Pottstown Metropolitan Region

Comprehensive Plan ● 2015 Update

Final Draft—updated April 2015

Montgomery County:
Douglass Township
Lower Pottsgrove Township
New Hanover Township
Pottstown Borough
Upper Pottsgrove Township
West Pottsgrove Township

Chester County:
East Coventry Township
North Coventry Township

Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee

Douglass Township

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Anthony Kuklinski

East Coventry Township

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N. Lance Parson

Walt Woessner

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North Coventry Township

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Renee Spaide

West Pottsgrove Township

Charlie Valentine

Tom Palladino

Pottstown Metropolitan Region

Comprehensive Plan Update

2015

The Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan

was prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

MCPC

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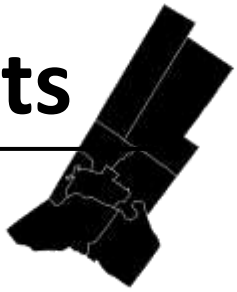

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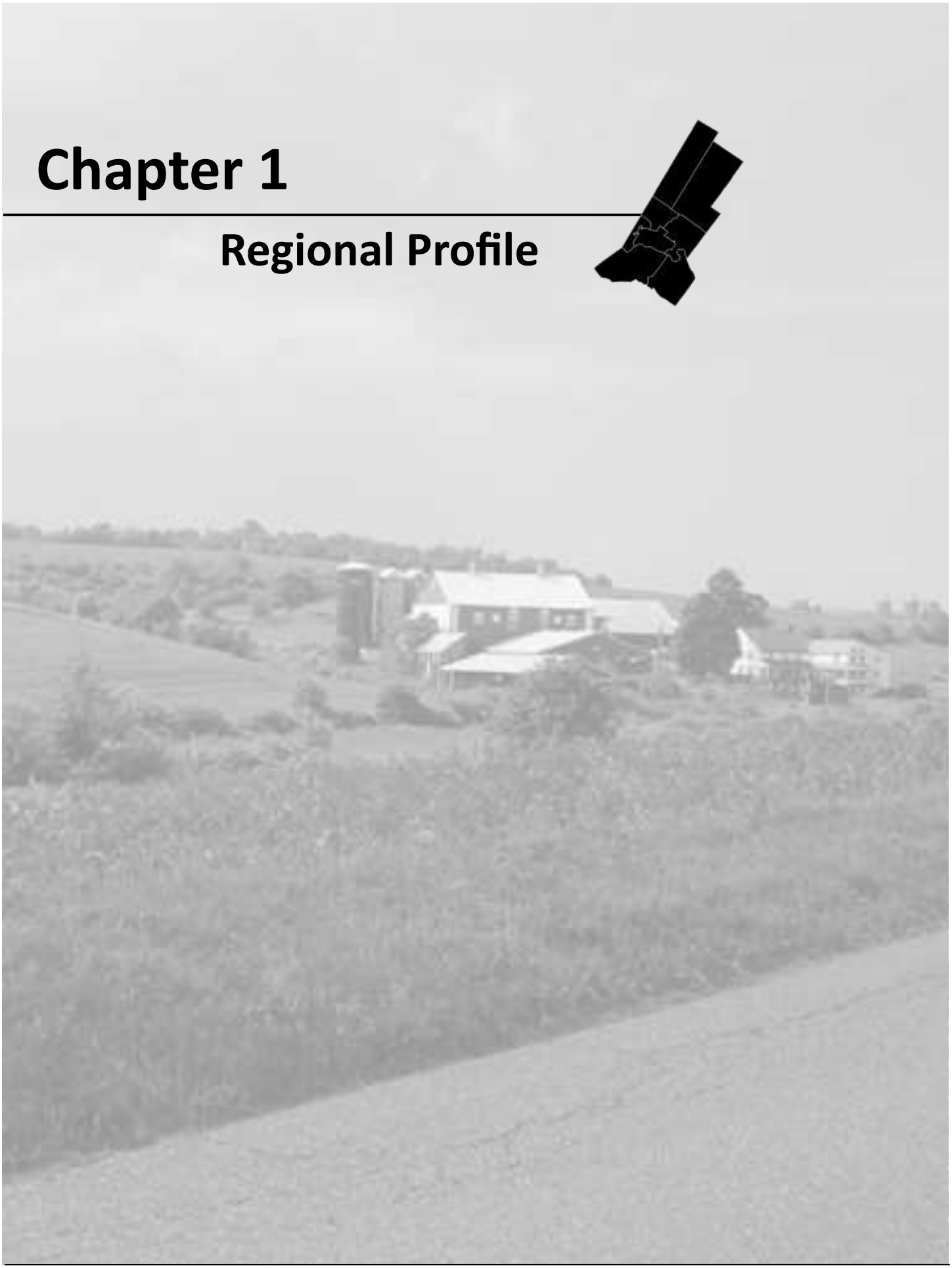
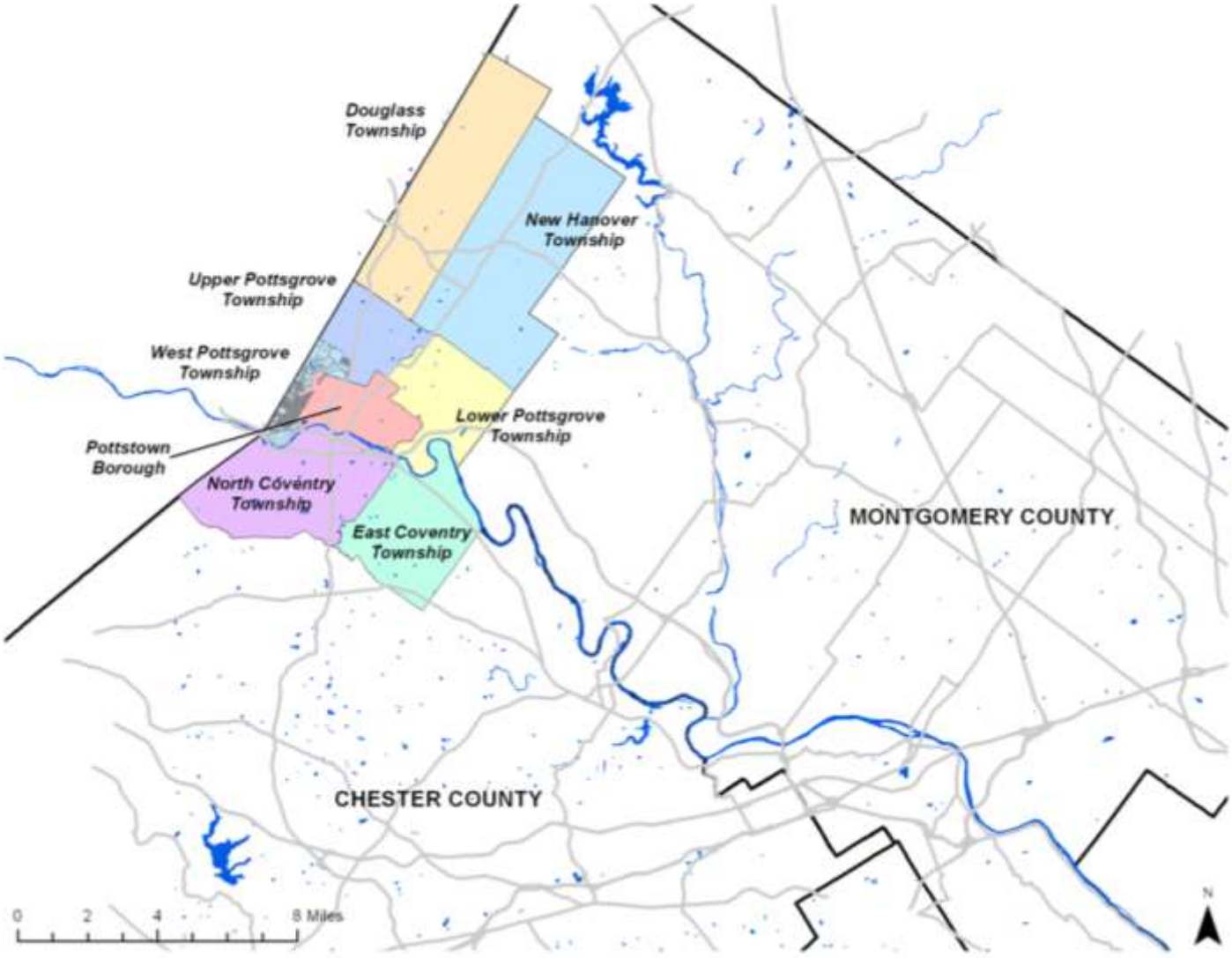
Regional Profile



Regional Setting

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is located approximately 40 miles west of the City of Philadelphia in Montgomery and Chester Counties and abuts the southeastern border of Berks County. The Metropolitan Region is comprised of Douglass, New Hanover, Lower Pottsgrove, Upper Pottsgrove and West Pottsgrove townships and Pottstown Borough in Montgomery County and East Coventry and North Coventry townships in Chester County. The Schuylkill River runs through the center of the Region and separates Montgomery and Chester Counties.

Centrally located in the Region along the Schuylkill River is the Borough of Pottstown. It is the only borough in the study area and contains the highest density development of all the municipalities. The Region is also the crossroads of Route 422, a major east-west U.S. Route, and Route 100, a major north-south State Route.



Municipal Overview

The municipalities of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region desire to plan together for more effective growth management. This section briefly describes some of the unique history and qualities of each municipality.

Douglass Township

The original boundaries of Douglass included the land of New Hanover and extended south to the Schuylkill River. In 1683, the first German settlers arrived as part of William Penn's recruiting effort and organized themselves as the Frankfurt Company. In 1741, New Hanover, Douglass, Upper Hanover and Pottsgrove townships were formed by the division of Hanover Township. In 1807 the southern boundary of Douglass Township was established forming the current-day township boundary.

A "publick house" or inn built along East Philadelphia Avenue in Gilbertsville was a landmark throughout the 1700s. From the late 1800s to 1920, East Philadelphia Avenue was operated as a toll road by the Limerick and Colebrookdale Turnpike Company.

By 1848, increasing development in Gilbertsville made it large enough to be recognized as a specific place. The Village of Congo, north of Gilbertsville gained recognition around 1848 when a hotel was established there along Hoffmansville Road. The Village of Niantic, also north of Gilbertsville became a place after the development of a Gristmill along the West Branch of the Perkiomen Creek. The Village of Sassmansville was created in 1888 to honor the organizer of a Reformed church who built the village.

Early schools within the Township were affiliated with neighboring churches. A Township-wide public school system was created in 1851 at which time numerous neighborhood schools were constructed to serve the local school-aged children. In 1965, a jointure was formed with the Boyertown Area School District. Boyertown remains the school district for the Township today.

Trolley tracks were laid in Gilbertsville in 1909; however, the trolley did not run for several more years due to controversy over its development. When the trolley finally began operations, it ran from Pottstown to the Swamp Hotel in New Hanover and through Gilbertsville to Boyertown where it ended. This rail line allowed residents to use public transportation all the way to Philadelphia until service was suspended in 1937. In the 1960's, well after the automobile had taken over as the primary mode of transportation in the Region, Route 100 was constructed through the Township.

The Berks-Montgomery municipal sewer system was extended to Douglass Township in the 1960s.

Today, the rural character of Douglass still remains in the northern and central parts of the Township. However, the Township has most recently experienced increased pressure to develop as suburbanization spreads into the area.

East Coventry Township

The area where East Coventry is located was once known as the "Skoolkill District." The name Coventry was later given to the area by Samuel Nutt, an early settler, whose forbearers were from the English town of the same name. It was first settled in 1718 by twenty-eight families and four non-resident landowners. By 1774, the population had almost tripled. That same year, Coventry had 78 landowners, many whose names still exist on Township roads.

In the 1700s, farming was the primary activity of the township, although several grist mills were located along Pigeon Creek. Following the Revolutionary War, there was a steady increase in population, and by 1840, the year before the Township was split in half to form North and South Coventry, the number of residents had climbed to 2,620. In 1844, there was a further division, with East Coventry being carved out of North Coventry.

The water power of the Schuylkill River provided industrial opportunities for early settlers. There were several mills in operation in the early half of the 1800s. In addition, the early settlers found opportunities in agriculture. The land area adjacent to the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek provided exceptionally productive land for farming.

The Schuylkill Canal Navigation System, located along the Schuylkill River in the northern portion of East Coventry Township, was incorporated in 1815 and completed in 1824. The purpose of the Schuylkill Canal was to provide a system for transporting cola, iron, lumber, merchandise and produce between Mt. Carbon/Mill Creek (Schuylkill County) and the City of Philadelphia. The 108 mile long canal system played an important role in the growth and development of East Coventry Township. By 1870, the Schuylkill Canal become obsolete and eventually was abandoned in favor of other improved transportation systems.

Between 1850 and 1950, there was little change or growth within the Township, with the population of East Coventry Township increasing by only 271 residents. The population of the Township in 1950 was recorded as 1499. Between 1950 and 1960, the population increased to 2,183 residents. This growth rate (45.5 percent) is mostly attributed to the availability of reasonably priced land, regional locality, a

growing economy, and the improvements to the regional transportation network. As of the 2010 Census, the Township population was 6,636,with much of the recent growth having occurred in the northern areas of the Township, in the form of residential housing built on productive farmland.

East Coventry Township has maintained a great deal of its historic character over the time of its existence. That character has been primarily agricultural. However, like most areas in the Region, low density residential development is occurring as families find the area a pleasant place to live and access to employment centers improves.

Lower Pottsgrove Township

Lower Pottsgrove was formed in 1889 from the larger Pottsgrove Township. Pottsgrove Township was originally made up of the current day Lower, West and Upper Pottsgrove townships, which were once all included in the former Hanover Township. In 1889, Lower Pottsgrove separated from Upper Pottsgrove and West Pottsgrove. After the separation, several annexation attempts were made by the Borough of Pottstown throughout the early 1900's, some of which were successful. Lower Pottsgrove Township became a first class Township in 1954 partly in an attempt to prevent future annexation.

The Sanatoga Run, called Senetoga (meaning "swift stony stream") by the native inhabitants of the area, was used by five gristmills, three sawmills, a carding mill and a clover mill in the 1800's. In 1890, two stores opened in the Village of Sanatoga. By 1900, only four gristmills and two sawmills remained along the Sanatoga Run.

In the 1890s, Ringing Rocks Park was developed. It had many attractions including a roller coaster, zoo, merry-go-round and dancing pavilion. Around the same time, people were attracted to Sanatoga Park because of the trails, bridges and boats for rent on Sanatoga Lake, which also included an amusement section with a rollercoaster and dancing pavilion.

The Township was initially accessible by horse and buggy, which was made easier by the opening of the Perkiomen and Reading Turnpike in 1815. By 1938, the railroad had come through the town with a stop at Sanatoga Station. In the 1960s, development pressure began to increase and by 1971, public sewer lines were installed in some areas of the Township.

Pottsgrove Township was served by five, one-room schoolhouses throughout the 1800s. In 1890, when Lower, Upper and West Pottsgrove Township's separated, so did the schools, with each running schools in their municipality. In 1955, Lower, West and Upper Pottsgrove schools consolidated to form the Pottsgrove School District that serves all three municipalities today.

In recent times, the Township has seen noticeable growth from migration to the outer suburbs. While the amusement parks of the past are gone, the Village of Sanatoga and some of the parks developed in the early days of the Township still remain.

New Hanover Township

New Hanover Township was established in 1741 by the division of the former Hanover Township into New Hanover, Upper Hanover, Douglass and Pottsgrove townships.

New Hanover is bisected by Skippack Pike, one of the County's oldest east-west highways. A second major road through the Township, Swamp Pike, was constructed from Limerick to Boyertown in 1723 and became a toll road in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Trolley service from Pottstown went through the farmland of New Hanover to the Swamp Hotel and continued on through Douglass to the Borough of Boyertown. In the 1930s, bus service replaced the trolley system.

Early education in New Hanover was provided by neighborhood schools, as it was in neighboring communities. In 1966 a jointure with the Boyertown Area School District was formed. The Boyertown School District remains the school district for the Township today.

A Sewer Authority was formed in 1973, and a sewer system was operational by 1982. Most of the system ran (and still runs) by gravity flows. Drinking water was provided by hand dug wells in the Township, including some 70 to 90-foot deep artesian wells.

Much of New Hanover Township continues to be utilized for farming today. The rural/ suburban character of the Township has brought about increased development pressure, but a significant amount of the northern and central parts of the Township still retain the rural character of the past.

North Coventry Township

The first wave of European settlers came in the early 1700s as William Penn was conveying large tracts of land throughout the Region. This northern area of Chester County was first mapped by the Europeans as the "Skoolkill District" and later renamed to "Coventry" by Samuel Nutt.

In the 1790s, the Pennsylvania Legislature authorized the construction of toll roads throughout the state. One of the toll roads was the Wilmington - Exton Turnpike, now Route 100. With the construction of this turnpike came the first bridge in the area across the Schuylkill River. Within 25 years of Route 100 being built, the Schuylkill Canal was completed. The canal had a significant impact on the commerce, trade and transportation aspects of the Township and Region.

Education in the township came about in the early 1800s when farmers joined together to hire teachers. The wealthy went to the newly established local academies, but widespread education was not brought about in the Township until 1834 when the Free Public School Act was passed by the State Legislature. As with other area municipalities, the end of the civil war brought about a renewed interest in education. There were several one-room school houses throughout the Township providing at least an elementary education. After the Civil War, school houses became larger and the level of education expanded. A high school was constructed in the Township in 1912. In the late 1950s, North Coventry joined other neighboring municipalities and formed the Owen J. Roberts School District.

Through the 1950's and 1960's, North Coventry experienced a housing boom caused by the nationwide shift to the suburbs. The increased development of the Township brought with it a demand for more services. During this time, roads throughout the Township were paved, sewage disposal was brought to the Township and zoning was first enacted. In reaction to the increased pressure for development, the Township passed an open space preservation tax referendum which many hope will help preserve the remaining open space and natural resources.

Pottstown Borough

The convergence of the Manatawny Creek and Schuylkill River was an attractive location for members of the Delaware Indian tribe and foreign explorers. Settlements were formed in the area of Pottstown, but the current location was not created until 1717 when the area around the Manatawny was bought and used for iron production. By the mid 1700s, Thomas Potts, who was an ironmaster, had multiple iron interests in the Pottstown area. John Potts bought the area that would become Pottstown and eventually, the name Pottstown was created from people referring to it as Pott's Town. Pottstown was incorporated as a Borough in 1815.

Pottstown was a metal manufacturing town, first as an iron producer and later as a steel producer. This industry was prevalent in Pottstown until the early 1900s, increased during both World Wars, and all but ended after WWII when increased competition started to slow production demand.

The Schuylkill River played a significant role in the development of Pottstown. The Schuylkill Canal opened in 1824 and provided the first mode of transportation besides horseback, biking or walking. Bicycling used to be a very popular means of transportation in and around Pottstown. By 1839, steam locomotives were running between Reading and Philadelphia, with a stop in Pottstown. Citizens who opted for motorized transit also had two trolley lines running from Sanatoga to Stowe and from High Street to Ringing Rocks Park.

Pottstown was the traditional hub of activity for the Region. The Borough was a large employment center and had many cultural activities, shops and banks that lined the streets.

The school system dates back to before 1800 when two log cabin school houses existed. In 1838, Pottstown established a public school system. Multiple school buildings were built around this time and in 1890, a large school building with multiple rooms was constructed. Private schools have always had a prominent role in the Borough, including the Hill School which was opened in 1851 and run as a family operated school until 1920 when it became a not-for profit operation.

In the 1860's, a water company was formed and water was pumped to a reservoir on Washington Hill. A municipal sewer system was not installed in the current day Borough until development pressures increased in 1915. Today, Pottstown is served by public water and sewer.

In recent decades, the Borough's economy has been hit by the dwindling presence of the steel industry and by the closing of other major employers within the Borough. Positive steps to turn the tide have been made and more work is being done to revitalize the Borough.

Upper Pottsgrove Township

Upper Pottsgrove Township was settled by the English and Germans. The land was part of a manor set up by William Penn and was eventually sold to a wealthy Philadelphia merchant named George McCall. At his death, the manor was divided between McCall's children. One of the divisions encompassed at least the area of Upper Pottsgrove Township and West Pottsgrove Township. A further division occurred in 1889 officially separating the current day Township of Upper Pottsgrove from West Pottsgrove.

The Village of Halfway House was named for a tavern located halfway between Pottstown and Boyertown on Farmington Road. The tavern's location led to the development of this small community within the Township. In the mid-1900s, development began to expand north from Pottstown Borough and the more developed areas surrounding the Borough. The new residents wanted to be annexed to the Borough of Pottstown for the services it provided. Those hopes ended in 1965 when Upper Pottsgrove became a first class township, removing any possibility of further annexation.

Like many of the surrounding Townships, farmers and farm related occupations historically dominated the Township's economy. Workers were also employed in the iron mills in Pottstown. During WWII, increased wages for industrial workers moved people off of the farms and into factories. Today, farming as a way of life in Upper Pottsgrove has given way to other employment opportunities in the area.

In the early days, elementary school children were educated in one of two one-room schoolhouses, while high school students went to Pottstown. A brick consolidated school, built on Farmington Avenue in 1929, was used until it closed in 1973. Students today are educated in the Pottsgrove School District.

A sewer authority was established in 1972 to serve Upper Pottsgrove residents, however most homes had, and still have, on-lot septic systems. Some water for the Township continues to be supplied by private wells.

Development has increased throughout the Township since the housing boom of the 1950s and 1960s and is projected to continue into the future.

West Pottsgrove Township

In 1900, West Pottsgrove separated from Upper Pottsgrove. West Pottsgrove became a second class Township in 1900, and a first class Township in 1922.

The Village of Stowe, formerly Buchanville, was once primarily populated by immigrant labor. In 1885, a stop for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company was constructed in the Township. The stop was called Stowe, in reference to the Stowe farm located near the station.

Prior to 1900, children were educated in a one room schoolhouse. In 1892, a two room school building was built and in 1905 a larger school building was constructed in the Township. Between 1914 and 1932, multiple room additions were made to the larger school building with another new school building completed in 1944. In 1956, West Pottsgrove joined both Upper and Lower Pottsgrove to form the Pottsgrove School System.

Municipal sewer and water has been provided and is still provided to West Pottsgrove under a contract with the Borough of Pottstown. The Township also operated a landfill for nearly 70 years until it reached capacity and was closed in 2005.

Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic characteristics of the Region are vital to providing a snapshot of the trends in population, employment and housing. These trends provide the basis for creating future goals that will help guide the Region toward a unified planning vision. This demographic report has been developed using the most recent information available.

Population

As shown in **Figure 1-1**, The Pottstown Region as a whole experienced a 14.2% growth in population, an increase of 9,852 people from 2000 to 2010. The highest levels of growth were concentrated in East Coventry (45.3%), New Hanover (48.45%) and Upper Pottsgrove (29.5%). The municipalities with the lowest levels of growth were Pottstown and West Pottsgrove with increases of 2.3% and 1.5% respectively.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Borough of Pottstown contains the largest population (22,377 people) of all the municipalities in the Region, despite its lower growth rates over the past several decades. Lower Pottsgrove Township has the second largest population (12,059 people), with approximately half that of the Borough. Douglass Township rounds out the top three with approximately 13% (10,195 people) of the total regional population.

Figure 1-1: Population Change 2000 to 2010

Population Increase: 2000 to 2010			
Municipality	**2000**	**2010**	**% Change**
Douglass	9,104	10,195	11.98%
East Coventry	4,566	6,636	45.34%
Lower Pottsgrove	11,213	12,059	7.54%
New Hanover	7,369	10,939	48.45%
North Coventry	7,381	7,866	6.57%
Pottstown	21,859	22,377	2.37%
Upper Pottsgrove	4,102	5,315	29.57%
West Pottsgrove	3,815	3,874	1.55%
TOTAL	**69,409**	**79,261**	**14.19%**

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census Data

Population Forecasts

According to the forecasts created by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), population growth in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region is projected to increase 22.1% over the next 30 years (see **Figure 1-2**). This rate is lower than the rate projected in the 2002 forecasts, which predicted regional growth of 32% between 2000 and 2025. While rates have slowed from previous years, there are many reasons for the continued growth, including the Region's location at the crossroads of State Route 100 and U.S. Route 422. The area's undeveloped land and accessibility to the greater Philadelphia area continue to make the Region an attractive place to live.

These population forecasts were developed by DVRPC using 2010 Census numbers. The forecasts predict that the highest levels of growth will occur in New Hanover Township (48.7%), with substantial increases also occurring in Douglass (27.7%), East Coventry (33.9%), and Upper Pottsgrove (38.4%) townships. Pottstown Borough and West Pottsgrove Township, which were both forecast to lose population in the 2002 DVRPC projections, are now expected to grow at 6.4% and 8.9%, respectively.

Figure 1-2: Population Forecasts

Population Forecasts									
Municipality	**2010**	**2015**	**2020**	**2025**	**2030**	**2035**	**2040**	**Absolute Change '10-'40**	**Percent Change '10-'40**
Douglass	10,195	10,529	11,009	11,680	12,350	12,781	13,014	2,819	27.70%
East Coventry	6,636	6,904	7,240	7,760	8,279	8,615	8,883	2,247	33.90%
Lower Pottsgrove	12,059	12,157	12,434	12,979	13,517	13,870	14,117	2,058	17.10%
New Hanover	10,939	11,442	12,286	13,603	14,921	15,765	16,268	5,329	48.70%
North Coventry	7,866	8,013	8,198	8,484	8,770	8,955	9,102	1,236	15.70%
Pottstown	22,377	22,595	22,865	23,210	23,555	23,750	23,818	1,441	6.40%
Upper Pottsgrove	5,315	5,412	5,687	6,184	6,682	7,057	7,354	2,039	38.40%
West Pottsgrove	3,874	3,890	3,937	4,046	4,156	4,202	4,218	344	8.90%
TOTAL	**79,261**	**80,942**	**83,656**	**87,946**	**92,230**	**94,995**	**96,774**	**17,513**	**22.10%**

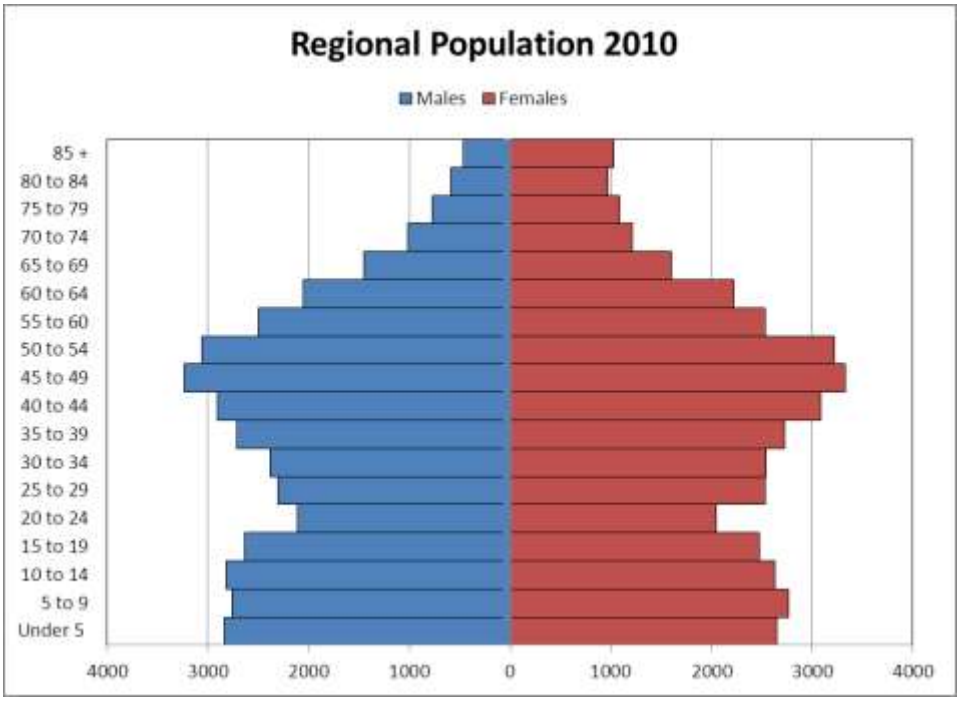
Source: DVRPC

Age Group Trends

The overall age of the population in the Region has increased from 2000-2010, consistent with national trends of an aging baby-boom generation. This generation can be defined as those people born between the years of 1946 and 1964. This makes the baby boom generation those adults between the ages of 46 and 64 in the 2010 census.

The population pyramid in **Figure 1-3** shows the male and female population recorded by the U.S. Census in 2010 for the entire Region. The baby boomers (defined above), are still the largest percentage of the population in 2010.

Figure 1-3: Male/Female Population Pyramid



It is likely that the population of 20 and 30-somethings, the children of the baby boomers, have left the Region for a larger metropolitan areas and more urban communities, such as the City of Philadelphia, Boston, New York City, or Washington D.C. This loss of 20 to 30 year-olds is a national trend that is known as a "brain drain" or "youth drain" - the loss of younger adult professionals to metropolitan areas. This usually happens because the larger metropolitan areas have more jobs and activities that tend to cater to younger professionals.

Figure 1-4: Age Groups by Municipality (2000)

Age Groups 2000													
Municipality	Age Group												
Y2000	Under 5	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Douglass	668	777	815	608	367	1,023	1,801	1,311	419	345	544	248	78
East Coventry	234	262	370	278	163	368	812	714	288	246	377	293	161
Lower Pottsgrove	840	974	919	751	423	1,509	2,010	1,572	513	370	629	537	166
New Hanover	444	564	655	510	245	815	1,507	1,103	418	314	483	254	57
North Coventry	367	439	501	489	389	882	1,245	1,276	452	295	609	362	75
Pottstown	1,644	1,635	1,495	1,262	1,196	3,275	3,474	2,514	1,023	793	1,712	1,406	430
Upper Pottsgrove	293	334	367	258	156	528	792	602	190	140	267	142	33
West Pottsgrove	229	280	286	232	203	580	653	517	167	154	278	189	47
Total	4,719	5,265	5,408	4,388	3,142	8,980	12,294	9,609	3,470	2,657	4,899	3,531	1,047
Source: 2000 Census Data													

Figure 1-5: Age Groups by Municipality (2010)

Age Groups 2010													
Municipality	Age Group												
Y2000	Under 5	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Douglass	598	785	857	741	472	883	1,593	1,817	650	588	656	394	161
East Coventry	418	426	448	354	324	875	961	1,104	429	325	460	304	208
Lower Pottsgrove	878	834	825	819	562	1,407	1,743	1,877	779	688	786	546	315
New Hanover	809	822	828	670	407	1,079	1,793	1,904	714	595	768	435	115
North Coventry	421	526	536	507	411	797	1,070	1,398	581	517	615	373	114
Pottstown	1,716	1,491	1,294	1,385	1,521	3,479	2,861	3,253	1,294	1,076	1,481	1,067	459
Upper Pottsgrove	365	384	392	386	241	680	863	901	338	274	289	150	52
West Pottsgrove	282	250	263	251	214	568	546	594	243	207	227	153	76
Total	5,487	5,518	5,443	5,113	4,152	9,768	11,430	12,848	5,028	4,270	5,282	3,422	1,500
Source: 2010 Census Data													

Figure 1-6: Employment by Occupation

Employment by Occupation											
Municipality	Total Number[1]	Management[2]		Service[3]		Sales[4]		Natural Resources[5]		Production[6]	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Douglass	4,956	1,961	39.60%	554	11.20%	1,425	28.80%	438	8.80%	578	11.70%
Lower Pottsgrove	5,899	2,600	44.10%	560	9.50%	1,747	29.60%	505	8.60%	487	8.30%
New Hanover	5,368	2,414	45.00%	588	11.00%	1,383	25.80%	546	10.20%	437	8.10%
Pottstown	11,002	2,708	24.60%	2,170	19.70%	3,136	28.50%	960	8.70%	2,028	18.40%
Upper Pottsgrove	2,778	1,212	43.60%	358	12.90%	667	24.00%	288	10.40%	253	9.10%
West Pottsgrove	2,194	508	23.20%	367	16.70%	555	25.30%	348	15.90%	416	19.00%
East Coventry	3634	1441	39.65%	575	15.82%	1156	31.81%	245	6.74%	217	5.97%
North Coventry	4306	1581	36.72%	389	9.03%	1287	29.89%	543	12.61%	506	11.75%

Source: American Community Survey 2007-2011

Footnotes:

[1] Resident labor force includes employed civilians 16 years old and over.

[2] Includes management, business, financial, computer, engineering, science, education, legal, community service, arts, media, and healthcare practitioner occupations.

[3] Includes healthcare support, protective service, food preparation and serving, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and personal care occupations.

[4] Includes sales, office and administrative support occupations

[5] Includes farming, fishing, forestry, construction, extraction, installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.

[6] Includes production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

Employment

Employment of the regional population is shown in **Figure 1-6**. It is easy to see that management, professional and related occupations lead the way in the employment by occupation. This is distantly followed by sales and office occupations. These two categories make up the largest number of workers and show why DVRPC has identified the Pottstown Employment Center as a service sector center.

Despite the fact that the Region contains a significant amount of farmland, there are few people employed in farming, forestry or fishing. And while there continues to be a number of people employed as production oriented occupations in the Pottstown Region, the focus on "heavy" industrial employment has significantly decreased since the 1940s and 1950s.

Employment forecasts were created for the Region by DVRPC and project an overall increase in employment of 18.8% (see **Figure 1-7**). This growth, however, is not predicted to be uniform across the Region as DVRPC predicts substantially higher levels of employment growth in townships like Douglass and East Coventry, and minimal growth in the Borough of Pottstown. These predictions run in opposition to the goals of this Regional Plan, which are to direct growth towards the Region's established employment centers, such as Pottstown, and preserve the valuable farmland and open space of the Region's more rural areas, such those in Douglass Township.

Figure 1-7: Employment Projections

Employment Projections									
Municipality	**2010 Actual**	**2015**	**2020**	**2025**	**2030**	**2035**	**2040**	**Absolute Change 2010-2040**	**Percent Change 2010-2040**
Douglass	3,339	3,517	3,772	4,129	4,486	4,715	4,839	1,500	**44.9%**
East Coventry	1,317	1,372	1,441	1,548	1,654	1,723	1,778	461	**35.0%**
Lower Pottsgrove	4,484	4,531	4,666	4,929	5,192	5,364	5,484	1,000	**22.3%**
New Hanover	1,753	1,791	1,855	1,955	2,055	2,119	2,157	404	**23.0%**
North Coventry	3,863	3,937	4,030	4,174	4,318	4,411	4,485	622	**16.1%**
Pottstown	10,812	10,917	11,048	11,215	11,381	11,475	11,508	696	**6.40%**
Upper Pottsgrove	1,229	1,241	1,275	1,336	1,397	1,443	1,479	250	**20.40%**
West Pottsgrove	1,056	1,070	1,111	1,206	1,301	1,342	1,356	300	**28.40%**
Total	**27,853**	**28,376**	**29,198**	**30,492**	**31,784**	**32,592**	**33,086**	**5,233**	**18.79%**

Source: DVRPC

Income

The income characteristics in this analysis not only show how local municipalities compare with one another, but how they compare to Chester and Montgomery Counties as well. As shown in **Figure 1-8,** there are some significant differences between these communities.

The per capita income is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as "the mean income computed for every man, woman and child in a particular group. It is derived by dividing the total income of a particular group by the total population in that group." In this case, taking the total income for a municipality and dividing it by the population of that municipality.

As shown above, the per capita incomes for townships with more recent suburban growth are somewhat similar. The per capita incomes for the Borough of Pottstown and West Pottsgrove Township, both older communities, are significantly lower than the "newer" suburban communities.

The median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having incomes above the median, half having incomes below. The median incomes for the Pottstown Region are, again, highest in the fast-growing communities and lowest in the older communities of West Pottsgrove and Pottstown. New Hanover Township had the highest median household income in the Region in 2010 followed by Upper Pottsgrove Township.

Figure 1-8: Regional Income

Regional Income						
Municipality	2000	2000 Adjusted	2010	2000	2000 Adjusted	2010
	Per Capita	Per Capita	Per Capita	Median (HH)	Median (HH)	Median (HH)
Douglass	$22,476	$29,411	$29,731	$55,679	$72,858	$69,178
East Coventry	$27,257	$35,675	36,728	$58,125	$76,077	83,661
Lower Pottsgrove	$23,958	$31,350	$32,507	$52,100	$68,175	$76,213
New Hanover	$25,084	$32,823	$34,293	$67,097	$87,799	$88,581
North Coventry	$25,418	$33,268	$30,920	$51,954	$68,000	$68,355
Pottstown	$19,078	$24,964	$22,648	$35,785	$46,826	$43,311
Upper Pottsgrove	$25,607	$33,508	$32,060	$70,500	$92,252	$86,322
West Pottsgrove	$18,413	$24,094	$23,477	$42,759	$55,952	$52,500
Chester County	$31,627	$41,395	$41,251	$65,295	$85,461	$84,741
Montgomery County	$30,898	$40,431	$40,076	$60,829	$79,597	$76,380

Source: American Community Survey

Footnotes:

(1) 2010 figures are actually five year estimates – an average of responses taken between 2006 and 2010 adjusted to 2010 dollars

(2) 1999 figures are from the 2000 Census (Summary File 3) and summarize a sampling specific to a single year as opposed to a rolling five year collection.

(3) Adjusted income has been derived to account for inflation and reflects the original data in 2010 dollars in order to make direct comparisons.

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of the population is measured by looking at the population aged 25 and older. In the Pottstown Region, there are 51,819 people aged 25 and older. The educational attainment levels for the Pottstown Region are shown in **Figure 1-9**.

Figure 1-9: Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment (Persons 25 years and older)							
Municipality	Total Number of People age 25+	Less than 9th Grade	9th to 12th grade, No Diploma	High School Graduate or Equiv (1)	Some College No Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Post Graduate Degree
Douglass	6440.000	4.0%	5.8%	37.7%	22.6%	18.6%	11.3%
East Coventry	4412.000	1.6%	3.4%	32.8%	23.9%	25.1%	13.1%
Lower Pottsgrove	7817.000	2.1%	4.8%	31.6%	29.6%	22.6%	9.3%
New Hanover	6888.000	3.0%	5.9%	31.6%	25.0%	27.0%	7.5%
North Coventry	5422.000	2.3%	6.8%	38.6%	19.5%	21.4%	11.0%
Pottstown	14928.000	4.0%	11.9%	45.2%	21.7%	13.2%	4.1%
Upper Pottsgrove	3355.000	2.8%	7.2%	33.7%	28.8%	19.4%	8.2%
West Pottsgrove	2557.000	3.6%	12.2%	46.7%	25.7%	9.2%	2.5%
Montgomery County	545630.000	2.2%	5.2%	26.3%	22.1%	25.7%	18.5%
Chester County	328054.000	3.0%	4.4%	23.8%	20.7%	29.3%	18.8%

Source: American Community Survey

Households

As shown in **Figure 1-10**, every municipality in the Region except for West Pottsgrove and North Coventry saw a decrease in the household size from 2000 to 2010. Pottstown's average household size stayed the same during this time period.

Housing Value

As shown in **Figure 1-11**, the median value of housing in every municipality increased from 2000 to 2010. In 2010, the highest median values for housing were found in East Coventry, New Hanover, and North Coventry. The lowest median value was found in the Borough of Pottstown. In both 2000 and 2010 none of the individual communities had median housing values that equaled or exceeded that of Chester County or Montgomery County as a whole.

Pottstown Borough, which has the greatest number of rental units, had a median price of only $748 in 2010. East Coventry, on the other hand, had a median rental price of more than $1,300 per month. The differences in median rents are likely attributable to the differences in the age of housing units, as well as the types of housing for rent.

Housing Units

Figure 1-12 shows that the total number of housing units in the Region increased 13.5% between 2000 and 2010. Two of the Region's historically rural townships, East Coventry and New Hanover, had the largest increase in housing units, at 44% and 46% respectively. This follows the increases that were found in households and population over the last decade.

Figure 1-10

Average HH Size		
Municipality	**Size**	
	2000	**2010**
Douglass	2.83	2.82
East Coventry	2.64	2.59
Lower Pottsgrove	2.75	2.65
New Hanover	2.91	2.88
North Coventry	2.45	2.5
Pottstown	2.36	2.36
Upper Pottsgrove	2.89	2.86
West Pottsgrove	2.5	2.54

Source: Census 2010

Figure 1-11

Median Housing Value		
Municipality	**Median Housing Value**	
	2000	**2010**
Douglass	$142,800	$264,900
East Coventry	$157,300	$272,700
Lower Pottsgrove	$131,300	$215,300
New Hanover	$158,500	$295,500
North Coventry	$151,800	$249,000
Pottstown	$87,600	$143,100
Upper Pottsgrove	$143,800	$237,100
West Pottsgrove	$95,600	$155,300
Chester County	$182,500	$334,300
Montgomery County	$160,700	$297,200

Source: U.S. Census 2010

Figure 1-12

Total Housing Units			
Municipality	**2000**	**2010**	**% Change**
Douglass	3292	3709	12.7%
East Coventry	1684	2423	43.9%
Lower Pottsgrove	4127	4600	11.5%
New Hanover	2615	3814	45.9%
North Coventry	3114	3303	6.1%
Pottstown	9973	10233	2.6%
Upper Pottsgrove	1459	1890	29.5%
West Pottsgrove	1606	1649	2.7%
TOTAL	**27,870**	**31,621**	**13.5%**

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

Owner-Occupied v. Renter-Occupied Units

The percentage of owner-occupied units as a percentage of total residential units has increased slightly over the last decade. The chart in **Figure 1-14** below shows that a higher percentage of the new units built between 2000 and 2010 were built as owner-occupied units rather than rental units.

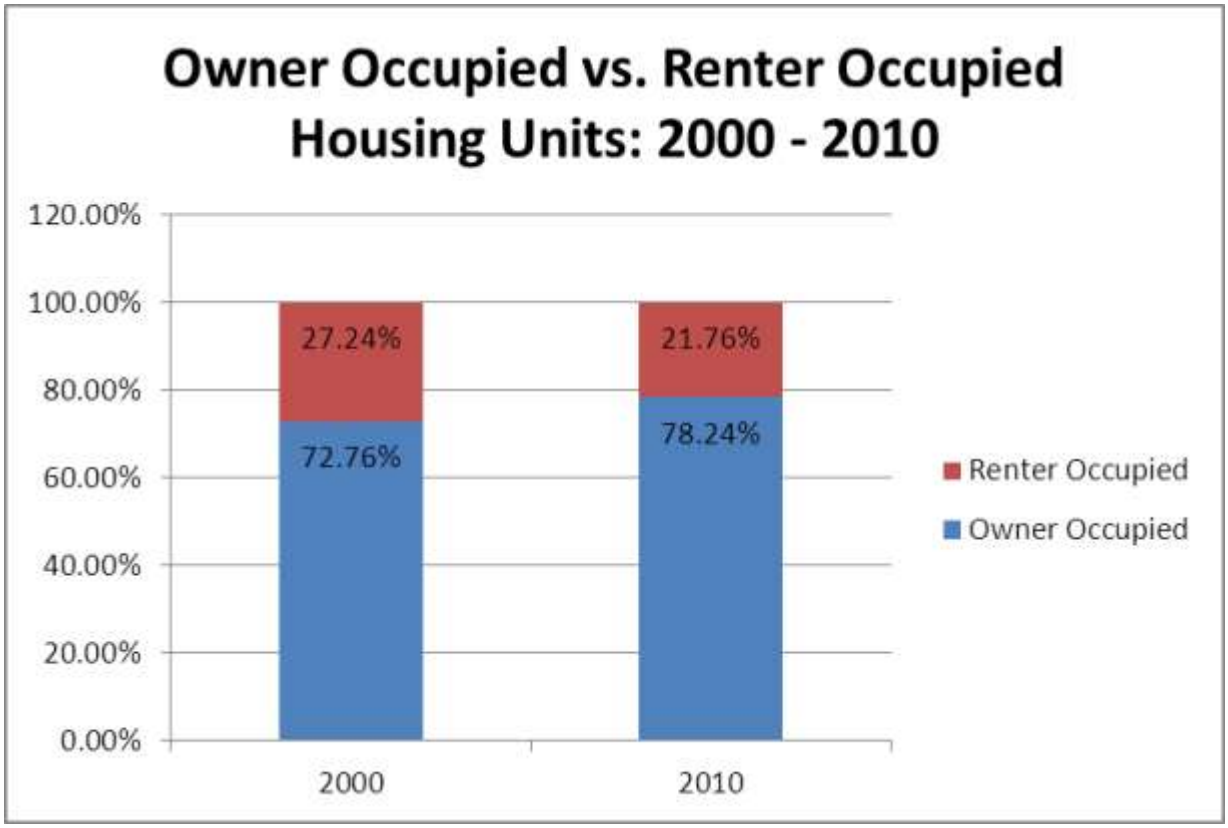
While the share of owner-occupied units increased more than the share of rental units, there still was small increase in the total number of rental units in the Region. The breakdown of rental units by municipality is shown in **Figure 1-13** and indicates that the Borough of Pottstown far exceeds the other municipalities in the number of rental units. Although Pottstown Borough still has the most number of rental units, East Coventry experienced the most growth of rental units between 2000 and 2010. East Coventry's increase from 199 rental units in 2000 to 501 in 2010 corresponds with a 151.8% increase. New Hanover and Upper Pottsgrove also had significant growth in its rental market with increases of 20.8% and 29.3% respectively.

Figure 1-13

Number of Rental Units			
Municipality	Rental Units		
	2000	2010	% Change
Douglass	655	637	-2.7%
East Coventry	199	501	151.8%
Lower Pottsgrove	705	761	7.9%
New Hanover	173	209	20.8%
North Coventry	842	831	-1.3%
Pottstown	4,004	4169	4.1%
Upper Pottsgrove	140	181	29.3%
West Pottsgrove	502	504	0.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

Figure 1-14: Owner Occupied vs. Renter Occupied Units



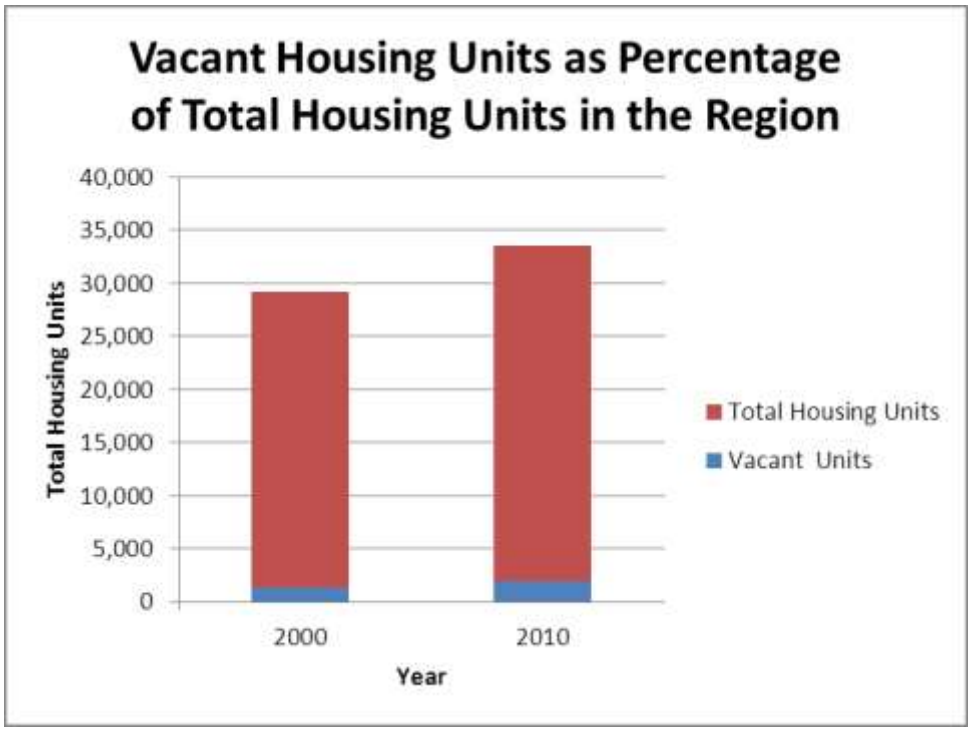
Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

Occupied v. Vacant Residential Units

Since 2000, the total number of vacant units in the Region increased from 1,364 units to 1,917 units, or 40.5%. The U.S. census defines vacant units as those units for rent, for sale, or rented or sold but not occupied or used for seasonal or occasional use.

East Coventry had the greatest increase in the number of vacant units, up 322.9%. Upper Pottsgrove's number of vacant units also more than doubled from 2000 to 2010. The high increase in the number of vacant units between 2000 and 2010 is likely attributable to the decline of the housing market and increased foreclosures. While the total number of vacant units increased substantially, the increase in vacant units as a percentage of total housing units was more moderate. **Figure 1-15** shows that while vacant units accounted for 4.9% of total housing in the Region in 2000, that percentage increased to 6.1% of total units in 2010.

Figure 1-15: Vacant Housing Units



Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

Conclusion

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region's position on the edge of the greater Philadelphia area makes it a desirable location for growth and new investment. Population growth is expected to continue due to good access and land availability, with the strongest growth occurring in the northern parts of the Pottstown Region and East Coventry Township. This will have substantial impacts for community infrastructure across the Region, but particularly in Douglass, New Hanover, Upper and Lower Pottsgrove, and East Coventry townships.

The demographic influence of the aging baby boomers and their children is creating a high demand for housing, family services, and schools in the Region. Housing costs have increased dramatically in the Region to meet this demand. The need for senior services and housing options will also grow.

The increasing cost of housing and demands of the Region's growing and aging population presents economic opportunities for the Borough of Pottstown and the villages of the Region. These walkable places tend to have lower housing costs that appeal to young families and active older adults seeking housing in walkable neighborhoods. This could help to balance income differences between the Region's older neighborhoods and the newer suburban communities, and address the current concentration of rental housing and vacancy issues in Pottstown Borough.

The Pottstown Region is considered to be an employment center of the greater Philadelphia area dominated by the service sector. This reflects the Pottstown Region's transition from an industrial to an information age economy. Income and educational levels appear adequate, although are generally lower than Chester and Montgomery County as a whole.

The growth and demographic trends of this profile indicate that the municipalities of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region need to figure out how they will attract the type of growth that is appropriate for the Region and manage growth in a way that can build upon its existing assets while also preserving its valuable natural resources and open space. Addressing these issues together as a Region will increase the effectiveness of each municipality's planning efforts.

Chapter 2

Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Since the creation of the Pottstown Regional Planning Commission in 2005, the Region's eight member municipalities have strived to meet the goals of the 2005 Regional Comprehensive Plan, placing an emphasis on the protection of valuable open space and agricultural lands and direction of development to designated growth areas and older communities, including the Borough of Pottstown.

Since the Committee's inception in 2005, however, the eight municipalities have experienced a significant decline in the amount of new development taking place in the Region. Between 2001 and 2007, the Borough of Pottstown approved roughly ten subdivision and land development plans each year; since 2008, that number has fallen to just an average of just three plans each year. Pottstown is not alone is this trend, and the Region is as a whole is facing a different set of circumstances than it did when the first Regional Plan was written in 2005. While the reasons behind this slowdown are numerous, including a sluggish economy and changing demographics, the priorities of the Region's municipalities and focus on growth management must adapt to meet the current economic conditions.

While the circumstances facing the Region have changed, the need to work together remains strong. Along with the goals established in 2005, including natural resource protection, open space preservation, transportation improvement, and enhanced recreation options, this plan will put a new emphasis on economic development. It will be vital for the Region's municipalities to work together to pursue innovative economic development strategies and attract appropriate development in appropriate locations. Through multi-municipal planning and the implementation of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan, the Region's municipalities intend to achieve the following goals and objectives.

General Goals

- Implement growth management techniques to proved for orderly and well-planned new development.
- Pursue economic development strategies that will help the Region to grow smarter and will ensure appropriate development occurs in appropriate locations.
- Protect the unique historical, cultural, and natural resources of the Region.
- Preserve open space and agriculture.
- Improve transportation choices for better mobility in and through the Region.
- Encourage walkable communities with a mix of uses and a range of housing options where appropriate.
- Maintain and improve recreation options.
- Employ municipal and land use practices that will help conserve natural resources, reduce energy consumption and improve the overall health and environment of the Region.
- Address the specific needs and unique conditions of each municipality.

- Maintain the existing municipal commitment levels for the following residential and non-residential land uses as agreed upon in the Regional Implementation Agreement by maintaining the appropriate Zoning districts to support the Fair Share commitment.

Municipal Commitments for Residential Fair Share*

Municipality	Minimum Acreage
Douglass Township	156
East Coventry Township	500
Lower Pottsgrove Township	339
New Hanover Township	750
North Coventry Township	165
Pottstown Borough	550
Upper Pottsgrove Township	151
West Pottsgrove Township	74
TOTAL ACRES	**2,685 (5% of Region)**

* Additional information about fair share housing in the Region can be found in Chapter 7: Housing.

Municipal Commitments for Mobile Home Parks

Municipality	Use to be Permitted
Lower Pottsgrove Township	Mobile Home Parks
East Coventry Township	Mobile Home Parks
Upper Pottsgrove Township	Mobile Home Parks
New Hanover Township	Mobile Home Parks

Municipal Commitments for Nonresidential Uses

Municipality	Use to be Permitted
Lower Pottsgrove Township	Quarry
New Hanover Township	Junkyard
West Pottsgrove Township	Landfills

<u>Economic Development Goal</u>: **Promote economic development in the region's growth areas by pursuing commercial, office, and industrial development that will be compatible with the Region's unique assets and infrastructure.**

Objectives:

- Provide high quality employment opportunities
- Enhance the region's tax base
- Maintain and enhance existing commercial, office, and industrial areas
    - ◊ Prioritize and attract commercial development that will meet the needs of the Region's population, including supermarket and specialty food space, sit-down eating establishments, home furnishing retail, vehicle sales and service, pharmacies, apparel sales, and home improvement retail opportunities.
    - ◊ Attract both traditional multi-tenant as well as R&D office development.
    - ◊ Attract industrial development activity of consumer-oriented products, including the manufacturing and assembly of light aircraft, scooters, bicycles, kayaks, canoes, other consumer goods, and alternative energy technology.
- Prioritize economic development in locations where adequate transportation access and necessary utilities are available and planned for, with a focus in the following targeted sites:
    - ◊ The Pottstown municipal airport
    - ◊ Schuylkill Riverfront
    - ◊ Philadelphia Avenue in Gilbertsville
    - ◊ New Hanover at the intersection of Routes 663 and 73
    - ◊ High Street in Pottstown
    - ◊ Keystone Blvd/Trail Area
    - ◊ Sanatoga Interchange Park
    - ◊ North Coventry Commercial Districts
    - ◊ Route 100 and State Street intersection
- Create a competitive advantage for the Region's business community by promoting resource conservation and sustainable development practices.
    - ◊ Grow the local economy by attracting "green-color" jobs, such as alternative energy production facilities.
    - ◊ Invest in cleaner energy sources that minimize negative effects and maximize energy efficiency.
    - ◊ Promote energy-efficient buildings .
    - ◊ Promote location-efficient communities that are healthy, affordable, and diverse.

- Actively promote tourism, capitalizing on the Region's recreation opportunities, agricultural industry, and numerous historical resources.
    - ◊ Promote regional recreation activities to attract users to the Region's recreational amenities.
    - ◊ Promote the development of agritourism in the Region.
    - ◊ Build upon the existing tourist attractions and visitor organizations in the Region.
    - ◊ Create a consistent Signage/Wayfinding system for the Region.

Housing Goal: **Provide adequate housing opportunities to meet the needs of a changing demographic and population.**

Objectives:

- Meet residential Fair Share requirements as a region.
- Maintain and promote revitalization of existing residential neighborhoods and villages.
- Concentrate new housing where infrastructure is currently located and in designated growth areas.
- Create pedestrian-oriented, residential neighborhoods that foster a sense of community.
- Provide housing opportunities for a range of income levels.
- Provide housing and continuing care opportunities for older adults.

Parks and Recreation Goal: Provide recreational opportunities to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Objectives:

- Coordinate park and recreational opportunities among the Region's 8 municipalities.
- Implement the park and recreation goals of municipal open space plans.
- Maintain and enhance existing park and recreation facilities.
- Provide and incorporate new parks and open space with new development.
- Create well-rounded parks that can provide a full range of opportunities, including physical activities, contact with nature, social connections, and connections with history and culture.
- Prioritize park and recreation opportunities that preserve natural linkages, environmental resources and scenic views.
- Expand recreational opportunities along the Schuylkill River and prioritize the completion of the Schuylkill River Trail between Phoenixville and Pottstown.
- Develop a regional trail network to connect communities, recreation areas, and the Schuylkill River Trail.

- Work with private organizations to provide recreational opportunities.
- Continue to pursue private and public sector funding opportunities to enhance recreation in the region.
- Promote active transportation that includes providing safe walking and bicycling routes to parks and safe access within parks themselves.
- Increase resident awareness and promote access to the Region's parks and open space facilities through the development of consistent entrance and wayfinding signage, promotional materials, and community events.

Open Space Goal: Preserve open space for current and future residents.

Objectives:

- Implement the open space goals of municipal open space plans
- Designate growth and conservation areas within the Region to ensure preservation of open space areas
- Embrace infill strategies and substantially minimize low-density and non-contiguous growth to mitigate land loss and conserve valuable open space.
- Coordinate and connect open space areas between municipalities
- Actively pursue strategies and resources to preserve open space
- Prioritize open space opportunities that preserve natural linkages, environmental resources and view sheds, especially along the Schuylkill River.

Natural Resource Protection Goal: Preserve and protect natural resources for current and future residents.

Objectives:

- Protect existing groundwater resources and provide for groundwater recharge in the designs of new development.
- Preserve sensitive natural resources areas, including the PA Schuylkill Highlands and Hopewell Big Woods, as well as all other woodlands, stream systems, wetlands, steep slopes, and wildlife, especially along the Schuylkill River.
- Promote and protect street trees and other vegetation in developed areas.
- Protect all municipalities within the same watershed from impacts of improper development.
- Implement the natural resource preservation goals of municipal open space plans.
- Promote the stewardship of natural lands and pursue best management practices that will limit fragmentation and restore links between forests, reduce invasive plant species in the Region, promote wildlife diversity, and improve water quality.

Agriculture Goal: Promote the preservation of agriculture as a viable industry in the Region

Objectives:

- Permanently preserve agricultural lands through participation in government and private agricultural preservation programs at the local, state, and national level.
- Designate growth areas and conservation areas within the Region to ensure preservation of agriculture.
- Promote community gardens.

Transportation Goal: Promote a safe and efficient transportation system throughout the region.

Objectives

- Identify problematic traffic areas and develop mitigation strategies.
- Support improvements to Route 422 and Route 100 and their interchanges in the Region.
- Maintain and improve the existing road network in the Region.
- Prioritize transportation improvements in new development that enhance the Region's road hierarchy and increases connectivity.
- Promote the design of new development to be walkable.
- Expand and enhance the Region's two airports.
- Provide charter and other aviation transportation services at the Pottstown municipal airport.
- Maintain short line rail access and rail access to the Keystone Boulevard area.
- Promote the expansion of public transportation options, including passenger rail that would connect the Pottstown Region with Philadelphia and Reading.
- Develop a local and regional pedestrian and bicycle network.
- Provide adequate parking that is safe and effective and minimizes traffic congestion and impervious cover.
- Promote shared parking, where appropriate.
- Develop a master trail plan for the Region that connects existing and planned trail networks, parks and points of interest.
- Improve connections between Montgomery and Chester County municipalities, including enhancements to the Hanover Street Bridge and the conversion of the existing unused railroad trestle into a pedestrian bridge.

<u>Community Facilities Goal</u>: Address the needs of current and future residents by ensuring the proper development and location of public sewer and water systems, emergency services, schools, and library facilities.

Objectives:

- Coordinate municipal services and facilities, where appropriate.
- Use public sewer and water facilities efficiently by extending these systems concurrently only within designated growth areas
- Protect surface water quality and ensure sufficient water supply by using public and private sewer and water systems effectively, including on-site systems
- Support existing emergency services and improve their capacities to serve a growing population.
- Cooperate with local school districts, Montgomery County Community College and local library systems to encourage appropriate locations for new or expanded facilities; promote pedestrian access to these facilities
- Develop ways for residents from non-Montgomery County communities within the Region to greater utilize Montgomery County Community College.

Chapter 3

Natural and Historic Resources

Introduction

Continued population and economic growth in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region will impact the Region's natural and historic environment. The natural and historic features of the Region will also influence the intensity and patterns of the Region's land use. Understanding these features, such as geology, hydrology, soils, vegetation, wildlife and cultural and historic sites, and how they are parts of interrelated systems will help the communities of the Region plan for a future that balances conservation of these resources with sustainable growth.

Natural Resources

Geology

The Pottstown Region's underlying rock formations are the base of its natural systems. Changes in elevation and orientation of the land are the results of the Region's geology, climate, and other weathering effects. Locations of watercourses and the Region's soils, vegetation, and wildlife are also

Pottstown Region's Rock Formations

Brunswick is characterized by reddish brown shale, mudstone, and siltstone. The topography of this formation is characterized by rolling hills. It is considered to be a good to fair source for road material and fill, and part of the formation can be an excellent source of lightweight aggregate and material for common brick.

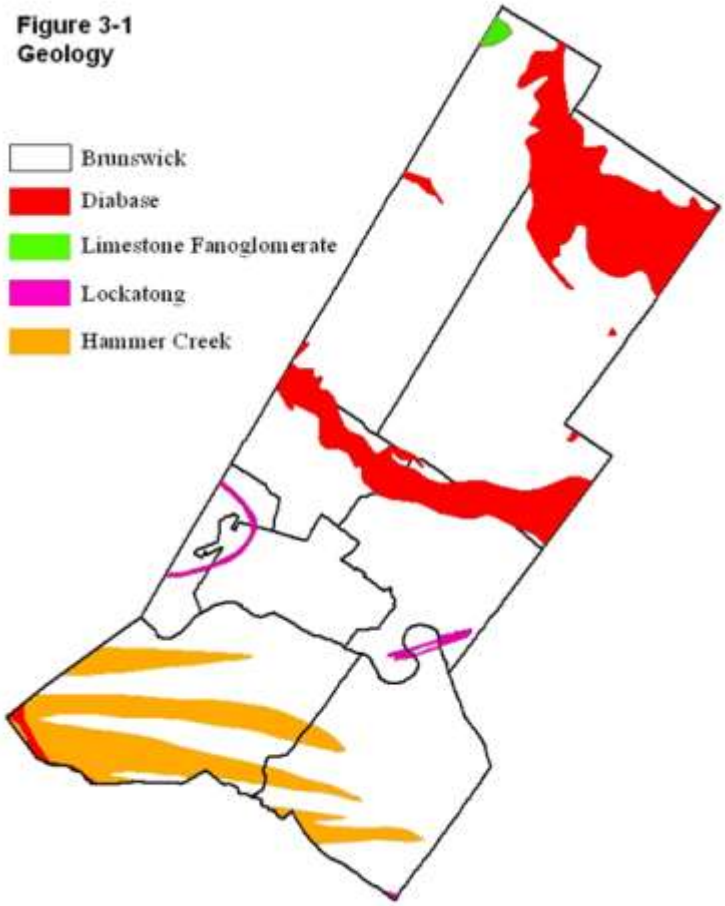
Diabase, also referred to as "black granite", is very resistant to erosion, weathering, water infiltration, and groundwater movement. This formation is notorious for low well yields and is very difficult to excavate. Diabase areas are often steeply sloped and wooded, with numerous surface rocks and boulders.

Hammer Creek Conglomerate is made up of very coarse quartz conglomerate with abundant pebbles and cobbles of gray quartzite and minor interbeds of coarse red sandstone. It is moderately resistant to weathering. The topography is rough terrain and its natural slopes are steep and stable. It has low porosity and permeability. It is also difficult to excavate.

Lockatong consists mainly of dark, thick-bedded argillite, with occasional layers of shale. These rocks are hard, resist weathering, and have poor groundwater supplies.

Limestone Fanglomerate is composed chiefly of limestone and dolomite pebbles and fragments. It is moderately resistant to weathering and creates topography of rolling hills. Groundwater yields are good. Stability of building foundations is adequate; however sinkholes have occurred in this formation and should be investigated.

Figure 3-1
Geology



influenced by the rock formations and the land's orientation. Ultimately, all of these factors impact the locations and patterns of land use and human settlement.

The Region is located in the Triassic Lowland section of the Piedmont Physiographic Provience. The Triassic rock formations found in the Region are Brunswick, Diabase, Hammer Creek Conglomerate, Lockatong, and Limestone Fanglomerate. The general location of these formations is identified in **Figure 3-1.**

From both a visual and planning perspective, several prominent diabase ridges formed by molten rock extruding through large cracks in the Brunswick formation are the most significant rock formations in the Region. These high, hard, ridges divide the Region into two main watersheds. One of these ridges is located in southwestern North Coventry Township. The other diabase ridgeline runs through the northern portions of Upper and Lower Pottsgrove Townships, including the Ringing Rocks area, and along the southern border areas of Douglass and New Hanover Townships. This same ridgeline arcs back in Western Montgomery County and crosses the northern sections of Douglass and New Hanover Townships in the Deep Creek area.

Several fingers of Hammer Creek Conglomerate bisect the Brunswick formation in North and East Coventry Townships creating a series of hills and valleys across the area. The slower eroding Hammer Creek Conglomerate forms the hills and the valleys created by the faster weathering Brunswick rock. Two different Lockatong formations also are present in East Coventry and West Pottsgrove Townships, forming high points in those communities.

An important geological issue to in the Region is the substantial development limitations in areas underlain by Diabase rock. Sewer and water utilities are difficult to locate, and often the soil layer is thin and not easy to excavate or well suited for building structures.

Soils

The soils of the Region have formed over time by the continual interaction between the Region's weather, rock formations, and organisms. As a result, soils throughout the Region vary in their color, mineral characteristics, fertility, texture, erodibility, depth to bedrock and groundwater.

Soils affect our use of the land in various ways and are therefore one of the Region's most significant natural resources for planning purposes. In rural areas of the Region, the suitability of soils for productive agriculture and on-lot sewage disposal are very important characteristics. In developed areas, “made land” is present. Alluvial, hydric, and other frequently wet soils need to be considered in all areas of the Region during land development, along with such factors as shallow depth to bedrock.

U.S. Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey

Soil scientists have classified soils into several groups call soil series. Soils listed within the same series will display similar subsurface characteristics. However, the surface characteristics of soils within a particular series can vary in slope, degree of erosion, size of stones, and other easily recognizable features. Detailed information pertaining to soil capabilities for agriculture and building purposes is available in the Soil Survey completed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Agricultural Land

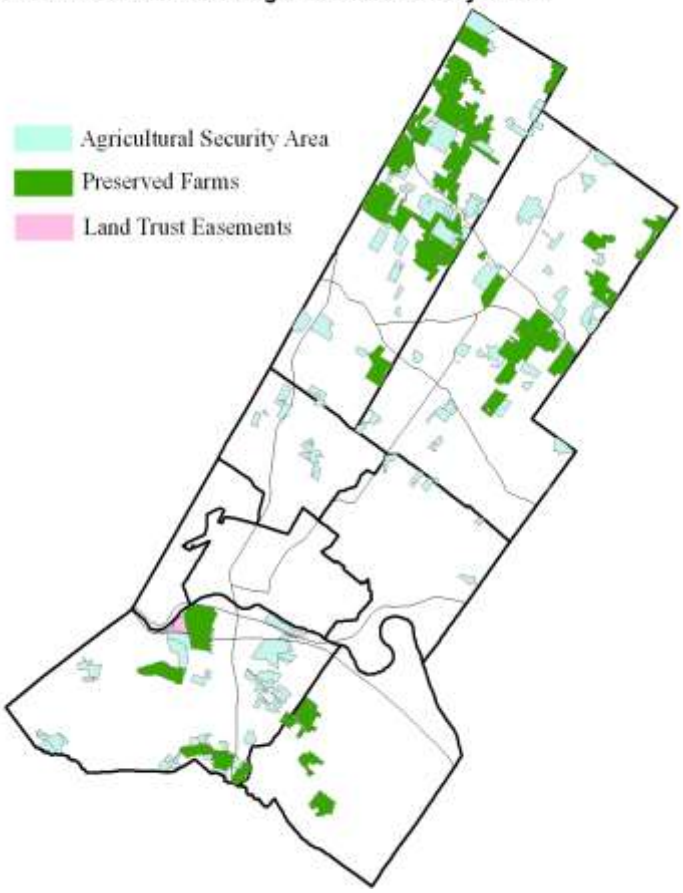
Prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and other land are the three soil classifications used for determining a soil's agricultural value by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Their value is based on the fertility, depth to bedrock or groundwater, texture, erodibility, slope, and the amount of large stones. Prime farmland includes deep, well-drained, and mildly sloped soils that can support high yields of crops with little management. Farmland of statewide importance includes soils that support cultivation but require careful crop management. Agricultural use of the "other" soils is generally limited to pasture, and woodlands.

Figure 3-2 details the Pottstown Region's prime agricultural soils. The Region has a rich history of farming and contains substantial soils that are important for sustaining agriculture. In particular, places where the Brunswick rock formation is located may contain important agricultural soils due to the extensive concentrations of soils having a high water table and shallow depth to bedrock.

Figure 3-2
Agriculture Soils

In the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, 143 farms are part of an Agricultural Security Area (ASA). ASAs are intended to promote more 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. ASAs are created by local municipalities, in cooperation with landowners who agree to collectively place at least 250 acres in an ASA. By joining an ASA, property owners gain three main benefits: 1) Municipalities agree not to pass nuisance ordinances which would restrict normal farming operations, 2) There are limitations placed on the ability of government to condemn farmland in the ASA for government projects, and 3) Landowners may be eligible to apply to

Figure 3-3
Preserved Farms and Agricultural Security Areas



sell a perpetual agricultural conservation easement (or development rights) through a local Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

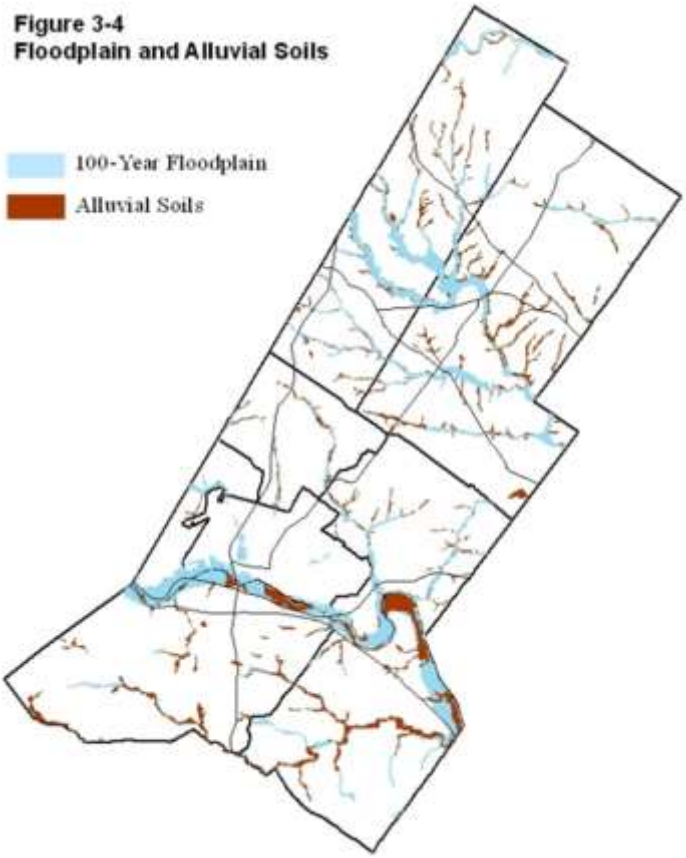
As shown in **Figure 3-3**, several of these farms have chosen to sell agricultural easements to the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program and to the Chester County Agricultural Preservation Easement program. Unlike farms in an ASA, Preserved Farms have sold the right to build non-agricultural buildings. This land must remain in farming in perpetuity. There are currently 3,993 acres of preserved farmland in the Region.

Alluvial, Hydric and Other Soils Least Suitable for Development

Alluvial soils have been deposited by flowing water and are often, but not always, located in floodplain areas.

Their texture and composition make them unstable. In addition, they often function as aquifer recharge areas. These characteristics make alluvial soils important to protect from encroachment and are among the least suitable soils for development. **Figure 3-4** shows the locations of the Region's alluvial soils and 100-year floodplain.

Figure 3-4
Floodplain and Alluvial Soils



Hydric soils are periodically wet soils. Soils with major hydric components are conservative indicators of potential wetlands, but not all hydric soils support the growth of wetland vegetation. Other soils may have hydric components in specific locations, such as depressions, drainage ways, and alluvial soils. The Region's hydric soils are detailed in **Figure 3-5** on page 36.

Other soils limit development because of their poor drainage, shallow high water table, and slow rates of permeability and run-off. These soils constrain the effectiveness of on-lot sewage disposal because of their wet characteristics, but may be otherwise be developable with appropriate engineering, technology and construction practices.

Made Land

Another important soil type for the Region is "made land." “Made land” consists of areas where earth moving during land development has removed or altered the characteristics of the original soil. Pottstown and other historic population centers in the Region have substantial areas of this soil. From a planning standpoint it is valuable to utilize these disturbed areas for redevelopment in order to minimize the impacts of development on the Region’s land resources.

Hydrology

Water is a critical natural resource and as growth occurs in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region it is proving to be a very valuable resource. The geology and climate of the Region combine to create surface and groundwater systems. As the Region's precipitation reaches the earth's surface it will evaporate, infiltrate into the earth, or become surface runoff as it continues through the water cycle. Planning primarily focuses on infiltration and surface runoff and their effects. These systems are detailed here.

Surface Waters

Watersheds

A large, diabase ridge located in the northern sections of Upper and Lower Pottsgrove and running along the southern boundaries of Douglass and New Hanover townships separates the majority of the Region into two main watersheds. Douglass and New Hanover townships, mostly north of the ridge, are located in the Perkiomen Watershed, which includes the Swamp Creek and its tributaries. The area south of the ridge in Lower, Upper and West Pottsgrove townships, North and East Coventry townships and Pottstown Borough are located within the Schuylkill River Watershed, with the exception of a few

Figure 3-5
Wetlands and Hydric Soils

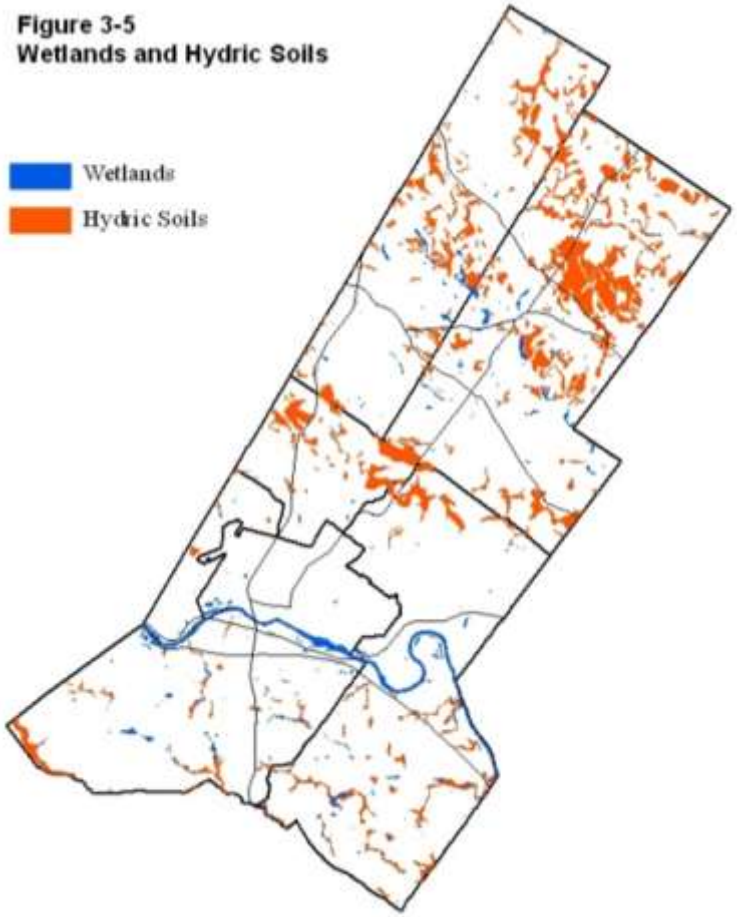


Figure 3-6
Drainage Basins

relatively small areas in the southern portions of North and East Coventry within the French Creek Watershed.

A drainage basin is an area drained by, or contributing water to a body of water. The term drainage basin is synonymous with watershed. The drainage basins that encompass the Pottstown Metropolitan Region are shown in **Figure 3-6**.

Rivers, Streams and Creeks

The Pottstown Region's rivers, streams and creeks are the most visible parts of the Region's hydrology. These waterways are fed from three sources: direct runoff, groundwater and sewage treatment effluent. Statewide water quality standards are established in Title 25 PA Code Chapter 93 as required by the Federal Clean Streams Act to protect designated water uses. These designations given to the Region's waterways indicate their value for the protection and propagation of aquatic life. Streams designated WWF (Warm Water Fishery) possess a basic level of quality that supports fish species, flora, and fauna such as bass that are indigenous to a warm-water habitat. The streams designated CWF (Cold Water Fishery) support fish species, flora, and fauna such as trout that are indigenous to a cold-water habitat. Other streams are designated TSF (Trout Stocking Fishery), which can support stocked trout, other fish species, and additional flora and fauna that are indigenous to cold-water habitat for a limited period of time.

Waterways that exceed standard quality may receive a HQ-High Quality designation. These streams have a quality above the levels necessary to support the propagation of fish, shellfish, wildlife and recreation in and on the water. The highest quality designation for a stream is EV– Exceptional Value Waters.

Streams of the Region located in the Perkiomen Basin are designated TSF (Trout Stock Fisheries), with the exception of the West Branch of the Perkiomen, which is a CWF. The Schuylkill River and unnamed tributaries are considered WWFs The Sprogels and Sanatoga Sub-Basins are also WWFs. The Manatawney Creek is a Cold CWF. In Chester County, the quality of the streams is higher most likely due to more limited development in those drainage basins. The Pigeon Creek and Stony Run are both designated HQ—TSF and the French Creek is a HQ—CWF.

Wetlands

Wetlands are valuable regional water features because of their critical ecosystems and important storage areas for surface and groundwater. Wetlands are identified by the presence of hydric soils, surface water and wetland vegetation. The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, generally identifies wetlands one acre in size and larger. **Figure 3-5** shows the location of these wetlands along with other hydric soils in the Pottstown Region. Riverine or palustrine wetlands are typical wetlands adjacent to rivers and streams in the Region. These types of wetlands are important since they filter out impurities in stormwater flowing into streams.

Groundwater

Groundwater behaves much like surface water, flowing like a stream, only much slower. The quantity and quality of groundwater depends on the type of bedrock formation. The groundwater characteristics of each geology type are listed below:

Brunswick Formation - This is a relatively porous formation that is considered a reliable source of small to moderate quantities of groundwater. Brunswick shale has been reported to yield 100 gallons of water per minute from wells drilled more than 200 feet deep. Nonetheless, groundwater yields from this formation are highly variable. Secondary openings such as joints and fractures are key to adequate groundwater flow.

Diabase Formation - Diabase has some fractures near the surface that allows minimal absorption of water. Groundwater movement within diabase is slow and the formation is notorious for low well yields, having a median yield of five gallons per minute. Fracture zones, sometimes represented by stream valleys or gullies, provide the best locations for wells in diabase areas.

Hammer Creek Conglomerate Formation – This formation is known for its good water bearing capabilities. Its permeable rates are moderate. The groundwater yields of the formation are sufficient to support low density residential development. Depending on the depth, its well yields range from 20 to 100 gallons per minute, with the median being 35 gallons per minute. The water quality is generally acidic, soft, with low amounts of dissolved solids.

Lockatong Formation - This is a poor aquifer due to its porosity and permeability rates. Lockatong yields smaller water supplies for domestic use, 5 to 15 gallons per minute. The water from Lockatong can be highly mineralized and hard. Lockatong also has very poor septic absorption capacity.

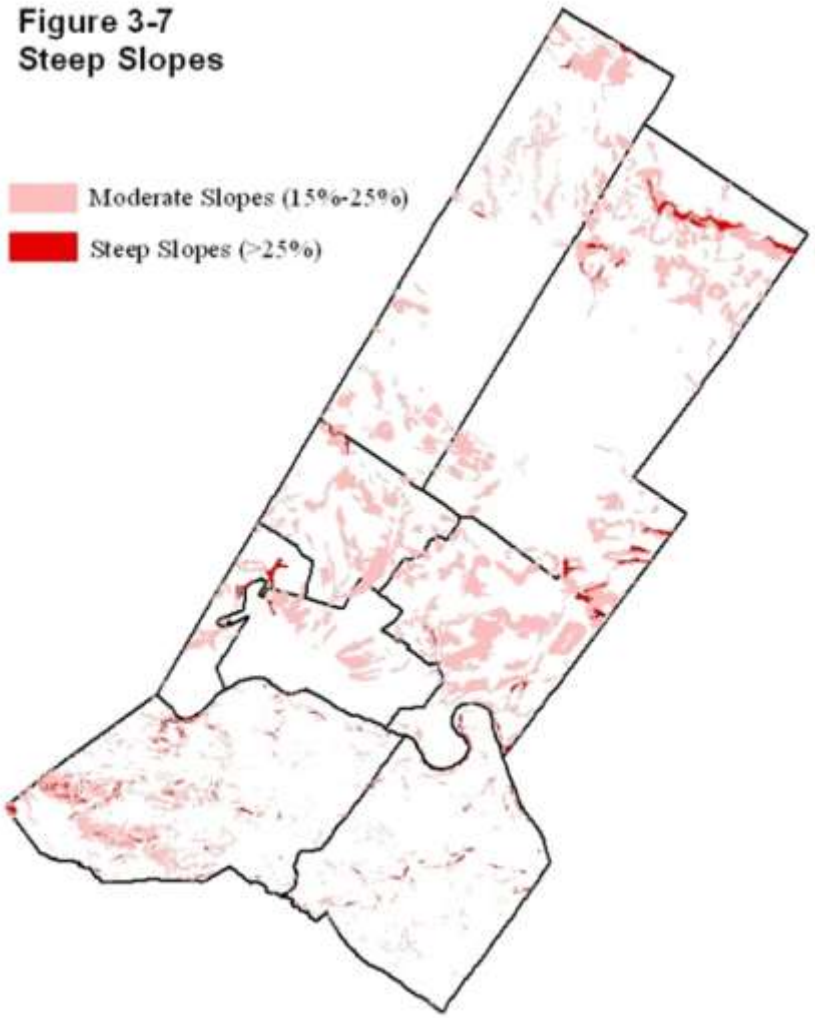
Limestone Fanglomerate - Not a significant formation in the Region that affects groundwater.

Aquifer Recharge

Maintaining the infiltration of water into the groundwater supply is a significant planning issue for conserving the quantity and quality of water of the Region's groundwater and surface waters. Excessive impervious surfaces, such as roads, parking lots, and buildings, created by development can substantially lower infiltration compared to undeveloped land. Prime aquifer recharge areas, such as faults and seeps in the bedrock are often in areas that are steeply sloped, heavily wooded, or located in areas of hydric and alluvial soils. The more natural constraints located in the recharge areas, the more likely these areas can be preserved through ordinances or innovative development techniques. Measures should be taken to preserve these sites in their natural state, or at least minimize the intrusion of impervious surface coverage.

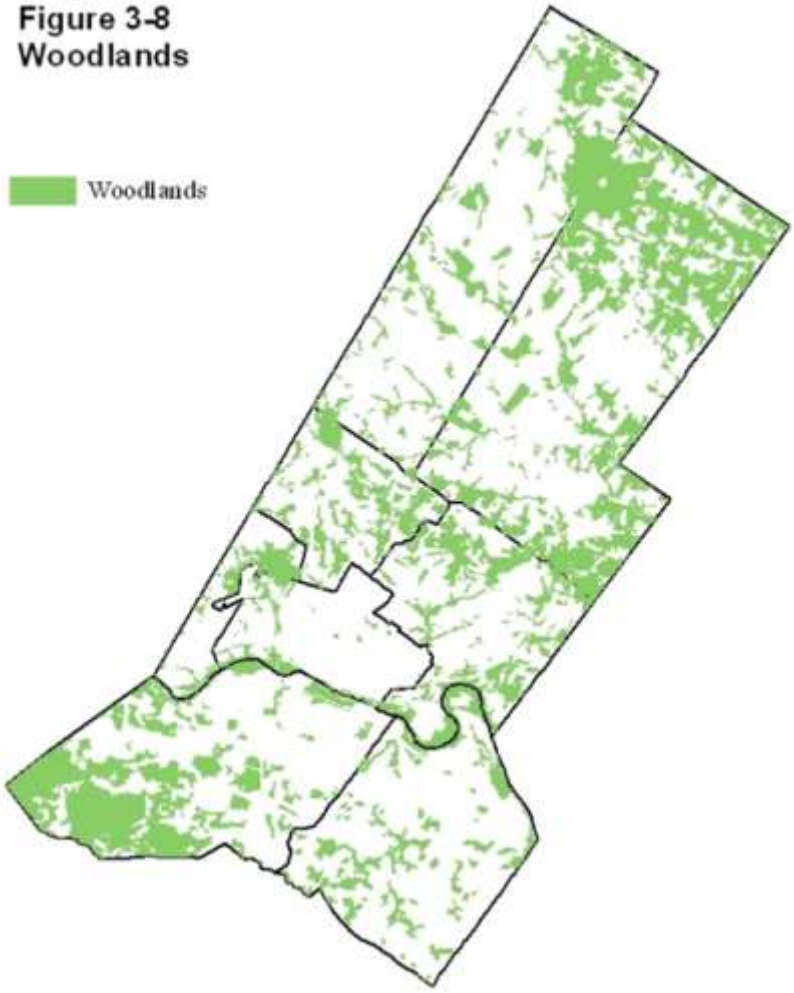
Steep Slopes

Land with a slope of 15 percent or greater is generally considered steeply sloped. These areas of the Region shown in Figure 3-7 are considered environmentally sensitive areas. Generally, as slope increases the depth of topsoil and its ability to support structures decreases and the potential for erosion increases. This means that steeply sloped areas are often only suitable for low intensity uses. Minimal disturbance of these sloped areas is preferred in order to prevent erosion, increased flooding, and water pollution. Steep slope environments also support unique plants and wildlife that are part of the Region’s biodiversity and often they offer dramatic landscapes that define community character and recreational opportunities. Concentrations of steep slopes, particularly in North Coventry, Upper and Lower Pottsgrove Townships, as well as the northern portions of Douglass and New Hanover Townships create dramatic terrain and high points throughout the Region.



Woodlands and Other Vegetation

Figure 3-8
Woodlands



Woodlands, particularly large contiguous tracts, are both functional and aesthetic. Woodlands prevent soil erosion, buffer surface waters, and provide habitat for wildlife. This not only benefits the wildlife but also offers recreational and educational opportunities for the Pottstown Metropolitan Region.

Soils, slopes and solar orientation influence the type of species found within woodlands. The soils on north-facing slopes tend to be cooler and moister than south-facing slopes due to less exposure to sunlight. More softwoods (pines, hemlocks) mixed with some hardwoods such as beech and black walnut tend to be found in these locations. The warmer, drier southern slopes are usually more populated with hardwoods (tulip poplar, ash, and oak).

Several hundred years of clearing and agricultural production, as well as more recent suburban development have significantly reduced the woodlands of the Region. There remains a large band of woodlands running from West Pottsgrove to New Hanover, which is part of the forests of the larger Highlands Region. The area of woodlands in northern Douglass and New Hanover is also part of this Highlands Region. The large stand of woodlands in southwestern corner of North Coventry Township is one edge of the Hopewell Big Woods.

The stream valleys and hedgerows of the Pottstown Region provide “corridors” of woodlands and other vegetation that supply cover for wildlife habitats and migration. They also add to the scenic rural character and reduce soil erosion by slowing wind and water. The Region has many of these woodland corridors, also called riparian corridors, along its creeks, including the Swamp, Sprogels and Pigeon Creeks, and along roads and property lines. Separate, unconnected stands of woodlands are also located throughout the Region. These scattered woodlands are often on land that is too steep, too rocky, or too wet for agriculture.

Unique Natural Features

Within the Pottstown Metropolitan Region there are special natural features that add to the Region's biodiversity and make its communities distinct. Many of the Region's important features are identified in the Natural Areas Inventory compiled and written by the Pennsylvania Office of The Nature Conservancy. Sites mapped in the inventory included Sites of Statewide Significance and Sites of Local Significance. Sites of Statewide Significance contain species (plants or animals) of concern (rare, threatened, or endangered), high quality natural communities (habitats) and significant geologic features. Sites of Local Significance include sites that have high species diversity and may harbor rare species, sites with uncommon vegetation types for the county, or sites with potential to recover to natural community status (e.g., a forest that is returning to a more natural state after selected logging). Following is a synopsis of the Inventory and general management recommendations to help protect these rare plants, animals, and natural communities. The following list is not exhaustive, and other important natural features, such as the Hopewell Bi g Woods, should continue to be protected and managed using best practices.

Sites of Statewide Significance

Niantic Ne Woods *(Douglass Township and Upper Hanover Township)*

A fair population of a rare wildflower is found in this diabase woodland along the West Branch of the Perkiomen Creek. The site also supports a diverse herb layer including sweet cicely, smooth yellow violet, and false solomon's seal. Maintaining the forest cover will help to minimize invasion of exotic species and continue to provide the shaded habitat required by the rare wildflower. Disturbance of the herb layer should also be minimized. Deer browse is also a potential problem.

Deep Creek Marsh *(New Hanover Township)*

A good quality population (over 1000 plants) of sedge of special concern was found in the wet meadows and marshland along Deep Creek. Change in hydrology or water quality would be detrimental to the habitat and since the sedge needs open habitat, succession of a woody plant community could eventually crowd out the species.

Ringing Rocks *(Lower Pottsgrove Township)*

This "boulder belt," located off of Keim Road within Ringing Rocks Park, is identified as a significant scenic geologic feature in the state (Geyer & Bolles 1979). It gets its name from the fact that various boulders ring out different sounds when struck with a hammer. The site is bordered by woodland which enhances the scenic and education value of the site.

Sites of Local Significance

Henning Road Woods *(New Hanover Township)*

This site is within the Deep Creek drainage basin and contains a well-developed mixed-hardwood forest community on steep slopes strewn with diabase boulders. At least 13 species of trees, including red maple, oaks, ash, beech, hickory, flowering dogwood, sassafras and pawpaw, are found on the site. The site also contains a well-defined shrub strata and diverse herb layer and includes a section of younger forest that serves as a buffer to the older hardwood section.

New Road Swamp *(New Hanover Township)*

Located north of New Hanover Square Road, this site is a locally significant example of a floodplain forest community. It provides habitat for pin oak, elm, white ash and red maple, with a well developed shrub and herb layer, including spicebush, viburnum, sedges, false nettle, violets, Jack-in-the-pulpit. The site also provides good breeding habitat for a variety of amphibian species. Maintaining the forest canopy will help prevent the spread of weedy species and maintain the integrity of the community as a whole.

Laughing Waters Hemlocks *(New Hanover and Upper Frederick Townships)*

This site includes older growth hemlocks on steep slopes along Swamp Creek within Laughing Waters Girl Scout Camp. Severe erosion from heavy foot traffic is a threat to the longevity of the hemlock. Additional trail maintenance and rerouting of the high use trails could help to protect this natural area. The site also includes a young but healthy hardwood forest of sugar maple, shagbark hickory, and ash.

Glasgow Railroad Woods *(Pottstown Borough and West Pottsgrove Township)*

These woods are identified as two separate sites with locally significant flora along the Manatawny Creek and an adjacent railroad. Ivy and other exotics have crowded out some of the habitat. The woodland buffer should be retained to discourage further encroachment of weedy species.

Historic Sites and Buildings

Globalization and new economic patterns have dramatically altered and “standardized” the landscape in many communities. With these rapid changes, buildings, objects and places that remind us of our past and connect us to our historic environment are considered important community resources.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission maintains a list of historic resources in Pennsylvania that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or that have been determined to be potentially eligible for the National Register. **Figures 3-9** and **3-10** on pages 44 and 45 indicate

the names and location of these properties. Numerous other structures and places in the Region may be considered historic, especially within the Region's villages and the Borough of Pottstown, but they have not been listed on the National Register and are contained in local surveys and planning documents.

Historic Districts

In addition to the many designated individual historic sites and buildings, several areas in the Pottstown Region have been recognized as historic districts. To be eligible or listed for historic designation, a historic district must have a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. As the historic center of the Region Pottstown Borough has a concentration of these districts representing various historical themes and features. The following are eligible or listed historic districts in the Pottstown Region.

Old Pottstown

This National Historic District includes the downtown of Pottstown Borough. It contains small and large commercial buildings, the early churches of Pottstown, the houses of Pottstown's early wealthy citizens and community leaders, the homes of ordinary persons, buildings of fraternal organizations, some industrial and warehouse structures, and government buildings. The environment is an expression of the period of great expansion and prosperity in Pottstown and western Montgomery County. The District's wide variety of architecture spans an era from 1850 to 1930 and includes late Federal, Victorian, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Richardsonian, and late Victorian.

High Street

Pottstown's first suburban neighborhood is represented by this Registered National Historic District following High Street in Pottstown Borough. The establishment of a trolley line eastward along High Street allowed growth to spill beyond the borders of the Borough's original boundaries. The large houses of industrialists, business owners and managers, professionals, and civic leaders are found along the wide, tree-lined street. There are many 2 1/2 story single homes interspersed with large, semi-detached houses and a few smaller single homes. The landmark Grubb Mansion anchors the east end of the District. The architecture generally spans from 1875 to 1935 and includes Victorian, Late Victorian, Gothic Revival, Four-Square, and Classic Revival styles.

Glasgow Village

Glasgow Village located on the edge of Pottstown Borough near West Pottsgrove is eligible but is not designated as a National Historic District. The area represents a mid-19th century working community centered on the former Glasgow Iron Works. Still to be seen are the homes of the ironmaster, workers, and managers. A stone water tower also remains. A number of the individual buildings would also quality as architectural landmarks. The architecture generally spans from 1830 to 1870 and includes Federal, Queen Anne and Victorian Period styles.

Figure 3-9
Historic Sites and Districts

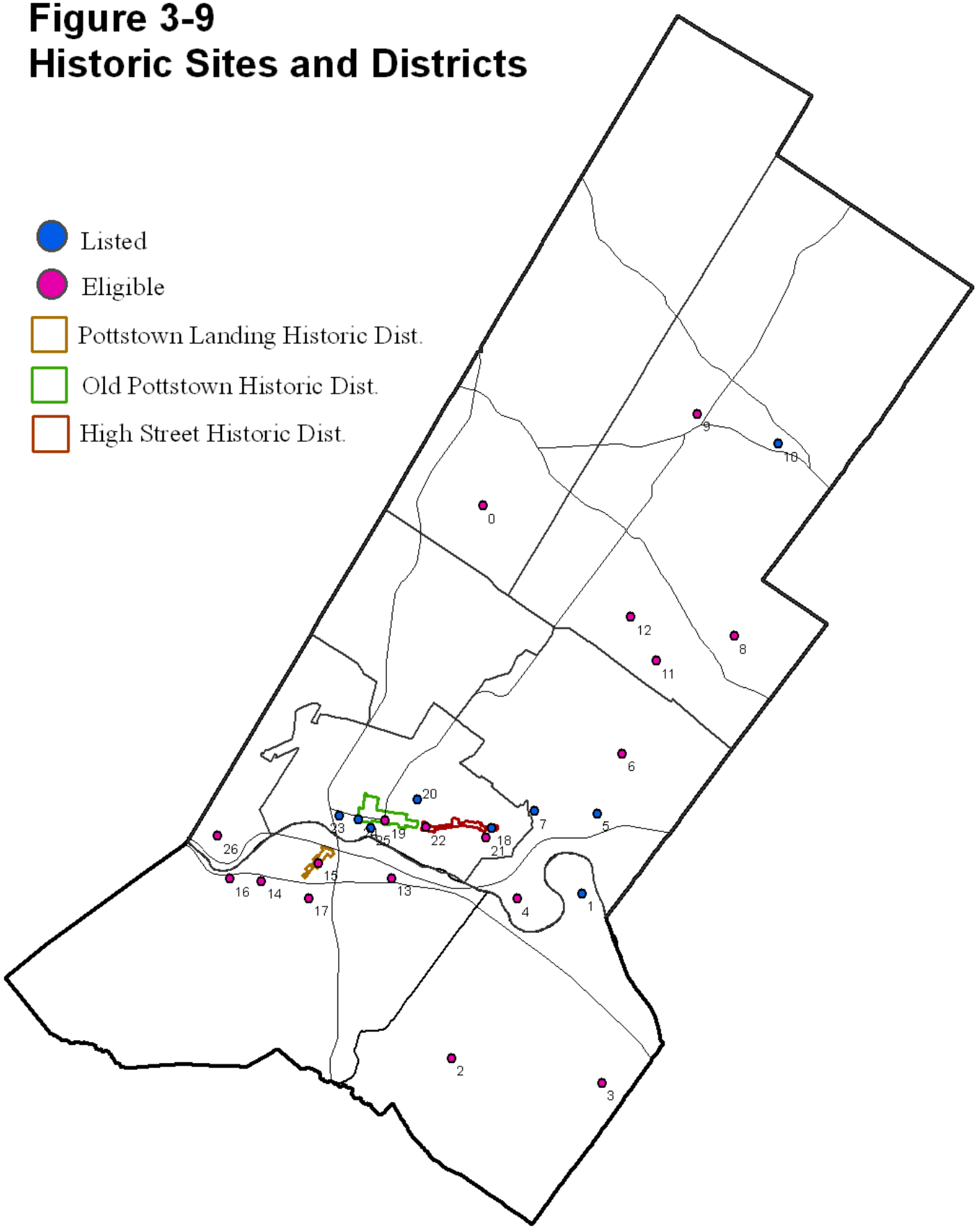


Figure 3-10: Regional Historic Sites and Buildings

Map ID #	Location	Historic Resource	Address	Status
0	Douglass	Gilbert Farm	1447 Grosser Road	Eligible
1	East Coventry	River Bend Farm	Sanatoga Road	**Listed**
2	East Coventry	Daniel H Kulp House	131 Maack Road	Eligible
3	East Coventry	John Mattis Farm	250 Kolb Road	Eligible
4	Lower Pottsgrove	Jacobs Aircraft Engine Company Property	351-375 Armand Hammer Boulevard	Eligible
5	Lower Pottsgrove	Sanatoga Union Sunday School	2341 East High Street	**Listed**
6	Lower Pottsgrove	Saylor Property	1559 North Pleasant View Road	Eligible
7	Lower Pottsgrove	Sunnybrook	99 Sunnybrook Road	**Listed**
8	New Hanover	Elliott Farm	North side of Fagleysville Road/ Wagner Road	Eligible
9	New Hanover	Layfield Mill Complex	Ludwig and Layfield Roads	Eligible
10	New Hanover	Long Meadow Farm - Plank House Barn	Route 73, 1/2 mile Northwest of Frederick	**Listed**
11	New Hanover	McGee Tract House and Outbuilding	Wassmer Street West Side	Eligible
12	New Hanover	Parsonage, Falkner Swamp Reformed Church	117 Cross Road	Eligible
13	New Hanover	John Riegner House; J. Yerger Farm	2481 Romig Road	Eligible
14	North Coventry	Ira Gruber Estate; Stover House	Schuylkill Road PA	Eligible
15	North Coventry	Laurel Locks Farm	PA 724 North and South of PA 724	Eligible
16	North Coventry	Shaner's Bakery	482 Laurelwood Road	Eligible
17	North Coventry	Walters Tract Subdivision	1338 West Schuylkill Road, PA 724	Eligible
18	North Coventry	Farmers Hall	Laurelwood Road	Eligible
19	Pottstown	William Grubb Mansion	1304 East High Street	**Listed**
20	Pottstown	Hoffman's Store	236 High Street	Eligible
21	Pottstown	Jefferson School	Warren Street, Lincoln Street, Hale Street, Beech Street	**Listed**
22	Pottstown	W.W. Rupert Elementary School	1230 South Street	Eligible
23	Pottstown	Henry Potts House	720 High Street	Eligible
24	Pottstown	Pottsgrove Mansion	High Street, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, West of Pottstown	**Listed**
25	Pottstown	Pottstown Railroad Station	High Street between Hanover and York Streets	**Listed**
26	Pottstown	Pottstown Roller Mill	South and Hanover Streets	**Listed**
27	West Pottsgrove	Gudebrod Brothers Silk Company	Old Reading Pike	Eligible

Fourth Street

This area in Pottstown Borough is eligible but is not designated as a National Historic District. It represents one of the earliest expansions of the urban core beyond the original boundaries of the Borough. This pleasant residential area features two-story, modest-sized, semidetached brick homes. The grid street pattern reinforces the regularity and consistent quality of its structures. The architecture generally spans from 1865 to 1910 and includes Federal, Late Federal, Gothic Revival and Four Square styles.

Charlotte Street

Pottstown's second suburban area is represented by this District, which is eligible but is not listed as a National Historic District. It is primarily a residential area. The establishment of a trolley line allowed for the development of a number of fine country homes and the Pottstown Hospital, north of the original Borough. Development was in the form of 2-1/2-story and 2-story semi-detached and single homes. A scattering of corner stores and the Jefferson Hotel were also developed. There are several large homes of landmark quality located along Charlotte Street, and the former four-story factory of the Merkle Light Motorcycle Company is located on Hanover Street. The architecture generally spans from 1865 to 1925 and includes Late Federal, Late Queen Anne, Mansard, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Four-Square, Victorian Period, and Commercial styles.

Lincoln Avenue

This historic district is a hillside community with a mix of 2 and 2-1/2-story, semi-detached, attached, and detached homes nestled around the Jefferson Elementary School and several churches in Pottstown Borough. It is eligible, but is not designated as a National Historic District. Both frame and brick masonry structures are found here. There are no landmark structures, but the overall level of architectural integrity is good. The architecture generally spans from 1870 to 1910, and styles include Late Federal and Late Queen Anne.

The Hill School

The campus of the Hill School in Pottstown Borough has a number of outstanding edifices that represent the development of this private educational institution. Buildings range from one-story cottages to four-story dormitories. Buildings are of brick, stone, and stucco. The majority of buildings would be eligible for landmark status. The architecture generally

ranges from 1850 to 1940, and styles include Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Collegiate Gothic, and Medieval Revival. There are also several modern-style structures of note. This district is eligible but is not designated as a National Historic District.

East End

This area of Pottstown Borough is primarily residential and represents a suburb of the 1920s. It is eligible but not designated as a National Historic District. Nearly all the houses are semi-detached, uniform in style, size, and color, and laid out in a regular pattern. The regularity of the architecture is reinforced by the rhythmic spacing of street trees. The uniformity of the environment makes it sensitive to even the slightest of irregularities. The architecture generally spans from 1910 to the late 1920s and its styles include Bungalow and Four Square.

Iron Works

This district in Pottstown Borough is eligible but is not designated as a National Historic District. It is primarily a residential area, and also contains a foundry and several small industries. The neighborhood developed along with the foundry and the nearby iron works. The semi-detached houses and row homes provided shelter for those who worked at the steel mill on the other side of the tracks or at the foundry. The foundry complex provides an interesting architectural focus for the area. The architecture generally spans from 1875 to 1920 and includes Victorian and Late Victorian styles.

South Side

This location with an interesting mix of architecture embodies much of the industrial history of Pottstown. Early industry along the river and later industrial development along the railroad provide the basis for this residential area. The semi-detached houses and row homes provided shelter for the mill and railroad workers. As an early ethnic neighborhood of German craftsmen, the area later evolved into homes for Eastern Europeans. A variety of industrial buildings, churches, and modest homes provide interest. Company-owned housing can still be seen. Landmarks include churches and mill buildings. The architecture generally spans a period from 1870 to 1900 and styles that include Late Federal, Victorian, and an Eastern European church. This area is eligible but not designated as a National Historic District.

Falkners Swamp Rural Historic District

This district covers a large rural area in western Montgomery County, including parts of Douglass, Limerick, Lower and Upper Pottsgrove, New Hanover, and Upper and Lower Frederick townships. This recognized cultural landscape is based on its agrarian heritage, with numerous contributing vistas and vernacular buildings from colonial times through to modern structures.

Fricks Locks

Fricks Locks Village is located along the Schuylkill Canal in the northeast portion of East Coventry Township off of Upper Fricks Lock Road. The name Fricks comes from John Frick who owned the land that became Fricks Village. In 1815 the Schuylkill Navigation System was chartered. In 1820 a group of men from the navigation company spoke with John Frick about buying land from him for the new waterway. He did not live to see the first barge travel the canal. Fricks Locks Village became a center for commerce and transportation along the canal. It was an active village until 1968 when it was taken over as part of the development of PECO's Limerick Nuclear Power Plant. Today, the village is part of the National Register of Historic Places.

Pottstown Landing

The Village of Pottstown Landing located in North Coventry Township is a Registered National Historic District. Pottstown Landing developed along Laurelwood Road on the north side of Schuylkill Road (now Route 724). The older homes are found on the east side of Laurelwood with the oldest homes located at the north end of the road near the river. Pottstown Landing was believed to be the location of one of the first trading posts in the Region. The community developed further as a result of the opening of the Schuylkill Canal. A landing was built to supply the boats on the canal with coal, lumber, and iron products produced in Pottstown. The community also included a feed mill, tavern, and general store. The oldest homes in the village are in the English Colonial and Federal styles, while later homes (those constructed during the Victorian era) exhibit Gothic Revival and Queen Anne architectural features. Several bungalows dating from the early 1900's can also be found. An adaptive reuse of a barn (into an ice cream shop) anchors the southern end of the village.

Conclusion

The natural and historic features of the Region are plentiful and diverse. As suburban growth expands in the Region it will be increasingly important to protect these resources. Directing this growth into designated growth areas will conserve important natural resources, promote reinvestment in the Region's historic places, and provide a balance of growth and preservation in the Region.

Concentrations of valuable natural resources are located around the Region's Diabase ridgelines. The terrain of these areas contains many of the Region's steep slopes, which are covered with significant portions of the Region's woodlands. The thinner soil layers and Diabase geology in these areas also make building and installation of infrastructure more difficult. These places should be a high priority for preservation in the Region through restrictive land development regulations and preservation

ordinances. Public infrastructure should not be extended into these areas in order to limit the intensity of development and on-site sewer and water facilities can maintain the balance of the local water supply.

The parts of the Region underlain by the Brunswick formation also include some of the best farmland in the Region. The characteristics of quality farmland: gently sloped, well-drained, and cleared of mature vegetation make these lands valuable for other land uses. With the Region directly located within the path of growth it is important for its communities to strategically plan for how these agricultural lands will be used in the future. It is critical that municipal comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and 537 plans be consistent so that development follows the vision for the Region and the individual municipality in these highly developable farming areas.

Limiting the amount of imperious cover and better managing stormwater through improved development methods will help protect the Region's groundwater supplies and prevent damage to the Region's waterways. Aquifer recharge areas in one community often supply groundwater to another community. Therefore, regional cooperation and management of development is needed to preserve the Region's aquifers and other water resources.

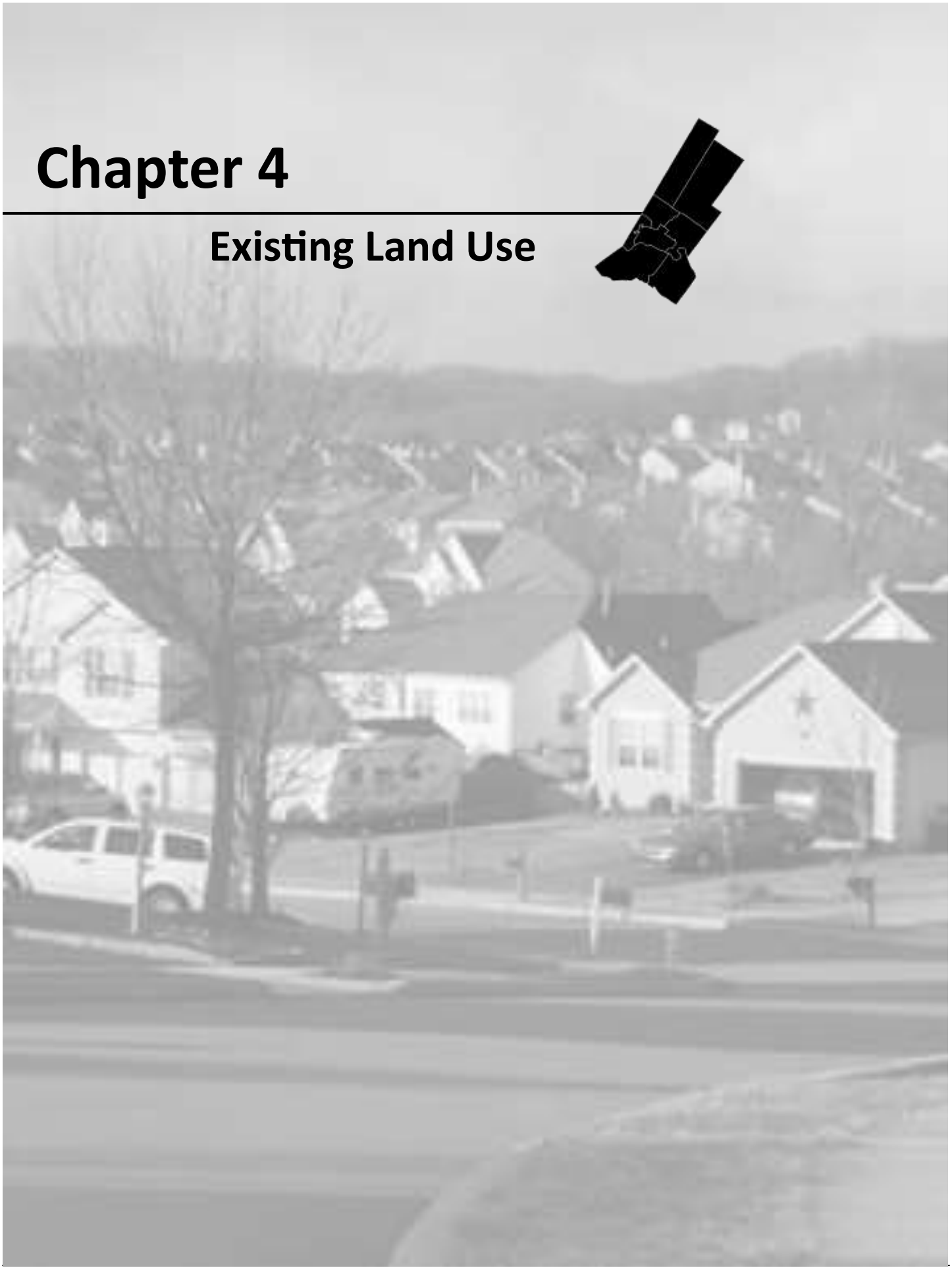
The Region's stream corridors are another strategic resource for preservation. These riparian corridors influence groundwater recharge, maintain water quality and provide recreation connections in the Region. One priority example of this is the Schuylkill River Greenway initiative.

Preservation of the Pottstown Region's natural and historic resources can be done together with new development. Up-to-date land development regulations and preservation ordinances are a vital part of achieving both goals.

Historic resources can also often be saved and sometimes adaptively reused. The Region's municipalities can combine both regulatory and non-regulatory tools to preserve valuable natural and historic environments.

Chapter 4

Existing Land Use



Introduction

Any planning for the Pottstown Metropolitan Region must incorporate the existing landscape as a major factor for the future. This Chapter will focus on the existing characteristics of land uses within the Region through an "overview" of its general land uses. From highly developed, urban neighborhoods to open, rolling farmlands, the landscape of this Region is very diverse. These land use patterns have been developing in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region for centuries, and while the landscape is constantly changing, there is a development pattern of existing structures that influences change.

Categories of Existing Land Use

Land use can be broken down into three main categories, residential, non-residential, and agriculture/open space/undeveloped, as shown in **Figure 4-1**. There are as many ways to classify land as there are types of uses to put onto the land. However, this Plan defines 15 sub-categories.

Six categories involve non-residential uses, five categories involve different types of residential development, and four categories represent those that can be classified as open space. **See Figure 4-7** at the end of this chapter for a map depicting the Region's existing land use.

Figure 4-1: General Categories of Existing Land Use

Category	Acres	% of Total
Residential (All Types)	20,229.30	41.56%
Non-Residential (All Types)	5,291.71	10.87%
Agriculture, Undeveloped, Open Space	23,153.57	47.57%
TOTAL	**48,674.57**	**100.00%**

Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessment

The designations given to each property were based initially on land use classifications used by the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals (BOA) and the Chester County Board of Assessment Appeals, which are responsible for assigning categories for taxing purposes. For the purposes of land use planning, the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) has modified these categories. For example, private golf courses are categorized as commercial land for taxing purposes, but are considered private open space for land use planning.

Summary of Land Use

The percentage of land that falls within each of the three main land use categories is shown in **Figure 4-1**. A slight majority at 47.6% is in the agriculture/open space/undeveloped category. The next highest at 41.5% is Residential.

Figure 4-2 identifies the 15 land use sub-categories established by MCPC and the corresponding acreage percentage for each in the Pottstown Region. This breakdown presents a more detailed picture of the agriculture/open space/undeveloped lands category shown in Figure 4-1. This category includes agriculture at 27.8%, undeveloped at 13.1%, private open space at 3.3% and public open space at 3.3%.

Of the land that is categorized agriculture, a significant portion is permanently protected through the purchase of development rights; however, there still remains a great deal of "unprotected" farm land that can potentially be used for future development.

The single family detached land use sub-category, the one most commonly associated with suburban development, contains approximately 28.3% of the Region's land. Country Residence, or those single family detached parcels with 5 acres of land or more come next, at 11.4%.

Figure 4-2: Specific Categories of Existing Land Use

General Category	Specific Category	Acres	Percent-age
Residential	Multifamily	291.8	0.6%
	Single Family Attached, Twins, and Duplexes	541.4	1.1%
	Mobile Home Park	67.8	0.1%
	Single Family Detached	13,784.9	28.3%
	Country Residence	5,543.4	11.4%
Non-Residential	Mixed Use	336.9	0.7%
	Retail	1,173.1	2.4%
	Office	130.5	0.3%
	Industrial	1,159.5	2.4%
	Institutional	2,001.6	4.1%
	Utilities	490.1	1.0%
Agriculture, Undeveloped, Open Space	Undeveloped	6,384.5	13.1%
	Public Open Space	1,627.2	3.3%
	Private Open Space	1,600.5	3.3%
	Agriculture	13,541.4	27.8%
TOTAL		48,674.6	100%

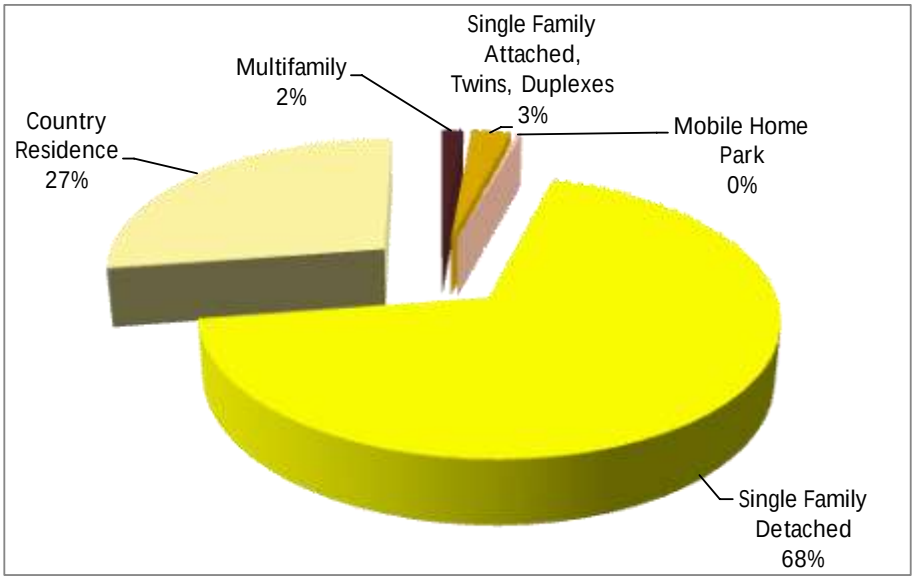
Residential Categories

The graph in **Figure 4-3** shows the 20,229 acres of residential land in the Region divided into the 5 land use categories. These categories are defined according to the number and arrangement of dwelling units.

A dwelling unit is defined as one or more rooms intended to be occupied as separate living quarters with individual cooking, sleeping and bathroom facilities in the unit. These categories include all lots that have been developed solely for the purpose of residential occupancy. Lots with both residential and nonresidential uses are counted in the Mixed Use category.

- **Country Residence**: A lot 5 acres or greater in size designed for and occupied exclusively as a residence for one family only and not attached to any other building or dwelling unit.
- **Single Family Detached (SFD)**: A lot less than 5 acres in size containing a building designed for and occupied exclusively as a residence for one family only and not attached to any other building or dwelling units.
- **Single-Family Attached (SFA)**: A dwelling unit with independent outside access. SFA units have party walls in common. Examples of SFA - townhomes, row homes, triplexes and quadruplexes. For this particular plan, we've also grouped Twins/Duplexes into the SFA category. Both Montgomery County's Board of Assessment data which provides land use classifications for Montgomery County municipalities and DVRPC, which provides land use classifications for Chester County identify rowhomes as "Single-Family Attached" and Twins/Duplexes a separate and distinct land use. However, the U.S. census Bureau classifies both rowhomes and twins as "Single-Family Attached" housing types. To avoid confusion and provide greater consistency between the land use and housing data for the Region, this land use chapter has incorporated Twins/Duplexes into the Single Family Attached category.
- **Multi-Family**: Dwelling units located in a detached residential building containing three or more dwelling units, usually apartments. They are usually multiple units in one building on one lot and the units are stacked on multiple floors having shared indoor or outdoor access and some common facilities, such as a swimming pool. Multi-family development is usually run under one owner or operating unit, as a rental or condominium property. Examples of Multi-Family: garden apartments, flats and multifamily conversions from single family homes.
- **Mobile Home Park**: A parcel of land that contains lots rented under one owner/operator, used for the placement of mobile homes. A mobile home park is a distinct classification identified by the Municipalities Planning Code. When mobile homes are placed on lots owned by the mobile home owners, they are considered single-family detached dwellings.

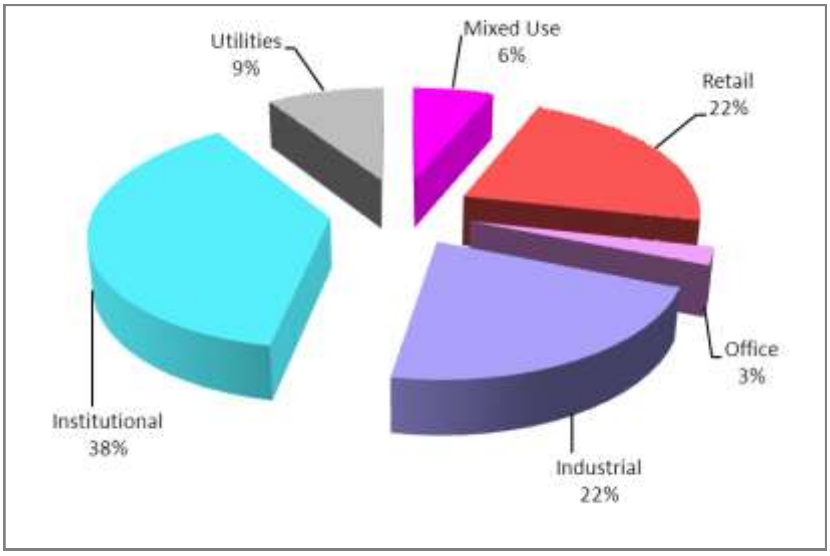
Figure 4-3: Existing Residential Units



Mixed Use and Non-Residential Categories

The graph in **Figure 4-4** divides the 5,291.7 acres of existing non-residential and mixed use lands of the Region among six categories.

Figure 4-4: Mixed-Use and Non-Residential categories



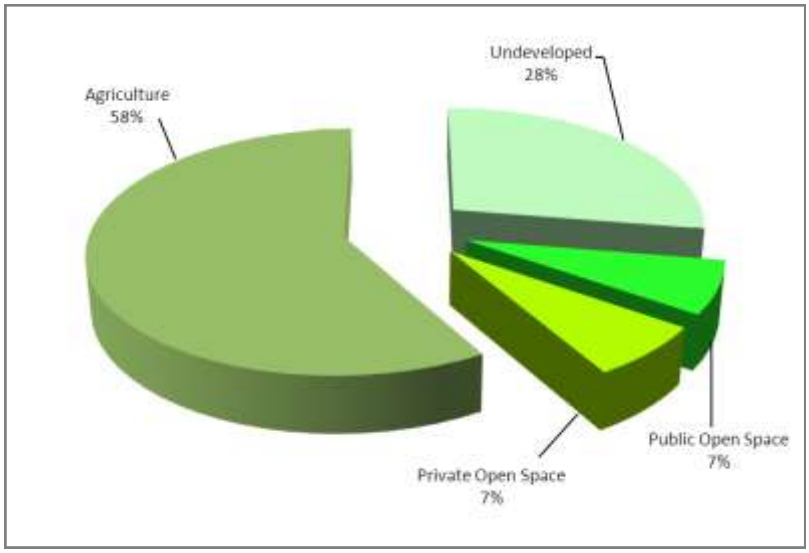
- **Mixed Use**:This land use category includes properties with more than one land use on them. Each parcel has one or more nonresidential uses and may include a residential component. These mixed uses are often combinations of stores and dwellings or stores and offices.
- **Retail**: Stores, restaurants, repair shops and garages, and a variety of other commercial uses frequented by the general public are included in this category. Among the largest and most recognizable retail developments are shopping centers and malls. Many retail businesses in Pottstown Borough are included in the mixed-use category because they share a building with offices or dwelling units.
- **Office**: Properties that are developed exclusively for office purposes as well as some miscellaneous uses, including animal hospitals, funeral homes, and banks are part of this category. Many office businesses in Pottstown Borough are included in the mixed-use category because they share a building with retail uses or dwelling units.
- **Industrial**: This category includes large industrial uses and a variety of smaller uses which are scattered throughout the Townships and Borough. "Heavy commercial" uses and junkyards are categorized industrial.
- **Institutional**: This includes uses from public and private schools to cemeteries, government uses, hospitals and other not-for-profit organizations, and local club meeting places.
- **Utilities**: This category includes uses that contain public utilities such as water and electricity. Examples of Utility uses are: electric transmission lines, water and sewer lines, and sewer plants. Rail lines can also be considered utilities. Note: not all utilities, such as electricity transmission lines are separated into the utility category, some are categorized as easements through properties classified according to the main use of the property.

Agriculture, Open Space, and Undeveloped Lands

The agriculture, open space and undeveloped land use categories account for a significant portion of the Region's total land area (47.5%). The chart in **Figure 4-5** divides these 23,153 acres into the following 4 categories.

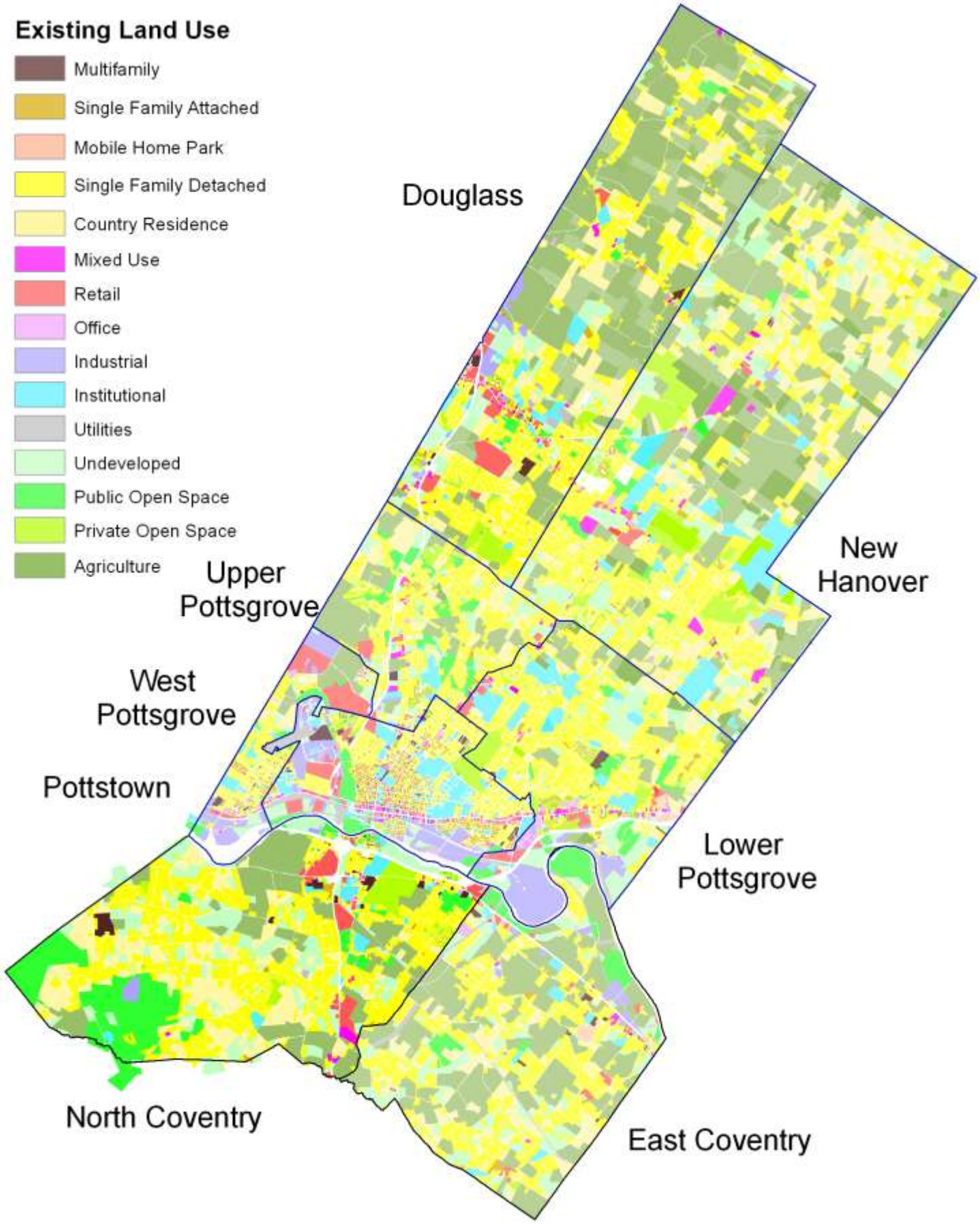
- **Undeveloped**: Many of these parcels are vacant land. The larger parcels are easily discernible as vacant, however there are many smaller vacant parcels that appear to be part of an adjoining developed parcel. All of these parcels have individual tax parcel numbers and are capable of being transferred to new owners as vacant lots, although some of the smaller parcels may not be large enough for independent development.
- **Agriculture**: These are parcels that are mainly used for agricultural practices. This category can include lands under Act 319, lands where development rights have been purchased by Montgomery or Chester Counties Farmland Preservation Programs or other organizations, farmland identified from aerial photography and input from municipal officials. Most of the parcels contain a farmstead, but agriculture is the dominant use of the land.
- **Public Open Space**: Public open space is considered to be permanently preserved open space. This category can include parks, recreation areas, and open space owned by a public agency.

Figure 4-5: Open Space, Agriculture, and Undeveloped Lands



- **Private Open Space**: This category contains land owned by private owners who can still develop their property according to what is permitted by zoning. This category includes golf courses, and not for profit organizations with sizable land holdings such as the Girl Scout camp in New Hanover.

Figure 4-6: Existing Land Use



Purposes of Data and Mapping

The table below, **Figure 4-7,** summarizes the existing land uses in all 15 categories for each of the Region's eight municipalities, and for the Region as a whole. The numbers document the amounts of land occupied by each use as of the latest Board of Assessment Appeals information collected from Montgomery and Chester Counties. The Region's land use is depicted by these 15 categories in the map on the previous page in **Figure 4-7.**

Figure 4-6: Acres by Land Use and Municipality

Acres	Douglass	East Coventry	Lower Pottsgrove	New Hanover	North Coventry	Pottstown	Upper Pottsgrove	West Pottsgrove	REGION
Multifamily	50	29	27	7	48	109	9	12	292
SFA, Twin, or Duplex	44	32	60	71	27	236	33	40	541
Mobile Home Park	0	25	33	10	0	0	0	0	68
Single Family Detached	2,276	1,915	1,775	3,524	2,277	605	1,110	303	13,785
Country Residence	1,101	678	288	2,080	974	0	359	64	5,543
Mixed Use	48	17	34	141	3	57	31	4	337
Retail	246	59	130	80	215	178	53	213	1,173
Office	7	16	51	10	2	30	3	12	130
Industrial	132	87	349	19	19	325	14	213	1,159
Institutional	186	96	373	592	221	359	115	58	2,002
Utilities	31	142	57	47	19	172	1	22	490
Undeveloped	612	787	591	1,568	2,192	170	340	124	6,385
Public Open Space	84	346	201	189	358	152	234	64	1,627
Private Open Space	203	7	248	800	166	114	62	1	1,600
Agriculture	4,293	2,324	397	4,187	1,561	0	620	161	13,541
TOTAL	9,310.41	6,561.53	4,612.61	13,324.35	8,081.49	2,506.51	2,984.29	1,291.88	48,674.20

Conclusion

The Borough of Pottstown and its surrounding villages formed as centers of commerce during the Pottstown Metropolitan Region's agrarian and industrial eras. In more recent times, suburbanization has led to approximately 39% of the Region's land being developed for lower density housing. Today, approximately 47.5 % of the Region's land area remains as agriculture/ open space/undeveloped. Some of these lands are permanently preserved for agriculture or parkland, but large areas of prime developable land exist in the Region.

The Region's past has created a diverse land use pattern that meets the variety of economic and social needs of the Region: from urban neighborhoods to rural farms, corner stores to the Coventry Mall, Route 422 to the Pottstown Airport, and small garages to large manufacturing facilities.

A fundamental planning consideration for the Region is how its remaining open and undeveloped land will be used in the future. This decision has major consequences for all of the Region's environmental, transportation, and other community systems. It also affects whether underutilized properties and revitalization initiatives in the Region's older communities will be successful.

Chapter 5

Future Land Use

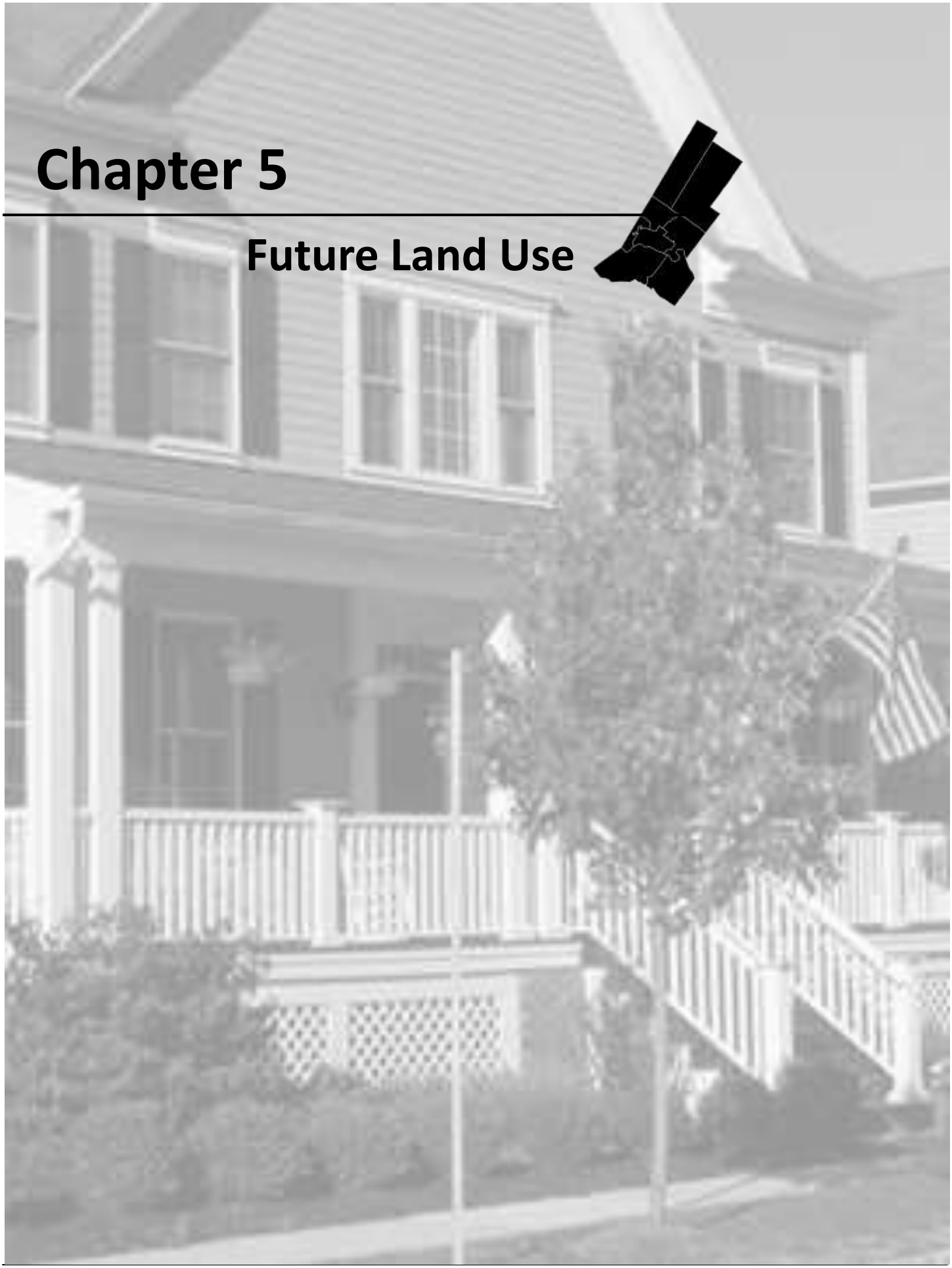


Figure 5-1 Pottstown Metropolitan Region Future Land Use Map

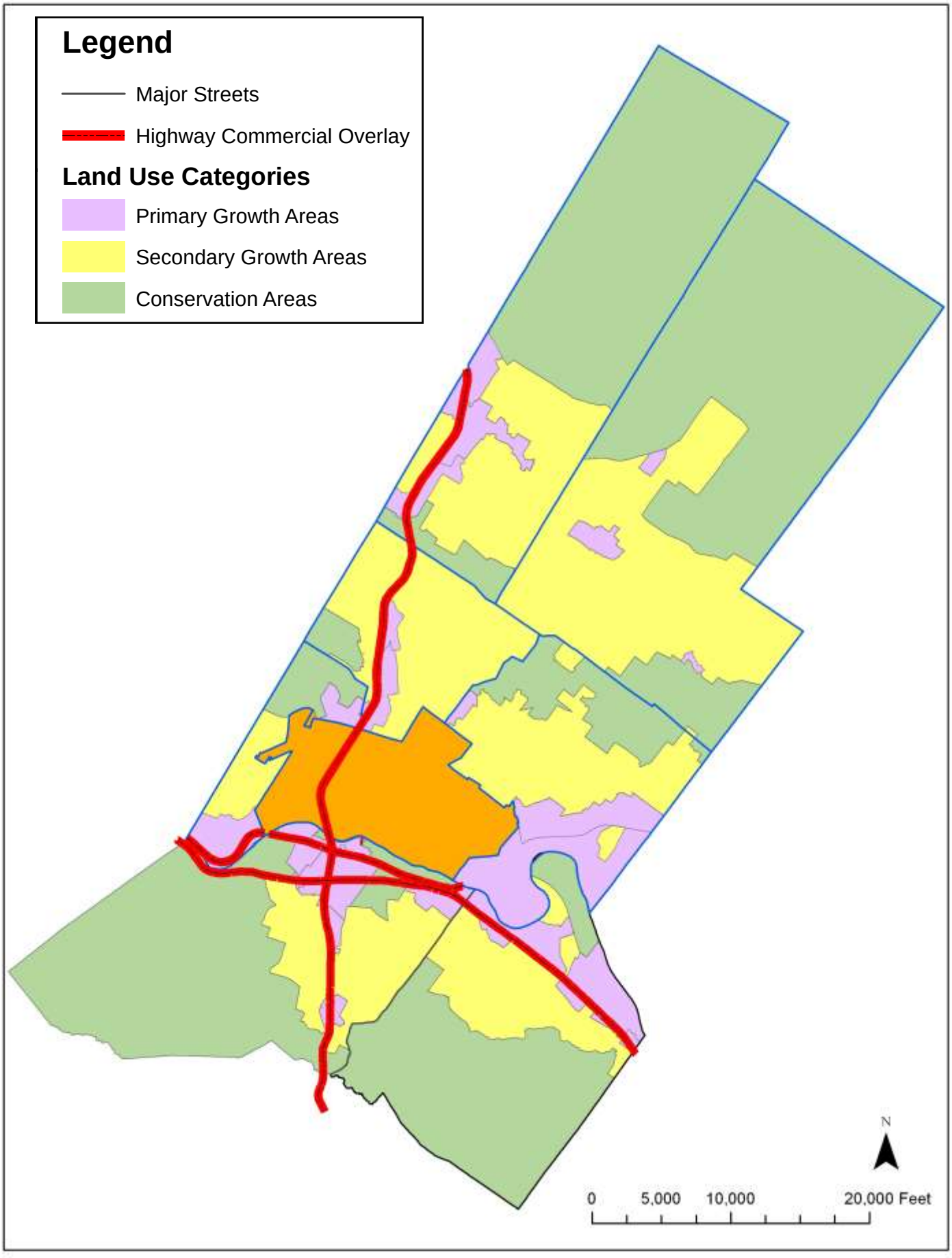


Figure 5-2 Douglass Township Future Land Use Map

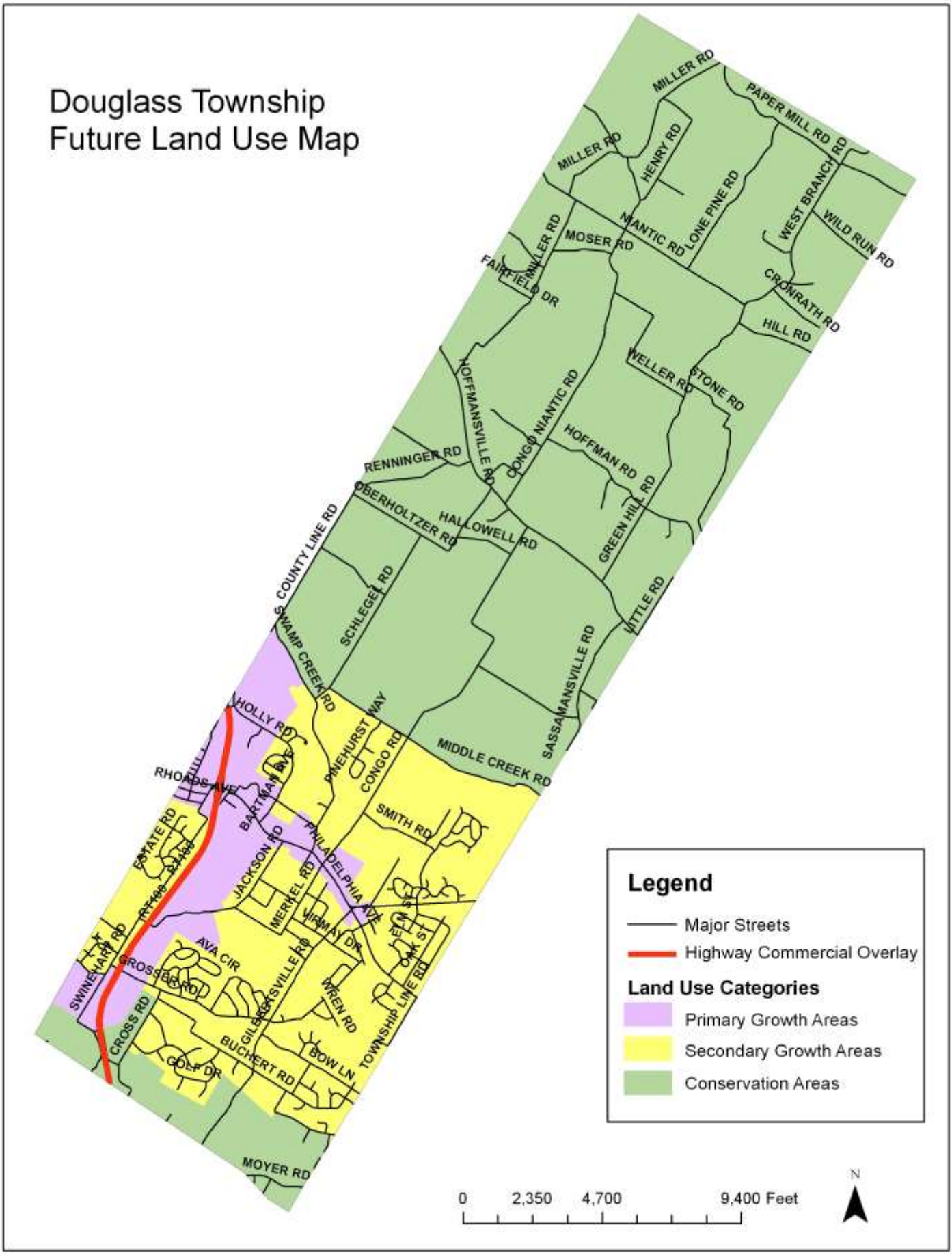


Figure 5-3 East Coventry Township Future Land Use Map

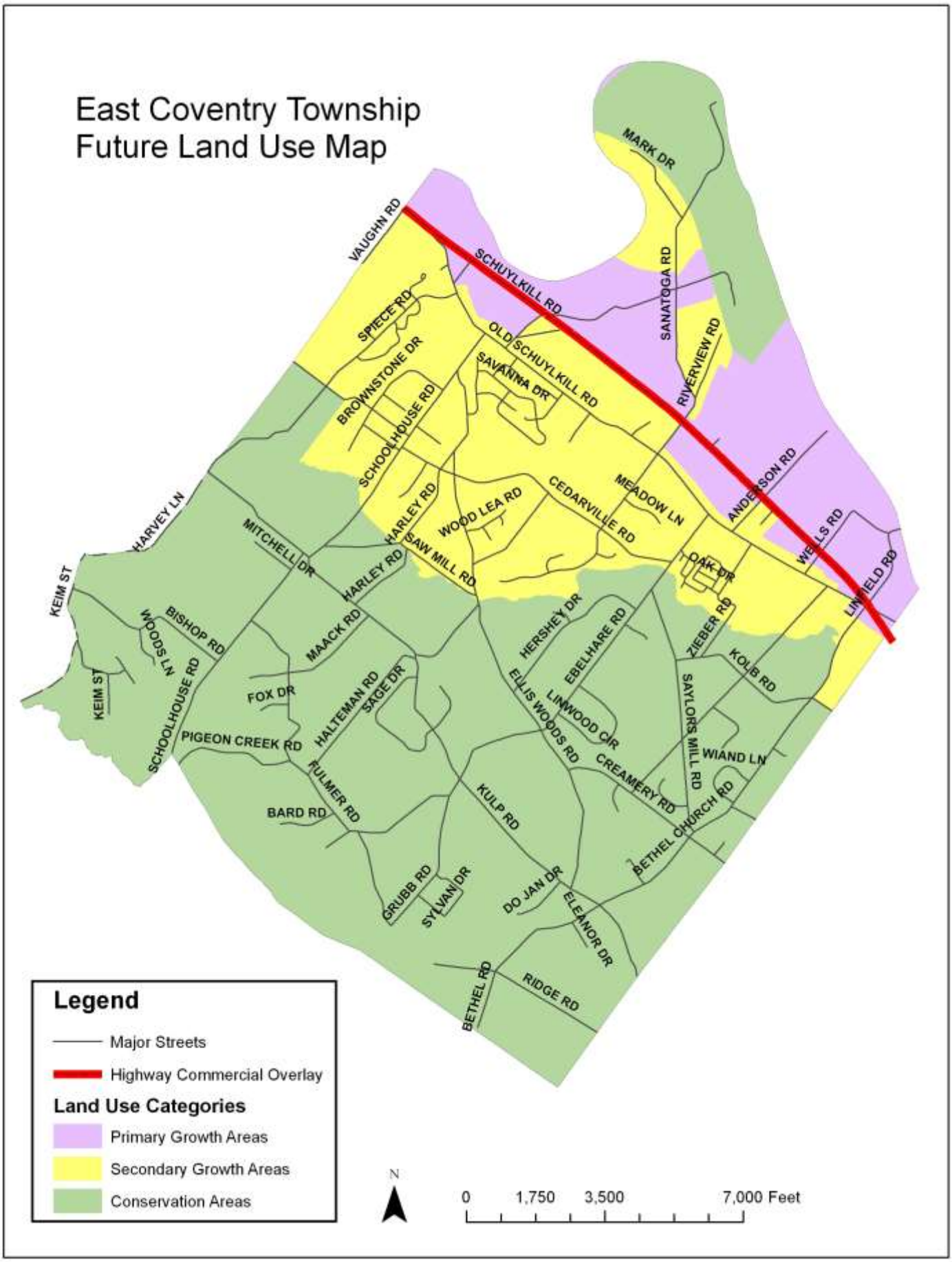


Figure 5-4 Lower Pottsgrove Township Future Land Use Map

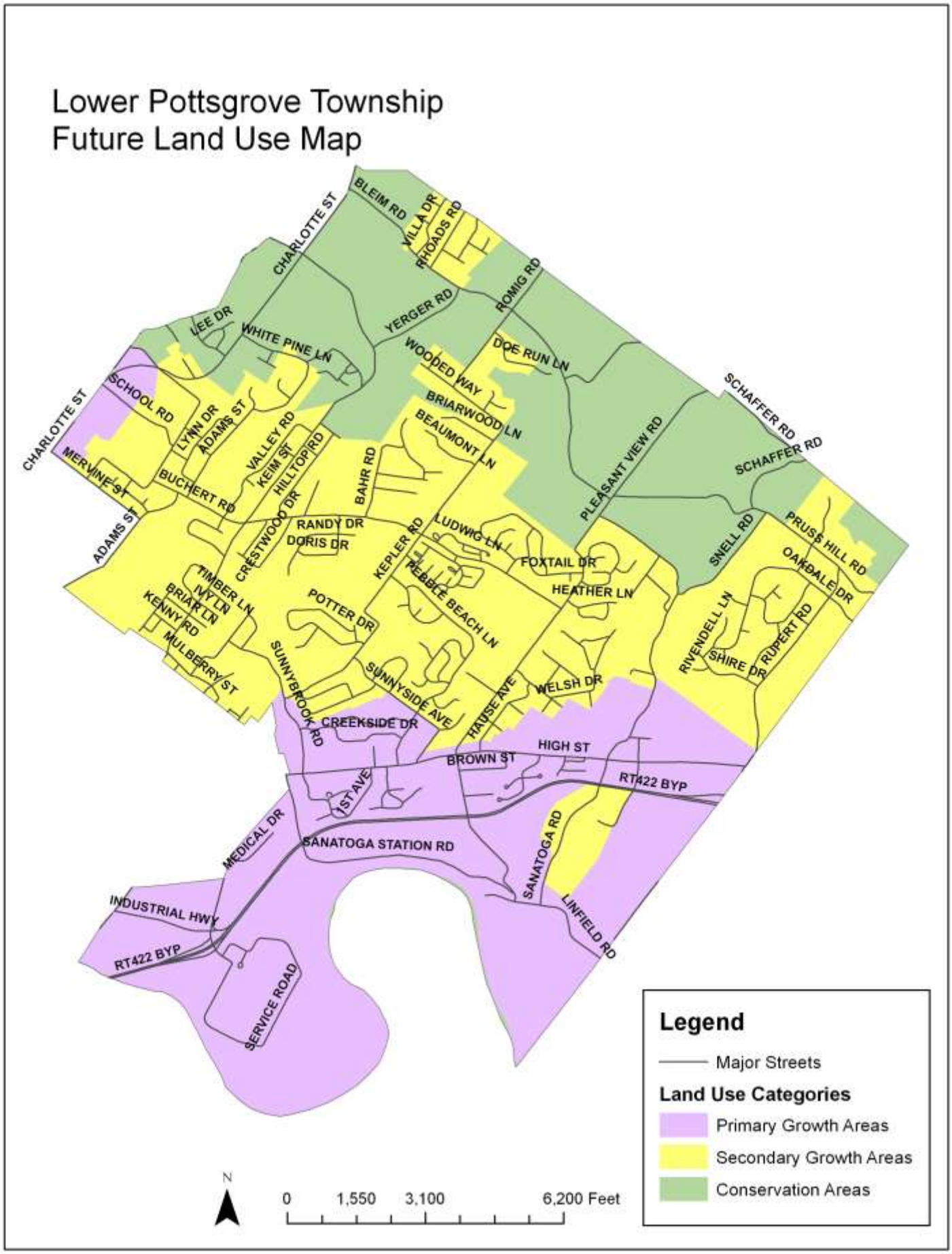


Figure 5-5 New Hanover Township Future Land Use Map

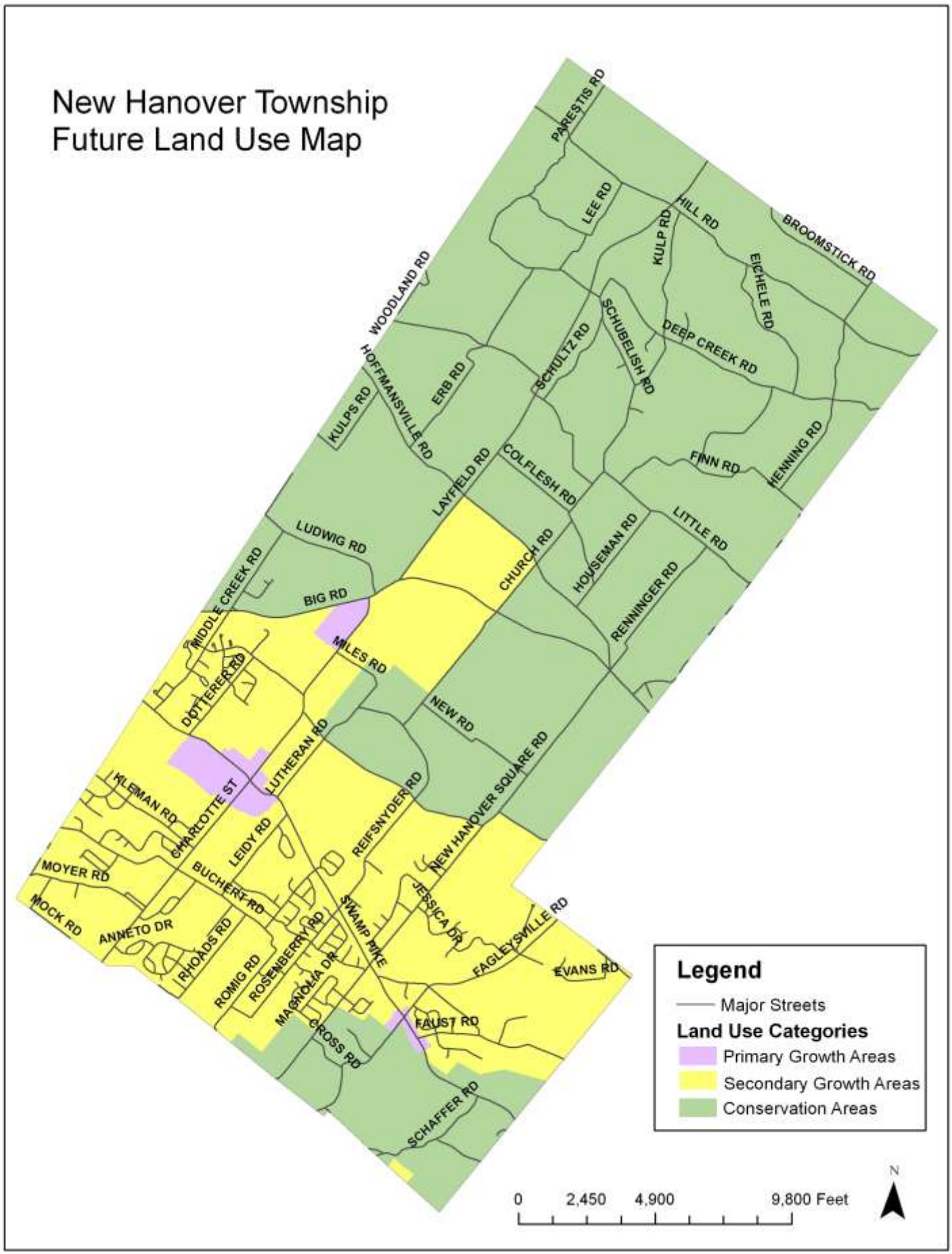


Figure 5-6 North Coventry Township Future Land Use Map

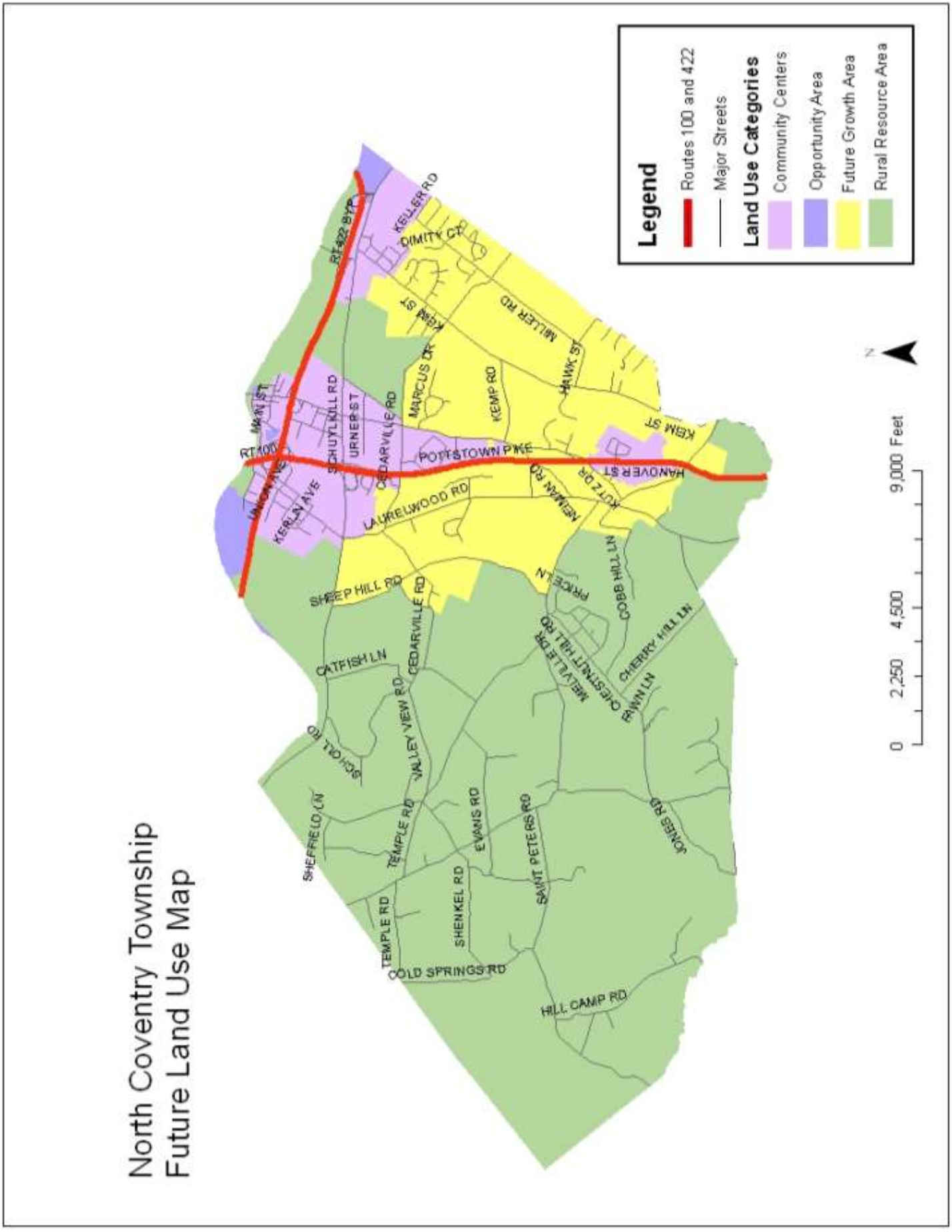


Figure 5-7 Pottstown Borough Future Land Use Map

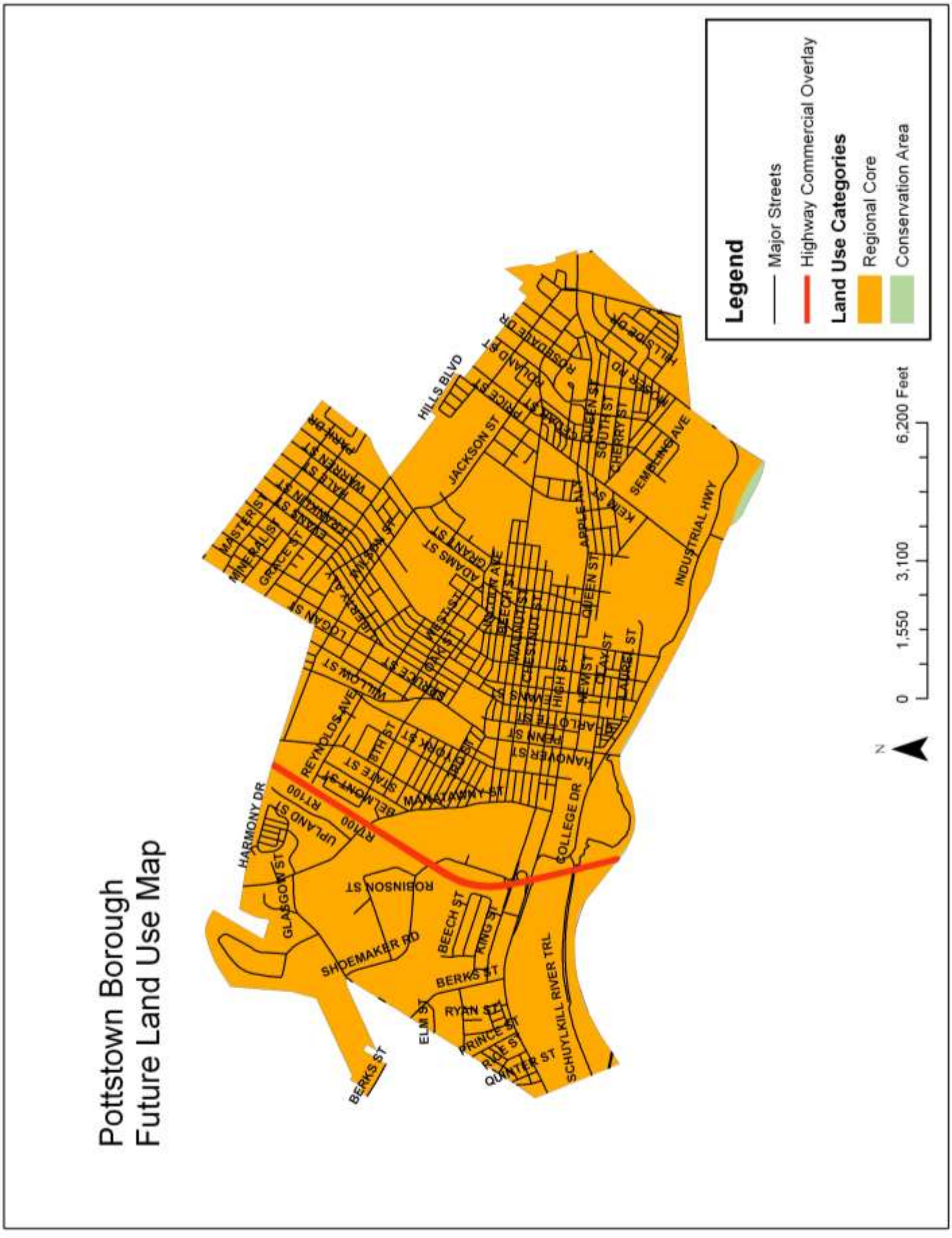


Figure 5-8 Upper Pottsgrove Township Future Land Use Map

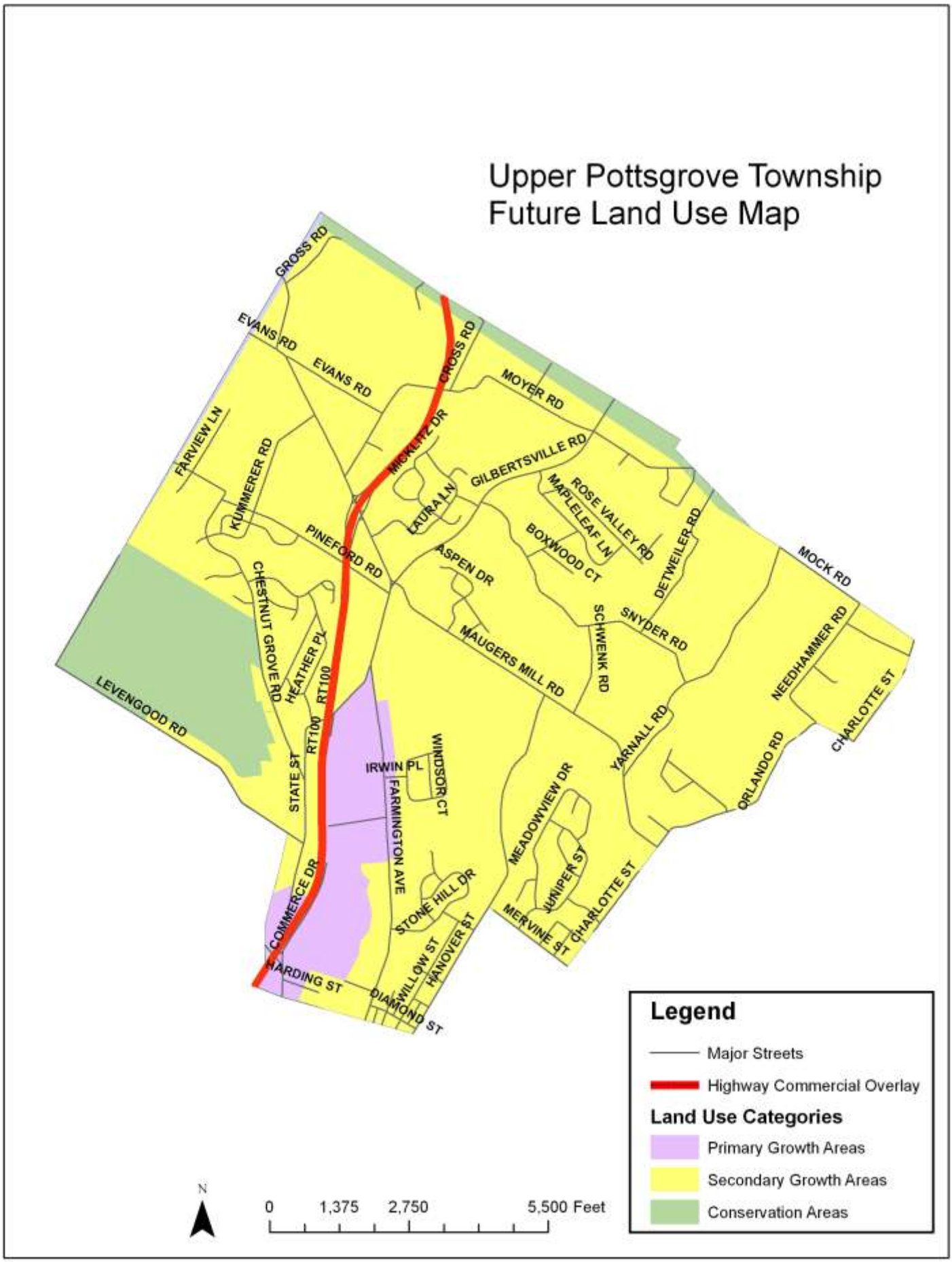


Figure 5-9 West Pottsgrove Township Future Land Use Map

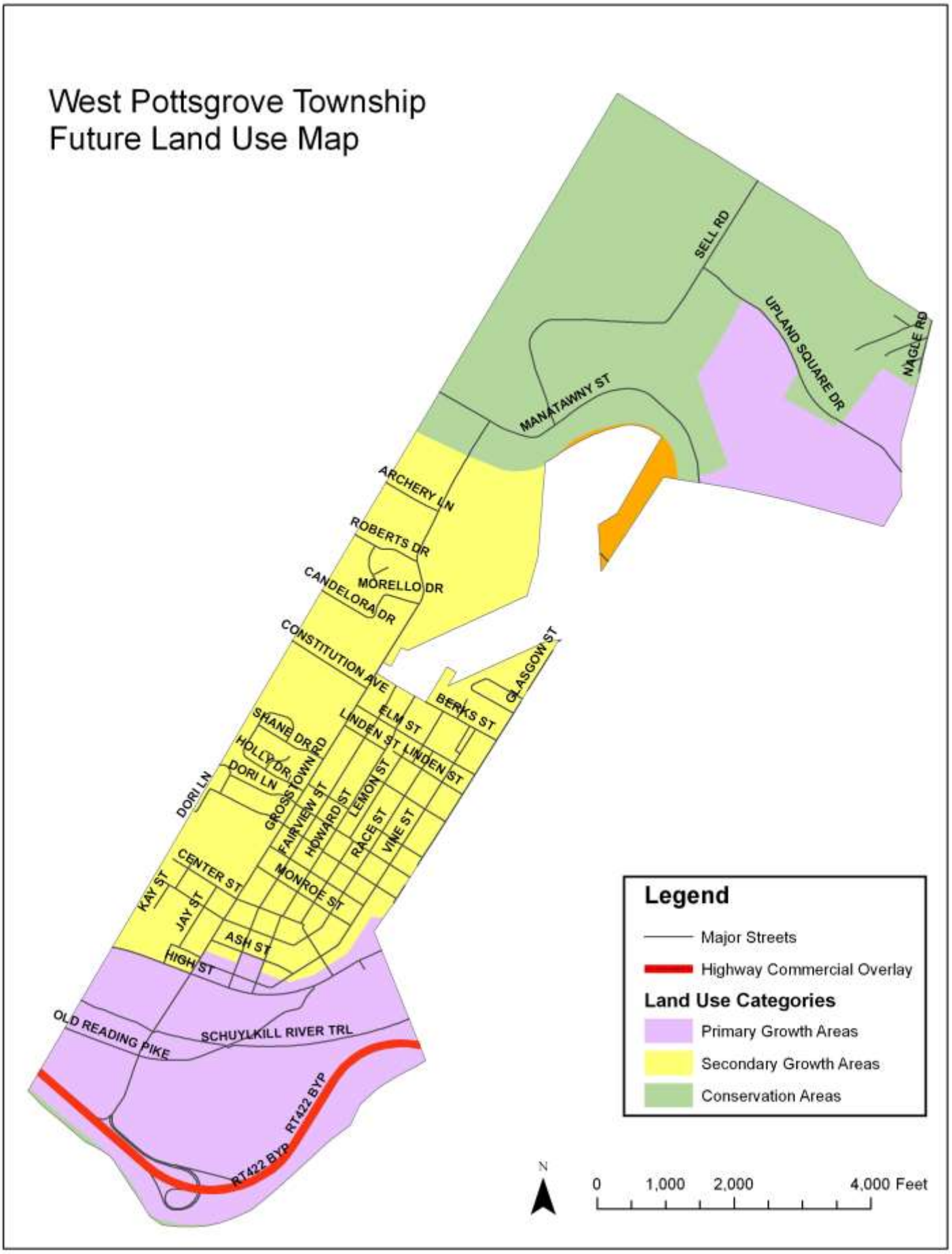


Figure 5-10 Future Land Use Categories and Suggested Use Options

Use Options	Future Land Use Categories				
	Conservation	Secondary Growth Areas	Primary Growth Areas	Regional Core	Highway Commercial Overlay
Agricultural Activities	✓	✓			
Low Density Residential	✓				
Medium Density Residential		✓	✓	✓	
High Density Residential			✓	✓	
Institutional	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Town Mixed Use			✓	✓	
Village Mixed Use		✓	✓		
Business (Office, Retail, Limited Commercial)		✓	✓	✓	
Light Industrial/ Manufacturing			✓	✓	
Highway Commercial					✓
Heavy Industrial			✓	✓	

Introduction

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is located directly within the path of growth expanding outward from the City of Philadelphia and its suburbs. The Region's municipalities understand that how the Region's future growth is managed will determine the preservation and quality of their natural resources, the cost of infrastructure, and ultimately its economic success and quality of life. The policies and maps contained in this section are intended to guide future growth in the Region for the next 20 years.

This Plan's future land use map and policies, however, take a different approach than the 2005 Regional Comprehensive Plan. The number of land use categories included in this plan was simplified and reduced from seven to five in order to better reflect the primary intent of each land use category. Additionally, the adopted upper limits for density and permitted dwelling units per acre that were contained in the 2005 Plan have been eliminated. The reason for this change is the idea that density limitations do not always lead to the best possible result. In some rural areas, encouraging cluster residential development with marginally higher densities and smaller lot sizes in exchange for greater preservation of open space would effectively preserve the Region's rural character and natural resources. Other methods such as transfer of development rights (TDR) and large lot zoning of two acres per dwelling unit and above also help to preserve open space.

While the density limits have been eliminated, municipalities in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region must still ensure their zoning districts are in line with the overall intent of this Future Land Use Plan. In order to create a more efficient land use pattern, more effectively preserve the natural environment, and promote the revitalization of the Region's older neighborhoods, this Future Land Use Plan provides a suggested range of densities for each land use category as well as a set of comprehensive design guidelines for development.

Land Use Categories

1. Regional Core

The Regional Core area includes all of the Borough of Pottstown and a portion of West Pottsgrove between the airport and Borough Line. The Borough is the "center" of the Region and was historically the economic hub for the area. This area has a traditional town character with a diverse mix of housing types and nonresidential land uses, public sewer and water, and a walkable grid road system supported by several major regional roadways and two highways. It is the intent of this Plan to encourage the revitalization of this area as the historic, urban, mixed use core of the Region. Individual municipalities retain the authority to set appropriate density and intensity standards in order to meet the intent of the Regional Core Areas.

2. **Primary Growth Areas**

Primary Growth Areas in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region consist primarily of places outside of Pottstown Borough where growth has already occurred, and where new growth, particularly non-residential and high-density residential growth, in these municipalities should be focused (except for areas within the Primary Growth area that contain environmentally sensitive features). These areas range in character, from the Parker Ford Village Center to the commercial shopping centers along Philadelphia Avenue in Douglass Township. These areas are diverse and the future development that occurs there should reflect local characteristics.

Many of the commercial uses located in the Region's Primary Growth Area are ripe for redevelopment, due to either the age or condition of the existing buildings or changing market preferences. As properties become available, the Region's municipalities should prioritize infill and redevelopment of these areas. New high-density

residential development shall be located near supporting land uses, including commercial or mixed use development. Higher-density residential uses should be developed as a part of a larger community to ensure their long term viability and improved quality of life for residents.

Most of the Primary Growth Areas are equipped with adequate sewer and water capacity and are easily accessible by the Region's road network. New growth shall be located in areas where this infrastructure already exists or can be easily extended. New residential and non-residential development shall be built to generally reflect the context of the surrounding community and adjacent land uses, and should be planned in a way that provides appropriate transitions between different uses and intensities of development. Whether a new mixed use development is designed to complement a nearby existing village or industrial opportunities are sought along the Keystone Boulevard in West Pottsgrove to capitalize on the existing infrastructure, these areas present an enormous opportunity for redevelopment and infill. Repurposing abandoned and underutilized sites can help alleviate the pressure for growth in the Region's Conservation Areas and breathe new life back into existing communities. Individual municipalities retain the authority to set appropriate density and intensity standards in order to meet the intent of the Primary Growth Areas.

3. **Secondary Growth Areas**

Much of the Plan's Secondary Growth land use areas can be categorized today as suburban, single-family residential development. As population growth continues in the Pottstown Region, there will be increased pressure to develop the Region's prime agricultural lands and rural open spaces for residential and supporting non-residential uses. New residential growth shall therefore be generally directed within the Secondary Growth Area where important infrastructure is already in place or has been identified as a sewer growth area in the municipality's sewer facilities plan. New high-density residential development should be located near supporting land uses, including commercial or mixed use development. Higher-density residential uses should be developed as a part of a larger community to ensure its long term viability and improved quality of life for residents.

New residential and non-residential development shall be built to generally reflect the context of the surrounding community and adjacent land uses, whether it is of a more urban, village or rural nature. New development shall also be designed and planned in a way that provides appropriate transitions between different uses and intensities of development. In all cases, importance shall be given to creating walkable neighborhoods that connect to the surrounding community. New roads shall be built to tie into and improve the existing road network. Pedestrian infrastructure in the form of sidewalks and trails should be provided to not only connect residents within a neighborhood, but also to facilitate access to neighborhood-level destinations, such as retail, parks and open space areas, and community institutions, including schools. Individual municipalities retain the authority to set appropriate density and intensity standards in order to meet the intent of the Secondary Growth Areas.

4. **Conservation Areas**

The Conservation Areas of the Plan are intended to preserve important and cultural resources throughout the Region. Development and installation of public sewer and water shall be limited in these areas in order to prevent significant amounts of development and limit further pressures for growth. Most of the Region's preserved farmland, woodlands, and geologically sensitive areas of the Region are located within the Conservation Areas.

The primary land uses anticipated in these areas are agriculture and open space, although forestry, and other extractive industries are also anticipated to occur. While residential development is not intended for the Conservation Areas, where it does occur, it shall consist of a density of one dwelling unit per two acres or greater, or where slightly higher densities are sought significant areas of common protected open space shall be a major part of any new development. Protected open spaces shall be the dominant feature of any new residential development and shall prioritize the conservation of valuable environmental resources such as wetlands, woodlands, and stream corridors.

The intent of the Conservation Areas is to protect the Region's rural and agricultural nature, limit further sprawl, and preserve the Region's natural-resource related industries and jobs. Individual municipalities retain the authority to set appropriate density and intensity standards in order to meet the intent of the Conservation Areas.

5. **Highway Commercial Overlay**

The Highway Commercial Overlay includes the lands located along the Region's major vehicular corridors, including Route 100, Route 422 and Route 724. Areas along these major roadways are most appropriate for highway-oriented development and can include a wide variety of scales and types of development, from stand-alone businesses to multi-building complexes, restaurants, motels, and auto dealerships. These regionally-serving developments depend on visibility and accessibility by vehicular traffic and locations adjacent to the Region's major roadways are ideal sites for Highway Commercial development.

It is not the intent of this plan that all of the land along the Region's major roadways be developed as highway-oriented commercial uses, but rather municipalities should identify those areas, limited to the Overlay, where such development would be most appropriate. Areas of the Overlay that intersect with Conservation Land Use Areas are not appropriate for Highway Commercial. Similarly, sections of the Overlay that intersect with Primary Growth Areas should be favored above those areas that intersect with Secondary Growth Areas.

Where Highway Commercial uses are developed, municipalities shall use strong performance standards, design criteria, and landscaping requirements, in order to limit the negative impacts on surrounding land uses. Additionally, municipalities shall encourage shared access for multiple properties and limit curb cuts and new intersections along major roadways. Individual municipalities retain the authority to set appropriate density and intensity standards in order to meet the intent of the Highway Commercial Overlay.

Development Guidelines

Agricultural

Agricultural and related activities constitute an important and significant land use in many of the Region's municipalities, including Douglass and New Hanover Townships in Montgomery County and East and North Coventry Townships in Chester County. Preservation and protections of these lands will be important for the continued success of the Region. Objectives for development of Agricultural Land Uses include the following:

Fit buildings into folds of hills or valley bottom

1. *Identify and protect significant natural resources with special attention paid to streams, stream banks, wetlands, and riparian habitat.*
2. *Protect surface waters from fecal or chemical contamination.*
3. *Minimize soil erosion to prevent soil loss and to protect water from increased sediment load.*
4. *Maintain landscapes and improvements to preserve the natural rural landscape and visual environment.*
5. *Stop the spread of non-native plant species.*

Lot and Farm Size

- Lot Size and Density:
    - ◊ Density and intensity regulations for Agricultural Uses will be set individually by municipalities to reflect local characteristics and policies.
- Minimum farm size:
    - ◊ Municipalities with significant farmland may want to consider adopting a minimum farm size in its agricultural zoning district. This requirement serves two purposes. First, certain uses, such as farm businesses are only permitted on parcels that meet the minimum defined farm size. Second, for municipalities that seek to limit development of farmland, the zoning ordinance would prohibit the subdivision of a farm parcel where the resultant size of the farm falls below the minimum farm size. The justification most often cited for a minimum farm size of 10 acres is that it is the same minimum acreage that a landowner must possess to participate in the State's preferential tax assessment program for farmland, Act 319, Clean and Green.

Permitted Uses: It is recommended that municipalities adopt zoning regulations that allow landowners flexibility in the economic use of their land while still maintaining the long-term viability and sustainability of agriculture, as well as limiting and controlling the impacts of future development in rural areas and protecting natural resources such as water bodies. In addition to agricultural

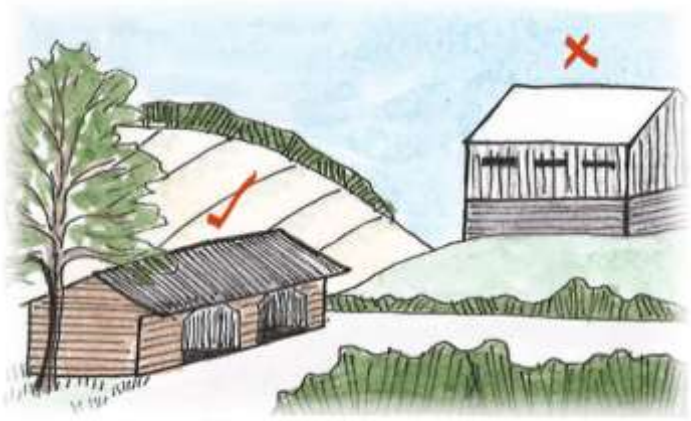
activities and resource extraction activities, the following accessory uses should be permitted on properties where agriculture is the primary land use:

- Single-family detached residential unit; or Single-family attached residential units if part of a plan aimed to reduce lot sizes in exchange for additional preserved open space.
- Bed and breakfast
- Agri-tourism, including farm tours, hayrides, produce picking
- Roadside markets
- Solar energy generation equipment
- Wind energy generation equipment

Site Layout: Agricultural buildings should be designed to accommodate a site's natural features, topography, and sensitive areas. New buildings should blend into the natural form of the land and avoid be located on platforms or exposed skylines or ridges.

Building Considerations: In order for agricultural buildings to blend into the rural landscape, the following design guidelines should be considered:

- Overhanging eaves and big roofs should be incorporated into buildings. These features settle a building into the landscape, create shadows, and give shape to the building.
- Roofs should be dark whenever possible, with a non-reflective finish in order to mimic the color and texture of the surrounding landscape.



Darker roofs blend into the landscape more easily than white or reflective materials

Buffers and Landscaping:

- Landscaping should be provided around farm buildings to help integrate them into the landscape.
- Where agricultural properties are located adjacent to non-agricultural land uses, adequate buffers and screens should be used to minimize the impact of farming operations.
- To protect the Region's valuable water supply, it is encouraged that agricultural properties limit farming operations to outside a 25 foot setback on either side of a *riparian corridor*, or stream. Landscaping this buffer area is encouraged in order to help filter runoff from agricultural properties and limit the amount of pesticides, sediment and other chemicals entering the waterways.

Recommended Agricultural Preservation Methods:

- Agricultural Zoning (minimum farm size)
- Permanent Agricultural Easements (Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program or Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program)
- Transfer of Development Rights

Low-Density Residential

In the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, low-density residential development tends to range from a high of 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres to a low density of 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres, such as in North Coventry's Resource Conservation district. This range of densities is acceptable for low-density development in the Region's Conservation Area. Objectives for low-density development include the following:

1. *Protect and conserve important environmental and natural resources, including wetlands, streams, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils, and open space.*
2. *Permit low-density development that is consistent with the resource preservation goals of the Region's Conservation areas.*
3. *Limit the demand and extension of certain utilities, including public sewer and water.*

Location: Low-density residential uses are most appropriate for the Region's Conservation Areas.

Appropriate Building Types: Single-family detached residential unit; or single-family attached residential units if part of a plan aimed to reduce lot sizes in exchange for additional preserved open space.

Density: Density and intensity regulations for Low-Density Residential Uses will be set individually by municipalities to reflect local characteristics and policies.

Site Layout: In all cases, low-density residential development should be designed to accommodate a site's natural features, topography, and sensitive areas. Preservation of these rural features generally require that lot sizes for individual residential units be permitted to be reduced to an area smaller than the lot size corresponding to the base density. How small lot sizes are permitted to go, however, creates two general types of Low-Density Residential development:

- Rural Residential Development offers a way to preserve important rural or natural features on a site in conjunction with the development of larger single-family residences. Allowing for a minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet provides for greater flexibility in the layout of a residential development and allows for the preservation of conservation areas. Rural Residential Development is most appropriate for parts of the Region's Conservation Area, where public water and sewer does not exist within ½ mile of the proposed development. By allowing minimum lot sizes to be reduced to a size that is smaller than the base density of the district, Rural Residential Development can help to keep many rural features intact, such as woodlands and scenic character. The most important natural and environmental features are taken out of the net developable acreage and permanently preserved. It's important to note that reduced lot sizes should only be permitted on lots that are internal to the site. To preserve the rural character of the site, lots fronting exterior roadways should have standard lot sizes.

- Cluster Development also allows the flexibility to plan around a site's natural features and constraints by reducing lot sizes even more significantly than in rural residential development, often in the 12,000 - 20,000-square-foot range. Residential units are then clustered on a portion of the tract in order to preserve larger areas of open space - ideally at least of 60% of the tract area would be preserved under the Cluster Development option. Where on-lot systems cannot be accommodated, community sewage systems should be used in lieu of extending public sewer lines. Cluster Development allows for low-density development while still preserving large portions of the site's natural features or agricultural lands.

Building Design and Placement:

- Rural Residential Development*:* Residential units should be located on the portion of the lot with the least visual, environmental, or agricultural value, as well as below ridge and tree lines. Homes should be hidden by topography and existing woodlands where possible, or by buffer landscaping (see Buffer and Landscaping guidelines). Build-to lines for front facades should have a wide variation to enhance rural streetscapes.

- Cluster Development*:* The siting of new residences should minimize the impact of new development on the environmental, historical, and visual character of the community. Homes should take access from streets interior to the development and should be shielded from view along exterior roads using either existing topography or vegetation. An open space area at least 100 feet wide should be provided between at least every ten residential units located in a row. Homes abutting central open space areas (see Open Space guidelines below) should directly face those areas. New cluster development should also be designed to provide a gradual transition between different uses. For example, if a development site is located between areas of open space and areas of existing development, new residential units should generally be located nearest to existing development while the areas of newly preserved open space should be located adjacent to existing open space.

For both types of development, buildings should be harmonious with their rural surroundings and new construction should utilize building materials, roof pitches, window sizes, rhythms, colors and details to meet this goal.

Open Space:

- Rural Residential Development*:* Even when residences are developed on large lots, it is important to preserve a site's most important environmental features, to not only maintain the rural appearance of the community, but to protect valuable resources. Determining the net developable area should consider features such as wetlands, floodplains, or steep slopes, which are typical constraints to development, but may also consider mature woods, historic buildings and scenic views in the calculation. For larger tracts, around 5 acres or more, municipalities should aim to preserve around 30-40% of site, although this amount will likely vary depending on the environmental constraints located on a particular tract. For Rural Residential Development, emphasis should be given towards preserving areas of the highest quality. Additionally, new buildings should be set back from the right-of-way in order to preserve the area's rural character.
- Cluster Development*:* When development takes the form of the Cluster Development design, open space is of considerable importance. By permitting significantly reduced lot sizes in these developments, preserved open space areas should ideally constitute at least 60% of the total site area. Like the Rural Residential Development option, important environmental features such as wetlands, streams, mature woods, and historic properties or scenic areas should be prioritized for open space preservation. Additionally, the site should, where possible, locate preserved open space on areas of the site that are adjacent to other areas of open space or properties where the potential for open space exists.

  To help preserve the rural character of the developed portion of the site, cluster development should require central open spaces in the form of village greens, eyebrows or landscaped medians. Ideally, 10% of the total area preserved as open space should be in the form of central open space. This not only improves the appearance of cluster development, but provides additional gathering areas for residents.

Buffers and Landscaping: In both types of low-density development, landscaping of residential areas should retain existing natural features and incorporate low maintenance and native vegetation. Buffers and screening should be provided between along external roadways and tract boundaries.

Roadways and Access:

- Rural Residential Development: Roadways should be designed to reflect a rural, rather than suburban character. Road widths should be narrow, swales should be used instead of curbs, and guard rails or stream crossings should be built with appropriate materials. Sidewalks should not be required, however multi-use trails and paths should be encouraged to connect residences to each other and to open space areas.
- Cluster Development: Road widths should be narrow, swales should be used instead of curbs, and guard rails or stream crossings should be built with appropriate materials. Either sidewalks or multi -use trails and paths are encouraged.

Lighting: Outdoor lighting should be minimized in order to preserve the rural character and dark skies.

Utilities: Rural Residential development should be located on lots large enough to utilize on-site or community sewer and water systems. Cluster Development should prioritize community sewage or water systems over any extension of public utilities into the Conservation Areas.

Medium Density Residential

Medium-density residential development makes up a large percentage of the Region's existing suburban housing and typically ranges from 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre within the eight municipalities. It is likely that most new residential development in the Region will be in the form of medium-density development that is served by public sewer and water. To better facilitate development of neighborhoods with a sense of place, incorporation of certain design, architectural, and landscaping elements will be necessary. Some objectives of Medium-Density Residential Development include the following:

1. *Provide well-designed and attractive medium-density development.*
2. *Create new housing that reflects the character of the surrounding area.*
3. *Protect privacy by having adequate dimensional standards.*
4. *Provide usable and accessible neighborhood open space.*

Medium-density residential neighborhoods should be walkable and provide central open space

Location: Medium-density residential development is most appropriate for the Region's Primary and Secondary Growth Areas, but may also work in the Regional Core when density is in the upper ends of the medium-density range.

Density: Density and intensity regulations for Medium-Density Residential Uses will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and policies.

Lot Size: To create more walkable suburban neighborhoods that provide a sense of community, this plan advocates for lots ranging from 7,000 square feet to 14,000 square feet, which works well with densities ranging from 2 to 3 dwelling units per acre. These relatively smaller lot sizes require that medium-density residential housing is developed where access to public water and sewer facilities is available and will allow for common open space areas to be incorporated into the development.

This plan further advocates that the use of extra wide lots, ranging from 80 to 120 feet. Extra wide lots, which would allow for an extra-wide side yard on one side of the home, provide a visual break in the streetscape which can enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Additionally, wider lots allow for larger homes or homes with different orientation to add to the diversity of the development.

General Layout: Medium-density residential developments shall be planned in a way that is compatible with surrounding uses. Generally, single-family detached residential units should be located adjacent to existing single-family detached residential developments. Townhomes and multi-family residences, when incorporated into a new development, should be located adjacent to commercial or other high-density residential uses to provide an appropriate transition between land

uses. Higher density residential development should be placed in proximity to supporting commercial development that can help ensure its long term viability.

Building Type: Homes in medium-density residential development will typically consist primarily of single-family detached housing units. In certain parts of the Region, where new medium-density residential development is adjacent to mixed use, village or commercial areas, or located near high-density residential development, townhomes and multi-family residential uses will also be appropriate.

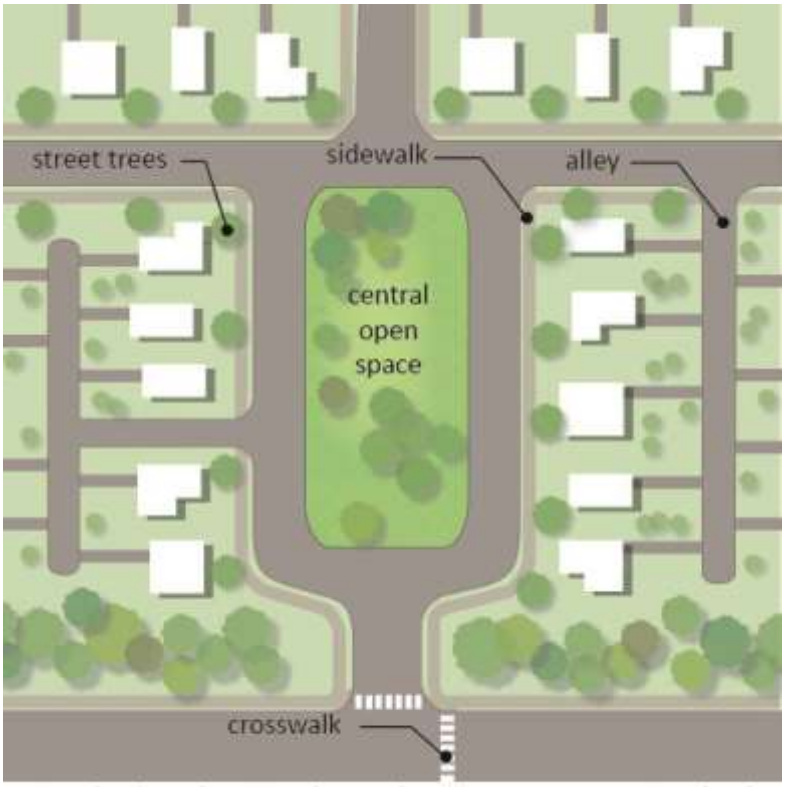
Building Design: Medium-density residential units should incorporate the following design standards:

- ***Front Setbacks***: Homes should ideally have a setback between 20 and 30 feet from the right of way. A variety of front setbacks within this range should be encouraged in order to create a diverse and attractive streetscape.
- ***Porches***: Homes should ideally incorporate a front porch or balcony that extends across half the front façade of the dwelling unit. A depth of at least seven feet should be encouraged. Front porches help to connect residents to the neighborhood as well as improve the overall appearance of the development.
- ***Garages***: The location, orientation, and appearance of garages can significantly impact the streetscape. To create more walkable neighborhoods and more attractive development, this plan advocates that medium-density development require well-designed garages. One of the best ways to decrease the prominence of garages on the streetscape is through the use of alleys that allow garages to be accessed from the rear of the lot. When access is taken from the front of the house, garages that face the street should be located at least 20 feet behind the front façade or detached from the house completely and located in the rear or side yard. Alternatively, side-facing garages are also appropriate for this type of development.

Open Space and Landscaping: Generally, medium-density developments should strive to retain existing natural features and limit preconstruction clearing of vegetation. Buffering between the roadways and developed areas should be encouraged. Two particular amenities, street trees and central open space are especially important to creating well-designed neighborhoods.

- ***Street Trees*:** Street trees should be provided along both sides of the street, roughly every 40 feet of frontage and should consist of a wide variety of trees, including oaks, lindens, and maples. Street trees help create a sense of safety, improve appearance of streets, protect privacy, improve the environment, and even increase property values.

- ***Open Space*:** Ideally, new development should consist of at least 10%, up to 20%, open space. Often, new medium-density residential development results in preserved open space areas due to the environmental constraints of the land. Steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands can significantly limit the area of developable land. While these types of preserved open spaces often occur anyway, this plan advocates that a portion of the preserved open space requirement consist of central open space areas. Central open spaces can consist of village greens, landscaped medians, eyebrows, and cul-de-sacs and should be placed throughout the development in order to be useful, prominent, and accessible. Additionally, this plan advocates that 40% or more of the lots in the development either border or be located across the street from central open spaces.



Drawing based on Woodmont development, Lower Moreland Twp., Montgomery County

Roadways and Access: Reasonable street width, sidewalks, and street trees help make medium-density residential development an attractive and inviting place for both cars and pedestrians. A street width of between 26 and 30 feet is recommended and allows for two lanes of traffic as well as parking on at least one side of the street. Streets that are too wide can contribute to an increase in traffic speed and stormwater runoff. Additionally, streets in medium-density residential neighborhoods should be interconnected, not only within the development, but with the surrounding street networks as well. Streets that are laid out in a logical matter, for example in a grid pattern rather than a series of cul-de-sacs, help to reduce the length of vehicular trips and encourages more pedestrian activity.

Pedestrian Facilities: Sidewalks in medium-density development should always be provided on both sides of the street. Sidewalks promote increased and safer pedestrian activity. Additionally, sidewalks should extend to connect with sidewalks in abutting development.

High Density Residential

Much of the Regional Core and Primary Growth Areas are prime locations for high-density development. High-density development can provide workers with housing close to employment opportunities, create vibrant communities, and reduce costs associated with expanding infrastructure, such as roads or utilities, that often comes with less dense development. Objectives of high-density development include the following:

1. *Provide an adequate supply of housing nearby commercial and employment centers.*
2. *Allow for a variety of quality and attractive housing types in order to meet the needs of a diverse population.*
3. *Create vibrant and walkable neighborhoods.*
4. *Decrease infrastructure costs to the community by concentrating housing and limiting the extension of public facilities.*

Location: New and infill high-density housing should be located within or adjacent to established communities that are within reasonable walking distance of commercial centers, schools, and parks. The Regional Core and Primary Growth Area are appropriate places for locating high-density residential development.

Density and Lot Size: Exact density and intensity standards for High-Density Residential Uses will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and policies. Overall, density for high-density residential development typically ranges from 6 dwelling units per acre to 20 dwelling units per acre, depending on the character of the neighborhood and the type of housing being built, as high-density development in the form of townhomes should have a different over all density than a garden apartment development. Similarly, a range of lot sizes are appropriate for high-density development, and will be vary based on location and the type of housing unit.

High Density Residential Housing

General Layout: High-density residential developments should be planned in a way that is compatible with surrounding uses. Generally, single-family detached residential units should be located adjacent to existing single-family detached residential developments. Townhomes and multi-family residences, when incorporated into a new development, should be located to provide a transition with any existing higher density residential or non-residential uses.

Appropriate Building Types: A variety of building types are appropriate for high-density development, including small lot single-family detached units, twins, townhomes, and apartments. In many situations, a mix of building types is preferable and should be encouraged in order to provide a range of housing choices for people with different incomes, ages, and lifestyles. Additionally, high-density residential development that includes mixed building types most accurately reflects the original villages and towns that were built in the Pottstown Region. Providing for a mix of dwelling types will help new development fit in with its surroundings.

Site and Building Design: To create attractive high-density communities, enhance neighborhood character, as well as protect privacy within the development; certain design standards should be incorporated into high-density development:

- ***Maximum Front Setback***: Unlike other residential developments that often establish a minimum front yard setback requirement; this plan advocates that both a minimum and maximum front yard setback be established. This keeps homes close enough to the street to encourage a sense of community and increases the size of rear and side yards to maintain privacy. The setback range will likely vary according to the overall density of the site and the types of buildings used.
- ***Tract Boundary Setback***: While the setbacks will vary according to the type of development, a larger setback should be employed along tract boundaries, where high-density housing is adjacent to other non-high-density, commercial, office, or industrial uses.
- ***Parking***: Parking should not be a prominent feature of high-density housing. Parking garages can be located below or inside apartment buildings or to the rear or side of homes. Rear access alleys are ideal for high-density developments, while front facing garages should be discouraged.

Roadways and Access: High-density residential communities should be built along a gridded street network that facilitate connectivity with surrounding properties as well as provide more direct access to community services and other destinations. Roads should be narrow and should incorporate sidewalks on both sides of the street and be buffered from the roadway with a vegetated shoulder or on-street parking.

Buffers and Landscaping: New development should strive to retain the existing natural features on a site and limit preconstruction clearing of vegetation. Landscaped buffers should be provided along roadways and tract boundaries and should incorporate street trees as well as other native, low-maintenance vegetation. To ensure green space is provided throughout the development, a maximum impervious coverage between 60 and 80 percent is appropriate.

Institutional

Institutional land uses can vary greatly depending on the specific use (i.e. post office versus a medical facility). The following guidelines should be considered in the development of new institutional uses.

Location: Generally, institution uses should be permitted and integrated with a variety of other uses, including residential and commercial development. Institutional uses, where located, should be scaled and designed to blend with the surrounding community. More intense uses, such as hospitals or colleges, should be focused in non-residential or high-density residential areas.

Density/Lot Sizes: Specific density limits and lot sizes for Institutional Uses will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and land use policies.

Roadways and Access: Institutional uses, particularly intense institutional uses, should be located along collector or higher classification roads. While off-street parking is necessary, institutional uses should explore opportunities for shared parking with neighboring uses, when feasible. For many institutional uses, such as religious organizations, peak parking times will differ from other types of uses.

Other Design Considerations:

- *Government Facilities*: Should be located to face public streets and designed to be visually connected with the community they serve.
- *Educational Facilities*: Educational facilities should generally be centrally located and accessible for all types of users, including bicyclists and pedestrians.
- *Medical*: Site access and circulation are important issues for medical facilities, which should give consideration to those with more limited mobility. While larger facilities will need larger sites and parking areas, smaller medical facilities should be incorporated into the community whenever possible.
- *Places of Worship*: These facilities should also allow different means of access, including bicyclists and pedestrians, with small facilities being integrated into residential areas. The limited period of peak parking presents an opportunity for shared parking when Places of Worship are located near other non-residential uses, including schools.

Town Mixed-Use

The Town Mixed-Use district allows for compact, walkable, and mixed use development. Town mixed-use development typically contains higher densities than Village Mixed-Use development, and is most appropriate for the Regional Core and Primary Growth Areas. Town Mixed-Use development is ideal for the redevelopment of suburban commercial areas and old industrial sites. Some objectives of Town Mixed Use development are to:

1. *Create lively and sustainable places by allowing for a wide variety of uses, including residential, office, retail, entertainment, and other compatible uses.*
2. *Incorporate attractive central gathering places and appropriately located and sized green space*.

3. *Create pedestrian-friendly areas through good design and building placement.*
4. *Design parking areas to be unobtrusive.*
5. *To scale height and intensity of development to a level that can achieve compact, walkable areas but is appropriate for the surrounding community.*

Location: Town Mixed Use development is most appropriate in the Regional Core and Primary Growth areas, where a municipality seeks to redevelop or reinvent an area of existing intense development that may be experiencing abandonment, disinvestment, or decline. Suburban commercial areas such as shopping centers, malls, office parks, and strip commercial, as well as old industrial sites are all appropriate locations for this type of development.

Lot Size/Density: Density and intensity regulations for Town-Mixed Use development will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and policies. Generally, Floor Area Ratios (FAR), rather than square footage is an appropriate metric that can be used to describe the intensity of development in Town Mixed Use areas, where lot size, and overall density will likely vary according to the location of the development and the mix of uses included. The floor area ratio is the amount of gross building square footage, excluding parking facilities, in relationship to the total lot area. While lot sizes will vary according to the type of use, an FAR of between 1 and 2.5 is generally appropriate for Town Mixed Use development. An FAR much higher than this range may result in development that is too intense or urban, while a lower FAR minimum may lead to more typical suburban development.

Uses: To be effective, Town Mixed-Use development must incorporate different types of uses, including but not limited to higher density residential, retail, offices, hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, institutions, structured parking facilities, parks, and central open spaces. To be compatible with the residential uses and pedestrian environment, certain uses including drive-through facilities or large land consumers like self- storage facilities should be discouraged.

Design:

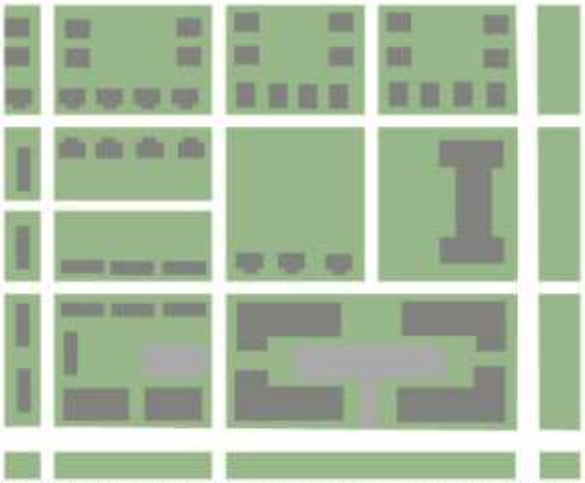
- ***Ground-Floor Setbacks***: Setbacks should be smaller than typical auto-oriented suburban development, but larger than those of a major urban center found outside the Pottstown Region. A setback of around 12 feet from the curbline is appropriate for Town Mixed-Development, except along arterial streets where a larger setback of around 20 feet can help to buffer pedestrians from traffic. Buildings that face streets should have both a minimum and maximum setback for the front façade.

- ***Upper-Floor Setbacks***: The upper stories on taller buildings, typically those over 40 feet, should be set back further from the curbline than smaller buildings. A 25-foot setback is appropriate for these taller buildings. This can be achieved by either setting the entire building further from the curbline or by using a tiered setback so the upper floors are further from the street than the lower floors.
- ***Height***: A range of heights are permitted in the Town Mixed Use district, but should generally not exceed 6 stories.
- ***General Layout***: Like all new or infill development, Town Mixed Use districts should be planned in a way that is compatible with surrounding uses. Generally:
    - ◊ Single-use residential buildings should be used to transition between existing residential development and non-residential uses.
    - ◊ Non-residential uses should generally be located near existing retail areas (if possible) and higher classification streets.
- ***Building Design Considerations***: Entrances, walls, windows, and roofs should be designed to soften the urban landscape and prevent buildings from overwhelming the streetscape and pedestrian environment.
    - ◊ Accentuated entrances should be incorporated into buildings that are located along all existing and proposed streets.
    - ◊ Blank walls should be discouraged along street-facing facades. Minimum window percentages and other architectural treatments should be used to break up the bulk of a wall.
    - ◊ Features such as gables, dormers, towers, domes, projecting cornices, parapets, or varied vertical heights should be used to break up roof planes and building ridgelines.
    - ◊ Façades should appear to be broken into smaller sections or buildings. A break in the depth of a façade can be created with the use of architectural features such as bay windows, porches, porticos, building extensions, building recesses, balconies, towers, and other treatments.

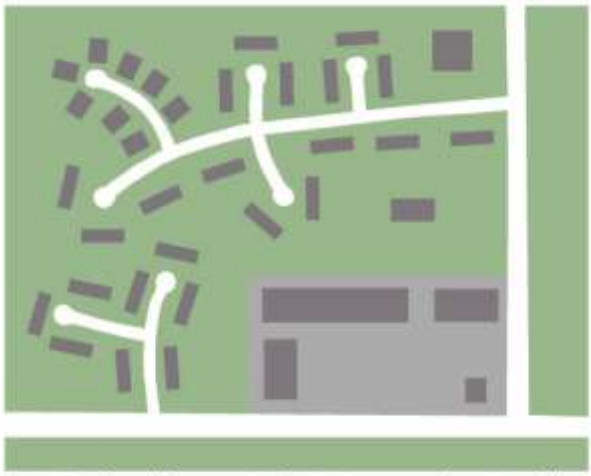
Open Space and Landscaping:

Central gathering spaces, often referred to as plazas, should be provided in all Town Mixed Use developments, with consideration for the following design guidelines:

- Generally, one square foot of plaza space should be provided for every forty feet square feet of gross floor area.
- Plazas can range in size between 2,500 and 40,000 square feet.
- Plazas should be surrounded by streets or front façades of buildings.
- A portion, 25% -80%, of the plaza should be landscaped.
- Plazas should contain amenities such as fountains, public art, shade trees, trash receptacles, benches, or other similar features.



Good Design: interconnected streets, less prominent parking



Poor Design: disconnected streets, prominent parking

Roadways and Access:

Street design should promote walkability through the use of relatively short blocks and a high ratio of street intersections compared to street links.

- Grid or modified grid patterns should be used to increase connectivity between blocks.
- Blocks should not exceed 800 feet in length.
- Pedestrian connections should be provided between parallel streets every 500 feet or less.
- Streets should interconnect with streets on abutting properties.
- Alley and driveways should be incorporated when feasible to improve development design.

Parking Facilities:

Structured parking facilities are preferable over surface parking lots due to their ability to concentrate parking in a smaller area, reduce the visual impact of parking, and preserve the pedestrian environment. Both structured parking and surface lots can be improved through certain design standards:

- Parking structures with street frontages should have active uses along the first floor.
- Parking garages, when used, should ideally be wrapped inside other uses so that they are not visible from the street.
- Parking garages, when visible from the street, should screen cars with grills, lattices, mock windows, false facades or other architectural treatments.
- Surface parking should be obscured to the highest extent possible by locating lots to the rear or sides of buildings and using screens where a lot abuts a residential use or public street.
- Surface lots should be interconnected.

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Sidewalks should be provided along all street frontages on both sides of the street.
- Street furnishings, such as bicycle parking, rest areas, lighting, trash disposal, should be provided to increase the attractiveness of the streetscape and improve function for pedestrians.

Village Mixed Use

Village Mixed-Use areas already exist throughout the Pottstown Region in locations such as Gilbertsville in Douglass Township and Pottstown Landing in North Coventry Township. Village Mixed Use development contains a variety of residential uses and a variety of commercial and institutional uses in small traditional-style buildings. New Mixed Use Villages can vary in size and intensity and should be designed to fit the character of the surrounding community. The overall intent of the Village Mixed Use district is to:

1. *Provide for a mix of uses, including residential, banks, religious institutions, small retail stores, firehouses, and offices, both next to each other and within the same building.*
2. *Create a walkable community through well designed and placed buildings, appropriately located parking, and an attractive streetscape.*
3. *Incorporate central open space areas.*
4. *Develop a network of interconnected streets and sidewalks.*

Location: Village Mixed Use development is appropriate for a variety of locations in the Region's Primary Growth and Secondary Growth Areas. As shown below, new Village Mixed Use development could be provided within or adjacent to an existing village, used as a buffer between commercial and residential uses, or built in a completely undeveloped portion of the Region in order to allow a municipality to create a new town to meet the community's commercial and Fair Share residential needs.

Density and Lot Size: Density and intensity regulations for Village Mixed Use development will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and policies. Overall, Village Mixed Use development should have relatively small lots, ranging as small as 2,400 square feet for townhomes, 5,000 square feet for twins, and 10,000 square feet for single-family detached residences or non-residential buildings. Village Mixed Use developments can have a wide range of overall densities, depending on how much open space is set aside. As a general guideline, a density of 6 dwelling units per acre provides a good balance between walkable mixed use development and small town character.

Uses:

A Village Mixed Use District should allow for a wide variety of uses to mimic the character of traditional villages, including:

- Single-family detached residential
- Single- family attached residential (twins and townhomes)
- Multi-family residential (apartments)
- Stores
- Restaurants
- Hotels and Bed and Breakfasts
- Offices
- Institutions, including schools, libraries, and religious facilities.

Automobile-oriented uses, such as drive-through restaurants should be discouraged as they detract from the pedestrian environment.

Site Design: To mimic the appearance of traditional villages, new Village Mixed Use development should have appropriate lot size, lot width, yard setback, height, and coverage. These regulations will need to be tailored to suit each specific development.

- ***Site Layout***: Village Mixed Use developments should be laid out to encourage walking and biking. Mixed Use developments should also be designed to provide a transition between external land uses. Generally, commercial uses should be located near existing commercial uses or existing villages, as well as close to higher classification streets. New commercial buildings should be close to the street, grouped together, and connected to residential areas through a network of streets and sidewalks. Residential uses of all types should be mixed within the development, rather than segregated by building type.
- ***Front Setback***: Instead of a typical minimum front setback requirement, Village Mixed Use development should employ both a minimum and maximum front setback range. This range limits buildings from being too close, as well as too far from the street.

Building Design:

Non-residential buildings should have a size, scale, design, and character of a village mixed use character and fit in with the residential uses in the development. The following design standards for non-residential buildings should be incorporated to new development:

- *Small Building Footprint*: Often, new grocery stores are over 50,000 square feet. To keep buildings smaller and more in line with a village character, non-residential building footprints should not exceed 7,000 square feet.
- *Building Orientation and Entrance*: Non-residential buildings should be located close to the street, with public doors facing the street.
- *Windows*: Non-residential buildings should have windows along facades that face a public street.
- *Walls*: Attractive and varied walls should be located along streets, walkways, and parking areas to create a more hospitable walking environment.
- *Roofs*: Pitched roofs, ideally of a 6 to 12 or 8 to 12 pitch, are encouraged to create a village character.

Residential buildings, like non-residential structures, should be built to reflect a village mixed use character:

- *Architectural Features*: Residential buildings in Village Mixed Use developments are encouraged to incorporate unenclosed front porches and/or raised first floor levels or front yards.
- *Garages*: Residential garages should be located to the side or rear of house.
- *Roofs*: Pitched roofs, ideally of a 6 to 12 or 8 to 12 pitch, are encouraged to create a village character.
- *Scale*: To keep the scale of all residential uses similar, apartment buildings should have no side longer than 80 feet and no more than four townhomes should be attached in a row.

Roadways and Access: Street design should promote walking and biking through the use of relatively short blocks and a high ratio of street intersections compared to street links.

- Grid or modified grid patterns should be used to increase connectivity between blocks.
- Blocks should not exceed 800 feet in length.
- Pedestrian connections should be provided between parallel streets every 500 feet or less.
- Streets should interconnect with streets on abutting properties.
- Alley and driveways should be incorporated when feasible to improve development design.

Parking: Controlling the location, orientation, and appearance of parking facilities is critical for creating a sense of community and walkable environment. The following guidelines apply to parking for non-residential and residential parking design.

Non-Residential Parking

- Parking lots should be located to the side or rear of non-residential buildings to improve pedestrian access to building entrances from the street.
- Adjacent non-residential parking lots should be connected in order to allow traffic to move between lots without traveling back onto the street.
- Parking lots should be buffered from adjacent properties with a wall and landscaping.

Residential Parking

- Single-family detached and twin homes should have side-loaded garages, front-loaded garages that are set back at least 10 feet from the front façade, garages in the rear of homes, and garages that take access from an alley. Attached, front-facing garages should be discouraged.
- Parking for townhouses will vary whether the unit is located on the end or in the interior of a row. For end units, parking should be located to the side or rear of the townhome. For interior units, front facing garages should comprise no more than 30% of the total area of the front façade elevation.

Buffers and Landscaping: Village Mixed Use developments should have extensive greenery. To create more open and green spaces, Village Mixed Use developments should preserve a portion of the tract as open spaces, ideally 20%. A portion of preserved open space should be in the form of central open spaces, including village greens, landscaped medians, eyebrows, or cul-de-sac islands.

Business

Business uses include both commercial and office development, ranging from small neighborhood-scale retail sites to larger more diverse community commercial centers that may include uses such as movie theaters, fast food restaurants, and auto sales and services, along with retail and office buildings. More than any of the other uses included in these development guidelines, each municipality's zoning for business uses will need to be tailored to fit the goals and objectives of the community in which it will be located. Commercial and office developments need to be scaled appropriately, not only for the nature of the community (i.e. rural, suburban, or urban), but also for the sites or areas intended to be developed.

When determining the scale of development and intensity of uses that should be permitted in each municipality's business districts, consideration should be given to the surrounding land uses, capacity of roadways, the type of development desired, as well as the fiscal impacts of the development on the community. While commercial and office developments typically provide a fiscal benefit to local school districts, the fiscal impact of business uses on the municipality can be mixed, due to increased wear on nearby roadways and need for additional police officers.

While business development should be tailored to specific communities, there are some development standards should be employed for all types of commercial and office development. The intent of these standards is to:

1. *Discourage strip-style commercial development which requires incongruous architectural styles, excessive paved areas, and numerous curb cuts.*
2. *Encourage consolidation of driveways, parking, and curb cuts to provide more efficient and economical access and parking.*
3. *Assure suitable design to protect the character and property values of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods.*
4. *Allow existing commercial properties to be appropriately redeveloped.*

Location: Business uses are most appropriate for the Regional Core, Primary Growth, and Secondary Growth land use areas. Each municipality should identify the locations most suitable for commercial and office development. Generally, these guidelines encourage business development to be concentrated in clusters rather than stripped along roadways. Clustering commercial and office development in nodes at an intersection reduces traffic and congestion on main roadways.

Density and Lot Size: Density and intensity regulations for commercial development will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and policies.

Uses: A business district should allow for a wide variety of commercial and office uses. These development guidelines recommend that certain, more intrusive uses, such as drive-thrus, gas stations, auto sales and repair uses, kennels, and other similar commercial uses be permitted as conditional uses. Conditions for approval of these types of uses may include more stringent setback or soundproofing requirements.

Site Design:

- ***Setbacks***: Setbacks will vary according to the type of development and the character of the development and surrounding community. Business development that is intended for use by both pedestrians and drivers should have a reduced setback from the street than a development that is primarily auto-oriented. In either case, however, increased setbacks should be provided between business developments and residential uses.
- ***Impervious Coverage***: Similar to setbacks, maximum impervious coverage should vary according to the intended character of the development. Commercial and office developments in rural areas may want to limit impervious coverage to only 50%, while developments in suburban or more urban settings will likely require higher maximum limits ranging from 70-85%.

Building Design:

Buildings in business districts should be designed to be compatible with the character and architecture of the surrounding areas. For large scale commercial buildings, requiring variations in facades and rooflines can help to break-up the mass of a large building and awnings, porches, canopies, balconies, and other features can help improve the visual aesthetic of large-scale developments.

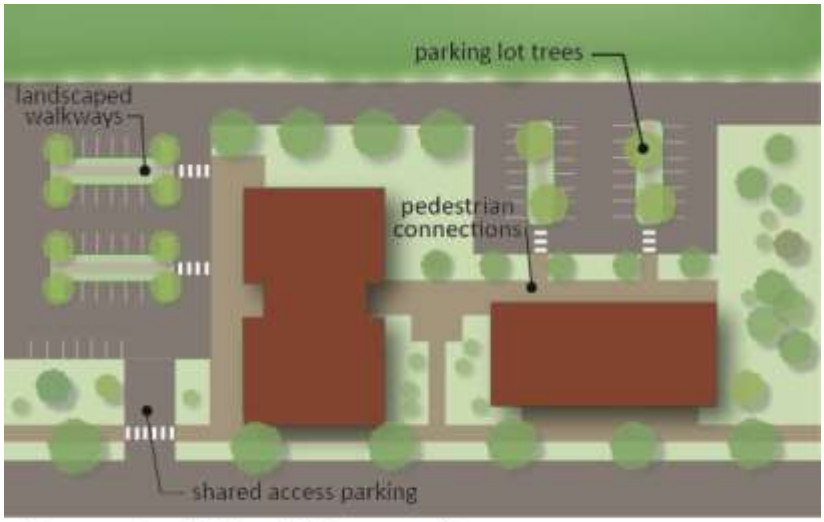
In more rural or suburban areas, requiring roofs of new commercial and office buildings to be pitched can help these developments fit in with the surrounding community. Additionally, buildings in business districts that face public streets should incorporate ground-floor windows, entry areas, awnings, and other features to improve the streetscape.

Roadways and Access: These guidelines recommend that for small to medium sized properties in business districts, only one access driveway be permitted for each street serving the development. Reducing the number of access driveways and curb cuts can help to reduce traffic and congestion on main roadways. Access driveways should also have an adequate driveway depth before internal parking or intersections begin. Providing an adequate driveway depth can reduce conflicts between cars entering and exiting the site and vehicles navigating the internal parking lot.

Lastly, adjacent commercial and office uses should provide interconnections between parking areas. When interconnections are not provided, vehicles have to re-enter main roadways to get to a neighboring commercial property. This can lead to increased congestion and safety problems.

Parking: Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation: Efficient and well-designed parking areas create safer environments for both vehicles and pedestrians. Business development should incorporate landscaped islands and medians in parking areas to help funnel traffic into driveways. Ensuring that drivers travel within designated travel ways and appropriate speeds reduces conflicts with other cars and pedestrians.

Pedestrian circulation can also be improved within parking areas by installing walkways within landscaped strips, delineating pedestrian crossings, and providing traffic calming devices near building entrances to help slow cars and give pedestrians the right-of-way.



Elements of well-designed off-street parking

Lighting: Exterior lighting should be designed and scaled in a way that addresses safety concerns without be a nuisance to surrounding properties, particularly nearby residential properties. Employing timers and motion sensors to control lights around the side and rear of buildings ensures that lights are on only when needed and helps to minimize light pollution. Requiring fully-cutoff lights that direct light downwards, rather than upwards or to the side, will also help reduce the impact of lighting on adjacent properties.

Buffers and Landscaping: Landscaping is very important for helping to create attractive developments that are also compatible with the surrounding community. Landscaped buffers should be employed to help shield commercial or office development from surrounding non-commercial uses. Within the site, landscaped islands should be provided between rows of parking and at the end of parking rows. Landscaping not only improves the appearance of commercial and office development, but is important for controlling stormwater runoff within the site.

Industrial & Manufacturing

Industrial and manufacturing development should be designed to minimize the potential negative impact of these uses. While industrial and manufacturing uses will vary significantly in size and intensity, the general design elements described below can help to create high quality developments. The intent of these standards are to:

1. *Protect and enhance the Region's economic vitality by creating high quality industrial and manufacturing development.*
2. *Minimize adverse impacts of vehicular circulation on existing neighborhoods and the surrounding environment.*

Location: Industrial and manufacturing uses are most appropriate for the Regional Core, Primary Growth, and Secondary Growth land use areas. Industrial and manufacturing developments should have good access to highways, both for employers commuting to work as well as for freight or delivery trucks. When possible, these developments should be situated on a high-volume road that connects with a highway interchange. Municipalities should locate industrial and manufacturing development so that the traffic that serves the site can avoid traveling through developed residential neighborhood. Where freight rail lines or airports exist in a municipality, industrial and manufacturing development should be located near these facilities.

Density and Lot Size: Density and intensity regulations for industrial or manufacturing development will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and policies.

Uses: An industrial or manufacturing district should allow for a wide variety of uses, including light industrial uses, offices, warehouses and storage facilities, research facilities, hotels, as well as some limited retail uses or day care centers to serve the needs of nearby employees.

Site Design:

- ***Site Layout***: Design of sites will vary with the size of the development and type of uses. However, parking facilities should generally be located to the side or rear of buildings, set back from property lines and roads, and screened with landscaping.
- ***Setbacks***: Buildings in industrial or manufacturing districts will typically require larger setbacks than other types of uses. Setbacks of 40-50 feet from roads and 30-40 feet from property lines are appropriate for this type of development.

Building Design: Green building techniques for new projects should be encouraged to reduce the environmental impact of these facilities.

Roadways and Access: Well-designed roads and access can help improve safety and traffic flow of an industrial development. Separate entrances and parking areas should be provided for truck and car traffic and can help increase efficiency. Road access should be clear and direct. Loading areas will vary based on the use of the building, but are often effective when located along rear property lines or between industrial buildings and screen from adjacent properties.

Parking: Parking areas should be located to the rear or between buildings. Creating multiple, smaller parking lots that are separated by landscaped buffers and connected through access drives can help reduce the visual impact of surface parking lots.

Pedestrian Access and Facilities: When industrial and manufacturing is located close to residential or commercial areas, sidewalks and bike paths should be provided to link these developments to the surrounding sidewalk or bicycle network.

Often, however, industrial and manufacturing uses are not located in a walkable setting and should therefore incorporate on-site pedestrian amenities such as walking trails, landscaped areas with benches, and other similar features. Providing pedestrian amenities and gathering spaces for nearby employees can help make these developments attractive places for both workers as well as potential new businesses.

Buffers and Landscaping: Extensive landscaping should be used both to buffer these uses from surrounding properties and within the site. Landscaping and green areas can improve the attractiveness of industrial and manufacturing developments and significantly reduce stormwater runoff from the site.

Highway Commercial Development

The Highway Commercial Overlay is intended to provide appropriate locations for regional commercial development. These large scale developments depend on visibility and accessibility by vehicular traffic and locations adjacent to the Region's major roadways are ideal sites for regional commercial development. It is not the intent of this plan that all of the land along the Region's major roadways be developed as highway-oriented commercial uses, but rather municipalities should identify those areas, limited to the Overlay, where such development would be most appropriate. Areas of the Overlay that intersect with Conservation Land Use Areas are not appropriate for large-scale Regional Commercial uses. Similarly, sections of the Overlay that intersect with Primary Growth Areas should be favored above those areas that intersect with Secondary Growth Areas. Where Highway Commercial uses are developed, municipalities are strongly encouraged to use strong performance standards, design criteria, and landscaping requirements, in order to limit the negative impacts on surrounding land uses. Additionally, municipalities should encourage shared access for multiple properties and limit curb cuts and new intersections along major roadways.

Location: Highway commercial uses shall be located within areas of the Highway Commercial Overlay that intersect with the Primary Growth or Secondary Growth areas. Highway commercial development requires substantial infrastructure *(e.g., roads, water, sanitary sewer)* and shall be located in areas with established infrastructure or where it can be easily extended. Not all areas along the Region's major roadways are equally suitable locations for highway commercial development and priority should be given to areas that are already developed, adjacent to developed areas, intended for growth, or are located at major intersections.

Density and Lot Size: Density and intensity regulations for Highway Commercial development will be set individually by each municipality to reflect local characteristics and policies.

Uses: Areas designated for Highway Commercial development should allow for large-scale regional commercial uses, including "big-box" retail, hotels, and other similar uses. Large-scale office developments may also be appropriate, but should be encouraged in conjunction with commercial development.

Building Design: Buildings should be oriented towards streets and sidewalks. Buildings in regional commercial centers should incorporate well-designed architecture. Buildings should incorporate designs and materials that enhance the surrounding area and reflect the character of the general community. The design should include visual and architectural elements *(e.g., large windows, awnings, plazas)* to enhance aesthetic appeal. Architectural elements can also be incorporated to break up the mass of large commercial buildings.

Roadways and Access: Regional commercial developments should utilize shared roadways to minimize curb cuts.

A Pedestrian walkway is provided through the parking lot of commercial development.

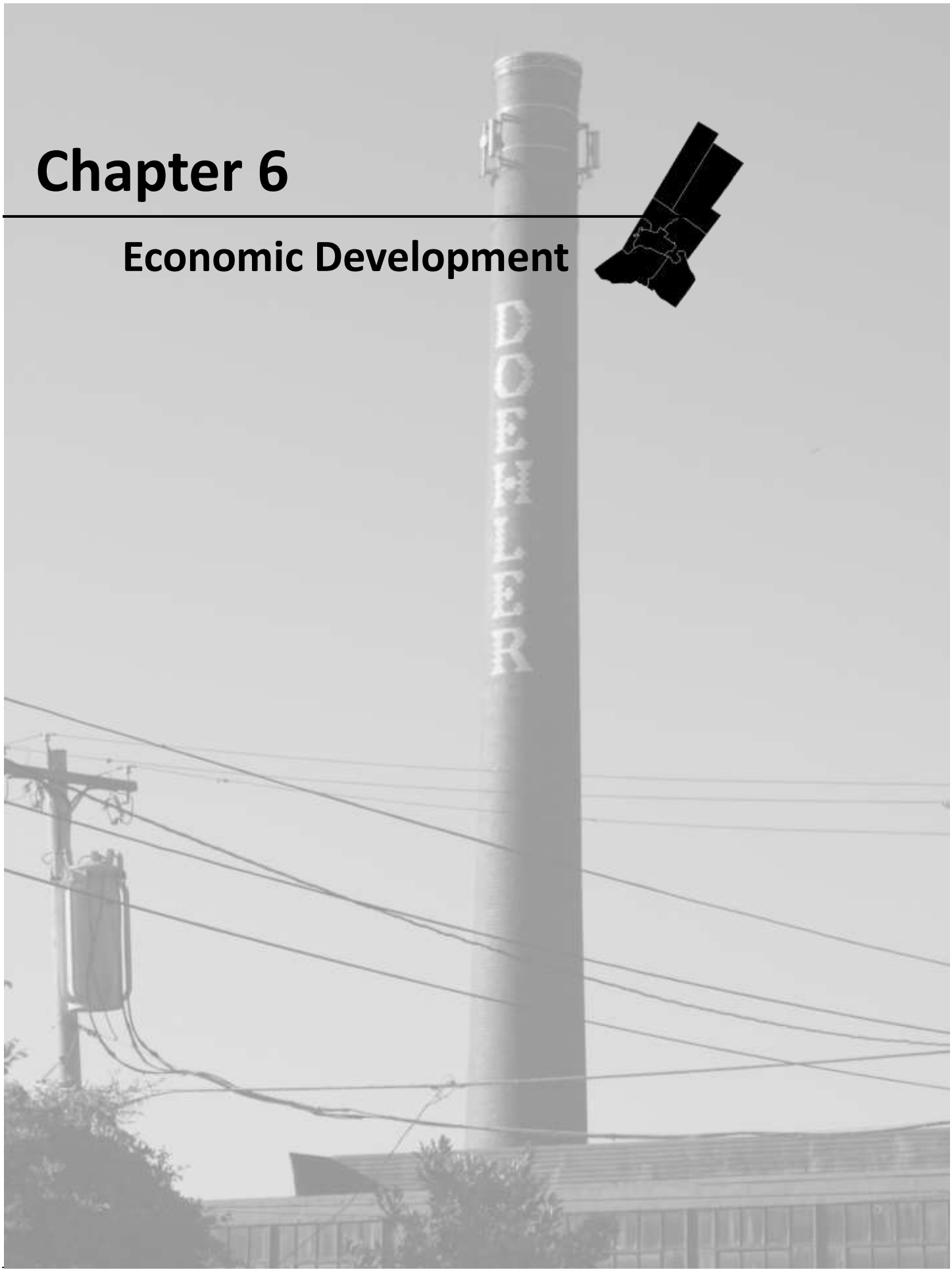
Parking: Efficient and well-designed parking areas create safer environments for both vehicles and pedestrians. Regional commercial development should incorporate landscaped islands and medians in parking areas to help funnel traffic into driveways. Ensuring that drivers travel within designated travel ways and appropriate speeds reduces conflicts with other cars and pedestrians.

Pedestrian circulation can also be improved within parking areas by installing walkways within landscaped strips, delineating pedestrian crossings, and providing traffic calming devices near building entrances to help slow cars and give pedestrians the right-of-way.

Buffers and Landscaping: Landscaping is very important for helping to create attractive developments that are also compatible with the surrounding community. Landscaped buffers should be employed to help shield commercial or office development from surrounding non-commercial uses. Within the site, landscaped islands should be provided between rows of parking and at the end of parking rows. Landscaping not only improves the appearance of commercial and office development, but is important for controlling stormwater runoff within the site.

Chapter 6

Economic Development



Introduction

This chapter will analyze the status and character of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region's economy, and recommend strategies for economic development. This Plan recognizes the critical role the economy plays in people's quality of life, and places a high priority on economic development. This chapter will review the status of the Region's economy and information contained in many of the economic development plans adopted by the Region's municipalities to provide an economic development plan that will build economic diversity, encourage revitalization and growth management, and address workforce issues.

Based upon the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives, economic development in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region will focus upon encouraging new retail, office and industrial development within designated areas to meet a range of uses. Fostering this economic development in a way that encourages infill and redevelopment within established areas, such as vacant industrial sites and other underutilized commercial parcels while complementing the existing conditions surrounding areas, will be essential to the region's success. Given the economic downturn that has occurred in recent years, there is greater pressure among all the municipalities to improve economic conditions in their communities. While Pottstown Borough remains the economic core of the Region, it will be important to spread economic development throughout the Region in existing villages and commercial centers, along Route 100, where appropriate, as well as in areas designated primary growth areas in the Future Land Use Plan.

The focus of economic development for the purposes of the recommendations in this chapter will be on the revitalization downtown Pottstown, existing villages, and other strategic opportunity sites throughout the Region, recreating the Region's niche in the industrial sector, and fostering tourism through recreation.

Economic Development Goal and Objectives

Promote economic development in the region's growth areas by pursuing commercial, office, and industrial development that will be compatible with the Region's unique assets and infrastructure.

Objectives:

- Promote high quality employment opportunities.
- Enhance the region's tax base.
- Maintain and enhance existing commercial, office, and industrial areas.
    - ◊ Prioritize and attract commercial development that will meet the needs of the Region's population, including supermarket and specialty food space, sit-down eating establishments, home furnishing retail, vehicle sales and service, pharmacies, apparel sales, and home improvement retail opportunities.
    - ◊ Attract both traditional multi-tenant as well as R&D office development.
    - ◊ Attract industrial development activity of consumer-oriented products, including the manufacturing and assembly of light aircraft, scooters, bicycles, kayaks, canoes, other consumer goods, and alternative energy technology.

- Prioritize economic development in locations where adequate transportation access and necessary utilities are available and planned for, with a focus in the following targeted sites:
    - ◊ The Pottstown municipal airport
    - ◊ Schuylkill Riverfront
    - ◊ Philadelphia Avenue in Gilbertsville
    - ◊ New Hanover at the intersection of Routes 663 and 73
    - ◊ High Street in Pottstown
    - ◊ Keystone Boulevard/Trail Area
    - ◊ Sanatoga Interchange Park
    - ◊ Intersection of Route 100 and State Street
    - ◊ North Coventry's Commercially Zoned Areas
    - ◊ East Coventry's Commercially Zoned areas along Route 724
- Create a competitive advantage for the Region's business community by promoting resource conservation and sustainable development practices.
    - ◊ Grow the local economy by attracting "green-color" jobs, such as alternative energy production facilities.
    - ◊ Invest in cleaner energy sources that minimize negative effects and maximize energy efficiency.
    - ◊ Promote energy-efficient buildings .
    - ◊ Promote location-efficient communities that are healthy, affordable, and diverse.
- Actively promote tourism, capitalizing on the Region's recreation opportunities, agricultural industry, and numerous historical resources.
    - ◊ Promote regional recreation activities to attract users to the Region's recreational amenities.
    - ◊ Promote the development of agri-tourism in the Region.
    - ◊ Build upon the existing tourist attractions and visitor organizations in the Region.
- Market the Region as a great place to live, work, and play.

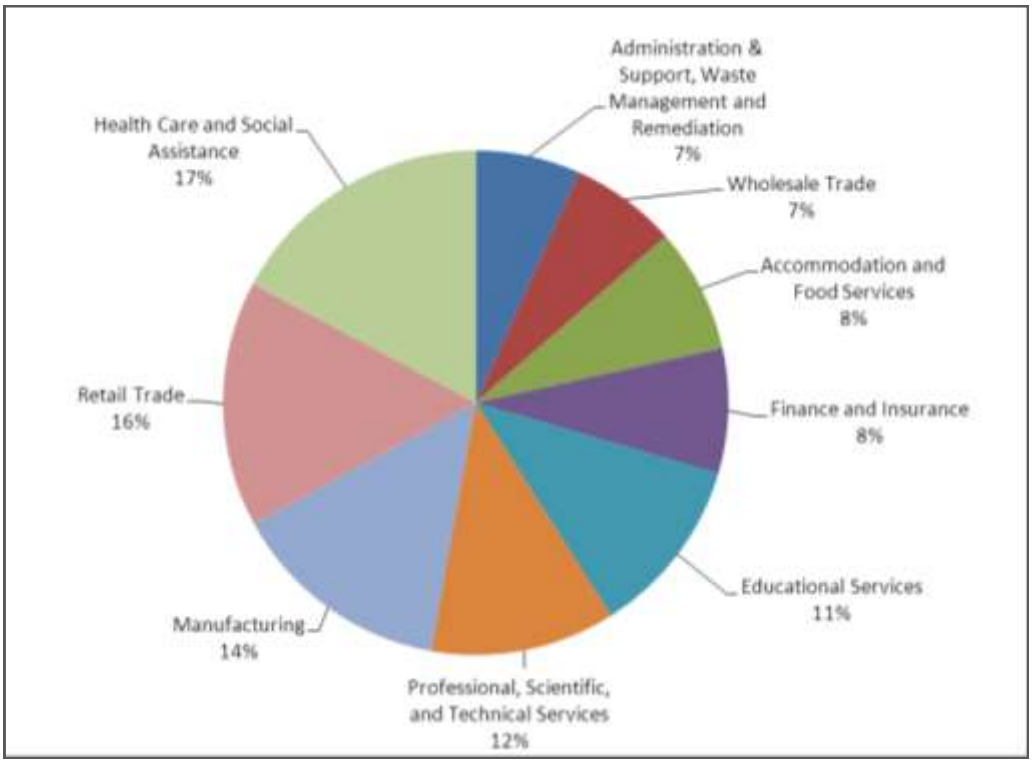
Existing Economic Conditions

According to the 2011 U.S. Census Borough Center for Economic Studies, there are 39,063 employed people living in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region. Of those 39,063, only 5,971 both live and work within the region—representing about 15% of the total employed residents. The remaining 33,092 or 84% are employed outside of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region. As reported by the U.S. Census

Bureau's Center for Economic Studies, **Figures 6-1** and **6-2** both illustrate the job type distribution of the region's employed residents, dividing them into 20 industry categories. As with all of the tables in this chapter, **Figure 6-2** also provides comparisons to Montgomery County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a whole.

The majority of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region's employed residents (49.3%) earn more than $3,333 per month, as illustrated in **Figure 6-4. Figures 6-5** and **6-6** give the educational attainment and age distribution of the region's resident workers, respectively. The age profile of the Region's resident workers is similar to Montgomery County and the State of Pennsylvania; while the region's resident workers are more likely to possess a Bachelor's or advanced degree than the average resident worker in the Commonwealth, but less likely to possess a Bachelor's or advanced degree than the average worker in the County. .

Figure 6-1 Resident Workforce Distribution by Industry



The 2011 U.S. Census Bureau data shows that there are 20,634 jobs available within the Pottstown Region. Of those 20,634 jobs, only 5,971 are held by people who also live within the region. Therefore, 14,663 jobs, or roughly 71%, of the jobs within the region are held by workers commuting into the region from elsewhere (**Figure 6-3**).

Retail trade jobs are the most commonly held type of job with the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, with healthcare and social assistance jobs coming in second. These two job types account for about 23% and 19% of all jobs in the region, respectively. This is illustrated in **Figures 6-7** and **6-8**. The earnings distribution of people working at a job within the Pottstown Metropolitan Region differs with the employed residents data, with less of a percentage earning more than $3,333 per month (about 33.6%) and greater percentages for those earning $1,250 per month or less (about 32%) and those earning between $1,251 and $3,333 per month (about 34%), as outlined in **Figure 6-9**. The age distribution and educational attainment of those occupying jobs available are illustrated in **Figures 6.10** and **6.11**, respectively.

Figure 6-2 Resident Workforce Distribution by Industry

	Region		Montgomery Co.		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	84	0.2%	430	0.11%	3,541	1.5%	20,785	0.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	43	0.1%	283	0.07%	255	0.1%	27,743	0.5%
Utilities	314	0.8%	1,945	0.49%	1,335	0.6%	33,432	0.6%
Construction	1894	4.8%	14,190	3.60%	8,895	3.7%	223,757	4.0%
Manufacturing	4309	11.0%	35,471	9.00%	19,114	8.0%	587,038	10.5%
Wholesale Trade	2076	5.3%	20,966	5.32%	12,803	5.4%	239,092	4.3%
Retail Trade	4790	12.3%	42,768	10.85%	24,076	10.1%	632,853	11.3%
Transportation/ Warehousing	1280	3.3%	9,969	2.53%	7,201	3.0%	228,887	4.1%
Information	960	2.5%	10,168	2.58%	7,765	3.3%	104,677	1.9%
Finance and Insurance	2435	6.2%	27,750	7.04%	18,137	7.6%	262,173	4.7%
Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	481	1.2%	5,673	1.44%	3,321	1.4%	61,305	1.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3596	9.2%	42,209	10.71%	27,051	11.3%	337,342	6.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	919	2.4%	10,086	2.56%	8,070	3.4%	130,226	2.3%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	2037	5.2%	20,844	5.29%	11,844	5.0%	285,953	5.1%
Educational Services	3482	8.9%	40,252	10.22%	23,682	9.9%	549,190	9.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	5221	13.4%	57,924	14.70%	30,949	13.0%	954,953	17.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	518	1.3%	5,572	1.41%	3,762	1.6%	82,575	1.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	2422	6.2%	23,991	6.09%	14,179	5.9%	412,482	7.4%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	1265	3.2%	13,709	3.48%	8,513	3.6%	190,264	3.4%
Public Administration	937	2.4%	9,841	2.50%	4,222	1.8%	228,526	4.1%
Total Resident Workforce	**39,063**	100.0%	**394,041**	100.00%	**238,715**	100%	**5,593,253**	100%

Figure 6-3: Commuting Patterns in the Pottstown Region, 2011

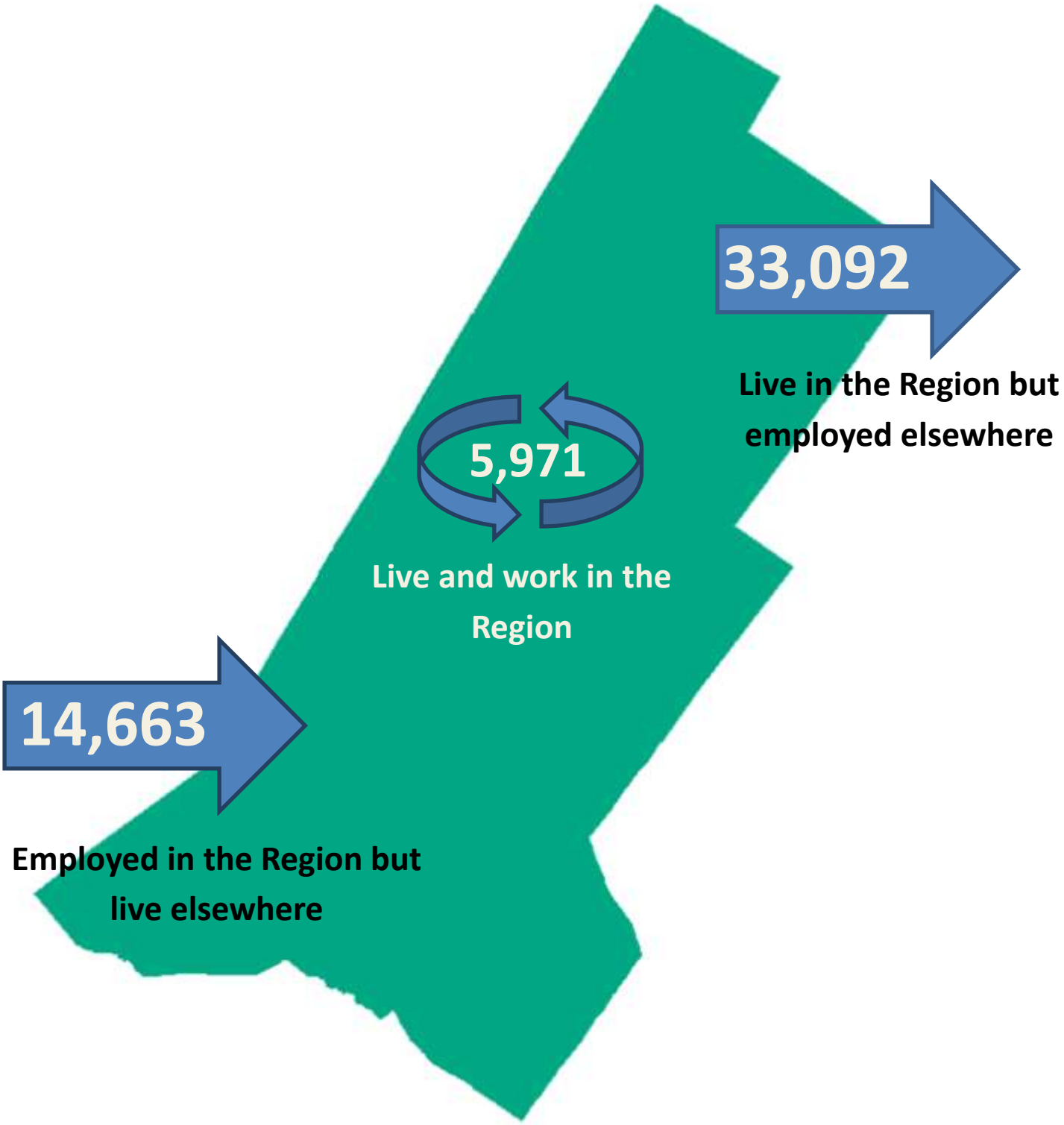


Figure 6-4: Earnings Distribution of Resident Workers

	Pottstown Region		Montgomery County		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
$1,250 per month or less	8,593	22.00%	88,551	22.2%	49,766	20.8%	1,407,026	25.2%
$1,251 to $3,333 per month	11,200	28.70%	99,534	24.9%	59,395	24.9%	1,905,523	34.1%
More than $3,333 per month	19,270	49.30%	210,956	52.9%	129,554	54.3%	2,280,704	40.8%
Total	**39,063**	**100%**	**399,041**	**100%**	**238,715**	**100%**	**5,593,253**	**100.0%**

Figure 6-5: Educational Attainment of Resident Workers

	Region		Montgomery County		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share
Less than high school	2,217	5.70%	21,229	5.4%	13,343	5.6%	378,198	6.8%
High school or equivalent, no college	8,153	20.90%	73,038	18.5%	44,717	18.7%	1,303,289	23.3%
Some college or Associate degree	9,471	24.20%	92,923	23.6%	55,583	23.3%	1,362,990	24.4%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	10,747	27.50%	123,635	31.4%	75,426	31.6%	1,294,340	23.1%
Educational attainment not available (workers aged 29 or younger)	8,475	21.70%	83,216	21.1%	49,646	20.8%	1,254,436	22.4%
Total Resident Workers	**39,063**	**100%**	**399,041**	**100.0%**	**238,715**	**100%**	**5,593,253**	**100.0%**

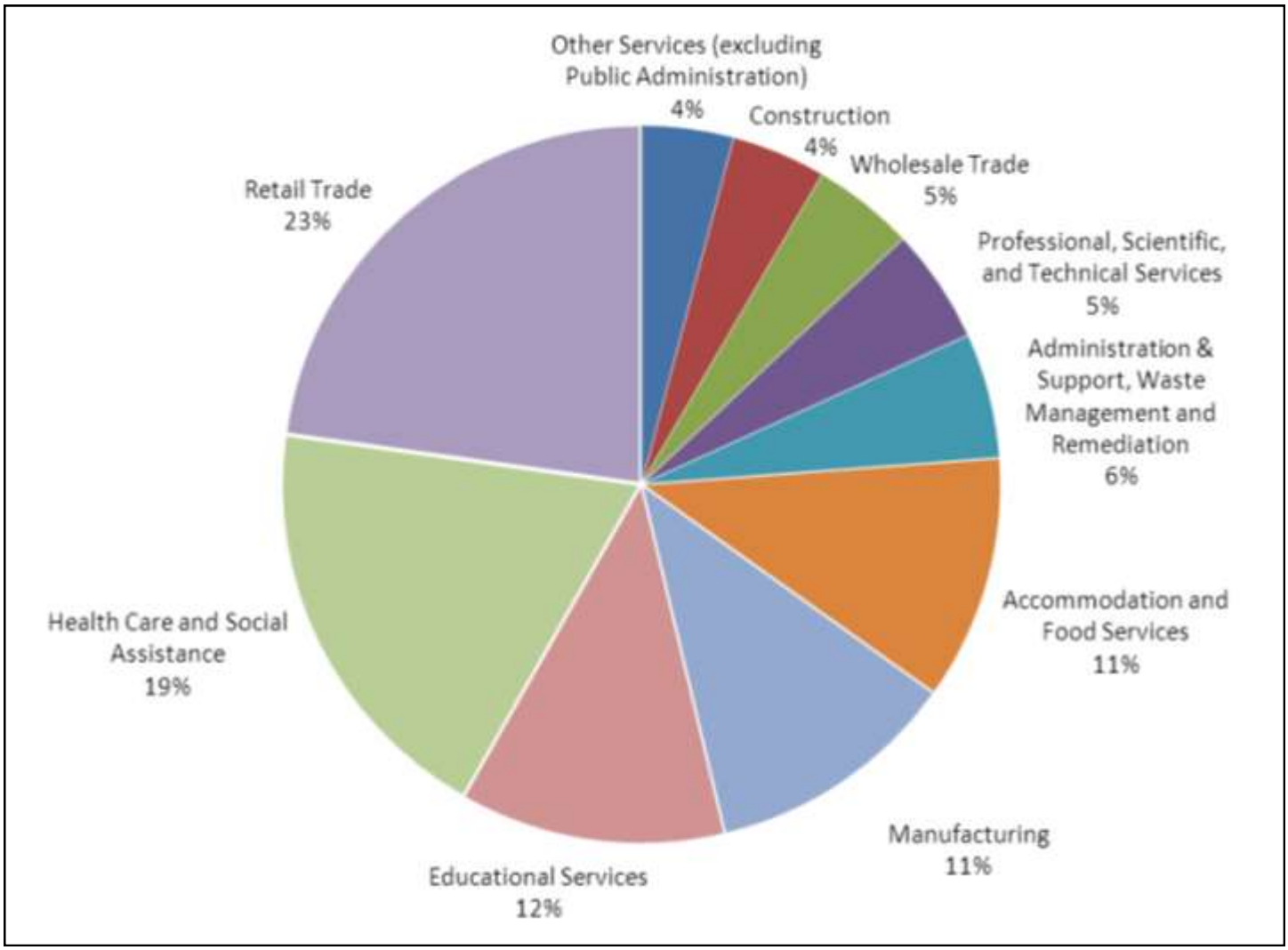
Figure 6.-: Age Distribution of Resident Worker

	Region		Montgomery County		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share
Age 29 or younger	8,475	21.70%	83,216	21.1%	49,646	20.8%	1,254,436	22.4%
Age 30 to 54	22,862	58.50%	222,598	56.5%	136,050	57.0%	3,123,024	55.8%
Age 55 or older	7,726	19.80%	88,227	22.4%	50,019	22.2%	1,215,793	21.7%

Figure 6-7: Employment Type Distribution of Persons Occupying Jobs Available

	Regional Workers		Montgomery County		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	100	0.50%	305	0.1%	5,790	2.4%	21,754	0.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	5	0.00%	315	0.1%	237	0.1%	30,475	0.6%
Utilities	67	0.30%	3,060	0.6%	555	0.2%	33,486	0.6%
Construction	772	3.70%	18,500	3.9%	9,224	3.9%	216,729	3.9%
Manufacturing	2,035	9.90%	46,213	9.8%	21,965	9.2%	577,473	10.5%
Wholesale Trade	824	4.00%	27,503	5.8%	14,099	5.9%	232,306	4.2%
Retail Trade	4,090	19.80%	57,977	12.3%	23,696	9.9%	625,160	11.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	481	2.30%	10,280	2.2%	6,713	2.8%	227,094	4.1%
Information	423	2.10%	13,726	2.9%	8,615	3.6%	102,446	1.9%
Finance and Insurance	579	2.80%	35,415	7.5%	18,817	7.9%	255,331	4.6%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	331	1.60%	6,786	1.4%	3,917	1.6%	59,203	1.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	938	4.50%	57,159	12.1%	27,484	11.5%	327,842	5.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	129	0.60%	11,033	2.3%	7,808	3.3%	129,383	2.3%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	1,020	4.90%	33,512	7.1%	12,044	5.1%	280,645	5.1%
Educational Services	2,143	10.40%	29,318	6.2%	20,368	8.5%	541,146	9.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,401	16.50%	61,912	13.1%	28,584	12.0%	951,082	17.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	346	1.70%	5,826	1.2%	3,649	1.5%	83,252	1.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,985	9.60%	28,186	6.0%	13,679	5.7%	411,188	7.5%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	753	3.60%	15,856	3.4%	9,148	3.8%	187,885	3.4%
Public Administration	212	1.00%	8,833	1.9%	2,093	0.9%	217,860	4.0%
Total	**20,634**	**100%**	**471,715**	**100.0%**	**238,485**	**100%**	**5,511,740**	**100.0%**

6-8 Employment Type Distribution of Persons Occupying Jobs Available



6-9 Earnings Distribution of Persons Occupying Jobs Available, 2011

	Region		Montgomery County		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Number	**Share**	**Number**	**Share**	**Number**	**Share**	**Number**	**Share**
$1,250 per month or less	6,672	32.30%	103,926	14.6%	49,386	20.7%	1,399,784	15.3%
$1,251 to $3,333 per month	7,032	34.10%	135,936	19.1%	66,087	27.7%	2,225,808	24.4%
More than $3,333 per month	6,930	33.60%	471,715	66.3%	123,012	51.6%	5,511,740	60.3%
Total	**20,634**	**100.00%**	**711,577**	**100.0%**	**238,485**	**100%**	**9,137,332**	**100.0%**

6-10 Age Distribution of Persons Occupying Jobs Available, 2011

	Region		Montgomery County		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share
Age 29 or younger	5,193	25.20%	106,700	22.60%	53,531	22.4%	1,246,144	22.60%
Age 30 to 54	10,754	52.10%	267,558	56.70%	136,763	57.3%	3,067,481	55.70%
Age 55 or older	4,687	22.70%	97,457	20.70%	48,191	20.2%	1,198,115	27.70%

Figure 6-11 Educational Attainment of Persons Occupying Jobs Available, 2011

	Region		Montgomery County		Chester County		Pennsylvania	
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share
Less than high school	1,405	6.80%	27,975	5.9%	14,068	5.9%	371,753	6.7%
High school or equivalent, no college	4,823	23.40%	89,838	19.0%	44,826	18.8%	1,291,100	23.4%
Some college or Associate degree	4,980	24.10%	111,195	23.6%	55,048	23.1%	1,341,823	24.3%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	4,233	20.50%	136,007	28.8%	71,012	29.8%	1,260,920	22.9%
Educational attainment not available (workers aged 29 or younger)	5,193	25.20%	106,700	22.6%	53,531	22.4%	1,246,144	22.6%

Economic Assets

Available Land

Nearly 15% of the region's total land area, approximately 5,000 acres, is currently classified as Undeveloped. While some portion of this land may be eventually intended to be protected as permanent open space, many large undeveloped parcels are ripe for redevelopment. While the decline of the Region's industrial base over the past several decades has contributed to its economic downturn, the closing or movement of these businesses out of the Region has helped to create ample available land. A majority of these former industrial properties are located along the Schuylkill River in Pottstown Borough, Lower Pottsgrove and West Pottsgrove Township. In addition to these former industrial parcels, there are also many underutilized or vacant properties throughout other parts of the Region whose repurposing could contribute to the revitalization of these areas.

Unlike much of Montgomery County, the Pottstown Metropolitan Region also has large areas of land still available for new residential development. Although this plan encourages the preservation of the places identified in the Future Land Use Plan as conservation areas, infill development of underutilized parcels and development of undeveloped lands when appropriate will help to support the Region's population growth.

Access to Rail, Air Transport, and Major Highways

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region has an excellent transportation network, including an active freight rail line, proximity to two airports, and several major roadways. A quality and varied transportation network is important for the Region's economic development and facilitating the movement of goods into and out of the area. This transportation network is also key for bringing people to the Region, who both patronize and work in the Region's many businesses.

Rail: Freight rail moves through the Region along the Harrisburg Line, owned by Norfolk Southern. The line is a Class 1 railroad and runs along the Schuylkill River through Pottstown Borough and Lower and West Pottsgrove Townships. While the Harrisburg line is a freight-only rail line, the Colebrookdale rail line, a spur running between Pottstown and Boyertown Borough in Berks County opened as a tourist railroad in late 2014. This rail line is not only expected to attract upwards of 30,000 riders each year, but is also anticipated to have significant economic impact in the nearby communities as well as create 200 new jobs.

Air: The Pottstown Region is also home to the Pottstown Municipal Airport and is additionally located very close to the Pottstown-Limerick Airport (located across the region's border in Limerick Township). Both of these facilities are used for general aviation purposes (non-airline passenger and cargo flights). While the Pottstown-Limerick Airport is a private facility, the Pottstown Municipal Airport is a public-use airport and served 22,075 flight operations in 2012 for limited corporate and charter services as well as for recreational flights. The Municipal Airport is located on 63 acres and is directly adjacent to Circle of Progress Boulevard, a business and industrial park in Pottstown.

Road Network: The Pottstown Region contains two "expressways", four major arterials and several minor arterials. The two expressways, PA-100 and US-422 intersect in North Coventry Township and move tens of thousands of people through the area each day and provide important commuting routes for area residents and workers.

A Growing Regional Population

The Pottstown Region has been and is continuing to grow in both its resident population and employment sector. With proximity to the City of Philadelphia to the east, the Pottstown Metropolitan Region is well connected to this urban market as well as many other suburban employment areas around the City.

Between 2000 and 2010, population grew from approximately 69,000 to 79,000 residents and the number of people employed in the Region increased from 27,000 to 30,000. Most importantly, DVRPC projects the Region's population and employment to continue to grow over the next several decades, with the population increasing another 22% to more than 96,000 people by 2040 and jobs growing another 18.7% to 33,000 jobs by the same time.

An increase in the Region's population over the next several decades will help to usher in and support new economic development activities in the Region's municipalities.

Existing Economic Organizations and Education Institutions

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is already home to numerous organizations whose missions help support the economic development of member municipalities. Organizations such as the Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce, Pottstown Area Industrial Development (PAID) and the Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA) are directly invested revitalization and attraction of new business, while the area's numerous arts, culture, and recreational organizations help to make the Region an attractive place for both residents and visitors alike. The Region is also home to the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation, an organization that, among other efforts, is helping to improve recreational opportunities in the Region, providing important funding and organizational capacity that have helped municipalities to accomplish recreational and open space goals.

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is also home to the Montgomery County Community College (MCCC), Western Campus, the Hill School, and several public school districts serving the Region's eight municipalities. In addition to the employment opportunities provided by the institutions, these schools (particularly the MCCC and the Hill School) can aid in the Region's economic development by attracting new students and their families to the area.

Recreational, Cultural, Historic Resources

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is the setting for a growing number of both cultural and historic resources as well as abundant recreational opportunities.

Historic: The Pottstown Region has a rich history. Its many historic resources include the two nationally registered historic districts in downtown Pottstown, the Pottstown Landing Historic District in North Coventry, several eligible historic districts in the Region, Frick's Locks Village, a nationally registered historic district in East Coventry Township, as well as 33 nationally registered and eligible historic sites throughout the Region. The Region offers great opportunities for visitors to learn more about its history through programming and events, including tours of Frick's Locks Village, the Pottstown Annual Holiday House Tour, as well as the annual Colonial May Fair and Candlelight events at the Pottsgrove Manor.

Arts and Culture: The Region boasts a growing arts and cultural sector with organizations such as Steel River Playhouse and Pottstown Symphony Orchestra among many others in Pottstown Borough, and the Styer Holton Gallery in East Coventry.

Recreation: Recreation opportunities in the Region are plentiful. With more than 1,600 acres of public open space in the Region, and equal amount of private open space, and the Schuylkill River and Trail running through the Region – there are opportunities for both passive and active recreation as well as numerous programs and events planned for the parks each year. Annual events include the fishing derby in Douglass Township, Coventry Woods Festival in North Coventry, the Volleyball Rumble in Pottstown, and the many programs offered at Upper Pottsgrove's Althouse Arboretum, among others.

More than just serving the Region's existing population, recreational and open space and amenities promote economic development by attracting visitors and increasing the value of properties near and around preserved open space. The development and preservation of these amenities, often paid for through grants, also help to put money back into the local economy through the construction and development of these areas. The Althouse Arboretum alone has estimated to have paid more than $40,000 to local contractors in the completion of its facilities.

Economic Development Plan

The economic development strategies recommended by this comprehensive plan are designed to support the economic development goal of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region. All strategies recommended by this plan are a reiteration and reaffirmation of the recommendations outlined in the 2012 *Marketing the Pottstown Region* report, *Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan*, and other relevant planning documents adopted by the municipalities of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region. The following sections outline several policy areas that serve as examples of the ongoing economic development initiatives employed in the region.

Attract New Commercial and Retail Development to Meet the Region's Growing Needs

The *Marketing the Pottstown* Region report used information on business trends both in the Region and similar areas throughout the country to identify unmet needs for commercial and retail development in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region. The report identified the following development opportunities that could be capitalized on by the Region:

- 26,000 square feet of supermarket space
- 5,000 square feet of specialty food space
- 37,000 square feet of food service establishment space
- 79,000 square feet of general merchandise space
- 24,000 feet of home furnishings and furniture space
- 76,000 square feet of vehicle sales and service space
- 26,000 square feet of added drugstore space
- 32,000 square feet of apparel space, generally focused on women and family apparel
- 90,000 square feet of hardware and home improvement space
- 58,000 square feet of miscellaneous or other retail space, including gifts, cards, novelty, paper, and related items.

These figures are based on the growing needs that will result from the projected population growth figures estimated by DVRPC. Efforts should be made by municipalities and economic development organizations to continue to reach out to and attract businesses that can help to fill the region's commercial and retail gaps.

Redevelop Key Parcels in the Region

Several strategic sites and corridors were identified in the *Marketing the Pottstown Region* report as being ideal for redevelopment. Each of the strategic opportunity sites is located within the Regions proposed primary or secondary growth areas. The following sites are not exhaustive and there are numerous properties throughout the Region that are vacant, underutilized, and ripe for redevelopment. All such sites should be prioritized for growth ahead of "green" sites that have never been development. The following is a summary of the eight strategic opportunity sites identified in the report:

Pottstown Municipal Airport and Circle of Progress Boulevard

The Pottstown Municipal Airport already provides limited corporate, charter, and recreational flight services and also provides repair services through the private operations of Witmer's Aviation Services. The airport is located adjacent to Circle of Progress Boulevard, an area of land zoned to allow a variety of office and light industrial activity. The industrial park still contains several vacant parcels, the future development of which should capitalize on the proximity to the municipal airport. The plan recommends the light aircraft industry as an ideal niche opportunity given the location and land availability in the area.

"River Bend" Industrial Development

The area of land located along the Schuylkill River in the east of Pottstown Borough, Lower Pottsgrove and East Coventry Townships has been home to significant industrial development in the past. The opportunities identified for reuse of these already development sites include: alternative energy development, creation of a Research and Development campus, assemblage of consumer-oriented products, or a multi-tenant office center. The report specifies that any new industrial or office activity that is developed in this area should be restricted to the previously developed areas and preserve the riparian buffer that exists along portions of the river.

Philadelphia Avenue in Douglass Township

The area in Douglass Township along Philadelphia Avenue between Gilbertsville Road and Route 100 has the potential to be redeveloped as a linear business park, providing additional opportunities for retail, government services, medical offices, and full and limited restaurants. Iincorporating design standards, streetscape, and signage improvements could significantly enhance this area which currently contains a mix of both residential and non-residential uses and several rundown properties.

Keystone Boulevard

This area was also the subject of the 2012 *Industrial Zone Transportation Access Study,* which created a concept plan for the area of land along the Schuylkill River between Route 100 in the east and Grosstown Road in the west. The plan recommends the extension of Keystone Boulevard, and with proximity to rail, available utilities, and potential connections to both Route 100 and US Route 422, the site's 366 acres possess many economic development opportunities. Currently, Pottstown Borough and West Pottsgrove Township are working in cooperation to create a new vibrant employment center that can maximize the area's redevelopment potential.

Station Interchange Business Park at Sanatoga

The report notes that while development of the land west of the Route 422 interchange in Lower Pottsgrove is unlikely to develop at a pace and intensity previously planned for, development of these parcels should still be pursued. The report recommends development of a business technology park with space for multi-tenant office, emerging energy technology, and single-tenant office users.

North Coventry's Commercially Zoned Districts

With the decline of the Coventry Mall and other large-scale commercial uses and the rezoning of land along Route 100 in North Coventry for Traditional Neighborhood Development, these areas are ripe for redevelopment and should incorporate a mix of retail and office uses that are appropriately scaled for the existing conditions as well as a mix of residential uses.

New Hanover Recreation Corners

Existing commercial and retail gaps in the more rural portions of New Hanover provide the opportunity for expansion of retail to serve the municipal population as well as draw others to the area. The report recommends that New Hanover capitalize on its rural landscape to develop recreational opportunities that can further draw outsiders to the area and help support the expansion of commercial activity. Agri-tourism activity and additional recreation amenities could help create a unique niche for this part of the region.

High Street in Downtown Pottstown

As the historic and economic core of the region, downtown Pottstown, specifically the areas along High Street, contain significant economic development potential. In addition to streetscape improvements, *Marketing the Pottstown Region* identifies the following improvement opportunities:

- Additional non-national chain food service establishments
- Additional specialty food space
- Development of miscellaneous retail space
- Multi-tenant office space for community based professional services, outpatient medical service, and research and development activity
- Additional housing units

Route 100 and State Street Intersection

The intersection of Route 100 and State Street, while not specifically mentioned in *Marketing the Pottstown Region*, is ready for redevelopment. Located on the border between Pottstown Borough and Upper Pottsgrove and West Pottsgrove Townships, the properties in this area are situated along major roadways with connections to public sewer and water. With the former Giant property vacant, among other properties nearby, these three municipalities should look to focus future large-scale commercial development in this area.

Promote Recreational and Cultural Tourism

With more than 3,000 acres of public and private open space as well as direct access to the Schuylkill River and Schuylkill River Trail, the Pottstown Metropolitan Region possesses the amenities to become a recreational destination. Events such as the Pottstown Volleyball Rumble, which attracted an estimated 2,000 athletes and many more spectators to the 4-day event in 2013, are helping to transform the Region into hub for recreational activity. The Pottstown Metropolitan Region should continue to implement improvements to its parks and recreational facilities and provide quality programming for the facilities. Completion of the Schuylkill River Trail from Pottstown to Phoenixville remains particularly important for attracting recreational users and growing tourism in the Region.

The Region should also market its growing number of cultural organizations to build tourism. From the increasing number of art galleries and performing arts venues in the Pottstown Region to the planned Colebrookdale Tourist Railroad, the Pottstown Region should position itself as a cultural center for the area.

Develop a Niche Industrial Market

The *Marketing the Pottstown Region* report identifies several niche industrial opportunities for the Pottstown Region that can help to capitalize on the Region's agricultural sector, recreation opportunities, and other existing infrastructure that is unique to the area. Some of the recommended opportunities include the following:

- Light Aircraft was identified as a growing market segment that could capitalize on the region's proximity to two airports, available industrial-zoned land, and accessibility to both highway and rail transportation infrastructure.
- Bicycle production and assemblage could take advantage of the Region's location along the Schuylkill River Trail and further build its image as a recreational hub.
- The manufacturing of kayaks and canoes could build on the Region's location along the Schuylkill River and further develop its recreational tourism industry. The report suggests that development of these products could also incorporate tours on the Schuylkill River as a way to attract visitors to the Region.

Increase Education and Skill Levels of Regional Workers

The Region should capitalize on the location of MCCC's West Campus and encourage public school districts to engage in partnerships Montgomery County Community College. Such partnerships could incorporate workforce training or education programs that meet the needs of the Region's workforce. This could help to provide educational and career pathways that increase the post-secondary degree attainment levels of residents and expand opportunities for the Region's youth, helping to improve the education and skill levels of future residents.

Market the Region to Attract New Businesses, Residents, and Visitors

Effective marketing of the Region and its municipalities could help to not only draw visitors from surrounding communities but could also help to attract more permanent businesses and residents.

New Business Attraction

The Region should continue to work with organizations such as the Montgomery and Chester County economic development offices, the Pottstown Area Industrial Development Corporation (PAID), Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA), Tri-County Chamber of Commerce and other economic development groups around the Region to pursue and attract new businesses and employment opportunities. Marketing efforts should be focused on businesses that can provide quality employment opportunities for the area's residents.

Signage

Both the *Marketing the Pottstown Region* and *Connections* reports identify signage as an important issue in the Region, both for acting as gateways to the Region and for navigating to the area's notable sites and attractions. A uniform and comprehensive "wayfinding" signage system could help draw visitors into the Region and further encourage tourism. Signage should direct people to key areas such as downtown Pottstown, the municipal airport, historic sites, and large commercial and employment centers. Signs to help locate recreational areas, educations institutions, public services, and parking should also be provided.

Conclusion

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region has a diverse economy. More residents are working in services; finance, insurance, real estate, and information services; fewer residents are working in manufacturing and agriculture. This is consistent with national trends.

The Pottstown Memorial Medical Center is the Region's largest employer. Other large employers are public school districts, and retailers Wal-Mart and Boscov's. Various factors affect the ability of a region to attract growing and high-paying industries. The Pottstown Metropolitan Region recognizes the importance of bringing more quality jobs to the Region. Directing growth to the established centers and primary growth areas throughout the Region will minimize the need for building and maintaining new infrastructure which is expensive and can pose a drain on municipal coffers. Promoting a diverse, strategic set of industries for the Region is important for its long term economic health.

The Region's Workforce is generally well-educated. Numerous educational institutions are located in and near the Region. They include the Community College, and close by colleges, graduate schools, and technical institutes. To maintain a high-quality workforce, an ongoing communication network among the Region's businesses, workforce training providers, and job seekers is required.

Maintaining and revitalizing the older, more developed areas of the Region, particularly the Borough of Pottstown, the Region's many villages, and underutilized industrial and commercial sites, is critical to the Region's long-term economic success and quality. Commercial and industrial enterprises should be directed into the Region's existing retail centers and underutilized brownfield sites. Villages within the Region's Townships need to redesign themselves as convenience and specialty commercial districts that also preserve their unique sense of place. The historic center of the Region, downtown Pottstown may again become the cultural, entertainment, and destination shopping center as it once was years ago. The strong growth management measures recommended by this Plan will help promote economic development and revitalization throughout the Region's eight municipalities. This effort is not only worthwhile but of critical importance if the Region is to successfully competes in the new global economy. By cooperating together the initiatives proposed in this Plan will produce even greater results for the Region.

Chapter 7

Housing

Introduction

An important factor in the social and economic success of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region is an adequate supply of housing of all types. There is a diverse supply of housing currently available, from row homes and small-lot singles, to large-lot single-family dwellings and farmhouses on agricultural tracts. However, as the Region grows and the population increases, new homes will need to be added to the existing supply to meet the future demand.

Some of the very things that brought people to the Region decades ago, farmland, open space and small town character, still bring people today. These settings that provide the quality of life that people seek could be lost in the future to mounting growth pressure. New development must be provided for in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, but it should be done in a way that complements and reinforces the amenities that Pottstown Borough, existing suburban areas and rural environments already provide. Above all, suburban sprawl and unmanaged growth need to be discouraged.

Housing Goals

The municipalities of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region intend to manage housing growth by acting on the housing objectives stated in the Goals and Objectives Chapter of this Plan. These housing objectives for the Region are to:

- Meet the residential “Fair Share” requirements as a region.
- Maintain and promote revitalization of existing residential neighborhoods and villages.
- Concentrate new housing where infrastructure is currently located and in designated growth areas.
- Encourage pedestrian-oriented, residential neighborhoods that foster a sense of community.
- Accommodate housing opportunities for a range of income levels and age groups.
- Provide housing and continuing care opportunities for older adults.

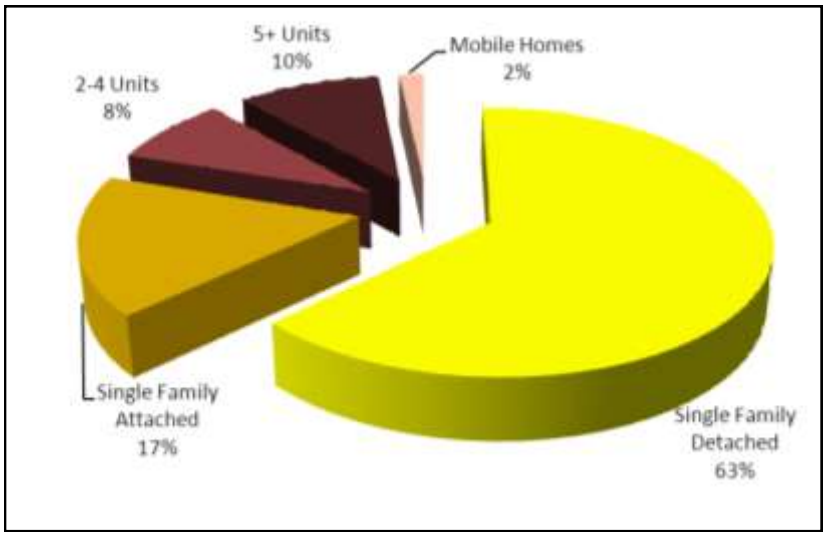
Background

The housing stock of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region reflects its diversity. There are row homes, multi-family complexes, townhomes, mobile homes, and single-family homes on small and large lots. This mixture of housing types is located in urban places, various suburban neighborhoods, and in rural villages and farmsteads.

U.S. American Community Survey data for the year 2010, shown in **Figure 7-1**, found that single-family detached housing types accounted for approximately 63% of the existing homes, an increase of 2% since the 2000 Census. The remainder was higher density, "Fair Share" housing units such as mobile homes in mobile home parks, single-family attached and multi-family units.

Although the Region has a well-balanced housing inventory, as shown in **Figure 7**-2, a significant amount of the land area is rural. Single-family detached dwellings on larger lots are the predominant housing type in these rural areas. Some of the townships have had 2-acre minimum lot size zoning, or larger, implemented due to geological limitations for development, farmland preservation efforts or the preservation of natural resources.

Figure 7-1: Regional Housing Types



Despite these larger lot requirements, the northernmost rural communities (Douglass and New Hanover) account for approximately 33% of the existing single-family detached homes, while the southernmost rural communities, East Coventry and North Coventry, account for approximately 20%. Admittedly, these areas encompass a significant land area, but more than 50% of the single-family homes are in the more rural communities. With its high density zoning, Pottstown Borough contains approximately 63% of the Region's multi-family units and approximately 52% of the single-family attached units. High-density uses that are common in the Borough average around 6 to 8 dwelling units per acre. These densities can also be found in the townships in some of their more densely concentrated villages.

Figure 7-2: Housing Types by Municipality

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	2-4 Units	5+ Units	Mobile Homes
Douglass	3,709	2,914	330	165	280	9
East Coventry	2,423	1,565	399	18	312	129
Lower Pottsgrove	4,600	2,957	1,016	137	281	209
New Hanover	3,814	3,690	33	39	0	52
North Coventry	3,303	2,441	199	133	501	29
Pottstown	10,233	3,712	2,821	2,036	1577	61
Upper Pottsgrove	1,890	1,601	197	31	27	34
West Pottsgrove	1,649	1,006	409	89	136	9
Total Regional Housing Type %	**100%**	**62.9%**	**17.1%**	**8.4%**	**9.8%**	**1.7%**
Source: ACS 2006-2010						

The higher density areas of Pottstown, and to some extent the more heavily developed suburban areas in the surrounding townships, provide much of the affordable housing in the Region. In theory, higher densities translate into more affordable housing or lower housing costs. The concept that higher density equals more affordable housing units is the rationale of the Fair Share housing unit analysis that is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Locating Future Housing

Without effective growth management much of this development will likely occur in the more rural areas of Douglass, New Hanover, East Coventry and North Coventry townships where there are large tracts of open land that are either farmed or otherwise undeveloped. While market forces dictate if and when development will be occur, as well as the type of development to be built, an objective of this Regional Plan is to direct new development into designated growth areas where public utilities and infrastructure exists or is planned for.

This growth management effort will promote two other objectives of the Plan as well. First, to encourage reinvestment in existing older neighborhoods and villages, particularly in the Borough of Pottstown, and second, but equally important, protect the Region's rural areas by limiting the amount of new development through in these areas. Together, these two objectives form the basis for growth management and rural resource preservation in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region.

Low Density Residential

Limiting residential development in the Conservation Areas of the Region to predominately low-density residential zoning should help reduce conflicts between farms and homes as well as help preserve its unique environmental and natural features. The objective of low-density residential development is to protect and conserve important environmental and natural resources, and limit the demand and extension of certain utilities.

While the Future Land Use Plan does not set specific density limitations, low-density residential can range from a high of 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres to a low density of 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres for areas with viable farming activity, environmental constraints, or significant natural resources.

In addition to density, a significant number of other regulatory tools are available to the municipalities including, but not limited to: conservation subdivision design, farmland zoning, environmental performance zoning and transfer of development rights. Also, to reinforce these land use tools for controlling development, public sewer and water extensions are discouraged within the Conservation Areas.

Medium-Density Residential

Medium-density housing make up a large percentage of the Region's existing suburban housing and typically ranges from 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre within the eight municipalities. Homes in medium-density residential development will typically consist of single-family detached units, although townhomes and multi-family may be appropriate in certain locations as well. It is likely that most of the new homes that are constructed in the years to come will be in this residential category. To preserve the rural countryside as much as possible, infill in the Borough of Pottstown and the Region's older suburbs is strongly encouraged, and new large-scale development of Medium-Density Residential development should be directed to the designated growth areas within each Township, including the Region's Primary Growth Areas, Secondary Growth Areas, and Regional Core. These growth areas are situated near the existing built areas where the road network, community facilities and commercial and retail centers already exist. In addition, some of the growth areas that are not currently served and are not currently proposed to be served by public sewer and water may be rezoned to promote the appropriate development density.

Typical suburban medium-density development often appears dull and uniform due to rigid quarter-acre and one acre tract housing guidelines. Although appropriate for many of the more developed areas of Montgomery and Chester Counties, suburban-style development does not fit into the rural landscape that encompasses much of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region. Therefore, medium density development that is well-designed and creates a sense of place is encouraged. Such developments may include central greens, landscaped cul-de-sacs, sidewalks, and other pedestrian-oriented design features.

High-Density Residential

High-density housing is most appropriate for the Region's Core and Primary Growth Areas. High-density development can consist of a range of housing types, including small lot single family detached units, twins, townhomes, and apartments. Most of the Region's existing high-density housing is located in the Borough of Pottstown and neighboring municipalities. With the necessary infrastructure already in place, the Borough, along with the Region's other growth

areas are best suited to accommodate new high-density infill housing or mixed use projects on scattered, underutilized sites. New high-density housing should be physically and architecturally compatible with existing high-density housing. Design criteria should be integrated into the municipal zoning codes of the Region to ensure new development fits in seamlessly with the community. Design elements should include sidewalks, interconnected streets, and central greens, which work in combination to help create livable communities.

Mobile Home Parks

The Region currently has a number of mobile home parks. Mobile home parks are specifically required by Pennsylvania Law, Act 247, to be provided for on 1% of land within a municipality (in this case, within the Region). Currently, 2.4% of the Region's land is zoned to permit mobile home parks, although other zones located in the Region allow mobile home parks as conditional uses or by special exception.

Residential "Fair Share"

An important aspect of planning for housing in Pennsylvania involves analyzing and discussing "Fair Share" housing types and its effect on regional planning. In Pennsylvania, municipalities are required to permit, through zoning, a wide variety of Fair Share housing types. These housing types consist of single-family attached units such as twins and duplexes, multi-family units such as townhouses and apartments, and mobile homes in mobile home parks. These housing types are considered to be more affordable according to the courts. If a municipality does not have enough land set aside (i.e. zoned to permit) these types of residential uses, it runs the risk of having its zoning successfully challenged in the courts for not meeting its Fair Share of these uses. An important benefit of regional planning is that municipalities will no longer need to provide for their Fair Share of these uses so long as the region as a whole does. The residential Fair Share commitments shown in the chart on page 23 indicate the number of acres each municipality in the Region has committed to maintaining as Fair Share. This means, for example, that East Coventry has agreed keep at least 500 acres of its Township zoned to permit Fair Share housing types. These commitment levels made by the Region's municipality's meet and exceed the acceptable level of Fair Share housing requirements that have been established by Pennsylvania's courts. The following analysis clearly demonstrates that the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, in its entirety, clearly meets the Fair Share housing requirement.

The Analysis

Pennsylvania courts have applied two methodologies in determining whether a municipality satisfies its fair share needs. Test #1 requires calculations of the amount of land zoned to permit the Fair Share housing types. Test #2, used in conjunction with test #1, requires a calculation of the ratio of single-family detached housing units to the number of Fair Share housing types that would exist at buildout. If the current stock of low-density housing far exceeds that of high density, the courts will look to see if the ratio improves at buildout. Buildout is a term that describes the total number of housing units that would exist, if all of the developable land in the region was developed at the maximum density allowed in each zoning district.

Both Test #1 and Test #2 only apply to those municipalities, or region, that lies directly within the path of growth. A conclusion of this Plan is that the Pottstown Metropolitan Region does in fact lie in the path of growth that is extending outward from the city of Philadelphia westward along the Route 422 corridor.

Test #1

For municipal level Fair Share tests, the courts have stated in three separate rulings that municipalities that have set aside from between 2.7% and 3.5% of their total land area for Fair Share higher density zoning are meeting their Fair Share needs. To not do so could potentially invite a landowner "curative amendment". If successful, the "cure" is site specific which may, or may not, conform to sound planning practice or municipal land use goals. As noted earlier, municipalities that participate in regional planning would no longer have to meet this Fair Share requirement individually, provided that the region does as a whole. Presently, the Pottstown Metropolitan Region has 20% (9,746 acres) of its total land area zoned to permit Fair Share housing types at higher densities, including zoning overlay districts (see **Figure 7-3**). This number significantly exceeds the upper most percentage (3.5%) currently mandated by the courts. The participating municipalities, therefore, could potentially reduce their acreage zoned for fair share housing by a total of 16.5%. However, they have chosen not to do this, but instead, have agreed to maintain a minimum of 5% of their total land area for Fair Share housing. They have agreed to do this in order to allow for greater market flexibility or to meet any unanticipated shift in housing demand.

Figure 7-3: Area of Land Zoned to Permit Fair Share Housing

Gross Acres					
Category	Residentially Zoned Land Use			All Other Zones	Region Totals
	Single-Family Detached Housing	Fair Share Housing Types	Total		
Number of Acres	34,346	9,746	43,986.65	4,747.23	48,733.88
Percent of Region Gross Area	70.5%	20.0%	90.3%	9.74%	100.00%
Percent of Total Residential Area	78.1%	22.2%	100.0%	-	-

Test #2

The second test requires that a municipality, or region, analyze the ratio of its single-family detached housing category to the Fair Share housing category at buildout. This test is used to determine if the ratio of the two categories is substantially unequal, with the knowledge that the number of single-family detached housing units will be substantially higher in a more suburban or rural community.

As shown in **Figure 7-4** below, in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, the ratio of Fair Share housing types to single-family housing types is very well balanced according to the completed test. Approximately 37.3% of all existing housing units are of the Fair Share housing type, while 62.7% are single-family detached housing units. Under current zoning, full buildout of the Region would create an additional 5,722 Fair Share housing units and 11,758 single-family detached units. Under the buildout scenario, 35.6% of the Region's total housing units would be Fair Share housing. This percentage of fair share housing units is still well within acceptable limits.

Figure 7-4: Regional Fair Share Housing Buildout Analysis i

Housing Types	2010 Housing Units	Percentage of Total Units	Housing Units At Buildout	Buildout percentage of total units
SFD	19,879	62.7%	31,637	64.3%
High Density	11,825	37.3%	17,547	35.6%
Total	**31,704**	**100%**	**49,184**	**100%**

Conclusion

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is in the path of growth and may require approximately 8,310 new housing units in the next 20 years according to DVRPC's 2007 projected future growth figures. A buildout analysis indicates that roughly 17,481 additional units can be accommodated in the Region, greatly exceeding DVRPC's projections. The future land use plan establishes regional growth areas for locating new development in an effort to maximize existing infrastructure, promote reinvestment in older neighborhoods and villages, and protect rural areas by limiting the amount of new development through various planning and regulatory techniques.

The housing stock of the Region is a well-balanced mixture of styles and densities in a variety of neighborhood settings. This Plan will help to ensure that this balance is maintained for the foreseeable future by providing for a wide variety of housing types at densities sufficient to meet the most optimistic of population growth projections. This Plan also ensures that the Region will continue to meet its Pennsylvania "fair share" housing requirements.

Chapter 8

Transportation

Introduction

The transportation system of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region is important for accessibility, safety, economic development and quality of life. Residents of the Region must be able to reach their jobs, as well as access community facilities such as stores, parks, and schools. Area businesses must also have an adequate road network in order to move their goods and services. This chapter will discuss existing conditions and planning for the Region's highways, public transit, bike and pedestrian mobility, and freight transport to provide a safe and efficient transportation system for the entire Pottstown Metropolitan Region.

Transportation Goal and Objectives

Goal: Promote a safe and efficient transportation system throughout the region.

Objectives:

- Identify problematic traffic areas and develop mitigation strategies.
- Support improvements to Route 422 and its interchanges in the Region.
- Maintain and improve the existing road network in the Region.
- Prioritize transportation improvements in new development that enhance the Region's road hierarchy and increases connectivity.
- Promote the design of new development to be walkable.
- Expand and enhance the Region's airport.
- Provide charter and other aviation transportation services at the Pottstown municipal airport.
- Maintain short line rail access and rail access to the Keystone Boulevard area.
- Promote the expansion of public transportation options, including passenger rail that would connect the Pottstown Region with Philadelphia and Reading.
- Develop a local and regional pedestrian and bicycle network.
- Provide adequate parking that is safe and effective and minimizes traffic congestion and imperious cover
- Promote shared parking, where appropriate.
- Develop a master trail plan for the Region that connects existing and planned trail networks, parks and points of interest.
- Improve connections between Montgomery and Chester County municipalities, including enhancements to the Hanover Street Bridge and the conversion of the existing unused railroad trestle into a pedestrian bridge.

Roadways: Existing Conditions

The primary challenges affecting the Region's highway and roadway system include traffic congestion and deteriorating roads and bridges. From 2000 to 2010, the Region's population increased more than 14% (roughly 10,000 people), further contributing to the growing traffic volumes on the Region's road network. However, the Region will not support tolling any roads within the region to fund improvements to transportation systems, as the communities would expect other funding agencies to pay for these improvements.

Several studies have been conducted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), which focus on some of the Region's major roadways, including US-422, PA-100, and PA-724. Additionally, a Future Growth Study for PA-663 is underway.

The PA-724 Corridor Study, completed in 2004, sought to identify efficient, low cost alternatives for improving Route 724. While the study concluded that major widening of the roadway is not an option, the addition of turn lanes and signals, better access management, and improved roadside maintenance were found to be feasible solutions for improving the operation, capacity, and safety of this significant roadway in the Region.

The US-422 Reconstruction Traffic Study (2002) and the US-422 Corridor Master Plan (2011) identified the several Pottstown area improvements. Currently, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is replacing the structurally-deficient Route 422 bridge over the Schuylkill River located between Armand Hammer Boulevard and the Route 724 interchange. Approximately 1.5 miles of roadway will be improved as part of the project. The 2011 Corridor Master Plan further identified the Keim Street and Hanover Street bridges as well as the intersecting routes PA-100 and Hanover Street as being in need of upgrades.

The Tri-County Transportation Study (2010) identified the following corridor improvements for Route 100:

North Coventry Township

- Widen PA 100 to provide two through lanes per direction south of Cedarville Road.
- Widen for turning lane improvements at key intersections
- Implement access management techniques between Hoffecker Road and Temple Road.
- Provide sidewalk and trail linkages to accommodate non-vehicular traffic and provide high-visibility pedestrian cross walks.

Pottstown Borough, West Pottsgrove Township, and Upper Pottsgrove Township:

- Widen PA 100 to provide three through lanes per direction from Shoemaker Road to the southern State Street intersection.
- Modify traffic flow patterns in the vicinity of King Street
- Construct a Continuous Flow Intersection (CFI) at both Shoemaker Road and at the southern State Street intersection.
- Construct Superstreet Median Crossover intersections at the northern State Street intersection and at Moyer Road
- Plan for potential widening of Farmington Avenue and its overpass of PA 100 to accommodate separate left-turn lanes at the ramp intersections and potential signalization.

Douglass Township:

- Plan for three through lanes per direction as a potential long-term need.
- Construct a CFI at the Jackson Road intersection, provide a connector roadway between Jackson Road and Grosser Road, restrict left turns from PA 100 onto Gross Road and accommodate these movements at the new Jackson Road CFI, and widen for turning lane improvements at both intersections.
- Construct a CFI at the County Line Road intersection, relocate Holly Road away from its existing intersection with County Line Road, and widen for turning lanes.

Reconnections: Reconnecting the People of North Coventry Township and Pottstown Borough with Each Other and Their Schuylkill River Heritage, completed in 2004, made several recommendations to improve the physical connections between North Coventry Township and Pottstown Borough, including: enhancements to the Hanover Street Bridge, establishment of the River Road Trail from Hanover Street Bridge to River Park in North Coventry, and conversion of the existing unused railroad trestle into a pedestrian bridge across the river to connect River Park and Riverfront Park.

The 2012 *Industrial Zone Transportation Access Study,* focused on the area of land in Pottstown Borough and West Pottsgrove Township bounded by the Schuylkill River to the south, the Norfolk Southern rail line to the north, Grosser Road to the west, and College Drive to the east, analyzed the possibility for extending Keystone Boulevard in Pottstown Borough to Old Reading Pike in West Pottsgrove Township. With proximity to rail, available utilities, and potential connections to both Route 100 and US Route 422, the site's 366 acres possess strong economic development potential that could be realized with the extension of Keystone Boulevard. Currently, Pottstown Borough and West Pottsgrove Township are working in cooperation on this effort.

Traffic Counts

The two most significant roads in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region include PA Route 100 and US Route 422. The busiest section of US-422 in the Region is located in North Coventry between Keim Street and Route 724 and averages more than 66,000 cars each day. The busiest section of PA-100 in the Region is also in North Coventry and is located south of the intersection with US-422. **Figure 8.1** displays the annual average daily traffic counts for some of the busiest roadways in the Region. These values are drawn from the most recent traffic counts collected by DVRPC.

The ownership of all the public roads in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region falls under the jurisdiction of either the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (PennDOT), Montgomery County (Chester County owns no roads), or one of the eight municipalities of the Pottstown Region (see **Figure 8-2**). Within the limits of applicable laws, the townships and Pottstown Borough have complete control over roads under their jurisdiction but must coordinate with PennDOT and the Montgomery County Department of Roads and Bridges regarding state and county-owned roads.

For planning purposes, however, the townships and boroughs of the Region have the responsibility for designating all the roads under an appropriate functional classification relative to the purposes they are intended.

Figure 8-1: Annual Average Daily Traffic

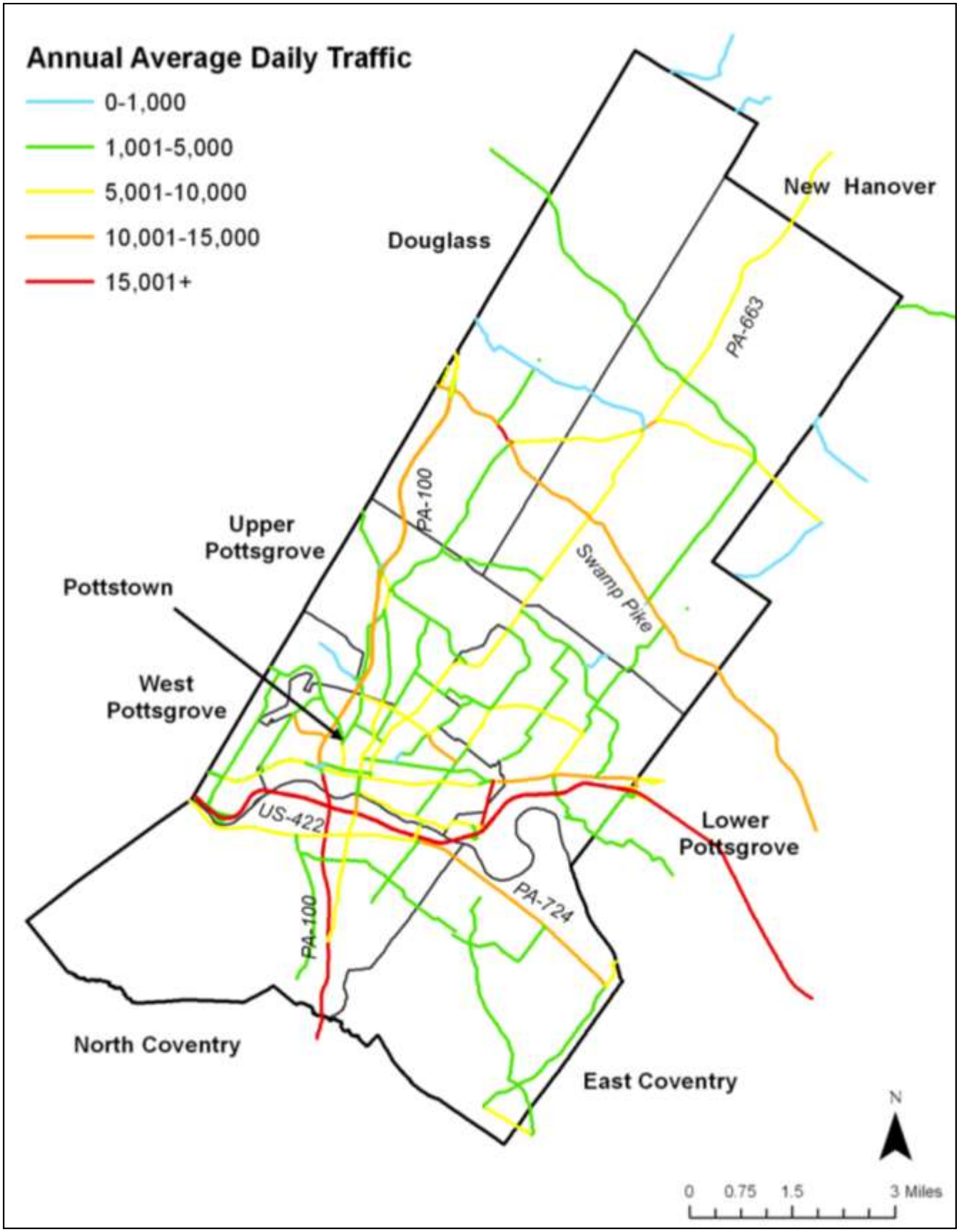
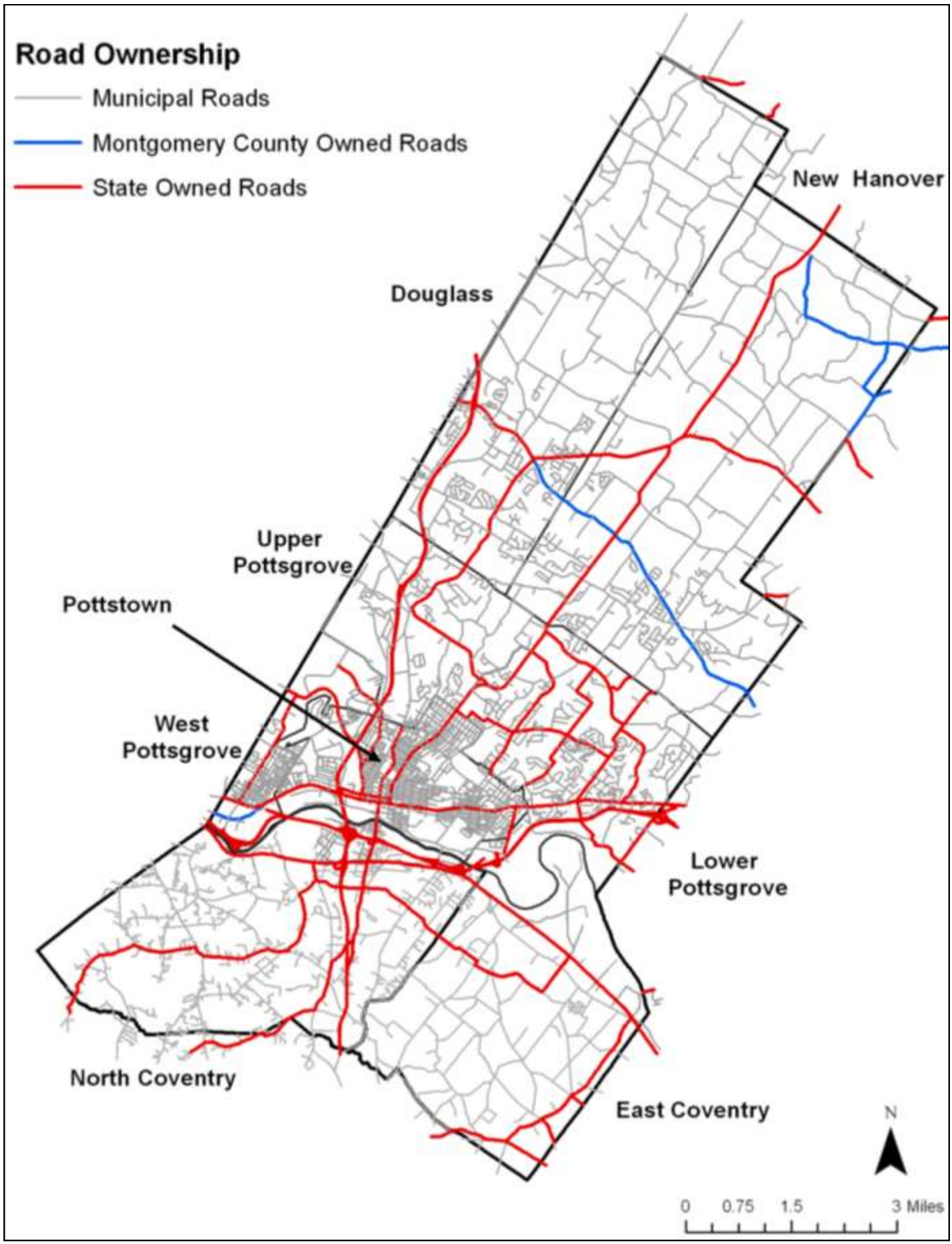


Figure 8-2: Road Ownership



Functional Road Classification System

Functional classification is the grouping of roads into a hierarchy by the character of service and function they provide. It was developed as an important planning and design tool for comprehensive transportation planning. The system is based on standards established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and is used by PennDOT. It provides design guidelines appropriate for each road, as well as a way to coordinate road functions and improvements among neighboring communities and throughout the state. This system permits a logical and efficient road network to be established under a road hierarchy.

Figure 8-3 on the next page shows Pottstown Metropolitan Region's functional road classification system using the following classifications: Expressways, Major Arterials, Minor Arterials, Collectors, and Local Roads and Rural Lanes.

Expressways

The highest level of road classification is the expressway, which is a multi-lane highway with fully controlled access usually provided only at grade separated interchanges. Expressways are used in corridors that need to move high volumes of traffic at high speeds while providing high levels of safety and efficiency and usually traverse and connect metropolitan areas. US Route 422 is the only expressway in the Pottstown Region.

Principal arterials

A principal arterial provides a high degree of mobility to long trips, but it does not necessarily have fully controlled access and it is not a part of the Interstate Highway System. It generally has two to four through-lanes and serves primarily to carry the highest volumes of through traffic on a regional level. Several principal arterials serve the Pottstown Region, including PA-100, High Street, PA-663 and PA-73.

Minor arterials

Minor arterials interconnect with and augment principal arterials in serving major activity centers, but generally serve trips of more moderate lengths. They are spaced at intervals consistent with population density and carry traffic within or between several municipalities of the county. Further, they link other areas not connected by principal arterials and provide key connections between roads of higher classification. The Pottstown Region's minor arterials include PA-724, Route 23, South Hanover Street, Hoffmansville Road, and Swamp Pike.

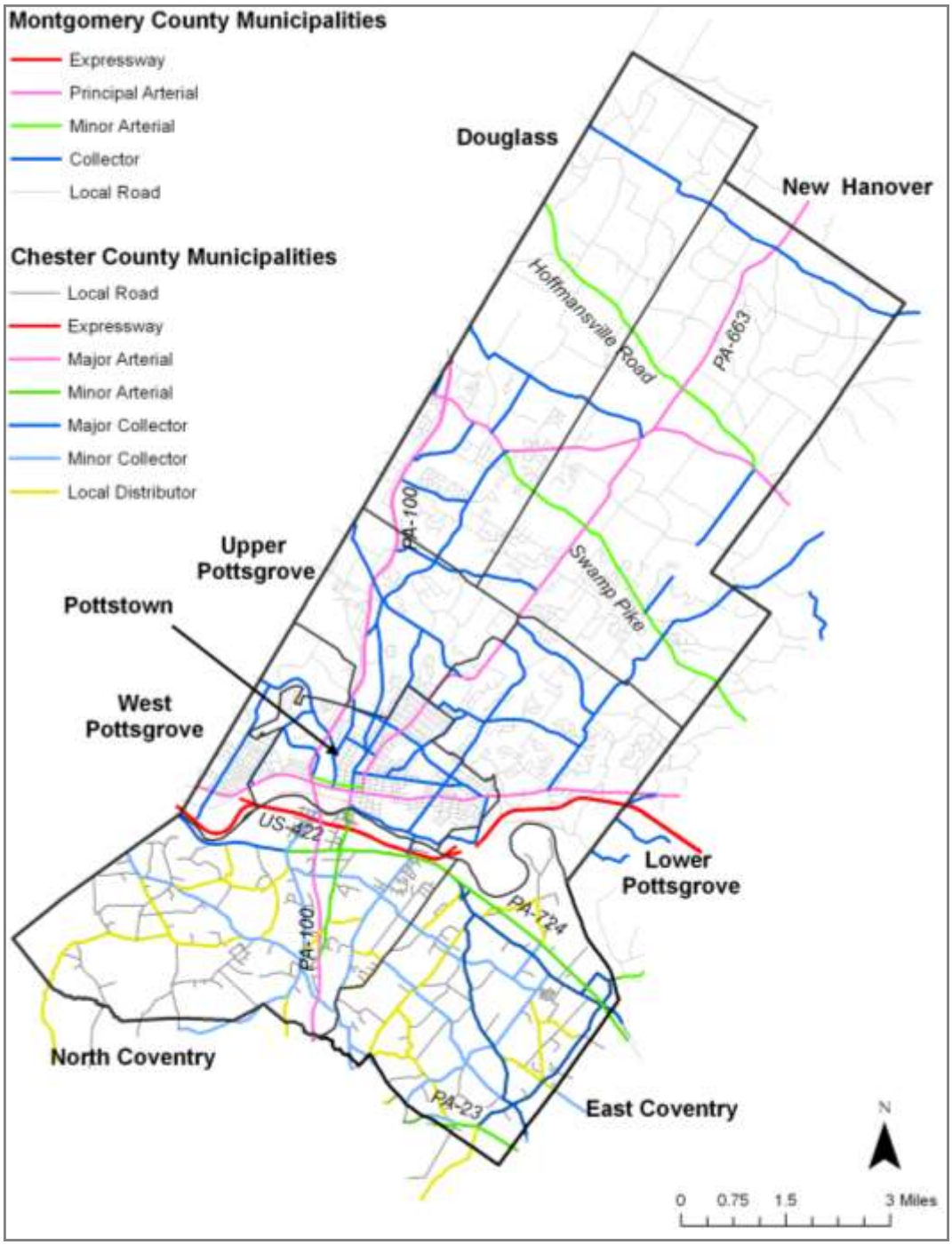
Collectors

Collector roads provide a mix of mobility (the ability to travel through an area quickly) and accessibility (road interconnectivity). They typically serve trips up to four miles. Examples of collector roads in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region include Gilbertsville Road, Sanatoga Road, and Temple Road in North Coventry, along with many others.

Local roads and rural lanes

Local roads and rural lanes are the minor streets that carry the lowest volumes of traffic and function primarily to provide vehicular access to adjacent land uses. They have relatively short trip lengths, generally not exceeding one mile. Because property access is their main function, there is little need for mobility or high operating speeds and as a result they have lower posted speeds between 20 and 30 miles per hour. They provide a link between properties and the collector road network. Through traffic is discouraged from using local roads. The remaining roads in the Pottstown Region, shown in gray on Figure 8-3, are considered local roads.

Figure 8-3: Functional Road Classifications



Road Design Guidelines

General design guidelines for the Functional Classification System were derived from the 1990 edition of *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO); the *Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Design Manual, Part 2*, Highway Design (Publication 13) (1990); and the *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, published by AASHTO (1991).

The guidelines, listed in Figure 8-5 on page 139, make recommendations for dimensions of different components of a roadway based on its functional classification and whether it is located in an urban or rural locale.

Smart Transportation

Located on the suburban fringe of Philadelphia, the Pottstown Metropolitan Region is still predominantly rural in character, yet has and is continuing to develop. The Borough of Pottstown, as well as the Region's villages and other development centers may not quite fit into the "rural" or "urban" categories used in the Highway Functional Classification System and Design Guidelines. Another limitation of the functional classification system is that often an entire road is placed into a certain class based on select characteristics such as trip volumes relative to other roadways in the area; however, that class may not be appropriate for all segments of the roadway. This creates a dilemma for roadway designers to apply design standards for that class which may encourage higher operating speeds than are appropriate for segments serving community access.

Transportation agencies are recognizing these issues and the changing needs and demands of our transportation system. To adapt to this changing world, more than a quarter of the states in the United States are working on a concept called "Smart Transportation." Smart Transportation considers financial, land use, environmental, technological, and social contexts when approaching transportation challenges. The idea is that road design should not be a one-size-fits-all approach, but should be done to complement community character.

In 2008, PennDOT, DVRPC and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJ DOT) prepared a *Smart Transportation Guidebook* to provide technical guidance for standards and approaches related to traffic engineering and design. The Guidebook outlines six principles:

1. Tailor solutions to the context
2. Tailor the approach
3. Plan all projects in collaboration with the community
4. Plan for alternative transportation modes
5. Use sound professional judgment
6. Scale the solution to the size of the problem

The *Smart Transportation Guidebook* outlines seven land use context areas: rural, suburban neighborhood, suburban corridor, suburban center, town/village neighborhood, town/village center,

Figure 8-4 Smart Transportation Proposed Roadway Categories

Roadway Class	Roadway Type	Desired Operating Speed (mph)	Average Trip Length (miles)	Volume	Intersection Spacing (ft)	Comments
Arterial	Regional	30-55	15-35	10,000-40,000	660-1,320	Roadways in this category would be considered "Principal Arterial" in traditional functional classification.
Arterial	Community	25-55	7-25	5,000-25,000	300-1,320	Often classified as "Minor Arterial" in traditional classification but may include road segments classified as "Principal Arterial."
Collector	Community	25-55	41039	5,000-15,000	300-660	Often similar in appearance to a community arterial. Typically classified as "Major Collector."
Collector	Neighborhood	25-35	<7	<6,000	300-660	Similar in appearance to local roadways. Typically classified as "Minor Collector."
Local	Local	20-30	<5	<3,000	200-660	

and urban core. A land use context area is a land area that contains a unique combination of built and natural characteristics made up of different land uses, architectural types, urban form, building density, roadways, and topography and other natural features. The seven context areas can be condensed into three context areas: urban, suburban, and rural.

The *Smart Transportation Guidebook* also proposes new roadway categories in order to design roadways to better reflect their role in the community. The new roadway categories focus more narrowly on the characteristics of access, mobility, and speed and are outlined below in **Figure 8-4**. It is important to note that the Smart Transportation categories should be used as only a planning and design "overlay" for individual projects and that both Pennsylvania and New Jersey will keep the underlying traditional functional classification.

Also noted in the *Smart Transportation Guidebook* is that fact that the "Main Street" (while not actually a Smart Transportation classification) is a very important concept to promote. Thinking of these roadways, such as High Street in Pottstown Borough, as town centers and corridors to concentrate mixed-use development will help promote more sustainable land-use patterns.

The *Smart Transportation Guidebook* also outlines standards for roadway design based on land use contexts and roadway types. These design elements are summarized above in **Table 8.5** for urban, suburban, and rural context areas. The table only provides a summary of the design elements. To see a more expansive list of design elements for each of the seven context areas and five roadway typologies see the *Smart Transportation Guidebook*, available online at http://www.smart-transportation.com.

The design guidelines presented in the guidebook will not yet replace PennDOT's design manual guidelines but will help PennDOT to apply their own design manual guidelines to road improvements in a context-sensitive manner that serves the best interests of communities. The guidebook is also intended for use as a guide for planners to direct future improvements that will preserve the feel of the road.

Figure 8-5 Smart Transportation Guidelines for Dimensional Roadway and Roadside Elements

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Travel Lanes	10 to 11 ft. lanes (11 ft. as typical minimum) of 35 mph or below; 12 ft. for roadways of 35 mph or above and high traffic volumes and heavy vehicles.	11 to 12 ft.	10 ft. for lightly trafficked roadways; 11 to 12 ft. for roadways with regularly trafficked roadways or with speeds above 35 mph.
Shoulders	4 to 6 ft. if no sidewalks are provided.	8 o 10 ft., but 4 to 8 ft. for suburban neighborhoods.	8 to 10 ft. for arterials, 4 to 8 ft. for collector roadways.
Medians	Provide depending upon access control, left turn, and "pedestrian refuge" needs. Left turn medians are 12 to 18 ft.; pedestrian refuges 4 to 8 ft.	Provide depending upon access control, left turn, and "pedestrian refuge" needs. Left turn medians are 12 to 18 ft.; pedestrian refuges 4 to 8 ft.	Design depending upon access control, left turn needs.
On-Street Parking	7 to 8 ft. parallel parking; consider in town center contexts.	Provide on-street parking as needed in suburban neighborhoods.	N/A
Grass Buffer	4 to 6 ft. along neighborhood streets, typically absent in town/village centers.	4 to 8 ft.	N/A
Sidewalk	Strive for 6 to 10 ft. in town/village centers, 5 to 8 ft. in town/village neighborhoods	Minimum 5 ft.	N/A
Bike Lanes	5 to 6 ft.	5 to 6 ft.	N/A

Roadway Improvements and Recommendations

Both the Montgomery County and Chester County Planning Commissions maintain lists of proposed transportation projects that are used along with municipal suggestions to make recommendations for future highway improvements. Projects with top priority are passed onto DVRPC and PennDOT to include in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to the extent allowed by fiscal constraints.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is the regionally agreed upon list of priority projects, as required by federal law (ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21). The TIP document must list all projects that intend to use federal funds, along with non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant. These include projects that are in the TIP for a specified phase (preliminary design, final design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction) or have funding committed for that phase through some other source, such as private development. By definition, these projects are ranked high as they are already funded for at least one phase of the project development process.

Figures 8-6 and **8-7** show the Region's bridges, roads, and intersections included in the Transportation Improvement Program for 2013-2016.

Figure 8-6: Map Regional Projects
Included in the 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

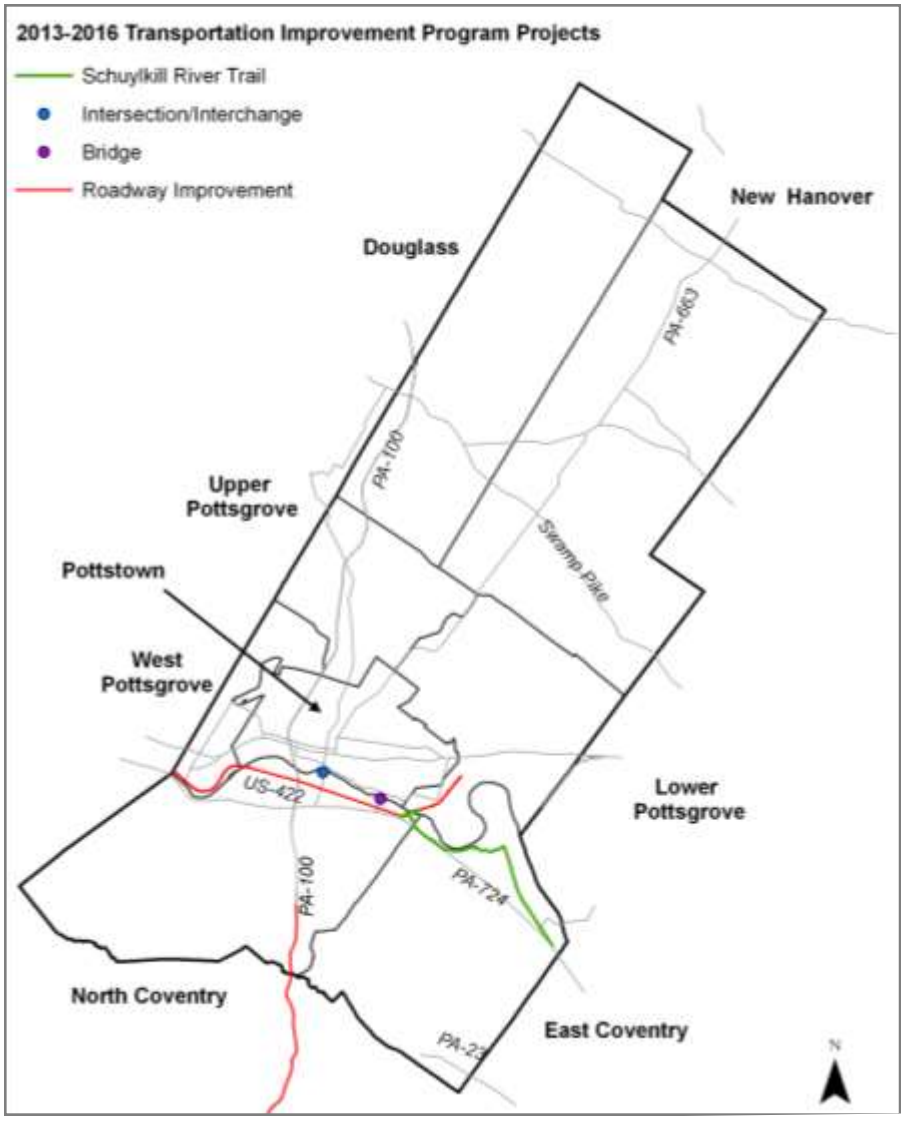


Figure 8-7: Regional Projects Included in the 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Municipality	Project Number	Project Name	Project Description
Douglass Township	86336	Congo Road Bridge Replacement	Rehabilitation or replacement of the Bridge at Congo Road over Middle Creek.
East Coventry Township	59434	Schuylkill River Trail	Construction of a 9.8 mile trail from Township Line Road in East Pikeland Township to US422 over the Schuylkill River in North Coventry Township. The trail will be located within existing railroad and PECO Energy corridors, railroad and utility rights-of-way, existing bridges, canal towpaths, and public and private open space. This is a critical segment of the 130-mile Schuylkill River Trail.
North Coventry Township	80042	PA 100 Corridor Safety Improvements	The police pull out, climbing lane, and Dynamic Message Sign improvements are planned measures to slow motorists down in order to reduce the number of "hit fixed objects" accidents that occur within this corridor.
Pottstown	48186	Pottstown Area Signal System Upgrade	Upgrading traffic signal controllers, initiating a closed loop traffic signal system, and upgrading the signal heads and preemptions for 45 signalized intersections.
	83742	Keim Street Bridge	Rehabilitation or replacement of the existing steel Pony Truss bridge over the Schuylkill River.
	87097	Pottstown Borough Improvements – Round 1	This project will include sidewalk rehabilitation, updated and new signage, and pavement markings. The proposed improvements at each of the Borough elementary schools aim to create a safe environment for children to walk and bike to school.
	59935	Capital Operating Assistance – Pottstown Area Rapid Transit (PART)	The project covers the operating subsidies for the Pottstown urban Transit System.
	16194	High Street Bridge Over Manatawny Creek	This bridge replacement project is located on Ridge Pike between PA 100 and Manatawny Street.
	78736	E. King Street O/ Manatawny Creek (Bridge)	This project involves rehabilitating or replacing the state bridge over the Manatawny Creek on East King Street.
	64222	US 422 Expressway Reconstruction	Reconstruction of approximately one mile of roadway on both existing and new alignment.
	66986	US 422 Schuylkill River Bridge over Schuylkill River (M2A-Stowe)	Reconstruction of the bridge carrying US 422 over the Schuylkill River in Chester and Montgomery Counties.

County Recommended Projects

Montgomery County prioritizes projects not currently on the TIP as first-priority (the group from which the next TIP projects would be nominated), as well as second-priority, and third-priority projects. Chester County also maintains a list of recommended projects. **Figures 8-8** and **8-9** list some of the projects recommended for funding by both Montgomery and Chester Counties.

Figure 8-8: Montgomery County Recommended Transportation Projects

Montgomery County			
Municipality	**Project Number**	**Project Name**	**Project Description**
Lower Pottsgrove	57861	Pleasant View Road	Realign Road and widen to soften "S" curve; add curbs, sidewalks, and drainage, and left turn lanes from Buchert Road to Sanatoga Road.
Lower Pottsgrove	16738	US 422 Expressway Reconstruction	Reconstruct 1.7 miles of roadway from west of Porter Road to just east of Park Road
New Hanover	16741	Swamp Pike at PA 663	Widen PA 663 to accommodate exclusive left turn lanes on both approaches to Swamp Road
Pottstown Borough	16194	High Street Bridge Over Manatawny Creek	Replace bridge over Manatawny Creek, east of PA 100.
Pottstown Borough and West Pottsgrove Township	154	Keystone Boulevard Extension	Extend Keystone Boulevard from its current terminus to Old Reading Pike as a two-lane road.
Pottstown Borough, Lower Pottsgrove Township, West Pottsgrove Borough	401	Norristown Line Service Extension	Construct passenger rail service between Norristown and Wyomissing.
Pottstown Borough	976	PA 100 at Shoemaker Road	Create double left turns from northbound PA 100 onto Shoemaker Road.
Pottstown Borough	1036	PA 100 at King Street and High Street	Eliminate NB off-ramp cloverleaf to High Street.

Figure 8-9: Chester County Recommended Transportation Projects

Chester County			
Municipality	**Project Number**	**Project Name**	**Project Description**
East Coventry	n/a	Schuylkill River Trail	Construction
North Coventry	n/a	US-422: Reconstruction: North Coventry	Construction
North Coventry	n/a	PA-100: Corridor Safety Improvements	Construction
North Coventry	n/a	River Park Bridge	Convert railroad bridge to pedestrian bridge.
East Coventry	n/a	Route 724: Signalization projects	Add turn lanes/signalization
East Coventry	n/a	Bealer Road over Pigeon Creek	Replace bridge
East Coventry	n/a	Old Schuylkill Road over Pigeon Creek	Replace or rehabilitate bridge.
North Coventry	n/a	Cedarville Road over Eckers Run	Replace or rehabilitate bridge.
East Coventry	n/a	Fulmer Road over Pigeon Creek	Replace or rehabilitate bridge
East Coventry	n/a	Kulp Road over Pigeon Creek	Replace or rehabilitate bridge
East Coventry	n/a	Schoolhouse Road over tributary of Pigeon Creek	Replace or rehabilitate bridge
East Coventry	n/a	Sawmill Road over Bickels Run	Replace or rehabilitate bridge
East Coventry	n/a	Schoolhouse Road over Bickels Run	Replace or rehabilitate bridge.
East Coventry	n/a	Schoolhouse Road over tributary of Bickels Run	Replace or rehabilitate bridge.
East Coventry	n/a	Harley Road over Bickels Run	Replace or rehabilitate bridge.
East Coventry	n/a	Spiece Road over Bickels Run	Replace or rehabilitate bridge.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is defined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers 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." It encourages motorists to drive at a speed which residents of the area consider compatible with surrounding land uses, it can be an important means of enhancing community character, and it serves as a tool to help increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety in a neighborhood.

Traffic calming measures can be employed in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region in one of two situations: when an area is being newly developed, or as a retrofit of an existing street. New development gives the designer or planner ability to shape the roadway and roadside in a manner that encourages motorist speeds that they consider desirable for the area. For situations of new development, the designer may consider narrow roadways or on-street parking to slow cars. Retrofitting of existing streets can occur when high traffic speeds have been identified as an issue on a roadway. In residential areas when high speeds are an issue, municipalities should gather traffic data, evaluate a range of traffic calming measures such as speed humps and traffic circles, and conduct a survey of motorists on the street to determine support of the installations. To address high speeds in commercial areas, intrusive measures such as speed humps and traffic circles are not recommended, and curb extensions, narrow lanes, and on-street parking could be considered. **Figure 8-10** depicts traffic calming measures appropriate based on Smart Transportation roadway typology.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility and Connectivity

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation are also a part of a regional transportation network. Pedestrian and bicycle networks in the Region include sidewalks, trails, paths, and crosswalks. Pedestrian and bicycle travel can be an effective alternative to the automobile for short distance trips, particularly within Pottstown and the Region's villages. People also may use the network, including the Schuylkill River Trail, for longer distance exercise activities such as jogging.

Pedestrian access needs to be created where lacking in order to facilitate access between and among growth areas in the region. These networks should be as interconnected as possible to form an integrated, safe pedestrian network.

Likewise, bicycling can be a great way to run errands or commute to work, in addition to its most common use as a means of recreation. If biking is used in place of automobile trips, it can help reduce traffic congestion, pollution, and energy consumption. Road improvements for bicycling should be encouraged and facilitated in the region to help achieve some of these things.

Figure 8-10: Traffic Calming Measures Appropriate to Roadway Classifications

	Appropriate
	Not Appropriate
	Appropriate in certain circumstances

Classification			Regional Arterial	Community Arterial	Community Collector	Neighborhood Collector	Local Street
Design speed range (mph)			30 to 45	25 to 45	25 to 30	25 to 30	20 to 25
Traffic calmed category			Framework Street		Non-Framework Street		
Transition zone to traffic calmed segment							
Gateway (landscaping, archway, signs, etc.)							
Cross Section Measures	Reduction in number of lanes						
	Reduction in width of lanes						
	Long median						
	Short median/refuge						
	Bulbouts(1)						
	Curb and gutter						
	Pedestrian-scale lighting						
	Street trees						
	Buildings at back of sidewalk						
	Lateral shifts						
	Bike lanes						
	On-street parking	Parallel					
		Back-in-angle					
		Front-in-angle					
		90 degrees					
Periodic Measures	Horizontal Measures	Roundabouts					
		Mini-traffic circles					
		Chicanes					
		Short medians					
	Narrowings	Pinch points					
	Vertical Measures	Raised intersections					
		Raised crosswalks					
		Flat-top speed humps					
		Speed cushions					
		Speed humps					

1) Bulbouts should be used on regional arterials only in urban or suburban center contexts, with speeds of 35 mph or below. On arterials they should be no greater than 6 ft in width. *Source: Smart Transportation Guidebook, 2008*

Sidewalks

Sidewalks promote walkability and reduce motorized vehicle use. Where sidewalks exist, they provide safety for non-drivers. There are often many problems with an existing sidewalk network. Network gaps can exist where existing sidewalks fail to interconnect with wider networks. Existing sidewalks may be broken in places, obstructed, or inaccessible to the handicapped. Also crosswalks may be missing or inadequate, therefore inhibiting pedestrian traffic across major roads.

Sidewalks should be well-designed and set back from the street, free of obstructions, interconnected, and wide enough to accommodate the anticipated volume of foot traffic in the area served. See **Figure 8-11** for sidewalk design standards. Additionally, crosswalks should be clearly marked and should connect to adjoining sidewalks.

Within higher density areas, municipal Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development ordinances should provide language that requires sidewalks along all streets, major driveways, and parking areas. Sidewalks should be located anywhere there is a potential for pedestrian -vehicle conflicts. Because the nature of suburban development has given priority to auto traffic at the expense of pedestrian mobility, there are many such conflict points that lack proper sidewalks.

Installing sidewalks everywhere they are absent and improving existing but inadequate sidewalks can be problematic. Therefore, this becomes a question of prioritizing where sidewalks are missing or inadequate and where is it most important they be installed or upgraded. They should be installed

Figure 8-11: Sidewalk Design Standards

Sidewalk Location	Sidewalk Width	Planting Strip Width
Central Business District	8’ or wider	8’ or wider
Commercial, office, industrial areas outside of CBD	5’ or wider; 7’ with no planting strip or; 5’ with 2’ planting strip	4’ to 8’ preferred
Residential areas along arterial or collector	5’ or wider	4’ to 8’ preferred; 2’ is acceptable
Residential areas along local streets w/ density > 4DU/ acre	5’ or wider	Minimum 2’ wide; Wider is preferred
Residential areas along local streets w/ density ≤ 4DU/ acre	4’ or wider	Minimum 2’ wide; Wider is preferred
Important Note: *All sidewalk widths are exclusive of any obstacle. Sidewalk areas containing street lights, trees, benches, doors, trash cans, mailboxes, newspaper boxes, etc., must be added to the minimum width. In addition, in central business districts, two feet should be added to the width wherever pedestrians may be window shopping or doors may be opening onto the sidewalk area.*		

wherever people might be expected to walk, which could include main street areas, shopping centers, office parks, industrial complexes, and higher density residential areas. Sidewalks should also connect to “destinations” such as shopping centers, bus stops, schools, parks, and libraries.

In an effort to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections, the Borough of Pottstown and Pottstown School District have begun working together on a plan to repair sidewalks and install bike lanes along several borough roadways in an effort to establish “Safe Routes to School”. The proposed $3 million dollar “Safe Routes to School” plan would install bike lanes and repair sidewalks throughout the Borough in order to create a network of safe walking and biking routes for students traveling to and from school. Efforts should continue to be made to improve sidewalks and bike lanes throughout all of the Region’s municipalities. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure not only promotes healthy lifestyles through increased walking and biking, but can also provide economic benefits including increased property value.

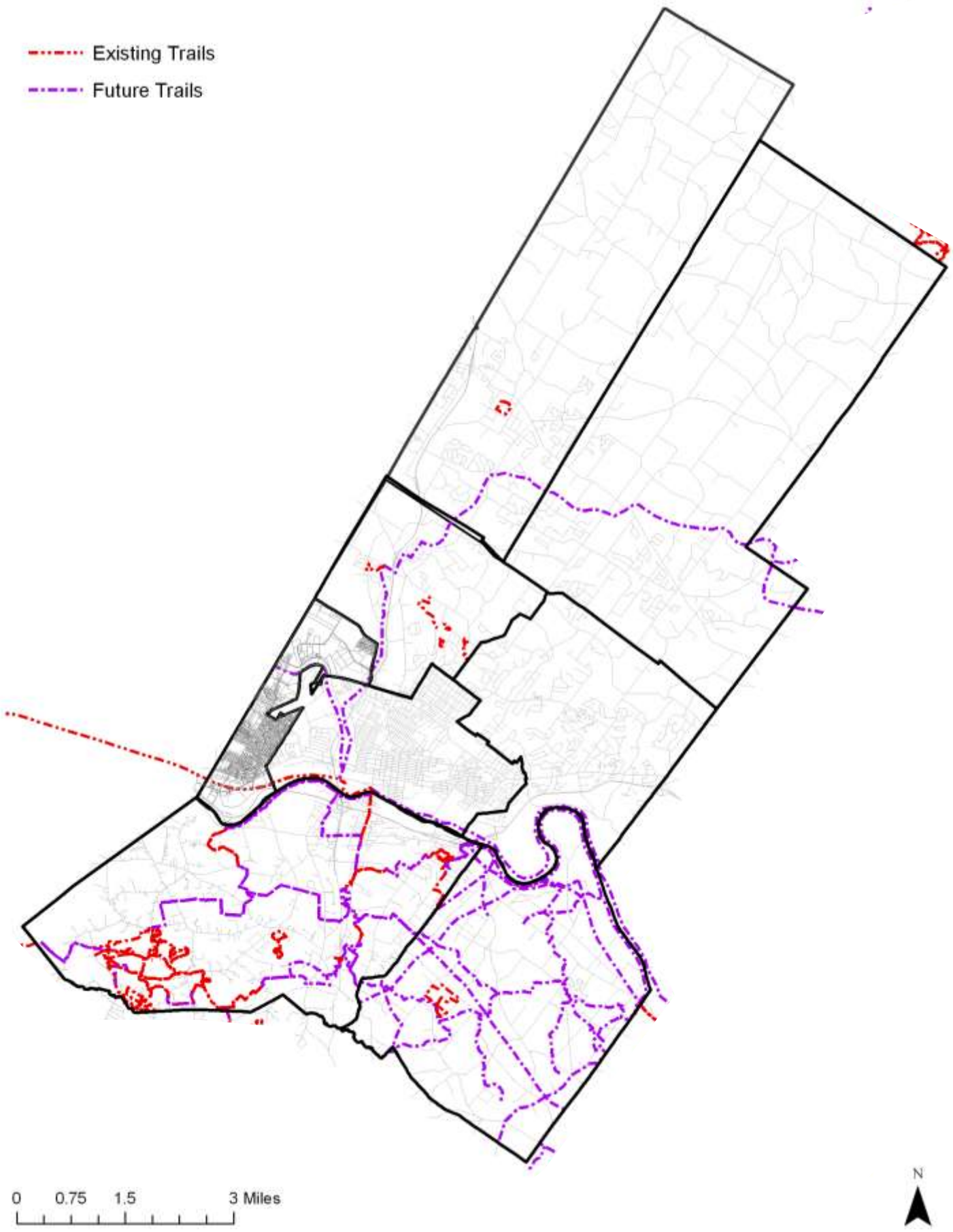
Trails

Trails can be used for recreation but can also be used as an alternative transportation choice. They can connect destinations in the within and outside of the region that are too far apart for sidewalks to link. Trails also have been shown to enhance the quality of life in communities.

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region trail network consists of several trails, including the Schuylkill River Trail at the regional level, as well as local trails located within municipal parks and open space. Municipal trails include the Goose Run Trail, Fox Run Trail, Mocharniuk Meadows Trail, Hollenbach Park Trail, and Sunset Park Trail in Upper Pottsgrove; the Douglass Park Trail in Douglass Township; as well as the Cedarville Trail, Chestnut Hill Trail, Collier Trail, Coventry Trail, Furnace Trail, Great Oak Trail, Hanover Trail, Kenilworth Park Trail, Love Valley Trail, Meadow Trail, Pigeon Creek Trail, and Rock Run Trail in North Coventry Township. **Figure 8-12** shows existing and proposed trails in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region.

In addition to the trails that have been identified and proposed in several of the municipalities’ Open Space Plans, Montgomery County and Chester County are working to complete the Schuylkill River Trail through the Region. Other proposed trails in the Region include the Manatawny Trail, West County Trail, and the Sunrise Trail. Municipalities should continue efforts to develop these trails and connections as resources permit. In doing so, the municipalities should connect sidewalks and trails as much as possible, however; trails should not be considered a replacement for a sidewalk network along roads. Rather, the trails will enhance the walkability that is primarily supported by a strong network of sidewalks, specifically in the boroughs and villages.

Figure 8-12: Regional Trail Network—Existing and Proposed Trails



Public Transportation

Public transportation reduces the amount of traffic on the roads and provides greater transportation options to those without access to automobiles or those with physical disabilities who cannot drive. Use of public transit can also conserve energy and improve air quality. Furthermore, an expanded public transit network can better connect workers and jobs and consumers in commercial areas, thus enhancing economic development.

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region's existing public transportation options are concentrated and based primarily out of Pottstown Borough. A local transportation agency, Pottstown Area Rapid Transit (PART), provides bus service from downtown Pottstown to Coventry Mall and four other routes. PART is the largest municipally-owned transit system in the county; it is different than a typical municipally-owned transit provider in that it is an actual transit agency. It provides hourly service six days a week (Monday through Saturday), with limited service at night, through the Borough, Lower Pottsgrove Township, West Pottsgrove Township, and North Coventry Township. While PART is currently municipally-owned, the creation of a separate authority to oversee the bus system is being considered following a recommendation by PennDOT.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA's) Route 93 bus also serves the Pottstown Region, connecting Pottstown Borough with the Norristown Transportation Center (and the greater SEPTA transit network) via Collegeville along the Ridge Pike/High Street corridor. The bus runs seven days a week, at approximately one-hour intervals. The Route 93 bus line stops along High Street in downtown Pottstown and at Montgomery County Community College. SEPTA does not pick up or drop off between Sanatoga and downtown Pottstown, except for certain runs each day when PART isn't operating. This formal agreement helps to preserve PART's ridership.

Additionally, private intercity bus service is available for Greyhound and Bieber Tourways in Pottstown Borough, with service to King of Prussia, Philadelphia, Reading, and Harrisburg.

Extension of Passenger Rail

Although there is currently no passenger rail service serving the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, this is an amenity which would surely be a welcome transportation improvement in that it would reduce congestion on US 422 and provide an alternative means for the Region's residents to commute along that corridor. A current regional proposal calls for a 44-mile extension of the SEPTA Manayunk/ Norristown (formerly named the R6) train line which would eventually terminate in Wyomissing. This extension would serve the Region via the US 422 corridor with a stop in Pottstown Borough, and would hopefully serve as a catalyst for future new development, as well as provide access to jobs along this corridor. This issue has been discussed since the mid-1990s. The federal government declined to fund it in 2003 and the state declined funding in 2007. A recent/current feasibility study, released in 2009, found this rail extension is feasible. However, since the tolling of US Route 422 has been largely rejected, there remains a lack of funding for the proposed rail extension and the project is unlikely to move forward in in the near future.

Freight Transport

There are several freight lines that do run through the Region's municipalities. The rail infrastructure consists of the former Reading main line and a small segment of the former Pennsylvania West Shore Line which are both currently owned by Norfolk Southern Railway Company. Norfolk Southern operates freight rail service within and through Pottstown Borough, along the former Conrail track near the borough's southern border. The other line, a rail spur to the Oxychem site in Lower Pottsgrove, is minimally utilized and its future is uncertain; in recent years the line was being used only once per week. Previous plans have recommended that the line be removed to facilitate redevelopment.

A third line, the Colebrookdale Branch Railroad, was purchased by Berks County in 2009, after its former owner (East Penn Railroad) sought federal approval to abandon the line. While Berks County originally hoped to resume its operations as an active freight line, plans are currently being proposed for the creation of a Tourist Railroad. In January 2012, a conceptual plan was completed for transforming the line into a Tourist Railroad, named the "Secret Valley Line". The proposed rail line would link Pottstown Borough to Boyertown Borough in Berks County and would help to expand heritage and recreational tourism as well as potentially provide a catalyst for further economic development in the Region.

Air Service and Airports

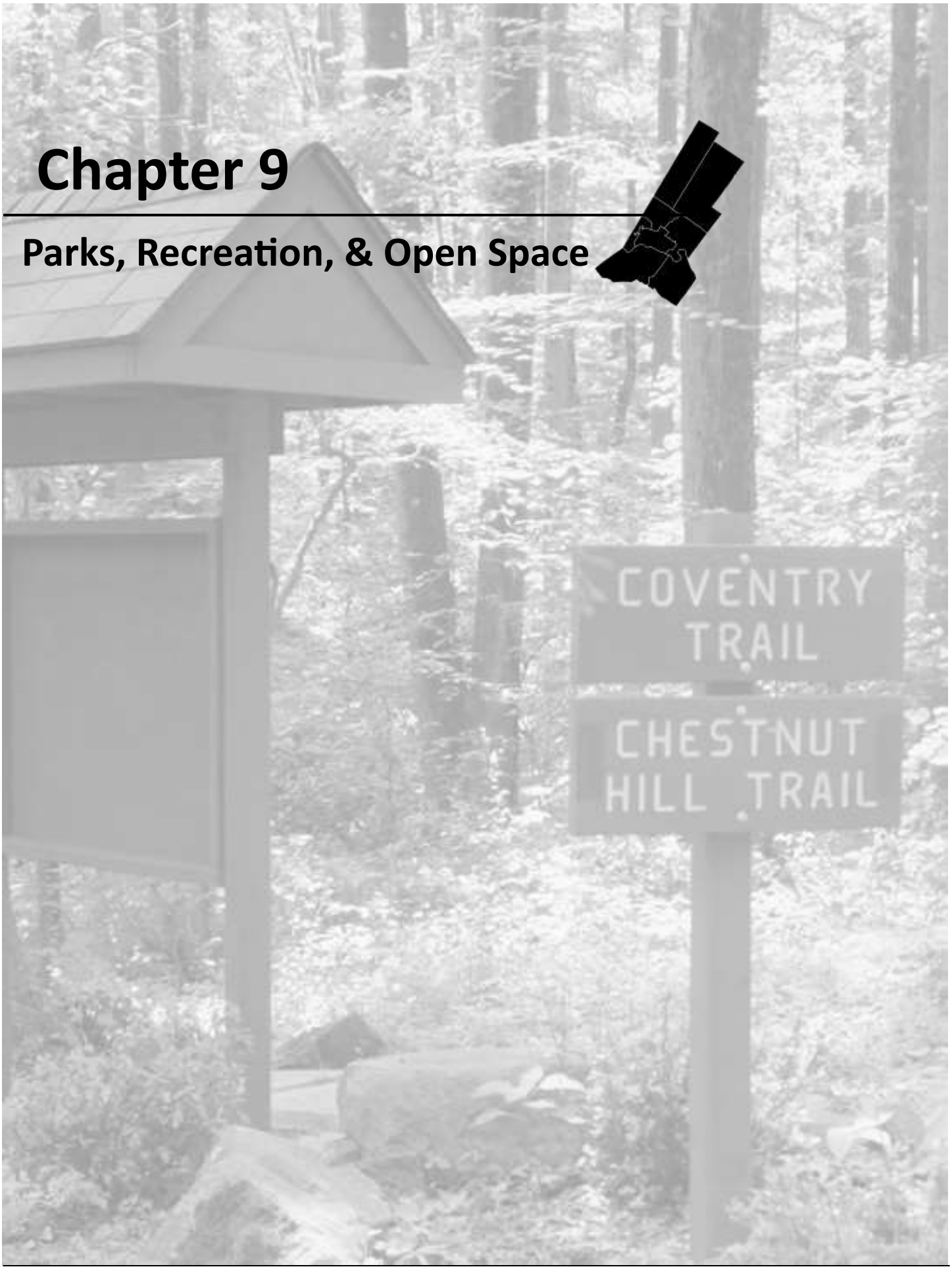
The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is also served by various airports. The one airport located in the Region, Pottstown Municipal Airport, was built in 1952 and is located along Glasgow Street in the borough's West End. While the Pottstown Municipal Airport is a full-service airport, there are no scheduled airlines that operate out of the Pottstown Municipal Airport.

Pottstown Municipal Airport provides limited corporate and charter service, and emphasizes personal service to recreational pilots. Its paved runway is 2,704 feet long and 75 feet wide. The airport had 22,275 annual flight operations in 2012 which shows significant growth over the previous 7,250 flight operations counted during 2003. Forty-four aircraft were based at Pottstown Municipal as of 2012. The Pottstown Region should look to the long-term viability of the Pottstown Municipal Airport because of its critical importance to the local economy. The *Marketing the Pottstown Region: Strategies for Economic Development and their Fiscal Impact* report, completed in 2012, identifies the Municipal Airport as a regional opportunity site that could help expand and support additional industrial development and recreational activities in the Region.

Another nearby and important airport facility is the Pottstown-Limerick Airport, which helps to reduce corporate and general aviation air traffic at the Philadelphia International airport. There are also three major commercial airports in close proximity to the Region: Reading Regional, Philadelphia International, and Lehigh Valley International. These airports serve high volumes of passengers and freight.

Chapter 9

Parks, Recreation, & Open Space



Introduction

Protection of open space for active and passive recreation, natural resource conservation as well as for preservation of agricultural lands is an essential component of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan and a priority of the Region's eight municipalities. The Pottstown Metropolitan Region has the opportunity to create a rich open space network from downtown Pottstown to the Region's outlying rural areas.

This chapter identifies and describes the open space, parkland, and other permanently preserved lands of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region and recommendations for increasing the acreage, function, and value of these open spaces in the Region. As additional open space is protected, these lands should be integrated into a green infrastructure system that can provide for a variety of opportunities for all members of the Regional community.

Existing Conditions

Municipal Core Parks and Greenway Parks

Municipally-owned open space in the region can be separated into two basic categories: core parks and greenway parks. The region's "core parks" consist of those parks that meet the community's basic active recreation needs. Core parks all contain some element of active recreation, which may include playgrounds, hard surface courts for basketball or tennis, playing fields for baseball, football, soccer, or lacrosse, picnic areas and pavilions, or walking paths. Greenway parks provide passive recreation opportunities, such as hiking, and provide protection for significant natural resources.

County and State-Owned Open Space

In addition to the Region's municipally-owned open space, there are large areas of open space preserved in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region by Montgomery and Chester Counties, the Brandywine Trust Conservancy, and the state of Pennsylvania. The Historic Pottsgrove Manor as well as the Schuylkill River Trail lands are part of Montgomery and Chester County's open space system. French Creek State Park in North Coventry is state-owned, and an area comprising nearly 58 acres in North Coventry is preserved through the Brandywine Conservancy through a conservation easement.

Private Open Space

Sports clubs, golf courses, and Home-Owner Association (HOA) open space located in residential subdivisions are all examples of private open space areas located in the Pottstown Region. With the exception of the Region's golf and sport clubs, which are included in this Chapter as private open space areas, the majority of these lands are permanently preserved through ownership of an HOA. Private open spaces that have not been permanently protected, such as golf courses, could potentially be sold and used for other purposes future. Consideration should be given to the means available to protect these parcels as open space.

Preserved Farms

Both Montgomery and Chester County have helped to permanently preserve agricultural lands throughout the Pottstown Region. Agriculture has historically played an important role in the Region, however, the decreasing profitability of the family farm and pressures from suburban sprawl have contributed to the decline of the agricultural industry in the Region over the past several decades. Both the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program and the Chester County Department of Open Space Preservation utilize County, State, and other funding sources to purchase agricultural easements on productive farms in their county. In 2014, there were 150 farms permanently preserved in all of Montgomery County and 378 farms in Chester County.

Within the Pottstown Metropolitan Region there are currently 50 preserved farms in Montgomery County, totaling 3,201 acres and 8 preserved farms in Chester County, totaling 792 acres. These nearly 4,000 acres of preserved agricultural lands are located in the municipalities of Douglass and New Hanover Townships in Montgomery County, and in North Coventry and East Coventry Townships in Chester County.

Regional Open Space Inventory

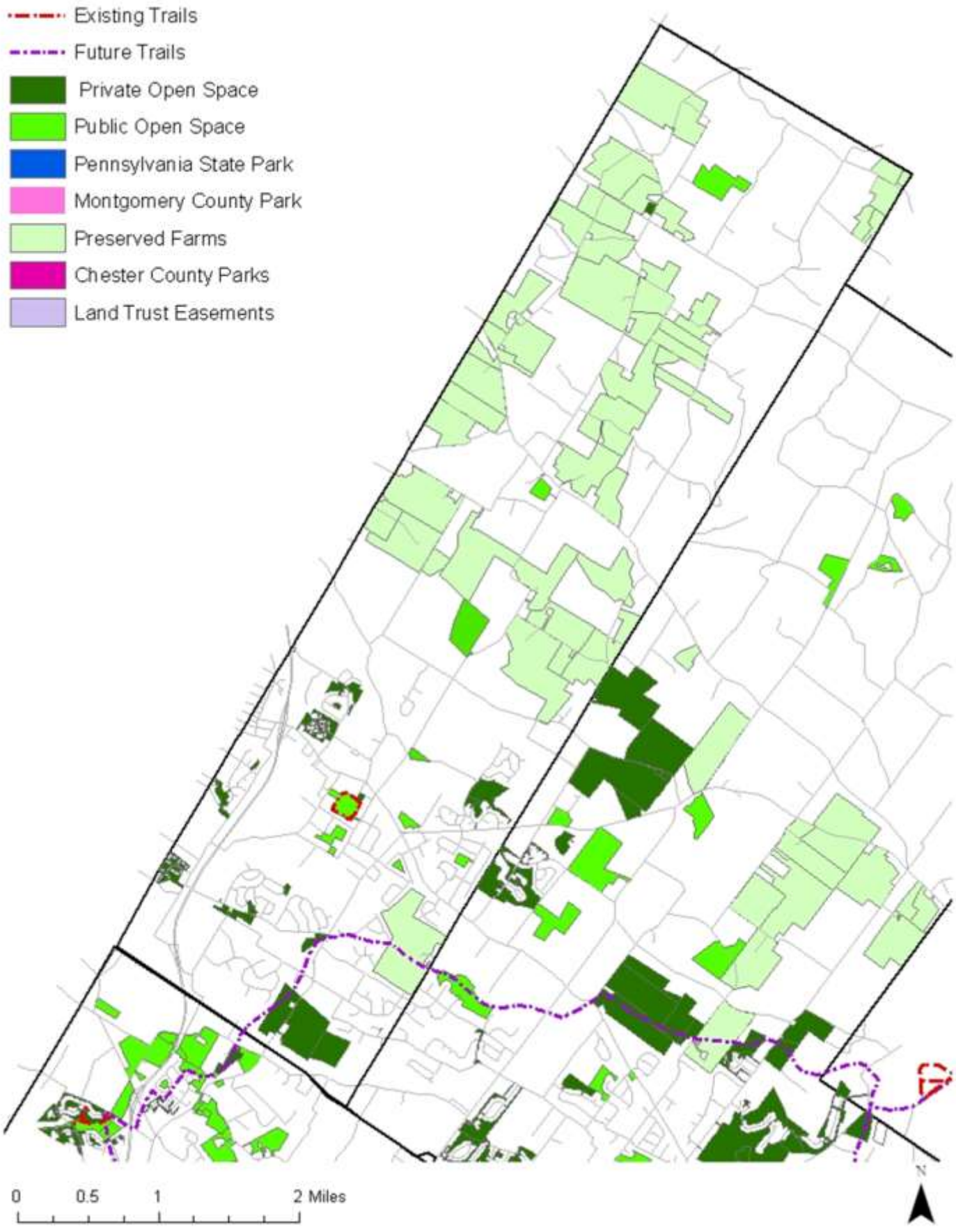
The following pages include charts and maps detailing the types and location of open space areas for each municipality in the Region.

Douglass Township Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-1 Douglass Township Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Various	Preserved Farmland	2,140
Douglass Park	Core Park	19.57
Keller Woods	Greenway	34.34
Moyer Property	Greenway	9.89
Rhoads Property	Greenway	8.5
Nelmore Park	Greenway	2.13
Municipal Drive Open Space	Greenway	0.91
Libor Property Open Space	Greenway	39.09
Smith Road Open Space	Greenway	4.17
Colonial Manor	Greenway	3.96
Various	Private Open Space	204.4
TOTAL		**2,466.96**

Figure 9-2 Douglass Township Open Space Map

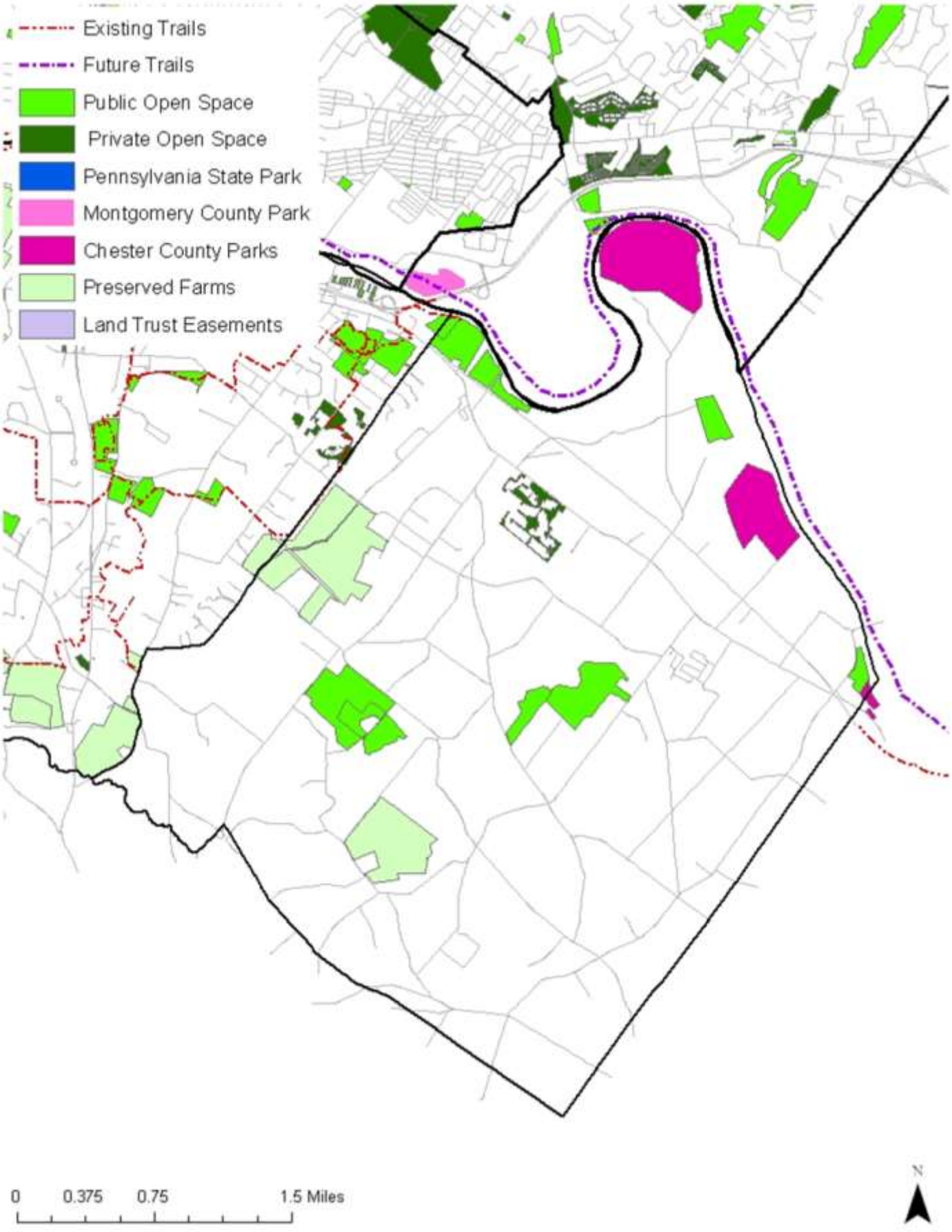


East Coventry Township Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-3 East Coventry Township Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Various	Preserved Farms	241.01
Ellis Woods Open Park	Core Park	17.9
Towpath Park	Core Park	7.5
Faulk Tract Open Space	Greenway	13.3
Heyser Tract	Greenway	28.16
Wineberry Open Space	Greenway	31.09
Creekview Open Space	Greenway	52.97
Maack Property	Greenway	57.4
Wade Tract	Greenway	6.7
Frick's Locks Village	Historic District/Open Space	18
Schuylkill River Trail	Chester County Park	198.4
Coventry Glen HOA	Private Open Space	21.6
Total		**694.03**

Figure 9-4 East Coventry Township Open Space Map

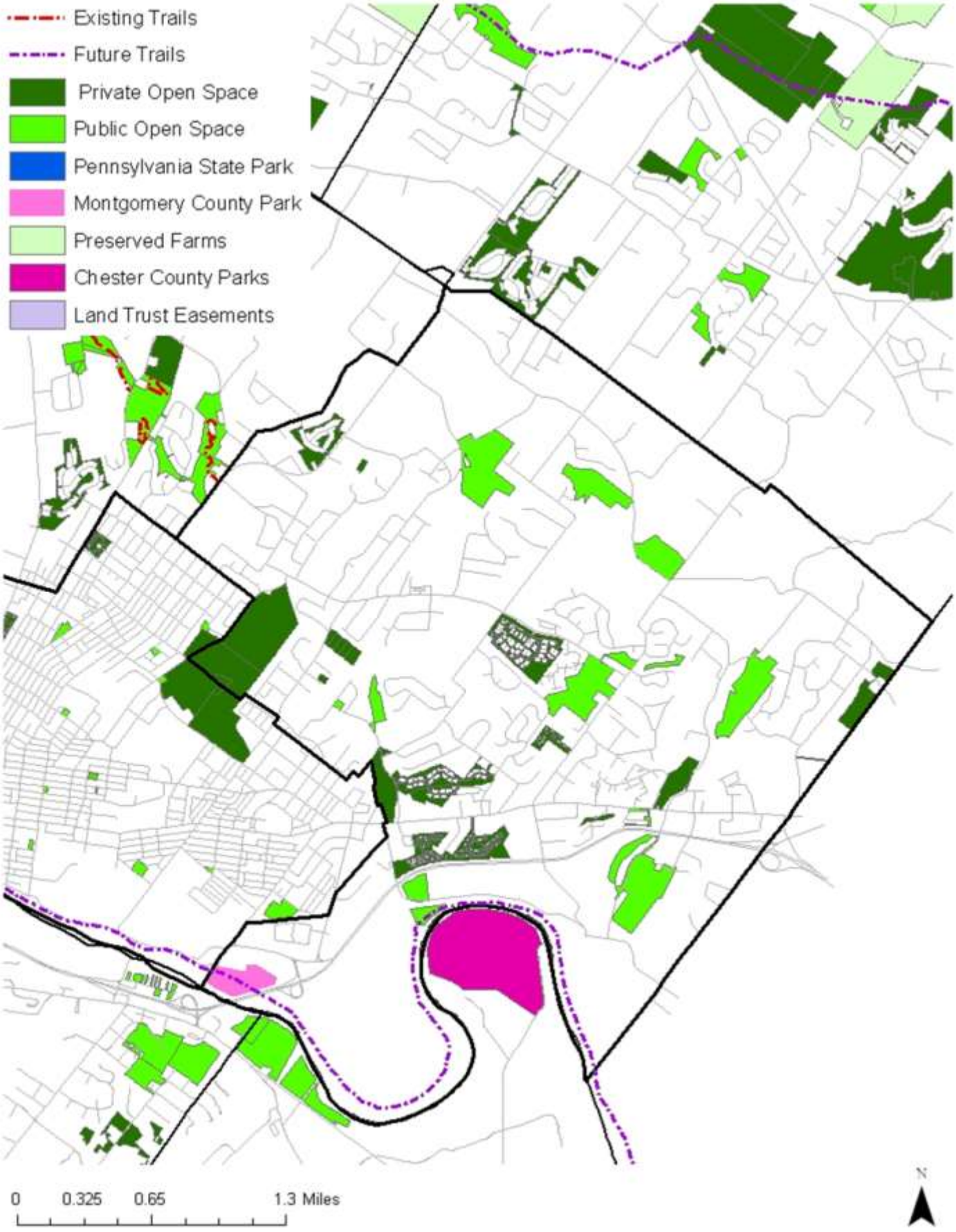


Lower Pottsgrove Township Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-5 Lower Pottsgrove Township Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Sanatoga Park	Core Park	54
Gerald G. Richards Park	Core Park	30.8
Liberty Hill Open Space	Greenway	0.3
Keim Street Open Space	Greenway	0.2
Crimson Lane Open Space	Greenway	0.7
Alfred B. Miles Park	Greenway	8.9
Sprogels Run Open Space	Greenway	11.2
Schuylkill River Park	Greenway	12.3
Snell and Norton Park	Greenway	45.1
Ringing Rocks Park	Greenway	38.4
Pleasant View Park	Greenway	17.9
Pottsgrove Historical Society	Greenway	0.3
Prusshill Barn	Greenway	0.8
Montgomery County Open Space	Montgomery County Park	22
Various	Private Open Space	221.9
Total		**464.8**

Figure 9-6 Lower Pottsgrove Township Open Space Map

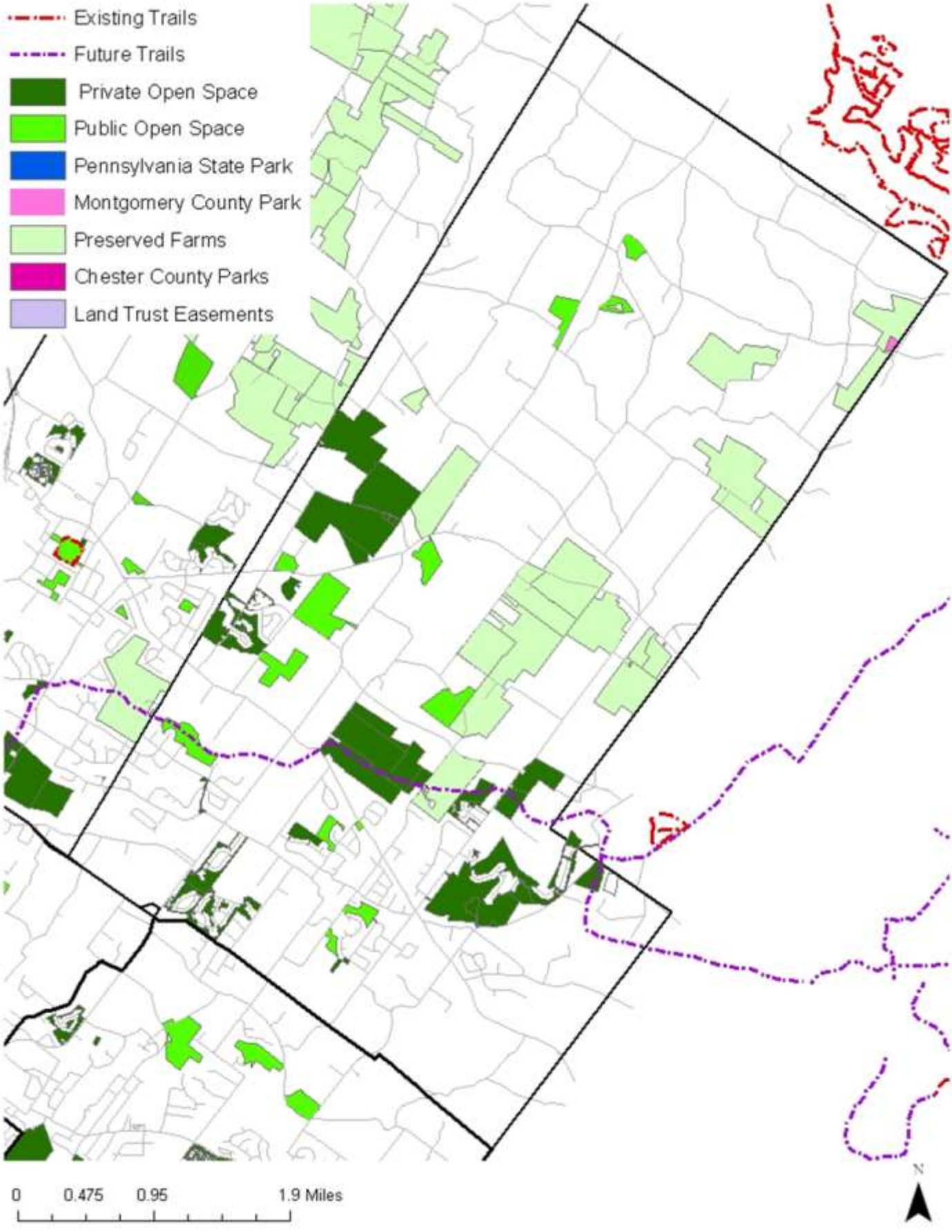


New Hanover Township Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-7 New Hanover Township Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Various	Preserved Farms	1,061
New Hanover Community Park	Core Park	21
Layfield Park	Core Park	28
Hickory Park	Core Park	21
Middle Creek Athletic Fields	Core Park	48.5
Romig Road Open Space	Greenway	10.6
Rosenbury Road Open Space	Greenway	11.5
Turnbury Road Open Space	Greenway	5.6
Deep Creek Nature Center	Greenway	10.8
Parestis Property	Greenway	17.9
Big Road Open Space	Greenway	8.9
Swamp Creek Park	Greenway	34.3
Pleasant Run Park	Greenway	11.4
Various	Private Open Space	759.8
Total		**2,050.29**

Figure 9-8 New Hanover Township Open Space Map

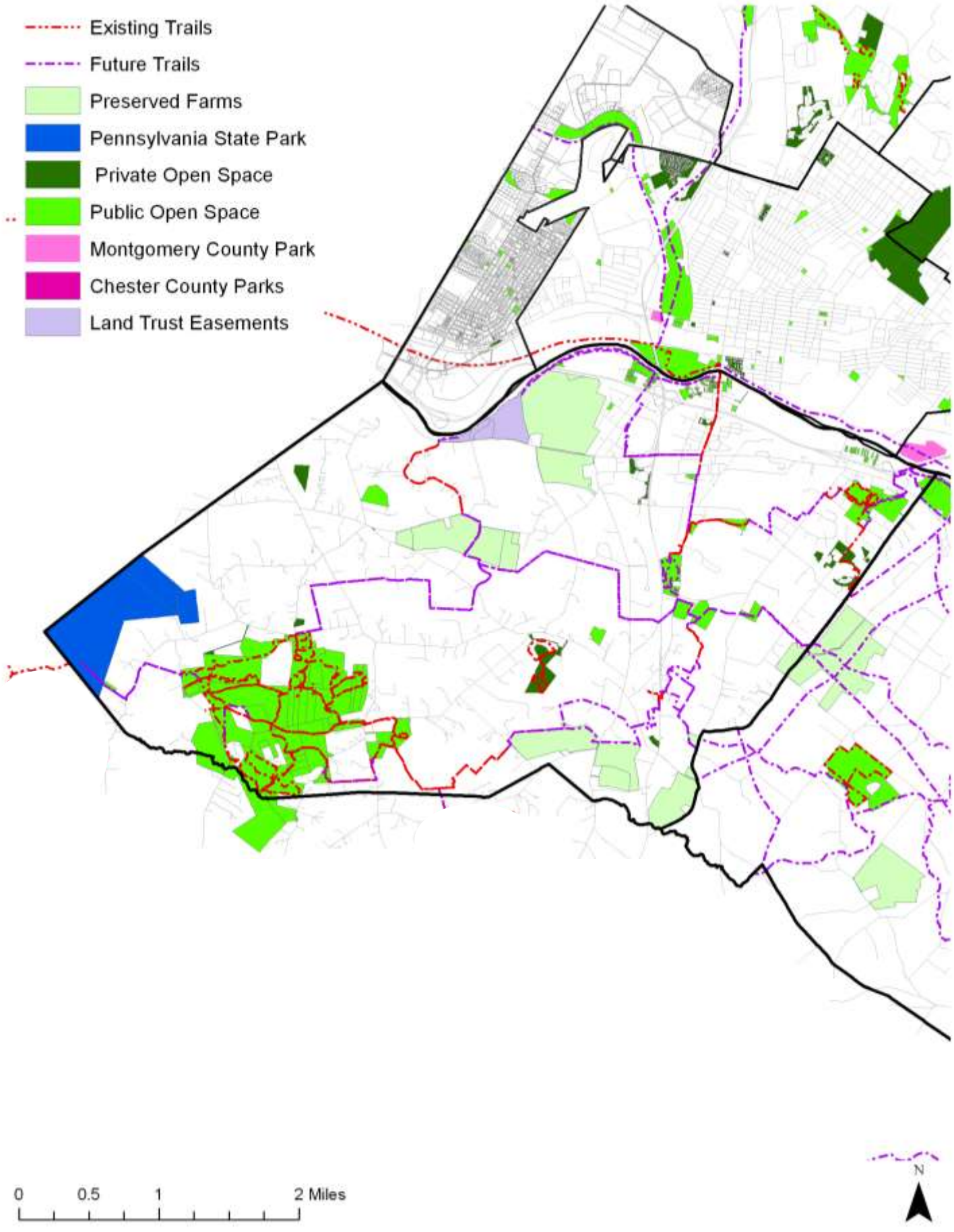


North Coventry Township Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-9 North Coventry Township Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Various	Preserved Farm	551.57
Kenilworth Park	Core Park	51.52
River Bend Park	Core Park	11.65
Hanover Meadows	Greenway	22.03
Bryton Avenue Lot	Greenway	0.76
Riverside Park	Core Park	4
Riverside Avenue Lot	Greenway	0.92
Barnard Property	Greenway	3
Bickle Run Park	Greenway	32
Coventry Woods Park	Greenway	608.26
Schuylkill Corridor Lots	Greenway	9.42
Shenkel Road Open Space	Greenway	12.6
Cedarville Trail	Greenway	8.75
Brandywine Conservancy Land Trust Open Space	Land Trust Easement	57.8
French Creek State Park	State Park	274.6
Various	Private Open Space	66.5
Total		**1715.38**

Figure 9-10 North Coventry Township Open Space Map

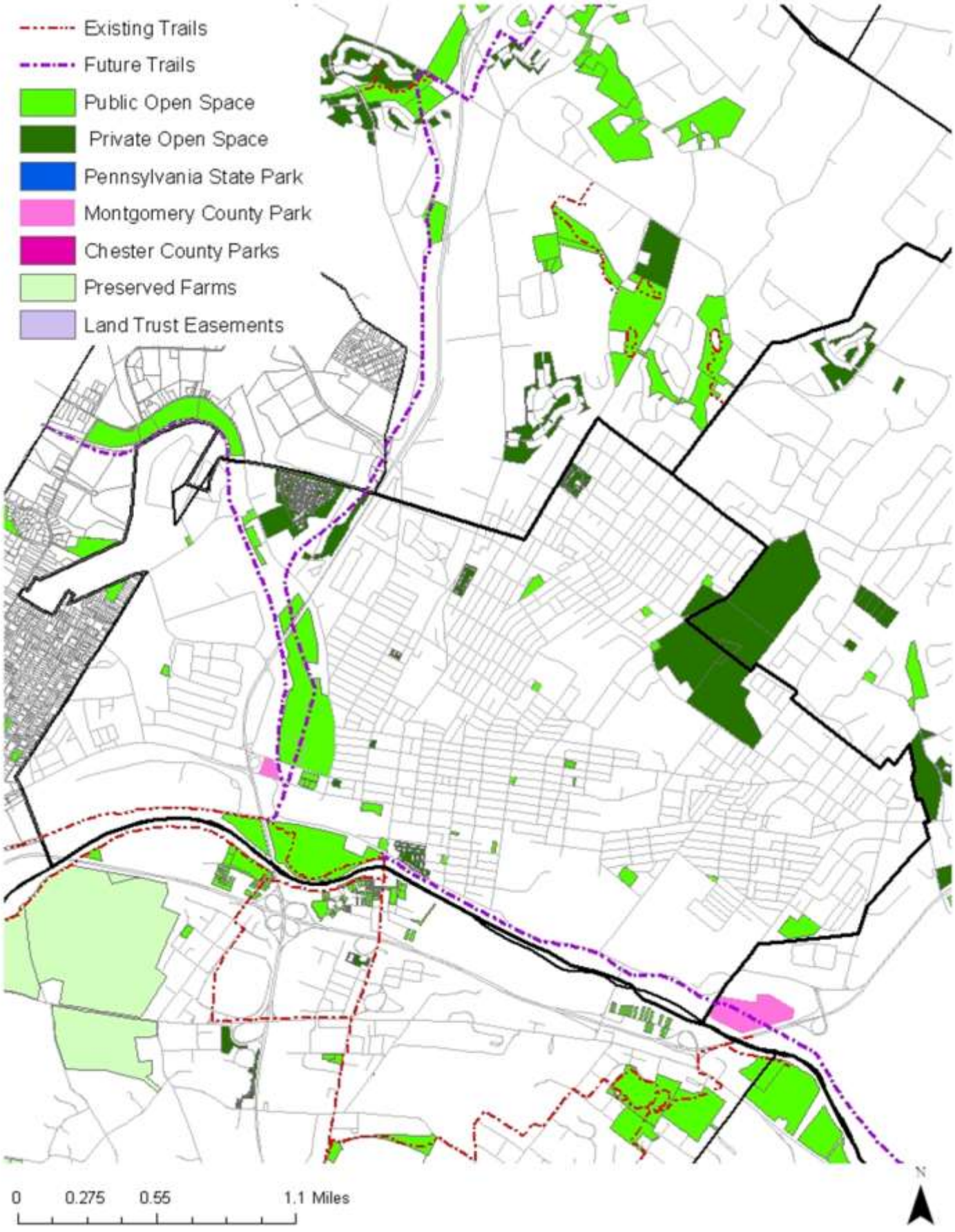


Pottstown Borough Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-11 Pottstown Borough Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Memorial Park	Core Park	78
Brooks Side Park	Core Park	0.5
Cherry Street Park	Core Park	0.25
West Street Park	Core Park	0.5
Maple Street Park	Core Park	6.3
Pollack Park	Core Park	1
Potts Drive Park	Core Park	0.5
South Street Park	Core Park	0.25
Spruce Street Park	Core Park	1
Terrace Lane Park	Core Park	0.25
Walnut Street Park	Core Park	0.5
Washington Street Park	Core Park	0.5`
Pottstown Carousel	Core Park	1.1
Pottstown Mini-Golf Course	Core Park	1.1
Rickets Community Center	Core Park	0.7
Center Avenue Open Space	Greenway	0.15
Evans Street Open Space	Greenway	0.09
Smith Plaza	Greenway	1.6
College Drive Park	Greenway	0.35
Manatawny Creek Open Space	Greenway	3.67
Jackson Street Open Space	Greenway	0.7
Riverfront Park	Greenway	60
Pottsgrove Manor	Montgomery County Park	1.7
Various	Private Open Space	87
Total		**247.71**

Figure 9-12 Pottstown Borough Open Space Map

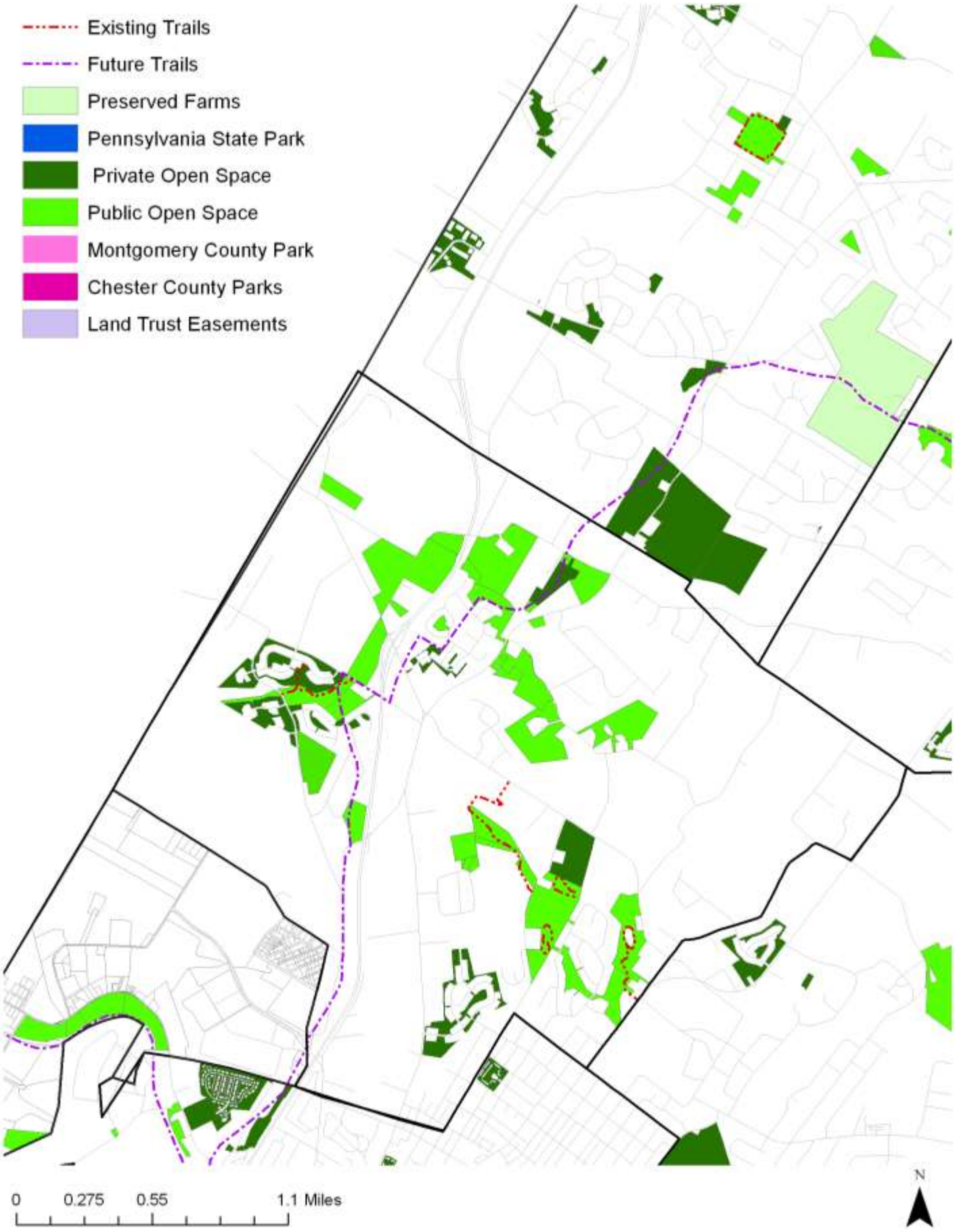


Upper Pottsgrove Township Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-13 Upper Pottsgrove Township Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Heather Place Park	Core Park	6.3
Hollenbach Park	Core Park	46.2
Kulp Field	Core Park	6
Hoffman Field	Core Park	3.7
Sunset Park	Core Park	21.5
Sussel Park	Core Park	19.4
Cherry Tree Park	Core Park	1.5
Prout Farm Park	Core Park	29
Althouse Arboretum	Core Park and Passive Open Space	5.29
Various	Greenways	113.7
Various	Private Open Space	79.4
Total		**332**

Figure 9-14 Upper Pottsgrove Open Space Map



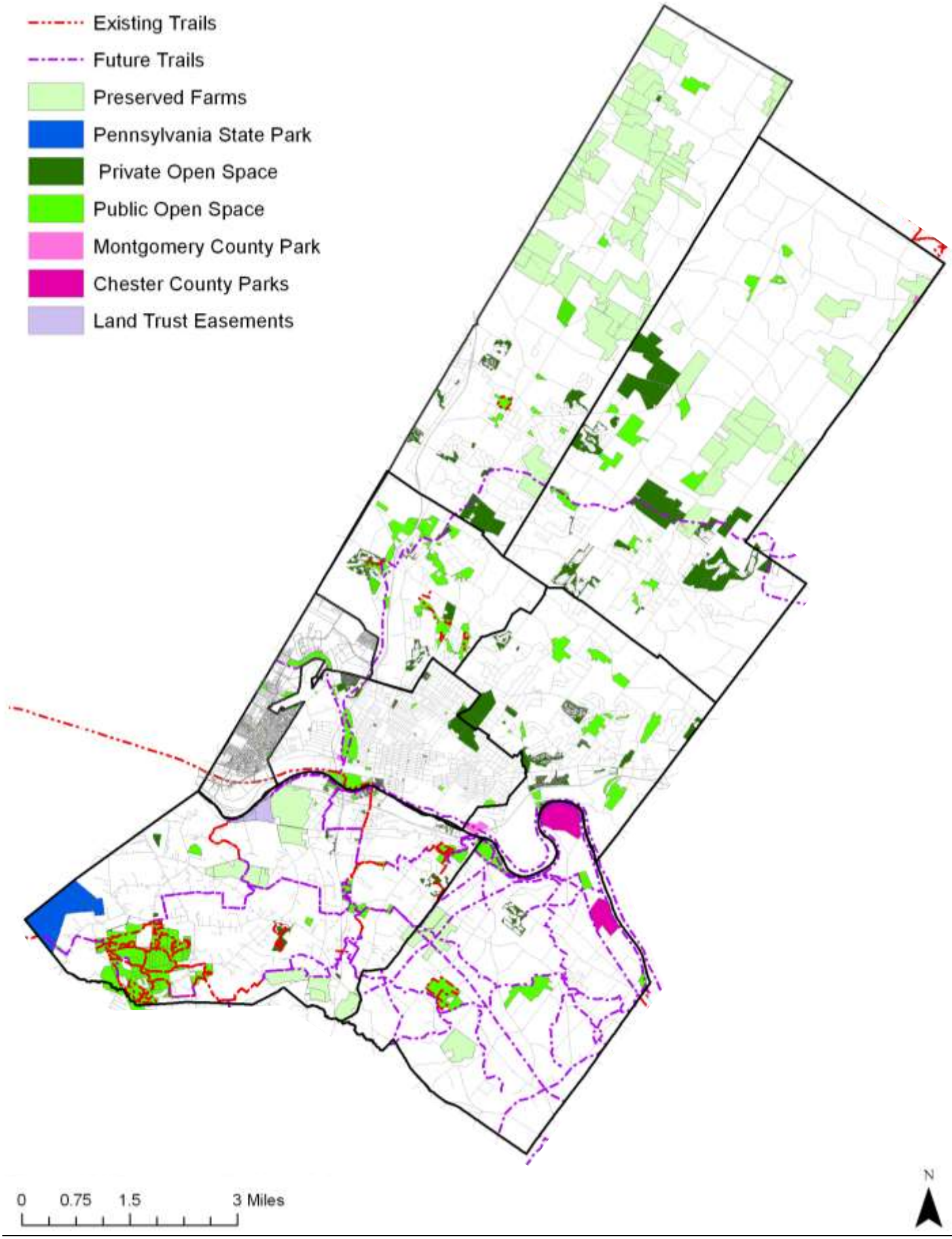
West Pottsgrove Township Parks and Open Space Inventory

Figure 9-15 West Pottsgrove Township Open Space

Name	Type	Acres
Howard Street Park	Core Park	0.4
Vine Street Park	Core Park	1
Old Timer's Field	Core Park	6.4
Collins Property	Greenway	2.5
Edgewood Drive Open Space	Greenway	3.5
Race Street Open Space	Greenway	0.67
Fairview Street Open Space	Greenway	1.19
Grosstown Road Open Space	Greenway	0.24
Kristen Court Open Space	Greenway	0.37
Manatawny Creek Park	Greenway	18.41
Various	Private Open Space	1.04
Total		**35.72**

Figure 9-16 West Pottsgrove Open Space Map

Figure 9-17 Pottstown Metropolitan Region Open Space Map



Open Space Planning

Evaluating Needs

Historically, municipal open space needs have been calculated using a 1983 guide, *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*, developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The 1983 guidelines suggested a municipal park system include 6.25 to 10.5 acres of land per 1,000 people. Using the high-end of the standard, at 10.5 acres per 1,000 people, the cumulative open space needs of the Region's communities based upon the projected 2040 population (96,774), would be approximately 1,016.12 acres. With the total amount of public open space currently calculated to be acres 2,416 acres, the region exceeds the recommended acreage by more than double.

Exceeding the recommendation for total acreage across the Region, however, does not necessarily ensure that the proper mix of open space and recreation opportunities exist within each municipality. Given this deficiency of the standards, the NRPAs 1983 publication has been replaced to recognize the expanded role parks and open space play in local communities.

The newer publication, *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, was developed by the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. The omission of the word "standard" in the new publication's title is indicative of the shift toward a new way of looking at open space. The philosophy of the most recent publication is to provide guidance only, ultimately allowing the amount of park, recreation, and open space to be defined by individual communities. This new systems approach looks at the level of service provided to the users of the facilities rather than the size of the facilities based upon population. This method reflects, in part, the dual function of municipal parkland: providing recreation opportunities (passive and active) and protecting important natural features.

Since this plan does not provide specific criteria or recommendations for municipal acquisition of open space areas, such decisions should be made in accordance with each municipality's individual procedures and open space priorities.

Regional Open Space and Recreation Goals

Open Space Preservation

1. Designate growth and conservation areas within the Region to ensure preservation of open space areas.
2. Conserve open space by increasing infill development, minimizing low-density and non-contiguous growth, and promoting cluster and conservation-style developments.
3. Coordinate and connect open space areas between municipalities.
4. Actively pursue funding and resources to preserve open space, including agricultural lands.
5. Prioritize open space opportunities that preserve natural linkages, environmental resources and view sheds, especially along the Schuylkill River.

Parks and Recreation

1. Coordinate park and recreational opportunities among the Region's eight (8) municipalities.
2. Maintain and enhance existing park and recreation facilities.
3. Provide and incorporate new parks with new development.
4. Create well-rounded parks that can provide a full range of opportunities, including physical activities, contact with nature, social connections, and connections with history and culture.
5. Prioritize park and recreation opportunities that preserve natural linkages, environmental resources and view sheds.
6. Expand recreational opportunities along the Schuylkill River and prioritize the completion of the Schuylkill River Trail between Phoenixville and Pottstown.
7. Develop a regional trail network to connect communities, recreation areas, and the Schuylkill River Trail.
8. Work with private organizations to provide recreational opportunities.
9. Continue to pursue private and public sector funding opportunities to enhance recreation in the region.
10. Promote alternative forms of transportation, including walking and bicycling, by providing safe routes to parks and safe access within parks themselves.
11. Increase resident awareness and promote access to the Region's parks and open space facilities through the development of consistent entrance and way finding signage, promotional materials, and community events.

Municipal-Specific Open Space and Recreation Goals

Douglass Township

1. Enhance pedestrian and vehicle access and improve visibility to Douglass Park from Main Street (East Philadelphia Avenue) in Gilbertsville.
2. Update and expand playground equipment, comfort facilities, and active recreation opportunities at core parks and open space properties.
3. Promote park use in the community by providing non-motorized access connecting core parks, greenways, open space areas, and nearby destinations.

East Coventry Township

1. Promote completion of the Schuylkill River Trail.
2. Establishment of a trailhead at Fricks Locks Village.
3. Continue coordination with Chester County to install a restroom in the village for trail users.
4. Establish local trails that are user friendly, and connect to schools, communities or the township building.

Lower Pottsgrove Township

1. Improve the playing conditions at Gerald Richards Park and develop a stormwater management plan for the park.
2. Secure funds to make the Sanatoga Park restroom facility and the band shell ADA-compliant.
3. Evaluate all special events to determine if the Township is meeting the needs of the residents.

North Coventry Township

1. Form, expand, or protect strategically located active and passive recreational parks which are accessible by all residents.
2. Preserve land in agricultural production and protect land with sensitive environmental features and/or historical or cultural importance.
3. Improve and expand trails to connect our municipal parks with neighborhoods and regional recreation facilities, such as the Schuylkill River Trail, French Creek State Park, and other parks and trails within the region.
4. Upgrade existing park and trail facilities, signage, and equipment to create sustainable ecosystems and watersheds while providing enhanced and varied recreation opportunities for all users.
5. Ensure acquisition of open space areas in the Township is in accordance with the Township's established procedures and municipal comprehensive plan.

Pottstown Borough

1. Link and expand pedestrian, bicycle, and trail systems with existing recreation spaces in and amongst core parks and greenways.
2. Enrich and update existing active recreation opportunities and equipment in core parks.
3. Expand community involvement in active recreation programs in all parks.
4. Provide a community swimming pool that is accessible to all Borough residents.

Upper Pottsgrove Township

1. Complete the planning, engineering, and construction of Upper Pottsgrove's trail system.
2. Acquire additional open space land as the opportunity arises.
3. Provide for sustainability of waterways and ponds on open space, including Sussell Park and Sunset Park ponds, as well as Sprogels Run.
4. Provide additional active recreation opportunities in partnership with local sports organizations.
5. Continue to support the efforts of the SAVE Alliance .

West Pottsgrove Township

1. Improve awareness of the Community Pool with enhanced marketing, directional signage, and community events.
2. Provide security lighting at playgrounds and pocket parks.
3. Seek partnerships with adjacent municipalities to construct trail connections to the Schuylkill River Trail as grants and other funding sources become available.

Implementation

This section summarizes a menu of strategies that municipalities in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region may wish to employ to meet the region's open space goals.

Update Municipal Open Space Plans

Almost all the municipalities in the Pottstown Region have had municipal open space plans prepared in past decade. These plans should be selectively updated where necessary to reflect new conditions. In addition to incorporating updated census and demographic data, municipal open space plans should reflect recent open space acquisitions and an analysis of current open space needs. The updated open space plans can also revisit properties recommended for acquisition and possible trail alignment to determine if the recommendations are still suitable and/or have changed priority. Finally, the open space plans should integrate the policy recommendations within this regional comprehensive plan. Increased focus upon inter-municipal connections and cooperation will greatly enhance the value of existing open space and permit consideration of future acquisitions within a regional context.

Prevent Land Loss

Conservation Subdivision

One method to preserve open space is to cluster homes within one portion of a development and reserve the rest for permanent open space. The overall density of the site is about the same, while the homes are on smaller lots. The open space area might preserve the views, or historic landscapes, farmland, woodlands, steep slopes, wetlands, etc. The open space may then be dedicated to the township or borough as parkland.

Through clustering, significant portions of the site can be preserved as much as 75 or 80 percent. The open space may be in the developed portion of the site so that the homes have neighborhood open space. While this type of development preserves natural resources, it also benefits the developer by lowering infrastructure costs (reducing road length and utility lines).

Farm Preservation: Agricultural Security Area and Sale of Development Rights

Agricultural security districts can be created through state law. Groups of farmers, with municipal approval, can form these districts. The districts must be at least 500 acres in size (although farms do not have to be contiguous). If a municipality is unable to meet the acreage requirement, it can join another municipality's district. While there are no obligations with this program, landowners receive these benefits:

- Farms in agricultural security areas are protected from new ordinances that restrict normal farming operations or define farms as nuisances. (Although farm operations must use acceptable farming practices).
- Condemning land in agricultural security areas becomes more difficult. Land condemnation by the Commonwealth or municipal authorities, school boards, and governing bodies, must be reviewed by and approved by a state agricultural board prior to any action.

- Farms in agricultural security areas can apply to sell their development rights to the county and the state. Farmers receive the difference between the development value of their property and the farm value of their property when development rights are sold. A conservation easement is then placed on the property, which permanently restricts the property from any nonfarm development on the property.

Open Space Easements

Landowners can preserve their land by donating the full title of their property or by donating their development rights to a nonprofit land conservation group. These two methods permanently preserve open space.

Landowners who donate development rights receive tax benefits and their land must be permanently restricted from future development. Land conservation groups that operate within Montgomery County and who receive donations include: the Brandywine Conservancy, the Natural Lands Trust, the Nature Conservancy, and the Wissahickon Watershed Association.

Some land conservation groups can also help local landowners to develop some of their land while keeping the majority of the land open and deed-restricted. This approach ensures that land is developed in a sensitive manner yielding the landowner some monetary compensation, while also preserving the most important environmental amenities on the site.

Open Space Requirements for New Development

Municipalities can require developers to provide open space through their zoning and/or the subdivision ordinance.

An open space requirement when placed in the zoning ordinance must be located in specific zoning districts (for example the high-density residential district). The zoning ordinance can specify the percentage of required open space, for example between 15 and 20 percent, and other criteria relevant to the maintenance of common open space. The municipality cannot require the open space to be dedicated or open to the public or to include specific recreational facilities. However, the community can require that the land meet specific standards such as being flat, open land suitable for playing fields.

The subdivision ordinance can also require developers to provide open space but it also allows further provisions. The ordinance can require the land to be dedicated to the township or borough. If a developer does not want to provide the land, the ordinance can require fees in lieu of land. An adopted recreation plan must be in existence in order to have this requirement and must follow the provisions within the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. A community needs to make a decision of whether fees in lieu of should be accepted so as to create larger central parks for a number of neighborhoods or if there should be smaller scale open space within developments. Requiring developments to provide open space allows municipalities to meet the needs of new residents without building additional municipal parks. The provision of requiring open space or a fee in lieu of allows for a community to have flexibility in establishing their open space priorities.

Create Integrated Networks of Open Space

Establish Acquisition Priorities and Identify Locations for New Trails

Municipalities, particularly those containing large areas of undeveloped and rural lands, should establish a list of priority properties whose acquisition can contribute to the connection of open spaces within the region. Creating an integrated and connected open space system not only allows for the development of future recreational trails, but also provides important benefits for the region's ecosystem and wildlife populations. By identifying these areas in advance, municipalities will be equipped to preserve the most suitable properties if the opportunity arises.

Protect the Region's Natural Features and Environmental Assets

The ordinances discussed below protect natural features such as floodplains, stream corridors, wetlands, groundwater, steep slopes, and woodlands.

Floodplains

Floodplain ordinances restrict or prohibit development within floodplains, especially development within the 100-year floodplain. There are typically three types of floodplain restrictions in the county. One type, often common in the boroughs, allows development within the floodplain provided that buildings are floodproofed. Many ordinances do not allow building within the floodplain. This type of ordinance protects properties from flood damage, protects the environment within the floodplain, and also reduces the possibility of raising the flood level. A third type of ordinance not only restricts development within the floodplain but also requires a minimum setback from the edge of the floodplain. This type of ordinance protects the unique wooded habitat, or riparian woodlands, of the floodplain.

Stream Corridors

Stream corridor protection ordinances go beyond floodplain ordinances to protect the water quality of the stream in addition to plant and animal habitats. These ordinances have a minimum setback requirement from the stream bank where no development can occur. A minimum setback of 75 feet from the stream bank, for example, will help stabilize the stream bank, control sediment, remove nutrients that would pollute the stream, moderate stream temperature, and preserve wildlife habitat. The area within the setback should be left in its natural state.

Wetlands

In addition to federal and state governments, municipalities can regulate development that occurs on wetlands. Municipalities can prohibit development on wetlands and require wetlands to be shown on development plans. While developers can locate homes right next to wetlands (after receiving all the federal and state permits needed), such location might lead to future problems. Homeowners might decide to fill in the wet areas behind their home to have a more usable back yard. To prevent this, local municipalities can require a minimum building setback from wetlands. While federal and state regulations address only the filling of wetland, municipalities can take the extra step and require the replacement of destroyed wetlands vegetation.

Groundwater

Wellhead protection ordinances and stormwater ordinances which include provisions for groundwater recharge can help protect groundwater quality.

Stormwater management ordinances help protect surface and groundwater and ensure that adequate stormwater management takes place with development. Such ordinances maintain existing pre-development water balance within watersheds, groundwater recharge, and runoff volumes.

Wellhead protection areas are identified by a number of methods, such as a hydrogeologic survey. Wellhead protection ordinances can restrict certain uses such as gas stations, limit the intensity of development (such as limiting the density of single-family detached homes with individual septic systems), and/or by controlling how a land use activity occurs (such as farming with specific types of pesticides and other chemicals) within wellhead protection areas. A municipality can also impose design standards that would not allow, for example, hazardous materials containment structures or large impervious areas such as parking to limit potential groundwater pollution.

Steep Slopes

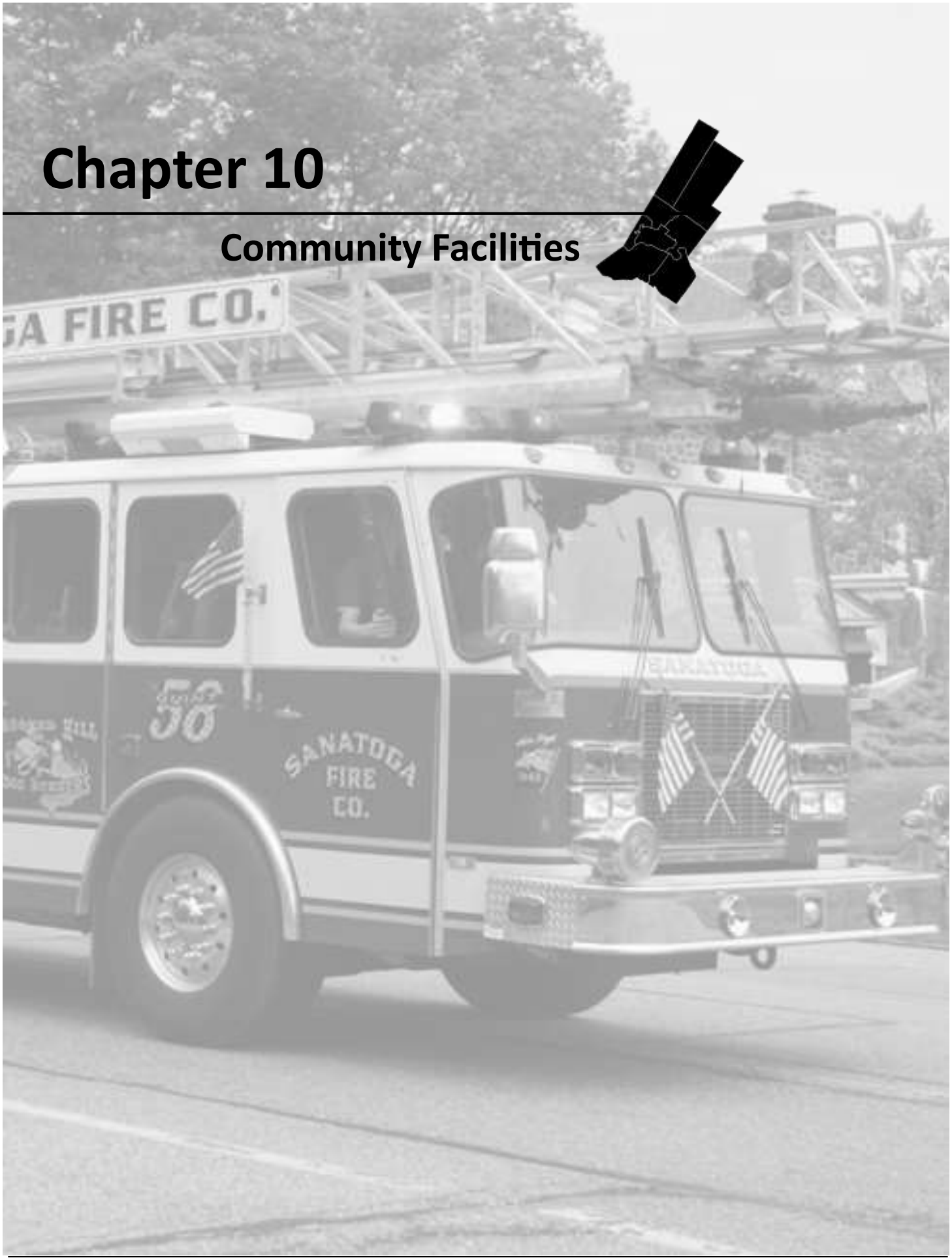
Development on steep slopes, which are typically slopes of 15 percent or more, can be restricted or prohibited through steep slope ordinances. Development often is permitted on slopes of 15 percent to 25 percent if the minimum lot size is increased and/or the percent of the lot disturbed is limited. Some steep slope ordinances prohibit all development, although typically development is prohibited on extremely steep slopes such as 25 percent or more.

Woodlands

Protection of existing trees and woodlands can be accomplished with woodland preservation ordinances. Some ordinances provide minimum standards that must be followed during construction for trees that will remain. Other ordinances, when existing trees are preserved, allow developers to put up fewer street trees, buffers, or individual lot trees. Tree replacement is another requirement of some ordinances.

Chapter 10

Community Facilities



Introduction

A community's infrastructure and facilities greatly impact the quality of life and safety of the Region's residents. Development, both existing and proposed, is dependent on these facilities. In addition, new development can be directed into designated growth areas by coordinating the provision of these systems. This chapter examines the existing conditions of these community facilities and establishes policy guidelines for the continued provision of services. It also explains how the absence of such public systems can be used to support policies regarding protection and preservation of rural resources.

Water Facilities

A clean, reliable water supply is essential to protecting the health of the Pottstown Region's residents as well as the continued economic and social vitality of the Region. Public water suppliers currently provide service to a majority of the Region's population within Pottstown Borough, and the townships of Lower Pottsgrove, West Pottsgrove, and Upper Pottsgrove in Montgomery County. Douglass and New Hanover townships in Montgomery County and East Coventry and North Coventry townships in Chester County are served in part by public water, but large portions of these townships also rely heavily on groundwater via individual wells and private community water supply systems.

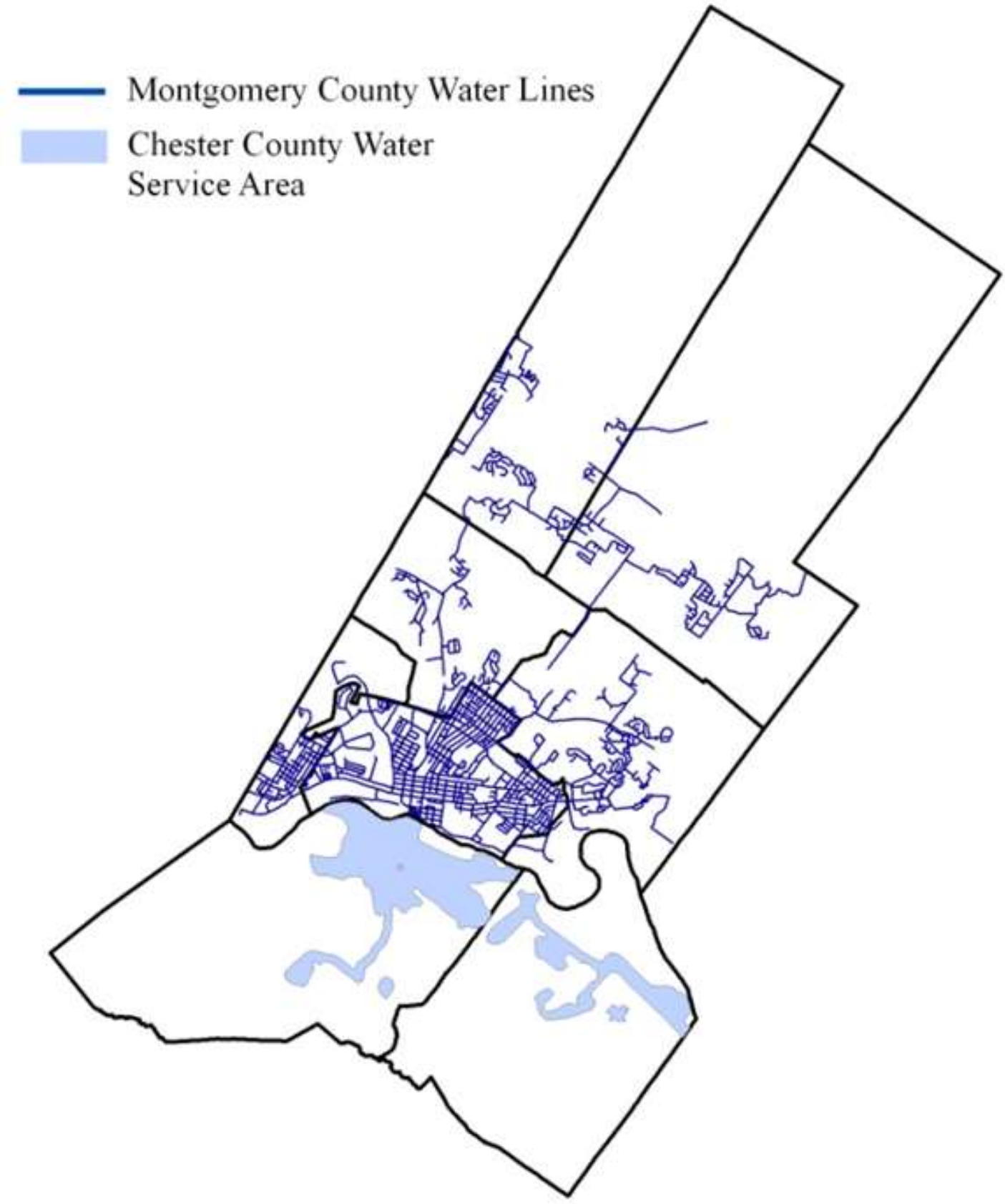
Existing Water Facilities

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is served by five different water suppliers. **Figures 10-1** and **10-2** detail these suppliers and their service areas.

Figure 10-1: Public Water Companies in the Pottstown Region

Public Water Company Service Areas	Municipalities Served
Boyertown Borough Water Authority	Douglass Township
Superior Water Company	Douglass Township, New Hanover Township, Upper Pottsgrove Township, Lower Pottsgrove Township
Pottstown Borough Water Authority	Pottstown Borough, Upper Pottsgrove, Lower Pottsgrove, West Pottsgrove
North Coventry Water Authority	North Coventry Township
Pennsylvania American Water Company	East Coventry and Lower Pottsgrove Townships

Figure 10-2 Public Water Service Areas



Boyertown Borough Water Authority

The Boyertown Borough Water Authority serves only a small area of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, in the northern and southwestern portions of Douglass Township. The sources of surface water for the Boyertown Borough Water Authority Water Treatment Plant are the Popodickon Reservoir, Trout Run Reservoir, and Ironstone Creek. As of 2002, when the most recent Source Water Assessment was completed, there was an average of 600,000 gallons of water being treated each day for the Borough of Boyertown and its service areas outside the Borough, including Douglass Township. The reservoirs and streams, which make up the water supply, have a drainage area of approximately 8 square miles.

Superior Water Company

Superior Water Company – Main System provides water service to all of New Hanover Township as well as portions of Upper Pottsgrove and Douglass townships. As of 2005, Superior Water Company served roughly 5,500 customers from eight groundwater sources, including five wells located in Douglass Township and three wells located in New Hanover Township.

The Pottstown Borough Water Authority

The Pottstown Borough Water Authority withdraws all of its water from the Schuylkill River and treats it at the Borough of Pottstown Water Filtration Plant in West Pottsgrove Township. The plant produces an average 4.5 million gallons of water each day and uses approximately 115 miles of underground pipes to provide clean and safe water to area residential, commercial, and industrial customers. Almost all of the 1,384 new connections in the service area during the nineties can be attributed to residential development, with half of those connections added in Lower Pottsgrove Township. While the number of industrial and institutional connections showed modest increases, about 250 commercial connections have been lost in the last decade.

North Coventry Water Authority

North Coventry Water Authority sources its water from the Pottstown Borough Water Authority, which draws from the Schuylkill River.

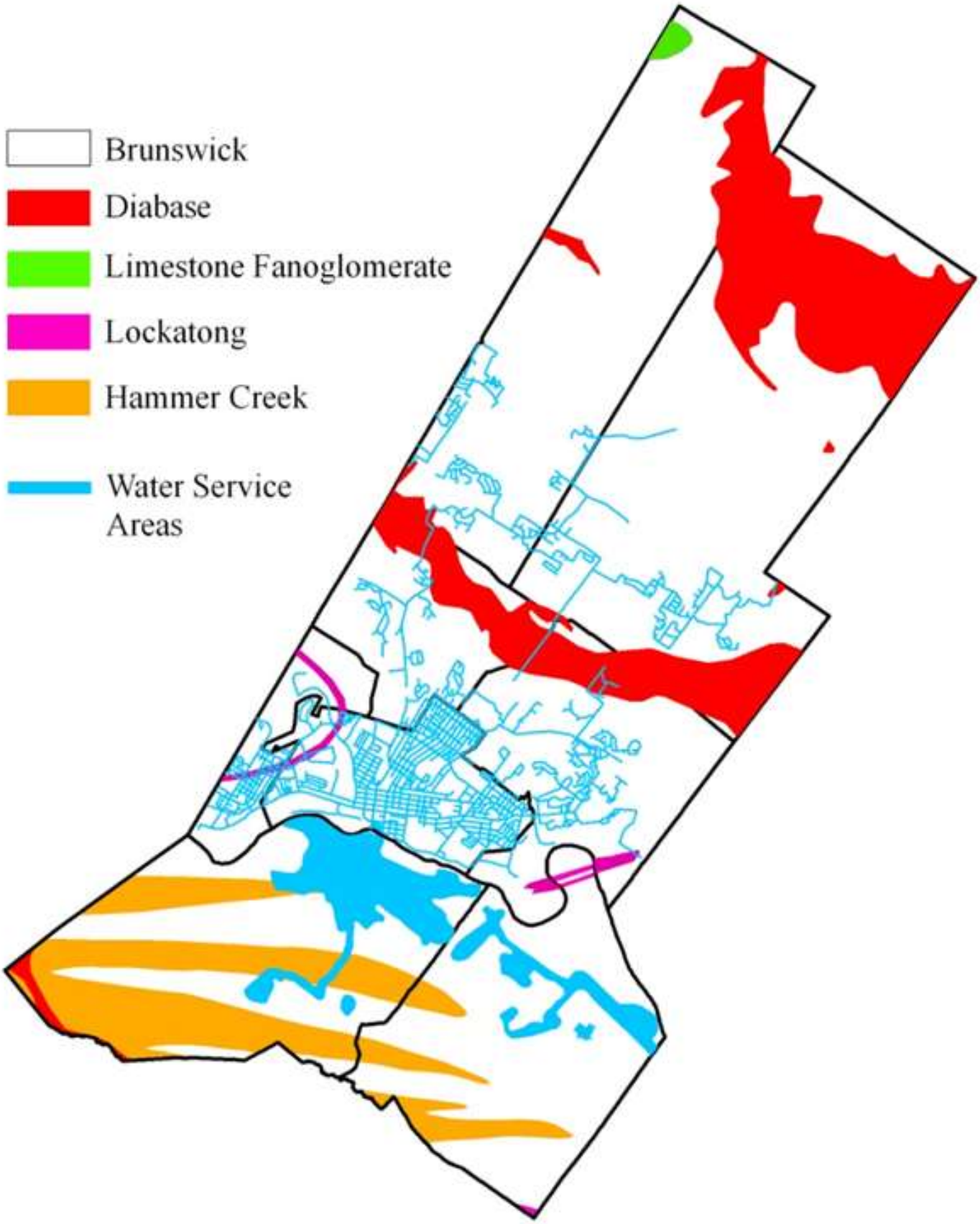
Pennsylvania American Water Company

The Pennsylvania American Water Company's Home Water System serves portions of both East Coventry and Lower Pottsgrove townships as part of its larger service area that also includes the Boroughs of Spring City and Royersford. The Home Water System obtains its water from the Schuylkill River and four groundwater wells. Roughly 2.2 million gallons of water are supplied to customers on a daily basis.

Areas Not Served by Public Water

Many residents and businesses of Douglass Township, New Hanover Township, North Coventry and East Coventry rely on individual sources of groundwater for their water supply. Individual on-lot wells are directly affected by a community's natural features and the intensity of surrounding development. This is especially important given the geology of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region. Figure 10-3 depicts the bedrock geology in relation to the methods of water supply. Of the five

Figure 10-3 Geology and Water Service Areas



formations underlying g the Region, the sedimentary Brunswick Formation covers most the area and has moderate porosity and permeability. The Diabase Formation, which covers the second largest area primarily in the Region's northern municipalities, has low porosity. The Diabase Formation has limited infiltration of groundwater and relatively low yields from wells. The Hammer Creek Formation located in North Coventry and East Coventry townships also has low porosity and permeability.

The use of individual on-lot wells by more intense development in North Coventry Township has created concerns about the depletion of ground water in those areas. Following an assessment of its ground water resources and capacity in 2008, North Coventry established a Water Budget Impact Zone Overlay District. The Water Budget Impact Zone applies to all areas in the township that rely on private on-site wells for water supply. Any significant water uses that are proposed within the Overlay District are required to perform a Water Budget Impact Analysis in order to guarantee that appropriate water resource standards, quantity, and quality are not violated and that the proposed development will be designed to maintain hydrologic balance and prevent significant adverse impact to overall water quality.

Water Facilities Plan

Focus Water Improvements In Growth Areas: Public water should be limited to the Regional Core, Primary Growth Areas, Secondary Growth Areas, and Highway Commercial Overlay land use designations as shown on the Regional Future Land Use Plan. Limiting their expansion to these areas whenever possible will help foster revitalization and limit sprawl. Water facility extensions should be discouraged in the rural resource areas and should only be allowed in special circumstances such as to serve existing villages or when public sewer has already been extended to the area.

Require Public Water In all Areas Utilizing Public Sewer: Connection to a public water system should be required whenever a development will utilize public sewer, particularly when the sewer system uses stream discharge. Development with individual wells and sewage disposal using stream discharge can deplete the groundwater, since no recharge will be taking place. Public water supplies generally use deep wells that do not affect shallower groundwater levels dramatically.

Permit Only Low-Density Development in Areas Not Served by Water: Development that does not exceed one dwelling unit per two acres maximizes the land area for on-lot sewage disposal and groundwater infiltration. This also applies to low-density cluster development since the preserved open space provides sufficient area for the necessary recharge.

Limit Individual Wells in Large Residential Subdivisions: A community water supply system should be used in larger residential subdivisions, in place of individual wells, to protect water quality and existing users of groundwater. Currently, only wells that withdraw more than 10,000 gallons per day must apply for a permit from the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). Therefore, a 25-lot subdivision with 25 individual wells can avoid regulation although the cumulative impact is equal to 10,000 gallons per day. Such a development would remain outside the regulations and existing nearby groundwater users would have no protection from impacts to their wells and water supply. A community well on the same subdivision would require a permit from the DRBC and provide additional protection to existing users.

Sewage Facilities

Figure 10-4: Act 537 Plan Dates

Municipality	Plan Year
Douglass Township	2009
East Coventry Township	2003
Lower Pottsgrove Township	2010
New Hanover Township	2003
North Coventry Township	2005
Pottstown Borough	2005
Upper Pottsgrove Township	2005
West Pottsgrove Township	1991

The foundation for sewage facilities planning in Pennsylvania is the Sewage Facilities Planning Act (Act 537 of 1966). This law requires every municipality to develop and maintain an up-to-date sewage facilities plan. The purpose of a sewage facilities plan is to correct existing threats to public health and safety, prevent future sewage disposal problems, and protect the surface and groundwater resources of the municipality. These plans are also important tools for implementing the Comprehensive Plan by matching designated growth areas with sewer growth areas, and by adopting policies to maintain the viability of on-lot systems outside the growth areas. Every municipality in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region has adopted an Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan and is responsible for keeping the plan updated (**Figure 10-4**).

Existing Municipal Sewage Facilities

Figure 10-5 shows the existing sewer service areas as well as the municipal wastewater treatment plants in the Pottstown Region. There are five sewer facility companies that currently serve the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, including one for the Borough of Pottstown and Upper, Lower, and West Pottsgrove Townships, two sewer authorities serving Douglass Township, one serving New Hanover, and one serving both East and North Coventry Townships in Chester County.

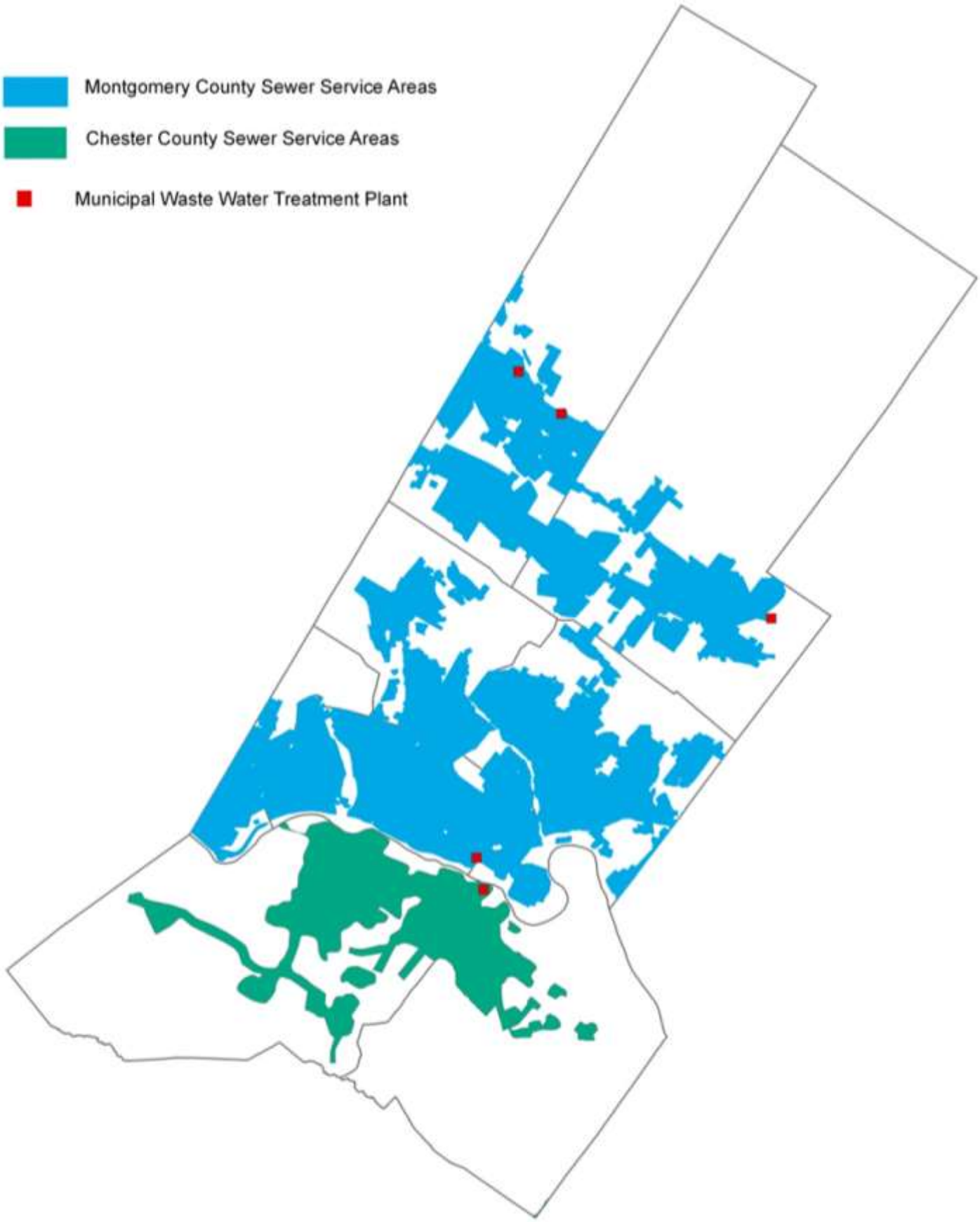
Pottstown Borough, Lower Pottsgrove, Upper Pottsgrove, West Pottsgrove Townships

The Pottstown Sewer Authority maintains a sewer collection system that conveys wastewater to a sewage treatment plant located on Industrial Highway. The collection system includes 70 miles of pipe that also transports wastewater from West Pottsgrove and Upper Pottsgrove townships to the plant. While Lower Pottsgrove Township is also served by the Pottstown sewer treatment plant, the Township transports most of its wastewater with its own system of pipes. The plant currently treats waste generated by 15,000 area homes, commercial businesses, and industrial sites, totaling an average of six million gallons of sewage per day. The plant was upgraded to a 15.6 million gallon a day plant in 1992.

New Hanover Township

The New Hanover Sewer Authority owns and operates a wastewater collection and conveyance system comprised of over 25 miles of sanitary sewer lines and two wastewater pumping stations. A large portion of the land in New Hanover, however, is outside the public sewage service area and utilizes primarily individual on-site sewage disposal systems. As of 2003 when the township last updated its Act 537 Plan, approximately 1,200 households were being served by individual on-site sewage systems, producing an estimated 330,000 gallons each days of wastewater not intended to be treated by the public sewage system.

Figure 10-5 Existing Sewer Service Areas



Douglass Township

Of the two authorities serving Douglass, the Berks-Montgomery Municipal Authority (BMMA) provides the majority of the Township's public sewer services. Additionally, the BMMA provides service to all of Colebrookdale Township, Bechtelsville Borough, a portion of Boyertown Borough, and a small part of Washington Township in Berks County. The West Swamp Creek plant, one of the BMMA's two treatment plants, is located in Douglass Township and treats sewage from Douglass Township and the Boroughs of Bechtelsville and Boyerstown. The West Swamp Creek Plant has an average annual capacity of 2.3 million gallons per day (MGD) and average daily flows of roughly 1.2 MGD. The West Swamp Creek Treatment Plan is currently under a Corrective Action Plan for its conveyance system. Certain improvements, including replacement and upgrading of the plant's interceptor lines are planned.

Both the BMMA West Swamp Creek Treatment Plant and the Borough of Boyertown Treatment Plant discharge the treated water into Swamp Creek.

North Coventry and East Coventry Townships

Public sewer service is provided to North and East Coventry Townships by the North Coventry Municipal Authority Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is located near the intersection of Vaughn Road and Route 724 in North Coventry Township. The Treatment Plant recently upgraded its plant capacity by approximately 500,000 gallons per day or 1,667 equivalent dwelling units to a total annual average capacity of 2.01 million gallons per day. The North Coventry Treatment Plant discharges treated water into the Schuylkill River.

Sewer Service Growth

As noted in the 2012 Community Assessment Report, the availability of public sewer is currently not a limiting factor to economic development in the Region. The Region is projected to have adequate capacities in its sewer systems for the foreseeable future. The Montgomery County municipalities in the Region have a combined capacity surplus of 11 million gallons per day and are expected to have a surplus of over nine million gallons per day in 2025. The Chester County portion of the Region is projected to also have adequate capacities through 2025.

On-Lot Disposal Systems in the Region

Large portions of Douglass, New Hanover, Upper Pottsgrove, North Coventry and East Coventry Townships rely on on-lot disposal systems. On-lot systems are sewage systems on the property of the homeowner that treat and dispose of domestic waste through natural processes. Typically, these systems are installed in rural and semi-rural areas because of the isolation of the property they serve or because of the lack of available public sewerage.

The Pottstown Metropolitan Region land use plan advocates that public sewer and water be directed towards areas of existing developed land and growth areas, rather than undeveloped rural areas. The extension of public water and sewer service to rural areas is not only costly, these utilities, when provided, encourage development of the Region's Conservation Areas. While public sewer and water are

generally not encouraged in Conservation Areas, there are a few locations in rural areas for which provision of these services would be more appropriate, including existing rural villages, locations requiring service to protect public health, and conservation subdivisions located within ¼ mile of an identified regional growth area.

There are many ways of dealing with sewage disposal on a local level and the Montgomery County Planning Commission has identified a hierarchy of sewage facilities choices for rural resource areas, identified in **Figure 10-6**. This hierarchy applies specifically to standard lot residential or nonresidential development; preferred alternatives for cluster development and malfunctioning on-lot sewers may differ.

Figure 10-6: Hierarchy for On-Lot Sewage Disposal Systems

1. On-lot systems with subsurface disposal (the on-lot system could include one or more septic or aerobic tanks and a sand filter). Subsurface disposal methods include sand mounds, drip, and trench systems
2. Individual Residential Spray Irrigation Systems (IRSIS)
3. Community lagoon system with spray discharge
4. Community lagoon system with subsurface discharge (for small developments)
5. Community sand mound (with either individual or community septic tank(s)
6. Mechanical treatment system with spray discharge
7. Mechanical treatment system with subsurface discharge (for small developments)
8. Community lagoon system with stream discharge
9. Mechanical treatment with stream discharge
10. Individual low flow treatment with stream discharge

Some portions of the Region are experiencing problems with on-lot sewage systems (**Figure 10-7**). For those areas located within sewer growth areas, public sewer could be extended to those lots to alleviate the problem. However, whenever the case involves on-lot system failures in the Conservation Areas, a public sewer solution should be carefully measured against this Plan's call for limited growth and the preservation of open space in these areas. In the Conservation Areas, a public sewer solution to failing on-lot systems should be considered only as a last resort, and if used, the sewage facility infrastructure should be appropriately sized so as to not incentivize additional development.

Sewage Facilities Plan

Focus Sewer System Improvements In Growth Areas: Public sewer should be limited to the Regional Core, Primary Growth Areas, Secondary Growth Areas, and Highway Commercial Overlay land use designations as shown on the Regional Future Land Use Plan. Limiting expansion to these areas whenever possible will help foster revitalization and limit sprawl. Sewer facility extensions should be discouraged in the Conservation Areas and should only be allowed in special circumstances such as to serve existing villages or when public water has already been extended to the area.

Figure 10-7: Areas Experiencing On-Lot Sewage Problems

Problem Area	Municipality	Description	Status/Recommendation
Parkerford	East Coventry	Failing systems identified on many of the homes surveyed for the 2003 Act 537 Plan Update.	
Ringing Rocks (Kiem Street and PA 663 to the Park)	Lower Pottsgrove	Residential area identified by sewage enforcement officers based on complains and/or inspections	
Press Hill Road (from the intersection with Pleasant View)	Lower Pottsgrove	Residential area containing bad soils and small lots identified by the Lower Pottsgrove Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) as a major problem area.	
S. Park Road	Lower Pottsgrove	Residential area consisting of small lots, identified by the Lower Pottsgrove SEO as a problem area.	
Bleim Road	Lower Pottsgrove	Identified by the Lower Pottsgrove SEO as a problem area.	
Wagner Road/ Faust Road	New Hanover	Identified in 2003 municipal Act 537 Plan Update	Located within proposed growth area according to 2003 Act 537 Plan Update
Sanatoga Road	New Hanover	Identified in 2003 municipal Act 537 Plan Update	
Middle Creek Road	New Hanover	Properties along Middle Creek Road, between Big Road and Ludwig Road, identified in 2003 municipal Act 537 Plan Update	
Miles Road	New Hanover	Identified in 2003 municipal Act 537 Plan Update	Some, but not all properties lie within municipal proposed sewer growth area.
Layfield	New Hanover	Identified in 2003 municipal Act 537 Plan Update	Approximately half the parcels (south side of Big Road) are within a proposed sewer growth area.
Church Road	New Hanover	Church Road properties between Big Road and Hoffmansville Road identified in 2003 municipal Act 537 Plan Update	
New Hanover Square	New Hanover	Village area identified in both the 1972 County Act 537 Plan Update and the 2003 municipal Act 537 Plan Update	

Update Act 537 Sewage Facility Plans: Each municipality should review and revise its Act 537 Plan, as necessary, to help implement the recommendations of this Chapter and the Future Land Use Plan. The updated Act 537 Plan policies will clearly show the proposed methods of sewage disposal for each section of the municipality to land and business owners. In addition, each Act 537 Plan must be approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and will be reviewed for consistency when any sewage facility permit or planning module is submitted.

Establish Priorities and an Alternative Analysis for All Proposed Sewage Systems: Municipalities in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, particularly those containing rural areas will need to permit a variety of new and replacement sewage facility alternatives for existing and proposed development outside of the sewer service areas. Therefore, any revisions to an Act 537 Plan should include an establishment of a hierarchy for the types of sewage disposal systems from most acceptable to least acceptable. The hierarchy should give precedence to sewage facility alternatives that utilize land application of the effluent to recharge the Region's groundwater. These types of systems include standard in-ground and sand mount systems, as well as spray irrigation and new land application systems. Precedence should also be given to systems that require lower operation and maintenance costs and hierarchy should include priorities for both individual and community sewage systems, where applicable.

Establish a Program for Long-Term Management and Maintenance of Existing and Future On-Lot Disposal Systems: Douglass Township, New Hanover Township, and East and North Coventry Townships will continue to rely heavily upon individual on-lot disposal systems. To ensure the continued operation of these systems, any Act 537 Plan revision should investigate the establishment of an On-Lot Disposal Systems Management program (OLDS). These programs should include public education, required pumping of septic tanks, and registration and inspection of systems. In addition to protecting public health and safety, proper maintenance of on-lot systems with other treatment methods that may not provide essential groundwater recharge. Also, municipalities should establish sewage disposal priorities and prepare a comprehensive analysis of sewage facility alternatives. DEP offers reimbursement for up to 85% of all municipal costs associated with implementing an OLDS management program.

Conduct On-Going Monitoring of Known Problem Areas to Protect Public Health: Past sewage facilities plans have indicated the existence of potential on-lot problem areas, listed in Figure 10-7. Municipalities should coordinate with the Montgomery County Health Department to periodically monitor these areas to identify the existence of any malfunctioning systems. Identified malfunctions should be tracked to make certain they are properly repaired or replaced. Monitoring can also help ensure that any cluster of system failures can be quickly recognized. Should monitoring indicate a cluster of system failures, an Act 537 Plan revision can be initiated to determine appropriate alternatives to address the problem. However, it will be important for any Act 537 Plan update to differentiate between the importance of providing sewage facilities for the purpose of correcting on-lot problem areas and protecting human health and safety, and providing sewage facilities as a method to guide the location of new development and prevent future disposal problems. Any localized situation that involves the construction of a community disposal system to address an on-lot problem area will not require the creation of new sewer growth areas.

Solid Waste Services

"Solid waste" includes daily discards from residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional establishments. Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) refers only to discards from commercial and residential establishments. Act 101 of 1988, the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act, addresses recycling, planning, permitting, and operation of facilities for municipal waste. Counties, instead of townships and boroughs, are given the responsibility of municipal waste planning and disposal. There are seven existing municipal waste facilities located in the county as well as numerous out of county facilities that waste haulers can use to process municipal solid waste from the county.

Act 101 also requires populations of at least 10,000 and those with populations between 5,000 and 10,000 and more than 300 persons per square mile develop curbside recycling programs. Many municipalities in the county that do not meet these thresholds have developed voluntary recycling programs. East Coventry Township was the most recent municipality in the Region to adopt a recycling program, and not every municipality in the Region provides curbside recycling pick-up for its residents. As of the 2010 census, West Pottsgrove was the only municipality in the region that was not mandated to do so under Act 101.

While the 276-acre Pottstown landfill closed in 2005 after more than 70 years of operation, the Pottstown Region still contains two recycling centers located in Douglass and North Coventry Townships.

Beginning in 2013, the Pennsylvania Covered Device Recycling Act went into effect, banning the disposal of a variety of electronic devices. The law makes it illegal for devices such as desktop computers, laptop computers, computer monitors, tablets, and televisions with viewable screens larger than four inches to be disposed of in state landfills. Residents and businesses in the Pottstown Metropolitan Region will now be required to recycle their electronic-waste at municipal recycling centers or other collection events.

Solid Waste Services Plan

Increase recycling rates and decrease solid waste generation rates in the Region

Across the county, per capita rates of municipal solid waste generation have continued to increase while recycling rates have decreased. While the county's overall recycling rate in 2011 was 38.5%, there is still more that can be done, through increased education and other efforts, to reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the Region and increase rate of recycling.

Increase E-Recycling (Electronic-Recycling) in the Region

Currently, the only permanent electronic recycling provider in the Region is located at the Douglass Township Recycling Center; however, use of this Center is restricted to Pottstown residents only. Both Montgomery and Chester Counties have permanent collection sites for all County residents, but these are outside of the Region's eight municipalities. While collection events may occur in the

Region, the establishment of additional permanent collection sites to serve all of the residents of the Pottstown Region should be considered in order to increase e-recycling rates in the Region and encourage compliance with Pennsylvania's new law. Alternatively, the Region should consider entering into a sharing agreement to allow residents of all 8 municipalities access to recycling centers located in the Region.

Government Facilities

Government facilities serve a wide range of functions, including borough or township hall, maintenance facilities, U.S. Post Offices, and welfare and social security offices among others. The Region is generally well served by government facilities, however, some municipal buildings would benefit from modernization and expansion.

The government facilities in the Region vary by municipality. Pottstown Borough, for example, has a higher concentration of such facilities, many of which provide vital services to residents across the Region. While the Borough's central location makes it convenient for the users of these services to access them, their exemption from municipal and school taxes can create a tax burden on the tax paying segment of the Borough.

Government Facilities Plan

Locate and Design Government Facilities to Strengthen Community Identity

Future government facilities in the Pottstown Region should preferably be located in the Regional Core, Primary Growth Areas, and Secondary Growth Areas. The location of government facilities in the Region's development centers can strengthen community identify, particularly when the facilities draw a relatively large amount of visits by the public. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings should be encouraged for government facilities, particularly buildings having notable historic or architectural qualities. New buildings should be designed to be complimentary to the community.

Additionally, new municipal buildings and other facilities should, where possible, provide a combination of government offices, meeting space, emergency services, libraries, and other public services. This is referred to as co-location and consolidates government services for the benefit of the public and improves costs and efficiency for the municipality .

Regional Sharing of Government Facilities

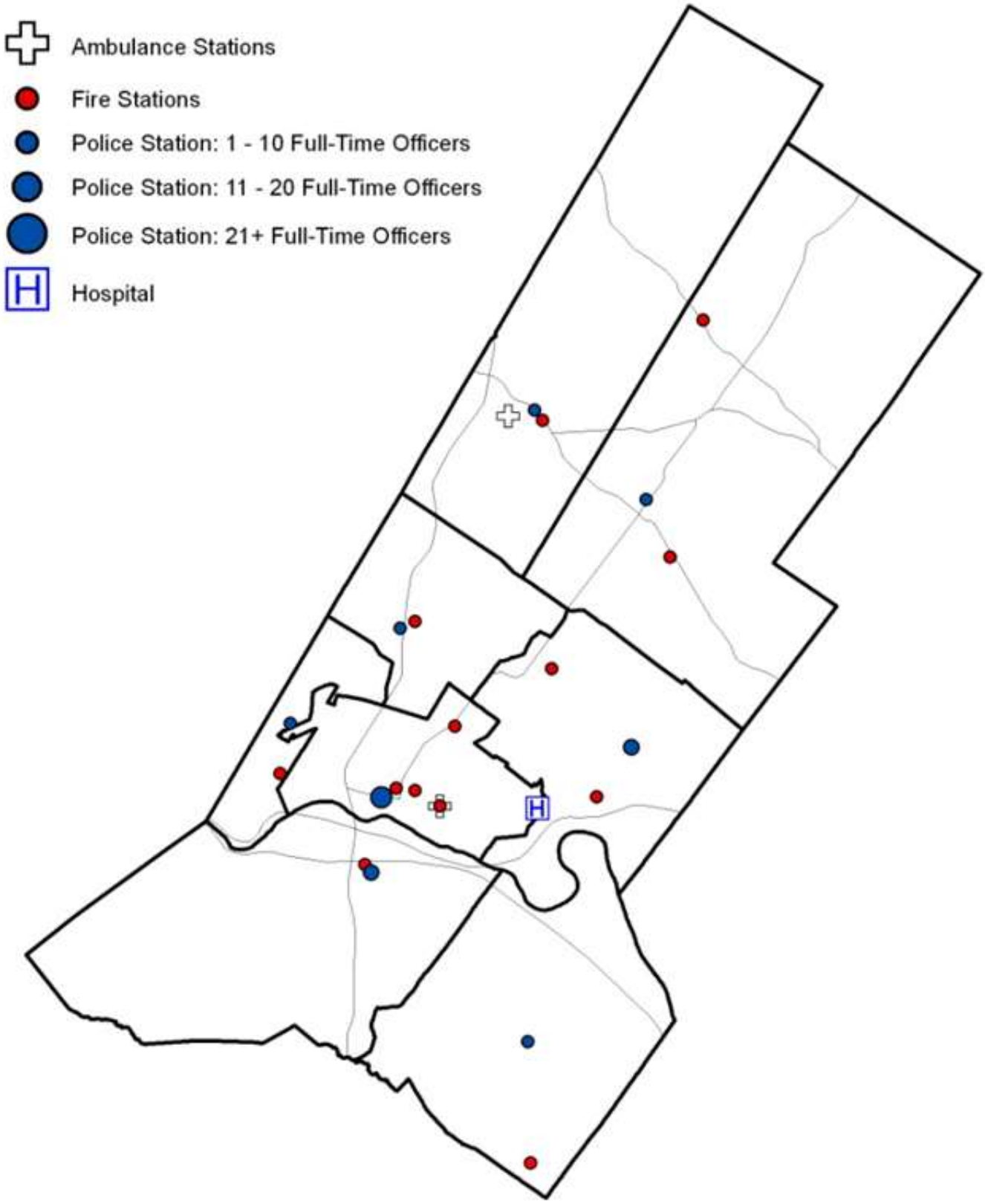
Sharing of government facilities and technology on a regional level should also be discussed. By sharing facilities or technology, municipalities can incur cost savings or provide additional services to residents in their service area. For example, one township's police force may not have a budget large enough to provide high-tech crime-fighting equipment; however, it may be feasible for the Region's municipalities to cooperate and purchase high-tech anti-crime equipment to share.

Emergency Services

The Region is well served by emergency services, including fire, police, and emergency room services. Due to the localized nature of municipal government services in Pennsylvania, municipalities have realized mutual benefit from emergency services resource sharing. For example, municipalities in and outside the Region founded the Ches-Mont Emergency Response Team (CMERT). This team specializes in special weapons and tactics, and was developed to handle high-risk situations that normal patrol officers are not equipped to handle. CMERT consists of specially trained police and emergency response personnel from Pottstown, Collegeville, Upper Providence; the Lower, West, and Upper Pottsgroves; Douglass, New Hanover, Limerick, North Coventry and Colebrookdale townships. The team of more than 20 individuals is commanded by the Lower Pottsgrove Police Chief.

Figure 10-8 displays the location of emergency services in the Region. Each municipality has its own individual police force, while several municipalities have more than one fire company. Currently, Pottstown has four different fire companies. While a possible merger has been discussed in the past, and two of the Borough's fire companies have moved into the same building in part to help reduce costs, no decisions regarding the merger of Pottstown's fire companies have been made.

Figure 10-8 Emergency Services



Emergency Services Plan

Increase Sharing of Services, Technology, and Equipment in the Region

Sharing of special emergency services equipment or technology should be investigated by the Pottstown Region's municipalities. Increased coordination can allow municipalities to have improved access to cutting edge equipment or technology they might not otherwise be able to afford, reduce costs, and avoid duplication of equipment and services.

Utilize Technology to Improve Emergency Services

Emergency services information, such as the location of facilities, staffing, equipment, contact information, and hazardous materials should be maintained in electronic format and accessible via a geographic information system (GIS). Additionally, the Region may wish to investigate the installation of traffic signal preemption devices so emergency vehicles may pass through intersections faster and more safely. Pottstown Borough is in the process of installing a 48-Signal Closed Loop System. The project will integrate the signal system into the PennDOT Traffic Operations Center located in King of Prussia and will allow for remote operation to control congestion or events, including emergencies. The rest of the Region may wish to consider upgrading its traffic signals along major roadways to help facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles.

Update Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The Region may wish to review its evacuation alert procedure in the event of an actual emergency. This is particularly true for the 10-mile radius Emergency Planning Zone of the Limerick Nuclear Power Station, which includes virtually the entire Pottstown Metropolitan Region. '

Educational Institutions

The Pottstown Region is served by four public school districts. The Boyertown School District serves Douglass and New Hanover Townships, Owen J. Roberts serves East Coventry and North Coventry Townships. Pottsgrove School District serves the townships of West Pottsgrove, Lower Pottsgrove, and Upper Pottsgrove, and the Pottstown School District serves the Borough of Pottstown. There are currently 21 public schools located in the Pottstown Region (**Figure 10-9**). This number does not include all of the school buildings for the four districts serving the Region, as some school facilities are located outside of the Region's boundaries. For example, teenaged students living in Douglass and New Hanover Townships attend school in Boyertown Borough where the Boyertown District High School is located.

Figure 10-9 Public Schools in the Pottstown Region (2012-2013 School Year)

LEVEL	SCHOOL DISTRICT	SCHOOL NAME
Elementary Schools	Pottsgrove	Lower Pottsgrove
		Ringing Rocks
		West Pottsgrove
	Pottstown	Barth
		Edgewood
		Franklin
		Lincoln
		Rupert
	Boyertown	Gilbertsville
		New Hanover-Upper Frederick
	Owen J. Roberts	East Coventry
		French Creek
		North Coventry
		West Vincent
Middle and Junior High Schools	Pottsgrove	Pottsgrove Middle School
	Pottstown	Pottstown Middle School
	Boyertown	Boyertown Area Junior High East
	Owen J. Roberts	Owen J. Roberts Middle School
High Schools	Pottsgrove	Pottsgrove Senior High
	Pottstown	Pottstown Senior
	Owen J. Roberts	Owen J. Roberts High School

Figure 10-10: Private Schools Located in the Pottstown Region (2012-2013 School Year)

SCHOOL	MUNICIPALITY
Buxmont Academy	Pottstown
Coventry Christian School	Lower Pottsgrove
Hill School	Pottstown
St. Aloysius School	Pottstown
Stowe Lighthouse Christian Academy	West Pottsgrove
Westmont Christian Academy	North Coventry
Wyndcroft School	Pottstown

In 2013, due to increasing costs and decreasing available school funding, the Pottstown School District voted to close Edgewood Elementary School after the 2013-14 school year. As part of the closure, the attendance areas will be re-districted, the four remaining elementary schools in the District will undergo renovations, and all of the District's fifth graders will be moved into the Pottstown middle school. While Edgewood Elementary is the Borough's newest school building, other factors, such as location and walkability for students were considered in determining which elementary school would be closed.

There are additionally eight private schools in the Region, five of which are located in the Borough of Pottstown (see **Figure 10-11**). These schools offer an alternative to public education for many residents. The Hill School in Pottstown is one of the most prestigious private schools in the nation. Through its sharing of athletic and performing arts facilities, staff and faculty involvement in the Borough's civic organizations, and ongoing community service projects, the Hill School is also an important member of the greater community. St. Pius X High School, a private Roman Catholic school formerly located in Lower Pottsgrove Township was closed in 2010 and replaced by a new Catholic High School in Upper Providence Township. From 2010-2012, the former St. Pius X school building was used to house students from Ringing Rocks Elementary School while their building underwent renovations. As of 2013 the building remains unoccupied, providing a significant opportunity for redevelopment in the Township.

Vocational technical programs in the Region are offered at Pottstown Senior High School. Students in other school districts take vocational technical courses at the Western Montgomery Career and Technical Center, in Northern Chester County, or Berks County Career and Technology Centers.

The Montgomery County Community College's West Campus in Pottstown is the only college in the Region. The West Campus opened in 1996 and in 2012 served roughly 5,000 full-credit students and 800 non-credit students. The West Campus consists of two locations: South Hall located at 101 College Drive and North Hall located at 16 High Street. North Hall, formerly the Vaughan Knitting Mill, Pottstown Brewery, and Kiwi Shoe Polish Factory, has been renovated to include state-of-the art classrooms, faculty offices, art gallery and an art studio. The South and North Halls are connected by a pedestrian underpass.

Education Plan

Utilize Existing Buildings for School Expansions

When schools or colleges in the Pottstown Region expand, they should reuse existing buildings where possible, particularly if the buildings have historic qualities. When new construction, rehabilitations, or building modifications are undertaken, the project should be sensitive to the area's existing character.

Locate New Schools in the Region's Development Centers

Schools should be located in or adjacent to the Region's development centers to promote walkability and community identify. At a minimum these should be located in growth areas.

Continue to grow a relationship with MCCC

One of the Region's goals is to have the Montgomery County Community College West Campus play a larger role in education and job training. The College has expressed a desire to shape its curriculum to match the job training needs of the Region's employers, thus facilitating economic development.

The Community College is a major component in the revitalization of downtown Pottstown. The Region would support the Community College's expansion into a more central part of downtown in the future.