Assistance: Delaware County Bicycle Plan
DCPD
DVRPC
PennDOT
BCGP
Borough
DVBC

CHAPTER 8

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Open space can take many forms including a public playground, a trail, a cemetery, or even a private natural area. It provides psychological, social, economic, and ecological benefits that relate directly to quality of life in a community. It is therefore important that Chester Heights maximize its use of existing open space and recreational lands in order to preserve and enhance its livability. The Borough can achieve this by making open spaces accessible to pedestrians using the sidewalk network or greenway trails. It is also important that besides purchasing property, the Borough utilize alternative methods such as conservation or access easements, for open space preservation.

Recreational open space can be classified as active or passive. Passive open space serves a number of functions, including the protection of natural resources such as floodplains and woodlands, as well as offering aesthetic and psychological benefits to residents. It involves a low level of disturbance but can accommodate both low-energy activities such as walking and picnicking and higher-energy activities like running or bicycling. Active open space often involves the development of playfields, which often require such practices as regrading, landscaping, and other land disturbances. Publicly accessible greenways offer passive recreation opportunities, and can also link to active open space.

In addition to an evaluation of existing conditions, this chapter offers an overview of some recommended methods of open space, parkland, and recreation management, maintenance, planning, and preservation.

GOAL: TO PRESERVE CURRENT LEVELS OF OPEN SPACE IN KEY AREAS OF THE BOROUGH IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY AND PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

MUNICIPAL PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE 8-1: TO PROVIDE CHESTER HEIGHTS BOROUGH RESIDENTS WITH ADEQUATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WHICH ARE ACCESSIBLE, SAFE, ATTRACTIVE, AND SUITABLE FOR A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES.

To date, it has not been a goal of Chester Heights Borough to develop its own parks system. With the exception of the planned residential developments like Darlington Woods and the Village of Valleybrook, most neighborhoods in the Borough have a low enough density that there is room for children to play in backyards. There is also a large amount of undeveloped agricultural land for scenic relief, though most of it is unprotected. Much of the undeveloped land area that could conceivably be used for future

parks and public open space uses is held in private, institutional, or commercial ownership. Recently, in 2012 the Borough adopted a brief, stand-along Recreation Plan focusing on municipal provision of recreational facilities. A copy of this plan can be found in Appendix B. The contents and recommendations of this and the following section (Recreational Needs) of Chapter 8 compliment that recently adopted Recreation Plan.

TABLE 8-1
OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES, 2010

Owner	Name	Location	Acres	Facilities
Chester Heights Borough	Chester Heights Community Park	West side of Valleybrook Road, just north of Smithbridge Road	6.8	Athletic field, playground, woodland, parking lot, picnic area
	Chester Creek Open Space	Lenni Road and Chester Creek	0.1	Wooded, streamside open space
Middletown Township	Darlington Tract	West side of Chester Creek, between Darlington Road and Rocky Run	21.1	Wooded open space, stream
Homeowners Association Open Space	Darlington Woods	Around Darlington Woods community, fronting on Chester Creek	65.9	Wooded open space, lawns, stream
	Hamanassett	North side of Darlington Road, fronting on Chester Creek	5.5	Wooded open space
	The Highlands	North side of Baltimore Pike, west of Darlington Road	7.6	Wooded open space
	Rolling Heights Estates	Lenni Road and behind homes on Rolling Heights Lane	8.0	Wooded open space
	Village of Valleybrook	Around townhouses on Bishop Drive	37.8	Wooded open space, lawns
	Willets Way	Behind homes on Willets Way, on West Branch of Chester Creek	9.0	Wooded open space, stream

Source: DCPD

Existing Parks and Open Space Facilities

Chester Heights owns and maintains only one public park, known as Chester Heights Community Park (4.7 acres). Also within the Borough, there is a 21-acre portion of Middletown Township's "Darlington Tract" passive open space property. The Borough does contain several common "homeowners' association open spaces" associated with some of the housing developments but these open spaces do not contain recreational facilities. Since the Borough does not contain any public schools, there is not an opportunity for school fields and playgrounds to double as public parks. It should be noted that St. Thomas the Apostle Church property is sometimes used for community events. Map 8-1 shows the location of existing parks and open space areas listed in Table 8-1.

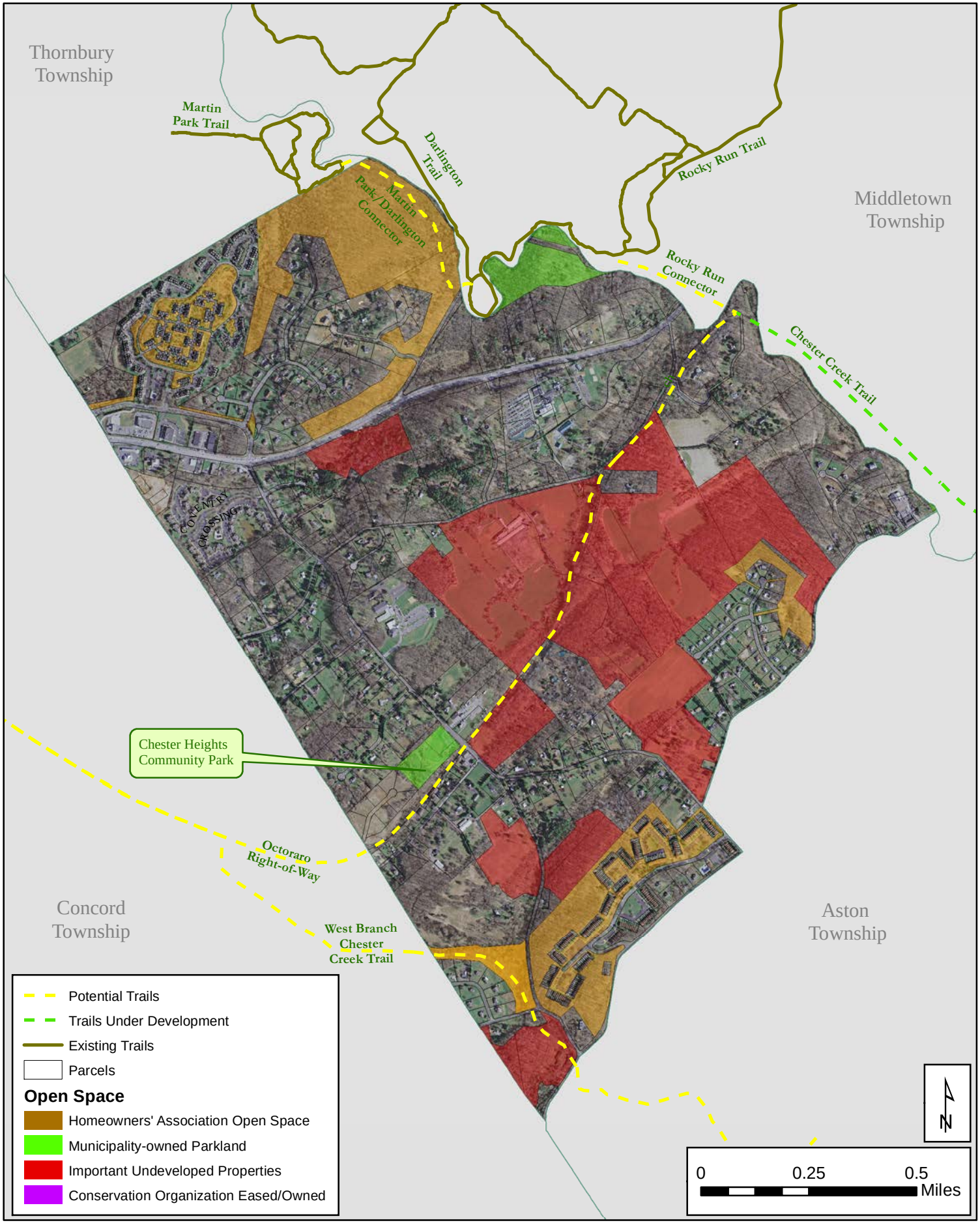
Chester Heights Community Park

Located on the west side of Valleybrook Road, the 4.7-acre Chester Heights Community Park is comprised of a large soccer and multi-use field, a playground, benches, shade trees, a paved parking lot, and some wooded open space. The soccer field is utilized by the Brandywine Youth Club for its games. There is an officially adopted master plan for the park and in the past the Borough has received state funding assistance for park improvements. Contiguous to the south side of the park is a narrow parcel owned by PECO, containing the former Octoraro rail right-of-way as well as high-voltage cables. The land parcel stretches from Valleybrook Road to the Concord Township line and, if utilized for a multi-use trail, could improve access to the park.

(Chester Heights Community Park)

Darlington Tract

The Darlington Tract is a passive recreation area, owned by Middletown Township. It is situated on a 21.1-acre portion of the 222-acre Darlington Tract within both Middletown Township and Chester Heights Borough. The land in Chester Heights is completely wooded and has no road frontage. It does, however, contain areas of Chester Creek stream bank and a portion of the Chester Creek Rail right-of-way.



Chester Heights Borough

Map 8 - 1
Open Space

Disclaimer
This map is for analytical purposes only. The reliability of this map depends on the accuracy of the underlying data sources which have not been verified.

Prepared by
Delaware County
Planning Department
February 2010

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Borough should:

8-1 Consider developing a parks, recreation and open space master plan for the Borough to evaluate existing facilities and programs in detail and to lay out an action plan to meet the needs and goals of the community.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2)
Technical Assistance:	DCPD PA DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation PA Recreation and Park Society RecTAP Program

8-2 Continue to maintain and improve Community Park according to its master plan, the ongoing needs of residents, and any recommendations from a proposed Borough parks and recreation board (see Recommendation 8-5).

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD PA Recreation and Park Society RecTAP Program

8-3 Connect the Community Park property to the Octoraro right-of-way, if and when a recreational trail is developed there.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD

RECREATION NEEDS

OBJECTIVE 8-2: TO ASSURE A BROAD SELECTION OF RECREATION PROGRAMS FOR RESIDENTS OF CHESTER HEIGHTS BOROUGH.

Measuring current parkland acreage against numerical regional standards is one way of determining whether recreational needs are being met. However, the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) current approach does not stipulate numerical standards, but rather advocates a more systematic approach that takes into account unique needs, demographics, desires, and resources in a community. Past NRPA guidelines specified acreage standards based on population. Because there is only one neighborhood park in the Borough, recreation on public acreage may appear low by NRPA standards.

However, as is explored in this section, there are other open space and recreation opportunities to consider.

Existing Active Recreation Opportunities

The Brandywine Youth Club (BYC) serves the young people of Chester Heights Borough, as well as Bethel, Chadds Ford, Concord, and Thornbury Townships. The club utilizes Chester Heights Community Park for some of its activities, but various fields and gymnasiums throughout the six-municipality area are also used. As of 2010, activities offered through the BYC include baseball, basketball, cheerleading, field hockey, football, girls' and boys' lacrosse, softball, soccer, volleyball, and wrestling. BYC operates its programs through user fees.

Organized Recreational Needs

Recreation programming is the process by which a municipality provides opportunities for people to engage in recreational experiences. In contrast to park development and maintenance activities, which often require financial support from a municipality's general fund, recreation programs can often be self-supporting through activity fees. It is important for a municipality to coordinate activities among all of its recreation providers, and to make sure enough programs are offered to meet the needs of residents of all ages and interests.

Programming is best handled by a municipal or multi-municipal parks and recreation board, which can also advise the governing body on the condition and adequacy of parks facilities used for the programs.

In Chester Heights, organized recreation needs are generally being met by the BYC, school activities (Garnet Valley School District), and commercial recreation providers in Chester Heights and adjacent municipalities. Commercial providers include the Rocky Run YMCA, Snap Fitness Center, Premier Martial Arts, and Hidden Hollow Swim Club.

Rocky Run YMCA and Hidden Hollow Swim Club are in Middletown, and Chester Heights's population appears to be too low to cost-effectively support its own recreation programming. Residents not served by BYC offerings can also participate in some of the recreation programs offered by Concord or Middletown Townships. However, not all programs run by these municipalities are offered to non-residents. Chester Heights could approach one or both of the Townships to see if the Borough's residents could participate in the programs funded by user fees, after local residents have had first chance to register. The Borough should still plan and budget for some annual community events such as Fourth of July fireworks, fall festival, senior luncheon, and Easter egg hunt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the current residential density and the ability to fulfill active recreational needs in nearby municipalities, additional active parkland is not viewed as a necessity for

the Borough. Since some of the active recreational programming needs of youth are being met by the Brandywine Youth Club and by school programs, there might not be a need for additional programming by the Borough. A fuller slate of periodic special events, however, is recommended for the Chester Heights community. For some events when appropriate, Chester Heights should combine efforts with Concord and/or Middletown Townships.

The Borough should:

8-4 As part of a parks, recreation and open space master plan (see Recommendation 8-1), conduct a survey of the recreational activities that residents prefer and engage in, in order to ascertain how well the public need is being met. The plan should explore further possibilities for meeting those needs and for coordination of facilities usage.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD PA DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation PA Recreation and Park Society RecTAP Program

8-5 Appoint and maintain an active parks, recreation and open space board and continue to work with the Brandywine Youth Club. The board should plan for meeting community needs, organize programs and special events, and evaluate the success of such offerings.

Technical Assistance:	PA DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation PA Recreation and Park Society RecTAP Program NRPA

PROTECTION OF UNDEVELOPED LAND

OBJECTIVE 8-3: TO PROTECT CHESTER HEIGHTS'S REMAINING UNDEVELOPED PRIVATE OPEN SPACE FROM DEVELOPMENT

A great deal of the undeveloped land in Chester Heights is privately owned. These private open spaces serve as visual relief for residents of Chester Heights and the surrounding communities and are an important element of the Borough's character. However, these lands have the potential to be developed in accordance with the Borough's zoning ordinance. If the desire is to retain a particular privately-owned property as open space, the Borough should reach out to the landowner and carefully engage in an ongoing dialogue. For more on reaching out to landowners, refer to the Landowner Education and Outreach section of this chapter. Plans for the Borough's development patterns are discussed in detail in the Land Use Chapter (Chapter 9).

Categories of Existing Privately-Owned Open Space

Institutional Properties with Open Space

There are two properties containing open space that are owned by religious institutions. Both are within close proximity of one another on Valleybrook Road. The 30-acre St. Thomas the Apostle Church and School property contains some active recreational fields and a large woodland area. The Chester Heights Camp Meeting has a 13-acre undeveloped parcel, which is a mix of lawn and woodland, located between Valleybrook Road and the developed portion of the camp.

Homeowners' Association Open Space

Chester Heights has several housing developments that have used conservation design or have had environmental constraints resulting in the setting aside of open space along side of the homes. This land is owned and maintained by a homeowners' association (HOA). Most of the open spaces are natural, passive recreation areas such as woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, stream valleys, and open meadows. Such places are very valuable for the preservation of important environmental resources. However, public access is usually restricted, because homeowners can be very protective of their privacy and their security. Consequently, it can be difficult to negotiate passive access for the public. Access for homeowners can be limited as well, since foot paths or trails were not installed in all HOA lands. HOA open spaces are included in Table 8-1 and shown on Map 8-1.

Conservation Organization Protected Lands

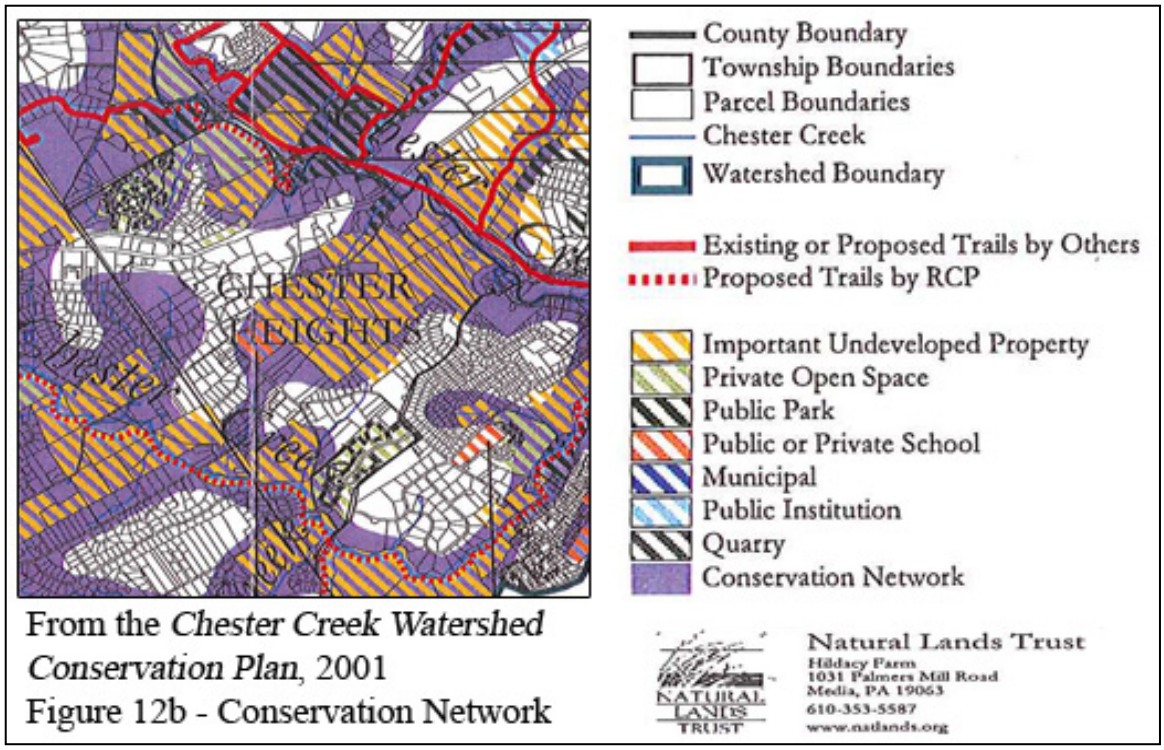
One seven-acre, two-parcel tract in the Borough is owned by a local conservation organization, Natural Lands Trust, Inc. (NLT). This property is on the southwest corner of Wawa Road and Baltimore Pike. Across Wawa Road from this property are two other parcels totaling 8.5 acres. These properties are owned by PennDOT and are under easement agreements held by NLT. They are on either side of Baltimore Pike and contain approximately one-quarter mile of Chester Creek stream bank. The easement limits certain uses (development) on all, or on a portion of a property for conservation purposes, while keeping the land under the property owner's control. Because of its mission, NLT can be trusted to keep its owned and eased lands in a perpetual natural state.

Important Undeveloped Properties for Protection

The Chester Creek Conservation Plan is a Rivers Conservation Plan (RCP), developed by Natural Lands Trust for the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association in 2001. Once the plan was listed on the Pennsylvania Rivers Registry, it allowed applicants to become eligible for PA Rivers Conservation grant funding for projects that implement recommendations from the Plan.

The Conservation Network map (Figure 8-2 below, from Figure 12b in the RCP) shows a stream valley-based network of parcels that fall into various ownership categories. The 'Important Undeveloped Properties' in Chester Heights, shown on the map are privately-

owned open space parcels that are within stream valleys - touching a major stream or touching another open space parcel that leads to the stream. As of 2010, approximately 371 acres of the Important Undeveloped Properties remain undeveloped. These remaining properties are also shown on Map 8-1.



(FIGURE 8-2: Chester Heights Conservation Network Map)

Due to environmental constraints, like steep slopes and floodplains, not all of these lands are in danger of development in the immediate future. However, depending on the type of development proposed, some areas with these features could still be developed further. More restrictive subdivision and land development ordinance provisions can limit the effect of development. The Borough should prioritize the most important parcels for protection in their natural or open state. The Borough can then find ways to tactfully communicate or partner with the landowner for protection and proper management of these properties. This plan contains two descriptive lists as a starting place for land protection: *Tools for the Preservation of Open Space* (Appendix D) and *Grant Funding Sources for Open Space and Greenways* (E).

(A private, undeveloped property in Chester Heights)

One of the tools in Appendix D, establishment of an Agricultural Security Area, is worth pursuing. It requires that land parcels form or gain membership in an Agricultural Security District. The nearest existing District is in adjacent Concord Township. The Borough should pursue the possibility of joining that District in the short term. See Appendix D for details on the benefits and procedures of Agricultural Security Areas. Another tool listed in Appendix D, a Fee in Lieu of Open Space program, was recently enacted by the Borough along with its new Recreation Plan noted earlier (Appendix B). This new Fee in Lieu ordinance of the Borough can be found in Appendix C of this plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Borough should:

8-6 Explore the possibility of developing an active recreation area on a portion of the property fronting the northeast corner of the Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads intersection. This could be accomplished through written agreement or through a lease.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR
	C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	PA DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

8-7 Assemble and maintain a list of contacts for homeowners' associations in the Borough. Educate homeowners' associations on proper natural lands management and other open space issues.

Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DCCD

8-8 Target the remaining Important Undeveloped Properties, shown on Map 8-1 as the primary areas to preserve as undeveloped open space. As the Borough develops its open space plan (Recommendation 8-1) officials should prioritize or rank these parcels, as well as others according to their significance and the urgency for preservation.

Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	NLT
	Brandywine Conservancy

8-9 Strengthen local ordinances to limit development on environmentally sensitive lands such as steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and stream buffers.

Technical Assistance: DCPD
PA DEP
NLT
Brandywine Conservancy

8-10 Explore the use of all potential land preservation techniques and funding opportunities for the protection of open space. To this end, the Borough should inquire with Concord Township about the possibility of adding parcels from Chester Heights to its existing Agricultural Security District.

Technical Assistance: DCCD
DCPD
PA DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
NLT
Brandywine Conservancy

LANDOWNER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

OBJECTIVE 8-4: TO EDUCATE CITIZENS AND LANDOWNERS IN CHESTER HEIGHTS ABOUT THE FUNCTION AND VALUE OF THE BOROUGH'S NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS PROPER MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE.

Reaching Out to Landowners

Privately owned land can contribute to a municipality's overall open space land area. The Borough should engage in multiple forms of contact with open space landowners. Initial contact can be as simple as sending a flyer to their mailbox inviting them to a watershed association presentation on a land management topic. The Borough open space committee (if and when it is formed) or environmental advisory committee could also send pamphlets and informational mailings to large property owners. More personal contact could include mail or phone questionnaires on issues encountered when maintaining property.

Landowners, of both large and small properties, should be invited to programs or forums that provide information on proper natural lands management techniques, including how to site development away from the most environmentally sensitive areas and how to protect select portions of a parcel before selling it. Additional program topics could include invasive plants, reforestation and forest management, agricultural lands preservation, meadow management, and the importance of riparian buffers and care of stream valleys.

The following government and nonprofit organizations have programs to assist private landowners with sound land resource management:

Delaware County Conservation District	*http://www.delcocd.org*
Natural Lands Trust	*http://www.natlands.org*
Brandywine Conservancy Environmental Management Center	*http://www.brandywineconservancy.org/preserve.html*
Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry	*http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry*

Role of the Chester Heights EAC

The Chester Heights Environmental Advisory Committee should partner with the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association to provide some of the education and outreach activities noted above. The EAC can later determine whether to share this responsibility if and when an Open Space Committee is formed.

Open Space Committee

An open space committee or board is a group of appointed volunteers that work to develop and implement a plan for open space conservation. Though any resident would be eligible to serve on the committee, owners of large open land tracts should be encouraged to volunteer for service as members, or at least attend and observe meetings. At least one member of Borough Council should serve as an official liaison to the Committee. This committee's mission should emphasize broad public participation, seeking out citizen input and involvement across the Borough. Concord and Chadds Ford Townships are nearby examples of municipalities with active open space boards/committees and could be looked to as models.

Getting the Community Involvement

Some of the best education activities involve getting citizens outside for hands-on interaction with the land. The EAC or Open Space Committee could work with residents and provide opportunities for the public to tour private properties that utilize sound land management techniques. Borough citizens could also be recruited as volunteers for organized stream clean-ups, tree plantings, and other land management projects that benefit the local environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Borough should:

8-11 Appoint a municipal open space committee from interested volunteer residents.

Technical Assistance: DCPD
PA DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

8-12 Develop and maintain a contact list of owners of large undeveloped land parcels for use in communication and outreach.

Technical Assistance: DCPD

8-13 Develop an education and outreach program on natural open space lands management. Activities could include lectures, tours and demonstrations, mailings, and hands-on activities.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR
	C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	DCCD
	CRC Watersheds Association

GREENWAYS

OBJECTIVE 8-5: TO SET ASIDE GREENWAYS TO PRESERVE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACES, INCREASE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO PARKS AND OTHER DESTINATIONS, AND CONSERVE AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO STREAM CORRIDORS.

As defined in *Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections* (2001), "…a greenway is a corridor of open space. Greenways vary in scale, from narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban, and rural areas to wider corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural, and scenic features. They can incorporate both public and private property, and can be land or water-based." The primary way that the Borough can make greenway connections is by using stream corridors and unused rights-of-way. There are several opportunities for greenway conservation and development both within Chester Heights and across boundaries with neighboring municipalities.

Conservation Greenways and Stream Valley Greenways

Privately held stream corridor properties present several opportunities for public benefit. First, the protected stream corridors under private ownership could help to provide protection from flooding, for water quality, and provide scenic vistas. Second, the segments lying within public property or where an easement can be obtained on private property may be utilized to create a green connection between parks, natural areas, community buildings, and business areas, thereby elevating the quality of life for residents.

The Chester Creek Conservation Plan, (developed by Natural Lands Trust for the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association, 2001) contains a Conservation Network Map showing linked open space alongside and branching out from stream valleys. In addition, the County's *Greenway Plan for Western Delaware County* (under development in 2011), the second phase of a countywide greenway plan, will show opportunities for local greenway conservation projects within delineated segments of the countywide greenway network. Implementing these plans will help to provide the benefits above, and also allow the communities to take part in building a regional greenways network.

Currently, the only protection provided for stream corridors is through the Chester Heights Stormwater Management Ordinance (Ord. #170, adopted 12/1/2003). Section 404A.2 of the ordinance requires the creation of a riparian buffer, maintained with native vegetation, 50 feet from the top of the bank of any perennial or intermittent stream on a development site. Since this only applies to parcels undergoing new development or redevelopment, additional levels of stream valley protection involving land preservation might be needed.

Trails

Trails can come in a variety of types and can serve various functions. Hard surfaced trails tend to be able to accommodate more users engaging in more types of activities. A paved surface should be considered for trails that have the potential to extend over a long distance across many municipalities. Other more rugged-surfaced trails (packed dirt or gravel) can stem off from the main branch. Both types can occur side by side as well, such as in a case where an equestrian path parallels a paved trail.

Trails can offer alternate routes from neighborhoods and parks to transit stations, other neighborhoods, and shopping areas. They can also offer scenic views and access to natural areas that are otherwise inaccessible from the roadsides. Trails can provide a popular place for physical activities like running, bicycling, walking, and in-line skating. The presence of trails increases the desirability of a place to live and can increase real estate values.

The lack of a sidewalk network in Chester Heights, outside of the planned residential developments, and the inaccessibility of many of the creek valleys and scenic vistas in the Borough present a need that trails could help to fulfill. Trails would improve the ability of some pedestrians to safely get around. For even more people, trails would offer a much needed recreational amenity and serve the purpose of an additional borough park.

Liability

The Pennsylvania Recreational Use of Land and Water Act (RULWA), 68 P.S. §§ 477-1 to 477-8 (2003), limits the legal liability that landowners owe to entrants upon their land, when it is made available to the public for recreation free of charge. So long as no user fee is charged, the Act provides that landowners "owe no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry or use by others for recreational purposes, or give any warning of a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity on such premises to persons entering for such purposes." The Borough should be aware, however, that substantial improvements to the land might negate RULWA immunity.

Pennsylvania's Rails-to-Trails Act, 32 P.S. § 5611 *et seq.*(1991), also set similar specific limitations on landowner liability. Liability is limited for the owner or lessee who permits trail use by the public.

Regardless of these statutes, trail managers and municipalities that possess trails should adopt risk management strategies to protect themselves in the event they are sued. These include: designing the trail for safety, warning signage and posting of regulations and emergency contact information, developing medical emergency procedures, and covering the trail under the overall insurance policy of the Borough.

(Source: Fact Sheet – *Liability and Rail Trails in Pennsylvania*, Rails to Trails Conservancy. May, 2007)

(Continued on next page)

Planning and Construction
Trail development takes place over a number of stages from start to finish. A feasibility study, either for one trail or for trails throughout the entire Borough, should be done first, with the help of a planner or landscape architect with experience in trail planning and design. The study should include research on what steps need to be taken to gain access and property rights to the trail corridor. If the study finds that the trail is feasible, the Borough should next work on getting this property access. Next, an engineering study is required to determine the exact location of the trail and plan all aspects of construction. Once the relevant permits are secured, actual site preparation and construction can occur.

Safety and Security
Experiences at existing trails have shown that the more popular a trail becomes, the higher volume of user traffic it will see, making criminal activity and security much less of an issue – perhaps even nonexistent. With the prevalence of cell phones, help can be reached relatively quickly in an emergency. Most public trails post regulations similar to those at other municipal parks. They are usually closed from dusk until dawn.

Maintenance
The different options for continued maintenance can be carefully weighed in a trail feasibility study. In an ideal situation, citizens will form their own "friends of the trail" group that sends volunteers from their own membership to clean up debris and keep the trail clear. Some trails at other locations have seen the adjacent property owners happily act as caretakers and "trail champions." It is possible that a "friends of" group can become active enough to maintain the trail themselves, but they will likely need a little help and funding from the Borough Public Works Department. Oversight and coordination on trail maintenance issues on Borough property, easements, and rights-of-way could be a responsibility for a Borough Parks and Recreation Board (Recommendation 8-5).

Greenway Opportunities in Chester Heights

Chester Creek Greenway

Chester Creek runs along the entire border between Chester Heights Borough and Middletown Township. For the most part, the stream is buffered by wooded open space on the Chester Heights side. North of the Octoraro rail right-of-way, the greenway is primarily in homeowners' association, municipal, or land trust ownership. The only exceptions are two parcels (less than one-eighth of a mile) between Darlington Road and the Darlington Tract that are protected by conservation easements form the Natural Lands Trust.

Chester Creek Rail-Trail

The Chester Creek Branch Rail right-of-way generally parallels Chester Creek on its eastern banks. There are two places where the rail right-of-way crosses over the stream and into Chester Heights, but only the southern one, just south of Baltimore Pike and connecting to the Octoraro right-of-way, is within a planned phase of the Chester Creek Rail Trail. This trail will be a multi-use (paved) trail extending south from the new Wawa rail station through Middletown and Aston Townships to Chester Township. It is a project of the Friends of the Chester Creek Branch Rail Trail and the County of Delaware. Municipalities are not required to contribute any funds towards the trail's development or maintenance.

Martin Park/Darlington Connector Trail

There is an opportunity for a Chester Creek trail that would connect Thornbury Township's Martin Park to Middletown's Rocky Run Trail or Darlington Trail located at the Township's Darlington Tract. Partnering with Thornbury Township, Middletown Township, and the Darlington Woods Homeowners' Association will be essential. Options for a stream crossing also need to be explored. Two options may be: (a) to share the road on the Darlington Road Bridge (the Darlington trail is right on the other side) or (b) to construct a separate trail pedestrian bridge.

Rocky Run Connector Trail

There is another trail opportunity on the Middletown Township side of the stream, but it is in Chester Heights's interests to encourage its development, and keep apprised of its planning. Middletown's Comprehensive Plan map for Recreation and Open Space shows a future "Rocky Run Connector Trail," which could bridge the gap between the two trails described above, allowing more people direct access a multi-municipal trail network.

Chester Creek Tributary Greenway/Cross-Borough Greenway

A narrow unnamed tributary of Chester Creek extends southwest to northeast across the middle of the Borough through private properties. It begins east of Valleybrook Road and feeds into Chester Creek. Though development does not encroach upon the floodplain, which is wooded in many portions, there are sections where farm animals graze that do not include a vegetated buffer. In fact, it is along this corridor, on either side of the creek, where the largest concentration of agricultural and woodland open space in the Borough is concentrated.

Octoraro Branch Rail Trail

Within the Chester Creek Tributary Greenway, the Octoraro rail right-of-way runs roughly parallel to the Chester Creek tributary across the center of the Borough. The greenway joins the Chester Creek Branch rail right-of-way near the new Wawa SEPTA rail station, on the east side of the Borough. The right-of-way on the other side of the Borough crosses into Concord Township to the west of Chester Heights Community Park. There is a great potential for this right-of-way to be used for a multi-use rail trail.

A map in Concord Township's Comprehensive Plan Update (2000) shows the right-of-way as a proposed trail across the Township, with the potential to link with a number of parks, open spaces, and other destinations. In order for the Octoraro Trail in Concord to link to the Chester Creek Trail, it would first need to pass through Chester Heights. The Octoraro trail also has the potential to link to a planned trail in Chadds Ford Township continuing west into Chester County, and could become the backbone of the County Trail Network in western Delaware County.

Some Borough businesses might also benefit from the trail because users might patronize those located trailside or at the trailhead or terminus. Chester Heights

residents and landowners will benefit by having a new recreational amenity enhancing their quality of life, and potentially the value of their land and homes.

The right-of-way appears to be free from encroachment and in good shape. Rails and wooden ties have been left to deteriorate since train service ended in 1971 while trees and other flora have grown up on the rail bed.

The Borough could consider widening the public access and/or conservation greenway, or taking the trail away from the right-of-way at certain places. The rail right-of-way parallels a PECO high-tension electric cable right-of-way at its western end. This route may be a preferable option for the trail in some sections. In that case, the Borough would need to negotiate an additional public access trail easement.

(The above photos show views of the Octoraro branch right-of-way in the spring of 2010)

West Branch Chester Creek Greenway and Trail

One more proposed trail that was shown on the *Chester Creek Conservation Plan*'s *Conservation Network – Southern Section* map (Figure 8-2) is one along the West Branch of Chester Creek. The greenway is currently in good condition, buffered by woodlands in both private and homeowners' association ownership. This is an area known to be used by fishermen. Aston and Concord Townships should engage in discussions concerning this trail's feasibility. If a West Branch trail is determined not feasible due to a high

number of private property owners or a lack of prominent destinations, proper management of the stream valley should still be promoted for maintenance of a conservation greenway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a number of opportunities for Chester Heights to provide additional open space resources other than active playfields. Such open space, which could be small, linear, passive, or accessed only visually, could serve as a valuable amenity in the community. Open space also need not be under public ownership to be beneficial. The following recommendations can help to maximize open space opportunities using greenways.

The Borough should:

8-14 Participate in Delaware County's greenway network planning for the western part of the County, which is part of the countywide open space, recreation, and greenway plan. The Borough should consider implementing portions of the County's open space and greenway plan within the Borough.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR
	C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	CRC Watersheds Association

8-15 Determine the feasibility of greenway and trail opportunities in Chester Heights as part of its parks, recreation and open space master plan (see Recommendation 8-1) and partner with neighboring municipalities to create connections across their municipal boundaries.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR
	C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD

8-16 Develop a feasibility study for a recreational rail-trail greenway on the unused Octoraro rail right-of-way. Explore ways to secure the right-of-way and connect the trail to parks, transit, and town center areas. At the same time, the Borough should explore ways to establish a conservation greenway around the creek that parallels the Octoraro line. The Borough should strongly consider partnering with Concord Township on this study in order to plan for a longer segment of the right-of-way and create more connections.

Funding Programs:	PA DCNR
	C2P2
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	PA DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

CHAPTER 9

LAND USE

Land use serves as the fundamental element of the Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan. The present day, *existing* land use provides a snapshot of the types and distribution of uses in the community as they currently are, while the proposed, *future* land use is a plan for the Borough's next ten and more years.

Chester Heights offers a view into a community in Delaware County that retains uses commonly associated with a rural and agrarian past while accommodating new, more modern development in locations with proximity and access to other, more developed parts of the County. Split by the Route 1 corridor, the Borough reflects two somewhat different communities functioning as one. The portions along and north of Route 1 are developed with a mix of new residential and commercial uses while the areas south of Route 1 contain a more limited variety of generally lower density uses and a more rural, tranquil setting. This approach to development has allowed Chester Heights to preserve much of its essential natural, open space character while allowing newer residential and commercial uses in proscribed areas to develop and for the Borough to accrue the associated benefits.

Some natural questions that arise when planning for Chester Heights' future land use are if and when growth pressures begin impinging on the Borough, how should they be handled? Should all of what is presently preserved remain and if not, where should accommodations be made? For those areas that are desired to remain as they are or substantially as they are, what are the best ways to ensure their preservation? And in areas where additional new development was to occur, what should be the intensity and character such new development?

GOAL: PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN THE RURAL CHARACTER AND RESOURCES OF THE BOROUGH THROUGH THE PRESERVATION OF SIGNIFICANT REMAINING UNDEVELOPED RURAL LANDS.

This chapter reviews the existing land use of the Borough in terms of the types and distribution of its various uses. An analysis assesses how much new growth could occur if certain locations in the Borough were allowed to fully develop or redevelop under their current zoning. The Borough's geographic location in the County and with respect to its municipal neighbors is reviewed to determine whether it might be in the path of future growth and development. A future land use plan for the Borough can then be provided that addresses the concerns and desires of the comprehensive plan committee, Borough residents and other relevant parties and stakeholders. As part of the future land use plan a list of '"critical" parcels or sites whose future development could have a significant impact on the character of the Borough will be provided. The Borough's zoning ordinance is also commented upon in respect to possible changes to address the goals of

the land use plan. Finally, the relationships between uses in the Borough and adjacent uses in bordering municipalities are then examined to assess their compatibility.

EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land uses within Chester Heights help to paint the picture of the layout and character of the community. As noted above, the Borough contains a large amount of preserved open space and natural lands that cover a substantial portion of the municipality. A thorough understanding of present use distribution and a vision for the future can be used to determine areas of preservation and those for future development.

Plan Area Distribution

The Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD) utilized several methods in determining the existing land use distribution within the plan area. First, an overview of 2005 aerial and parcel data was conducted for a preliminary distribution of land uses.[1] From this preliminary map, copies were distributed to the Comprehensive Plan Task Force for review and comment. Finally, through a survey of areas in question, an Existing Land Use Map and the following distribution was created as shown in Table 9-1. The table shows the land use categories present in the Borough in descending order from the greatest to the least acreage totals. Map 9-1 is the Existing Land Use Map for the Borough.

TABLE 9-1
EXISTING LAND USE DISTRIBUTION, 2010

Land Use	Plan Area Totals	
	Total Acreage	Percent
Single-family detached	561.7	41.6
Open space	266.8	19.8
Agricultural	176.7	13.1
Multi-family	81.7	6.1
Institutional	66.2	4.9
Commercial	65.3	4.8
Single-family attached	61.2	4.5
Heavy commercial	21.9	1.6
Recreation	15.3	1.1
Vacant	12.8	0.9
Roads/alleyways	11.7	0.9
Railroad/parking/utility	4.8	0.4
Mixed use	3.4	0.3
Single-family semi-detached	0.5	0.0
TOTAL	**1,349.9**	**100.0**

Source: Delaware County Board of Assessment parcel data and DCPD field surveys, 2010

[1] Aerials flown by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission at five year intervals at 200 feet, parcel data created by the Delaware County Board of Assessment.

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MAP 9-1 - EXISTING LAND USE
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The following is a summary, and in some cases aggregation of the land use categories from Table 9-1.

Residential: 705.1 acres or 52.2 percent of Borough land area

Residential comprises the largest land use classification in the Borough at 705.1 acres and 52.2 percent of all uses. It is divided into four categories based on the number of units in each type as listed below:

a.	Single-family detached (Single)	-	One family per unit/parcel
b.	Single-family semi-detached[2]	-	One family per unit/parcel; two units per structure
c.	Single-family attached (Townhouse)	-	One family per unit/parcel; three plus units connected by vertical party walls
d.	Multi-family	-	Various apartment configurations designed with common tenant features and containing three or more dwelling units

By a wide margin the predominant residential land use is single-family detached dwellings comprising approximately 561.7 acres, almost 80 percent of all residential uses. They are also the single largest use category in the Borough at 41.6 percent of the municipal land area. Apartments comprise the second largest residential use at 81.7 acres, which is 11.6 percent of all residential uses while single-family attached dwellings comprise 61.2 acres or 8.7 percent of residential uses. There are very few semi-detached dwellings in the Borough comprising approximately 0.5 acres within the plan area.

Open Space: 266.8 acres or 19.8 percent of Borough land area

The open space use designation includes public and private areas of scenic and undeveloped land and includes both wooded and forested areas as well as meadows, clearings and riparian areas along streams and creeks. In some cases these areas have been preserved as open space through restrictive easements or covenants and in other cases they are simply undeveloped. These uses comprise 266.8 acres or 19.8 percent of the Borough's land area. They are second largest use category behind residential and are a critical element that helps to create the Borough's rural character and feel.

Agricultural 176.7 acres or 13.1 percent of Borough land area

Agricultural uses are open space areas where there are still limited agricultural functions being conducted such as stabling of horses, baling of hay, and raising of livestock. Agricultural uses can be found predominately along Wawa Road in the central portion of the Borough and are the third largest land use in the Borough. Similar to open space they also are an important component in helping to preserve the Borough's rural character.

Commercial/Heavy Commercial: 87.2 acres or 6.5 percent of Borough land area

Commercial uses include retail and service establishments while heavy commercial uses also include higher impact commercial businesses such as auto repair and servicing shops and light manufacturing and assembly facilities. Commercial uses overall are the fourth largest use in the Borough and provide an important source of local revenue.

[2] This category includes duplexes that contain one family per unit and two units per parcel/structure.

Institutional: 66.2 acres or 4.9 percent of Borough land area
Institutional uses consist of all municipally owned or affiliated facilities, place of worship and associated facilities, both public and private schools, residential care facilities, and nonprofit historic or cultural facilities. Institutional uses are the fifth largest land use category and are scattered throughout various locations in the Borough. Due to the size of the some of the institutional lands they contribute to some degree to the natural, open space character of the Borough.

Recreation 15.3 acres or 1.1 percent of Borough land area
Recreational uses include parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and indoor sporting and recreational spaces and they comprise a relatively small portion of the Borough's land. The main facility is the community park on Valleybrook Road just north of the Smithbridge Road intersection. Other facilities include a private tennis court near the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Valleybrook and Wawa Roads and a private swimming pool further east along Wawa Road.

Vacant: 12.8 acres or 0.9 percent of Borough land area
The vacant land use category contains lands that are currently undeveloped or contain 'vacant' or unoccupied structures. Land that is specifically set aside or planned to be set aside for open space preservation is not considered vacant land. There are very few vacant parcels of land remaining in the Borough and most new development would need to occur as redevelopment of existing low-density tracts.

Roads: 11.7 acres or 0.9 percent of Borough land area
This land use category includes all paved roads within Chester Heights. These roads may be federally, state, or locally owned and pass through any portion of the Borough.

Railroad/parking/utility: 4.8 acres or 0.4 percent of Borough land area
This designation includes active rail lines and related facilities; public and private freestanding surface parking lots; and freestanding, above-ground utilities such as electrical and gas storage and transmission substations, telecommunications and data transfer facilities and water and sewerage treatment plants and related infrastructure. It does not include public or private off-street parking areas or lots as an accessory use to other principal uses, or abandoned rail lines.

Mixed-use: 3.4 acres or 0.3 percent of the total plan area
Mixed-uses generally include a combination of commercial or office along with a residential component, although a mixture of retail, commercial service, office, and public uses without a residential component can also be classified as a mixed-use. Mixed uses are only found in a few of the two story buildings at or in the vicinity of the Smithbridge and Valleybrook Roads intersection and comprise the smallest use category in the Borough.

FUTURE LAND USE

OBJECTIVE 9-1: DESIGNATE KEY OPEN SPACE PARCELS FOR PRESERVATION AS WELL AS THOSE AREAS OF THE BOROUGH APPROPRIATE FOR SOME DEGREE OF ADDITIONAL, NEW DEVELOPMENT

Future land use is a projection and recommendation for the future use of land within a municipality, other governmental corporation or a defined geographic area. Future land use establishes a set of land use classifications that builds upon the established categories of existing land uses but also extends, and in some cases establishes new use categories to address changing conditions and future needs. The future land use map is a visual representation of a community's future land use pattern and becomes the land use "plan" for that community. It is a fundamental component of the comprehensive plan itself, and is intended to provide a general framework for municipal governance and decision making concerning land use and community development. Map 9-2 is the Future Land Use Map for the Borough.

The future land use map (FLUM) itself is not a zoning map but rather a comprehensive planning tool designed to assist a municipality in their planning and zoning. Similar to this plan as a whole it is advisory in nature, not mandatory. Upon adoption of this plan, certain decisions and actions of the Borough Council relating to planning and land use as discussed later in Chapter 10, Plan Implementation will require a review by the Borough Planning Commission, including a determination as to their consistency with this Plan. However, decisions and proposed actions determined to be inconsistent with the plan can still be carried out by the municipal legislative body and can not be subject to a challenge or appeal or held invalid due to this lack of consistency.

The FLUM and accompanying proposals indicate the type of land uses determined to be the most appropriate for the various parts of a municipality. These recommendations are based on several factors that include the existing land use patterns and intensity of use, environmental constraints such as topography, proximity to floodplains, and soil composition, traffic volumes and site accessibility, the existing zoning and other geographic factors. The map and recommendations were also influenced by the existing level of development, or "build-out" of the Borough and the projected future growth and potential demand for various uses.

Projected Growth and Future Demand

Pennsylvania planning law and the courts require that local governments provide and make reasonable accommodations for all of the various types of residential, commercial, and other land uses, including all of the basic forms and types of housing. This requirement can be ameliorated when a group of municipalities plan together regionally in which case not every participating municipality has to provide for every land use as long as it is allowed somewhere and at adequate levels within the multi-municipal planning area. This is not presently the case with Chester Heights as this plan is a single, municipal comprehensive document.

Overall, Chester Heights is mostly built out in that there are very few fully vacant, undeveloped parcels, other than those with specific environmental constraints, restrictive development easements or other limitations. *However a number of parcels, including some rather large and centrally located, while having limited low-density development are not 'built-out' to their allowable density under the current zoning.* If these and other 'under-utilized' sites were developed to their fullest capacity, they could significantly alter the appearance and character of the Borough. For example, if a parcel greater than twenty acres that presently contains a single residential or agricultural structure were redeveloped under an allowable density of one dwelling unit per acre, this primarily open space parcel could be converted to a low density residential subdivision. To preserve significant swaths of natural, open space the Borough will need to focus their protection efforts on these specific types of parcels that are not built-out to their presently zoned site capacity.

Population forecasts have a particular importance in terms of future land use as they relate to a municipality's accommodation of its "fair share" of regional housing growth. As determined by the Pennsylvania State Courts a key consideration is whether a municipality is making available its fair share of developable land to accommodate all the basic *types* of housing. In the case of a legal challenge to a zoning ordinance - on the grounds that a fair share of projected housing growth is not being accommodated - if a municipality is not fully built out, the court determines that it is in the path of growth and is a logical place for new development, than that zoning ordinance or the challenged provisions can be invalidated. Population projections for the Borough and surrounding municipalities are shown in Table 9-2.

TABLE 9-2
MUNICIPAL POPULATION AND FORECASTS TO 2040 -
CHESTER HEIGHTS AND SURROUNDING AREA

Municipality	2010 Population	2020 Forecast	2030 Forecast	2040 Forecast
Chester Heights	2,531	2,540	2,573	2,582
Aston	16,592	16,663	16,910	16,980
Middletown	15,807	15,925	16,334	16,452
Concord	17,231	17,635	19,041	19,445
Thornbury	8,028	8,173	8,680	8,825

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2011

The data forecast a very slow, almost flat level of population growth in Chester Heights with the population projected to increase by 51 residents from 2010 to 2040. Aston Township is forecast for a somewhat higher increase of 388, while Middletown and Thornbury are forecast for even greater increases of 645 and 797 new residents respectively. Concord, one of the fastest growing townships in the state is forecast for a substantial increase of 2,214 new residents by 2040.

In the case of Chester Heights, as noted above it is not completely built-out to allowable densities under its current zoning. If the Borough's zoning ordinance were ever subject to

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MAP 9-2 - FUTURE LAND USE
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a legal challenge in relation to the amount or type of new residential development allowed, it is possible a court might conduct a "path of growth" analysis and consider whether it was a logical place for new growth and development. The population forecasts for the surrounding area, as well as recent and proposed development in Concord and Middletown Townships suggest that the Borough is at least somewhat in the path of future development. While little growth is projected for the Borough the surrounding area as a whole is projected to experience a not insignificant influx of new residents. However, it could be argued that the Borough is not necessarily a *logical* place to accommodate new development, particularly given its very small size relative to its neighboring townships and some of the environmental and legal constraints to new development on specific parcels as discussed in Chapters 4 and 8 and shown on Maps 4-1, 4-2 and 8-1 of this plan.

Given the desire to preserve some of the large rural tracts remaining in the Borough it would be prudent to allow an increase in the density and types of residential development in selected locations in the Boroughs to balance out any restrictions on new development on "underutilized" sites. The future land use plan and maps that follow do this by recommending a Village designation at the intersection of Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads; designating the northwest corner of the Borough as combined commercial-high density residential node; and "up-zoning" specified residential areas to incrementally increase the allowable densities.

Future Land Use Categories

The following categories are conceptual groupings displayed on the FLUM and should provide the basis for any future zoning ordinance amendments or updates enacted after the completion of this plan. While the various future use designations shown on the FLUM adhere to particular parcel boundaries they are intended to show the *general* location of proposed future uses. A proposed future use would not necessarily have to be strictly within the boundaries of a future use category shown on the FLUM if it was located in the general vicinity of such a category and was compatible with a proposed site in terms of a number of the criteria noted above. Because the FLUM is based on studies of variety of objective factors it provides justification for a zoning map that should be generally consistent with the FLUM. A zoning map that is based on a well-conceived future land use map has a much stronger legal standing and validity than one not based on a comprehensive study.

Residential Uses

1. **Low-density residential**
   This grouping is comprised of single-family detached dwellings at a density of less than one (1) unit per acre.

   This category is proposed for areas where this type of housing density is primarily found - in the center of the Borough between Route 1, Valleybrook Road, Chester Creek and the Rolling Heights Estates, and sections of the

Borough north of Route 1 and north of Ivy Mills Road to the west of Valleybrook Road.

2. **Medium-density residential**
This grouping is comprised of single-family detached dwellings at a density of one to two units per acre.

The main areas proposed for this category are areas where the existing residential densities are close to or less than one dwelling unit per acre: in the southern end of the Borough at or below the intersection of Valleybrook and Llewellyn Roads, the Rolling Heights Estates development and south of Ivy Mill Road to the west of Valleybrook Road.

3. **High-density residential**
This grouping is comprised of housing for multi-family, attached and semi-detached dwellings at a density of greater than four units per acre.

This classification is proposed for the current locations of high-density residential housing in the Borough – the Village of Valleybrook, Coventry Crossings, the Hollow at Fox Valley and Darlington Woods. No new areas of high-density housing are being proposed.

Nonresidential Uses

1. **Commercial-Office**
This grouping comprises lower-impact retail, service and office uses that are located along major roads and designed to serve residents of the Borough as well as those of surrounding areas. Given their location, these uses would generally be oriented to automobile traffic and provide on-site parking. While typical uses can be stand alone establishments such as convenience stores, restaurants and general merchandise retailers, planned commercial and office developments are also included in this grouping. While not formally a mixed-use category, apartments or other high-density dwellings in the vicinity of or adjacent to these uses would be compatible.

The primary areas proposed for these uses are along Route 1 at the western edge of the Borough and on the southern side of Route 1 at the current location of the Wawa Corporation business campus.

2. **Village Center**
This is a grouping for a small, low-impact mixed use district located near the center or crossroads of a local area. It comprises small retail and commercial service establishments, residential uses in the form of townhouses and apartments on the upper stories above commercial uses, offices, municipal or other governmental facilities, and public recreational and civic uses such as parks, trails and community centers.

This use category is proposed for the intersection and surrounding vicinity of Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads.

3. **Heavy Commercial – Light Industrial**

This category includes larger, higher impact commercial uses such as auto repair shops, equipment rental and leasing establishments, light industrial, assembly, and packaging facilities, and wholesale, warehousing and storage functions. Establishments in this use category can have larger parking requirements and receive more frequent and larger freight deliveries than uses in the Commercial-office category.

This use category is limited to the southeast corner of the Borough where the Chester Creek intersects with Lenni Road.

4. **Institutional**

This category includes individual community facilities such as municipal facilities, places of worship, schools, residential care and health care facilities, and cultural and historic facilities.

This use category is designated for areas with existing institutional uses such as the St. Thomas Church, the Friends Camp Meeting site and the two group homes/schools located in the Borough.

5. **Open Space/Agricultural**

This classification is a combination of the two separate "existing use" categories Open Space and Agricultural. It is used to designate both existing open space or agricultural uses that are mostly restricted in some manner from future development or for open space/agricultural protection focus areas that are not currently protected and which the Borough desires to preserve into the future.

The three main areas for this designation are in the center of the Borough in the area roughly bounded by Wawa Road, the Camp Meeting site and Wilson Circle or the area roughly parallel to the latter; the southwester corner of the Borough on portions of both sides of Valleybrook Road south of Llewellyn Road; and north of Route 1 along Darlington Road, Chester Creek and the municipal boundary with Middletown Township. The first two are the areas that presently contain little or no restrictions on future land development.

6. **Parks and Recreation**

This classification encompasses active and passive recreational uses such as parks, athletic fields, playgrounds and tot-lots, walking, biking and hiking trails, and indoor sporting and recreational facilities.

This category is mostly designated for areas where existing facilities are currently located such as the community park and the tennis courts further up

Valleybrook Road, however it is also proposed for along the former Octoraro rail line bed in the form of a multi-use recreational trail.

7. **Infrastructure**
   This category is similar to the Railroad/parking/utility classification from existing land use. It includes active rail lines and related facilities, surface parking lots as stand alone uses, water and sewer treatment facilities, power generation and data transfer and switching stations.

   This category is generally proposed for areas where these uses presently exist.

8. **Roads**
   This category encompasses all of the present paved roadways within the Borough from local streets, and collector and arterial roads owned by either the Borough or the State.

   These areas are shown in grey on the FLUM.

Critical Parcels

Although the FLUM shows the most appropriate future land uses for all properties in the plan area, there are certain parcels whose current status, location, size or other characteristics make their future development particularly important to the Borough. Given the Borough's overall predominant character of a rural and pastoral locale and its relatively small size, it is important to identify these parcels whose development or redevelopment could potentially have a strong impact in their immediate vicinity and beyond.

The parcels listed in Table 9-3 are those that are considered "critical" to the future development of the Borough as determined by the plan task force and they provide reinforcement for the future land use classifications detailed above and shown on the FLUM. While it may not be all inclusive it does include those parcels the task force felt essential to include on such a list.

TABLE 9-3
CRITICAL PARCELS, 2010

Parcel	Location	Acres	Present Use	Potential Use
Camp Meeting site	Camp Meeting Avenue	30.5	Recreation/Institutional	Same
Wood family tracts	Borough Center south of Wawa Road	178.2	Agricultural/Open Space	Same
Chester Heights village center	Smithbridge and Valleybrook Roads	63.4	Commercial	Mixed-use
Powell family tracts	Valleybrook Road	24.7	Commercial	Residential – clustered

Source: Comprehensive plan task force and DCPD, 2010

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE

The Borough Task Force and residents have identified the preservation of Chester Heights's remaining rural, open space character as a central component of this comprehensive plan. The preservation of key open space parcels might be achieved through a number of different approaches as discussed in Chapter 8 – Parks, Recreation and Open Space. However, by excluding future development on significant, potentially developable parcels the Borough will need to consider how this might affect its accommodation of projected area-wide development.

From a legal perspective, a defensible approach to down-zoning significant properties from future development, or restricting any new development on them altogether would be to allow a complimentary increase in new locations for development or an increase in allowable densities in areas where development is already permitted. Although projected growth in the Borough is low, the population for the surrounding area as a whole is projected to increase and Chester Heights might be reasonably expected to accommodate a proportionate share of that growth. This plan for land use does this through the designation of a new village center and commercial-high density residential node on Route 1 west of Valleybrook Road. These use designations would allow medium to high density residential development in areas where it is not presently permitted under the zoning ordinance.

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

9-1 Focus on preserving those parcels classified as Open Space/Agricultural on the FLUM that are not presently protected from new development due to environmental, legal or other constraints or restrictions. Maps 4-1, 4-2 and 8-1 from Chapters 4 and 8 respectively, indicate which of the parcels designated on the FLUM as Open Space/Agricultural presently have some form of protection or restriction against future development and those that do not.

Funding Programs:	Brandywine Conservancy
	NLT
	DCNR Park and Open Space planning grants
	PECO Green Region grants
	Borough funds
Technical Assistance:	DCPD
	Brandywine Conservancy
	NLT

9-2 Allow the area around the Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads intersection to develop as a small mixed-use village center that could include commercial establishments, institutional and civic facilities and residential uses in the form of townhomes and apartment units above ground-floor commercial establishments.

Funding Programs: DCED Conservation/Sound Land Use planning grants
DCED Local Municipal Resources and Development program
CDBG
Technical Assistance: DCPD

9-3 Allow the continued development along the Route 1 corridor west of Valleybrook Road into a higher density mixed-use, commercial-transit node that connects more effectively with the neighboring portion of Concord Township as well as the immediate surrounding areas in the Borough.

Technical Assistance: DCPD

9-4 Increase and diversify public recreational amenities in the Borough to take advantage of Chester Heights' natural scenic assets. Specifically, expand and upgrade the community park at Valleybrook Road and begin to assess the feasibility of a new multi-use train through the Borough along the right-of-way of the former Octoraro rail line.

Funding Programs: DCNR Community Conservation Partnership grants (C2P2)
DCNR Park and Open Space planning grants
DCNR Rails to Trails feasibility and special purpose grants
DCNR Recreational Trails grants program
Boroughl funds
Technical Assistance: DCPD

ZONING AND FUTURE LAND USE

The Borough's zoning ordinance should be amended to implement some of the changes that are proposed as part of the land use plan. The Borough currently has ten zoning districts and one overlay district which are shown below in Table 9-4.

The R-1-1/2, R-1 and R-3/4 are single-family detached residential districts whose minimum lot area requirements are 1½, 1¾ of an acre per dwelling unit. The RA district allows apartments in addition to the uses in the other residential districts while the MHP is a mobile home district. The PRD and PRC are planned residential districts allowing a mix of residential types developed as a unified whole.

The B district is the base business district for the Borough allowing traditional retail and service establishments while the PLO is a specialized office and research district. The LI is a limited industrial district of comprised or low impact industrial uses.

TABLE 9-4
ZONING DISTRICTS, 2010

District	Use	Type
R-1 1/2	Residential	Single-family detached
R-1	Residential	Single-family detached
R-3/4	Residential	Single-family detached
MHP	Residential	Mobile homes
RA	Residential	Apartments
PRD	Planned residential	Mix of types
PRC	Planned retirement	Age restricted
B	Business	Retail and service
PLO	Planned laboratory office	Office/research lab
LI	Limited industrial	Low-impact/light industrial
FP	Floodplain overlay	Special

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ZONING AND FUTURE LAND USE

Based on the existing zoning below and the expressed desires of the task force and residents the following recommendations regarding zoning are proposed:

THE BOROUGH SHOULD:

9-5 Rezone the areas in the center of the Borough west of Valleybrook Road, south of the former Octoraro rail line and north of Llewellyn Road and the Rolling Heights Estates from R-1 to R-1-1/2. This would ensure that if new development were to occur on parcels not currently protected from such, it would at least be at somewhat lower density.

9-6 Consider rezoning those areas south of Ivy Mills Road that are presently zoned R-1-1/2 and the area between Valleybrook and Llewellyn Roads presently zoned R-1 to the presently unused R-3/4 district.

9-7 Create a new mixed-use village center zoning district at and around the Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads intersection that would enable residential and civic uses at this crossroads in addition to commercial uses.

9-8 Allow townhomes and apartments, possibly as a conditional use, in the B-Business district along Route 1 west of Valleybrook Road or rezone.

9-9 Consider expanding the extent of the PLO-Planned Laboratory Office district further east towards the Route 1 and Wawa Road intersection.

9-10 Ensure that the zoning of the critical parcels identified in Table 9-3 adequately reflects their desired future use.

Funding and technical assistance for implementing these recommendations can be provided by DPCD.

REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Chester Heights shares common boundaries with four other municipalities: Middletown, Aston, Concord and Thornbury Townships. Below are capsule summaries of the existing and proposed future land uses that are found in the comprehensive plans for each of these contiguous municipalities and a comment on the compatibility of these uses with the adjacent existing and proposed future uses in Chester Heights as indicated in this plan.

Concord Township - Comprehensive Plan (2000 and 2004 amendment)

Concord Township borders the length of Chester Heights' western boundary with Route 1 traversing both municipalities. The neighboring uses in the township are quite compatible with those adjacent areas of the Borough.

Along the Route 1 corridor in Concord is a mix of commercial retail and service establishments with apartment developments in the rear. These uses connect nicely to the commercial uses along Route 1 in the Borough and the multi-family developments behind them. South of the Route 1 corridor uses in the township transition to low-density single-family detached dwellings and open space and vacant parcels. These uses generally mirror those in the Borough south of the Route 1 corridor and the compatibility is quite high. There are some single-family homes in the township opposite the Coventry Crossing development however the respective developments are well setback from each other and the single-family homes are buffered by a natural tree line.

North of Route 1 corridor in the township, are the grounds of the Edgewood Memorial Park and some adjacent open space which border the Borough. Uses in the Borough on the opposite of Stoney Bank Road are some open, horse grazing fields and a relatively new mini storage facility. The latter does not impinge on the space of the cemetery.

The future land use plan for the township generally calls for a continuation of the existing uses in the areas bordering Chester Heights so they should remain compatible for the foreseeable future. The Concord land use plan does designate the Route Corridor in the township as a mixed-use development node which would be compatible with the Borough allowing higher density residential in on parcels fronting Route 1.

Middletown Township - Comprehensive Plan (2001)

Middletown runs the length of Chester Heights' eastern boundary with both municipalities separated by the Chester Creek. The Township and Borough are also bisected by Route 1, Baltimore Pike.

North of Route 1 along the border with Chester Heights the township's land use is comprised primarily of public and quasi-public recreational and open space and trails including the Darlington tracts, as noted in Chapter 8, Parks and Open Space. There is one large residential parcel containing a single-family detached home. These uses are

opposite the deed restricted open space and conservation easement parcels of the Darlington Woods Homeowners Association and the Natural Land Trust in the Borough. The uses north of Route 1 in Middletown and the Borough are quite compatible. This recommends in the Parks and Open Space chapter, that the Borough work with Middletown to connect to some of these open space and trail features in the Township.

South of Route 1 uses in the Township are also presently quite compatible with neighboring uses in the Borough. The Borough contains almost exclusively large, single-family detached residential uses along the Chester Creek with the exception being the Westlake Plastics facility at the southeast corner where Lenni Road meets the Creek. Neighboring uses in Middletown are single-family detached dwellings, vacant undeveloped land and one professional office use which is located on a large parcel most of which is undeveloped and wooded.

The Township's 2001 comprehensive plan calls for future land uses along the Creek and boundary with the Borough to be low to medium intensity development – the use types are not specified. However, most recently the Township is considering a zoning amendment in the form of an overlay that would allow the development of a new, high density town center on the former Franklin Mint site along Baltimore Pike. Additionally SEPTA plans to restore rail service to a newly opened Wawa train station that would be located along the Creek at the boundary of the Borough and the Township just past the proposed Franklin Mint project. While low to medium density development along adjacent to the Borough's eastern boundary could be mitigated, a development of the magnitude of the Franklin Mint project would not generally be compatible with the current character and state of development in Chester Heights.

While immediate visual and auditory impact from the development could be mitigated by the separation afforded the Borough and Township by the Creek, a generally sloping and wooded topography along the shared boundary and the buffering of the potential project would have along its western flank, there would be a substantial increase in the resident and daytime populations, right on the border with the Borough. This would lead to more traffic along Route 1 and possibly development pressure spilling over into Chester Heights. Although the proposed Franklin Mint development is not certain to be approved and would take many years to reach full build-out, the most prudent steps for the Borough would be to take a pro-active approach in preserving existing open spaces and densities in the eastern end of the Borough that would most likely be affected if the development were to occur.

Aston Township – Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan (2005)

Aston Township borders Chester Heights along its southern boundary from Valleybrook Road to the Chester Creek in Lenni. Bodley Road runs along the boundary west of Birney Highway to Valleybrook Road and Lenni Road runs from Llewellyn Road to the Chester Creek east of Birney Highway.

East of the Birney Highway, the uses in Aston bordering the Borough are almost all single-family detached residences. They are opposite primarily single-family detached

residences and open spaces in the Borough and are quite compatible. The only other type of use along this boundary is a light industrial cluster opposite the Westlake Plastics facility on the Borough side. West of the Birney Highway bordering the Borough is the Rolling Hills Industrial Park. The buildings that make up the complex are opposite the Village at Valleybrook development and are not an ideal compatible use across Bodley Road. However most of the units in the Village front an interior road which provides some setback and buffering from Bodley Road. The few units that are directly along Bodley are rear facing. Additionally the front parcels in the industrial park contain buildings that are generally setback at least one hundred feet from Bodley Road. The remainder of Bodley Road running in the township down to Valleybrook contains open space and single-family detached houses which match similar uses across from them in the Borough.

The future uses proposed for the township along the border with the Borough are proposed to remain as they presently are so they should generally be compatible into the foreseeable future.

Thornbury Township - Comprehensive Plan (2004)

Thornbury contains the smallest contiguous land area with Chester Heights, bordering it for approximately one-half mile to the northwest. The existing uses along the shared boundary with Chester Heights are generally compatible with adjacent uses in the Borough.

In the township, the primary bordering uses are single-family detached residential dwellings and public and private recreational lands. The latter include Martin Park which is directly opposite the deed restricted open space and forested lands of the Darlington Woods Home Ownership Association. These uses are quite compatible and as noted in the Parks and Open Space Chapter the Borough should consider working with Thornbury and Middletown to develop a connector path to the Park through the homeownership open space or along the Chester Creek.

The single-family detached homes in Thornbury are opposite the townhouse and apartment community of Darlington Woods. Although the densities of the adjacent uses are in different ranges, the single-family detached uses in Thornbury are on large, wooded lots that provide a reasonable degree of distance and buffering from the planned community.

The future land use plan for the township calls for a continuation of the existing uses along its border with Chester Heights and the present compatibility of uses should remain for the foreseeable future.

CHAPTER 10

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This comprehensive plan is a policy document intended to guide the ongoing planning and development of Chester Heights Borough. It outlines the Borough vision for its future through a series of goals, objectives, and recommendations. The comprehensive plan is the foundation for most other plans, programs, ordinances and regulations enacted by governing bodies. In fact, the Pennsylvania state planning code requires that updated or amended zoning ordinances be generally consistent with adopted comprehensive plans. Given the purpose and scope of this plan, it should be consulted by Borough officials when confronted with new problems, issues and decisions.

The adoption of this plan will require the Borough Planning Commission to review and comment on certain proposed planning and development actions of the Borough Council. The particular proposed planning and development actions that will be subject to Planning Commission review are:

- The construction or alteration of any street, public ground, pier head or watercourse;
- The development, removal or sale of any public structure;
- The adoption, repeal or amendment of a zoning ordinance or subdivision ordinance, official map or capital improvements program; and
- The construction, extension or abandonment of a water or sewer line or sewerage treatment plant.

Recommendation for or against the above proposed actions will be required by the Planning Commission, which shall include a specific statement as to the proposed action's consistency with the newly adopted plan. However, the Commissions' recommendations will not be legally binding, as those proposed actions that are not consistent with the plan cannot be invalidated or be subject to a legal challenge or appeal based on this inconsistency.

Three critical components for the successful attainment of the objectives and recommendations of this plan are:

1. Utilization of principal implementation tools such as the zoning ordinance, capital improvements program, and the official map and the various program funding streams available for municipal planning and development from Delaware County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the federal government, nonprofit organizations and private sources such as banks and financial institutions and corporate and institutional entities;

2. Selection and designation of a Plan Implementation task force responsible for overseeing and guiding implementation activities;

3. Regular consultation and use of the plan by the Chester Heights Borough Council and other planning and management boards, commissions and staff.

PRINCIPAL IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Discussed below are some of the basic tools and documents that can be used to implement comprehensive plans.

Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance is the principal tool for implementing the comprehensive plan and for regulating the use of land. As noted in Chapter 9, Land Use, the zoning ordinance of Chester Heights Borough would benefit from selected changes and amendments to update and refine the types of uses allowed in particular locations. The amendments to the ordinances should be prepared in accordance with this plan as required by the State planning code.

One of the principal advantages of updating or amending a zoning ordinance based on a comprehensive plan is that its districts and provisions will be based on a carefully devised map showing the proposed future uses of land, as opposed to being prepared in a haphazard fashion and will thus likely require fewer additional amendments and also be legally more defensible if ever challenged.

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

A subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) used in concert with the zoning ordinance ensures that developments are accomplished in a manner that allows for the maximum protection of the environment, adjacent uses, and the public. The SALDO is applicable when dividing land into two or more parcels, developing property, and laying out streets and utilities. The ordinance also applies in cases of improvements to land with nonresidential buildings or the division of land or space among two or more prospective occupants. The SALDO also controls development features such as street widths, grades and curves, driveways, sight distances, lot design, sewage disposal, storm drainage, and recreational areas for new developments or additions or revisions to existing development.

Chester Heights currently utilizes its own SALDO which was adopted in 1997. The ordinance is relatively up to date and still effectively regulates new development in the Borough. However, the County is approaching the completion of a new *model* SALDO containing provisions municipalities within the County may adopt in whole or part. The Borough should consult the new model ordinance upon its release as it may contain elements that would enhance and update the Borough's current ordinance.

Official Map

Article IV of the state planning code enables municipalities to prepare an official map. This map is intended to show the location of public lands and facilities, including:

- Public streets, watercourses and grounds, including widenings, extensions, openings or closing of such.
- Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds and open space reservations.
- Pedestrian ways and easements.
- Railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements.
- Flood control basins, floodways and floodplains, storm water management areas and drainage easements.
- Support facilities, easements and other properties.

When a municipality creates an official map showing locations of existing and future streets as well as other public areas, it reserves this land for future public use for a fixed period of time. If a landowner notifies the municipality of his intention to develop a site identified on the official map, the municipality has one year to acquire the site or the reservation of that land becomes invalid. The official map is therefore an important but seldom-used tool that can help municipalities plan the location and layout of future roads, community facilities and other public infrastructure. When combined and made consistent with a municipal SALDO, zoning ordinance, and comprehensive plan, an official map can give strength and validity to the municipal vision and goals for future growth and development.

Given Chester Heights Borough's desire to preserve and maintain its present open space character as well as develop additional new outdoor and recreational amenities, it is recommended that the Borough consider preparing an official map so that it would have an opportunity to acquire certain parcels for important public purposes. In this manner, the Borough would be taking a proactive approach in shaping its future development.

Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and capital budget are another method useful for implementing the comprehensive plan. The CIP is designed to provide a multi-year program for scheduling capital projects and purchases. These items include outlays for purchase of land, buildings, major equipment and renovations for large, relatively expensive items or projects. Examples of capital improvement projects are storm and sanitary sewers, street improvements, recreational projects, construction or substantial building renovations, and the purchase of equipment such as fire trucks and police vehicles. Items designated in the first year of a six or more year period then become the capital budget for that year.

Capital programming is a process designed to anticipate what community projects are needed over the next several years. Typically, potential desired projects are ranked according to a set of criteria that should include:

- Consistency with the comprehensive plan recommendations
- Fulfillment of an urgent or pressing need
- Extent of service provided
- Savings that will accrue as a result of the project
- Relationship with other projects in the Borough or abutting municipalities

- Economic impact
- Public support

Projects may be completed in phases and last for several years. By ranking projects, the Borough can budget money to spread their cost over a number of years or, under other circumstances, make large purchases (e.g. real estate) in advance of actual use to avoid higher costs later. In short, this process lends a large degree of flexibility to purchasing and budgeting.

Another benefit of establishing a formal CIP is that by demonstrating this planning and budgeting process, chances for obtaining federal and state funding are often improved. Funding agencies are more likely to loan or grant money to a community that documents its needs and carefully plans for future improvements.

In order to establish a capital programming process, the Borough should appoint a committee responsible for the evaluation and prioritization of capital projects. The Council, secretary, engineer and members of other local boards should work together in selecting and prioritizing projects for the capital improvements program. Many of the policies established in the comprehensive plan need to be considered in the operating budget. Facility maintenance, code enforcement, housing rehabilitation, traffic control, zoning administration, and other activities required to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the plan are funded annually in the Borough's operating budget.

Presently the Borough does not have a formal, documented capital improvements program and budget. It simply considers mid-range and long-range projects during the course of formulating the annual budget. In order to improve the planning for municipal projects and purchases and improve local financial conditions, the Borough should take the following steps:

1) Implement a formal capital improvements program and budget designed to establish a long-range program to select, schedule, prioritize, and budget major capital projects.

2) Form a committee responsible for the planning, evaluation and prioritization of capital projects. This group should include members of the Borough Council and Planning Commission, the Borough Engineer, Borough Secretary and other appropriate officials.

3) Promote multi-municipal cooperation, coordination and purchase of services, products, and joint capital improvements projects with the surrounding townships to reduce costs of facilities and services in the region.

Code Enforcement Program

Code enforcement programs and initiatives are also methods that can be used for implementing this plan. The Borough opted in to local enforcement of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) in 2006. The UCC plays an important role in assuring that development, redevelopment and rehabilitation activities employ proper materials and construction methods, do not fall below industry standards, or create safety hazards.

The Borough presently employs a code enforcement officer that is available as needed. The codes officer has the primary responsibility for inspecting all building components of new construction, additions, alterations, and the repair of structures.

Citizen Involvement

Shaping the growth of a community requires active citizen participation. The Borough should therefore place great importance on the opinions of their residents, civic groups, and business community. The development of this comprehensive plan is a step in that direction.

The U.S. system of law emphasizes private rights and it is therefore the duty of private groups and citizens to act constructively in community affairs. Participation in local government issues including the planning process must be a positive effort as criticism alone is not sufficient. Citizens offering constructive alternatives to local proposals are vital to the effective operation of municipal government. Each person who is concerned with the future of the Borough should educate themselves about the problems and challenges facing Chester Heights. The comprehensive plan should be used in this informational process. It provides background studies that contain important statistical data and makes recommendations for land use, transportation, and community facilities based on the data.

The comprehensive plan is, however, only a tool to guide development policy. For it to be successfully implemented, this plan must have the support of the residents of the Borough.

IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

Due to the complexity of coordinating planning activities and reaching consensus among various stakeholders, one of the principal conclusions of this plan is that there should be a specific group whose primary mission is the implementation of the Chester Heights comprehensive plan. Additionally, it is recommended that the task force, if possible contain some members from neighboring townships.

Once a comprehensive plan has been adopted, there is a danger that the plan will not actually be consulted and used as an integral part of shaping decisions and actions of the municipal body. So it is important that a permanent group and structure be established to coordinate, oversee and maintain the process of implementing this plan. Only in this manner will this plan continue to be a dynamic and useful document into the future and not languish after completion. Policies and recommendations of the plan need to be shepherded forward and carried out and this requires a permanent group or task force created solely for this purpose.

An implementation task force would serve as the “keeper of the plan” and its sole purpose would be to make sure that the recommendations contained in the plan were being implemented. The first job of the task force would be to thoroughly review the

comprehensive plan and its recommendations and to prioritize the various activities and programs discussed. The task force would also organize and present the selected implementation tasks to the Borough Council and other stakeholders to gain their support. The Borough Council, developers, nonprofits, and other stakeholders would then execute the implementing actions.

At the end of each year, the task force would issue a report indicating the progress being made towards implementing the various plan recommendations. The group would also be responsible for reviewing and updating the plan at regular intervals as recommended in this report. Members of the task force should include Borough officials, members of the business community, various community and civic organizations and citizen representatives.

A community assistance planner from DCPD would be available after completion of the plan to work with the Borough in facilitating the start-up and ongoing operation of an implementation task force if the Borough desired such assistance. Additionally, in its role as a facilitator, DCPD would be able to identify and apply for state funding to help pay for the implementation of specific components of the plan.

CHAPTER 11

TWO YEAR ACTION AGENDA

After the comprehensive plan is adopted, it is sometimes difficult to decide which recommendations should be implemented first. Also, since comprehensive plans usually have a time horizon of at least ten years, its recommendations may seem remote. There is often no "blueprint" or schedule for action, and therefore, action on the plan can be delayed or not carried out at all.

For these reasons, this Two-Year Action Plan identifies the specific recommendations in this document that the plan Task Force felt were the highest priority to be carried out or to have substantially in progress within the first two years after adoption of the Plan. It groups the recommendations into six categories of actions to help define and classify them.

The short-term actions identified in this section are essentially stepping stones that will lay the foundation for effective and successful long-term implementation of the comprehensive plan. The Borough should annually track its progress and develop a revised agenda every two years as implementation moves forward.

This sequence is intended only as a guideline as municipal agendas are affected by a variety of factors, including previous commitments, the actors involved, funding considerations, contractual obligations, and other issues. However, to the extent possible within these limitations, the Borough should strive to adhere to this Action Plan.

Within each category of action the recommendations are numbered according to how they appear in the plan. So for instance, the very first item listed below, number 3-1 would be the first recommendation of Chapter 3. In some instances the recommendations listed below have been abbreviated from their full text in the plan. To see the full text of recommendation see the chapter in which it appears.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

3-1 Examine the cost and feasibility of renovating and expanding the existing municipal offices or constructing a new facility.

3-3 Plan for the expansion of the fire department either through the relocation of the Borough municipal offices, or the development of a new station house.

3-6 Continue to monitor development activity, and prepare studies as necessary to evaluate the adequacy of existing sewer systems and need for additional sewage treatment and conveyance options in the future.

ZONING REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS

5-7 Consider amending the existing R-1 ½ and R-1 zoning districts to make them 'cluster' zoning districts by *requiring* the use of the zoning ordinance's lot averaging provisions for new development.

9-5 Rezone the areas in the center of the Borough west of Valleybrook Road, south of the former Octoraro rail line and north of Llewellyn Road and the Rolling Heights Estates R-1 to R-1-1/2. This would ensure that if new development were to occur on parcels not currently protected from such, it would at least be at somewhat lower density.

9-7 Create a new mixed-use village center zoning district at and around the Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads intersection that would enable residential and civic uses at this crossroads in addition to commercial uses.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

6-3 Consider the creation of an official historic preservation advisory body such as a Historical Commission. Encourage joint planning and cooperation with neighboring municipalities on preservation projects and initiatives.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS AND ENHANCEMENTS

7-2 Strongly encourage PennDOT and SEPTA to widen the roadway and provide traffic shoulders and sidewalks under the SEPTA bridge over Baltimore Pike, when it is eventually replaced.

7-4 Determine if Baltimore Pike traffic signals at Stoney Bank and Valley Brook Roads can be better coordinated and monitor traffic conditions at entrance to new SEPTA Wawa station on Baltimore Pike.

7-7 Study locations with traffic issues and install traffic calming where appropriate, including Valley Brook Road intersections with Wawa Road/Ivy Lane and Ivy Mills Road.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

8-1 Develop a parks, recreation and open space master plan for the Borough to evaluate existing facilities and programs in detail and to lay out an action plan to meet the needs and goals of the community.

8-8 Target the remaining Important Undeveloped Properties, shown on Map 8-1 as the primary areas to preserve as undeveloped open space. As the Borough develops its open space plan (Recommendation 8-1) officials should prioritize or

rank these parcels, as well as others according to their significance and the urgency for preservation.

8-11 Appoint a municipal open space committee from interested volunteer residents.

LAND USE

9-1 Focus on preserving those parcels classified as Open Space/Agricultural on the Future Land Use Map that are not presently protected from new development due to environmental, legal or other constraints or restrictions.

9-2 Allow the area around the Valleybrook and Smithbridge Roads intersection to develop as a small mixed-use village center that could include commercial establishments, institutional and civic facilities and residential uses in the form of townhomes and apartment units above ground-floor commercial establishments.

9-4 Increase and diversify public recreational amenities in the Borough to take advantage of Chester Heights's natural scenic assets. Specifically, expand and upgrade the community park at Valleybrook Road and begin to assess the feasibility of a new multi-use train through the Borough along the right-of-way of the former Octoraro rail line.

APPENDIX A

CHESTER HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PUBLIC SURVEY RANKINGS

Most Significant features of the Borough

1. Scenic landscapes/rural/pastoral character
2. Seclusion/privacy
3. Police, fire and emergency medical services
4. Historic architectural sites
5. Access to outdoor recreational opportunities
6. Road maintenance, trash and recycling services
7. Neighbors living nearby
8. Variety of housing types
8. Access to nearby urban centers
10. Proximity to retail and commercial centers
11. Township administrative services

Improvement needs in Chester Heights

1. Open Space Preservation
2. Better traffic circulation/less congestion
3. More parks/trails/recreation
4. More police protection
5. Expanded public sewer access
6. Improvements to sidewalks/streetscapes
7. Improved Borough administrative services
8. Special events/fairs
9. More affordability in housing
10. More variety in housing
11. More Borough employees
12. Dining out opportunities
13. More/better shop variety

Chester Heights Comprehensive Plan Update -
Community Questionnaire
Open Ended Question Responses

A. What do you like most about living in Chester Heights?

Responses	Tally
Rural Character	54
Accessibility to outside destinations	19
Open Spaces/Parks	12
Low Taxes	8
School District	7
Government	5
Small	5
Community Feel	3
Affordable Housing	2

B. What do you like least about living in Chester Heights?

Responses	Tally
Traffic	30
Development Pressures	10
Private Service Providers	9
Taxes	8
Lack of Public Transportation	5
Lack of Sidewalks	2
Accessibility to outside destinations	2
Mailing address different from Chester Heights	2
Lack of Community Engagement	2
Lack of Parks	1
Lack of Ordinance Enforcement	1
Unnecessary Public Works Projects	1

C. What do you think might be the most significant problem facing the Borough in the next 5 to 10 years?

Responses	Tally
Continued Development Pressures	36
Traffic	32
Loss of Open Space/Habitat	19
Public Sewer Access	15
Need for more services	11
Crime	4
Encouraging Community Based Businesses	2
Tax Increases	1
Lack of ordinance enforcement	1

APPENDIX A

CHESTER HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE (2009-2010)
COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Street Address

Number of people in your household _____

How long have you been a Chester Heights resident _____

Please rank the importance of the following on a scale of one to five with 1 being '*not important*', 5 being '*very important*' and 2, 3 or 4 being lesser or greater degrees along that scale.

1) Significant Features of Chester Heights Borough
(Indicate what you like most about Chester Heights or what attracted you to the Borough)

Importance

Community Facilities and Services
a). Police, fire and emergency medical services _____
b). Road maintenance and trash and recycling services _____
c). Parks, playgrounds or programmed recreational activities _____
d). Township administrative services _____

Community Features
a). Neighbors nearby _____
b). Seclusion/privacy _____
c). Variety of housing types _____
d). Proximity to retail/commercial services _____
f). Access to nearby urban centers _____

Natural/cultural features
a). Scenic landscapes/rural-pastoral character _____
b). Historic architecture/sites _____
c). Access to outdoor recreational opportunities _____

2) Improvement Needs in Chester Heights Borough
(*Indicate what might be done to improve the quality of life in the Borough)*

Better traffic circulation/less congestion _____

Open Space Preservation _____

Additional Housing Opportunities
a). Affordability _____
b). Variety of types _____

Business District / Commercial Services
a). More/better variety of shops _____
b). More opportunities for dining out _____

CHESTER HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE (2009-2010)
COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Street Address _____

c). Improvements to sidewalks and other streetscape elements _____

d). More employers in the Borough _____

e). Special events/fairs _____

More public health safety and recreation services

a). More police protection _____

b). Improved/additional township administrative services _____

c). More parks/trails/recreational opportunities _____

d). Expanded access to public sewer services _____

Additional Questions

A. What do you like most about living in Chester Heights

B. What do you like least about living in Chester Heights

C. What do you think might be the most significant problem facing the Borough in next five to ten years?

APPENDIX B

BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS

RECREATION PLAN

This element of the Comprehensive Master Plan was prepared in accordance with the Municipality Planning Code Sect. 503 requiring municipalities to maintain a Recreation Plan. The Plan examines recreational considerations for residents of the Borough of Chester Heights, Pennsylvania. Admittedly, the Borough of Chester Heights overall low population density and existence of close regional, sub-regional, community and neighborhood recreational facilities has limited Borough involvement related to recreation opportunities. Borough residents avail themselves of many local, county and state recreational services available by State and Municipalities in western Delaware County and beyond. The amount of land designated for these purposes is based upon the population and needs of the community. The Borough continues to monitor recreational opportunities and assess the need for residents on a periodic basis and re-evaluate Borough involvement.

The Borough of Chester Heights was incorporated on September 21, 1945 and is approximately 2.09 square miles. According to the 2000 census, there were 2,481 residents. The 2010 census recorded a population growth of 2.0% equally 2,531 residents (+ 50 residents). No public transportation is available. The Borough is 95% residential and is served by the Garnet Valley High School located a few miles from the Borough and the St. Thomas the Apostle School located within the Borough.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives for recreation to provide Chester Heights Borough residents of all ages with adequate active and passive recreation facilities, to protect and enhance the natural rural environment, and to preserve the established quality of life:

A. To provide a range of recreational facilities to meet the present and future needs of the Borough for all age groups.

B. To encourage the preservation of areas with recreational, scenic or community value.

C. To preserve land for the protection and conservation of natural resources and maintenance of wildlife habitats.

D. To consider development , maintenance and/ or improvement of existing or future neighborhood parks or Borough open space.

E. To maintain parks, recreation areas or general open space using best management practices.

F. To explore opportunities for additional passive and active facilities, including but not limited to paths, walking trails, playgrounds, rest areas, as the need arises.

Needs Assessment

The Borough of Chester Heights was incorporated on September 21, 1945 and is approximately 2.09 square miles. According to the 2010 census data, there were 2,531 residents which was a minimal 2.0% increase from the 2000 census. By 2015, Borough's population is expected to increase to approximately 2, 556 persons. With the Borough expected to experience minimal residential growth, the need to provide additional recreational opportunities for Borough residents has become less critical. The Borough is 95% residential and considered rural. The Borough is served by the Garnet Valley High School located within a few miles from the Borough and the St. Thomas the Apostle School located within the Borough.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provide standards to assist in evaluating recreational services. These standards are useful in evaluating the adequacy of recreational facilities. Recreational facilities can be either passive or active. These active facilities include, for example, Regional parks, Sub Regional parks, Community parks, and Neighborhood parks. The classification of parks and recreational areas provide valuable guideline in maintain proportionate user space within the Borough. Where neighborhood and community parks tend to be smaller in size and primarily contain play areas, regional parks tend to contain elements such as trail networks and camping areas. Passive recreational use of open space is associated, for example with: hiking, walking, bikeways, picnic areas.

Community parks are the larger local parks, typically encompassing at least 15 acres and including a range of recreational facilities, multi-use playing fields, and space for special events. Neighborhood parks are usually smaller and less complex than community parks. The neighborhood parks are intended to comprise 5-15 acres and include areas for appropriate variety of informal field sports.

It is noted that the NRPA recommends a minimum of 10 acres of recreation land per 1000 people in the community. Six (6) of the 10 acres per 1000 should be provided at the local level; the remainder should be provided by a County, State or other regional authority. The Borough will continue to move forward to acquire more acreage. However, it is also noted that the "one size fits all" approach may not be applicable at times given budget constraints and proximity of recreational opportunities. It should also be noted that the NRPA recommends that communities develop park and recreational facility standards that fit the needs and circumstances of each community.

Additionally, as the need arises, the Borough will continue to determine how much acreage should be set aside as the community grows. At a minimum, developers of residential areas should dedicate adequate open space within their developments. Dedication or payment in lieu of dedication for new residential developments should be based on the proposed number and type of residential units. The amount of land to be dedicated should consider the number of people the development will support based on a development standard which needs to be created.

RECREATION INVENTORY

This plan includes an inventory of land that provides recreational opportunities for residents of Chester Heights Borough.

The Borough is serviced by existing Regional parks in close proximity to its borders. These include two Pennsylvania State parks: Marsh Creek (Chester Co.) and Ridley Creek (Delaware County). Ridley Creek is within minutes of the Chester Heights border and encompasses over 2600 acres of woodlands and meadows and 14 picnic areas, 12 miles of hiking trails, 5 miles of biking trails, 7 miles of horseback riding. Marsh Creek State park is within a 45 minute drive and offers a variety of recreational activities such as boating, fishing and camping.

The Borough is also serviced by six (6) County Sub regional parks which include: Clayton Park & Golf Course, Glen Providence Park, Kent Park, Rose Tree Park, Medley Park and Upland Park comprising a total of 621 acres. All are within a ½ hour drive. Also available to the Borough residents are thirteen (13) municipal parks located in Aston, Bethel, Concord, Haverford, Marple, Middleton, Nether Providence, Ridley Park, Rose Valley, Springfield, Thornbury, Upper Darby and Upper Providence. It should be noted that parks located in Concord Township are within minutes of residents and are easily accessible. These parks contain both active and passive recreational facilities. The parks contain fields, walking trails, designated play area for younger children.

Further servicing the residents of Chester Heights Borough within a desirable 2.5 mile radius is the multi-school campus of Garnet Valley School District which includes recreational facilities in both Concord and Bethel Township. The complex contains multiple fields for a variety of sports and activities, gym and tennis courts. Also within a short distance is the multi-school campus of Penncrest High school in Middletown Township containing a variety of recreational facilities.

St. Thomas the Apostle School is located within the Borough and contains a gymnasium and open field and some play areas for young children.

Further providing residents with opportunities is the Brandywine Youth Club which is located in Concord Township and includes athletic fields and allows for participation of organized youth leagues as well as a indoor gymnasium. The Borough maintains a close relationship with BYC and is an annual sponsor allowing use of its community park.

The Borough currently owns and maintains a neighborhood park named the "Chester Heights Community Park" located on Valley brook Road. The Borough purchased the land in 1991 and 1992. The park, which was created in 1992, comprises 6.8 acres. The park is accessible from the road and contains a parking lot. There is a play area for young children and a playing field which is used primarily for youth soccer. The park is centrally located within the Borough and is used for many Borough functions. The field known as the "Cappelli Field" was dedicated and named after Domenic Cappelli, Sr, a well- known local resident. In 2011, the Borough purchased a 3+ acre parcel known as the "DiSalvo tract" located

strategically at the corner of Valleybrook and Llewellyn Roads. The Borough is committed to using a portion of the property as open space and a memorial in honor of the DiSalvo family and their long standing commitment in assisting the Chester Heights Volunteer Fire Company as set forth in Resolution 09-11-B.

There are approximately 3,500 acres of both passive and active recreational facilities located within a very short distance of the Borough which complement the recreational facilities within the Borough, all of which provide a balance of opportunities for the Borough's 2500 residents.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The Borough of Chester Heights recognizes the benefits of sport and recreational programs as an important aspect of the quality of life in Chester Heights. The Borough believes that the facilities within the Borough and outside the Borough are available to meet the Borough's needs. Often in conjunction with our neighboring communities, the Borough offers its residents a wide range of organized youth and adult recreational programs, as well as many active and passive recreational opportunities on a year round basis.

Programs shared by communities have had a positive impact on the quality of life in the Borough. With budgetary considerations and limitations, the sharing of recreational facilities is benefitting the entire community.

Date: 6/4/12

Borough of Chester Heights

APPENDIX C

IN THE BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS, DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

ORDINANCE NO. 191

AN ORDINANCE OF COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS, DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 162 -47 OF THE BOROUGH SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE BY ADDING SUBSECTIONS E THROUGH L. PROVIDING FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS AND A FEE IN LIEU OF OPEN SPACE

IT IS HEREBY ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE Council of the Borough of Chester Heights that Chapter 162, Section 47, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance is hereby amended by adding the following subsections:

E. All residential subdivisions or land development plans submitted shall provide for suitable open space and/or recreation land in the Borough to ensure open space and adequate recreational areas and facilities to serve future residents of the Borough, to maintain compliance with the Borough's recreational standards; to ensure all present and future residents have the opportunity to engage in many and varied recreational pursuits and to protect stream corridors, natural areas and open space corridors for the benefit of the environment and enjoyment of Borough residents.

F. Any residential subdivision or land development plan, whether single and/or multi-family that contains less than twenty five (25) dwelling units may be exempted by Council from dedicating open space or land for recreational purpose, but shall pay a fee in lieu of land as provided in this ordinance. Any non- residential land development plan, may be exempted by Council from dedicating open space or land for recreational purpose, but shall pay a fee in lieu of land as provided in this ordinance. Any request for the exemption of land dedications shall be in writing to Council.

G. Council for the Borough of Chester Heights shall determine whether the land to be dedicated for public use is suitable for public dedication and use. In addition to Subsection C, herein, prior to Council's approval of public recreation and open space areas to be dedicated to the Borough, the Borough Planning Commission shall make its recommendation in writing to Council as to whether the dedication should be accepted by the Borough. Land dedicated to the Borough shall serve a valid public purpose and shall be suitable for recreational purposes by reason of size, shape, location topography and access.

H. Where Council agrees with the developer that because of the size, shape, location, access, topography or other physical features of the land that it is impractical to dedicate land to the Borough or set aside area as required by this section, Council shall agree on a payment of a fee in lieu of dedication of such land which shall be payable to the Borough. The amount of fee-in-lieu shall be set from time to time by Resolution of Council. Payment shall be due and payable at the time of final plan approval of the application for subdivision and/or land development or, if as a condition of final plan approval, shall be included in the required development agreement together with posting of financial security in

accordance with Section 509 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code or within Council's discretion. However, all such payments shall be made by the time of application for the first building permit.

I. The amount and location of land to be dedicated or the fees to be paid are to be used for the purpose of providing park or recreational purposes, including facilities accessible to the subdivision and/or land development, consistent with the Borough's Recreation Plan and within the discretion of Council and shall bear a reasonable relationship to the use of the park or recreational facilities. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit the person or entity who paid the fee and the Borough from agreeing that the original recreation facility as proposed by Council has been superseded or made unnecessary and reallocating the fee and any interest accumulated to such other project as the parties agree, provided, however, it meets the above standards with regard to a reasonable relationship to the parcel in question.

J. All monies paid to the Borough pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be placed in an interest bearing account , Borough Park and Recreation Development Fund, to be established by Council . Said fund shall be used by the Borough for the acquisition, maintenance or improvement of park, open space or recreational sites in existence or for future expansion and land consistent with the Borough's Recreation Plan. Upon request of any person who paid any fee under this section, the Borough shall refund such fee, plus interest accumulated thereon from the date of payment, if the Borough has failed to utilize the fee paid for the purposes set forth in this section within three (3) years from the date such fee was paid.

K. Land to be publically dedicated to the Borough shall be by fee-simple deed, free and clear of all encumbrances. The executed deed shall be delivered to the Borough for recording at the time of final plan approval and prior to signing of the approved plan by Council

L. The determination of suitability of land which is acceptable for dedication or use for park or recreational purposes shall be based on the following additional criteria, any exceptions subject to a conditional use hearing before Council:

1. The land must be readily accessible to all residents or expected users of the development by virtue of at least one side of each site abutting a public street for a minimum distance of 50 feet.

2. The land shall be located so that it equally serves all residents or expected users of the subdivision and/or land development

3. The shape of the land shall be suitable to accommodate those park or recreational activities appropriate to the location and needs of the residents or expected users of the development.

4. Soil and drainage shall be suitable for the Intended Park or recreational uses.

5. The intended land shall be contiguous, except that non-contiguous lands may be accepted for dedication to permit off-road trails where roads and other rights-of-way separate open space recreational land.

6. Such land shall have an average slope of less than 7% and shall have no more than 30% of the land contained within the boundaries of a floodplain, or steep slope area greater than 15% or a combination of floodplain and steep slope.

7. Provisions shall be made for vehicular parking so that any site can be adequately served and accessed pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Borough Subdivision and Land Development Code.

ENACTED and **ORDAINED** by Council for the Borough of Chester Heights, this 7th day of May, 2012, to be effective immediately.

Borough of Chester Heights

Michael Pierce, President

ATTEST:

Susan M. Timmins

Susan Timmins, Borough Secetary

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

TOOLS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

Land preservation is the act of permanently protecting undeveloped open space lands from possible development. There are multiple options for land preservation including, but not limited to, fee simple acquisition, donations, conservation easements, and agricultural security areas. The Borough should review all of the following techniques when implementing land preservation initiatives.

Acquisition

- **Fee Simple Purchase** – The most effective means of preserving land is through fee simple purchase. Fee simple purchase gives the owner complete control of the land, including all public access and conservation practice decisions. In most situations, fee simple acquisition is also the most expensive method of land control. Therefore, many entities interested in land preservation, particularly public agencies or land conservancies with limited budgets, will explore other, less expensive options for land control.

- **Bargain Sale** – A bargain sale involves the donation or sale of land, at a reduced price, to a municipality or land conservancy by a conservation-minded landowner. The landowner's main motivations for this type of sale are the tax benefits which he or she may enjoy as compensation by the municipality and the assurance that the land will be preserved for open space purposes. Also, since a realtor is not required, the landowner avoids paying a sales commission. The municipality receives open space acreages at less than the market price. The municipal solicitor should be contacted for more information on potential tax benefits in a particular municipality.

- **Life Estate** – In a life estate agreement, a conservation-minded landowner donates, wills, or sells their property (and/or the rights thereon) to a municipality or conservation organization, which at the time of death or other specified condition takes ownership of the land (or rights). As part of the agreement, the landowners and heirs benefit from reduced taxes because another party has legal ownership or interest in the property, and the owner is assured that the land will be used in perpetuity for open space purposes. The municipality benefits from the open space donation and gains peace of mind in knowing that the land will not be sold to a developer. The owner may also be a corporation or a farm, in which case the land becomes the property of the municipality when the company closes or the farm ceases to operate. In some cases there are arrangements made where public access to the property is granted for recreational uses such as trails, while the owner is still alive or the company is still in business.

- **Purchase and Leaseback or Resale** – An entity interested in preservation, such as a local government or a conservancy, can purchase land in fee simple, place restrictions on the deed prohibiting certain uses (e.g., residential development), and sell or lease the land to interested parties. The original buyer gains the potential for future use at the current price and may recover some or all, of the purchase price through leasing.

The land is maintained in open space and may be developed as a park if and when future demand warrants. Resale of some or all of the land with deed restrictions may maintain open space levels, relieve the municipality of maintenance obligations, and return the land to the tax rolls. A variation of this technique is possible at the County level, when tax-delinquent land parcels become temporary property of Delaware County. The County government might prefer to transfer a parcel in the greenway to the municipal government or other entity, but would first guarantee its preservation by placing a conservation deed restriction upon it.

Donations – Frequently, land or an easement on the land can be acquired through donations from private owners, organizations, and corporations. Local governments should encourage land donations by pointing out benefits of such actions, including federal income and estate tax benefits and public relations value. Prior to accepting a donation, a municipality should consider the location of the parcel and the anticipated development and maintenance costs. If the location is poor and/or projected costs will be excessive, the municipality should strongly consider whether or not to accept the land. In addition to land, corporations and other private parties also frequently provide cash donations for worthy causes, including land preservation.

- **Eminent Domain** – Open space land intended for public recreational use may be acquired through eminent domain. Eminent domain is the authority a government has to take, or authorize the taking of, private property for public use. It involves condemnation proceedings to acquire land in exchange for "just compensation" from an unwilling seller. The just compensation is usually a dollar amount equal to the fair market value of the condemned land. Eminent domain can be an effective tool for land acquisition, but the condemner must pay all associated costs for acquisition. When used, it is usually a last resort because of the risk of controversy.

Easements and Deed Restrictions

- **Conservation Easements and Deed Restrictions** – Conservation easements place restrictions or an outright prohibition on development at a lower cost than fee simple acquisition. Under a conservation easement, land could (and usually does) remain in current ownership, but the property owner voluntarily agrees to donate or sell the right to develop the land. The property owner agrees to place a restriction in the deed of the property, which becomes binding on all future owners of the land. The easement is held by the municipality, county, or a private conservancy, such as Natural Lands Trust or Brandywine Conservancy, both of which have their headquarters in Delaware County. Most conservation easements prohibit the construction of new residential and commercial buildings and the clear-cutting of timber. Furthermore, a conservation easement often provides the property owner with federal income tax and estate tax benefits.

- **Other Easements** – Conservation easements may be used to preserve many types of resources. For example, easements may be placed on historic lands or buildings, open space, forests, or farmland. Conservation easements are frequently used for

environmental preservation without providing for public use of the land. However, a conservation easement can also be combined with a *pedestrian easement* or *right of public access easement* to allow public access for walking, hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, fishing, and other activities with established rules and restrictions. With such an easement, state law assures that the landowner is not held liable for any injuries, crimes, or death associated with public use of the land.

Another easement type is the *joint-use easement*, which accommodates multiple uses under one easement. Joint-use easements are particularly appropriate for public utility corridors. Electric transmission lines, sanitary sewer lines, petroleum or gas pipelines, and other such corridors may be ideal for trail connections, as the corridors often contain a cleared pathway.

Agricultural conservation easements may be appropriate in areas with prime farmland adjacent to greenways. The action preserves additional contiguous land and helps to maintain the scenic character of both the greenway and the area as a whole. Local, county, or state governments may purchase easements from owners of prime farmland if the owner agrees to keep the land in agricultural use. The land must meet certain acreage, soil, and production criteria to qualify for the program.[1]

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA) is the statewide coalition of nonprofit land conservation groups. PALTA has developed model easements and agreements that are available on their website (http://www.conserveland.org). They include Pennsylvania Conservation Easement, Trail Easement Agreement, Riparian Forest Buffer Protection Agreement, and Fishing Access Agreement

Zoning and Subdivision Techniques

- **Conservation Design/Conservation Subdivision** – Also called open space development, conservation design is similar in many respects to "cluster development," and is very useful in areas where greenways pass through land that is zoned for development. When a tract is developed in the open space scheme, increased development densities are allowed in exchange for mandatory open space. As an example, under standard suburban development schemes, a 100-acre lot adjacent to a stream might be subdivided into 100 one-acre lots. Under conservation design:

    - The natural features of the site are identified and preserved first (10 acres, for example).
    - Open space is then set aside near the stream (40 acres, for example).
    - The remaining area is subdivided into the 100 lots originally allowed under conventional zoning, but the lots are only 0.5 acres each.

[1] Additional information about agricultural conservation easements is available from the Penn State Cooperative Extension, 20 Paper Mill Road, Springfield, PA 19064 (610-690-2655), DelawareExt@psu.edu.

- **Open Space Requirements –** Open space development can be facilitated with provisions in the zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO). Open space development provisions are often amendments to existing lot size requirements in each zoning district (e.g. "Low Density Residential District: 1.0 acre minimum lot size, or 0.60 acre with 40% open space").

- **Mandatory Dedication of Open Space or Fee-in-Lieu Thereof** – The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended) enables municipalities to require that residential developers dedicate land, or fees-in-lieu of land, for public recreation. Municipalities must have an adopted recreation plan and an adopted ordinance relating to mandatory dedication before land or fees can be accepted. The amount of land required must be related to the demand for recreation land typically created by new development. The required land dedication should be in addition to the preservation of natural features on the land, such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, or other sensitive areas.

- **Municipal Ordinances** – One of the least expensive ways to protect environmentally sensitive land is through municipal zoning ordinance, subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDOs), and other free-standing ordinances. Local ordinances contain provisions that prohibit or limit activities on or near environmentally sensitive areas. The following provisions are most important with regard to greenways.

    - *Riparian buffers* are the areas within a specified distance (or "setback") of a waterway within which development or other activities is prohibited or restricted. Typically, riparian buffers are 50–100 feet wide. The most appropriate buffer size depends on the size of the stream and the existing natural and human-built features along the stream. A two-tiered buffer can set different standards for two different setbacks (e.g., no development within 100 feet, and no mowing within 50 feet).

    - *Floodplain regulations* prohibit development and certain other activities within the 100-year floodplain, frequently in a separate floodplain ordinance. The 100-year floodplain corridor is composed of a *floodway* and *flood fringe* area. State floodplain regulations represent a bare minimum of floodplain protection. All floodplains should be kept in open space. Activities such as tree-cutting, clearing of vegetation, storage of hazardous materials, and landfill operations would have a negative effect during floods and should be prohibited or restricted. In places where existing structures are located within the floodplain, regulation options include establishing a lowest floor level for buildings, requiring flood-proofing, and prohibiting further development or improvements.

    - *Wetlands, high water table soils, and hydric soils* are areas containing permanently or frequently saturated soil conditions or standing water. The three features often coincide. Most zoning ordinances take a site-by-site

approach to wetlands regulation, requiring a developer to identify wetland indicators on a site plan for a parcel being developed. If the site contains wetland indicators, the applicant must have a qualified wetland specialist delineate wetlands, on which development must be prohibited. Alternatively, a municipality may have a complete wetlands map database prepared for the jurisdiction by a wetlands specialist.

- *Steep slopes* are usually divided into two categories: 15–25% (steep slopes) and 25% and greater (very steep slopes). Development densities and buildings sites are typically restricted in slopes between 15 and 25%, and restricted or prohibited on slopes 25% and greater. Keeping steep slopes as open space is a benefit to ridge-based greenways as well as stream-based greenways, where the riparian zone is surrounded by slopes.

- *Woodlands* – Most SALDOs contain tree-cutting provisions, permitting unlimited tree-cutting in areas necessary to accommodate home sites and road right-of-ways, and providing a maximum tree extraction number or rate for other areas. Identifying a maximum percentage of trees that may be removed *per lot* is another, more protective option. Cutting restrictions can also be placed on floodplain forests and upland forests, respectively, to protect woodlands along stream corridors and ridges.

- *Agricultural zoning* – "Effective agricultural zoning" limits the amount of development on key prime farmland tracts so that most of the land remains in large lots that can still be viable for farming. Agricultural zoning must consider soils, physical features, current land use patterns, and other matters. Limiting water and sewer extensions and transfer of development rights may also help to conserve farmland. In Delaware County, Radnor Township has an "Agricultural Conservation" zoning district on its major farmland and golf course areas; however, detached residences are still one of the permitted uses, with a required minimum lot size of two acres.

    - **PRDs and PUDs** – Planned residential developments (PRDs) or planned unit developments (PUDs) are large-scale development projects that permit a variety of types of uses on the same tract of land. A PUD is developed as a unit under single ownership or unified control. It is processed under the PRD or PUD provisions of a municipal subdivision and land development ordinance. It is designed as a parcel of land as a single unit rather than as an aggregate of individual lots, with design flexibility from traditional siting regulations or land-use restrictions. This greater flexibility makes it possible to include open space is one of the required uses. Within PRD provisions there are performance standards as well as numerical standards for area, bulk, and open space.

- **Performance Standards** – A performance standard is a regulation that permits uses based on a particular set of standards. The standard sets a minimum requirement or maximum allowable limit on the effects of a use or measurable or identifiable effect such as, but not limited to, noise, vibration, smoke, or odor. Such standards are placed on individual uses in the zoning code and allow the alteration of zoning or subdivision standards to achieve a desired form of development and protect the public from dangerous or objectionable elements. Examples of a performance standard may be the requirement of screening or an open space buffer between a noisy, odorous, or unsightly development and a residential area.

- **Official Map** – An official map is a map showing public lands and facilities from officially adopted municipal plans, such as a comprehensive plan. Authority for an official map is provided in Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended). The official map can be used to reserve a right-of-way for a period of one year, which can be very useful to a municipality for trail development, easement acquisition, or other negotiations with developers. Preferably, when a greenway plan is adopted, the proposed greenways should be put on a municipal official map, which should be adopted by the municipality. If a development is proposed on a parcel where a greenway is proposed, the municipality has one year to acquire control of all or a portion of the parcel, or negotiate other arrangements in accordance with local policies prior to development of the parcel.

  Land on an official map can be reserved without immediate purchase, giving the municipality time to set aside funds for future acquisitions. Having an adopted official map allows a municipality up to 12 months to acquire property or begin eminent domain proceedings, after a property owner gives notification of his intentions to build on, subdivide, or otherwise develop the land identified on it. It can also provide leverage for outside funding as it indicates a municipal commitment to purchase land and/or make improvements. Grant agencies are more comfortable funding projects that are part of a well-thought out strategy that has the community's support.

  The official map consists of a map and ordinance that identifies both existing and future public projects within the entire municipality or just a specific neighborhood or corridor. Its aim can be to meet many objectives from a municipal comprehensive plan or just a single one such as to preserve or reclaim land along a greenway. It is important to note that an official map is not zoning and does not place landowners in jeopardy of having their land taken away, nor does it imply municipal responsibility for opening, maintaining, or improving the identified property.

- **Negotiated Improvements** – Negotiation is a bargaining tool, often used in conjunction with PRD and cluster development, which will result in a conditional use being allowed. It can involve the use of waivers, the alteration of minor zoning requirements in exchange for desired improvements, increased open space, etc.

- *Land swaps* or *land exchanges* are useful when a development interest and a conservation interest both own a piece of land more appropriate to the mission of the other. For example, a residential developer may own a wetland area next to a park while a municipal government owns a vacant tract near an existing developed area. With the land exchange, the environmentally sensitive land is preserved by the municipality and the developer builds houses in an appropriate location. Any mismatches in land value can be negotiated.

- *"Good neighbor" agreements* between developer and municipality may result from negotiations. In this case, the developer adds some sort of improvement or conservation measure to the site as a way of maintaining good relations with the community or municipal government.

Preferential Assessment

Preferential assessment programs (i.e., Act 515 and Act 319) are valuable tools for open space preservation. They involve a property owner signing a covenant (agreement) not to change the land use from open space, farm, forest, etc. in exchange for a reduced tax assessment. Therefore, development is limited for the life of the agreement on the property. In the meantime, the landowner retains ownership and maintenance of their land. However, the protection that these programs provide should not be considered permanent. High land values can affect a property owner's decision to leave the program after the agreement expires, or the high land value may offset the tax penalty for breaching the program. Both programs have a requirement of 10 acres minimum and parcels under a single covenant must be held in common ownership and be contiguous. Many of the larger landowners in Chester Heights already participate in the Act 319 program.

- **PA Act 515 (PA Assessment of Open Space Covenant Act–1966)** – Act 515 enables counties to offer preferential tax assessment on land that is used for open space, farmland, forest land, or water supply land (per a minimum acreage requirement). The landowner covenants with the County for a reduced assessment for a period of 10 years (with an automatic yearly renewal thereafter). If the covenant is breached, the landowner must pay roll-back tax penalties to all taxing districts. In Delaware County, the Act 515 Open Space Covenant program is administered by the County Planning Department.

- **PA Act 319 (PA Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act–1974)** – Act 319 enables counties to offer preferential tax assessment on land based on the agricultural use value of the land according to the productivity of the soil. Act 319 can be applied to farmland or forest land (per minimum acreage and agricultural income requirements). The landowner covenants with the County

for a reduced assessment, subject to terms of the County Board of Assessments and based on soil surveys. The landowner must pay roll-back tax penalty for withdrawal from covenant. In Delaware County, the Act 319 program is administered by the Board of Assessments office.

Agricultural Security Areas

The Agricultural Area Security Law (Act 43 of 1981) allows for the establishment of agricultural security areas (ASA). ASAs are intended to promote permanent and viable farming operations over the long term by strengthening the farming community's sense of security in land use and the right to farm. They are created by municipalities, in cooperation with individual landowners who agree to collectively place at least 250 acres in an agricultural security area. The Law allows for the creation of joint municipality agricultural security areas. The ASA is reviewed every seven years however; new parcels of farmland may be added to an established ASA at any time.

Under the law, a municipality, or group of contiguous municipalities agree not to pass nuisance ordinances that would restrict normal farming operations. Limitations are placed on the ability of government to condemn farmland located in an agricultural security area for new schools, highways, parks, or other governmental projects.

Having land enrolled in an agricultural security area does not restrict a landowner's ability to use his or her property for non-agricultural development purposes. Landowners who are part of a 500-acre or larger agricultural security area are eligible for consideration to apply to sell an easement on their land under the state's Easement Purchase Program, through the local county's county agriculture preservation program.

Eligible Properties must be: 1) noncontiguous farm parcels that are at least 10 acres in area; 2) properties made up of viable agricultural land (Cropland, pasture, and woodland can all be included in an ASA.); 3) properties with at least 50% of the land in Soil Capability Classes I-IV as defined by the county soil survey; 4) zoned to permit agricultural uses.

Interested landowners should contact the Delaware County Conservation District to obtain agricultural security area application forms. Because of the amount of available land in Chester Heights, it would make more sense to first inquire with Concord Township about adding parcels its Agricultural Security Area, rather than to start a new one.

The following websites contain more information on ASAs:
Delaware County Conservation District http://www.delcocd.org/ag.preservation.htm
PA Department of Agriculture http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

GRANT FUNDING SOURCES FOR OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS

Funding for open space and greenway efforts is available from federal, state, and county government, and from private organizations and foundations. When considering options for funding open space, Chester Heights Borough should refer to the grant funding information listed below. One of the most useful funding sources for greenway planning and implementation is PA DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships – Community Grants Program. Many other options as listed can be sought to match each of the other, including DCNR funding, municipal funds, and other sources. They are always changing; new programs are added and older programs are revised or discontinued. Therefore, any municipality looking to fund a project should contact the administering agency to determine the exact requirements in effect at the time of application.

The Pennsylvania Greenways Toolbox's Funding Guide, located online at http://www.pagreenways.org/funding.htm, provides updated information about state and federal grant programs as well as standard and innovative local funding sources. These local funding sources include voter approved taxes and borrowing (property tax, earned income tax, real estate transfer tax, bonds), impact fees, a capital improvements program, private sector sources (foundations and businesses), trail sponsorship programs, volunteer work, "buy a foot" programs, and developer dedications.

The following is a listing of grant funding programs for open space and greenways. Some of these funding programs are specifically for trails. Others may fund riparian open space and recreation projects or historic preservation related projects, which may be applicable to the development of trail support facilities and the conservation of environmental assets. For more information on any of the programs below, contact the Delaware County Planning Department or go to the website address provided.

Grants offered through Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
Website: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants

- Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) - Land Trust Grants
- C2P2 - Community Grants
- Heritage Parks Program
- Land & Water Conservation Fund
  (Federal money, administered through DCNR)
- National Recreational Trails Funding (Symms NRTA)
  (Federal money, administered through DCNR)
- Rails to Trails, PA
- Rivers Conservation Program
- Urban Forestry Grants

Grants offered through Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
Website: http://www.newpa.com/

- Industrial Sites Reuse Program, PA ("Brownfields")
  (DCED, in cooperation with PA DEP)
- Intermunicipal Projects Grants
- Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP)
- Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program
- Shared Municipal Services

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES:

- Active Living By Design grants
  Offered/administered by: Robert Wood Johnson Fund
  Website: http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/

- Bikes Belong Coalition – General Grants
  Website: http://www.bikesbelong.org/

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
  Administered by: Delaware County Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD)
  Website: http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/hcd/cdbg.html

- Delaware County Revitalization Program
  Administered by: Delaware County Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD)
  Website: http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/hcd/1007revitalizationprogram.html

- Historic Preservation - Certified Local Government Grant Program
  Offered by: Federal government
  Administered by: PHMC
  Website: http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/

- Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program
  Offered/administered by: PHMC
  Website: http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/

- PA Infrastructure Investment Authority (PennVest)
  Involves both U.S. EPA and state funds
  Administered by: PennVest, PA DEP (Bureau of Water Supply Management)
  Website: http://www.pennvest.state.pa.us/

- PECO Green Region Grants Program
  Offered by: PECO / Exelon
  Administered by: Natural Lands Trust
  Website: http://www.natlands.org/

- Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
  Offered/administered by: National Park Service
  Website: http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
  - General Foundation Grants
    Website: http://www.rwjf.org/
  - Local Initiative Funding Partners Program
    Website: http://www.lifp.org/

- Transportation Enhancements Program
  Offered by: PennDOT
  Administered by: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
  Website: http://www.dvrpc.org/te or http://www.enhancements.org/

- Wetlands Reserve Program
  Offered/administered by: U.S. Departmentof Agriculture (USDA)
  Website: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WRP/

- William Penn Foundation
  General Grants
  Website: http://www.williampennfoundation.org/