

# ***South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan: A Balanced Path Forward***



Adopted: July 1, 2009

Prepared by:



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OXFORD DRIVE AT FISH HATCHERY ROAD  
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA



# **South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan**

South Whitehall Township  
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

July 1, 2009

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## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction and Background

South Whitehall Township has a diverse landscape that ranges from small villages nestled among the rolling hills and historic covered bridges of the Jordan Creek to roller coasters, shopping centers, and early suburban neighborhoods that sprung out of the City of Allentown to the south. However, change is visible. While agriculture continues to dominate the lands north of the Huckleberry Ridge, it is slowly migrating out of the Township, replaced by suburban style development. To the south of the Ridge, the Township is largely built out and ripe for redevelopment. In looking ahead, the Township expects to continue to be shaped by the growth of the Lehigh Valley, and is taking a proactive stance to plan for the efficient and attractive use of land and infrastructure, while protecting its greatest assets.

Development in South Whitehall Township is guided and regulated by a set of documents – the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), among others - dating from the 1960s and 1970s. As the Township continues to grow, contemporary planning practices are essential to achieving manageable and sustainable growth. Updating the Comprehensive Plan is the first step in this process.

This Comprehensive Plan marks the Township’s efforts to chart a path towards “growing gracefully” and providing a framework for sensible development patterns that balance economic, environmental, and social vitality and build on the historic precedents of small, close knit settlements. The Comprehensive Plan is an important tool in that it presents the Township’s vision for its future and the goals, objectives and strategies for achieving that end. The Township’s current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1969 and reviewed in the mid 1980’s. Though the Township’s growth rate has slowed since 1960, growth and other dynamics of the twenty-first century will have far reaching impacts on the infrastructure, environment and character of the Township that planning can guide in a positive direction.

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy and planning tool enabled by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). As a policy document (as compared to a regulatory document), the Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide future land use decisions. The policies and recommendations asserted in the Comprehensive Plan are intended to be implemented through regulatory documents, such as the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), and other non-regulatory means. The Comprehensive Plan provides legal foundation for the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO in that it provides the rationale for these provisions, any amendments and other planning initiatives.

During the Comprehensive Plan process, the project team “re-visited” the MPC to focus on key words and elements to which this Plan is intended to respond, including its relationship to Zoning. The key elements that serve as the underpinnings of this Plan include:

- A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including, but not limited to the location, character and timing of future development, that may also serve as a statement of community development objectives as provided in Article VI, Zoning. (301.(a)(1))
- The Comprehensive Plan may identify those areas where growth and development will occur so that a full range of public infrastructure services, including sewer, water, highways, police and fire protection, public schools, parks, open space and other services can be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate growth. (301.(d))
- Zoning Ordinances may permit, prohibit, regulate, restrict and determine protection and preservation of natural and historic resources and prime agricultural land and activities. (603.(b))
- Zoning ordinances adopted by municipalities shall be generally consistent with the municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan, or where none exists, with the municipal statement of community development objectives and the County comprehensive plan. (603.(j))
- Zoning ordinances shall provide for protection of natural and historic features and resources. (603.(g)(2))
- Additional classifications may be made within any district for:
  - The purpose of making transitional provisions at and near the boundaries of districts; (605.(1))
  - The regulation, restriction or prohibition of uses and structures at, along or near: natural or artificial bodies of water, boat docks and related facilities; places of relatively steep slope or grade or other hazardous geological or topographic features; places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value; or floodplain areas, agricultural areas, and other places having a special character or use affecting and affected by their surroundings; (605.(2))
  - The purpose of encouraging innovation and the promotion of flexibility, economy and ingenuity in development, including subdivisions and land developments as defined (in Act 247) (605.(3))

While many of the citations above pertain to zoning, this Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide the rationale for any Zoning Ordinance Amendments that flow from it.

### **The Planning Process**

The Township created a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee in the summer of 2007 to oversee the planning process through adoption. This nine person Steering Committee was composed of representatives from the Board of Commissioners, Board of Authority, Planning Commission, Landscape and Shade Tree Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, Parks and Recreation Board, and the community at large.

To facilitate the planning process, monthly work sessions were conducted with the Committee, Township staff and facilitated by Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc. Township staff provided vital background data and coordination. Upon completion of a final draft, and in compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code [53 P.S. § 10302], the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update was submitted for review to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Parkland School District, the surrounding municipalities and the public. The South Whitehall Township Planning Commission hosted Public Meetings on February 11, 2009, March 16, 2009, and April 21, 2009. Board of Commissioners Public Hearings were held on June 4, 2009 and July 1, 2009. Public Notices for these meetings were advertised in the Morning Call or East Penn Press, and were posted at the South Whitehall Township Building located at 4444 Walbert Avenue, as well as on its website: [www.southwhitehall.com](http://www.southwhitehall.com).

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted on July 1, 2009. Pursuant to 53 P.S. § 306(b), a certified copy of the Comprehensive Plan was sent to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

### **Organization of the Plan**

The following 12 components make up this Comprehensive Plan, as mandated by the MPC:

- Demographic Profile
- Statement of Community Development Goals and Objectives
- Land Use Plan
- Resource Protection Plan, including Natural, Historic & Agricultural Resources
- Housing Plan
- Transportation Plan
- Utilities Plan
- Community Facilities Plan
- Park, Recreation, & Open Space Plan
- Statement of the Relationship between Comprehensive Plan Elements
- Statement of the Plan's Compatibility with Adjoining Municipalities and the County Comprehensive Plan: Interregional Relationships
- Implementation Strategies

Whereas the Demographic Profile offers insight into who lives and works in the Township, how it has grown over time, and what trends will influence it for the foreseeable future, the Community Goals and Objectives specify the qualities and values the residents have for the future of their community. With these principles in mind, the remaining chapters evaluate how functional areas, such as transportation, housing and utilities, contribute to the overall vision and development pattern of the Township. Each of these chapters evaluates existing

conditions and issues in order to recommend strategies for achieving the community's goals and objectives.

**The Plan for Land Use** is the first of these chapters for the simple reason that the Future Land Use Plan typically serves as the central organizing vision for the Plan. Each of the functional areas that follow the Land Use Chapter are essential parts of the Future Land Use Plan, interacting, influencing, and supporting it as the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan are brought to fruition. Transportation and Utility Planning are vital to supporting the growth envisioned and require close coordination over time. Protected resources are found throughout the Township and are intended to serve as an overlay to the Future Land Use Plan. The purpose of the Housing chapter is to ensure that an adequate amount of land is zoned for housing appropriate to the needs of projected residents. The Community Facilities, and Parks and Recreation Chapters ensure that the land and/or services needed for the future population are acknowledged and coordinated as part of the planning process. To summarize, Chapter 10 discusses how each of these chapters and functional components are expected to contribute and interact with the other components to create the desired framework for the future.

While land use controls in Pennsylvania lie firmly with the individual municipality, it is well understood that planning cannot be done "in a bubble". Issues do not create or resolve themselves at municipal borders and a neighbor's plans can have a tremendous impact. Transportation and Natural Resources in particular, require a multi-jurisdictional approach. Chapter 11 examines the relationship of South Whitehall Township's planning efforts with those of the surrounding municipalities, Lehigh County, and the Lehigh Valley.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Chapter 13 focuses on the implementation strategies for achieving the lofty goals laid out as part of the first 12 chapters. Strategies address Land Use regulations: Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance and SALDO amendments, as well as Capital improvements and organizational elements. Strategies are then prioritized in terms of short, medium or long-term goals with responsible parties.



## South Whitehall Township: A Demographic Profile

South Whitehall Township is an integral part of the Lehigh Valley's Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton metropolitan area, the third largest metropolitan area in Pennsylvania. This first class Township is located in south central Lehigh County, immediately west of Allentown, approximately 55 miles northeast of Philadelphia and 90 miles west of New York City. The Township is well served by several major roadways, most notably State Route 22, State Route 309, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and Interstate 78, which all run through the Township connecting it to the larger region and the northeast corridor. Just outside its boundaries, South Whitehall's neighboring jurisdictions include Upper Macungie and Lower Macungie Townships on its western border, Salisbury Township and the City of Allentown to the south, Whitehall Township to the east, and North Whitehall Township on the north.

Historically, South Whitehall is comprised of several small villages and neighborhoods that stand in testament to its development over time. Having risen long before current zoning and planning practices, these areas provide a unique texture to the Township's landscape and a potential framework for future development. Guthsville, Guth's Station, and Mechanicsville formed in the early 1800s in the Township's rural history at a time when the economy was based on mining, milling, and access to trolleys, rail and road. When Lehigh County was split from Northampton in 1812, Guthsville was a strong candidate for County seat, though the final decision bestowed the title on Allentown. At the turn of the century, suburban migration led to the formation of new communities on the outskirts of the County seat. Cetronia and Greenawalds are good examples of such neighborhoods, where a strong sense of community pride was common.

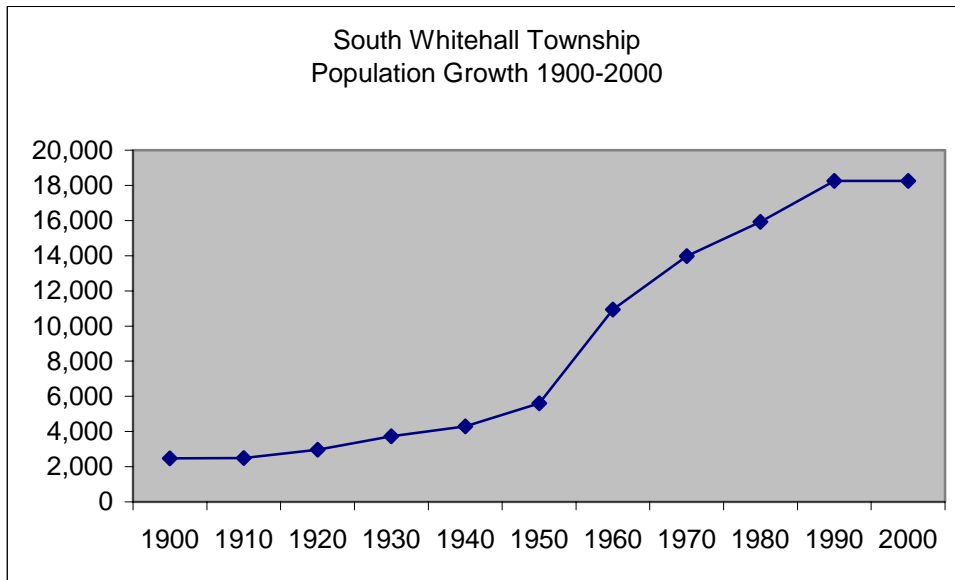
A review of the demographics of South Whitehall Township provides insight into existing conditions in terms of population, socioeconomics and industries of the Township, but also highlights overarching trends that have affected the Township. This analysis forms a major component of how and what to plan for in the future. Statistics for the region, County and Commonwealth are presented where available and to serve as a benchmark for comparative purposes.

Tables summarizing some of the available Census data for South Whitehall Township are provided on the following pages. The following summary of findings is organized into population and household growth, socioeconomic characteristics, economic industries, and land use trends. Housing trends are described in Chapter 6.

### Population and Household Trends:

- Analysis of population trends since 1900 shows that the Township has consistently grown faster than the Lehigh Valley and the State for nearly 100 years. The two exceptions to this fall at either end of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1910, the Township was still a rural hinterland on the outskirts of City of Allentown, while between 1990 and 2000, population in the Township stabilized, actually decreasing slightly as Lehigh County continued to gain an additional 7% population. **(Figure 2-1; Table 2-5)**

**Figure 2-1 Population Growth in the Twentieth Century**

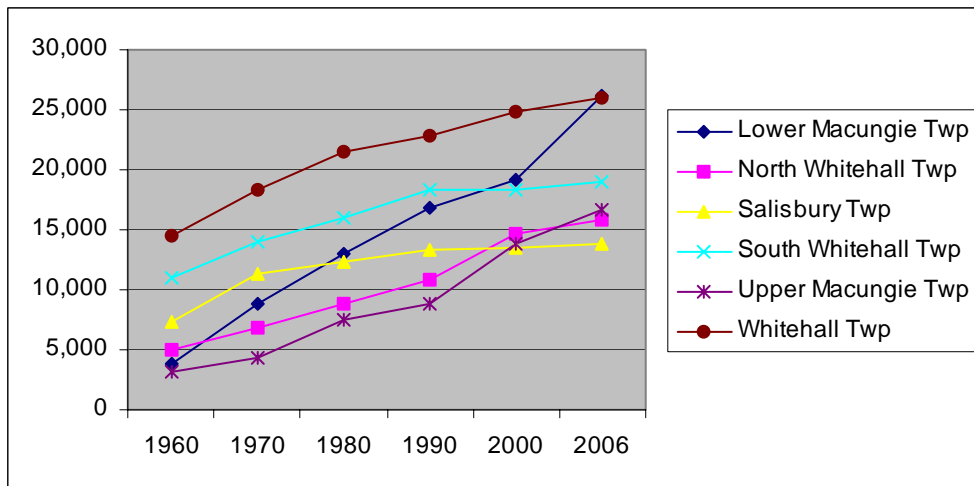


*Source: Draft Comprehensive Plan South Whitehall Township, July 1987*

- Between 1990 and 2000, South Whitehall's immediate neighbors, including the City of Allentown, had positive growth rates. Upper Macungie with a growth rate of 36% and North Whitehall with a growth rate of 58.6% were the two fastest growing townships. **(Figure 2-2; Table 2-5)**
- The most recent population estimates show the Township with a population of 18,937 persons in 2005, an increase of 3.70% since 2000 **(Table 2-5)**. This is in line with the growth rate for the County as a whole, but slower than the surrounding townships.
- Despite losing population between 1990 and 2000, the Township continued to gain households. The total number of households in the Township in 1990 was 6,521 and 6,943 in the 2000 Census, an increase of 6.5%. In 2000, the Township comprised 5.7% of the 121,906 households found in Lehigh County. **(Table 2-3)**

- The average household size in the Township in 2000 was 2.45 persons. This is slightly smaller than the 2.48 persons per household found in the County as a whole and the Township average of 2.63 persons per household in 1990. **(Table 2-4)**
- LVPC population projections estimate that South Whitehall will continue to grow at a rate of 24% over twenty five years for a population of 23,573. This is faster than between 1990 and 2000, but slower than the previous four decades. This equates to an annualized growth of less than one percent, but faster than the overall expected growth of the County. **(Table 2-6)**

**Figure 2-2: Population Growth in Select Lehigh County Townships, 1960-2006**



Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 2-3 Household Growth, 1990-2000**

	1990	2000	% Growth
South Whitehall	6,521	6,943	6.47%
Lehigh County	112,887	121,906	7.98%
Pennsylvania	4,495,966	4,777,003	6.25%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 2-4: Household Size, 1990-2000**

	1990	2000
South Whitehall	2.63	2.45
Lehigh County	2.51	2.48
Pennsylvania	2.57	2.48

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 2-5: Growth Rates in South Whitehall and Surrounding Townships, 1960-2000**

	1960	1970	Growth Rate 1960-70	1980	Growth Rate 1970-80	1990	Growth Rate 1980-90	2000	Growth Rate 1990-2000	2005-06	Growth Rate 2000-06
City of Allentown	108,347	109,871	1.41%	103,758	-5.56%	105,301	1.49%	106,632	1.26%	106,992	0.34%
Lower Macungie Twp	3,859	8,814	128.40%	12,958	47.02%	16,871	30.20%	19,220	13.92%	26,199	36.31%
North Whitehall Twp	5,061	6,819	34.74%	8,820	29.34%	10,827	22.76%	14,731	36.06%	15,897	7.92%
Salisbury Twp	7,294	11,285	54.72%	12,259	8.63%	13,401	9.32%	13,498	0.72%	13,828	2.44%
South Whitehall Twp	10,932	13,971	27.80%	15,919	13.94%	18,261	14.71%	18,028	0.00%	18,937	3.70%
Upper Macungie Twp	3,105	4,390	41.38%	7,446	69.61%	8,757	17.61%	13,895	58.67%	16,598	19.45%
Whitehall Twp	14,528	18,323	26.12%	21,538	17.55%	22,779	5.76%	24,896	9.29%	25,954	4.25%
Lehigh County	227,536	255,304	12.20%	272,349	6.68%	291,130	6.90%	312,090	7.20%	335,544	7.52%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 Population Estimates, Census 2000, 1990 Census, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

**Table 2-6 Population Forecast, 2005-2030**

	2005 Census Est.	2010 Forecast	2015 Forecast	2020 Forecast	2025 Forecast	2030 Forecast	2005-2030 Forecast Change
South Whitehall Township	18,937	19,817	20,658	21,619	22,564	23,573	4,636 24%
Lehigh County	330,433	342,932	356,139	370,644	385,496	399,721	69,288 21%

Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, April 2007



### **Socioeconomic Characteristics of Existing Population:**

- *Age:* The median age of South Whitehall's residents is 46 years old. Nearly 25 percent of the population is 65 years or older, and 21 percent is younger than 18 years. A greater proportion of the population of South Whitehall is older than those in the Lehigh Valley, which has a median age of 38 and only 16% of its population aged 65 or more.
- *Education:* South Whitehall residents have a relatively high level of education, with more than 82% of residents having attained at least a high school degree and 32% having graduated with a bachelors or masters degree. This is slightly higher than the Lehigh Valley graduation rate of 80% for high school and 22% for bachelors' or postgraduate degrees.
- *Income:* With a median household income of almost \$54,800 and only 3.9% of its population subsisting below poverty, South Whitehall Township is a solid middle class township. More than nine percent (9%) of those in living in Lehigh County and eight percent (8%) in the Lehigh Valley were considered below poverty in 2000. The County's median household income of \$43,500 is also lower than that of the Township.
- *Commute to Work:* Nearly 80% of residents work outside of the Township, commuting to nearby job markets in Allentown, Philadelphia and New York/New Jersey. The average commute time was 20 minutes. Ninety four percent (94.4%) of residents drive to work, with 6.3% of these carpooling.
- *Vehicles:* 92.9% of households have at least one vehicle available; 20% have at least three or more.
- *Source:* All data is derived from the U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

### **Economy (Table 2-7):**

The U.S. Census conducts an Economic Census every five years. The 2007 data has been collected and compiled, but is not scheduled to be released until after completion of the Comprehensive Plan. Highlights of the 1997 and 2002 Census for South Whitehall Township are as follows:

- The greatest number of jobs in South Whitehall Township are located in the Retail Services Industry. It remains the highest portion despite a nearly 20% decrease in jobs between 1997 and 2002.
- Healthcare and Social Assistance industry and Accommodation and Food Service have the second and third highest number of jobs in the Township. Healthcare and Social Assistance is a growing industry with nearly 35% increase in employees between 1997 and 2002. Accommodation and Food Services saw a slight decline during the same time period.

- The Professional Scientific, and Technical industry has remained steady in terms of number of employers, but has increased employment by 40%.
- At the other end of the scale, jobs in Information; Education; Arts & Entertainment make us the smallest proportion of jobs in the Township.
- Industries that are growing in the Township include Information; Real Estate & Rental and Leasing; Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; and Health care and Social Services.

**Table 2-7: Industry in South Whitehall Township, 1997-2002**

Industry	1997		2002		% Change in Establishments	% Change in Employees
	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees		
Manufacturing	22	822	13	597	-40.91%	-27.37%
Wholesale trade	40	595	25	494	-37.50%	-16.97%
Retail trade	115	1641	90	1,324	-21.74%	-19.32%
Information	N/A	N/A	8	20-99		
Real estate & rental & leasing	27	165	31	244	14.81%	47.88%
Professional, scientific, & technical services	79	779	79	1,091	0.00%	40.05%
Administrative & support & waste management & remediation service	30	1823	41	1,151	36.67%	-36.86%
Educational services	9	100	7	73	-22.22%	-27.00%
Health care & social assistance	82	911	89	1,217	8.54%	33.59%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	9	#	8	#	-11.11%	
Accommodation & food services	72	1288	55	1,175	-23.61%	-8.77%
Other services (except public administration)	50	337	45	331	-10.00%	-1.8%

Source: U.S. Economic Census, 1997; U.S. Economic Census, 2002

Notes:

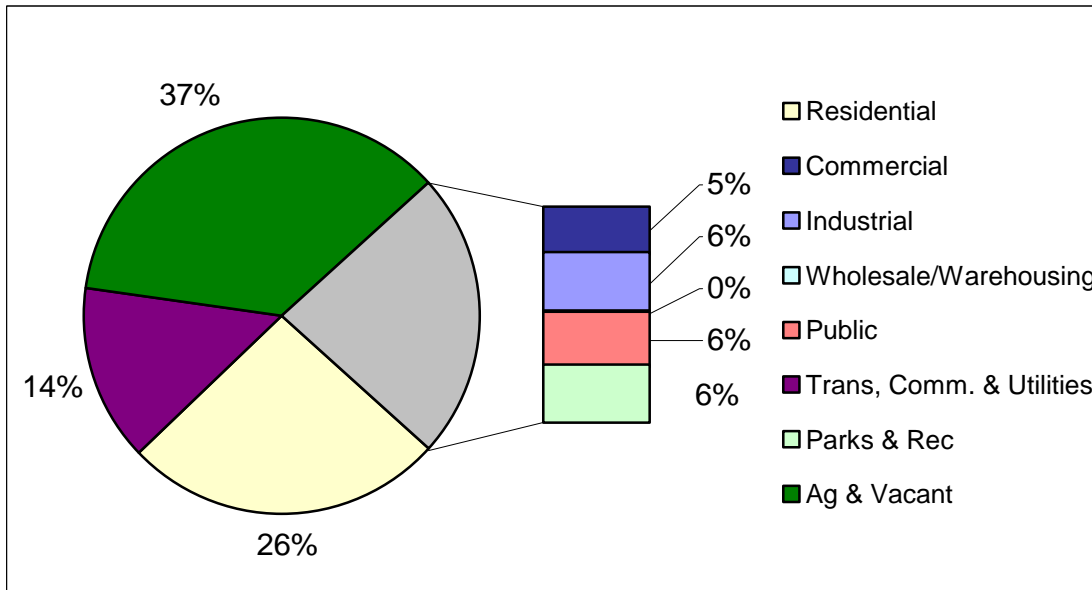
\* Withheld to avoid disclosing data of individual companies; data are included in higher level data

# = a range of 250 to 500 employees

**Land Use:**

- South Whitehall is comprised of 17.20 square miles or 11,008 acres.
- The population density in 2000 was 1,048 persons per square mile. The housing density was 1.54 units per acre.
- Agricultural and Vacant land comprises the greatest acreage in the Township. Of the major land uses, housing consumes that largest share followed by Transportation, Communications and Utilities. (Figure 2-8)
- Current land uses represent an increase in all categories, except residential, which remained stable, and agriculture which decreased by one third, according to a 1984 Land Use study prepared by the LVPC and updated in 1987.

**Figure 2-8: Estimated Land Use, 2005**



Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission





### **GOAL THEMES & STATEMENTS**

Pursuant to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Section 301(a)(1) and Section 606, “Community Development Objectives”, a Comprehensive Plan should provide a “statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development, that may also serve as a statement of community objectives”. Accordingly, Steering Committee members identified goal themes considered critical to the future of South Whitehall Township. Many of the following themes are required Comprehensive Plan elements, while others are directly and uniquely relevant to South Whitehall issues and challenges.

The initial drafts of this chapter started with 18 separate Goal Themes in order to keep a broad perspective and to record all ideas stated by the Comprehensive Plan steering Committee. However, as the Plan developed, we sharpened the focus and the 18 sets of ideas were consolidated into 10 Goal Themes as follows:

1. Growth Management
2. Innovative Planning & Zoning Tools and Design Techniques
3. Building & Maintaining Communities and Villages
4. Protection of Natural, Agricultural and Historic Resources
5. Parks, Recreation & Open Space
6. Housing Opportunities & Choices
7. Transportation Efficiency & Effectiveness
8. Municipal Infrastructure & Services
9. Economic Viability
10. Regional Coordination

These “Top 10” Goals Themes, and the related Policies that follow, present a formidable task and responsibility. Now that we have our Vision defined, we need to promote, nurture and shape community growth and conservation in sync with these policy provisions.

## 1. **Growth Management**

### Goals:

Grow in a harmonious way that maintains the character of the Township by providing a transition from urban to rural areas as demonstrated by the Rural to Urban Transect.

Keep the pace of growth consistent with the Township's ability to install infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.

### Goal Statements:

- 1.1 Closely relate and coordinate future land use and transportation.
- 1.2 Promote denser development around existing villages and neighborhoods.
- 1.3 Provide opportunities for attractive, more creative new villages of appropriate size and location.
- 1.4 Calibrate growth management with zoning ordinance amendments.
- 1.5 Evaluate future character areas and density options north of Huckleberry Ridge and determine a long-term vision for this area.
- 1.6 Evaluate the long-term viability and appropriate location for industrial uses and zoning in the Township.
- 1.7 Review the growth management plan frequently to keep it fresh and up to date.
- 1.8 Evaluate the use of impact fees as a growth management tool.

## **2. Innovative Planning & Zoning Tools and Design Techniques**

Goal: Incorporate state-of-the-art planning and zoning techniques to create attractive neighborhoods, mixed use, and nonresidential areas that promote walkability and are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

### Goal Statements:

- 2.1 Incorporate mixed-use techniques into the Zoning Ordinance in order to create village and neighborhood centers in lieu of strip-style development.
- 2.2 Promote villages/hamlets as a form of cluster development (increase amount of open space traditionally incorporated into the existing villages).
- 2.3 Evaluate the use of overlay district zoning to protect and enhance existing villages.
- 2.4 Assess appropriate uses and locations for flex zoning.
- 2.5 Evaluate the potential for incorporating features of Form-based Codes into the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- 2.6 Incorporate “architectural zoning” to provide more aesthetic standards.
- 2.7 Reevaluate the usefulness of the R-10 (Residential) Zoning District and assess Planned Unit Development (PUD)/Planned Residential Development (PRD) alternatives that permit higher density development with more sophisticated design standards.
- 2.8 Evaluate the incorporation of techniques that encourage “Green Building”, LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development), and sources of renewable energy into the Township Code.

### **3. Building and Maintaining Walkable Communities & Villages**

#### Goals:

Design new neighborhoods and retrofit existing places to be mixed use, walkable places, where daily tasks can be performed within a ½ mile.

Emulate the character of existing villages like Cetronia, Greenawalds and Guthsville in new development and celebrate their visual cues.

Promote intergenerational neighborhoods.

#### Goal Statements:

- 3.1 Permit diversity in building style/types.
- 3.2 Incorporate appropriate criteria for infill development in and around existing villages.
- 3.3 Reevaluate “non-conforming uses” in light of promoting mixed use neighborhoods.
- 3.4 Incorporate open space into new and existing neighborhoods that meets the needs of the community.
- 3.5 Require developers to include walking paths and/or sidewalks in new commercial and residential developments as part of the SALDO parks and recreation contribution.
- 3.6 Develop a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan that: evaluates the pedestrian/sidewalk network to inventory and prioritize gaps and needed improvements; establishes design and safety standards; and develops a list of grants and other funding sources for needed improvements.
- 3.7 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to: require sidewalks be installed on at least one side of the street in all new developments to connect existing and planned shopping, employment and residential areas; and to provide rigorous criteria for waivers.



#### **4. Protection of Natural, Historic & Agricultural Resources**

Goal:

Optimize the protection, conservation and preservation of natural resources, historic sites and farmland in a balanced land use approach.

Goal Statements

- 4.1 Protect water quality by incorporating the latest techniques for riparian buffer zones for streams, surface waters, and wetlands and providing protections for wellheads and recharge areas.
- 4.2 Consider effects of development on steep slopes and determine appropriate protection levels for steep slopes, while conserving the low, flatlands.
- 4.3 Evaluate appropriate protection levels for woodlands, and protection/replacement of shade trees and shade tree canopy.
- 4.4 Require additional investigation and studies for development proposed on sites that have underlying karst/carbonate geology.
- 4.5 Support and invest in the regional greenways concept to link the Township's "green infrastructure", which includes Covered Bridge Park.
- 4.6 Activate the South Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC).
- 4.7 Work with the Wildlands Conservancy, Lehigh County and others who can partner to conserve natural areas.
- 4.8 Promote historic preservation throughout the Township.
- 4.9 Preserve our covered bridges, historic barns, and historic neighborhoods, and visual amenities.
- 4.10 Document historical sites in order to ensure identification of all potential historical edifices and features.
- 4.11 Involve local historical societies, historians at local colleges and universities, and other interested parties in preservation efforts.
- 4.12 Explore state/county farm preservation programs as they might relate to South Whitehall Township farms.
- 4.13 Evaluate and increase percentage of South Whitehall land under preservation/conservation.
- 4.14 Assess the public's view on farmland preservation and use of taxpayer money to preserve more farms in South Whitehall Township.
- 4.15 Consider farmland protection through purchase of development rights.

## **5. Parks, Recreation & Open Space**

Goals: (Parks & Recreation Plan)

### Goal Statements:

- 5.1 Maintain Covered Bridge Park and acquire additional open space along the Jordan Creek.
- 5.2 Maintain and implement an up-to-date comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan for the Township.
- 5.3 Consider the Lehigh County Plan for Parks & Recreation when planning for Township Open Space.
- 5.4 Promote neighborhood parks where needed.
- 5.5 Create shared open space at edges of adjacent new development for smaller multi-neighborhood parks.
- 5.6 Give high consideration to open space as we grow.
- 5.7 Preserve quality open space in the northern tier.
- 5.8 Consider returning some active open space to passive open space if not needed.
- 5.9 Define and provide improved standards for different types of active and passive open space in the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO.

## **6. Housing Opportunities and Choices**

### Goal:

Provide a variety of housing and neighborhood choices for families of all sizes, abilities and income levels in the Township.

### Goal Statements:

- 6.1 Evaluate the housing opportunities, particularly in the rural area.
- 6.2 Assess the benefits of mixed-use communities.
- 6.3 Assess the benefits of mixed-use buildings in appropriate locations.
- 6.4 Evaluate housing affordability in the Township.
- 6.5 Evaluate age-qualified housing needs in the Township

## **7. Transportation Efficiency & Effectiveness**

### **Goal:**

Facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods now and as the Township grows.

Promote multimodal circulation, particularly walkability, throughout the Township.

### **Goal Statements:**

- 7.1 Identify transportation improvements needed to alleviate existing problems and avoid future conflicts resulting from growth and development
- 7.2 Use the Official Map to lay out potential/probable sites for new roadways in advance of submitted plans for land use
- 7.3 Promote opportunities for alternative transportation means, such as walking, biking and increased bus service.
- 7.4 Provide the opportunity for neighborhood shopping (for convenience items) and Live-Work units (a form of “zero-commute housing”) to reduce the number of vehicle trips and congestion on local roadways.
- 7.5 Provide opportunities for Park & Ride sites near I-78/Rt. 22/Rt. 309 and other areas to encourage carpooling.
- 7.6 Consider mass transit in site planning for more efficient access to this type of transportation.
- 7.7 Amend the Township zoning map so that the traffic-related intensity of permitted uses is appropriate to the capabilities of the existing and planned road network.
- 7.8 Reevaluate the viability and design of cul-de-sacs due to their potential to cumulatively create traffic congestion on the collector roads.
- 7.9 Increase the number of secondary north/south and east/west routes in the Township.
- 7.10 Consider establishing official transportation districts as part of an Act 209 Plan in order to provide an opportunity for future impact fees.
- 7.11 Develop a Capital Improvements Plan and program that will properly prioritize transportation improvement projects by evaluating the urgency of an improvement with the cost of that improvement.
- 7.12 Work closely with LVPC and adjacent municipalities on regional transportation issues.
- 7.13 Establish a citizen advisory group that focuses on traffic problems.
- 7.14 Define the role, scope and feasibility of uses for the existing rail line.

## **8. Municipal Infrastructure & Services**

### Goal:

Develop performance measures and benchmarks for all municipal services and utilities and expand or refine municipal functions to satisfactorily meet them as the Township grows.

### Goal statements:

- 8.1 Continue to support volunteer fire/ambulance services vs. paid full-time services with Township funding and policy.
- 8.2 Continue to support Township policing efforts.
- 8.3 Develop and maintain consistency between land use and sewage systems/public water systems plans.
- 8.4 Match Infrastructure with affordability based on new zoning areas and anticipated tax revenues.
- 8.5 Consider alternative options for sewer treatment, particularly in the Jordan Valley.
- 8.6 Examine the feasibility of the Township's future sewage treatment capacity at the Allentown plant.
- 8.7 Examine tools to better protect water supply sources and recharge areas, including a wellhead protection ordinance and a riparian buffer ordinance.
- 8.8 Maximize use of the Township Municipal Authority.
- 8.9 Create and annually review a five-year Capital Improvements Plan that prioritizes capital projects and informs the yearly budget and work program prior to the budget each year.
- 8.10 Develop a goal-oriented, performance-based municipal services budget with Activity-Based Costing to replace the line item budget.
- 8.11 Consider employing user fees to a greater degree to support municipal services.
- 8.12 Explore cooperation with adjacent municipalities and the County for municipal services.
- 8.13 Ensure Township has adequate space for vehicles, equipment and personnel.
- 8.14 Clarify Township boundary confusion regarding municipal services, with neighboring municipalities.
- 8.15 Consider developing a landfill policy.

## **9. Economic Viability**

### Goal:

Strengthen the tax base through planned land use.

### Goal Statements:

- 9.1 Keep planned development in step with infrastructure growth and the Township's fiscal capabilities.
- 9.2 Encourage business development in targeted areas.
- 9.3 Explore light industrial versus heavy industrial uses in the Township.
- 9.4 Manage transportation constraints to economic development.
- 9.5 Recognize the implications of development on the Parkland School District.
- 9.6 Involve the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses in planning.
- 9.7 Encourage low-impact home occupations as opportunities to grow small businesses.

## **10. Regional Coordination**

### Goal:

Work with LVPC, Lehigh County, and adjacent municipalities to coordinate and share services where feasible.

### Goal Statements:

- 10.1 Give consideration to growing in context with adjacent municipalities and the LVPC Comprehensive Plan.
- 10.2 Coordinate transit, roads, recreation, and public safety with regional partners.
- 10.3 Work with Lehigh County to obtain grants fostering cooperation with adjacent municipalities (e.g., Park & Recreation's Comprehensive Plan with North Whitehall Township), while maintaining our own identity and needs.





#### **4. A PLAN FOR LAND USE**

The Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to provide a conceptual framework for future land use, and in accordance with the MPC, may include:

“provisions for the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use proposed for residence, industry, business, agriculture, major traffic and transit facilities, utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation, preservation of prime agricultural lands, flood plains and other area of special hazards and other similar uses.”

In addressing these concepts in South Whitehall Township, the Steering Committee elected to use planning concepts known as “the Transect” and “Character Areas”. The Transect is a continuum that represents the range of environments from the most rural to the most urban. Character Areas represent categories of development along that continuum that display similar characteristics in terms of form: density, height, lot size, building coverage, street width, etc. Character Areas are intended to form the basis of an innovative and increasingly common zoning technique known as a “Form-based Code”, whereas Township codes would emphasize the form and appearance of the built environment over specific uses.

This Plan for Land Use is organized into the following discussions:

- *The Transect:* The Transect is the guiding principle used to describe existing and future land use within South Whitehall Township. As with any general concept, the details need to be calibrated to address the conditions unique to each place.
- *Existing Character Areas:* Based on the Transect concept, this section describes the Character Areas developed for South Whitehall Township based on existing land uses and development patterns.
- *Future Character Areas:* The Proposed Future Character Areas and Land Use Map represents the Township’s future land use plan and long-term vision. Preferred uses, intensity and design characteristics for each area are described in depth through a series of text and photo images. Together, these Best Practices and Models are intended to guide future amendments to

the Township's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance as part of the implementation of this Plan.

- *Community Design:* It has become increasingly clear to the Steering Committee and residents of South Whitehall Township that design is important and can greatly impact the viability and function of development. This section provides an inventory of innovative design tools and techniques that could be incorporated into the Township Codes. In addition to text, Best Practices and Models photos demonstrate the types of development desirable in the Character Areas.
- *Growth Management:* The Land Use Plan emphasizes a preferred development pattern intended to be built out over a 30 to 50 year period. Implementing this vision for land use will require continual management over time and proactive, innovative ordinance provisions that account for the logical, cost effective, extension of infrastructure and availability of land.

#### A. THE TRANSECT (T-1 to T-6)

The Transect is a generally accepted planning concept utilized by town planners to organize the intensity and character of development ranging from the most natural areas to the most urban. Each area along the Transect is considered a "Transect Zone" or "Character Area". Thus Transect Zone-1 (T-1) represents the most rural of environments and is usually characterized by pristine or protected natural resources that are considered too constrained to support development. Each successive area demonstrates progressively more diverse and intense levels of development, with the T-6 Area representing the most intense level of development within the study area. **Figure 4-1**, "The Transect: Neighborhood Structure" is a diagram that depicts an overview of the Transect on a conceptual basis.

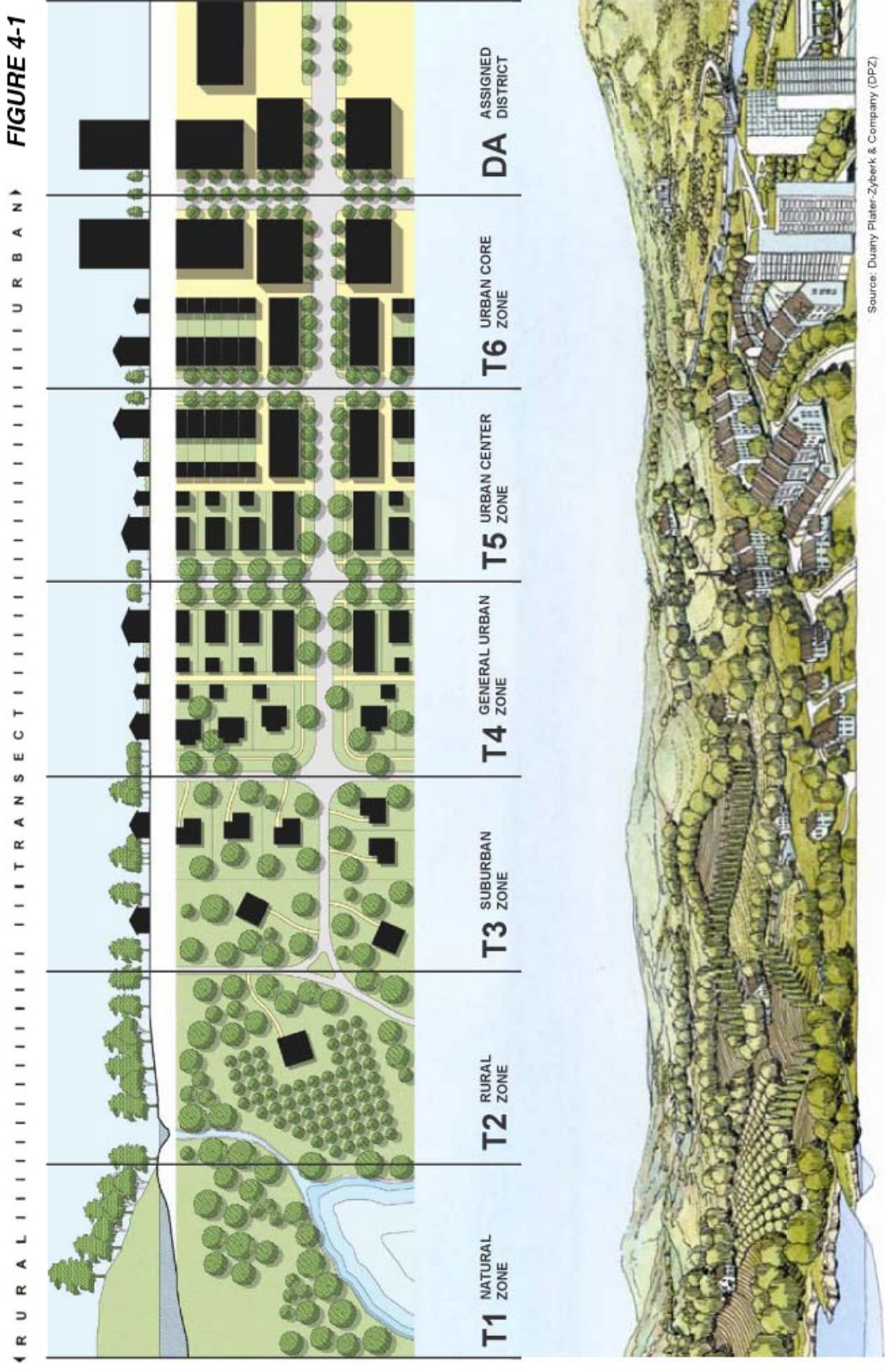
A seventh category, the Special District (D), represents areas that have a very specific character that do not fit into the overall development patterns of the Township. Districts cannot be measured by the same qualities and do not often fit smoothly into a rural to urban category. Land uses in this category typically include: airports and other large-scale transportation hubs, heavy manufacturing areas, college campuses, and hospitals. In cases such as big box or strip shopping centers, the use could be reconfigured in the future to better compliment and connect with surrounding neighborhoods. In others (i.e., the airport or heavy industrial node), integration is rarely achievable or desirable.

Ideally, the Transect concept is applied across entire regions, with large urban areas serving as the urban core. However, when undertaking more localized planning, the concept is applied by tailoring the Character Areas to local conditions and local ideas of what constitutes more rural or urban conditions. The Existing Character Areas section describes the calibration of the Transect to South Whitehall Township.



# The Transect: Neighborhood Structure

FIGURE 4-1



## **B. EXISTING CHARACTER AREAS**

To determine the Existing Character Areas in South Whitehall Township, current conditions throughout the Township were assessed based on patterns of development, parcel size and configuration, and street layout. Each Existing Character Area, as shown on **Map 4-1**, is intended to represent places, neighborhoods, or districts that share similar qualities, predominantly in terms of intensity or density. They are not an indicator of specific uses. These areas were confirmed through further analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and baseline data provided by Lehigh County and the Township to measure lot areas and average lot sizes. After making an initial decision to take a regional perspective, Allentown was designated the T-6 Urban Core and the Township was categorized into the following Character Areas:

- T-1: Natural Landscape
- T-2: Rural Landscape: Open Fields, Woodlands, and Parks
- T-3: Suburban Neighborhoods
- T-4: Suburban to Urbanized Neighborhoods & Villages
- T-5: Urbanized Neighborhoods
- T-6: Urban Core (Allentown)
- D: Special District

The Existing Character Areas can be described as follows:

### **T-1: Natural Landscape**

- FEMA 100-year Floodplain

### **T-2: Rural Landscape/Open Fields, Woodlands & Parks**

- Vacant Properties
- County/Township parkland
- Agricultural Properties/Orchards
- Woodlands (as derived from the SWT GIS data)
- Natural Areas recognized on the Natural Area Inventory of Lehigh and Northampton Counties (Crackersport Ponds)
- Private outdoor recreational areas
- Clusters of historic agricultural buildings

### **T-3: Suburban Neighborhoods**

- Outlying individual lots with single-family detached dwellings, not otherwise associated with a subdivision or agricultural complex,
- Larger lot subdivisions *typically* characterized by:
  - Predominance of Single-Family Detached Housing
  - Average Lot Sizes greater than 15,000 square feet;
  - Curvilinear street networks; and
  - Cul-de-sacs.
- Primarily located north of Route 22

- Largely built after 1950

**T-4: Suburban to Urbanized Neighborhoods & Villages**

- Mid-density areas *typically* characterized by:
  - A mix of Housing Types
  - Some neighborhood scale commercial uses
  - Average lot sizes averaging approximately 8,000 to 12,000 square feet;
  - Mix of curvilinear and gridded streets, some alleys; and
  - Few Cul-de Sacs.
- Cetronia and Greenawalds
- Existing villages, such as Guthsville, Orefield, Walbert and Mechanicsville that have a variety of lot sizes and uses

**T-5: Urbanized Neighborhoods**

- Higher density areas *typically* characterized by:
  - Mix of Housing Types with some mix of uses;
  - Average Lot Sizes smaller than 10,000 square feet;
  - Gridded street network with some alleys;
  - Higher density townhouse and R-10 development; and
  - Primarily located adjacent to the City of Allentown.

**T-6: Urban Core**

- City of Allentown

In addition to the Character Areas, a land use assessment of South Whitehall Township determined that there were several areas that fit into the District category, so many in fact that it made sense to create subcategories, as follows:

**D: Districts**

- *D-1: Campus style development*, includes:
  - Parkland School District properties and facilities, other than those considered neighborhood schools and facilities
  - Medical Office Complex or Hospital
- *D-2: Larger Footprint Commercial Development*, includes:
  - Strip Commercial Districts and Corridors
  - Big Box Commercial Areas
- *D-3: Theme Park*
  - Dorney Park
- *D-4: Industrial Areas and Buffers*
  - Existing Industrial Development
  - Junk yards and Outdoor storage
  - Higher intensity livestock and feeding operations (agriculture)

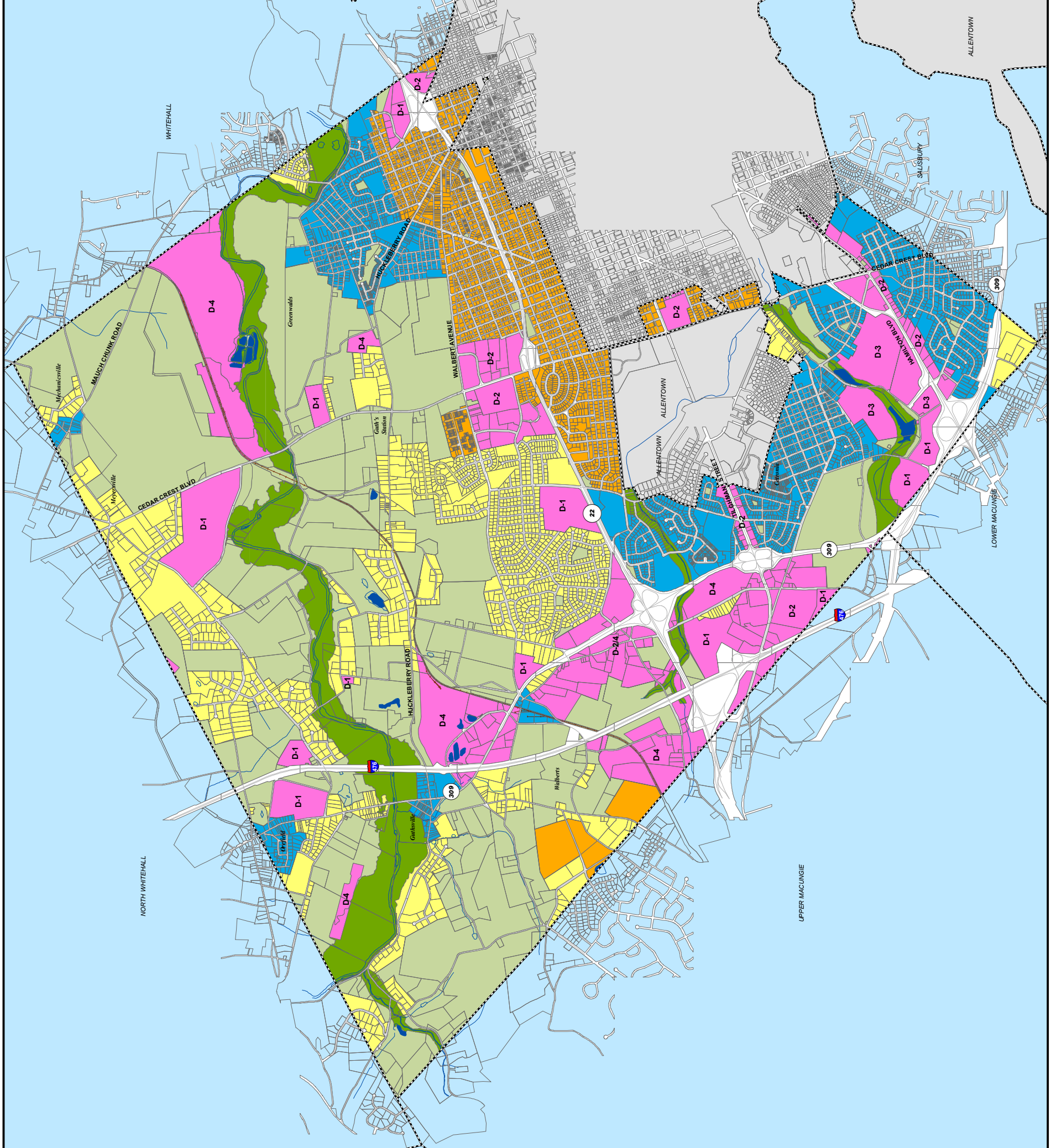
The following table shows the acreage breakdown for the Existing Character Areas.

**Table 4-2: Existing Character Areas, Acreage Breakdown**

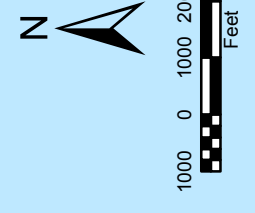
Character Area	General Character	Acreage	% of Total
T-1	Natural Landscape	866.09	7.84%
T-2	Rural Landscape	3,948.86	35.76%
T-3	Suburban Neighborhoods	1,726.96	15.64%
T-4	Suburban to Urbanized Neighborhoods	1,348.16	12.21%
T-5	Urbanized Neighborhoods	1,018.59	9.23%
District (D)	Special Districts	2,132.94	19.32%
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,041.60</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Based on the above table, the greatest percentages of land are found in the Rural Landscape and Special Districts Character Areas. This speaks to a high proportion of industrial areas, shopping centers/corridors, amusement parks, and campuses of the Special Districts do not readily blend in with the surrounding environment. While there is no benchmark for the ideal proportion of such development within a township, the Future Character Areas and Land Use Plan will take steps to evaluate which areas could feasibly and desirably be reconnected with the fabric of existing development patterns.

# Existing Character Areas



- Legend**  
**Character Areas**
- T1 - Natural Landscape
  - T2 - Rural Landscape/Open Fields & Woodlands/Parks
  - T3 - Suburban Neighborhoods
  - T4 - Suburban to Urbanized Neighborhoods & Villages
  - T5 - Urbanized Neighborhoods
  - T6 - Urban Core (Allentown)
  - D - District
  - D-1 Campus
  - D-2 Larger Format Commercial
  - D-3 Theme Park
  - D-4 Industrial



Data Sources:  
 Base Features: Lehigh County GIS, 2004  
 Character Zones: Consultant's Analysis

## Map 4-1 Existing Character Areas

Comprehensive Plan

South Whitehall Township  
 Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:  
 Thomas Comitita Associates, Inc.  
 Town Planners & Landscape Architects  
 18 West Chestnut Street  
 West Chester, PA 19380

April 17, 2008; May 22, 2008;  
 June 26, 2008; July 17, 2008;  
 August 21, 2008

### C. FUTURE CHARACTER AREAS

After evaluating the Existing Character Areas and examining the Township's goals and objectives, the Proposed Character Areas depicted on **Map 4-2** were developed as the Township's intended future land use plan. As shown, the Proposed Character Areas reflect a long-term build-out of the Township, beyond the 2020 projections currently available. These Character Areas should be used to inform future amendments to Township Codes in order to ensure that new development complements the character of existing development and enhances the vitality of the Township as a whole.

To develop this map, the consultant team and steering committee explored several alternatives for future growth. These "scenarios" were based on the Existing Character Areas and provided differing viewpoints of where future development could be located. Based on committee discussions and feedback over several months, the scenarios were refined and revised.

#### **Future Character Area Plan**

The Future Character Areas Plan is subtitled: "Compact Development Areas with Enhanced Transportation Systems" and hinges on the following concepts:

- *Compact, mixed use development:* As part of the Comprehensive Planning process it became abundantly clear that the Township values pedestrian-friendly design and an appropriate mix of uses in close proximity. This mixing of uses may occur in the same building or development, but is intended to complement the neighborhood in terms of size and scale.
- *Enhanced transportation systems* (including road improvements and increased transit (bus & rail)): Regardless of the type of development, the Township will see an increased need for transportation alternatives and enhancements as the region continues to grow. Transportation and circulation are discussed in depth in Chapter 7.
- *Infill and Redevelopment:* Infill and redevelopment are encouraged to make better use of existing infrastructure and land, increasing density where appropriate, and enhancing existing neighborhoods with mixed uses and open space.
- *Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods:* The majority of neighborhoods in South Whitehall Township are well-established and stable neighborhoods, but that lack amenities such as pedestrian infrastructure, neighborhood services (to decrease vehicle trips and increase neighborhood interaction), or a coherent identity. This plan encourages the protection of the character of these neighborhoods, while enhancing their function and appearance.
- *The Resource Protection Areas (discussed more fully in the next chapter), apply to all of the Character Areas.* Protected resources, whether natural, historic or agricultural, as outlined in Chapter 4 and shown on Maps 4-1 and 4-2, are intended to be an overlay to the Character Areas. When implementing the plan, these

resources are intended to be preserved in accordance with the recommendations of this plan as incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. The levels of protection for some resources may vary according to Character Area, while others may not.

- *Design matters.* Whether utilizing open space cluster, mixed-use, traditional neighborhood development, or green building techniques, good design is an essential component in creating the attractive, yet functional community that the Township desires. Through both text and graphics, this section provides an inventory of innovative design tools and techniques that could be incorporated into the Township Codes. The Best Practices and Models demonstrate the types of development desirable in the Character Areas.
- *Phased Growth Management:* The Future Character Areas and Land Use Map shows a long-term vision for development in the Township. In order to make efficient use of land and existing infrastructure, a phased approach to urban expansion is recommended.

**Map 4-2**, the Future Character Areas and Land Use Map depicts the proposed Character Areas for the Township. In addition to Character Areas (shown in solid colors), the Map also shows Growth Opportunity Areas (shown with a blue hatch). The majority of these areas are shown as T-4, with some T-3, T-5 and D. As such they are intended to be opportunities for new development and redeveloped in the form of mixed use, compact, walkable communities.

One Growth Opportunity Area in particular, in the northeast corner of the Township, is a prime candidate for a new traditional neighborhood community, with residential neighborhoods, village centers, business park opportunities, and community facilities, which models many of the concepts discussed throughout this plan. This area also offers an exceptional opportunity to complete the Jordan Creek Greenway within the Township.

**Table 4-3** shows the acreage breakdown of Character Areas. **Table 4-4, Guidelines for Future Character Areas**, lists the primary types and intensities of development recommended for each Character Area, including: Uses, Typical Lot Sizes (residential), Lot Coverage (Nonresidential), Building Types, Building Height, and Infrastructure (primarily sewer, water, and pedestrian circulation). It is intended to provide an overview for future zoning districts. While the densities may be modified from those recommended, the relationship between each Character Area to the others should remain tied to the progression of the Transect, providing a transition between higher intensity and lower intensity development. While not directly noted in each district, such initiatives as adaptive reuse and resource preservation, both discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, are an integral part of the development in all Character Areas.

**Figure 4-5, A Manual of Best Practices and Models**, depicts intended zoning and design techniques within each Character Area through photo images of existing places. These places, both within and outside of the Township, provide inspiration and guidance for preferred development types and patterns.

**Table 4-3: Future Character Areas, Acreage Breakdown**

Character Area	General Character	Acreage	% of Total
T-1	Natural Landscape	866.09	7.84%
T-2	Rural Landscape	2244.64	20.33%
T-3	Suburban Neighborhoods	2425.73	21.97%
T-4	Suburban to Urbanized Neighborhoods	2357.52	21.35%
T-5	Urbanized Neighborhoods	1020.61	9.24%
District (D)	Special Districts	2127.02	19.26%
<b>Total</b>		11041.60	100.00%

The Growth Opportunity Areas, shown as a hatched area of Map 4-2, represent 2,390.38 acres for redevelopment and new development for the Township’s long-term growth. These acres are intended to be comprised of open space, community facilities, mixed use, residential development (both high and medium density), and employment opportunities.

**Mixed Uses & Future Character Areas**

As demonstrated in Table 4-4 and Figure 4-5, nonresidential uses are intended to be located in all Character Areas. This is not to say that all nonresidential uses are appropriate anywhere, but that, when designed at a scale that is compatible to the surrounding neighborhood, nonresidential uses can be successfully and attractively integrated into a rural, suburban or urban area, whether as part of the same building or the same lot. In T-2 Areas, nonresidential uses would primarily be related to agricultural operations, (such as roadside stands, farming operations, or other agricultural businesses) and home occupations, as defined by the no-impact home-based business definition of the Municipalities Planning Code.

T-3 Areas are intended to permit limited neighborhood scale institution or commercial uses, such as a small child care center, cafe or corner store that is solely oriented towards daily needs of local residents. The local tavern or inn, often seen at historic crossroads or hamlets throughout the Township, is a good example of the type of use that would be encouraged and appropriate to the T-3 area. A small, owner-occupied Bed and Breakfast might also be appropriate in areas of scenic value and historic interest, such as along the Covered Bridge Driving Tour. Commercial uses intended to be located outside of the T-3 Areas include: auto-oriented uses, medium to large format buildings (greater than 15,000 square feet), business/industrial parks, linear corridor development, or businesses with drive-throughs.

The T-4 Areas are intended to promote an increasing range of neighborhood scale nonresidential uses, such as a barber shop, dry cleaner, restaurant, professional or medical



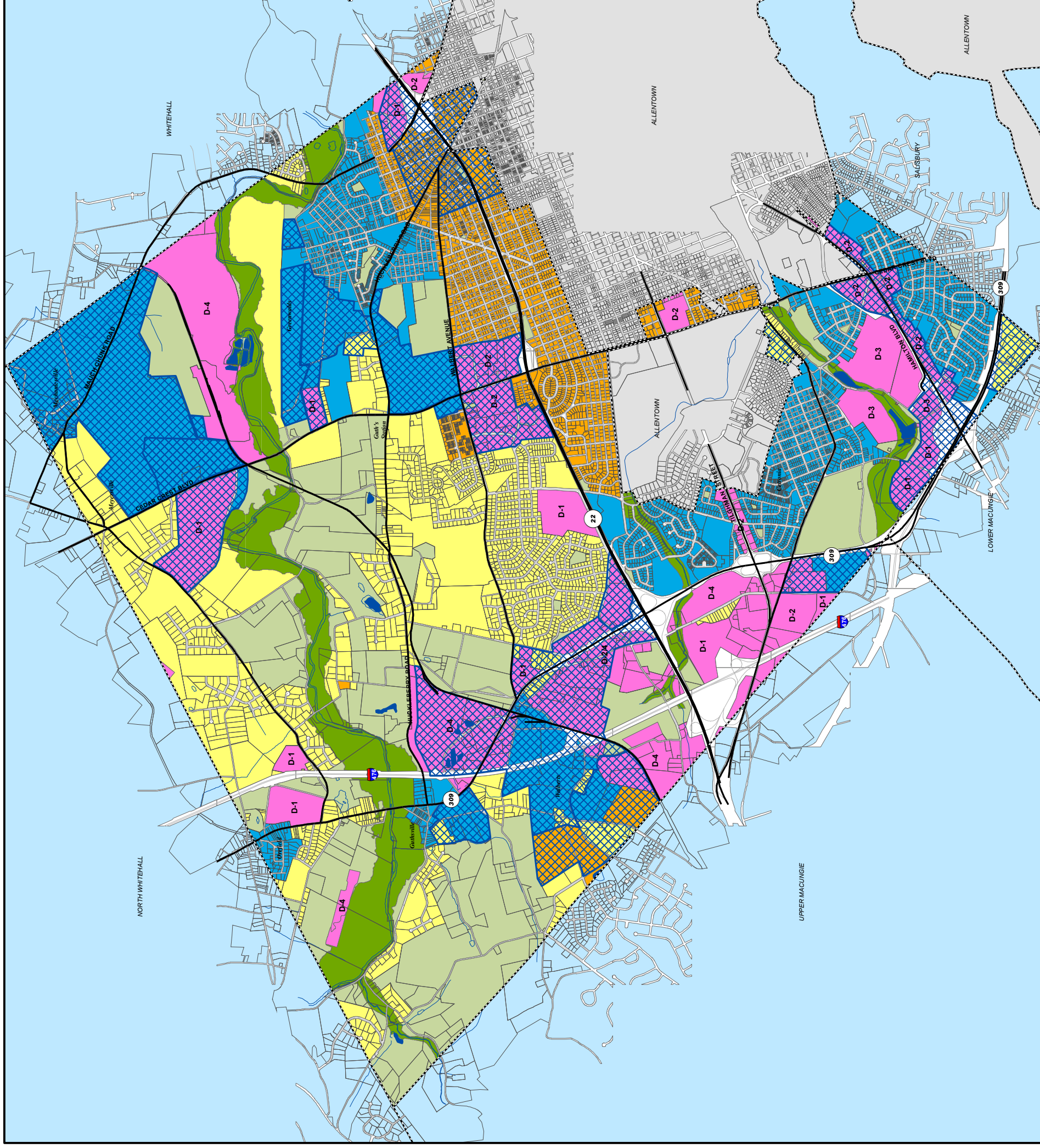
office, or small grocer, that provide for daily needs, particularly in the context of a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). The form of such uses would include corner stores, live-work units, traditional “main street” type of development, and village centers. As T-4 Areas are found in both existing and proposed growth areas, these uses are also intended to be retrofitted into existing neighborhoods in a manner that reflects and emulates the physical form of existing buildings. Although primarily intended to be located in the D-Districts, a limited area for office/clean, light industrial parks could be located within the proposed T-4 Area located along Cedar Crest Boulevard. Nonresidential building footprints may be larger than in the T-3, but should not exceed 40,000 square feet, unless in an approved business or industrial park. In addition, all buildings should be constructed to be a minimum of two stories. Such development would require a strong focus on site buffering and circulation patterns, and should emphasize connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods, in order to decrease vehicle trips.

After the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, and Zoning Ordinance Amendments are drafted, each T-4 area will be further analyzed. Distinctions in T-4 areas (e.g. T-4A, T-4B, T-4C) could be created to address such matters as transitional land uses adjacent to existing land uses, buffering and screening, percentage of open space, type of open space, street network, development intensity, and the like. In addition, “parent” Ordinance requirements such as flood plain, steep slope, and subsurface geology would also be applicable to help shape new T-4 development.

As T-5 Areas comprise existing higher density areas, future development in these areas is focused on enhancing the form and fabric of these existing neighborhoods through the provision of additional of open space, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities as well as the incorporation of neighborhood uses that would allow residents to shop, learn, work, and play within a short distance of their homes.

The Terminology used in this Chapter and the description of the Proposed Character Areas will be further clarified in any Zoning Ordinance Amendments, and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Amendments, prepared as part of the implementation of the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Definitions, Design Standards, and other Regulations will need to be written to implement the land use concepts presented herein.

# Future Character Areas & Land Use Plan



## Legend

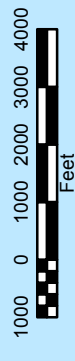
### Character Areas

- T1 - Natural Landscape
- T2 - Rural Landscape/Open Fields & Woodlands/Parks
- T3 - Suburban Neighborhoods
- T4 - Suburban to Urbanized Neighborhoods & Villages
- T5 - Urbanized Neighborhoods
- T6 - Urban Core (Allentown)
- D - District
- D-1 Campus
- D-2 Larger Format Commercial
- D-3 Theme Park
- D-4 Industrial

### Growth Opportunity Areas

- Areas Based on Existing & Expanded Sewer Systems & Enhanced Transportation Systems

Enhanced Transportation Corridors



Data Sources:  
Base Features: Lehigh County GIS, 2004  
Character Zones: Consultant's Analysis

## Map 4-2 Future Character Areas & Land Use Plan

Compact Development Areas  
with Enhanced Transportation  
Systems

Comprehensive Plan

South Whitehall Township  
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:  
Thomas Comitita Associates, Inc.  
Town Planners & Landscape Architects  
18 West Chestnut Street  
West Chester, PA 19380

April 17, 2008; May 22, 2008;  
June 26, 2008; July 17, 2008;  
August 21, 2008; August 25, 2008;  
September 10, 2008; October 22, 2008;  
March 3, 2009

TABLE 4-4: GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE CHARACTER AREAS

Area	(1) General Character & Intent <sup>1</sup> (See Note 1 for Intents that Apply to All Character Areas)	(2) Residential Intensity <sup>2</sup>		(3) Nonresidential Uses <sup>3</sup>	(4) Typical Building Height	(5) Infrastructure
		Typical Lot Areas	Housing/ Neighborhood Types	Lot Coverage		
T-1 Natural Landscape (Dark Green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplains &amp; other protected natural resources</li> <li>TDR Sending Area</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
T-2 Rural Landscape: Open Fields, Woodlands & Parks (Light Green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agricultural preservation</li> <li>Very low density cluster residential</li> <li>TDR Sending Area</li> <li>Open space and recreational uses</li> </ul>	1-3 acre lot areas	Predominantly Single-Family Dwellings Conservation Design/Open Space Cluster	No-impact home-based businesses; Agriculture; Agricultural-Businesses	Maximum: 2 stories (except agricultural buildings)	On-lot septic & well; Trails
T-3 Suburban Neighborhoods (Yellow)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low density residential with neighborhood services</li> <li>Conservation design &amp; cluster development</li> <li>Mix of lot and house sizes, including ADUs<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	15,000 sq ft - 1 acre lot areas	Predominantly Single-Family Dwellings (Detached, Semi-detached); Conservation Design/Open Space Cluster	No-impact home-based businesses; Bed and Breakfast; Inn; Agriculture	Maximum: 2 to 2½ stories	On-lot septic & well; Open space cluster: where public utilities can be made available; Sidewalks within neighborhoods; Trails/paths
T-4 Suburban to Urbanized Neighborhoods (Blue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development with neighborhood services</li> <li>TND development</li> <li>Existing villages</li> <li>Mix of lot and house sizes, including ADUs<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Small scale commercial (&lt;= 40,000 SF in residential mixed-use)</li> <li>Primary TDR Receiving Area</li> </ul>	5,000 – 10,000 square foot lot areas	Mix of dwellings, and Live Work Units Traditional Neighborhood Development; Transit Oriented Development	Mixed-use; Live-Work Units; Retail/office; Institutional Within approved Business Park uses: Office, Light Industrial; Flex Space; Research; Alternative Energy	Minimum: 2 stories Maximum: 3 ½ stories or up to 4 along major corridors	Public sewer & water; Sidewalks; Trails/paths
T-5 Urbanized Neighborhoods (Orange)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote compact, TND redevelopment</li> <li>Promote mixed-use development</li> <li>Retrofit and enhance existing neighborhoods w/small scale commercial and open space</li> <li>Enhance pedestrian connectivity</li> <li>Primary TDR Receiving Area</li> </ul>	4,000 - 6,000 square foot lot areas	Mix of dwellings, Multifamily, and Live Work Units Traditional Neighborhood Development; Transit Oriented Development	Mixed-use; Commercial; Institutional; Light Industrial	Minimum: 2 stories Maximum: 3 ½ stories or up to 4 along major corridors	Public sewer & water; Sidewalks; Trails

**Notes:**

- The following characteristics apply to all Proposed Character Areas:
  - Provide **natural resource protections** (flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands, critical natural areas, etc.) within natural resources overlay
  - Promote **adaptive reuse and rehabilitation** of historic resources
  - Develop and implement **design guidelines** for preferred development patterns, including small scale commercial, mixed-use, traditional neighborhood development, and others.
  - Promote **green building techniques and environmentally sustainable development** in accordance with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards.
- Development Intensity and the amount of open space will be subject to detailed analysis at the time the Zoning Ordinance is amended. Provisions for lot sizes, density, lot coverage, open space (types and sizes) and the like will be calibrated based on such items as: access to utilities and infrastructure; natural resource constraints; parcel configuration; surrounding land uses, etc.
- Uses are described in the most general of categories based upon those uses typically found to be compatible with a particular character of development. See Section 4C for further discussion.
- ADUs = accessory dwelling units, also known as “granny flats” or “mother-in-law suites”.
- The specific type of sewage disposal system and water supply system, be they public, community, or otherwise, should be determined in conjunction with the Act 537 Plan Sewage Facilities Plan, and other sewer and water feasibility studies conducted at the time of land development.

## D. COMMUNITY DESIGN

Determining where growth should go is only one aspect of creating opportunity for quality development. Many of the pre-World War II neighborhoods that are currently exemplified as desirable places to live are illegal to recreate today because of the suburbanization of zoning codes. Single-use zoning is a major culprit in the sprawling design of today's commercial and residential areas that lead to reliance on cars, congestion, degradation of sensitive resources, and the loss of community.

This Plan's focus on Character Areas is an attempt to infuse South Whitehall Township with the tools to create the mixed use, walkable communities emphasized in the Community's goals and objectives. Listed below, and depicted within the Manual of Best Practices and Models, are recommended design techniques for each of the Future Character Areas.

### **T-2 and T-3 Areas:**

Ideally these areas maintain the rural character that is currently seen in the northern portion of the Township. However, the current 3-acre zoning in the R-H District will not preserve this rural character, but only ensure that these areas are carved up and fragmented over time. Some alternative tools for development here are as follows:

*Cluster Development:* Residential clustering is a form of development that concentrates developable lots together in order to preserve large swaths of contiguous open space for common use, agriculture, and/or preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Based on the Conservation Design techniques, the first step in determining site suitability is an inventory of protected and environmentally sensitive resources. Development is ideally located on the most buildable portion of the site, with permitted minimum lot sizes smaller than those normally permitted in a particular district. Zoning Ordinance provisions should elaborate on the design of open space in order to achieve the intended goals.

*Lot size averaging:* The density remains the same overall but lot sizes and corresponding side and rear setbacks can vary. This improves planning for critical environmental areas and provides flexibility.

*Minor Cluster Concept:* Open space cluster where the percent of required open space is determined by a sliding scale based on minimum tract size.

*Net Lot Size:* Require that minimum lot sizes do not include protected natural resources, such as floodplains, steep slopes, wetland and riparian/wetland buffers.

The T-2 areas were designated, in part, due to the presence of existing agricultural land use and/or agricultural soils. Although it would be appropriate to protect these lands, if they are developed, a variety of development techniques could be evaluated. Certain T-2 properties might lend themselves to larger lots due to site constraints, property configuration, adjacent land use, the retention of some agricultural areas, and/or the retention of existing buildings. Other T-2 properties might have "smaller" lot sizes and an open space area (while being density neutral). Other T-2 properties could even have "smallest" sizes and substantial open space (while yielding the same density neutral lot total).

The T-3 areas were also designated to have a light imprint for development of predominately single-family detached dwellings. Like T-2, the T-3 areas could be divided into various sizes of lots, and could have various amounts of common open space. The actual lot yield for T-3 areas would depend on site constraints, property configuration, adjacent land use, and infrastructure availability.

**T-4, T-5 and D-Districts:**

In addition to the concepts above and in particular the reference to lot size averaging and net lot sizes, the higher intensity districts are intended to be compact, mixed use areas that are pedestrian friendly and will support alternative public transportation in the long term.

*Traditional Neighborhood Development(TND):* A form of land development consistent with Article VII-A of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), wherein a TND is defined as: “An area of land typically developed for a compatible mixture of residential units for various income levels and non residential commercial and workplace uses, including some structures that provide for a mix of uses within the same building. Residences, shops, offices, workplaces, public buildings and parks are interwoven within the neighborhood so that all are within relatively close proximity to each other. Traditional neighborhood development is relatively compact and oriented toward pedestrian activity. It has an identifiable center and discernible edge. The center of the neighborhood is in the form of a public park, commons, plaza, square or prominent intersection of two or more major streets. Generally, there is a hierarchy of streets laid out with an interconnected network of streets and blocks that provides multiple routes from origins to destinations and are appropriately designed to serve the needs of pedestrians and vehicles equally.” TND provisions are typically accompanied with a Manual of Written & Graphic Design Guidelines. This permits the Township to have greater opportunity to provide feedback regarding the form and design of a neighborhood.

**All Districts:**

*Transfer of Development Rights:* The transfer of development rights is a growth management tool that transfers development rights from one location, the “sending area”, to an identified growth, or “receiving”, area. Because developers purchase these rights, the private market provides landowner compensation, limiting the use of public funds to any administrative oversight. Oftentimes, the purchase of development rights from a sending area grants the developer the right to develop at a higher density elsewhere. This provides incentive for developers to use the TDR option, which is usually voluntary. The MPC supports the establishment of a TDR program. TDR programs can be complicated and have met with varying levels of success across the country, but should be seriously considered in the case of South Whitehall Township where such large swaths of open land are under the ownership of relatively few entities. It is essential that any program offer conversion for residential to commercial in order to encourage the development of mixed-use communities. In regards to the proposed character areas, T-2 and T-3 should be considered as sending areas, while T-4, T-5, and D areas would be designated as receiving areas.

*Overlay Districts:* An overlay district is a zoning district that is superimposed on existing zoning districts and provides additional standards for development. In the case of the historic villages, an overlay district could impose dimensional standards that require new development or redevelopment to tie into the location, massing, scale and character of existing development.

Another aspect of Overlay District zoning pertains to “Conditions of Eligibility”. For example, if a TND Overlay District is drafted for a T-4 area, new development could be conditioned upon the installation of infrastructure such as new roads, new public sewer, and new public water, as well as the improvement of existing inadequate infrastructure. For example, performance standards to improve existing street intersections and networks, and existing sewer and water systems would be needed to insure adequacy of such infrastructure.

In other words, after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, each T-4 area will need to be carefully evaluated to determine what types of infrastructure would be necessary to make them complete. Distinctions in T-4 areas (e.g. T-4A, T-4B, T-4C) could be made to specify what types of infrastructure the developer would need to install to enable T-4 type development (both existing and proposed systems).

*Green Building and Alternative Energy Sources:* With the increasing acknowledgement that Climate Change and Global Warming are valid concerns, “going green” is not just a fringe concept anymore, but an essential part of the planning and approach to future development. To stay ahead of the curve, municipalities need to be prepared for, and encourage sustainable options within their codes. Provisions for alternate energy sources, as well as green building techniques are finding their way into comprehensive plans, building codes, and zoning ordinances across the country. In Pennsylvania, several townships in Bucks and Chester Counties have provisions regulating “Wind Energy Conversion Systems” (wind mills), solar, and other renewable energy sources. While such instances are still unique, the use of municipal codes to advance sustainable development techniques is becoming more common.

In regards to Green Building, the LEED (LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN) system is the nationally recognized rating system for environmentally friendly design techniques. LEED is administered by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and is designed to “promote design and construction practices that increase profitability while reducing the negative environmental impacts of buildings and improving occupant health and well-being”. Currently the available rating systems address a variety of building projects, including, but not limited to: New Construction (NC), Existing Buildings (EB), Healthcare and Schools and Commercial Interiors.

In addition to the rating systems that specifically address the built environment, LEED is in the process of piloting LEED-ND (NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN). LEED-ND expressly integrates the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, and green building into the first national standard for neighborhood location and design. Unlike other LEED products that focus primarily on green building practices, with relatively few credits given regarding site selection and design, LEED-ND places emphasis on the design and construction elements that bring buildings together into a neighborhood, and relate the neighborhood to its larger region and landscape.

Green building techniques may be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and/or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance as mandatory standards or by providing incentives for compliance with LEED standards. If a mandatory approach is chosen, the standards may only apply to certain zoning districts. Municipalities may choose:

- To adopt the LEED rating systems by reference into the municipal code and specify types or locations of projects that must achieve certification;
- To develop their own standards for green building and establish a point system for meeting performance standards; or
- To provide density bonuses, flexibility in design, or setback reductions for projects that meet green building criteria or certification.

Specific regulations may include:

- Green building certification (LEED) requirements for PRD and/or TND
- Incentives for Green Roofs
- Water conserving landscape requirements
- Green building requirements as part of the standards and criteria for Conditional Uses or Special Exceptions
- Permit additional height for solar panels
- Require pervious pavement for parking spaces proposed above and beyond zoning requirements and overflow parking
- Provide regulations for renewable energy sources such as WECS (windmills) and solar facilities
- Promote better use of passive and active solar energy through southern exposure and reasonable setbacks and heights to allow for adequate solar orientation.

The following Manual of Best Practices and Models photographically demonstrates good examples of many of the concepts discussed above. The Manual is intended to assist the Township in promoting desirable growth patterns and incorporate more innovative design practices into the zoning “toolbox”.

## T-3: Suburban Neighborhoods

### Best Practices & Models: Ponds at Woodward (Mendenhall, PA)



New Residential Cluster where residential and agriculture are compatible uses.



Orchards as permitted agricultural use in Open Space.

#### **Overview:**

1. Conservation Design can incorporate natural resource protection areas, while allowing for low impact residential development.
2. Residential and agricultural uses can be compatible when ag uses are small scale or specialized (i.e., orchards, horse farms) in nature.
3. Open spaces could be owned and maintained in a variety of ways, including: third party, Land Trust, dedication to the Township (if accepted), or Homeowners/Property Owners Association.

#### **Recommendations & Best Practices:**

1. Carefully position new dwellings in an environmentally sensitive manner.
2. Prohibit development in floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes (greater than 25%).
3. Incorporate small scale and specialty agriculture as a permitted use in required open space.
4. Design required open space to connect with existing or planned open space on adjacent parcels.



Adaptive Re-use of Orchard Barn



Shared Driveways to Triplex Clusters



## T-3: Suburban Neighborhoods

### Best Practices & Models: Glen Mills (Glen Mills, PA)



Single-Family Detached Dwellings and Detached Garages off Alleys in Delaware County, PA.



Dwellings surround Civic Green

#### **Overview:**

1. New houses can be clustered around civic greens to create a neighborhood center.
2. Provide a variety of options for cluster development that will protect the rural character of the area, including: conservation design and lot averaging.
3. Open spaces could be owned and maintained in a variety of ways, including: third party, Land Trust, dedication to the Township (if accepted), or Homeowners/Property Owners Association.

#### **Recommendations & Best Practices:**

1. Cluster new neighborhoods around civic greens.
2. Utilize rear lanes and alleys to enhance building fronts with great curb appeal.
3. Provide an interconnected trail and sidewalk system.
4. Require clustering with a minimum of 50% open space for tracts over 20 acres in size.
5. Provide landscaped buffers along road corridors to maintain scenic vistas and screen development.



Alley and Garage in Rear Yard



Compact Housing on "Greenfield" Site

## T-3: Suburban Neighborhoods

### Best Practices & Models: Wyndcrest, Sandy Springs, Maryland



Village Green



Village Green

#### **Overview:**

1. Smaller cluster developments can provide mixed housing types with open spaces.
2. Affordable housing can be provided on the same block as other market rate housing.

#### **Recommendations & Best Practices:**

1. Cluster mixed housing types around civic greens.
2. Intersperse affordable housing units with market rate units.
3. Permit a range of lot sizes through lot averaging to increase the diversity of housing.



Single-family Dwellings



Street trees and front porches provide great curb appeal

## T-3: Suburban Neighborhoods

Best Practices & Models: Ludwig's Village W. Vincent Twp, PA/South Whitehall Twp, PA



Ludwig's Village Market in Chester County, PA



Angled Alignment of Buildings at Ludwig's Market

### Overview:

1. Well designed nonresidential uses that blend in with neighborhoods can provide daily necessities within walking distance.
2. Small scale commercial uses should be integrated into existing neighborhoods to decrease vehicle trips.
3. Commercial uses are an adaptive reuse strategy to maintain historic structures as viable uses.

### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Emulate the bulk and area standards of residential uses for new commercial buildings.
2. Permit commercial uses for adaptive reuse of historic structures.
3. Position buildings along existing streets to "buffer" internal parking areas.
4. Cluster commercial development and orient toward a through-street.



The Orchard Restaurant



P.J. Walbert's Tavern - Village commercial

## T-4: Suburban to Urban Neighborhoods & Villages

### Best Practices & Models: Willowdale Town Center (Unionville, PA)



Aerial View of Site at Routes 82 & 926 in Chester County, PA



Building as "Buffer" along Route 82

#### **Overview:**

1. Existing villages, such as Guthsville and Mechanicsville, provide opportunity for new growth and infill.
2. Village centers are intended to be mixed-use areas providing daily needs and employment opportunities.
3. Retrofit villages to provide pocket parks, greens and other open space and civic amenities.

#### **Recommendations & Best Practices:**

1. Create infill that is compatible with existing village character in terms of building height, building position, and streetscape amenities.
2. Locate parking behind buildings and provide generous landscaping.
3. Incorporate open space and civic uses in village centers.



Cluster of Business and Office Uses

# T-4: Suburban to Urban Neighborhoods & Villages

## Best Practices & Models: Lantern Hill (Doylestown, PA)



A new Traditional Neighborhood Development in Bucks County, PA

### Overview:

1. Traditional neighborhood development (TND) can be used to protect and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods.
2. TND is a tool for emulating and extending the character of existing neighborhoods into new development.
3. TND incorporates civic uses, open space, and mixed uses and housing types to create livable, walkable places.

### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Redevelop properties to incorporate corner stores, live-work units, and open space.
2. Mix uses, lot sizes and housing types to promote walkability.
3. Create open spaces for active or passive recreation connected by trails and sidewalks.
4. Create a continuous pedestrian network and fill gaps in the existing network.
5. Provide land for community facilities.



Civic Green with Gazebo



View through Gazebo to Mixed Housing Types

# T-4: Suburban to Urban Neighborhoods & Villages

## Best Practices & Models: South Whitehall Township, PA



Offices with residential above in Greenawalds



Corner Store in Cetronia

### Overview:

1. Existing neighborhoods and villages have the traditional compact design to be walkable , mixed use places.

### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Emulate and enhance commercial development in existing neighborhoods and villages.
2. Incorporate more personal service retail (dry cleaners, corner grocer, coffee shop) and civic uses into existing neighborhoods.
3. Ensure safe pedestrian access through a continuous network of trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, and crossing signage.



Cetronia Deli



Magnolia's Vineyard, Guthsville

# T-4: Suburban to Urban Neighborhoods & Villages

## Best Practices & Models: Eagleview (Exton, PA)



Eagleview Town Center, The Villas, and The Gardens



Mixed use commercial building in Eagleview Town Center

### Overview:

1. Master Planned Communities can be designed as walkable, mixed-use places.
2. New communities can connect to business parks and clean, light industrial uses to provide employment opportunities in close proximity.

### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Create a neighborhood center for each community.
2. Diversify and mix land uses.
3. Provide live-work units to enable a zero-commute and an opportunity to live above a shop, store, or office.
4. Provide a traditional streetscape including street trees, pedestrian lighting, sidewalks and benches.



Live-Work Units in Town Center



Town Center Pharmacy

## T-5: Urban Neighborhoods

### Best Practices & Models: Eagleview (Exton, PA)



Site Plan of Eagleview Corporate Center, Town Center, and TND in Chester County, PA



Claremont Neighborhood with Mixed Housing Types

#### **Overview:**

1. Traditional streetscapes can be created by promoting curb appeal, requiring sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture, and accessing garages off alleys.

#### **Recommendations & Best Practices:**

1. Retrofit existing neighborhoods with streetscape amenities and mixed uses.
2. Require street trees, sidewalks, and pedestrian oriented street lights on both sides of all streets.



Streetscape at The Gardens in Chester County, PA



Alleyscape at the Gardens



# T-5: Urban Neighborhoods

## Best Practices & Models: Pedestrian Pockets



Sitting Area, State College, PA



Bench and Landscaped Area, Wayne, PA

### Overview:

1. Open space amenities can be increased through the use of pedestrian pockets, greens, and plazas.

### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Construct and maintain plazas, pavilions, gaze bos, and sitting areas as viable pedestrian pockets.
2. Install and maintain benches, sitting walls, shade trees, plantings, and lighting in pedestrian areas to enhance attractiveness and safety.
3. Incorporate additional open space through the use of pedestrian pockets.



Sitting Area, Newport, Rhode Island



Benches in Sitting Plaza, Eagle Road, Haverford Township

# T-5: Urban Neighborhoods

## Best Practices & Models: Crocker Park (Cleveland, OH)



Civic Plaza



Boulevard Entrance Street

### Overview:

1. New commercial development can be combined with new residential development.

### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Provide civic amenities such as landscaped boulevards, plazas, bus shelters, and the like.
2. Promote the use of sidewalk cafes.
3. Provide first floor/ground floor retail use.



Street furniture and bus shelter



Sidewalk Cafe

## D-2: Large Format and Corridor Commercial

### Best Practices & Models: Main Street at Exton- Exton, PA



Two story building anchors corner



Corner building with sidewalk cafe

#### Overview:

1. Areas along Cedar Crest Boulevard, Tilghman Street and Hamilton Boulevard could be re-shaped into mixed use, walkable places with a main street environment.

#### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Retrofit existing and design new shopping centers to be mixed use places.
2. Use two story buildings (minimum) to help form the street wall and an "outdoor room".
3. Permit on-street parking to calm traffic and buffer pedestrians on the sidewalk.



Streetscape with on-street parking



Street wall to street wall dimension: 63'-6"

## D-1/D-2: Campus/Large Format Commercial

Best Practices & Models: Easton Town Center (Columbus, OH)



Civic Plaza & McDonalds



First Floor Retail & Second Floor Offices

### **Overview:**

1. New town centers can be created to emulate a pre-1950's town or village type environment.

### **Recommendations & Best Practices:**

1. Position buildings close to sidewalks and create a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
2. Provide parks, plazas, and civic areas.
3. Provide residential uses above first floor retail.



Terminated Vista



Well-defined Crosswalks at Street Intersection

## D-1/D-2: Campus/Large Format Commercial

### Best Practices & Models: Mashpee Commons (Mashpee, MA)



A Retrofit Town Center



Entry Sign and Branding of Character

#### Overview:

1. Existing, underperforming shopping centers and strip shopping areas can be transformed into new pedestrian-oriented places.

#### Recommendations & Best Practices:

1. Retrofit existing commercial development by transforming auto-oriented centers into pedestrian-oriented places.
2. Create a streetscape environment.
3. Mix residential with commercial uses.
4. Provide pedestrian amenities.



Main Street Environment



Post Office as Civic Amenity

### E. Growth Management

The Township does not expect to need all of the growth capacity represented by the Future Character Areas in the next twenty to thirty years. However, taking the long-term view of land use is useful in guiding policy and development along the way. How and when this development pattern is achieved will depend on numerous factors, including the availability of land and infrastructure, natural resources, the housing market and economy. Growth Management is the ongoing process of managing these myriad factors, primarily through infrastructure investment and ordinance provisions, to achieve the desired outcome. Two of the greatest challenges in growth management are: 1) the ability to ensure adequate public infrastructure in a cost-effective, fiscally responsible manner; and 2) to ensure that the character of growth meets the quality and goals of the community, as expressed in this and other long range plans.

In terms of addressing the first challenge, the Township first needs to closely examine and plan for the infrastructure improvements discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, Circulation and Utilities, respectively. In many areas depicted on the Land Use Plan, particularly those within the growth area located in the northern tier, alternative scenarios for providing sewer and water must be assessed in terms of capacity, feasibility, and fiscal impact, before determining where and how it makes the most sense to provide it. These analyses should then be incorporated into a revised Township Sewage Facilities Plan. Before a zoning change is approved that may generate significant additional sewage flows, the applicant should be required to show the feasibility of providing sewage and water services. The actual formal adoption of a Sewage Facilities Plan may occur later. This process will allow lead time to negotiate and engineer needed regional and local improvements and capacities. Preferred alternatives should then be incorporated into a Capital Improvements Plan and subsequent annual budgets.

Similarly, transportation improvements that support new growth will require a cooperative approach with PennDOT, LVPC, and LVTA/LANTA. Further analysis, assessment and cooperation between all parties involved (including PennDOT, LVPC, and the Township) is critical in deciding which alternatives are feasible and in what timeframe. Establishing an Official Map that depicts where the Township plans for new road connections and/or community facilities will assist in relieving some volume on already congested corridors and ensuring adequate space for new and expanded public facilities, even if they are not needed immediately.

In regards to the second challenge, guiding the character of proposed growth to meet the stated goals and needs of the Township can also be managed through a variety of strategies, including innovative zoning techniques. These zoning strategies might include the creation of a Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District to coincide with the Growth Opportunity Areas or the allowance of Traditional Neighborhood Development as a Conditional Use in existing zoning districts (permitted if certain standards and criteria as outlined in the Zoning Ordinance are met. Some of these criteria may include:

- A Fiscal Impact Statement that demonstrates a positive or neutral impact on the Township and School District;
- Creation and Submission of a Manual of Design Guidelines in accordance with the MPC Article VII-A;

- The design of such TND could include standards and/or bonuses for development with higher densities and that require Township investment. Design Criteria may include:
  - A minimum tract area;
  - Minimum frontage along an Arterial roadway;
  - Provision of new connector roads as shown on a Township Official Map; and
  - Provision of land for community facilities and public open space as shown on a Township Official Map.
- Incorporation of density bonuses for elements of a plan that are particularly desirable to the Township.

*Incremental Growth*

While the long range growth pattern is depicted in the Future Character Areas and Land Use Plan, the path of incremental growth along the way will vary greatly depending upon the availability of land, the demand for redevelopment along existing corridors, availability and capacity of utilities and market demand for different types of development. Emphasis should be placed on the logical extension of infrastructure, starting with areas with existing or approved public sewer, per the current or future Township Act 537 Plan, redevelopment of existing areas, and new growth areas depicted on the Future Character Areas and Land Use Plan.

As based on the 2005 census estimate and discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, it is projected that approximately 4,636 persons and 1,892 housing units will be needed by 2030. Of these, 2,682 persons and 1,095 housing units are projected by 2020. Thus, any Plan needs to accommodate a minimum of 1,095 housing units and the corresponding nonresidential development. In reality, this will not be difficult in South Whitehall, as nearly half of this projected growth has already been accounted for as shown in Table 4-6.

**Table 4-6: Planned and approved residential units since 2005**

Status	Number of Units
Residential permits issued, 2006 - 6/2008:	222
Approved units:	263
Units under review:	36
Total Units accounted for as of 7/2008:	521

*Source: South Whitehall Township, Department of Community Development*

In addition, infill and resubdivision can be expected to occur in existing neighborhoods that will accommodate a small percentage of new growth. It is also assumed that as much as 10% of the projected housing units may be proposed within the rural areas, outside of the growth area. This sample plan could accommodate the projected number of units for 2020. Considering the unpredictable factors discussed at the introduction to this section, growth areas typically include more land, nearly twice as much, as is projected to be needed. This ensures ample space for new nonresidential and mixed-use development.

## F. Land Use Recommendations

1. *Develop and implement Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance amendments based upon the Proposed Character Areas Plan.* These character areas are intended to depict the long-term growth pattern desired in South Whitehall Township, a growth pattern that focuses on new growth areas and redevelopment in areas where the Township is prepared to support it through cost effective and efficient infrastructure.
2. *Incorporate mixed-uses into the Zoning Ordinance by:*
  - Incorporating village center and mixed-use techniques;
  - Promoting villages/hamlets as a form of cluster development (increase amount of open space traditionally incorporated into the existing villages);
  - Adopting a TND ordinance as an outright or overlay district;
  - Allowing Live-work units, corner stores, and mixed use buildings as permitted or conditional uses in all zoning districts;
  - Permitting a greater diversity in housing types
  - Minimizing single-use zones
  - Permitting accessory retail uses within business and industrial parks
3. *Preserve and enhance existing villages:*
  - Evaluate the use of overlay district zoning to protect and enhance existing villages.
  - Evaluate the use of overlay district zoning to expand the size of existing villages, while maintaining the character and increasing connectivity.
4. *Incorporate open space and conservation design techniques for greater preservation of open space.*
  - Provide more defined standards for open space design and use, by providing minimum standards for size, connectivity, percentage of active recreation, trails, etc.
  - Provide a cluster option for both sewer and nonsewered areas that preserves open space
  - Allow lot size averaging as a tool for diversifying housing and increasing flexible design options, while maintaining permissible densities.
  - Explore the concept of incorporating Minor Cluster Provisions.
5. *Incorporate innovative planning and design techniques for neighborhood design into the zoning ordinance:*
  - Evaluate the potential for incorporating features of Form-based Codes into the Zoning Ordinance and/or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
  - Assess appropriate uses and locations for flex zoning.
  - Reevaluate the usefulness of the R-10 Zoning District and assess PUD/PRD alternatives that permit higher density development with more sophisticated design standards.
  - Promoting the use of a Manual of Written and Graphic Design Guidelines in accordance with the MPC and incorporate general architectural guidelines.
  - Consider the use of Impact fees.



- Utilize the design guidelines included in this chapter as a basis for General Design Guidelines that are included as an appendix to the Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, or used in accordance with Article VII-A of the MPC.
6. *Increase walkability*
    - Consider developing a grant program to assist landowners to install new sidewalks as part of a Comprehensive Sidewalk Plan
    - Amend the Zoning Ordinance to: require sidewalks be installed on at least one side of the street in all new developments to connect existing and planned shopping, employment and residential areas; and to provide rigorous criteria for waivers.
    - Require trails and pathways as part of the required open space in both residential and nonresidential development, particularly in PRD, TND, and cluster/open space developments.
    - Develop and implement a Township wide open space and greenways network.
  7. *Evaluate the incorporation of techniques that encourage “Green Building”, LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development), and sources of renewable energy into the Township Code.*
  8. *Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance.* Consider establishing a TDR program in order to balance the Township’s development and preservation goals, while maintaining equity for its landowners. Transfer of Development Rights require “sending areas” and “receiving areas”. Sending areas should be defined as the Township’s natural and historic resources, including ridgelines and scenic areas, and lands within the T-1, T-2 and T-3 Areas. Receiving areas should be defined as those designated as T-4, T-5, or T-6, but especially those within the planned sewer service area.
  9. *Coordinate land use with transportation and utilities plans to ensure adequate capacity as the Township grows.*
  10. *Create an Official Map.*
  11. *Implement the Future Character Areas through Zoning Amendments in accordance with a Capital Improvements Plan that incorporates capital improvements for public sewer, public water, and transportation infrastructure.*





## **5. A Plan for Resource Protection: Natural Resources**

As expressed in the Municipalities Planning Code, Article VI, Section 301, a Comprehensive Plan shall include: “A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources. This includes, but is not limited to wetlands and aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, floodplains, unique natural areas and historic sites.”

Natural resources influence the development patterns of any jurisdiction and thus are a critical consideration in plans for future development patterns and overall build-out. Floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes play vital roles in the natural cycles of the landscape and often lend a scenic quality to an area, but present significant challenges to development and thus are best avoided. This is evident in South Whitehall where the Jordan Creek and Huckleberry Ridge together mark the boundary between the development of the south and the more rural, rolling hills of the north. However, as vacant land free of constraints becomes more scarce, an increasing amount of development is proposed in these challenging and sensitive areas. The best time to enact protections is when development pressure is low.

This chapter is organized into a discussion of the natural features and resources in the Township, existing conditions, and protections afforded by the Township and other regulatory agencies. The inventory includes floodplains; wetlands; topography and geology; soils; forest and vegetative cover; watersheds, streams and lakes; and critical habitat. The assessment of existing conditions forms the basis of future planning policy recommendations and implementation strategies.

Maps 5–1 and 5–2 illustrate the major terrain features and water resources in South Whitehall Township. **Map 5–1** depicts the following:

- Steep Slopes;
- Karst/Carbonate Geology;
- Woodlands; and
- Natural Areas (Lehigh Valley Natural Areas Inventory).

**Map 5–2** depicts:

- 100-year Floodplain;
- Wetlands;
- Hydric Soils; and
- Watersheds.

## **A. Water Resources**

### Watersheds and Surface Water

Rivers and streams are a vital source of environmental, recreational, and, historically in the Lehigh Valley, economic benefits. Maintaining a high quality of water is important, not just for the survival and propagation of fish and other species, but for our own recreational benefit as well as water supply. The region's rivers and streams are inherently linked and identified as part of what makes the Lehigh Valley and South Whitehall Township attractive and desirable places to live. Map 5-2 shows the streams and watersheds found in South Whitehall Township: the Coplay Creek Watershed, the Jordan Creek Watershed, and the Little Lehigh Creek Watershed. Within these watersheds lie the Jordan Creek, Cedar Creek and a small tributary of the Coplay Creek. All three drain into the Delaware River Basin.

The Clean Water Act establishes regulations that prohibit the degradation of streams and water quality. In accordance with these regulations, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has instituted a classification system that designates streams based on designated use and the water quality standards needed to propagate that use. Most streams in the Lehigh Valley are classified by aquatic life: Trout Stocking Fishes, Migratory Fishes, Cold Water Fishes and Warm Water Fishes.

In addition, certain streams are classified as Exceptional Value (EV) or High Quality (HQ). Exceptional Value (EV) streams are those that constitute an outstanding national, state, regional or local resource. These streams are granted special protection from potentially harmful activities. High Quality (HQ) streams are those that have excellent quality waters and environmental or other features that require special protection. Impaired streams are potentially eligible for federal and state improvement programs and grants designed to raise water quality.

In South Whitehall Township, the Jordan Creek is considered a Trout Stocking Fishes in terms of water quality with its tributaries ranked as High Quality Cold Water Fishes. In addition, a small portion of the Coplay tributary in the northeastern corner of the Township is also classified for Cold Water Fishes.

The Township has adopted Act 167 Stormwater Management plans for the Jordan, Coplay and Little Lehigh Creeks, aimed at minimizing drainage impacts on these creeks by controlling the amount and quality of runoff entering the watersheds.

### Floodplains

Flooding causes millions of dollars of property damage every year, destroying livelihoods and devastating communities. Floodplains are important for controlling flood waters and accommodating the natural shifting of watercourses and are protected at the federal level. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines the 100-year floodplain as the area

of flooding that has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. Alluvial soils, those soils carried and deposited downstream by water, are often used to help identify floodplain areas. In South Whitehall Township, floodplain areas located along the Jordan Creek, Little Cedar Creek and Cedar Creek, and their tributaries are subject to such flooding and have been mapped as 100-year floodplains.

South Whitehall currently has a floodplain ordinance regulating uses and development within floodplain areas, in compliance with the federal and state regulations. Model ordinances are available from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, who reviews subdivision and land development applications for conflicts with County policies.

### Wetlands

Wetlands are protected and valued for their ability to recharge groundwater supplies, improve water quality, store floodwaters, and provide wildlife habitat. Both the federal government and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regulate their use.

Wetlands are defined by the Pennsylvania DEP (25 PA Code, Chapter 105) as: “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.” Wetlands contain three main components: (1) water at or near the surface for significant parts of the year, (2) hydric soils, and (3) wetland indicator vegetation such as cattails and skunk cabbage.

Wetland data are limited to that provided by the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and the USGS. These sources identify only the largest wetland areas that are visible by aerial photography and thus site specific delineation is needed to properly identify existing wetlands. Developers are required to acquire permits from the Pennsylvania DEP, prior to disturbing these areas. In addition to federal or state permitting, many municipalities adopt their own protections. These regulations include requiring wetland delineations for all subdivision and land development proposals, enacting stricter disturbance limitations, extending protections to isolated wetlands and hydric soils that do not meet all of the criteria for wetlands, or requiring a wetland margin, a buffer/margin adjacent to the wetland areas that acts to slow stormwater runoff and filter pollutants before reaching the wetlands areas. The LVPC recommends that municipalities identify wetland areas and include provisions in their ordinances that: provide 100% protection for wetland areas, and include strategies to protect a 50-foot natural buffer around these areas.

South Whitehall has limited areas of wetlands delineated by the NWI. While primarily located along the banks of stream corridors, there is a larger grouping in the Crackersport area (See Natural Areas section for more information on this site), which feeds into Little Cedar Creek. The Township relies solely on state and federal regulations for wetlands protections.

### Hydric Soils

Hydric soils are those soils that form under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. They are often found on the fringes of floodplains, generally within or adjacent to wetlands. While, such soils are one of the three main indicators of wetland conditions (along with hydrophytic vegetation and wetland hydrology), they may also indicate former wetland locations, such as those that have been drained as part of an agricultural operation. Some municipalities choose to extend wetland or floodplain protections to adjacent areas with hydric soils due to their role in the water cycle and regeneration of ground water resources.

## **B. Land Resources**

### Soils

Soil suitability is an important factor in the determination of whether development is a feasible undertaking or will be too difficult to be worth the effort. Soils are generally classified into seven “agricultural capability” classes. Prime agricultural soils include the three top ranked classes based on USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service data and are shown on **Map 5-4** in the Agricultural Resources section of this plan. Four soil associations (soils with similar characteristics) exist in the Township:

- Trexler Association: found on broad ridges and less steep hills underlain by shale, containing moderately deep to deep, well draining soils.
- Montevallo-Trexler Association: located on the steep parts of hills, underlain by shale, containing moderately shallow to shallow, well drained soils;
- Ryder-Duffield Association: level to rolling areas underlain by shale and limestone, containing moderately deep to deep well-drained soils; and
- Washington-Duffield Association: broad, rolling areas underlain with limestone, containing deep, well drained soils.

All of these soils are primarily well draining and well suited for agricultural purposes. In fact, much of the Township is classified as having prime agricultural soil. Good agricultural soils also translate into soils that are suitable for other types of development, thus leading to the development pressure on agricultural areas. This is especially true of proposed development that would rely on on-site septic systems, such as in the Township’s northern tier area. The thickness of the soil, drainage characteristics, erosion potential, and slope factor all determine whether septic systems are feasible in an area.

### Karst/Carbonate Geology

Like most of the Lehigh Valley, South Whitehall Township is underlain with a significant amount of carbonate, or karst geology, meaning it is developed on limestone or dolomite rock. While this has spurred successful industries throughout the history of the region, karst is also known for sinkholes, caves and underground drainage of water due to dissolving rock. (Source: PA DEP) In the Lehigh Valley, particularly in urban areas, sink holes commonly cause severe property damage and disruption of utilities and roadways. While development in these areas cannot be avoided completely, requirements for special studies that identify areas of greater risk before locating development, and mitigating such risks can reduce potential hazards.

### Steep Slopes

Slopes with grades greater than 12% - 15% are generally considered steep. Not only does this make these areas more difficult to develop, but disturbance can lead to heavy runoff, increased soil erosion and heavy sedimentation in streams and water bodies. The steeper the slope, the greater the chance for negative impact on the surrounding environment. These odds increase when on-lot sewage treatment is improperly sited, as the grade does not allow for proper treatment. In addition, ridgelines are attributed scenic value that is desirable to retain.

For these reasons among others, many municipalities choose to regulate steep slopes by categorizing the type of slope and limiting the amount of disturbance permitted in each type. Typical categories classify slopes between 15% and 25% as steep or moderately steep slopes, which receive a moderate amount of protection, primarily through impervious and overall disturbance limitations. The second level includes slopes greater than 25% slope as very steep, and likewise permits less impervious coverage and overall disturbance. A third category of slopes addresses grades greater than 35%, where disturbance is often prohibited.

There is just over 1,000 acres of steep slope in South Whitehall Township, primarily located in the western corner of the Township and along the Huckleberry Ridge. Of these, 660 acres have slopes between 15% and 25%, and 435 acres have slopes of greater than 25%.

Currently, South Whitehall Township has no steep slope provisions in the Ordinances. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission recommends minimizing new development on slopes greater than 25%, and permitting a maximum of one dwelling unit per three (3) acres (where on-lot treatment is used), with enhanced stormwater and soil erosion standards for moderately steep slopes.

### Woodlands

Woodlands are considered important for many reasons: they provide habitat; contribute to clean air and clean water; they regulate climate; and stabilize soils and steep slopes, preventing erosion. Large, contiguous areas are considered necessary for a variety of wildlife habitats and, in conjunction with stream and riparian buffers, can form corridors for migrating wildlife and recreational trails. Woodland areas also tend to coincide with other vital natural resources such as first-order streams, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian buffers. Forested buffers have a high biological value. Woodlands are also economically important for harvesting of commercial timber.

Protection of woodland areas is often achieved through a tiered approach, where disturbance limitations are based upon the average size of the trees within the stand, with larger trees indicating a more mature forest. Mature forests and those that overlay with other resources, such as riparian buffers or steep slopes, would be afforded a higher protection level than a young forest with fewer large trees making up its canopy. Additional standards addressing timber harvesting, tree protection (for trees to remain), and tree replacement are also recommended.

#### Natural Areas Inventory Sites

The Natural Areas Inventory provides information on the location of rare, threatened, and endangered species, and known outstanding natural areas, whether floral, faunal and geologic, that present exemplary natural habitats. The Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory database (PNDI), which over the past 24 years has become the chief source of information on natural habitat types, sensitive plant and animal species (species of special concern).

Areas are categorized into Exceptional Natural Features, Top Priority Natural Areas, and Areas of Local Significance.

Located in South Whitehall, the Crackersport Ponds site is considered an area of Statewide Significance. The site is listed for supporting a “fair quality population of a PA-threatened shrub and rare herb species, that should survive despite fragmentation and encroachment from industrial uses and infrastructure including the Pennsylvania Turnpike”. The Natural Areas Summary Report concludes that the site could “potentially develop into a diverse forested wetland area”.

The Lehigh Valley 2030 recommends that such areas be given the highest level of protection through acquisitions and easements.<sup>1</sup>

### **C. Natural Resource Recommendations**

Unlike some Townships, South Whitehall does not have an abundance of natural resource constraints on development and those that do exist, tend to be concentrated geographically. This plan advocates that the Township’s profusion of open, unconstrained land, be considered an opportunity to provide quality neighborhoods, community spaces, and employment opportunities, and to protect those resources, whose value in terms of function and beauty are less easily quantifiable.

#### 1. Ordinance Amendments:

##### *A. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate Riparian Buffers protections*

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<sup>1</sup> LVPC, A Natural Areas Inventory of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, Pennsylvania-Update 2005, p.75.



One of the most effective tools in preserving and reclaiming the quality of waterways are riparian buffers. Considered vital in the protection and enhancement of water quality, riparian buffers are an area of vegetation maintained along streams and water bodies that serve as a transition between the aquatic and the terrestrial environments. They protect water quality primarily by slowing and reducing stormwater runoff that erodes stream banks, and removing contaminants, particularly nitrogen and phosphorous, before they reach the stream. Forested buffers improve wildlife habitat and water quality by maintaining cooler temperatures through shading, and minimizing damage from floodwaters. Viewed as part of comprehensive system, these functions can reduce the need for costly, built infrastructure and are thus considered a valued part of a community's "green infrastructure".

Beyond the important role riparian buffers play in preserving wildlife habitat, stormwater management, and water quality improvement, these buffers also provide great scenic and recreational value. Since riparian buffers follow stream corridors they serve as the links in a regional open space network or "greenway", providing opportunities for recreational trails and connections between other open space and cultural amenities.

The LVPC recommends a buffer of 100 feet for major streams and rivers, e.g., the Jordan Creek. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection also strongly encourages a 100-foot buffer for most streams and water bodies, and 300 feet for those of Exceptional Value (EV) and High Quality (HQ). The DEP is currently considering an update to its Chapter 102 regulations to require these buffers statewide. These buffers are shown on Map 5-2 for demonstration purposes.

*B. Consider incorporating the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission model Wellhead Protection ordinance to help ensure a reliable, future water supply.* The purpose of this ordinance is to protect surface and groundwater supplies and includes the riparian buffer provisions discussed above.

*C. Maintain Floodplain and Wetland Protections in keeping with Best Practices and models.* In addition to maintaining an up-to-date floodplain ordinance, the Township may also consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to provide Township specific wetland protections, for those wetlands not associated with a floodplain area. These protections may include wetland buffers of between 35 and 50 feet and limitations on development on hydric soils found adjacent to existing floodplains or wetlands.

*D. Provide a two-tiered approach to protecting steep slopes:*

- 1) For slopes between 15% and 25%, provide maximum disturbance and impervious limitations on lots with a minimum site area of one to three acres depending on the availability of public sewer and water. Establish more stringent construction standards for controlling stormwater and erosion, with every effort made to prevent or mitigate any negative impacts of the development on the slope and surrounding properties.
- 2) Prohibit development of slopes greater than 25%.

*E. Adopt standards for protecting woodlands, and protection/replacement of shade trees and shade tree canopy.*

- 1) Establish disturbance limitations for remaining woodland areas in the Township, based on a sliding scale that includes the overall size of the stand and the average size of trees within it. Provide additional standards for woodland areas located on or adjacent to steep slopes.
- 2) Adopt tree protection standards, particularly for specimen trees larger than 24" diameter at breast height.
- 3) Provide replacement standards for woodland and specimen trees that are removed as part of subdivision and land development plans.
- 4) Require street trees in all new development.

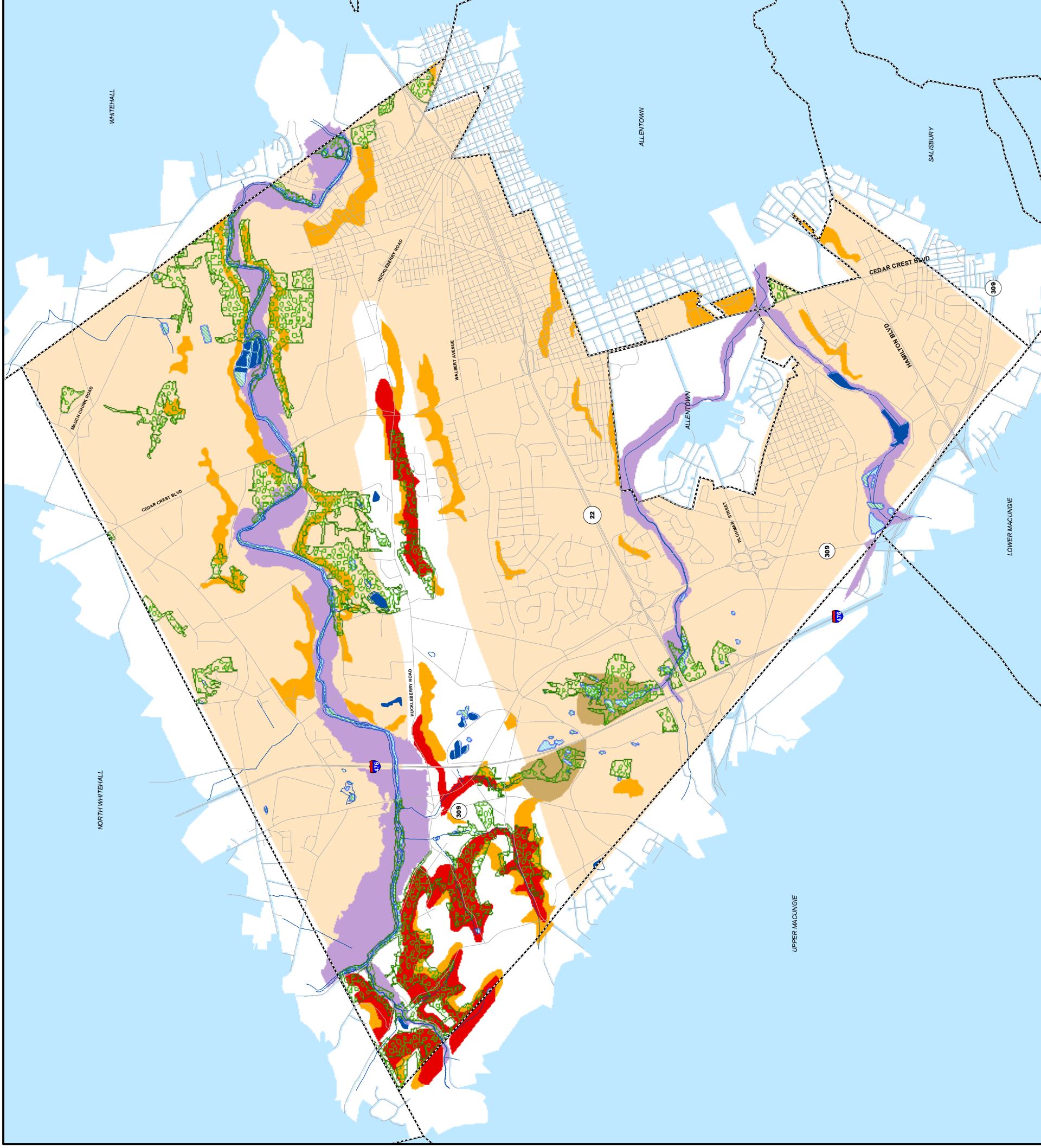
*F. Require additional investigation and studies for development proposed on sites that have underlying karst/carbonate geology.*

*G. Amend the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to require an Environmental Impact Assessment and Mitigation Report for certain developments.* This tool is commonly used to better assess and determine the impacts of development on the existing community and its resources, as well as potential mitigation strategies. Typically, the report is triggered and required by developments of a certain size and/or type (e.g., residential developments of five units or more or nonresidential development on 5 acres or larger).

*H. Establish additional limitations for development proposed in the designated Crackersport Ponds area and work with the County and LVPC on acquiring easements for this Natural Areas Inventory Site.*

2. *Support and invest in the regional greenways concept to link the Township's "green infrastructure", which could include Covered Bridge Park.* Proposed greenways should provide for connection between natural, agricultural and historic resources. The LVPC Comprehensive Plan for 2030 conceptually depicts the Jordan Creek and surrounding area as a "Major Park and Open Space Area."
3. *Partner with variety of public and private agencies to advance conservation efforts for natural resources.*
4. *Reactivate the South Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Committee.* This Committee could take an advisory role in the review of applications to modify the provisions for environmental regulations, such as those proposed above. Recommendations would be provided to appropriate decision-making body.

# Natural Resources



## Legend

- 100-Year Floodplains
- Hydric Soils
- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams
- Woodlands
- Wetlands
- Natural Area Inventory Sites
- Karst Geology
- Slope 15% - 25%
- Slope 25% +



Data Sources:  
 Base Features: Lehigh County GIS, 2004  
 Wetlands: National Wetlands Inventory  
 Floodplains: FEMA

## Map 5-1 Natural Resources

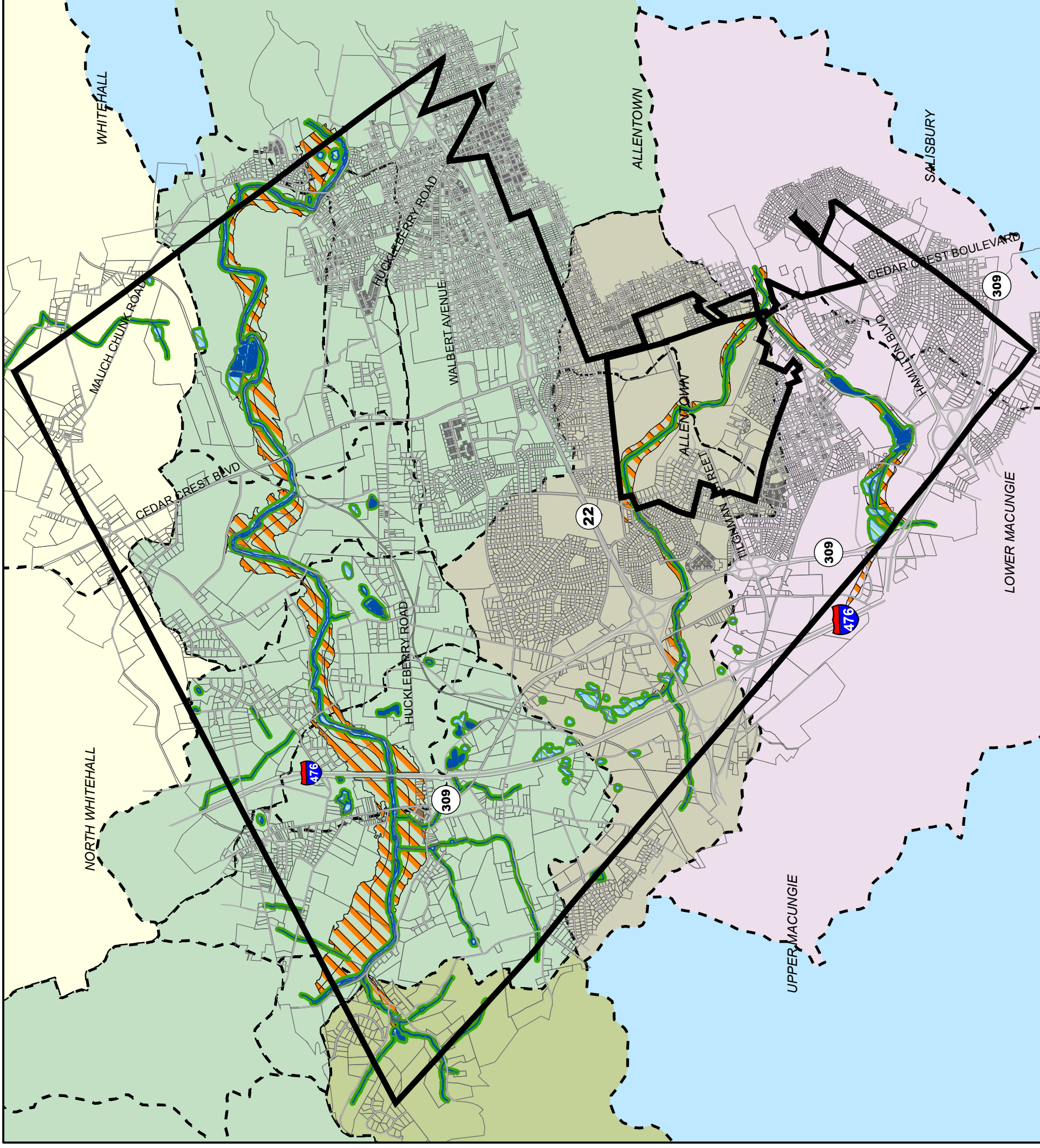
Comprehensive Plan  
 South Whitehall Township  
 Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:  
 Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc.  
 Town Planners & Landscape Architects  
 18 West Chestnut Street  
 West Chester, PA 19380

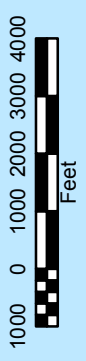
January 24, 2008; March 20, 2008;  
 April 17, 2008; August 21, 2008



# Water Resources



- Legend**
- Streams
  - Lakes & Ponds
  - Wetlands
  - Hydric Soils
  - 100 ft. Riparian Buffer
- Watersheds**
- Cedar Creek
  - Coplay Creek
  - Hassen Creek
  - Jordan Creek
  - Little Cedar Creek
  - 100-Year Floodplains



Data Sources:  
 Base Features: Lehigh County GIS, 2004;  
 Wetlands: National Wetlands Inventory  
 Floodplains: FEMA; Hydric Soils: USDA NRCS, SSURGO, 2007; Watersheds: Environmental Resources Research Institute, 1997

## Map 5-2 Water Resources

Comprehensive Plan  
 South Whitehall Township  
 Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:  
 Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc.  
 Town Planners & Landscape Architects  
 18 West Chestnut Street  
 West Chester, PA 19380  
 June 19, 2008; August 21, 2008





## **5. A Plan for Resource Protection: Historic Resources**

The goal of Historic Resource protection is to retain the unique features, structures, and sites that symbolize a community's common heritage for enjoyment by present and future generations. The MPC mandates the inclusion of a Plan for Historic Resource Protection in the Comprehensive Plan (Section 301(6)) as well as the directive that zoning ordinances provide such protections (Sections 603(g), 604 and 605).

New development can present an opportunity to incorporate and complement the character of a place, it is often used to degrade, alter, or destroy historic features. This section provides a draft inventory of the Township's historic resources, options for protection available to and by the Township and other agencies, and the Township's goals and objectives for a more robust historic preservation effort in the future.

### *Historic Resources- Existing Inventory*

Corresponding to the categories used by the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation (discussed further below), the inventory is organized into the following classifications: National Register of Historic Places Sites, Sites Eligible for the National Register, and Locally Significant Sites.

The National Register of Historic Places was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In Pennsylvania, the program is administered by the Bureau for Historic Preservation, a department within the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC). Properties listed on the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The program is designed to assist state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions. (Source: Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission)

National Register properties are evaluated and selected according to uniform criteria. These criteria include:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history;

- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in the past;
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; and
- D. Property has yielded or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The PHMC’s Bureau for Historic Preservation provides services to assist in the National Register process, including technical assistance in preparing National Register nominations, guidance on conducting architectural and historic surveys, evaluation of National Register eligibility, and nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historic Preservation Board reviews all nominations. If approved, the nomination is then sent to the National Park Service, which either approves or denies the nomination. If approved, it is entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

There are four Sites and Structures in South Whitehall Township listed on the National Register of Historic Places as shown in **Table 5-1** and shown on **Map 5-3**.

**Table 5-1: Historic Sites & Structures Listed on the National Register of Historic Places**

ID*	Property	Date Constructed
1	Wehr Covered Bridge	1841
2	Guth Covered Bridge	1882
3	Haines Grist Mill	1905
4	Dorneyville Crossroads Settlement	

\* Locator label found on Map 5-3

Historic resources of Local Significance are those that have not been nominated for the National Register or may need further evaluation for determination of eligibility. A resource that meets any one of the four eligibility criteria is given a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) by the Bureau for Historic Preservation. That resource, however, might never obtain a listing on the National Register. There are currently no resources with a Determination of Eligibility in South Whitehall Township.

In reality, most historic structures are not exceptional examples of a particular style or period architecture, nor can they claim that “George Washington slept here”. Yet these structures greatly contribute to the overall experience of a place and provide valuable insight into its intricacies and idiosyncrasies. So-called vernacular architecture tells a more local story, making history more accessible. Materials and slight alterations to particular styles may indicate local preferences for materials and climate control; experienced its heyday or demonstrate how local communities made a living. In South Whitehall, this type of resource



can be found in the covered bridges, agricultural buildings, lime kilns, mills, and other features found throughout the area.

**Table 5-2** is an initial inventory Historic Resources of Local Significance. The first five sites were recognized by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission as early as 1970, in its Regional Recreation and Open Space Plan- Historic Structures and Sites.<sup>1</sup> Table 5-3 reflects other sites that have not been evaluated, but that are valued by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and referenced in publications such as *South Whitehall Then and Now 1776-1976*.<sup>2</sup> This particular book, developed in 1976 to celebrate the bicentennial of the Township, is a tremendous resource reflecting the historic roots of the Township.

**Table 5-2: Locally Important Historic Sites & Structures**

ID* Property	Date Built	Comments
5 Peter Troxel House	1744	Commonly believed to be the oldest existing dwelling in Lehigh County
6 Lime Kilns		
7 Romig's Mill (Saeger's Mill)	1842	
8 Guth House	1745	
9 Iron Bridge	1857	

Source: LVPC (formerly JPC Lehigh Northampton Counties)

**Table 5-3: Locally Important Historic Sites & Structures to be Evaluated**

ID	Property	ID	Property
10	Schadt House	24	Grace Evangelical Congregational Church
11	Lichtenwalner House	25	Cedar Union Church
12	Runk House	26	Bastian's Hotel
13	Leh House	27	Dorney Baking Co.
14	Grouse Hall	28	Kratzer School House
15	Blumer Home	29	Guthsville
16	Daniel Troxel House	30	Orefield
17	Schanz-Miller Home	31	Mechanicsville
18	Kern-Haas House		
19	Deily-Lapp House		
20	Guth-Tait House		
21	1800 Home		
22	Jordan Evangelical Lutheran Church		
23	Jordan United Church of Christ		

<sup>1</sup> JPC Lehigh-Northampton Counties, 1970. "Regional Recreation and Open Space Plan- Historic Structures and Sites."

<sup>2</sup> Wieand, Paul R., 1976. *South Whitehall Then and Now 1776 –1997*.

There are two important items to note regarding the preceding lists. First, these lists are not comprehensive, but may and should grow as additional structures come to the attention of the Township, are evaluated at the 50-year mark, or are considered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Secondly, designation on the National Register of Historic Places does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage or dispose of property, and thus does not guarantee that a structure will be protected or even maintained. However, it often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable parts of our communities. Designation also provides a variety of benefits to assist property owners in protecting a designated resource. These include tax credits for appropriate rehabilitation and renovation, tax deductions for donation of easements, technical assistance, and access to grants and other sources of funding when available.

In addition to the National Register and MPC, another important piece of state legislation specifically enables historic resource protection at the local level. Pennsylvania Act 167 of 1961 (the Historic District Act) "authorizes counties, cities, boroughs, incorporated towns and townships to create historic districts within their boundaries providing for the appointment of Boards of Historical Architectural Review; empowering governing bodies to protect the distinctive historical character of these districts and to regulate the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings within the historic districts."

Under Act 167 of 1961, municipalities have the authority to enact local historic regulations, within historic districts, as it sees fit. Historic zoning often takes the form of a Historic Zoning Overlay District, where ordinance provisions provide standards for potential adaptive reuse of the resources, permissible façade treatments, and surrounding properties. Applications pertaining to historic resources are reviewed by an Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB), which then makes a recommendation to the governing body. There are currently no historic districts in South Whitehall Township and no preservation ordinance provisions.

#### Historic Preservation Recommendations:

Though not exhaustive, this initial inventory does demonstrate that the Township has a wealth of historic resources to consider going forward. The majority of these sites of interest are located in the northern tier, where the future development patterns are yet to be determined. The next ten to twenty years will present critical opportunities to preserve valued resources from the past and incorporate them into assets for the Township's future. Setting preservation goals and strategies before the development occurs gives the Township an opportunity to be proactive in prioritizing its preservation priorities and safeguards the legacy of South Whitehall Township for future generations.

There are several strategies that the Township and community can take to preserve these resources and protect the character of the area:

1. *Increase historic preservation awareness and education.*

Provide access to education and encourage a greater awareness of the value of historic resources to the community's identity and history. This awareness should focus on preservation's role in maintaining a unique character and identity of South Whitehall, but also its contribution to economic viability through adaptive reuse and tourism.

2. *Conduct an inventory of historic sites and structures in the Township.*

The inventory should categorize the resources and include a preliminary ranking of sites and structures that are locally important and that may be eligible for the National Register. An initial inventory is included in this chapter. Seek additional funding and technical assistance from the National Park Service, PHMC, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and other agencies, while tapping local historic societies and residents for additional documentation. This inventory can be used as a tool for reviewing subdivision and land development applications or, ideally, as the framework for a historic preservation ordinance.

3. *Consider adopting an Historic Preservation Ordinance.*

In considering a Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Township should evaluate the benefits of an ordinance that uses a tiered approach to place higher protections on resources of higher value. Resources are prioritized based on a developed ranking system that takes into account the type of resource (residential, commercial, rural, industrial, etc.), the structural and historic integrity of a structure, the degree to which it is threatened by development, economic decline, and link to the community, among others. The highest tier would be comprised of National and State designated properties and buildings. The mid and lower tiers could be determined as part of the historic sites and structures inventory. This would permit the Township to focus on protecting resources that have the greatest value to the community, while balancing them with new development.

Provisions that might be included in a Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- Require review prior to demolition permits.
- Prohibit demolition by neglect.
- Include provisions for alteration of historic resources.
- Include provisions for use and adaptive re-use of historic resources.
- Incentives for the preservation of historic resources. One option to achieve this is through Open Space and Cluster Development, whereby historic resources can be incorporated into open space set asides with public access.

As part of developing the Ordinance, the Township would create a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) to administer design standards and guidelines and provide recommendations to the Township Planning Commission.

4. *Encourage rehabilitation of existing buildings.* As discussed in Chapter 6, the Township is expected to need approximately 1,500 new housing units over the next 15 years. A

small percentage of these can be achieved through rehabilitation. Rehabilitation not only allows for the continued viability of older buildings, which tend to be outdated in terms of the modern amenities, but also prevents blight and provides alternatives to the large lot single-family detached dwellings that dominate the Lehigh Valley outside of the Cities.

In order to encourage rehabilitation and renovation, some municipalities partner with local banks or other partners to offer low or no interest loans to residents. The Township may consider permitting the conversion of older single-family detached dwellings into multifamily dwellings as a conditional use or special exception in order to encourage their continued viability and add to the variety of housing available.

5. *Encourage adaptive reuse.* One of the greatest challenges to historic preservation is maintaining the viability of older structures. A proven technique is to permit a greater range of uses in historic buildings, especially if located in otherwise single-use districts. With this approach, a barn can be converted to a bed and breakfast, office, or antique shop, as long as other provisions for parking and compatibility with surrounding neighborhood are adhered to. Other examples of reuse that are often seen today is the reuse of a farmhouse as a community center or clubhouse in new residential subdivisions. Other features, such as walls and fences, can also be incorporated alongside new development. Adaptive reuse should be strongly encouraged in the ordinance and the feasibility of adaptive reuse examined by the landowner prior to demolition. The ultimate decision, however, is in the hands of the property owner.
6. *Incorporate historic properties into a South Whitehall Township Greenway Network*, in conjunction with other protected natural and scenic resources where location is feasible. Many historic structures are found adjacent to the Jordan Creek, an area of high interest for both future development and future preservation and conservation. Part of any zoning that permits higher density development, such as Traditional Neighborhood Development, should stipulate that historic resources should be preserved and maintained. South Whitehall Township could encourage property owners to consider adaptive reuse as an alternative to demolition.
7. *Consider designating historic properties as “sending areas” in a Transfer of Development Rights program.*
8. *Consider adopting overlay zoning districts over existing villages for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the unique character found there.* The overlay district would permit context sensitive infill and expansion of the villages.

# Historic Resources

- Legend**
- Historic Resources**
- National Register Listed
  - Locally Significant
  - Parcels
  - Lakes & Ponds
  - Streams
  - Municipal Boundaries

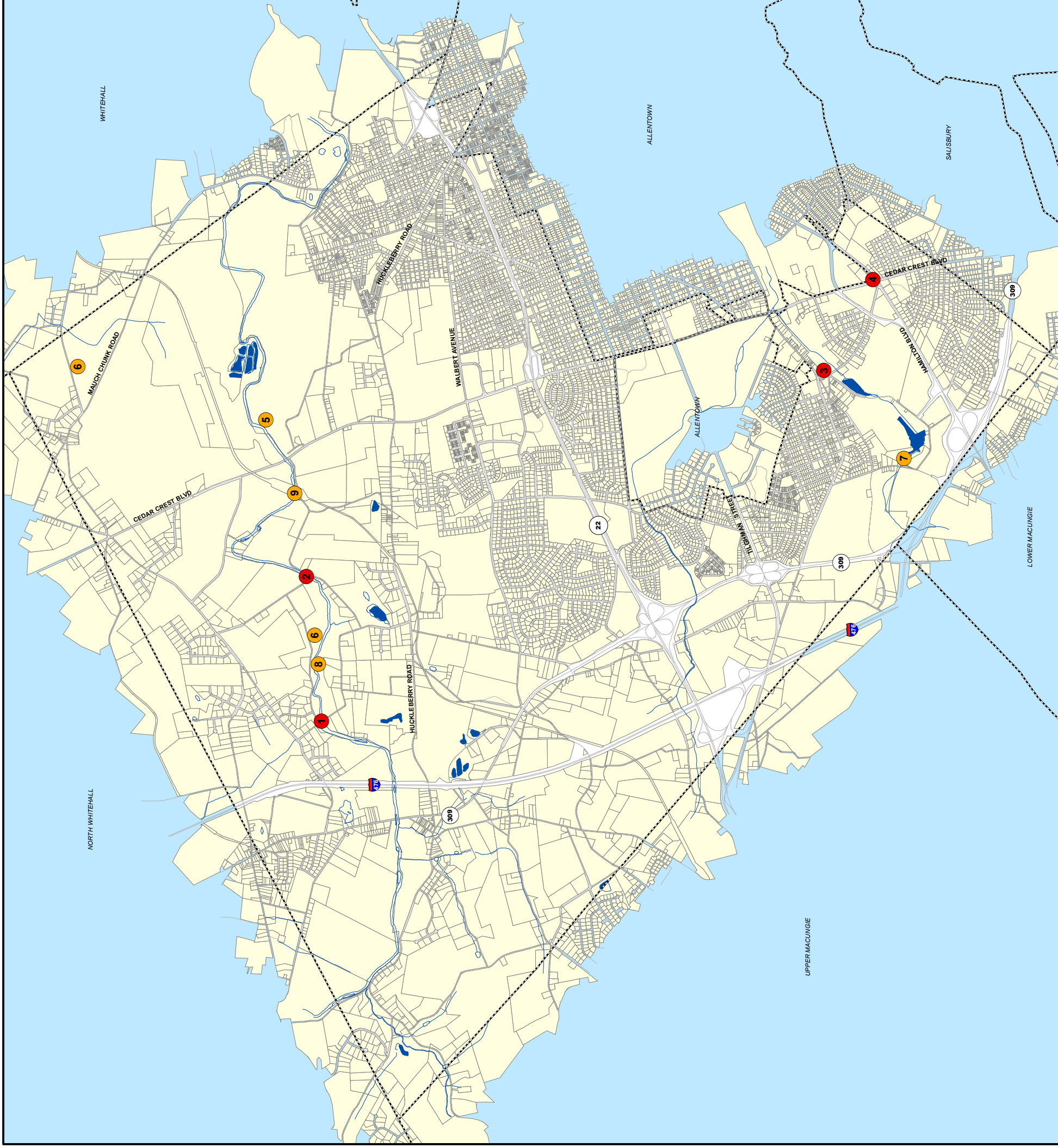


Data Sources:  
Base Features: Lehigh County GIS, 2004  
Wetlands: National Wetlands Inventory  
Floodplains: FEMA

## Map 5-3 Historic Resources

Comprehensive Plan  
South Whitehall Township  
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:  
Thomas Comitella Associates, Inc.  
Town Planners & Landscape Architects  
18 West Chestnut Street  
West Chester, PA 19380  
January 24, 2008; March 20, 2008







## **5. A Plan for Resource Protection: Agricultural Resources**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article VI, Section 301, states that a Comprehensive Plan shall include: “A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources. This includes, but is not limited to wetlands and aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, floodplains, unique natural areas and historic sites.” The MPC further promotes and defines these concepts Article VI- Zoning, when it states that:

- Zoning ordinances shall protect prime agricultural land and may promote the establishment of agricultural security areas (603.(g)(1));
- Zoning ordinances shall encourage the continuity, development and viability of agricultural operations. (603.(h));
- Zoning ordinances shall be designed to preserve prime agriculture and farmland considering topography, soil type and classification, and present use. (604.(3))

In South Whitehall Township, farming and agriculture have been an integral part of the history and economy, contributing to the rural character found north of the Huckleberry Ridge that many residents continue to identify with today. However, as the face of the Township and even the industry itself change, the degree and presence of agriculture in the Township’s future is uncertain. In accordance with Acts 515 and 319, farmland assessment accounts for nearly 3,365.47 acres of the Township, 30% of its 11,000 acres. Anecdotally, the Steering Committee believes that much of the farmland in the Township is not farmed by the landowner, but is leased out to other farmers. **Map 5-4** shows the location of Prime Agricultural Soils (defined as Classes I, II, and III soils) in South Whitehall Township. Soil data is managed by the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Based on this data South Whitehall Township has 6,138 acres of prime soils. More than forty percent of this area, nearly 2,630 acres, has been converted to urban uses. Though scattered throughout the municipality, the largest remaining undeveloped and contiguous concentration is located in the northeast corner of the Township, north of Huckleberry Ridge. These same soils are also highly suitable to development and thus contribute to direct competition between farming and suburban expansion. Thus far, suburban development in the northern tier of the Township has been limited by zoning, the lack of public infrastructure, and the individual choices of large landowners, but these factors alone will not prevent the loss of agriculture.

### **Farmland Preservation in the Lehigh Valley**

As new housing and commercial strips replace rural landscapes, farmland and open space, municipalities have become increasingly interested in farmland preservation. The benefits of farmland and farmland preservation go beyond the obvious scenic and rural qualities. Preserving farmland allows for open space to be maintained without taking it off of the tax rolls or increasing the municipal maintenance burdens as direct fee-simple acquisition of open space does. No additional infrastructure is needed to maintain the farm as a working property, as new development would, and preserved farmland does not increase the student population, enabling property taxes to remain low. In fact, according to a Penn State University study, agriculture typically pays more in taxes than is required in expenditures and therefore is more cost-effective for a municipality than residential development. Finally, there are the benefits of supporting local food sources, having access to local, fresh foods and the security of knowing where your food came from.

However, preserving farmland is not inexpensive and requires a significant commitment from local residents and leaders, with regional and state support. Though the practice of agriculture is changing with the rise of small scale, specialty farms, traditional agriculture is most successful when large, contiguous areas of land are kept in use; processing, distribution and other support activities are clustered nearby, protected from the encroachment of urban development; and access to markets remains high.

The primary tools available for farmland preservation in the Lehigh Valley include Agriculture Security Areas (ASAs), the purchase of development rights/conservation easements, and agricultural protection zoning (APZ). Enabled under Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Act 43 of 1981, Agricultural Security Areas represent the first step towards farmland preservation at the local municipal level. ASAs represent an agreement between a municipality and landowner that both parties intend for agriculture and farming to continue to be viable in the future. Municipalities agree to support agriculture by not passing nuisance laws that would encroach on daily farming operations and are restricted in their ability to condemn property in an ASA for public uses, such as rights-of-way. A minimum of 250 acres is needed to form an ASA. However, these acres do not need to be contiguous and may even be jointly achieved through partnering nonadjacent municipalities.

Farms located in ASAs of at least 500 acres are eligible to apply for conservation easements through the Lehigh County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. This nine-member board works with the Bureau of Land Preservation to purchase the development rights on a property, and thus place it under a conservation easement. A conservation easement legally guarantees that the land will remain in agricultural use, permitting the landowner to continue normal farming activities. In order for a farm to be eligible to apply for farmland preservation at the County level, the farm must be:

- In an existing ASA that is a minimum of 500 acres
- Be contiguous acreage of at least 50 acres in size unless the tract is at least 10 acres in size and is either used for a crop unique to the area or is contiguous to a property previously preserved with an agricultural conservation easement.
- Have at least 50% of the soils on the property in soil capability classes I-IV (as defined by the Lehigh County Soil Survey) and be available for agricultural production.
- Contains the greater of 50% or 10 acres of harvested cropland, pasture or grazing land.



In determining which farms are preserved, the Agricultural Land Preservation Board ranks submitted applications according to a ranking system. Points are assigned for criteria such as: prime agricultural soils, size of the farm, whether the farm is located in a County designated Farmland Preservation Area, proximity to other preserved land and farms, township commitment to farmland preservation through agricultural zoning, and easement purchase price per acre.

At the beginning of 2008, the Board had preserved 220 farms covering 18,009 acres in the County. As of June 2008, there were 18,222 acres preserved on 223 farms across the County (Source: Jeff Zehr, Lehigh County Farmland Preservation Specialist). **Table 5-4** shows Farmland Preserved in Lehigh County by municipality as of December 2007.

**Table 5-4: Preserved Farms by Municipality**

Township	Number of Farms*	Acreage Preserved**
1 Lynn	69	5,755.20
2 Weisenberg	44	3,879.20
3 Lower Milford	36	2,779.20
4 Heidelberg	30	2,449.60
5 Upper Macungie	8	744.90
6 Lowhill	5	516.90
7 Lower Macungie	6	448.00
8 Washington	3	416.90
9 Upper Milford	9	355.80
10 Upper Saucon	7	311.70
11 North Whitehall	2	238.90
12 South Whitehall	1	70.20
13 Albany Twp., Berks County (land assessed in Lehigh County)	0	19.04
14 Alburtis Borough***	0	18.00
15 Springfield Twp., Bucks Co.(land assessed in Lehigh County)	0	6.35
Total	220	18,009.89

Source: Lehigh County, Bureau of Agricultural Land Preservation  
 ([http://www.lehighcounty.org/Land/land.cfm?doc=land\\_preserved.htm](http://www.lehighcounty.org/Land/land.cfm?doc=land_preserved.htm), accessed May 6, 2008)

Currently, South Whitehall Township has one farm enrolled in the County's Conservation Easement program, with a second farm straddling the boundary of North Whitehall Township. These farms are part of noncontiguous ASAs with the adjoining townships.

Agricultural protection zoning (APZ) is another strategy used by municipalities interested in farmland preservation. In contrast to typical zoning classifications designed to permit development, APZ proposes to protect a natural resource: prime agricultural soils. To accomplish its purpose, APZ severely limits the amount of development permitted on land within the district and prohibits uses incompatible with agriculture (i.e., other than farm residences, housing for laborers, and accessory uses). Adoption of such a strategy requires thorough planning documentation and community support. According to the LVPC, APZ has not been popular in the Lehigh Valley, but successful models can be found in Heidelberg and Lynn townships.

### **South Whitehall Township**

The steering committee for the South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan has expressed a desire to explore farmland preservation measures. This is no surprise since in past surveys of the Lehigh Valley, voters gave a 91% favorable attitude towards preserving farmland. (Source: LVPC Comprehensive Plan) However, this desire for preservation needs to be balanced with the advantages and disadvantages of undertaking such a program.

From a regional perspective, the Township's access to transportation corridors, adjacency to Allentown, and existing suburban development to the east, west and south renders South Whitehall a logical place for new growth. Because of these factors and others, farms in South Whitehall could be at a disadvantage in the County's competitive ranking system. Additionally, because land values in the Township reflect its location, the County's current cap for purchasing easements of \$6,000 per acre may require undervaluing the land, and be undesirable to landowners.

This line of thinking is reflected in the Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan and its designated Farmland Preservation Areas. The greatest concentration of these areas are found in Lynn, Heidelberg, Weisenberg, and Lower Milford Townships in Lehigh County, and Plainfield, Washington, Lower Mt. Bethel, and Upper Mt. Bethel Townships in Northampton County. In general, these areas represent those that are farthest removed from the urban core, thus decreasing the opportunities for mutual conflict with other development and where there is a high likelihood of being placed under an ASA in the future. As such, these areas represent the best use of limited funding for farmland preservation. South Whitehall Township's northern tier is considered a Rural Development Area. As such, farming is included in the list of recommended uses in the area.

Successful farmland preservation requires more than preserving the land base. Supportive public policy, training and networking opportunities to draw young farmers into the aging industry, and access to agriculture support businesses and developing markets are all needed if the agriculture industry is to survive and flourish. Many of these strategies need to be undertaken on a regional level and cannot be achieved by South Whitehall Township alone. However, designation of an ASA is a strategy that the Township could consider (with willing farmers) at minimal cost and would increase a farmer's eligibility for preservation at the County level.

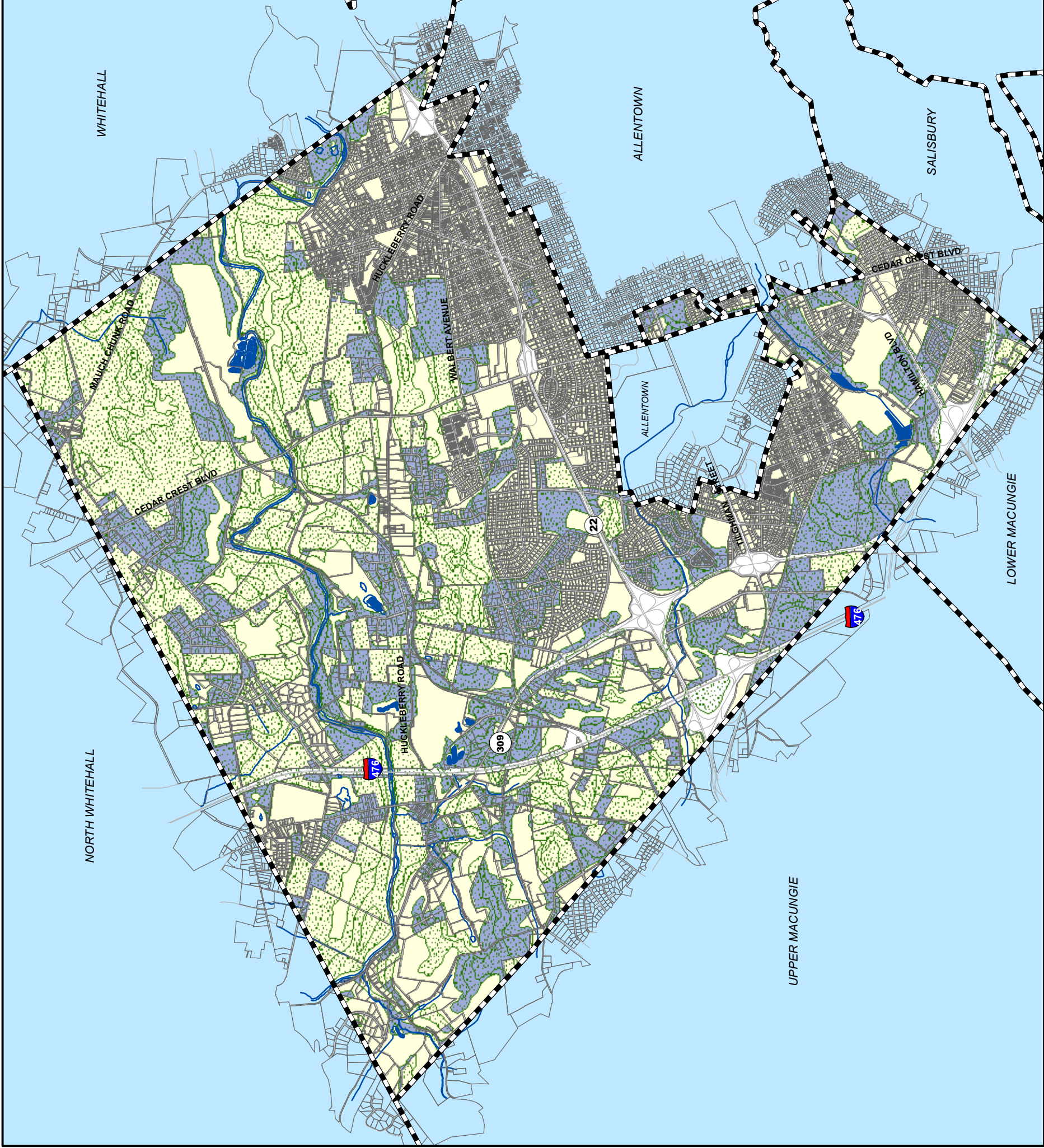
To seriously consider farmland preservation, the Township should conduct a community survey to assess the support of Township residents for farmland preservation, and more importantly their willingness to use taxpayer funds in these efforts. If the results of such a survey are positive and the Township wants to formally pursue farmland preservation, then the Township may consider working with existing farmers to develop an agricultural security area(s) and encourage these landowners to apply for preservation through the County. For better chances of success, farms should be chosen that are appropriate and compatible with nearby development. Horse farms and smaller specialty farms may be more appropriate than large production farms, especially in the T-3 Areas, though some “urban farms” or community gardening could be appropriate in T-4 Areas as well.

### **Agricultural Preservation Considerations**






- 4.1 *Assess the public's view on farmland preservation and the use of taxpayer money to preserve more farms in South Whitehall Township.*
- 4.2 *Consider a municipal farmland preservation program through purchase of development rights (conservation easements).*
- 4.3 *Work with the County and State to facilitate farmland preservation measures.*
- 4.4 *Revise Township ordinances to ensure they support the normal operations of agricultural uses by:*
  - amending nuisance provisions that infringe on a farmers' ability to perform necessary functions;
  - requiring agricultural buffers to ensure residential areas do not encroach on agriculture;
  - permitting agriculture support businesses in agricultural areas.
- 4.5 *Provide education and outreach materials to farming and non-farming residents about the importance of farming to the Township and what it means to live near a farm.*



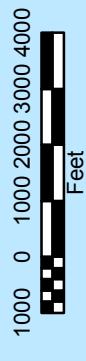
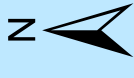
# Prime Agricultural Soils



## Legend

-  Prime Agricultural Soils (Classes 1, 2, and 3)
-  Urban Development on Prime Agricultural Soils\*
-  Parcels
-  Streams
-  Lakes & Ponds

\*Note: "Urban development" is defined as parcels in residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational (i.e. tax exempt) land use as designated by the county tax parcel data.



Data Sources:  
 Base Features: Lehigh County GIS, 2004  
 Wetlands: National Wetlands Inventory  
 Floodplains: FEMA

## Map 5-4 Prime Agricultural Soils

Comprehensive Plan  
 South Whitehall Township  
 Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:  
 Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc.  
 Town Planners & Landscape Architects  
 18 West Chestnut Street  
 West Chester, PA 19380

July 17, 2008; August 21, 2008





## 6. A Plan for Housing

This chapter is intended to give an overview of the Township's housing stock, and provide recommendations for accommodating future population through residential development. The MPC Section 301(a)(2.1) requires that the housing component of the Comprehensive Plan provide:

“A Plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.”

The MPC also states that the Township shall ensure a mix of dwelling types. Section 604(4) requires the Municipality to provide:

“For the use of land within the municipality for residential housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements, mobile homes and mobile home parks...”

This chapter is divided into a profile of the existing housing stock, with an examination of growth trends, current composition and condition, followed by an overview of housing affordability within the Township. Finally, recommendations for achieving the Township's housing goals are presented.

### A. Existing Housing Inventory

An analysis of the existing Census data available for South Whitehall Township reveals the following:

- Between 1990 and 2000, the Township's housing stock grew from 6,689 to 7,154 housing units, a growth rate of 6.95%.
- This rate is higher than the rate of population growth and confirms the national trend towards smaller households (2.45 persons per household).

- During this same period the County experienced an 8.9% growth rate for a total of 128,910 housing units in 2000. The Commonwealth had only a 6.3% increase in housing units, less than either the Township or the County.
- By far the greatest proportion of housing units in the Township are single-family units (86%), including both detached and attached. Though there may be a range in lot and house sizes, the overall result is a lack of diversity in housing units and types (**Table 6-1**) to meet the needs of residents.
- Multi-family units increased slightly between 1990 and 2000, while the number of mobile home units remained the same.
- Between 2000 and 2007, there were 732 building permits issued for new housing units (**Table 6-2**). During that time, 2005 and 2006 saw the greatest number of permits issued. There was a 20% decrease between 2006 and 2007.

**Table 6-1: Housing Types, 1990 & 2000**

	Single-Family (Detached and attached)		Multi-Family (all types)		Mobile Homes	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>South Whitehall</b>	89.2%	86.1%	9.5%	13.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Lehigh County	70.3%	71.9%	25.9%	25.6%	3.5%	2.5%
Pennsylvania	71.8%	73.8%	21.7%	21.2%	6.4%	4.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LVPC

**Table 6-2: Approved Residential Units- South Whitehall Township, 2000- present**

Year	Permits	Year	Permits
2000-	65	2004-	103
2001-	67	2005-	135
2002-	93	2006-	107
2003-	76	2007-	86

Source: LVPC, South Whitehall Township

***B. Ownership and Vacancy Rates***

As stated by the LVPC, home ownership “is positively linked to family stability, improved property maintenance, improved residential satisfaction, increased wealth, and increased civic participation.”



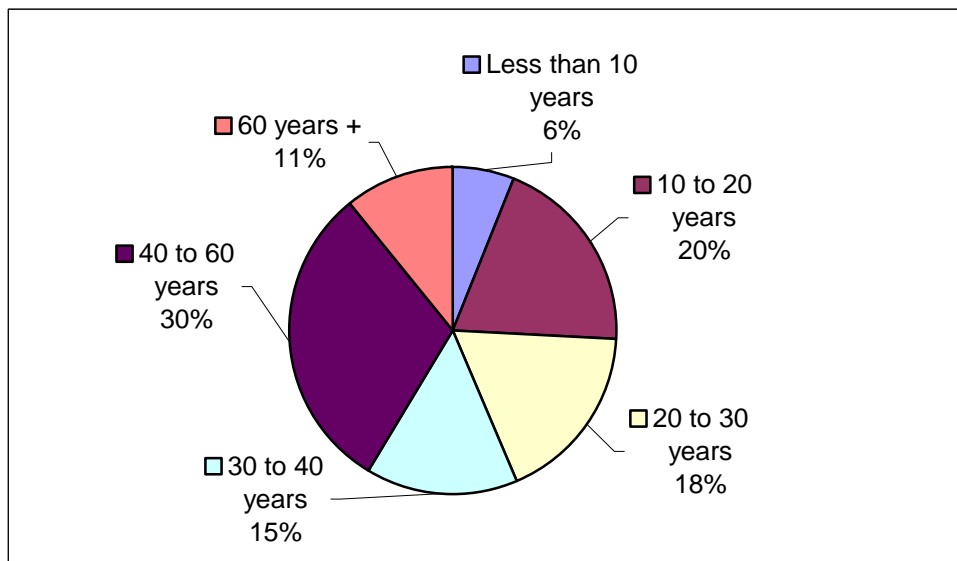
- The homeownership rate in South Whitehall Township in 2000 was 82.5%, significantly higher than both the region (70.9%), and the Commonwealth (71.5). The Township is similar to the rates in the surrounding Townships.
- If the benchmark of 6% represents a low vacancy rate, South Whitehall Township has an exceptionally low rate of 2.9%. This compares to 5.9% in the Lehigh Valley and 9.0% across the state. Many Boroughs and cities within the region averaged a vacancy rate of more than double that South Whitehall Township.

C. Condition of the Existing Housing Stock

Understanding the condition of the housing stock is important for several reasons. Housing in poor condition will likely need renovation in the future in order to avoid becoming blighted and is generally more expensive to maintain. Concentrations of older, neglected housing stock usually indicates other social and economic problems in the neighborhood. On the other hand, newer housing and housing in good condition will continue to be available to existing and anticipated residents for years to come.

The majority of housing in the Township has been built within the past 40 years (**Figure 6-3**). This is on par with the median for the County as a whole. However, as noted by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 90% of all new housing is built in the suburban and rural townships, and thus the housing stock in the Townships overall is in better repair than within the region's cities.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 6-3: Age of Structure**



Source: US Census 2000

<sup>1</sup> LVPC, An Affordable Housing Assessment of the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania (2004).

In lieu of a comprehensive assessment of housing in South Whitehall Township, the Census provides insight into several factors that are related to overall housing condition. The following summarizes key findings for South Whitehall, at the time of the 2000 Census data:

- Within South Whitehall, less than one tenth of one percent (<0.10%) of units lacked plumbing, no houses lacked kitchen facilities, and 0.2% lacked telephone service.
- Using the rule of thumb of one person per room to indicate standard occupancy, the Census indicates that 99.3% of units had less than one person per room and thus the risk for overcrowding is minimal to none.

D. Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is a growing concern across the country, as the rising cost of housing exceeds incomes for many segments of the population. In particular, South Whitehall is concerned over the ability of its teachers, police officers, emergency personnel, “boomerang kids” (returning college graduates), seniors/retirees, and others to continue to afford to live within the Township.

In simplified terms, housing affordability is measured as a percentage of income that occupants must pay for housing costs. Affordable housing is defined as paying no more than 30% of a household’s gross income for housing expenses, including taxes and insurance, regardless of income. Thus, there are two factors in determining what is affordable in a particular housing market: home values and median income.

The following two tables show housing costs as a percentage of household income in 1999. **Table 6-4** shows housing costs for ownership; **Table 6-5** shows rental costs as a percentage of the average renter’s income. Nearly 20% of homeowners paid more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. Almost double that amount of renters (38.8%) contributed 30% or more of their income to cover rental-housing costs.

**Table 6-4: Homeownership Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (1999)**

Percentage of Household Income spent on select Homeownership Costs	Number of Households	Percentage of Households
Less than 15 percent	2,106	39.0
15 to 19 percent	962	17.8
20 to 24 percent	803	14.9
25 to 29 percent	502	9.3
30 to 34 percent	233	4.3
35 percent or more	773	14.3
Not computed	15	0.3

Source: US Census Bureau

**Table 6-5: Gross Rental Costs as a Percentage of Renter Income (1999)**

GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1999	Number of Households	Percentage of Households
Less than 15 percent	88	7.3
15 to 19 percent	181	14.9
20 to 24 percent	191	15.8
25 to 29 percent	179	14.8
30 to 34 percent	68	5.6
35 percent or more	402	33.2
Not computed	102	8.4

Source: US Census Bureau

To provide a sense of what these numbers mean, Table 6-6 provides a comparison to surrounding municipalities during the same time period. In regards to homeownership costs, four of the six surrounding municipalities have a higher percentage of their populations paying more than 30% of their incomes towards housing costs, while South Whitehall Township falls in the mid-range in regards to homeownership costs. However, in regards to rental units, South Whitehall Township has one of the highest rates of renters paying more than 30% for the costs of rental housing in the area. At 38.8%, South Whitehall has a higher rate than the County or State, and is just above that of Allentown. Only North Whitehall has a higher percentage of the population. This interpretation does correspond to the higher than average rate of homeownership and lower than average vacancy rates in the Township, in which these combined forces provide an incentive to landowners to sell properties rather than rent them out. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the data is ten years old and that much has changed in the housing market over the past eight years. This baseline data will provide a useful comparison once the 2010 Census data is available.

**Table 6-6: Housing Costs as a Percentage of Income, 1999: Municipal Comparison**

	% Homeowners paying more than 30% of income for housing costs	% Renters paying more than 30% of income for housing costs
South Whitehall Township	18.6	38.8
Lower Macungie Township	18.8	25.8
North Whitehall Township	16	39.1
Salisbury Township	16.9	33.8
Upper Macungie Township	20	31.8
Whitehall Township	20.2	32.4
Allentown	23.2	38.7
Lehigh County	20.4	36.0
Pennsylvania	20.8	34.5

Another indicator of housing affordability is median home values in comparison to median income. The Lehigh Valley housing market, like much of the country, has been booming in the years from 2000 to 2006/07. The region was listed among the top 100 fastest growing areas. Many people relocated from the New York/New Jersey region for the reduced cost of living. During the same period, housing prices rose by unprecedented leaps and bounds. From 2002

to 2006, median home values in the Lehigh Valley rose from \$127,000 to \$189,000, a 37% increase. While specific data for the same period is not available at the Township level, we do know that the median home price in South Whitehall Township in 2000 was \$139,100. Median home values for the surrounding municipalities in 2000, is shown in Table 6-6. By 2006, the median value for housing within Parkland School District, which also includes North Whitehall and Upper Macungie Townships was \$260,000. In contrast, median incomes rose by only 1% in Lehigh County during the same time.

Due to all of these factors, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission has concluded that “there is a lack of supply of affordable and decent for-sale units for low and moderate income households, including first time homebuyers.”<sup>2</sup>

This same report noted that:

“The discussion of low income and low income housing usually assumes misperceptions of exactly who these households are.... This extensive list of job titles and salaries comprised of people who fill the bulk of vital community occupations that provide the basic services needed by everyone who lives in the Lehigh Valley.”<sup>3</sup> The report goes on to list the top five (5) of these occupations in the Lehigh Valley:

- Janitor/custodian
- Retail Salesperson
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Police Officer
- Elementary School Teacher

Using average wage data available from PA Career Link, the report concludes that only houses selling for \$130,000 to \$140,000 at the most, would be considered affordable to the two highest earning of the five occupations, assuming a single-income family.

**Table 6-7 Median Housing Prices, South Whitehall & Surrounding Municipalities**

	<b>Median Housing Value</b>
South Whitehall Township	\$139,100
Lower Macungie Township	\$169,000
North Whitehall Township	\$160,000
Salisbury Township	\$129,900
Upper Macungie Township	\$174,600
Whitehall Township	\$116,400
Allentown	\$76,900

<sup>2</sup> Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, “An Affordable Housing Assessment of the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania” 2004, page 48. Accessed via [www.lvpc.org/AffordableHousing/index.html](http://www.lvpc.org/AffordableHousing/index.html) on February 27, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 71.

### E. Future Housing Needs

According to the LVPC projections, the Township's population is projected to increase by 4,636 persons between 2005 and 2030 (See Table 2-6). Assuming that the average household size holds steady at 2.45 persons per household, this projected population would require an additional 1,892 housing units. This does not take into account the 193 building permits issued between 2005 to the end of 2007, nor any new permits issued in 2008.

As stated in the MPC at the beginning of the Chapter, one of the purposes of the comprehensive planning exercise is to ensure that an adequate amount of land is zoned for residential use to encompass the projected demand over the next twenty years. In the case of South Whitehall Township, there is little doubt that the Township's current zoning configuration could adequately accommodate the nearly 2,000 new housing units that would be demanded by the increasing population. Currently, the Township's agricultural and vacant land comprise the largest land use category, and nearly all of it is zoned Rural-Holding (R-H) with a 3 acre minimum lot size.

With almost 25% of its population currently older than 65 years of age, the Township will need to be committed to providing adequate and appropriate housing for the growing senior population. This will enable its seniors to stay within the community as they age. While the specific type of housing demanded by this market segment varies, it often ranges from the single-family attached or detached dwelling on a smaller lot to condominium units to units within a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). While retirement and age restricted communities have become popular and are needed, the Township will still want to remain attractive to singles and younger families within its boundaries, keeping a balance among the age groups within the community. The best policy approach remains to offer a variety of housing types at a variety of densities that will accommodate all age and income levels.

### **F. Housing Recommendations**

First and foremost, the Township needs to provide sufficient land for projected housing needs, as discussed in this chapter. Projections estimate that South Whitehall Township will see approximately 750 new households by 2020 and an additional 800 by 2030. South Whitehall Township's exceptionally low vacancy rate, will not accommodate a significant portion of these households. Therefore, a combination of existing and new units will be needed.

Specifically, the following steps are recommended to ensure the Township meets its housing needs in the future:

1. *Maintain existing housing stock.* Nearly forty percent of the housing stock is over 40 years old and may require rehabilitation and upgrading to accommodate new, affordable units. Existing dwellings should be maintained as part of the housing stock. The Township could consider incentives, such as grants or low-interest loans, to promote housing rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of existing buildings, including historic structures.

2. *Provide sufficient land for new housing units.* The Proposed Character Areas and Future Land Use Map is intended to provide sufficient land for new housing. The growth opportunity areas designated in the Proposed Character Areas could accommodate well in excess of 1,800 potential new units, as it is not intended to specifically plan for the 2030 projections, but for a long-term development pattern. The sequence of locations within the growth areas that will be developed is unknown, but as discussed in the Land Use Chapter, new development is intended to occur in a way that is fiscally responsible and which logically and incrementally extends infrastructure.
3. *Expand the supply and diversity of housing and neighborhood types and sizes.* The current housing stock predominantly consists of single-family detached dwelling units, a trend which will likely continue into the future. However, with the aging of the population, the demand for smaller, low-maintenance units, and the need for greater affordability in the housing market, alternatives to the conventional large lot single-family detached dwelling must be pursued.

One method of achieving this is through zoning. The South Whitehall Township Zoning Ordinance could be updated to permit greater flexibility and expanding the permitted neighborhood and housing types for new development, as well as infill in existing villages. A greater variety of dwelling choices would permit more residents to retire and grow older in the Township, while also allowing their children and grandchildren to afford to live nearby. These intergenerational neighborhoods were expressed as an important sentiment in the Statement of Community Goals and Objectives. The amendments listed here could be used to generate a minimum of 10% of new dwelling units as alternatives to the large-lot dwellings now commonly found.

- Permit a greater diversity of neighborhood types, including Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), open space/cluster developments, and mixed-use villages in the Township.
- Permit a wider range of fee simple housing types in the T-3 through T-5 zoning districts, while providing design guidelines to protect and preserve the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Amend the R-10 and other districts to provide design standards for medium and higher density development that will blend in with surrounding character and function well in terms of circulation, mixing of uses, and creating socially vibrant places for neighborhood interaction and spirit.
- Permit accessory dwelling units, the granny flat or in-law suite, in many, if not all of the zoning districts. These smaller units, often found over a garage or carriage house, can provide an affordable alternative for a renter and also help defray the costs of homeownership. Design Guidelines and user criteria will be needed in order to properly accommodate such units.

- Provide incentives for senior and workforce housing, possibly through increased flexibility or density bonuses. Senior and workforce housing could also be accommodated in TNDs, as part of live-work units (apartments above commercial), granny flats or in-law suites, or in multi-family dwellings.
- Consider a Transfer of Development Rights Program as part of an overall growth management plan to support diversified housing opportunities in receiving areas.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Land Use, and shown on the Future Character Areas and Land Use Map, development over the next 10 to 20 years is expected to be provided through more compact, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly development, with the opportunity for a diversity of housing types that will allow the growing retirement population the opportunity to age in place, close to family and friends.







## 7. A Plan for Transportation & Circulation

The Municipalities Planning Code Section 301(a)(3) defines the Plan for Transportation & Circulation as “a plan for movement of people and goods, which may include expressways, highways, local street systems, parking facilities, pedestrian and bikeway systems, public transit routes, terminals, airfields, port facilities, railroad facilities and other similar facilities or uses.” This section will focus on the Township’s vehicular circulation and road system; public transportation; pedestrian and biking infrastructure; and rail.

Circulation in South Whitehall Township is dominated by the road system and the single occupancy vehicle, with limited bus service connecting to or originating from Allentown. As in most townships, maintaining existing capacity, efficiency and safety of the transportation system represents a significant portion of the municipal budget and these costs can be expected to grow as the Township does. Managing the transportation system, including facilitating alternative modes of transportation, is a vital component of growth management and will increasingly impact the Township’s quality of life and capacity for economic development.

### I. VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

#### **A. Road Classification**

Transportation planning, perhaps more than any other area of the comprehensive plan, needs to be a cooperative effort if the most effective and efficient system is to be implemented and maintained. In Pennsylvania, roads may be under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, State, or local municipality, or be privately owned. In South Whitehall, each of these categories is represented.

In addition to being distinguished by ownership, most roads are also categorized by the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) functional classification system. This system defines roads based on their design, capacity (volume), and speed limits. Roads higher on the hierarchy are intended to carry greater volumes of vehicles for farther distances, while smaller, local roads are geared toward shorter, more locally oriented trips. This functional classification system is necessary when seeking federal-aid funding from the federal government. Roads in South Whitehall, where classified, fall under the urban

functional system, which includes principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local roads.

Updated in 1989, the FHWA currently defines these classifications as follows:

- *Principal Arterials* are designed to link cities, larger towns, and traffic generators such as resort areas and to provide interstate and inter-county service. They are expected to provide for relatively high travel speeds with minimum interference. The principal arterial system is stratified as follows: (1) Interstate, (2) other freeways and expressways, and (3) other principal arterials (with no control of access).
- *Minor Arterials* “interconnect with and augment the urban principal arterial system and provide service for trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials”.
- *Collector Roads* “provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas. They differ from the arterial system in that facilities on the collector system may penetrate residential neighborhoods, distributing trips from the arterials through the area to the ultimate destination. Conversely, the collector street also collects traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channels it into the arterial system. In the central business district, and in other areas of like development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid which forms a logical entity for traffic circulation”.
- *Local Roads* are designed to provide access between adjacent land uses and to collector roads within a short distance. It offers the lowest level of mobility and usually contains no bus routes. Service to “through traffic” movement usually is deliberately discouraged. (Source: [www.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov))

Current functional classifications for roads within South Whitehall Township are depicted on **Map 7-1** and tabulated in **Table 7-1**. A comparison of the Township functional classifications with the PENNDOT functional classifications shows contradicting information for several roadways. The majority of the discrepancies reflect the Township’s higher classification than PENNDOT. This is logical in that a roadway can provide a higher operational function within the Township and function at a lower level when considered on a regional basis. There are, however, five roadways/corridors for which PENNDOT has a higher classification than the Township. In these instances the Township and PENNDOT should review the classifications and confirm the appropriateness of the classifications. Each of the differences is tabulated in **Table 7-2**.

The Township conducted an evaluation of the classifications in the mid 1990’s and compiled a list of proposed amendments to the map. Development growth experienced and to be anticipated in the Township create a need to update these classifications. Proposed functional classifications for roads are shown on **Map 7-2** with the revisions tabulated in **Table 7-3**.

**Table 7-1: Existing Functional Classification of South Whitehall Township Roadways**

Principal Arterials		
I-476 (PA Turnpike-Northeast Extension)	PA Route 309	PA Route 22
I-78	Route 222 (Hamilton Boulevard and Dorneyville Bypass)	Cedar Crest Boulevard (South of Route 22)
Minor Arterials		
Albright Avenue (between Minnich Road & Cedar Crest Boulevard)	Huckleberry Road (between Guth's Station & Jordan Road)	Mauch Chunk (north of Scherersville Road to Whitehall Township)
Blue Barn Road	Jordan Road (between Huckleberry Road & Haasadahl Road)	Mechanicsville Road
Cedar Crest Boulevard (north of Route 22)	Lincoln Avenue	Orefield Road (west of Ritter Road)
Chapmans Road	Mauch Chunk (south of Custer Street)	Parkway Road
Church Road (between Route 309 & Chapmans Road)		Springhouse Road
Haasadahl Road		Tilghman Street
		Village Road
		Walbert Avenue
Collector Roads		
Applewood Drive	Jordan Road (north of Haasadahl Road)	Parkway Boulevard
Broadway	Lapp Road (between River Road & Orefield Road)	Peach Tree Road
Bulldog Drive	Lime Kiln Road	Ridgeview Drive
Cetronia Road	Mauch Chunk Road (between Custer Street & Scherersville Road)	Ritter Road
Church Road (between Route 309 & Huckleberry Road)	Mertz Lane	River Road
Crackersport Road	Minnich Road	Sherer Road
East Lane	Orefield Road (between Ritter Road & Mauch Chunk Road)	Shankweiler Road
Eck Road	Ott Street (between Highland Street and Pennsylvania Street)	Snowdrift Road
Haines Mill Road		Valley Road
Hausman Road		Walnut Street
Helen Avenue (between 18 <sup>th</sup> Street and 19 <sup>th</sup> Street)		Wehr Mill Road (between River Road & Lime Kiln Road)
Hoffmansville Road		Whitehall Avenue
Huckleberry Road (west of Jordan Road)		Willow Street
Huckleberry Road (east of Guth's Station)		Winchester Road
Iron Bridge Road (east of Lapp)		18 <sup>th</sup> Street (between Helen Avenue & Mauch Chunk Road)
		19 <sup>th</sup> Street (between Roth Avenue & Helen Avenue)
		28 <sup>th</sup> Street

**Table 7-2: Functional Classification Discrepancies**

<b>South Whitehall Township Classification</b>	<b>Roadway</b>	<b>PENNDOT Classification</b>
Local/Collector	Mauch Chunk Road	Minor Arterial
Collector	19 <sup>th</sup> Street/Helen Avenue/ 18 <sup>th</sup> Street	Minor Arterial
Local	Pirma Lane	Collector
Local	Custer Street	Collector
Local	Trexler Boulevard	Collector
Minor Arterial	Orefield Road	Collector
Minor Arterial	Walbert Avenue	Collector
Minor Arterial	Albright Avenue	Collector
Minor Arterial	Parkway/Springhouse Road	Collector
Minor Arterial	Lincoln Avenue	Collector
Minor Arterial	Jordan Road/ Haasadahl Road	Local
Minor Arterial	Blue Barn Road/ Chapmans Road	Local
Collector	Walnut Street	Local
Collector	Haines Mill Road	Local

**Table 7-3: Functional Classification Revisions**

<b>Existing Classification</b>	<b>Roadway</b>	<b>Proposed Classification</b>
Local	Dorney Park Road	Minor Arterial
Local	Mauch Chunk Road – between North Whitehall and Whitehall Townships	Minor Arterial
Local	Cedarbrook Road	Collector
Local	Coffeetown Road	Collector
Local	Strohl Road	Collector
Collector	Broadway	Minor Arterial
Collector	Huckleberry Road – between Cedar Crest Blvd. and Guth’s Station	Minor Arterial
Collector	Mauch Chunk Road – between Scherersville Road and Custer Street	Minor Arterial
Collector	Orefield Road – between Cedar Crest Blvd. and Ritter Road	Minor Arterial
Collector	Peachtree Road	Local
Minor Arterial	Village Road	Local

## **B. Existing Conditions & Issues**

### Existing Roadway Network

The Township has regional highway access via existing major north-south and east-west roadways. The Township and the Lehigh Valley region are readily accessible to major metropolitan areas along the Eastern seaboard. **Map 7-3** depicts the regional roadway network.

One north-south highway is I-476, the northeast extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, which traverses the western portion of the Township. This limited access, divided highway is classified as an Interstate Highway as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT). Access to and egress from I-476 is through a Turnpike interchange (Exit 56) with Route 22 at the western boundary of the Township. The turnpike is one of the principal routes to the Pocono Mountains and therefore receives heavy seasonal and weekend use.

PA Route 309 is a heavily utilized parallel route to I-476. In the southern portion of the Township, Route 309 is a limited access, partially divided highway while in the northern portion Route 309 is a two-lane highway with several traffic signals controlling access. PENNDOT classifies this road as a principal arterial. It is heavily used by local traffic and has been classified by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) as a congested corridor from Snowdrift Road to Orefield Road.

Cedar Crest Boulevard is a third major north-south roadway within the Township. Generally a two-lane roadway, Cedar Crest Boulevard is classified by PENNDOT as a principal arterial south of Route 22 and a minor arterial north of Route 22. This road is heavily traveled and signalized from its intersection with Walbert Avenue south into Salisbury Township. The roadway is classified by LVPC as a congested corridor from Winchester Road south beyond the limit of the Township.

Mauch Chunk Road serves as a north-south roadway along the eastern border of the Township. A two-lane roadway, Mauch Chunk Road is classified by PENNDOT as a minor arterial. This heavily traveled road has been recently studied due to the increasing congestion. Closely spaced traffic signals at the intersections with Girard Avenue/Pirma Lane and Scherersville Road in close proximity to the Jordan Creek bridge constrict traffic flow.

The major east-west thoroughfares in the Township are U.S. Route 22 and Hamilton Boulevard (U.S. Route 222). Route 22 is a divided highway with fully controlled access. Classified by PENNDOT as an Other Freeway and Expressway, this highway is the primary link between Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton, the major urban centers of the Lehigh Valley region. Within the Township, Route 22 has full movement interchanges with the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Route 309, Cedar Crest Boulevard, and Mauch Chunk Road/15<sup>th</sup> Street. This heavily used roadway is categorized by LVPC as a congested corridor through its full extent within the Township.

Hamilton Boulevard is a heavily traveled two-lane east-west roadway classified by PENNDOT as a Principal Arterial. The recently completed bypass from I-78 southwest around Trexlertown provides improved access to Kutztown, Reading, and Lancaster. Within the Township, the Dorneyville Bypass in the area of Cedar Crest Boulevard provides improved traffic flow.

Other significant roadways in the Township are classified as minor arterial streets (Tilghman Street) and collector streets (Walbert Avenue) by PENNDOT. The Township Street Map and Ordinances identify other minor arterial and collector streets. The streets that are not classified as arterial or collector are considered local in nature.

Within the northern area of the Township, situated near the east and west boundaries of a scenic park area, are historic Covered Bridges. Anticipating the continued preservation of these prominent structures which have limited traffic capacity, future road network upgrades have been identified to protect the bridges from additional traffic.

#### Traffic Volumes & Accident Data

Traffic volume is measured by Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts compiled by PENNDOT, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC), South Whitehall Township, and various other entities. In South Whitehall Township, the highest traffic volumes are carried by the Pennsylvania Turnpike, U.S. Route 22, U.S. Route 309, and Cedar Crest Boulevard (State Route 1019). **Map 7-4** depicts these conditions.

The LVPC has identified the following corridors within the Township as Congested corridors:

- Route 309 north of I-476
- Route 22
- Cedar Crest Boulevard

The Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan (LVCP) identified the following corridors as High Frequency Corridors or Severe Corridors for crashes:

- Route 22 west of I-476
- Portions of I-476
- Walbert Avenue east of Springhouse Road
- Cedar Crest Boulevard from Huckleberry Road to Minnich Road
- Mauch Chunk Road from Helen Avenue to Pirma Lane
- Route 309 from I-476 to Jordan Road
- Hausman Road south of Tilghman Street
- Cetronia Road
- Parkway Road from Tilghman Street to Springhouse Road

The LVCP identified the following corridors as High Priority Corridors (both high frequency and severe) for crashes:

- Tilghman Street
- Cedar Crest Boulevard

The intersection of Cedar Crest Boulevard and Orefield Road is identified as a High Priority Crash Intersection by the LVPC. Also, Township studies have identified a crash concentration along Mauch Chunk Road at Presidential Drive.

### C. Planned Roadway Projects

Within the Township, several roadway improvements have been planned to increase operational efficiency and safety. The recently completed Route 222 by-pass project has provided increased mobility and efficiency from I-78 to west of Trexlertown. In addition, it has had a modest impact in reducing congestion on other routes in the area.

The planned roadway improvements are depicted on **Map 7-5** and identified with red letter labels.

Intersection improvements at Walbert Avenue and Ridgeview Drive are currently under design as part of a Township improvement project (Intersection A).

Cedar Crest Boulevard is identified to be studied as part of PENNDOT's Congested Corridor Improvement Program (CCIP). The project extends from Winchester Road south beyond the limit of the Township (Corridor B).

Longer range planning by LVPC includes intersection safety enhancements at the Cedar Crest Boulevard and Orefield Road intersection (Intersection C), study improvements to mitigate congestion on Route 309 from Walbert Avenue to a location north beyond the limit of the Township (Corridor D), widening of Route 22 from 15<sup>th</sup> Street to Cedar Crest Boulevard (Corridor E), and the study and improvement of the Mauch Chunk Road corridor from Route 22 to the Jordan Creek Bridge (Corridor F), including the extension of Helen Avenue to Mauch Chunk Road (Extension F1) and intersection improvements at Mauch Chunk Road/18<sup>th</sup> Street (Intersection F2) and Mauch Chunk Road/Route 22 westbound ramps (Intersection F3). Also included are improvements to the Girard Avenue/Pirma Lane and Scherersville Road intersections with Mauch Chunk Road (Intersections F4) and replacement of the bridge over the Jordan Creek (Bridge F5).

Future road and intersection upgrades to be planned based upon conditions and development traffic studies, as described below, are also depicted on **Map 7-5** and are labeled with blue number labels.

Route 22, west of Cedar Crest Boulevard, is likely to require improvements to accommodate future growth west of the Township (Corridor 1).

Cedar Crest Boulevard north of Route 22, including the interchange with Route 22, is anticipated to require improvements to accommodate the future growth (Corridor 2). This likely includes improvements to the intersections of Cedar Crest Boulevard with the Route 22 eastbound ramps (Intersection 2A), the Route 22 westbound ramps

(Intersection 2B), Walbert Avenue (Intersection 2C), Huckleberry Road (Intersection 2D), Albright Avenue (Intersection 2E), Minnich Road (Intersection 2F), and Iron Bridge Road (Intersection 2G) as well as enhancements to the Cedar Crest Boulevard bridge over Route 22 (Bridge 2H).

Enhancements to the Route 309 corridor are anticipated to be necessary in support of continued growth in the Township and municipalities north of the Township (Corridor 3). Intersection improvements at Walbert Avenue/Church Road (Intersection 3A), Chapmans Road/Pope Road (Intersection 3B), Huckleberry Road (Intersection 3C), and Lime Kiln Road (Intersection 3D) are anticipated, along with potential improvements to the bridge carrying I-476 (Bridge 3E).

Additional enhancements are anticipated to the bridges carrying I-476 over Huckleberry Road (Bridge 4A) and Lime Kiln Road (Bridge 4B) as well as the bridge carrying Route 309 over Broadway (Bridge 4C). Broadway improvements and Hausman Road improvements between Tilghman Street and Broadway (Corridor 5) are anticipated along with intersection enhancements at the Tilghman Street/Hausman Road (Intersection 5A), Tilghman Street/Broadway (Intersection 5B), and Broadway/Hausman Road/Cetronia Road intersections (Intersection 5C).

Signalization of the Mauch Chunk Road and Presidential Drive intersection is anticipated to be required in the future as Mauch Chunk Road volumes increase (Intersection 6A). Enhancements at the Blue Barn Road and Chapmans Road intersection are also anticipated to be required (Intersection 6B).

Intersection enhancements are anticipated to be required at the intersections of Orefield Road/Lime Kiln Road (Intersection 6C), Walbert Avenue/Huckleberry Road (Intersection 6D), Parkway/Springhouse Road (Intersection 6E), Broadway/Haines Mill Road (Intersection 6F), Lincoln Avenue/Dorney Park Road (Intersection 6G), Cedarbrook Road/Dorney Park Road (Intersection 6H), and Cedar Crest Boulevard/Orefield Road (Intersection 6J) to improve intersection geometry as traffic volumes increase. Enhancements to the intersection of Walbert Avenue/Yellowstone Road may be required as volumes along Walbert Avenue increase (Intersection 6K).

Roadway improvements along Hausman Road between Crackersport Road and Church Road are anticipated to be required (Roadway 7A). Roadway alignment improvements are anticipated along Eck Road north of Crackersport Road (Roadway 7B), Minnich Road (Roadway 7C), and Sherer Road (Roadway 7D) to improve operation.

To facilitate emergency response throughout the Township, emergency pre-emption equipment should be investigated as part of new traffic signalization and evaluated for existing signalized intersections.



## D. Transportation Planning and the Future Development

Future development in the northern section of the Township will require additional infrastructure to promote continued connectivity with both the remainder of the Township and the surrounding communities. As a result, the following connections should be considered as future development occurs. The connector routes are conceptual. Future planning for these connections would take into account engineering design considerations (topography, obstructions, etc.) and permitting requirements.

- East-West connection from Cedar Crest Boulevard at Parkland High School to Mauch Chunk Road at Mechanicsville Road – Minor Arterial
- East-West connection from Albright Avenue in the area of Minnich Road to Mauch Chunk Road, such as an extension of Presidential Drive – Minor Arterial, or by an upgrade of Pirma Lane to a Minor Arterial, with direct connection to Albright Avenue
- Extension of Whitehall Avenue to east-west connection – Collector
- Extension of River Road to Ritter Road – Collector
- Extension of Coffeetown Road to Lime Kiln Road at Wehr Mill Road – Collector
- Extension of Strohl Road to North Whitehall Township – Collector
- Extension of Tri Clover Road to Jordan Road – Collector
- Connection from Sherer Road to Cedar Crest Boulevard opposite Albright Avenue – Collector
- Extension of Helen Avenue to Mauch Chunk Road – Collector
- Extension of Baldwin Lane to Applewood Drive – Local
- Extension of Brickyard Road to Penn's Crossing – Local
- Connection of Allison Lane, Pheasant Hill Drive, Lois Lane and extension to North Whitehall Township – Local
- Extension of Suncrest Drive to North Whitehall Township – Local
- Connection of Pacific Avenue, Gary Road, and Thompson Street – Local
- Extension of Old Sentry Road to Herman Lane – Local
- Connection of Herman Lane to Huckleberry Road west of existing connection – Local
- Extension of Loring Drive to Sherer Road – Local
- Extension of Anjou Road to Minnich Road – Local
- Extension of Chalmette Road to Cedar Crest Boulevard – Local
- Extension of Black Forest Drive to Blue Barn Road – Local

The future roadway connectors are depicted on **Map 7-2**.

## E. Vehicular Transportation: Recommendations

1. *Update of Functional Classification of Township Roads in accordance with Map 7-2.*
2. *Consider an Act 209 Plan.* Pennsylvania Act 209 was signed into the law in 1990 and amends the Municipalities Planning Code to permit a Township to assess

transportation impact fees on new development provided it has adopted a municipal transportation impact fee ordinance in accordance with the Act. While currently not deemed appropriate for the Township, an Act 209 Plan may possibly be considered in the future for a portion or portions of the Township.

3. *Incorporate planned and future transportation projects as part of a Capital Improvements Plan.* Transportation infrastructure comprises a large portion of any municipal budget. With proper planning and foresight these costs can be managed and distributed over time. It is in the Township's interest to consider creating a long-term capital improvements plan that informs and is informed by annual budgets and reviewed on a regular basis.
  4. *Coordinate closely with PENNDOT, LVPC and adjacent municipalities and participate in regional transportation initiatives.*
  5. *Enhance access management and traffic calming requirements in the SALDO.*
  6. *Identify roads with scenic and/or historic value and evaluate interest in Scenic Byway designation and protections.*
- 

Note: Recommendations continued on page 7-13

## II. ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES: PUBLIC TRANSIT & BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

As the negative impacts of the post World War II, automobile centered suburbs become more apparent (compromised air quality, rising fuel costs, road system maintenance challenges, etc.), encouraging and providing alternative means of transportation will be one of the biggest determinants of desirable communities in the future. Transportation alternatives are also vital for mobility and access for those segments of the population who are unable or unwilling to drive (whether too old, too young, not physically able, etc.). Other benefits of these alternatives include a reduction in traffic congestion and more efficient use of existing road capacity.

As of the 2000 Census, transit and walking each account for less than one percent of workplace commutes in the Township. South Whitehall Township is primarily a commuter, bedroom community with more than 88% of residents commuting to work by driving alone, an average of 20 minutes (as compared to the state and national averages of 25 minutes). Approximately 6% of the population carpoled and less than 1% walked or took transit.

### A. Public Transportation

South Whitehall Township is served by the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA). LANTA operates the Metro and Metro Plus operating systems. The Metro is a network of 30 fixed bus routes throughout the Lehigh Valley, and includes busses that can accommodate bikes for the growing number of people who ride to and from bus stops. The Metro Plus system arranges special door-to-door transportation services for people with disabilities and the elderly who cannot access the regular Metro transit system. The 101 accessible vans and mini-buses available to Metro Plus customers are dispatched daily. More than 4.3 million trips are made annually on the Metro system and an additional 480,000 are provided through Metro Plus.

In South Whitehall Township, regular bus service is provided on Bus Routes A, W, H and J, and Shuttles 2 and 3. In general, these routes are located in the southern portion of the Township, adjacent to Allentown, with the exception of the W, which travels the Route 309 corridor. These routes are shown on **Map 7-6**. In addition, **Table 7-4** below shows the annual ridership for FY2007 on each of these routes.

**Table 7-4: FY 2007 Annual Ridership on Routes in South Whitehall Township\***

Route	Route Description	Ridership
A	Village West	312,000
W	Allentown to Slatington (Route 309)	36,000
H	Lehigh Valley Mall to Dorney Park	312,000
J	South Mall to Crest Plaza	276,000
Route 2	Fogelsville on Broadway	168,000
Route 3	Trexlerstown	24,000
Starlight Routes	6PM to 11PM on all routes	180,000

Source: LANTA \* Ridership reflects overall number of riders on routes that have stops in South Whitehall Township, but do not necessarily reflect South Whitehall resident use.

In March 2008, LANTA commenced a comprehensive analysis of public transit needs to determine how future funding, particularly Commonwealth Act 44 funds, should be invested. In addition, the organization is currently completing an Origin and Destination survey that will better define where riders travel to and from along each of the LANTA routes. Rising fuel costs in 2008 resulted in considerable increases in LANTA riders, and may continue to impact public transit ridership.

In order to optimize integration of public transportation in new development, plan submissions to LANTA should be considered for review and for incorporation of bus shelter and transit access provisions as part of the review process. Transit agreements between Developers and LANTA should be encouraged to promote this growing and vital alternative transportation mode.

**B. Pedestrian/Bicycle Circulation, Greenway and Regional Trails**

Walking and bicycling are activities which improve health and fitness, improving quality of life. The Township should consider measures to improve facilities for pedestrian travel, and to promote bicycle safety for its residents. Sidewalk installations and extensions may be considered where appropriate for incorporation in capital improvements projects. Subdivision and Land Development Regulations requirements for sidewalks should be followed with deferrals granted when adequately justified. The Township should consider input from agencies which specialize in cycling promotion and education, and support programs which emphasize cycling education and safety. Additional measures such as placement of appropriate standard roadway signage and installation of bicycle parking facilities should be considered.

Often viewed purely as an opportunity for recreation and improved health, a continuous bicycle and pedestrian network is increasingly being recognized as a valid element in planning an efficient, multi-modal transportation system. The Township's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan recommended the development of a pathway system that would link the Jordan Creek, Norfolk Southern line, Little Cedar Creek and Cedar Creek (all east-west paths) via a single north-south pathway (along the Norfolk Southern right-of-way) using a combination of sidewalks/crosswalks and pathways.

The Township has been involved in a Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail Project. The Wildlands Conservancy has assembled a broad-based coalition of supporting organizations and governments for this project. The Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail Project considers ultimate development of a 20-mile greenway/trail linking significant recreational, natural, and cultural features within Lehigh County while providing recreational opportunities for the community and protection to the Jordan Creek. The Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail would provide a critical link in a Lehigh Valley-wide system of greenways, trails, and recreational areas, connecting five existing city, county, and Township parks, two state game lands, and two nationally significant greenways (Blue Mountain/Appalachian Trail and the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor). In addition, the project will also connect four of the county's historic covered bridges (two of which are located within South Whitehall Township) via the greenway/trail. Future connections to the trail could provide routes to schools (Kratzer, Kernsville and Parkland High School) and to additional Township parks without using Township roads.

### **C. Alternative Transportation Modes: Issues**

The Future Character Areas map relies on the notion that enhanced transportation, including alternative modes of transportation, will be increasingly available over the next ten to twenty years. Adjustments to existing trends must be considered to facilitate increased usage of alternative transportation modes. For instance, dispersed development and a lack of dense cores and corridors in the Township make expansions of bus services difficult. Therefore, where appropriate, alternatives to dispersed development should be encouraged. Also, sidewalk network/crosswalk facility improvements should be pursued.

### **D. Alternative Transportation Modes: Recommendations**

*(Transportation and Circulation Recommendations begin on Page 7-10)*

7. *Plan higher density housing, shopping, and employment facilities along existing or planned transit routes.*
8. *Encourage communication between shopping/commercial centers, business/industrial park (etc.) owners and LANATA to determine appropriate locations for bus shelters within developed areas of the Township and require developers to place bus shelters at these locations, as part of Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) requirements.*
9. *Plan for an Enhanced Pedestrian Network:* The network should be a combination of sidewalks, crosswalks, paved paths, and trails that connect across the Township.
10. *Safe Routes to Schools:* Focus on sidewalks accessing neighborhood schools; Work with Parkland School District.
11. *Crosswalks:* Improve standards per PENNDOT criteria in the SALDO and Zoning Ordinance (ZO) for crosswalk design; and require improvements with new

and redevelopment, especially in areas in proximity to schools, parks and other public facilities, and employment and shopping hubs.

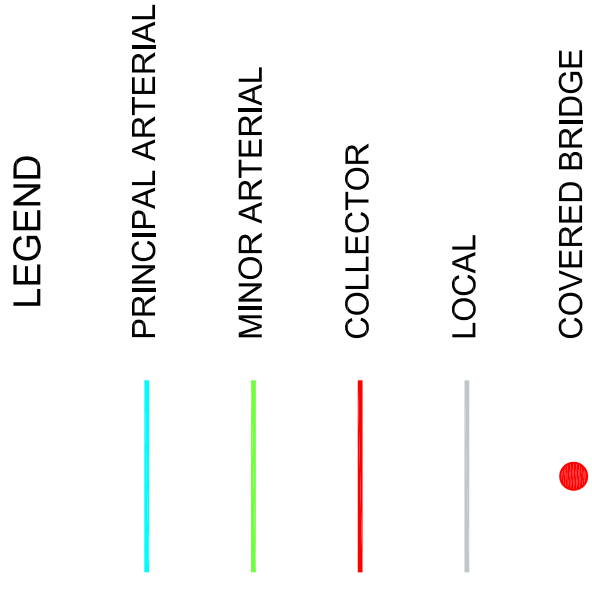
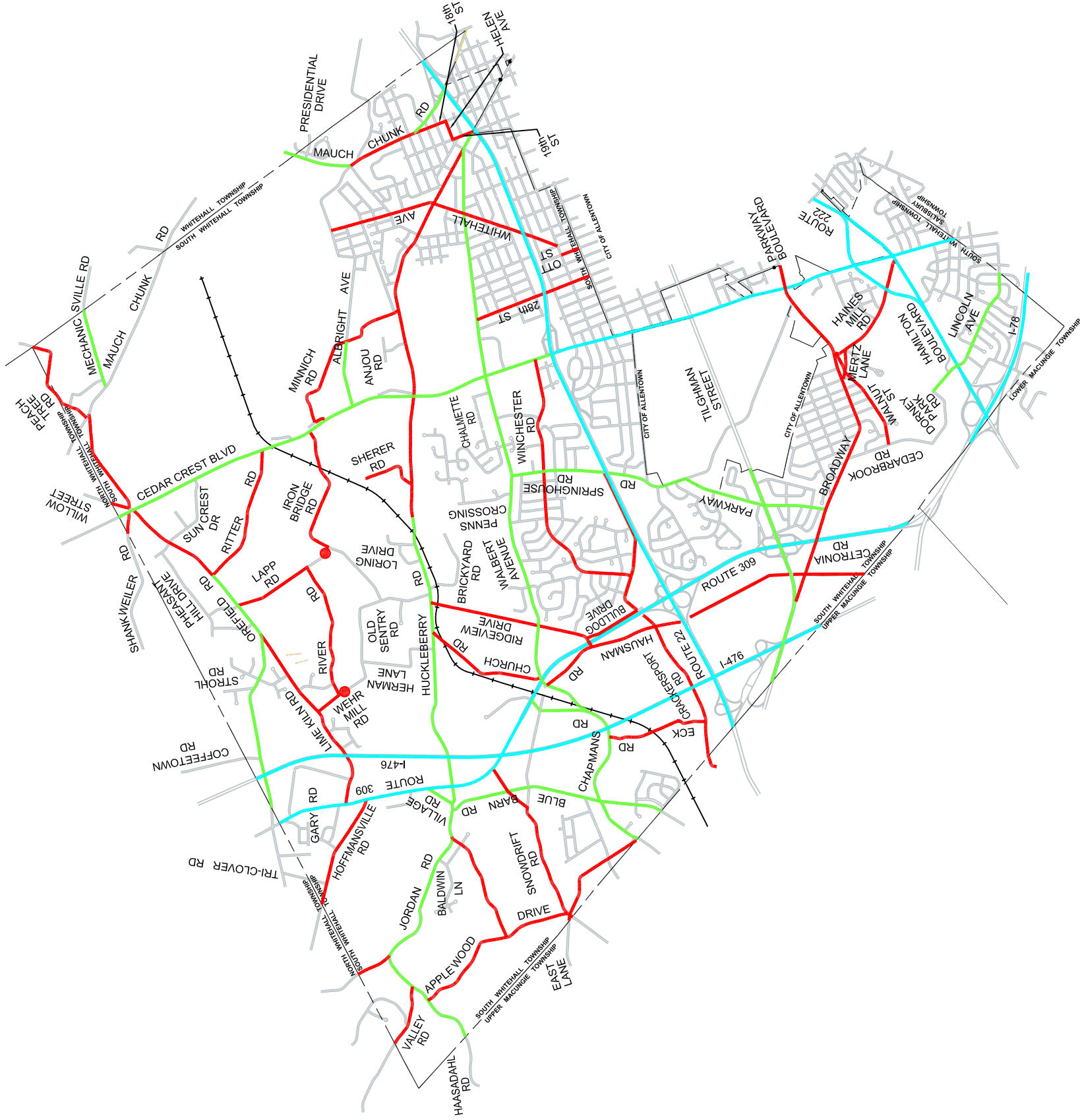
12. *Promote bicycle safety education programs.*
13. *Seek grants for alternative transportation mode improvements.*
14. *Consider input from agencies specializing in alternative transportation modes.*
15. *Consider applicable standard roadway signage installations where deemed appropriate associated with bicycling and pedestrian activities.*
16. *Paths and Trails:* Continue progressing with the development of the pathway system recommended as part of the latest approved Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
17. *Greenways Network and Regional Trails:* Continue involvement in the Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail Project.

### III. RAIL

The Fogelsville Branch of the Norfolk Southern rail line passes through and serves portions of the developed industrial tracts in the Township. Opportunities to preserve rail served sites along this rail line should be considered.

Passenger Light Rail routes within the Lehigh Valley were evaluated by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) in its U.S. Route 22 Corridor Planning Study titled "22/Tomorrow" dated November 2001. Several scenarios were analyzed with rail lines extending from the Iron Run Industrial Park area to the west, and ending in downtown Easton to the east. Also, a Light Rail route connecting prominent Bethlehem and Allentown locations was considered. The contemplated rail line's closest approach to South Whitehall Township is in the area of Lehigh Valley Hospital – Cedar Crest, south of the I-78/Cedar Crest Boulevard intersection. The LVPC finding/conclusions for the Light Rail scenarios were that these scenarios would not adequately address traffic problems on Route 22 through the year 2020, and were therefore not recommended for further study.

The re-evaluation of Light Rail routes should be considered as Lehigh Valley transportation conditions evolve.



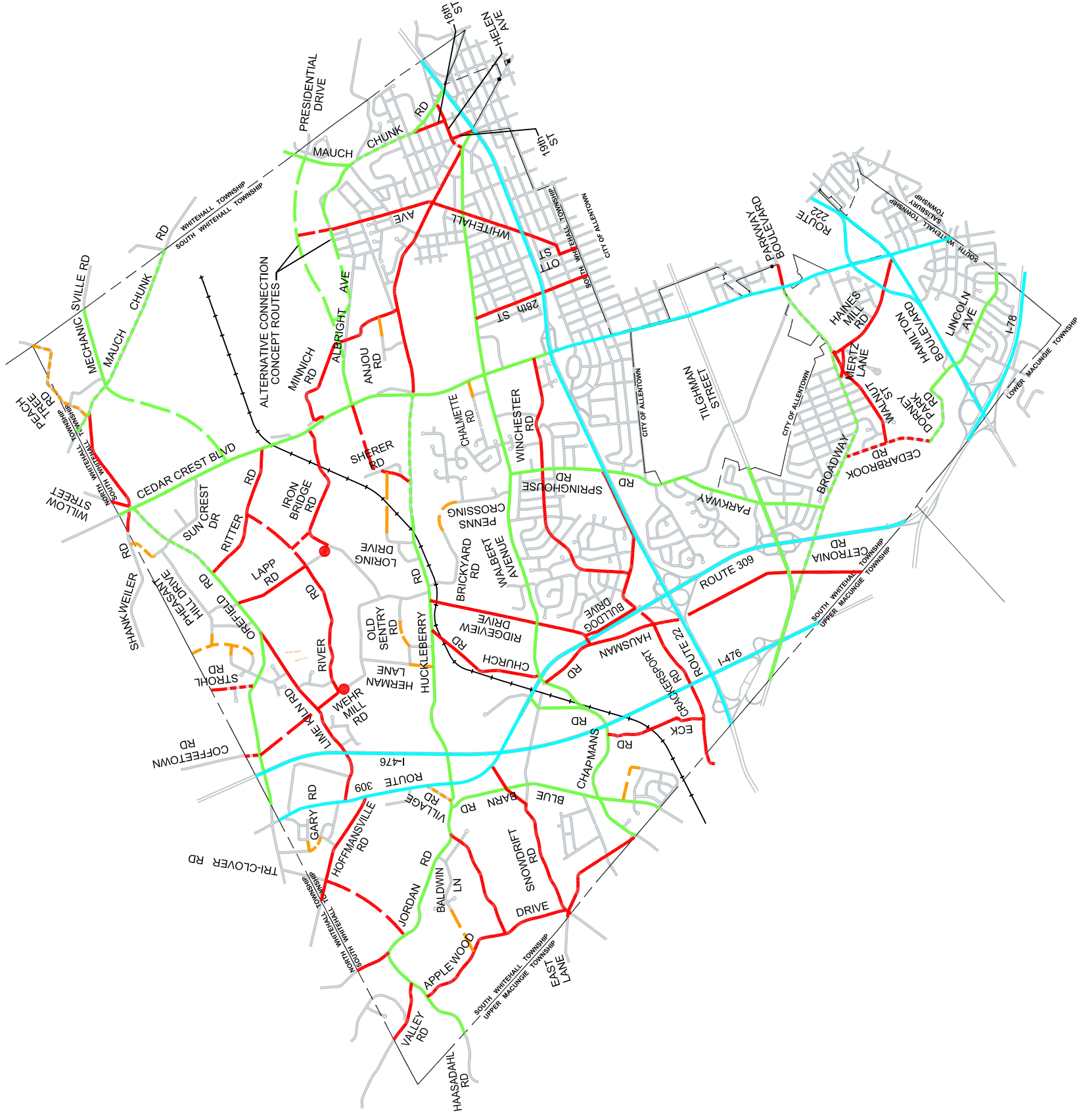
**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**  
**EXISTING FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS - MAP 7.1**

SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
 NO SCALE DATE: MARCH 6, 2009

**THE PIDCOCK COMPANY**  
 CIVIL ENGINEERING AND LAND PLANNING ARCHITECTURE LAND SURVEYING  
 OXFORD DRIVE AT FISH HATCHERY ROAD  
 ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA







**LEGEND**

CLASSIFICATION	EXISTING CLASSIFICATION	REVISED CLASSIFICATION	PROPOSED CONNECTION
PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL			
MINOR ARTERIAL			
COLLECTOR			
LOCAL			

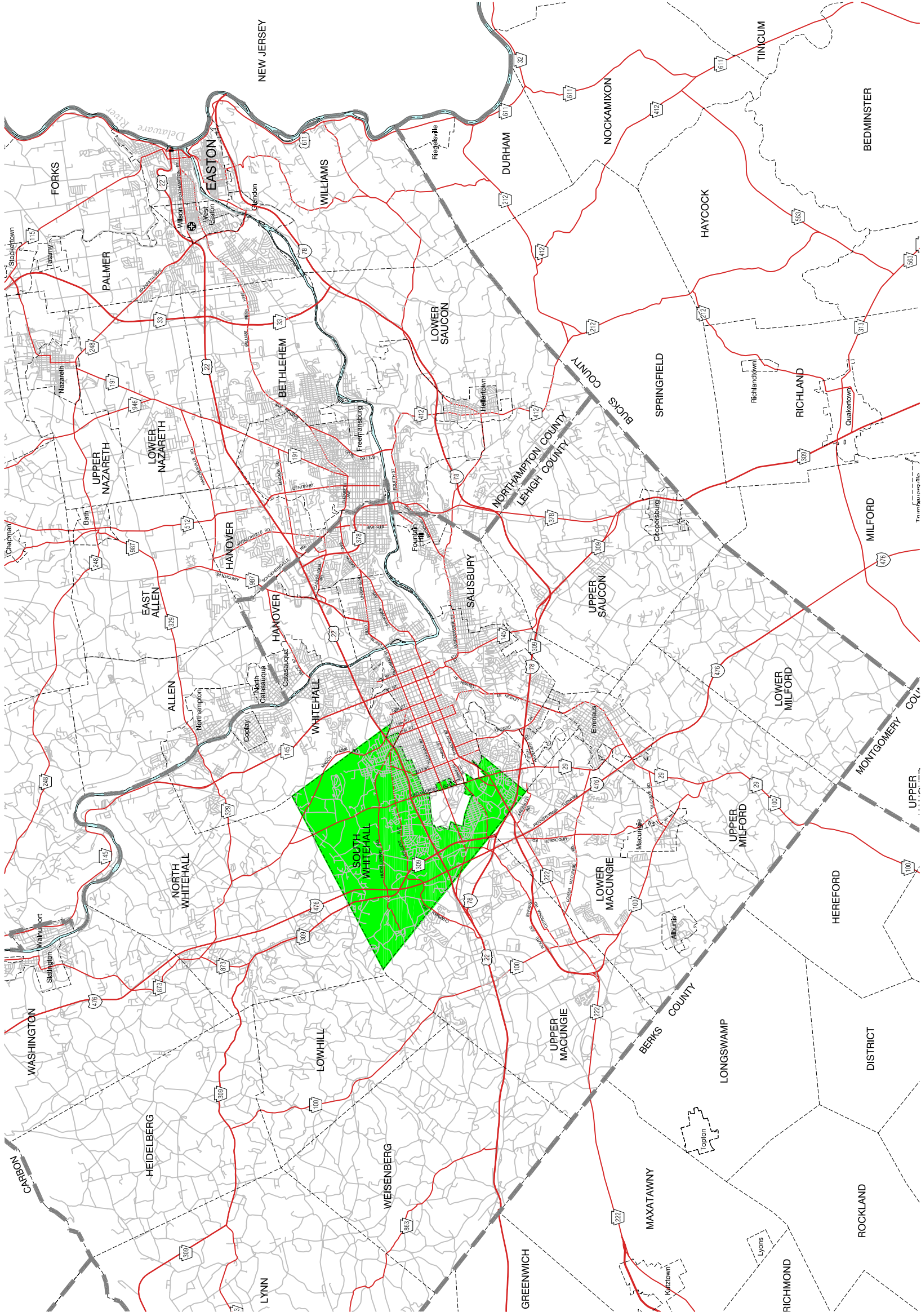
COVERED BRIDGE



**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**  
**PROPOSED FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS AND CONNECTIONS - MAP 7.2**

SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

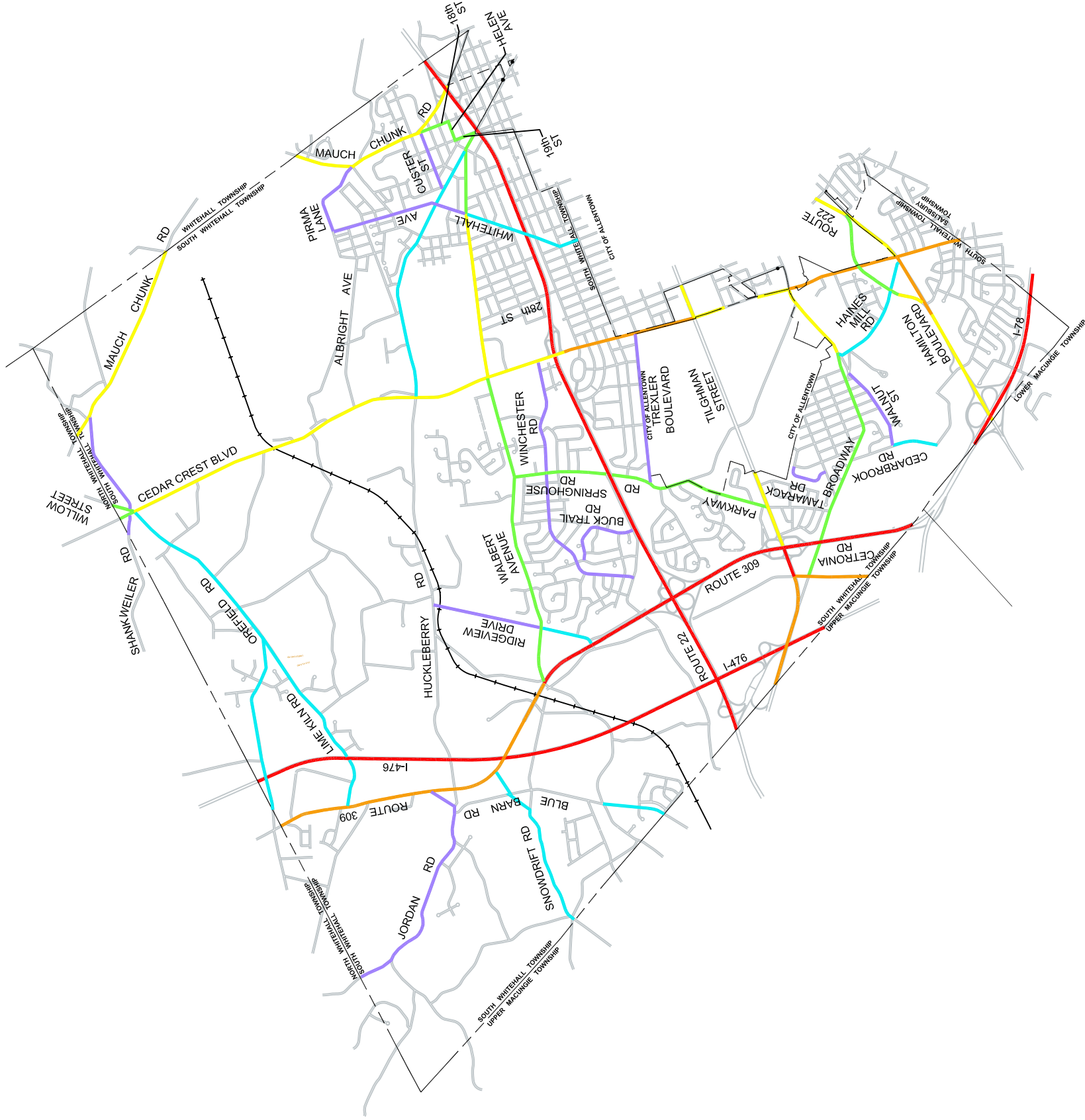




**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE  
REGIONAL ROADWAYS - MAP 7.3**

SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA





**LEGEND**

- UNKNOWN VOLUME
- 0 - 2,000 VPD
- 2,001 - 5,000 VPD
- 5,001 - 10,000 VPD
- 10,001 - 20,000 VPD
- 20,001 - 30,000 VPD
- OVER 30,000 VPD

VPD = VEHICLES PER DAY

VOLUME INFORMATION BASED ON SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, PENNDOT, AND LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION VOLUME COUNTS AND / OR TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS FROM 2003 THROUGH 2008.



**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE  
CURRENT TRAFFIC VOLUMES - MAP 7.4**

SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

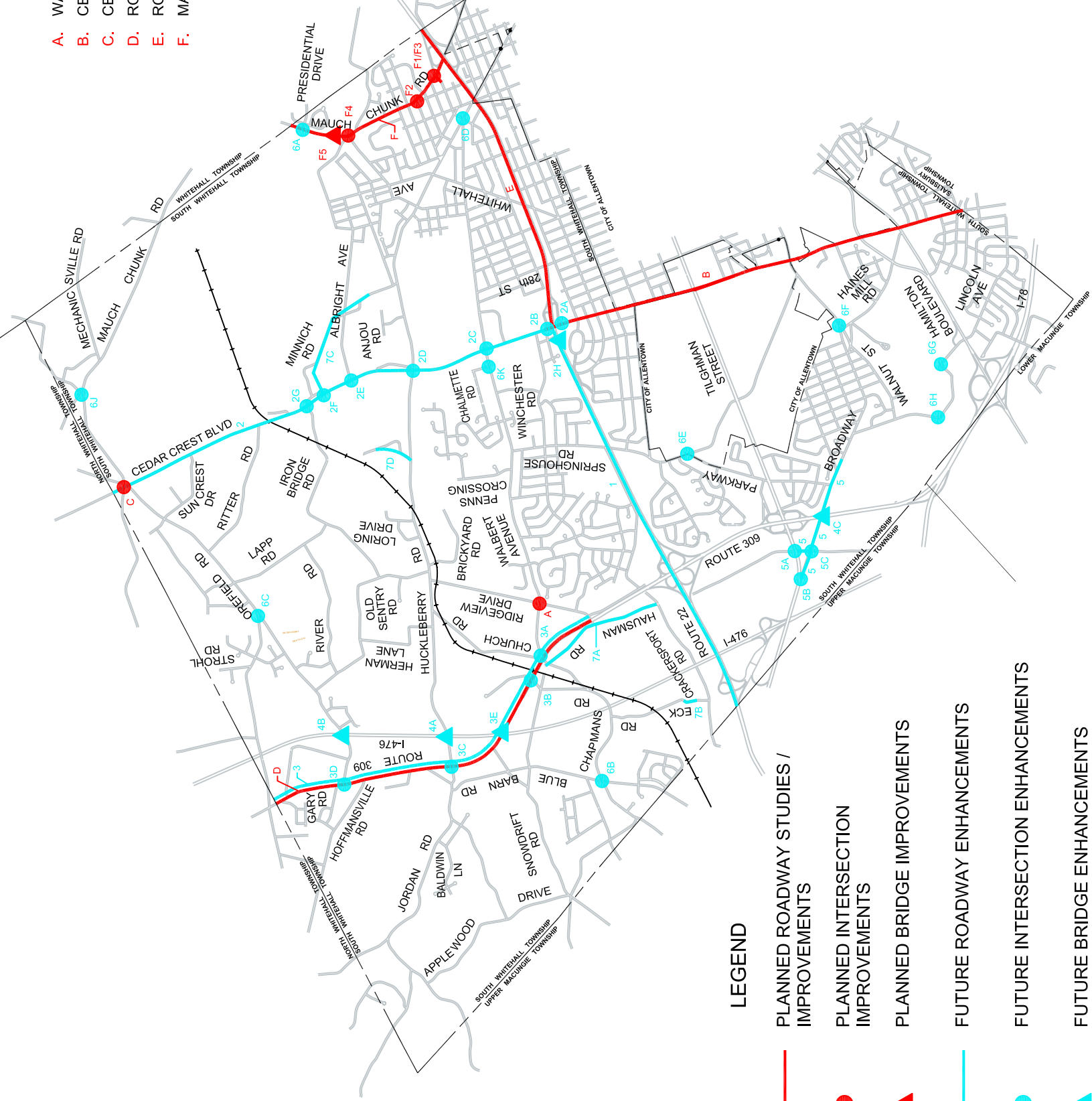
NO SCALE DATE: MARCH 6, 2009



**PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS**

- A. WALBERT AVENUE AND RIDGEVIEW DRIVE
- B. CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD
- C. CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND OREFIELD ROAD
- D. ROUTE 309 CORRIDOR STUDY
- E. ROUTE 22 EAST OF CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD
- F. MAUCH CHUNK CORRIDOR

- F1 HELEN AVENUE
- F2 MAUCH CHUNK ROAD AND 18th STREET
- F3 MAUCH CHUNK ROAD AND ROUTE 22 RAMP
- F4 GIRARD AVENUE/ PIRMA LANE AND SCHERERSVILLE ROAD
- F5 JORDAN CREEK BRIDGE



**LEGEND**

- PLANNED ROADWAY STUDIES / IMPROVEMENTS
- PLANNED INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
- ▲ PLANNED BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS
- FUTURE ROADWAY ENHANCEMENTS
- FUTURE INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS
- ▲ FUTURE BRIDGE ENHANCEMENTS

- FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS**
- 1. ROUTE 22 WEST OF CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD
  - 2. CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD
  - 2A CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND ROUTE 22 EASTBOUND
  - 2B CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND ROUTE 22 WESTBOUND
  - 2C CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND WALBERT AVENUE
  - 2D CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND HUCKLEBERRY ROAD
  - 2E CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND ALBRIGHT AVENUE
  - 2F CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND MINNICH ROAD
  - 2G CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD AND IRON BRIDGE ROAD
  - 2H CEDAR CREST BOULEVARD BRIDGE OVER ROUTE 22

- 3. ROUTE 309
- 3A ROUTE 309 AND WALBERT AVENUE / CHURCH ROAD
- 3B ROUTE 309 AND CHAPMANS ROAD/ POPE ROAD
- 3C ROUTE 309 AND HUCKLEBERRY ROAD
- 3D ROUTE 309 AND LIME KILN ROAD
- 3E ROUTE 309 AND I-476 BRIDGE

- BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS**
- 4A I-476 / HUCKLEBERRY ROAD BRIDGE
  - 4B I-476 / LIME KILN ROAD BRIDGE
  - 4C ROUTE 309 / BROADWAY BRIDGE

- 5. BROADWAY / HAUSMAN
- 5A TILGHMAN STREET AND HAUSMAN ROAD
- 5B TILGHMAN STREET AND BROADWAY
- 5C BROADWAY, HAUSMAN ROAD AND CETRONIA ROAD

- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS**
- 6A MAUCH CHUNK ROAD AND PRESIDENTIAL DRIVE SIGNALIZATION
  - 6B BLUE BARN ROAD AND CHAPMANS ROAD
  - 6C OREFIELD ROAD AND LIME KILN ROAD
  - 6D WALBERT AVENUE AND HUCKLEBERRY ROAD
  - 6E PARKWAY AND SPRINGHOUSE ROAD
  - 6F BROADWAY AND HAINES MILL ROAD
  - 6G LINCOLN AVENUE AND DORNEY PARK ROAD
  - 6H CEDARBROOK ROAD AND DORNEY PARK ROAD
  - 6J MAUCH CHUNK ROAD AND OREFIELD ROAD
  - 6K WALBERT AVENUE AND YELLOWSTONE ROAD

- 7. ROADWAY ENHANCEMENTS
- 7A HAUSMAN ROAD
- 7B ECK ROAD
- 7C MINNICH ROAD
- 7D SHERER ROAD



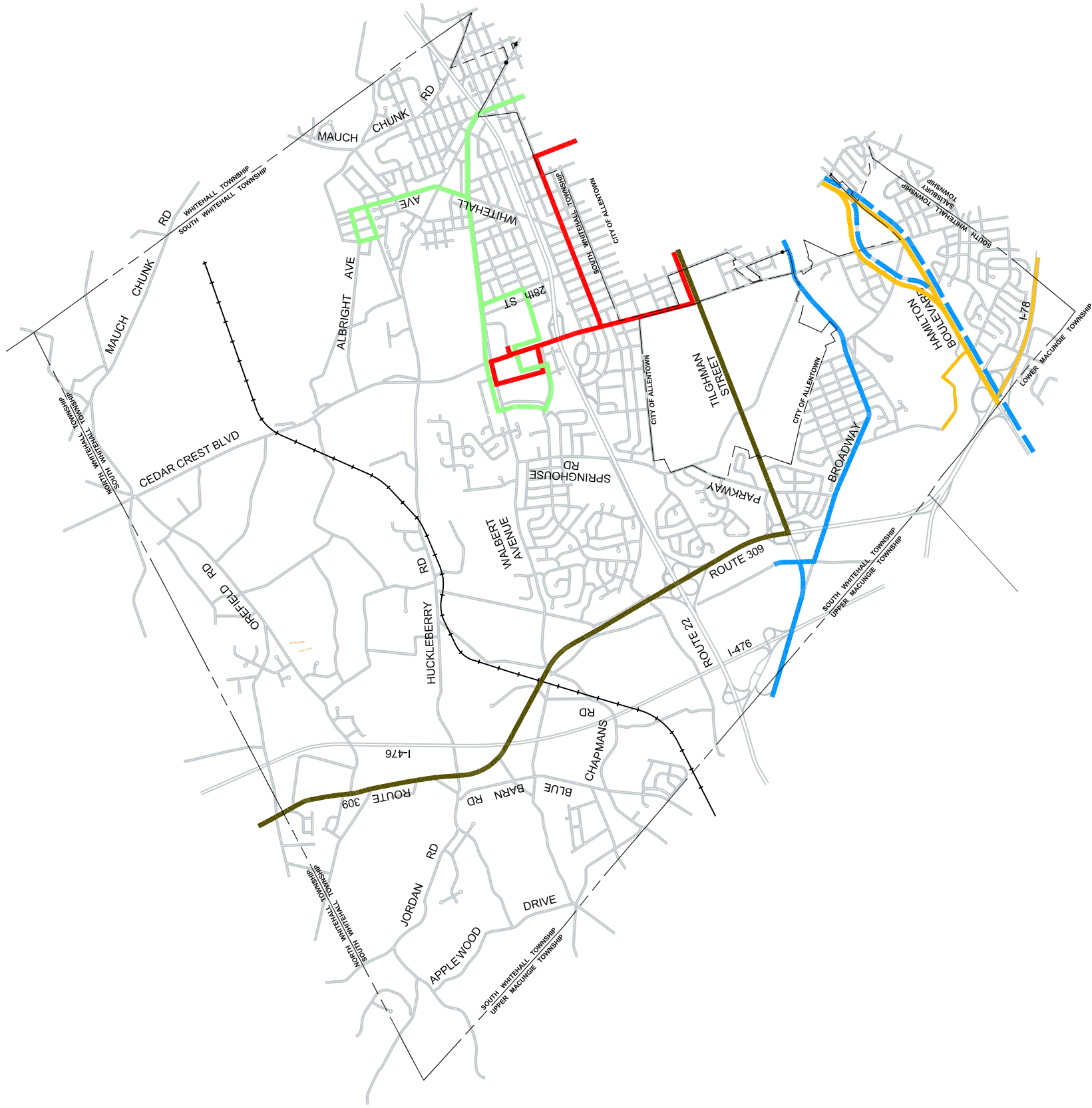
**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE  
PLANNED AND FUTURE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS - MAP 7.5**

SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

NO SCALE DATE: MARCH 6, 2009







**LEGEND**

- LANTA BUS ROUTE A  
(Village West / Hanover Avenue)  
6 AM to 6 PM - 1 HR INTERVALS
- LANTA BUS ROUTE H  
(Dorney Park / Fullerton Avenue)  
6 AM to 6 PM - 1 HR INTERVALS
- LANTA BUS ROUTE J  
(Boroline / Crest Plaza)  
6 AM to 7 PM - 1 HR INTERVALS
- LANTA BUS ROUTE W  
(Allentown / Slatington)  
6 AM to 7 PM - 2 HR INTERVALS
- LANTA BUS ROUTE 2  
(Fogelsville)  
6 AM to 6 PM - 1 HR INTERVALS
- LANTA BUS ROUTE 3  
(Trexlerstown)  
2 AM and 2 PM TRIPS



**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE  
LANTA BUS ROUTES - MAP 7.6**

SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

NO SCALE DATE: MARCH 6, 2009





## 8. A Plan for Utilities

### I. Water Supply

Drinking water within South Whitehall Township is supplied either from private wells on individual properties, from a private water company (Aqua-PA serving Country Club Gardens and Springhouse Farms), from 11 municipal water supply wells owned and operated by the South Whitehall Township Authority (Authority), or via connections to the City of Allentown water distribution system. In addition, an emergency interconnection exists between the Township and Lehigh County Authority (LCA) systems, and LCA serves certain isolated areas along the westerly boundary of the Township. The Authority also owns and operates a 3,000,000-gallon ground-level water storage tank on Huckleberry Ridge, and a 500,000 gallon elevated tank at the PPL Service Center on Hausman Road.

The Authority is permitted by the Delaware River Basin Commission to withdraw 2,000,000 gallons per day (gpd) (monthly average) of groundwater. In addition, an agreement with the City of Allentown allows the Authority to purchase up to 1,200,000 gpd. In 2007, the Authority served water to approximately 5,370 customers. The average daily consumption was approximately 1,520,000 gpd.

The water system has been planned for expansion in general accordance with the Township's 1983 Master Water Plan. System improvements should be pursued in conjunction with future development plans. The Master Water Plan should be updated to reflect development conditions and anticipated growth. Further, all future development in the vicinity of an Authority water supply well should be required to comply with wellhead protection regulations under Title 25, Chapter 109, as promulgated by DEP. In addition, LVPC has issued guidance in its report entitled "Lehigh-Northampton Counties Wellhead Protection Implementation Program", dated February 1996. By Resolution 96-8, the Township committed to "carefully consider the wellhead protection program prepared by the LVPC". Any new public water supplies, and development proximate thereto, would be required to comply with DEP regulations. To preserve water resources, groundwater recharge measures should also be considered for new development proposed within the Groundwater Recharge Basins shown on Map 8.1.

Within the Main Service Area (MSA)—generally south of Huckleberry Ridge as delineated on Map 8.1—virtually all undeveloped land is readily accessible to the existing water distribution system, either from abutting water lines or via relatively short water line extensions. The MSA is served at a pressure elevation of approximately 580 feet.

The High Level Service Area (HLSA) serves the area along Huckleberry Ridge as also delineated on Map 8.1. Within this area, much of the land south of Chapmans Road and north of the railroad is either approved for development or being reviewed for development, for which the developers propose municipal water service. This area is served by the Eck Road Booster Pump Station at a pressure elevation of approximately 735 feet. Once the HLSA is extended—as planned—east of the Turnpike, optimum service will be afforded to the portion of the HLSA temporarily being served from the Springhouse West Booster Pump Station.

The Authority's water system extends into the Northern Service Area (NSA), which serves the area north of Huckleberry Ridge as designated on Map 8.1. Existing mains extend along Blue Barn Road, into and through Guthsville to Siegersville, across Rt. 309 and along Lime Kiln Road to the Parkland High School. Also, a waterline exists on Wehr Mill Road from Lime Kiln Road to Huckleberry Road, continuing in Brickyard Road to the Huckleberry Ridge water storage tank (3,000,000 gallon capacity) at the 625 feet pressure datum. This system is available to serve development throughout the NSA via anticipated extensions and looping. The Authority's Cornerstone Well is located in the NSA. Additional production wells may be developed to augment supply for future proposed development in the NSA.

The Authority also serves Lehigh County's Cedarbrook campus from a separate system that includes two wells and a booster pump station.

Finally, by agreement and for convenience, LCA serves certain portions of the Township along its westerly boundary where service by the Authority is not feasible. Those areas are generally delineated on Map 8.1 and include Schantz Orchard; two homes on Clauser Road; the southwesterly quadrant of the Turnpike Interchange, including Commerce Plaza; and seven homes in Hillview Estates.

## II. Sewage Disposal

Municipal sewers owned and operated by the Authority provide gravity service throughout the Main Service Area south of Huckleberry Ridge for treatment at the City of Allentown facility at Kline's Island. The treatment capacity of the Kline's Island plant is 40 million gallons per day (mgd), and the average daily flow through the plant was 30.8 mgd in 2007. The Authority is currently allocated treatment capacity of 3.0 mgd. The average daily flow from the Authority system was 1.9 mgd in 2007.

North of Huckleberry Ridge, municipal sewers do not exist. The Township's Act 537 (Sewage Facilities) Plan designates this area for on-lot sewage disposal. In an effort to avoid proliferation of isolated on-site systems, and if development is proposed at densities that warrant sanitary sewer service, a feasibility study will be required to obtain DEP approval of a revision to the Township's Act 537 Plan. Such service could be provided by any of the alternatives summarized below.

#### Alternative I

This alternative extends an interceptor sewer from the east by gravity along the Jordan Creek for eventual treatment at the City of Allentown facility. In addition to the capital cost required for the interceptor itself, other additional significant issues that would require further evaluation are as follows:

- The availability and purchase of additional treatment capacity from the City of Allentown and the construction of plant upgrades if required;
- Constructing new or upsizing existing downstream sewer lines within South Whitehall and Whitehall Townships, and within the City of Allentown;
- Construction of collector sewers to serve existing development in the Jordan Valley;
- Additional annual O&M costs; and
- Land and/or easement acquisition.

#### Alternative II

Alternative II consists of the two following options:

- A. Constructing a sewage treatment plant at a point along Jordan Creek, or
- B. Taking possession of and expanding the existing plant at Parkland High School, and pumping sewage from the area of South Whitehall Township downstream of the existing plant to the expanded plant via a new pump station.

Although Alternative IIB would require the additional expense of constructing a new pumping facility, it may be more feasible and desirable to acquire and upgrade an existing treatment facility as opposed to siting and permitting an entirely new facility. In both cases, the construction of a new sewage treatment plant or the acquisition and expansion of the existing private facility would eliminate the need for:

- Additional or amended intermunicipal agreements;
- The purchase of collection, conveyance and treatment capacity; and
- The associated construction of significant downstream relief facilities.

Either option would also result in:

- Additional costs for annual operation and maintenance; and
- Costs for land acquisition.

These alternatives would need to be considered within the context of an Act 537 Plan study in order to gain DEP approval of sewage facilities planning. At that time, comprehensive comparison of each alternative would be accomplished.

In the past, the feasibility of each of these alternative methods has been studied and reports have been issued. However, to date, the Township has elected not to pursue any alternative. If future planning dictates the need for municipal sanitary sewer service in the Jordan Valley, a separate feasibility study will be required to determine the preferred alternative, under then-current conditions, within this portion of the Township. The feasibility of any alternative depends on many variables including, but not limited to:

- The extent of development;
- The availability of and capacity for transportation and treatment downstream of the Township compared to that within the Township;
- Costs for operation and maintenance;
- Availability of easements and property; and
- Approvals by regulating agencies; etc.

Detailed analysis of these issues, and others, is beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan. Such analyses would more appropriately be accomplished in the form of an Act 537 Plan study in conjunction with, and partially funded by, DEP.

### III. Storm Water Management

South Whitehall Township owns and maintains storm sewerage systems, and has updated storm water management regulations, including water quality updates consistent with Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Act 167 Storm Water Management Plans, for each of its watersheds. The Township has areas within three watersheds: the Little Lehigh Creek, the Jordan Creek, and the Coplay Creek watersheds. The Township most recently updated its storm water management regulations for all watersheds by amendment to Chapter 13 of its Codified Ordinances in April 2007. These regulations govern storm water runoff rates, volumes, and quality, and establish Storm Water Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all new developments throughout the Township.

The Township Public Works Department (Department) maintains the Township-owned storm sewers and detention basin facilities located throughout the Township. The Department systematically undertakes drainage system improvements throughout the Township. Drainage issues are prioritized annually by severity and available budget funds.

By implementation of the adopted updated storm water regulations for new developments, and by drainage improvement efforts undertaken by Township

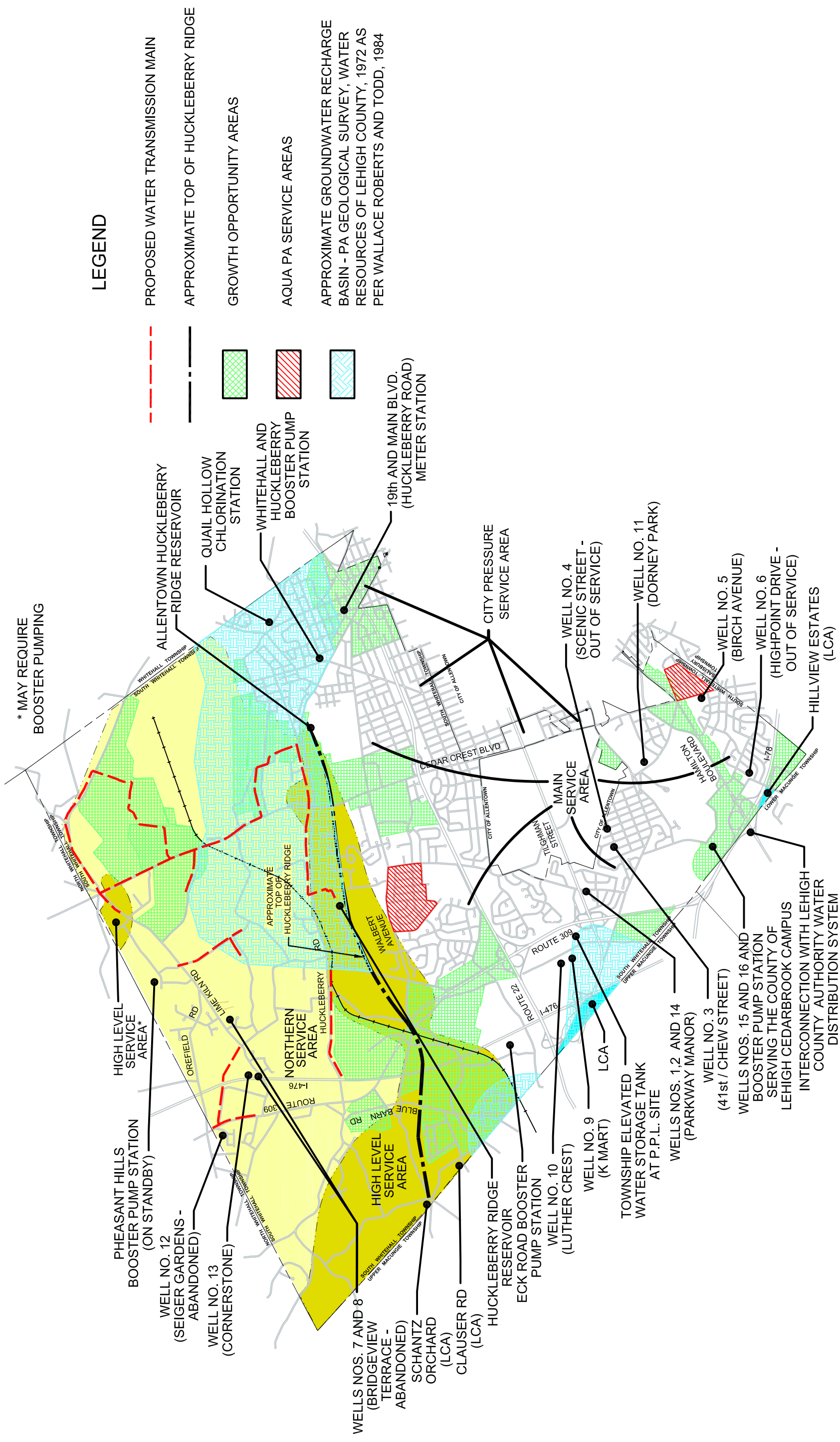
forces, the Township continues to manage storm water runoff, recognizing the importance of this valuable resource.

#### IV. Recommendations for Utilities

1. *Consider incorporating elements of the wellhead protection program prepared by the LVPC to increase protection of the water supply.*
2. *Consider groundwater recharge measures for new development and redevelopment proposed within the Groundwater Recharge Basins to preserve water supply.*
3. *Conduct fiscal impact studies of proposed alternatives for extending the sewer and public water systems.*
4. *Conduct an Act 537 Feasibility Study to determine the most feasible option for expanding sewer service in the Township and gain DEP approval of a revision to the Township's Act 537 Plan.*
5. *Incorporate planned and future utility extensions as part of a 5-year and 10-year Capital Improvements Plan.*
6. *Extend sewer treatment capacity to new growth areas in pace with Township capability and the Capital Improvements Plan.*







**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED WATER TRANSMISSION MAIN
- - - APPROXIMATE TOP OF HUCKLEBERRY RIDGE
- [Green Hatched Box] GROWTH OPPORTUNITY AREAS
- [Red Hatched Box] AQUA PA SERVICE AREAS
- [Blue Hatched Box] APPROXIMATE GROUNDWATER RECHARGE BASIN - PA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WATER RESOURCES OF LEHIGH COUNTY, 1972 AS PER WALLACE ROBERTS AND TODD, 1984

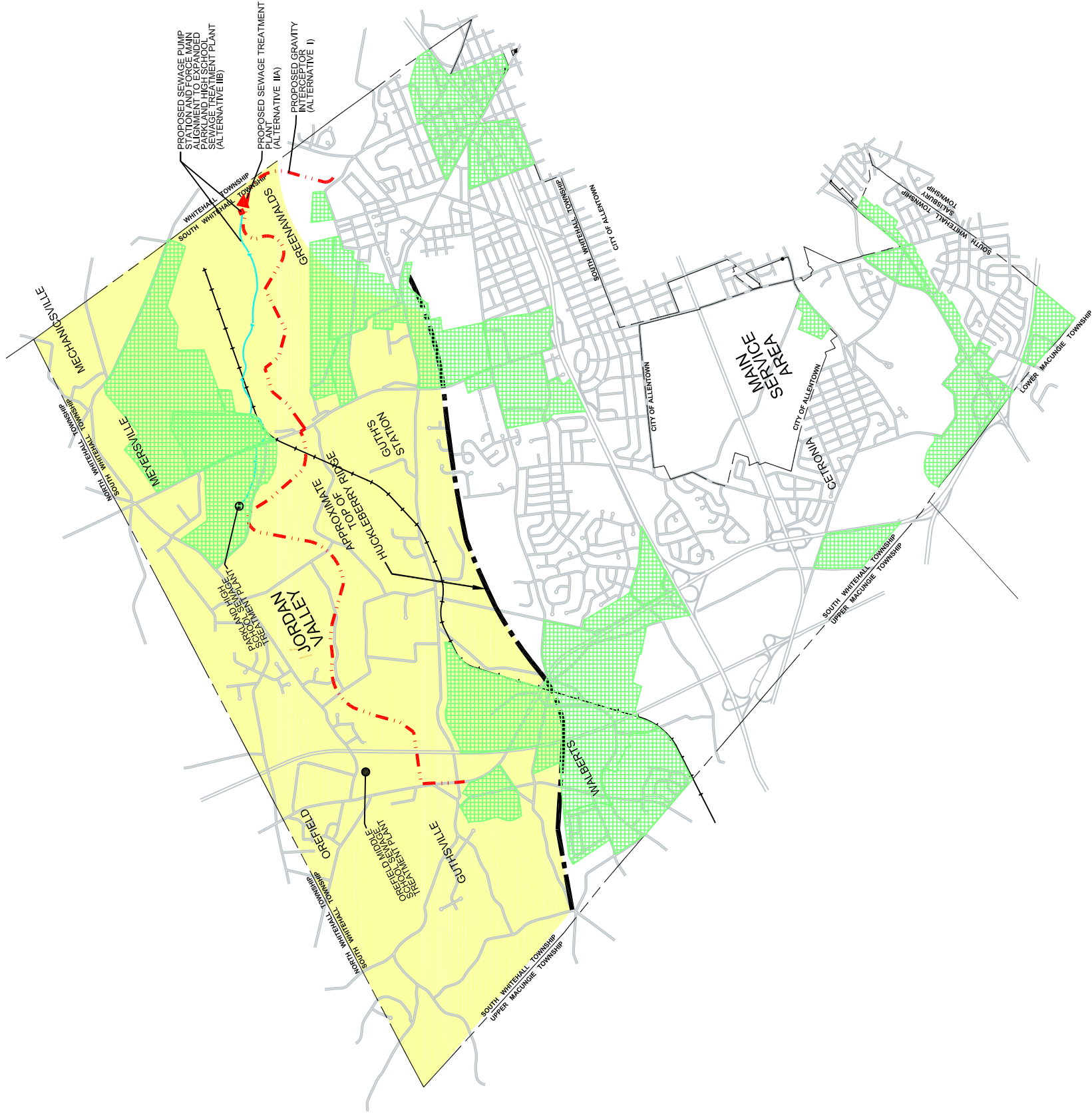
\* MAY REQUIRE BOOSTER PUMPING




**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE  
WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM - MAP 8.1**

SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA





**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED FORCE MAIN 
- PROPOSED INTERCEPTOR 
- PROPOSED SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT 
- PROPOSED PUMP STATION 
- JORDAN VALLEY 
- GROWTH OPPORTUNITY AREAS 





## 9. A Plan for Community Facilities

The Plan for Community Facilities addresses the Township's provision of municipal facilities and services as it accommodates future development. In addition to focusing on the Township facilities: administrative space, communications, educational facilities, fire protection, and emergency medical services, and nursing homes, the plan describes the coordination of these services in light of the Proposed Character Areas and Future Land Use map. It is this coordination that will enable the Township to provide the necessary services to support growth in the Township, but also to deliver them at a reasonable cost and while maintaining a fiscally balanced budget.

Existing community facilities are depicted on **Map 9-1** along with the Open Space and Recreation facilities, discussed in Chapter 10.

### Administrative Campus

The Township's goal for Community Facilities and Services is to provide effective services for the Township residents.

The Township's main campus is the central headquarters for all services offered directly by the Township government. Those services include: police, road maintenance, snow and ice control, storm sewer maintenance, water and sanitary sewer system operation and maintenance, leaf collection, a yard and garden waste center, recycling container and [large item] bulk sticker sales, inspection services, code enforcement services, planning services, and all other administrative services.

The Township is proud to have its own police force, and has found that asset to be an important consideration to those looking to locate or re-locate in the Lehigh Valley. In the future, one item that the Township will have to consider acquiring a lot in which to keep impounded vehicles for the police department.

Currently, a yard and garden waste center is located on the main campus, but in the not-too-distant future, a new site that is larger and offers a better traffic pattern, may be desirable. Planning may be done in conjunction with the Township's needs for leaf collection, the storage and disposal of clean fill, and the storage of township equipment.

The Parkland Library is also currently located on the Township's main campus, but may relocate at such time as the independently empowered Library Board may find a location that will allow its expansion and be more centrally located within the school district.

### **Communications**

South Whitehall Township has a large communications tower located atop Huckleberry Ridge to enhance its capabilities for radio and data communications. As cellular phone use increases, the Township will continue to keep in mind the value of this tower, and any other towers it may choose to build, as locations for the antennae of public and private entities. As data transmission infrastructure becomes more important in township operations, the Township should investigate and pursue means of providing secure and reliable data transmission between Township facilities. Consideration should also be made to design, construct and use non-campus facilities as alternative locations for Township operations should the campus be rendered partially or completely unusable.

### **Fire Fighting Services**

Fire fighting and rescue services are not directly provided by the Township. They are provided by four volunteer fire fighting organizations supported, in large part, by contributions from the Township.

The four volunteer fire companies are: Cetronia, located in the 3000 block of Broadway; Woodlawn, located on Whitehall Avenue; Greenawalds, located on Focht Avenue, and Tri-Clover, located on our northern border with North Whitehall Township.

The locations of these four fire companies were established long before South Whitehall Township became a township of the First Class, and the development of the Township since their respective establishments may be said to have rendered the current locations of one or two of these fire stations as being less than ideal.

The residents of the Township, however, have long held an acute appreciation—not only for the valuable service provided by each of these companies—but also the location of the various fire halls in their respective neighborhoods. Indeed, any relocation may have an adverse impact on the ability of any of these fire companies to recruit. Further, though the current distribution of these fire companies may not be ideal, the response times have remained very short.

At some time in the future, the Township will probably have to grapple with possible declines in volunteerism, as well as a possible need for a better distribution of fire fighting assets to address future development within the Township. One obvious answer to either or both of these issues may be to consider the establishment of a municipal fire department.

The timing of any action of this sort will be event driven, and the preparations for it will include the setting aside of contingency funds for a new building and fire fighting equipment. The Township's plan will also include the assembling of a civil service type of board to recruit and hire qualified people to fill the various positions in the department. The location of any new fire

station will be influenced by: major east/west and north/south routes within the Township; the location of existing volunteer companies; the pattern of future development in the existing fire districts, and the availability of suitable land.

An additional part of the plan is to include an Emergency Operations Center as part of any new building intended to house emergency services personnel.

### **Educational Facilities**

South Whitehall Township is part of the Parkland School District, which is comprised of South Whitehall Township, North Whitehall Township and Upper Macungie Township. The school district covers approximately 72 square miles, and has a population of about 46,000 residents, according to school district sources.

The Parkland School District is known as one of the most desirable school districts in the Lehigh Valley. According to its Executive Summary Report of August, 2008, regarding the district's Strategic Plan for 2008-2014, "The student enrollment of the school district as of June, 2008, was 9,290 students with 3,916 students at the elementary level (K-5), 2,183 students at the middle school level (grades 6-8) and 3,191 students at the high school level (9-12)." The document goes on to state, "Over the past twenty years, the district has almost doubled its student population. Within the past 5 years alone, the district has experienced a student growth rate of approximately 2% each year."

School buildings in South Whitehall Township include: The Parkland High School on Cedar Crest Boulevard, the Orefield Middle School on Route 309, Parkway Manor Elementary School on Parkway Road, Kratzer Elementary School on Huckleberry Road, Springhouse Middle School on Springhouse Road, and Cetronia Elementary School on Broadway.

The school district also has located its Administrative Offices in South Whitehall Township adjacent to the Springhouse Middle School, and the former Troxell Elementary school building on Cedar Crest Boulevard is used for both administrative and storage purposes.

Expansion of the student population will require close monitoring to ensure that the student to teacher ratio, classroom size, and other facilities are capable of adequately managing the population while providing a quality service. Expansion of school facilities will not only require attention to the school buildings themselves, but to the bus fleet and the ability to fill positions as needed with qualified professionals.

South Whitehall Township's residents also have a number of opportunities for higher education within a reasonable distance of their homes. These opportunities include: Lincoln Technical Institute, Lehigh County Community College, Lehigh County Vocational/Technical School, Kutztown University, East Stroudsburg University, Muhlenberg College, DeSales University, Moravian College, Northampton County Community College, Lehigh University and Lafayette College.

**Table 9-1: Student Enrollment Projections 2002-2003 / 2010-2011**

		02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11
K-5	Projected	3682	3686	3729	3761	3885	3846	3923	4002	4082
	Actual March	3579	3620	3651	3772	3771	-----	-----	-----	-----
	PDE Projected	-----	-----	3613	3899	4067	4258	4433	4573	4829
6-8	Projected	2066	2191	2275	2285	2213	2186	2231	2275	2320
	Actual March	2127	2209	2218	2148	2144	-----	-----	-----	-----
	PDE Projected	-----	-----	2211	2170	2169	2175	2258	2308	2883
9-12	Projected	2750	2897	2963	3090	3167	3222	3286	3352	3419
	Actual March	2813	2877	3000	3075	3159	-----	-----	-----	-----
	PDE Projected	-----	-----	3003	3114	3259	3305	3255	3297	3947
K-12	Projected	8498	8774	8967	9136	9265	9254	9440	9629	9821
	Actual March*	8519	8706	8869	8995	9074	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Actual 6/30	8504	8694	8863	8987	9098	-----	-----	-----	-----
	PDE Projected	8462	8695	8827	9183	9495	9738	9946	10178	11659
Difference-Actual vs. Projected		6	-80	-104	-149					

PDE= PA Department of Education

\*2006-2007 Actual Data as of: Dec-06

Other Actual data: March of given year

Projections based upon Actual Enrollment + .3%

Projections from 07-08 based on .2%

**Emergency Medical Services**

There is no shortage of medical care facilities for the residents of South Whitehall Township. In fact, the medical services industry is probably the largest employer of Lehigh Valley residents.

South Whitehall Township is fortunate to have a main branch of the Cetrionia Ambulance Corps located within its borders, and there are several excellent medical treatment centers to which the Township's residents have easy access. The Lehigh Valley Medical Center is located only a mile south of the Township's border in Salisbury Township. The St. Luke's and Sacred Heart



hospitals are only a 15 or 20 minute drive into Allentown from the Township. There are two short-stay hospitals located within the Township. They are the Westfield Medical Center, located in the western portion of the Township, and a soon-to-be opened Coordinated Health building, located near the center of the Township, in the former Roma Center at Cedar Crest Boulevard and Walbert Avenue. There are also a very large number of medical professional offices throughout the Lehigh Valley.

### **Nursing Homes and Assisted Living**

Lehigh County has a large campus located within South Whitehall Township that includes the Cedarview Apartments for our older citizens, and Cedarbrook Nursing Home. The privately-owned Luther Crest campus in South Whitehall Township augments the availability of various living arrangements, with various levels of care, for the elderly. The growing demand for the types of living arrangements the older segment of our population will pose will have to be met by the expansion of government-owned facilities (like the County's), and the establishment of privately-owned facilities—perhaps with some accommodation for these types of uses in our zoning ordinance.

### **Recommendations for Community Facilities**

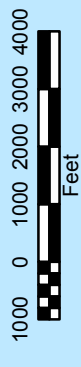
- 1. Consider acquiring a lot in which to keep vehicles impounded by the police department.*
- 2. Consider expanding the yard and garden waste center at a new site that is larger and offers a better traffic pattern. Planning for such a site may also fill the Township's need for leaf collection, the storage and disposal of clean fill, and the storage of township equipment.*
- 3. The Township should investigate and pursue means of providing secure and reliable data transmission between Township facilities. Consideration should also be made to design, construct and use non-campus facilities as alternative locations for Township operations should the campus be rendered partially or completely unusable.*
- 4. As the Township grows, consider the establishment of a municipal fire department.*
- 5. Include an Emergency Operations Center to house emergency services personnel as part of any new municipal building.*
- 6. Partner with the Parkland School District to closely monitor growth and ensure that the student to teacher ratio, classroom size, and other facilities are capable of adequately handling the population while providing a quality service.*
- 7. Prepare to meet the growing housing demands of the older segment of the population through the expansion of government-owned facilities (like the County's), and the establishment of privately owned facilities by accommodating for these types of uses in the Township Zoning Ordinance.*



# Community Facilities

## Legend

- Township Building & Library
- Fire & Ambulance
- Schools
- Parks



Data Sources:  
Base Features: Lehigh County GIS, 2004  
Wetlands: National Wetlands Inventory  
Floodplains: FEMA

## Map 9-1 Community Facilities

Comprehensive Plan

South Whitehall Township  
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:  
Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc.  
Town Planners & Landscape Architects  
18 West Chestnut Street  
West Chester, PA 19380

January 24, 2008; March 20, 2008;  
August 21, 2008







## **10. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that a Plan for Community Facilities include open space and recreation. As municipalities grow, natural resources are invariably threatened or compromised, while demand for recreational opportunities rises. An open space and recreation plan is a blueprint for balancing the benefits of development with valued environmental assets and a community's basic need for recreation and leisure opportunities.

Concurrent with the development of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, South Whitehall Township is also undertaking a Joint Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan in conjunction with North Whitehall Township. It is intended that these Plans be consistent, with the Comprehensive Plan addressing open space and recreation in a more general manner through the Future Land Use Plan, the Natural Resources Plan, and the Historic Resources Plan. The Joint Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is more specific in its analysis of open space needs, usage and recreational program demands.

This chapter provides an overview of the existing and desired Open Space and Recreation amenities in South Whitehall Township by listing the inventory of facilities and properties, as well as incorporating the goals, objectives and recommendations provided by the Joint Comprehensive Open Space and Recreational Plan.

### *Open Space and Recreation- Existing Inventory*

The inventory of the Open space and recreational facilities inventory includes municipally owned space, educational and nonprofit lands, lands provided as part of open space cluster subdivisions, and privately held recreational facilities.

### **Township Open Space**

South Whitehall Township owns 27 tracts of land preserved for open space and recreation. The most notable of these is the Covered Bridge Park, located along the Jordan Creek and including the historically significant Wehr and Guth Covered Bridges. This 165-acre park provides four soccer/football fields, four ballfields, outdoor volleyball court, playground equipment, three pavilions, fitness course, disc-golf course, handball court, fishing, a walking trail, picnic tables and barbeque facilities.

Other tracts consist of the tot lots, playgrounds and neighborhood amenities located around residential subdivisions. Fernwood Park (pictured above left), for instance, is a Township

owned park that is interwoven with the Fernwood subdivision and provides ballfields, a trail, and playground equipment.

**Table 10-1** lists these properties along with their acreage and brief description of amenities. **Map 9-1**, Community Facilities, depicts the location of open space within the Township.

Table 10-1: South Whitehall Township Parks & Open Space

NAME	MAP KEY
Bungalow Park	2
Cedar Crest Gardens	5
Covered Bridge Park	6
Deerfield Open Space	7
Donald Memorial Park	8
Fernwood Terrace	11
Golden Oaks Park	13
Grandlawn Baseball Field	14
Grove Street Park	15
Jacoby Park	18
Martha Nolan Memorial Playlot	21
Parkway Court	20
Springhouse West Park	22
Stoneridge Terrace - Open Space	24
Twin Grove Park	25

Existing parks not shown on the Map include: Beverly, Bridgeview Terrace, Spring Valley Estates, Winchester Heights, South Whitehall Chase, Hampshire Court and Wedgewood. In addition, new development at Green Hills will provide a Playground and Athletic Field to the Township’s inventory of open space and recreation.

**County Lands**

In addition to the Township, Lehigh County owns three park properties within South Whitehall boundaries:

- Jordan Creek Parkway which has 296 acres located primarily in Whitehall Township, but that does straddle South Whitehall’s eastern municipal boundary.
- On either side of Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom are Cedar Creek Parkway East and West. Cedar Creek East consists of 37.5 acres that links Cedar Creek Parkway (located in Allentown) and Dorney Park. Haines Mill Museum, located along Cedar Creek, is one of the four National Register sites in the Township. Cedar Creek Parkway West is 155 acres dedicated to both active and passive recreation uses.

The County is developing an online system to enable residents to more easily reserve fields and pavilions in any of the County facilities.

In addition, the County Convention and Visitor's Bureau has created a self-guided, historic covered bridge driving tour that includes the Wehr and Guth Covered Bridges in Covered Bridge Park.

### **Parkland School District**

As noted in the Community Facilities section, several school properties reside within South Whitehall Township and offer recreational opportunities: Parkland High School; Springhouse and Orefield Middle Schools and the former Troxell Junior High Schools; and Cetronia, Kratzer, and Parkway Manor Elementary Schools. Most Township sponsored recreational programs and activities are accommodated on School District property upon request with no rental fees.

### **Private/Commercial Amenities**

While it is vital that communities ensure that the benefits of recreation and open space are open to everyone, additional opportunities are offered by private, commercial enterprises, for an entrance or membership fee.

- Manito Equestrian Center
- Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom
- Good Shepherd
- Guthsville Rod and Gun Club
- Human Performance Center
- Izaak Walton Rod and Gun Club
- LA Fitness
- OAA Orthopedic Specialists
- Planet Fitness
- Stone Crest Swim Club
- Westend Racquet Swim and Fitness Club
- Westwood Swim Club

### **NRPA Guidelines**

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends standards and a classifications system for local governments to use in planning and evaluating their open space and recreation networks and services. At the Township level, the following categories of parks and open space are provided to organize the land resources found within a community<sup>1</sup>:

#### Mini-Park

- Typically less than one acre in size
- Serves a small (1/4 mile or less), secluded area or single neighborhood
- Used to address limited or isolated recreational needs
- May include playground area or tot lot

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<sup>1</sup> *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, National Recreation and Park Association, 1996

#### Neighborhood Park

- Typically between 5 and 10 acres in size
- Serves up to a ½ mile radius
- Focus on active and passive facilities

#### Community Park

- Typically between 30 and 50 acres in size
- Serves two or more neighborhoods or a 1 to 2 mile radius
- Meets multiple recreational needs

#### School Park

- Size and location vary
- Expands recreational, social, and educational opportunities in a more efficient and cost-effective manner

#### Regional Park

- Typically 200 plus acres
- Serves several communities
- Focused on a unique or valued asset of the community
- Provide a wide variety of passive activities

#### Greenway

- Serves as a linear connection between other scenic, historic, or recreational opportunities
- Commonly located along waterways or rail easements
- Provides continuous corridors for natural resource protection, movement of wildlife, and/or pedestrian circulation
- Provides passive recreation, particularly in the form of trails

#### Implications:

The NRPA recommendations are intended to provide a flexible guideline for establishing an acceptable level of service for each type of park, with some flexibility to account for and respond to the unique circumstances of each municipality.

As is recommended, the majority of South Whitehall Township's existing open space resources are those that serve the local population and fall into the categories of mini-park, neighborhood park, or school park. The more expansive Covered Bridge Park is considered a Community Park. These parks generally meet the needs of the Township at the present time. However,



as the Township grows, the NRPA standards also provide guidelines for determining the amount of open space that will be needed over the next 10 to 20 years.

Because residents view parks located in North or South Whitehall Townships as equally accessible, the Joint Plan reflects the combined amenities of the two Townships. According to the Consultants' analysis in the Joint Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan, North and South Whitehall Townships combined should provide between 218 and 366 acres of local recreational land. This increases (based on Lehigh Valley Planning Commission population projections) to 257 to 432 acres by 2020. Currently, the two Townships meet the recommended amounts of open space, but fall short in terms of local, active recreation space, and will need to increase these acreages to keep pace with projected growth over the next 10 to 20 years.

#### Draft Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS) and the Comprehensive Plan

The overall approach toward the provision of recreation put forth by the Township and the PROS Plan emphasizes large parks that offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities and yet streamline the administrative, operations and maintenance functions required by the Township. Dividing the Township into three (3) recreational planning areas, the plan recommends that there is a need for at least one community park for the area west of the Turnpike, as well as increased opportunities for walking, skating and biking in the neighborhoods south of Route 22. In regards to the central portion of the Township, east of the Turnpike and north of Route 22, the plan recommends that while there is adequate open space, the majority of it is not owned or operated by the Township and therefore is at risk of being converted in the future.

Considering the recommended Future Character Areas and the new growth opportunity areas in the northeast corner of the Township, this last recommendation is especially important. This area will not only require additional open space, but is intended to have a high degree of connectivity between the Jordan Creek Greenway, the recreational areas on the Troxell School property, and other trails. In addition to the growth area in the northeast, a second area is proposed to the west of the Turnpike surrounding Guthsville and the existing R-10 developments. All of these areas are intended to be designed and developed with a minimum percentage of usable open space. This open space may take the form of passive greens, active playfields, protected resources, but ideally will provide a combination of each. Such green space is an essential component to complement and balance the traditional neighborhood development proposed here.

Because the recommended recreational philosophy results in a smaller number of larger parks (as compared to a greater number of small parks dispersed throughout the Township) coordination and access become more important. Connectivity of open spaces is a unifying theme throughout this Comprehensive Plan, having been discussed in the Goals, Land Use, Resource Protection, Transportation, and now Open Space Chapters.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. *Develop the Jordan Creek Greenway.* The Greenway is an essential element in the future planning of the Township. Not only does it protect a significant natural resource,

protect water quality, and provide for wildlife habitat, but it would also provide recreational opportunities for two of the three recreational planning areas, and a connection to adjoining municipalities and the region. A critical piece of this Greenway is contained in the new community proposed on the Future Land Use Plan for the northeast corner of the Township. Development of any such community should require the preservation of land along the Creek as critical habitat, recreation and natural resource protection area. The Greenway should also serve as the spine for smaller trails that reach into the neighborhoods and allow pedestrian/bicycle access at the local level.

2. *Address the needs of the individual Planning Areas in regards to Recreation:* While the Township as a whole almost meets the NRPA recommended standards for parkland, most recreational needs are met at the local level. Recommendations for each of the three proposed recreational planning areas in South Whitehall Township consider the unique strengths and weaknesses of each, including: a community park and greenway connection with the Trexler-Lehigh Game Preserve in the western recreational planning area; bike lanes, pedestrian trails, and a neighborhood park in the southern planning area, and increase the amount and diversity of programs on Township owned recreational land including the Jordan Creek Parkway in the eastern Planning Area.
3. *Provide a connection to the Ironton Rail Trail.* The Ironton Rail Trail is a 6-mile plus loop located in North Whitehall and Whitehall Townships along the former railway corridor. South Whitehall Township could work with North Whitehall to provide a connection from this unique and scenic trail connection to the Jordan Creek Greenway.
4. *Amend Zoning Regulations to preserve natural, historic and cultural resources.* Chapter 5 focuses on this discussion with recommendations for Zoning Ordinance Amendments as well as other strategies.
5. *Amend Zoning or SALDO to adopt tree protection and replacement standards.* Woodlands in South Whitehall Township contribute to not only the sense of rural character and open space, but also assist in flood control, groundwater recharge and infiltration, and clean air. While the development of the Township will mean the loss of some of this habitat, protective measures that concentrate on maintaining large swaths of woodlands, especially along waterways, and the requirement for and replacement of trees as part of the land development process will contribute to an attractive, sustainable environment and community.
6. *Cooperate with surrounding municipalities and other independent organizations, especially Parkland School District, to provide and maintain joint recreational facilities.* Open space and recreation facilities can be expensive to acquire and maintain. Leveraging opportunities so that together, they meet the needs of the residents and visitors of South Whitehall Township is fiscally responsible, but will require leadership and foresight. Cooperative planning, such as the Joint Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is an imperative first step for which the Township should be commended. The Plan however, emphasizes the need to acquire a Township network and to not rely too heavily on independent and commercial enterprises, which do not have to maintain their open space in perpetuity.

7. *Create connectivity between existing and planned recreation areas, and neighborhoods, villages, and other recreation areas.* A community survey conducted as part of the Joint Plan reveals that hiking and biking trails and opportunities are a high priority for Township residents. This demand can be met on the neighborhood level and connected with larger, more regionally designed networks and greenways. This also ensures safe and convenient access for all ages to the available park facilities.
8. *Use conservation and scenic easements to help preserve open space.*





## **11. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS**

Section 301(a)(4.1) of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that the Comprehensive Plan include a “statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components, which may include an estimate of the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality.”

The South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan is intended to be viewed as a holistic document in which each of the components affects and interacts with the others. For instance, improvements recommended as part of the transportation and utilities chapters are necessary in order to make the Township’s Future Character Areas Plan a reality. Others, such as Parks and Recreation are needed to serve and support a desired quality of life. It is through the balance and coordination of each of these components that will allow the Township to enhance its economic vitality and balanced tax base that is necessary to achieve its vision for the future.

Each of the components is described more fully as follows:

The Plan for Land Use focuses on the Character Areas and represents the Township’s vision for development. The Land Use Plan is embodied in the Future Character Areas and Land Use Map (Map 4-2) which depicts not only where the Township will support and direct growth, but also the character of the community that growth should create. This is particularly emphasized within the Manual of Best Practices and Models through visual cues and depictions of desired growth. This map does not operate on its own, but interacts with the Natural Resources and Historic Resources maps, which should act as overlays that will further influence and refine development in these areas. These overlays are vital to the Township’s ability to protect its unique and rural character in the face of new growth and development.

The Plan for Utilities focuses on the sewer and water capacity that will be needed to support development where the Township has deemed appropriate and in accordance with Federal and State regulations for resource protection. In many areas depicted on the Land Use Plan, particularly those within the growth area located in the northern tier, planned improvements to provide sewer and water will be further assessed for fiscal impact, studied and approved as part of an Updated Act 537 Plan PRIOR to any zoning changes that would enable substantial new community to be created. The pace of the approved option for utility expansion should be undertaken in accordance with the Township’s ability to reasonably make such investments.

The Plan for Circulation plays a similarly vital role in the determination of how the Future Land Use Plan will become reality. Further analysis, assessment and cooperation between all parties involved (including PennDOT, LVPC, and the Township) is critical in deciding which improvements are feasible and in what timeframe. The Plan itself describes the necessary improvements that need to be made over the long term in order to support the Township's desired growth pattern while protecting the quality of life for residents, business owners, and visitors. Improvements to the transportation system will require long-term cooperative effort, but should not focus solely on physical vehicular improvements. Policy changes that encourage and support the development of alternative transportation and an improved pedestrian network should also be considered. In addition, planning for these improvements ahead of development will allow for developer contributions, dedications and other sources of support that will be timelier, more appropriate, and less costly to the Township.

The Plan for Housing focuses on the demand for housing and the types of housing that will be needed. It is important to the Township that the housing choices within its boundaries are attractive and affordable to people of all ages and incomes. This plan provides recommendations for how the Township Ordinances can better incentivize mixed housing types and more affordable alternatives.

The Community Facilities and Services are intended to serve the population that will come and to provide the Township a blueprint for its capital improvements planning. The demand for these services will rise as growth in the Township occurs. As the need for additional services and facility space arises, the Township will need to include space for these needs as part of the land use plan.

Together these components are intended to promote a desirable, sustainable pattern of development for the Township in the future. The design and implementation of the complimentary plan components and promote a vibrant natural cultural, and social environment, stable and diverse economic base, and fiscal viability.



## 12. INTERREGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Throughout this Plan, the Township has made an effort to keep the region beyond the municipal boundaries in mind, in order to avoid “planning in a bubble”. Just as the Municipalities Planning Code requires an explanation of how the Comprehensive Plan components relate to one another, it also requires a statement describing the compatibility of the Township’s plan with existing plans and development in the region. More specifically, MPC Section 301(a)(5) requires: “a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portion of neighboring municipalities” and a statement indicating that the plan “is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan.”

This chapter focuses on planning efforts and issues beyond the Township boundaries and how they inform and, hopefully, compliment the Township’s long-term vision and goals. To achieve this, the Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Maps of each of the adjacent municipalities and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission have been reviewed, with areas of significance summarized below.

### Lehigh Valley ... 2030

The most recent Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Plan produced by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission in 2004 classifies South Whitehall Township as a Suburban township with the southern half located in what is termed “the Urban Development Area” of the Region. The Plan classifies the northern tier as rural, reflecting the current use and Rural-Holding Zoning Classification.

The Overall Goal for Suburban Townships is to Improve Planning and management of Growth.” Stated policies emphasize:

- Keeping growth contiguous to existing development;
- Providing a greater variety of housing types and densities;
- Discouraging strip commercial development;
- Protecting important natural features; and
- Considering Traditional neighborhood Development as an alternative to conventional subdivision.

Overall, this Plan shares and is compatible with these policies and has incorporated some of the major strategies advocated by the LVPC, including:

- The Township has expressed a willingness to explore transportation impact fees, emphasized street and sidewalk connectivity, and improve access management standards.
- This Plan includes a list of Ordinance Amendments necessary to implementing the Comprehensive Plan and keep the Zoning and SALDO consistent with the Plan.
- Included the development and adoption of an Official Map as a strategy;

In addition to these goals and policies, the Township's desired expressed through this plan is also compatible in the following areas:

- The Township shares the goal of providing riparian buffers of 100 feet along rivers and major streams and at least 35 feet along other streams and adjacent to wetlands (in the form of a wetland margin). Additionally, the Township intends to protect steep slopes and natural areas of statewide significance.
- Both the Township and LVPC advocate increased diversity in housing types, the discouragement of strip commercial corridors, and the use of traditional neighborhood development.
- The Township supports a safe and continuous pedestrian network and creating more walkable neighborhoods through mixed uses.
- The Township supports providing additional open space along the Jordan Creek in order to maintain this vital wildlife corridor and create recreational opportunities that link to the regional trail system.

### **Adjacent Municipalities**

The following Table highlights the land uses, goals and items of special note in the Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Maps of the adjacent municipalities.



Table 12-1: Land Use Compatibility with Adjoining Municipalities

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Documents Reviewed</u>	<u>Comments on Plans and Compatibility</u>
City of Allentown	<p>Draft Comprehensive Plan June 2008</p> <p>Zoning Map</p> <p>Zoning Ordinance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land Use along the Allentown/SWT border is consistently medium density residential with pockets of highway commercial along Tilghman Street and Sumner Avenue</li> <li>▪ Compatible with existing and proposed SWT Character Areas</li> <li>▪ Emphasizes development and redevelopment that is compatible with adjacent land uses</li> <li>▪ Stresses regional cooperation, public and alternative transportation modes, and greenways</li> </ul>
Lower Macungie Township	<p>Southwestern Lehigh County Comprehensive Plan – 2005</p> <p>Zoning Map</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Boundary along SWT is comprised of Light Industrial and Commercial (continuation of that found in southern Upper Macungie), transitioning into suburban residential at the Salisbury Township line; Uses maintained in Future Land Use Plan</li> <li>▪ Advocates a Transfer of Development Rights program</li> <li>▪ Advocates increased bike/pedestrian connections, public transit and mixed-uses in village settings</li> <li>▪ Compatible with existing and proposed SWT Character Areas, which include the D-district and Suburban Neighborhood along this boundary.</li> </ul>
North Whitehall Township	<p>Comprehensive Plan - 1995</p> <p>Note: CP currently being updated, draft not available as of 7/1/08</p> <p>Zoning Map</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Boundary along SWT is comprised of Agricultural-Residential and Agricultural-Residential with Intense Livestock (1.3 acre lots), except for the area surrounding Orefield to the Route 309 corridor, which is Suburban Residential (5 du/acre)</li> <li>▪ Compatible with SWT's current low density residential and neighborhood commercial districts/T-2, T-3 and T-4 Character Areas along same boundary</li> </ul>

Table 12-1: Land Use Compatibility with Adjoining Municipalities

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Documents Reviewed</b>	<b>Comments on Plans and Compatibility</b>
Salisbury Township	Comprehensive Plan-1992 Zoning Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Boundary along SWT is comprised of medium-low density (4-6 du/acre) residential</li> <li>▪ Compatible with the proposed redevelopment T-4 in SWT</li> <li>▪ Transportation plan calls for addressing areas of ‘awkward’ alignment at intersections of Route 309 &amp; Lindberg Avenue; E Texas &amp; Flexer Avenues</li> <li>▪ Promotes Bike/pedestrian circulation</li> </ul>
Upper Macungie Township	Comprehensive Plan – 2007 Zoning Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ North of the rail line is comprised of Rural Residential (3 acre zoning) and single family residential (R-1/R-2); South of the rail line is comprised of light industrial, highway commercial office with some higher density residential</li> <li>▪ Future Land Use maintains a rural character in the North Fogelsville area, with single family residential surrounding an “enhanced” Village of Kuhnsville and the commercial/light industrial lands adjacent to the rail line</li> <li>▪ Advocates redevelopment and mixed uses in existing villages</li> <li>▪ Promotes sidewalks and trails connecting with regional amenities and natural resources</li> </ul>
Whitehall Township	Comprehensive Plan - 2005 Zoning Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Boundary along SWT progresses from low density (1/2 acre lots) in the north to medium-high (¼ acre lots) density and high (5-8 du/acre) along the southern portions of their shared boundary.</li> <li>▪ SWT goal of Jordan Creek greenway could connect with existing Jordan Creek Parkway</li> <li>▪ Depicts proposed bike trails in the Jordan Creek Parkway that could be connected with SWT</li> <li>▪ Encourages public transit and an expansion of services in the Township</li> </ul>



### 13. Implementation Strategies

The Implementation Matrix, **Table 13-1**, provides a summary of the Strategies from the previous Chapters, and presents an action plan for achieving the Township’s vision for future growth. The action plan lists a timeline for implementation and the party or parties responsible for directing the implementation of each strategy. The Board of Commissioners, Township Engineer, Planning Commission, and other Township officials can refer to this Matrix when drafting annual work plans and budgets, as well as revisions to Township Ordinances.

For easy reference, the matrix is organized by chapter. The first column lists the initiative with reference to the chapter and section that discusses the strategies and provides context behind the recommendation. Column two lists the responsible party or parties for each strategy. The following agencies, organizations or committees, in alphabetical order, are considered to be primary players in the implementation of this plan:

- BOC = Board of Commissioners
- EAC = Township Environmental Advisory Committee\*
- LC = Lehigh County
- LVPC = Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
- MA = South Whitehall Township Municipal Authority
- P&RC = Parks & Recreation Commission
- PC = Planning Commission
- PennDOT = Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- PSD = Parkland School District
- TE = Township Engineer
- TS = Township Staff

\* Only applicable if Township chooses to activate this Committee

Column three indicates the relative priority and timeline for each action to be completed in the “short term”, “medium term”, “long term”, or “on-going”. Short term indicates that a strategy should be implemented within 1 to 2 years after Plan adoption. Medium term is intended to mean 2 to 7 years, and long term is intended to mean 7 years and beyond. “On-going” indicates actions that are continually implemented after Plan adoption.

#### 4. Land Use

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Incrementally amend the Zoning Map to accommodate the proposed Future Character Areas (p. 4-31).	BOC; PC; TS	Short –Medium Term
2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require conditions for higher intensity traditional neighborhood development in the northern tier. Incorporate mixed-uses into Zoning Districts (p. 4-31).	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
3. Adopt an overlay zone to preserve and enhance the character of existing villages (p. 4-14)	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
4. Adopt open space design/cluster design options in the ZO (p. 4-13 & Manual).	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
5. Incorporate innovative planning and design techniques, including mixed use, open space clustering, and traditional neighborhood development into the ZO (p. 4-13 – 4-30).	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
6. Amend the ZO to require a pedestrian network.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
7. Encourage “green building” techniques in the Township Ordinances (p 4-15).	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Short Term
8. Consider a Transfer of Development Rights program (p. 4-14).	BOC; PC; TS; EAC	Short- Medium Term
9. Coordinate land use with transportation and utilities plans, in a manner that allows land development to occur only after the fiscal impact and alternatives have been finalized to the satisfaction of the Township.	BOC; PC; TS; TE; LVPC; PennDOT	Ongoing
10. Create and maintain an Official Map that reflects the proposed transportation corridors and other public amenities discussed.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Short Term
11. Develop and maintain a 5 and 10 year Capital Improvements Plan and 1-year Budget to support infrastructure needs in coordination with desired land use patterns.	BOC; PC; TS;	Short Term
12. Pursue funding opportunities for resource protection, greenway development and other implementation strategies.	BOC; PC; TS;	Ongoing

**5A. Natural Resources**

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance & SALDO to address: A. Riparian Buffers Model Wellhead Protection Ordinance Wetland/Wetland Buffers Steep Slopes Woodlands Karst Geology Natural Areas Inventory Sites B. Require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report	BOC; PC; EAC	Short Term
2. Greenways Network	BOC; PC; TS; PRC	Short- Med Term
3. Ongoing cooperation and partnership with other organizations, agencies, and adjacent municipalities	BOC; PC; TS; LC; LVPC	On-going
4. Activate SWT Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)	BOC	Short Term

**5B. Historic Resources**

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Promote awareness and education of the Township's history.	BOC; PC; TS	Ongoing
2. Conduct a Historic Resources Inventory.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
3. Adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
4. Encourage Rehabilitation of existing properties.	BOC; PC; TS	Ongoing
5. Incorporate Adaptive Reuse Provisions.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
6. Incorporate historic properties into the Greenway Network.	BOC; PC; TS	Ongoing
7. Designate as "sending area" in TDR program (p. 4-14).	BOC; PC; TS	Medium Term
8. Consider an overlay district for existing villages (p. 4-14).	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term

## 6. Housing

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Maintain existing housing stock	BOC; PC; TS	Ongoing
2. Amend Zoning Map incrementally to reflect Future Character Areas and Land Use Map and provide sufficient land for housing.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term/Ongoing
3. Permit a greater diversity of neighborhood and housing types in the Zoning Ordinance.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
4. Adopt a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
5. Review and revise accessory dwelling unit provisions to allow a greater use of granny flats/in-law suites.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term
6. Provide regulatory provisions and incentives for senior and workforce housing.	BOC; PC; TS	Short Term

## 7. Transportation & Circulation

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Update the functional classification of Township roads and further assess impact of future connectors as shown on Map 7-2.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Medium Term
2. Consider an Act 209 Transportation Plan.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Short Term
3. Incorporate planned and future transportation projects as part of a Capital Improvements Plan.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Short Term
4. Coordinate closely with PennDOT and adjacent municipalities and participate in regional transportation initiatives.	BOC; PC; TS; TE; PennDOT	Ongoing
5. Enhance access management and traffic calming requirements in the SALDO.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Short Term
6. Plan higher density housing, shopping, and employment facilities along existing or planned transit routes.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Long Term
7. Require developers to place bus shelters at appropriate locations, in coordination and in accordance with LANTA specifications as part of Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) requirements.	BOC; PC; TS; TE; LVTA	Short Term
8. Support, participate and partner in public transit planning where the opportunity is available.	BOC; PC; TS; TE; LVTA; LANTA	Ongoing
9. Create a pedestrian network plan.	BOC; PC; P&RC	Medium Term
10. Focus on sidewalks accessing neighborhood schools; Work with Parkland School District and seek Safe Routes to Schools Program grants.	BOC; PC	Short Term

11. Identify intersections that need enhanced crosswalks; improve standards in the SALDO and Zoning Ordinance (ZO) for crosswalk design; and require improvements in areas within ½ mile of schools, parks and other public facilities, and employment and shopping hubs.	BOC; PC	Short Term
12. Continue the development of the pathway system recommended as part of the latest approved Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.	BOC; PC; P&RC	Ongoing
13. Continue to support in the Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail Project.	BOC; PC; P& RC	Ongoing

### 8. Utilities

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Consider incorporating elements of the wellhead protection program prepared by the LVPC to increase protection of the water supply.	BOC; PC; TS; TE; EAC	Short Term
2. Consider groundwater recharge measures for new development and redevelopment proposed within the Groundwater Recharge Basins to preserve water supply.	BOC; PC; TS; TE; EAC	Short Term
3. Conduct fiscal impact studies of proposed alternatives for extending the sewer and public water system.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Short Term
4. Conduct an Act 537 Feasibility Study to examine the best option for expanding sewer service in the Township and gain DEP approval of a revision to the Township's Act 537 Plan.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Short-Medium Term
5. Create a long-term plan for the extension of approved improvements in phases.	BOC; PC; TS; TE	Medium Term
6. Incorporate planned and future utility extensions as part of a 5-year and 10-year Capital Improvements Plan.	BOC; PC; TS	Medium Term

### 9. Community Facilities

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Consider acquiring a lot in which to keep vehicles impounded by the police department.	BOC; PC; TS	Medium Term
2. Consider expanding the yard and garden waste center at a new site that is larger and offers a better traffic pattern. Planning for such a site may also fill the Township's need for leaf collection, the storage and disposal of clean fill,	BOC; PC; TS	Medium Term

and the storage of township equipment.		
3. The Township should investigate and pursue means of providing secure and reliable data transmission between Township facilities. Consideration should also be made to design, construct and use non-campus facilities as alternative locations for Township operations should the campus be rendered partially or completely unusable.	BOC; PC; TS	Medium Term
4. As the Township grows, consider the establishment of a municipal fire department.	BOC; PC; TS	Medium Term
5. Include an Emergency Operations Center to house emergency services personnel as part of any new municipal building.	BOC; PC; TS	Medium Term
6. Partner with the Parkland School District to closely monitor growth and ensure that the student to teacher ratio, classroom size, and other facilities are capable of adequately handling the population while providing a quality service.	BOC; PC; TS; PSD	Short Term
7. Prepare to meet the growing housing demands of the older segment of the population through the expansion of government-owned facilities (like the County's), and the establishment of privately owned facilities by accommodating for these types of uses in the Township Zoning Ordinance.	BOC; PC; TS; LVPC; LC	Short Term



**10. Open Space and Recreation**

INITIATIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Develop the Jordan Creek Greenway.	BOC; PC; P& RC	Ongoing
2. Plan to acquire and provide a community park in the western recreational planning area. Provide additional recreational opportunities, including bike lanes in the neighborhoods adjacent to Allentown, and acquire additional open space lands along the Jordan Creek, to support new growth areas.	BOC; PC; P& RC	Medium Term
3. Complete a connection to the Ironton Rail Trail.	BOC; PC; P& RC	Medium Term
4. Amend Zoning Regulations to preserve natural, historic and cultural resources.	BOC; PC;	Short Term
5. Amend Zoning or SALDO to adopt tree protection and replacement standards.	BOC; PC;	Short Term
6. Cooperate with surrounding municipalities and other independent organizations, especially Parkland School District, to provide and maintain joint recreational facilities.	BOC; PC; P& RC; PSD	Ongoing
7. Create connectivity between existing and planned recreation areas, and neighborhoods, villages, and other recreation areas.	BOC; PC; P& RC; TS;	Ongoing
8. Use conservation and scenic easements to help preserve open space.	BOC; PC; TS; P& RC	Ongoing

## **APPENDICES**

### Appendix A

Glossary of Select Terms

### Appendix B

South Whitehall Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

February 11, 2009

February 19, 2009

March 16, 2009

March 19, 2009

April 21, 2009

### Appendix C

South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes:

June 4, 2009

June 17, 2009

July 1, 2009

### Appendix D

Resolution 2009-42

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Glossary of Select Terms**

*Capital Improvements Plan*- A plan, including a timetable, priorities, cost estimates and anticipated funding sources, for the acquisition of real property, major construction projects/infrastructure improvements, or equipment expected to last a long time. Such plans typically anticipate a 5 to 10 year time period, with the plan for the current year being the Capital Improvements Budget.

*Character Areas*- One of seven areas or zones along the rural to urban “Transect” (See below), where Character Area-1 represents the most rural of environments and Character Area 6 is the most urban. (See Chapter 4, Land Use and Figure 4-1 “Neighborhood Structure”)

*Cluster Development*- An option for residential development whereby development is concentrated in order to preserve large areas of contiguous open space for common use, agriculture, and/or preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Based on the Conservation Design techniques, the first step in determining site suitability is an inventory of protected and environmentally sensitive resources. Development is ideally located on the most buildable portion of the site and minimum lot sizes are smaller than those normally permitted in a particular district.

*Compact Development*- A type of development that seeks to reduce lot sizes and building envelopes in order to concentrate development and preserve open space and natural resources, as well as reduce impervious surfaces, make more efficient use of infrastructure, and/or support transit.

*Flex Zoning*- A zoning district that permits a greater range and mix of uses within its boundaries, in contrast to the conventional single-use zoning districts, and is commonly used to encourage economic development and redevelopment.

*Form-Based Code* - A method of regulating development to achieve a specific form. Form-based codes create more predictable outcomes, primarily by controlling physical form, more so than land use, through municipal regulations.

*Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)* - A green building rating system developed and administered by the U.S. Green Building Council, designed to promote design and construction practices that increase profitability while reducing the negative environmental impacts of buildings and improving occupant health and well-being. Available rating systems address a variety of building projects including New Construction (NC) or Existing Buildings (EB), as well as overall Neighborhood Design (ND).

*Live-Work Units* - A commercial use, such as a shop, studio, office, or other place of business in combination with dwelling units located above such place of business. A person or persons other than the proprietor of the business may occupy a Live-Work Unit.

Lot size averaging- A Zoning technique whereby the maximum density is maintained on an overall tract, but lot sizes and corresponding side and rear setbacks may vary (smaller or larger) from the minimum. The technique is intended to improve protection of critical environmental areas by providing flexibility.

Minor Cluster Concept- An residential cluster zoning technique where the proportion of open space varies based on a sliding scale of minimum tract size, percentage of required open space, and allowable residential densities.

Mixed-Use- A development which typically combines residential and nonresidential uses or a greater diversity of nonresidential uses within the same building or on the same lot than is typically found in conventional zoning. Such development is planned and designed as a complex of related structures and circulation patterns and designed, constructed, or managed as a total entity.

Official Map- A map adopted by the Board of Commissioners pursuant to Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), that depicts the reserve of public lands and facilities relating to elements or portions of elements of the Comprehensive Plan. These elements may include, but are not limited to:

- Existing and proposed streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widenings, narrowings, extensions, diminutions, openings or closing of same;
- Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds and open space reservations;
- Pedestrian ways and easements;
- Railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements;
- Flood control basins, floodways and flood plains, storm water management areas and drainage easements; and
- Support facilities, easements and other properties held by public bodies.

Overlay Zone- A zoning district that applies to one or more underlying districts, that may impose additional requirements above that required by the underlying district, may provide additional use opportunities, may provide dimensional flexibility, and/or may offer other opportunities. Overlay Zones are enabled by Article VI of the MPC and may encompass a variety of conditions such as Flood Hazard areas, Steep Slopes, Airports, Highway Interchanges, Historic Districts or Traditional Neighborhood Development.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) - A form of land development in accordance with this Comprehensive Plan, and consistent with Article VII-A of the MPC. The MPC defines a TND as follows: An area of land developed for a compatible mixture of residential units for various income levels and nonresidential commercial and workplace uses, including some structures that provide for a mix of uses within the same building. Residences, shops, offices, workplaces, public buildings, and parks are interwoven within the neighborhood so that all are relatively compact,

limited in size and oriented toward pedestrian activity. It has an identifiable center and a discernible edge. The center of the neighborhood is in the form of a public park, commons, plaza, square or prominent intersection of two or more major streets. Generally, there is a hierarchy of streets laid out in a rectilinear or grid pattern of interconnecting streets and blocks that provides multiple routes from origins to destinations and is appropriately designed to service the needs of pedestrians and vehicles equally.

Transect - The Transect is a system to organize elements (e.g., streets, sidewalks, building massing and height, open space design, impervious coverage) of the environment on a continuum from rural to urban. (See Chapter 4, Land Use and Figure 4-1 “Neighborhood Structure”).



## **APPENDIX B**

### South Whitehall Township Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission Meetings from February 11, 2009; February 19, 2009; March 16, 2009; March 19, 2009 and April 21, 2009 are included in this Appendix B.

**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH WHITEHALL  
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**SPECIAL SESSION**

**MINUTES**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2009**

The Special Session of the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the Springhouse Middle School Building located at 1200 Springhouse Road, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Members in attendance:

Alan Tope, Chairman  
Steven Seyer, Vice-Chairman  
William H. McNair - Secretary  
Robert H. Bielecki  
David Dunbar  
Daniel D'Imperio

Staff members in attendance:

Gerald J. Harbison, Assistant Director  
J. Ralph Russek, Assistant Township Engineer  
Blake Marles, Township Solicitor  
Gregg Adams, Assistant Planner

Residents in attendance:

Mary Ann Baunach	Richard Klotz	Robert Price
Mark Bradbury	Betsy Koontz	Renato Rodriguez
Attorney James Broughal	Tim Kurtz	Joseph Rutz
Kathleen Bruno	Michelle Kurtz	Alex Tamerler
Louise Drexinger	James Lenahan	Richard Sams
Robert Drexinger	H.L. Martin	Charlie Schmehl, URDC
Howard Ellsworth	Victoria "Tori" Morgan	Daniel Smith
Tom Feist	Joel Newhard	Donald Snyder
Martin Gilcrest, URDC	Don Newhard	Kate Surret
David Jaindl	Manly Offutt, Jr.	Frederick Walker
Thomas Johns	Sue Ondrey	Marcie Walker
Noreen Kahn	Brad Osborne	Attorney Joseph Zator
Janet Kehnel	David Posocco	
	Frank Posocco	

**AGENDA ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Tope called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.



## **AGENDA ITEM #2 - OPENING REMARKS**

Chairman Tope made the following remarks:

Welcome to this evening's meeting of the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission.

The intent of tonight's meeting is to inform and obtain comments from the public regarding the prospective adoption of an updated Comprehensive Plan for South Whitehall Township.

For those in the audience that are not familiar with what a Comprehensive Plan is, a Comprehensive Plan is a policy document (not a regulatory document) that a Township is required to adopt pursuant to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. While it is not a regulatory document, a Comprehensive Plan does serve a purpose as it helps provide guidance for the enactment of ordinances or amendment of existing ordinances that regulate development such as the Township's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

About a year and a half ago, the Township recognized that its current Comprehensive Plan was in need of updating and began the process of being in a position to update its Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Commissioners formed a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and, after interviewing multiple consultants, hired a consultant to help the Steering Committee form an updated Comprehensive Plan.

The Steering Committee was a very large group and included representatives from, among others, the Township Zoning Hearing Board, the Water and Sewer Authority, the Planning Commission, the Board of Commissioners, Township staff from every department involved with development, the Township Engineer's office and the Township Solicitor's office.

The public was invited to all Steering Committee meetings and encouraged to participate in the meetings. Some of you in attendance this evening attended and participated in those meetings and the Township appreciates your participation. Also, prior to this meeting, the Township received written correspondence from you or other members of the public and that correspondence was reviewed prior to this evening's meeting and we have copies with us this evening.

After a lot of hard work, the Steering Committee and the Township's consultant, Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc., prepared a draft Comprehensive Plan for our consideration and it is before us this evening.

In accordance with state law, it is our honor to conduct this meeting in order to obtain comments from the public before we, the Planning Commission, make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners whether to adopt this draft — the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Tonight, Thomas Comitta and Jennifer Leister from Thomas Comitta Associates are with us to provide a power point presentation and answer any questions we may have.

After Tom and Jen provide the presentation and answer any questions the Planning Commission members may have, we will seek your comments and questions.

When that time comes, you will be given an opportunity to speak or ask questions but that opportunity is not without limit

In order to keep the meeting running efficiently and orderly, each person from the public will be limited to one opportunity to comment or ask questions for a duration of five (5) minutes.

The Planning Commission may allow a speaker an additional opportunity or additional time for commenting if the speaker's comments or questions are deemed relevant and non-repetitious by the Planning Commission.

Again, the point is to inform the public and obtain comments from the public.

However, the Planning Commission has the right to conduct its meeting as it sees fit to have an efficient and orderly meeting and do its job.

With that said, I'll turn the floor over to Mr. Comitta for his remarks and the presentation.

### **AGENDA ITEM #3 – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PRESENTATION**

Tom Comitta introduced himself and stated the legal requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code that this public meeting was fulfilling. He reviewed the experience Thomas Comitta Associates has in Comprehensive Planning, highlighting their experience in the Lehigh Valley. He described the role of the Comprehensive Plan in the growth of the Township.

Jennifer Leister introduced herself. She reviewed the development of the Comprehensive Plan goals and themes. She described the Existing Character Map, the principles of the future character areas and the Future Character Map. She reviewed the community designs for each area. She then touched upon the remaining chapters of the plan; housing, transportation, utilities, community facilities and open space.

### **AGENDA ITEM #4– COMMENTS**

Chairman Tope opened the floor to comments or questions from the Planning Commission members. Hearing none, he opened the floor to comments or questions from the public and requested that each individual limit himself to five minutes.

Attorney Joseph Zator, representing David Jaindl, submitted a prepared list of comments. He stated that his client had issues with the northern tier area as depicted in the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that, when Mr. Jaindl had attended one of the

Steering Committee meetings, Mr. Jaindl had come to the conclusion that the northern tier would be zoned at a density of one dwelling unit per acre. He stated that the Plan presented proposes much less density. He suggested that the plan respect the property owner's rights with regard to woodlands, floodplains and steep slopes. He also stated that the Township should not be involved in the consideration of the re-use of existing buildings. He stated that he did not believe that the T-2 zone has a place in this Comprehensive Plan and considers the characteristics of the zone to be confiscatory in nature. He requested that the Jaindl lands be redesignated to T-3 and T-4.

Mark Bradbury inquired as to the timeline for adoption of the plan.

Mr. Comitta stated that it would likely be in 2009.

Mr. Bradbury inquired as to whether the Township would entertain rezoning requested prior to the adoption of the Plan.

Mr. Comitta responded that the questions should be answered by the Township Commissioners and staff. He stated that the answer has no impact upon the Plan approval process.

Mr. Bradbury suggested that any rezoning which restricts the existing uses in place should grandfather the existing landowners and let them choose the parameters that suits their needs if they choose to subdivide or develop their property until their property is transferred to another entity. He noted that any property owner developing after a rezoning would have to appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board to develop their property in a method similar to the neighboring properties. He stated that the Ordinance should state that all new developments shall conform.

Mr. Comitta stated that the Zoning Ordinance amendments may take one to three years to implement. He restated that the Comprehensive Plan is not about zoning, rather about planning concepts. He stated that any planning concept within the Comprehensive Plan may or may not be implemented.

Mr. Bradbury stated that in most municipalities in the Lehigh Valley, most of the concepts in the Comprehensive Plan are not implemented.

Mr. Comitta stated that there appears to be confusion over the wording within the Plan and suggested that a landowner create a conceptual plan for their property to review with the staff and Planning Commission. He stated that it is easier for both sides to come to a shared vision over a plan than to try to gain a shared interpretation of the concepts offered by the Comprehensive Plan.

Attorney Zator stated that if any of the parameters of the Comprehensive Plan are not acceptable now and the staff, Planning Commission or Board of Commissioners change over time and forget the objections voiced here, the unacceptable parameters will still exist in the Plan.

Attorney James Broughal representing Dan Smith of Kuss Brothers Nursery stated that the Smith property is not shown within the adjoining D district and requested that the adjoining D-2 district be extended to cover that property.

Mr. Comitta stated that the Comprehensive Plan as developed looks at the broader perspectives and was not created at the level of detail to Attorney Broughal is requesting.

Alex Tamerler, property owner in South Whitehall Township, inquired as to whether the Comprehensive Plan is to reflect the possible zoning of the Township and, in effect, become the Zoning Map for the Township.

Mr. Comitta stated that the Comprehensive Plan is not intended to do that.

Attorney Marles stated that the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a road map toward the eventual adoption of the Zoning Map.

Mr. Tamerler stated that Township needs to review the details of any new zoning and suggested some changes to the existing Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. David Jandl, property owner in South Whitehall Township, stated that he considered the T-2 requirements unfair and a taking.

Kathy Bruno, resident of South Whitehall Township, stated her concerns with rezoning the northern tier of the Township to one-acre zoning. She stated it would increase traffic and crowding in the area.

Sue Ondrey, resident of South Whitehall Township, stated that she sees the need to address the Zoning Map soon after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to address these concerns in detail.

Kate Surret, resident of South Whitehall Township, stated that she is new to the Township and is concerned with potential development in nearby properties.

Attorney Zator, property owner in South Whitehall Township, stated that major landowners should be included on the steering committee as the process continues. As a representative of the Posoccos, he stated that, should the Comprehensive Plan be adopted and the zoning changed to reflect the Comprehensive Plan, the Blue Barn Meadows development would be in danger of being deficient in its open space requirements. He stated that traditional neighborhood development, walkable communities, are desirable but that there must be a financial feasibility. He stated that retrofitting existing neighborhoods also seems to be a good idea until the expense of complying with the existing codes is considered. He stated that the Future Character Map is not a Zoning Map, but he noted that it would be difficult to rezone against the Comprehensive Plan once it is adopted. He suggested that a statement regarding the level of detail in the plan

be placed in the plan so that future readers understand the amount of latitude the plan is intended to give.

Mr. Tamerler inquired as to the final disposition of “reserved open space”.

Mr. Comitta stated that there seems to be a misunderstanding of the open space set-aside. The Comprehensive Plan gives a number of options as to the disposition of the reserved open space. He stated that TCA usually lists six options within the Zoning Ordinances they develop.

**AGENDA ITEM #5 – PLANNING COMMISSION DECISION**

Mr. Seyer made a motion to take the Plan under advisement to review and address the comments presented. Mr. Dunbar seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #6 – ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Tope requested a motion to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. Mr. D’Imperio made the motion, Mr. Mr. Seyer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**ADOPTED THIS DATE: February 19, 2009**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Secretary**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairman**

**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH WHITEHALL  
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**REGULAR SESSION**

**MINUTES**

**FEBRUARY 19 , 2009**

The Regular Session of the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the Township Municipal Building located at 4444 Walbert Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Members in attendance:

Alan Tope, Chairman  
Steven Seyer, Vice-Chairman  
William H. MacNair - Secretary  
Robert H. Bielecki  
Daniel D'Imperio  
David Dunbar  
Donald Werley

Staff members in attendance:

Gerald J. Harbison, Assistant Director  
J. Ralph Russek, Assistant Township Engineer  
James Kratz, Assistant Township Solicitor  
Gregg Adams, Assistant Planner

**AGENDA ITEM #4 – CORRESPONDENCE**

**B. South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan Update**

Chairman Tope noted that “proportion of Open Space required” appeared to be a significant issue.

Mr. Harbison stated that Cedar Creek Farm dedicated 11% of the property as Open Space and Blue Barn Meadows dedicated 4.8%. He stated that strict compliance with the Ordinance usually results in a 9-13% dedication of Open Space.

Mr. Adams pointed out that the Ordinance may change with the adoption of the pending Joint Open Space Plan with North Whitehall Township.

Mr. Seyer inquired as to whether the percentage of land to be dedicated is hard and fast.

Mr. Harbison stated that the Ordinance allows some flexibility in land dedication and contributions in lieu of dedication.

Mr. Dunbar stated that Mr. Zator's review of the natural resource preservation sections seems to imply that we can force land owners to adhere to these proposed policies. He inquired as to whether the Township could. He also inquired as to whether the LVPC has model Ordinances regarding resource preservation that may be adopted.

Mr. Russek stated that there is some disagreement with the stream buffer requirements. He noted that most buffer requirements are not just the 100-year flood plain and require greater environmental analysis.

Solicitor Kratz stated that his understanding of the term riparian buffer includes both an offset from the watercourse and the planting of additional vegetation.

Mr. Bielecki stated that the developers seem to advocate building houses everywhere. He stated that there may be a compromise between the November 13<sup>th</sup> draft and the developers' stance.

Mr. Dunbar stated that the Township should be encouraged to adopt the LVPC model Ordinances on stream and steep slope protection.

Mr. Russek noted that many municipalities have steep slope Ordinances of different forms and degrees of flexibility.

Mr. Seyer inquired as to the definition of steep slope.

Mr. Russek stated that a steep slope is generally defined as starting between 25% and 33% slope; where downslope erosion can become extreme. He noted that the LVPC's model Ordinance generally requires larger lots on steep slopes.

Mr. Bielecki stated that he has heard the argument that building on slopes should be encouraged to save farmland.

Mr. Werley inquired as to the areas in the Township that have steep slopes.

Mr. Harbison stated that those areas are located along the Huckleberry Ridge and in the northwest corner.

Mr. Dunbar stated that there are some things in the Plan that the Planning Commission needs to take a stand on.

Mr. Seyer stated that the options, choices and intent seem to have gotten lost in the Plan. He stated that there is both idealism and pragmatism in the Plan.

Chairman Tope stated that it seems that there can be three responses to the comments: "we agree", "you misunderstood", and "we disagree". He inquired of Commissioner Osborne as to whether the Commissioners would prefer to receive the

current draft with a list of amendments or a revised draft with the amendments fully incorporated.

Commissioner Osborne stated that his preference would be that the Planning Commission takes its time to resolve all the issues.

Mr. MacNair pointed out that the Jeras comments mirror the Jaindl comments on some points.

Chairman Tope indicated that it would be easy to meet the Kuss Brothers' request. He noted that Mr. Tamerler's request would be more difficult.

Solicitor Kratz inquired as to whether the Commissioners would prefer to see a list of changes or a final draft.

Commissioner Osborne stated his preference for a final draft.

Mr. Seyer stated that the Steering Committee creates the document and the Planning Commission's role is to take the flak, remove the egregious decisions and present a good plan with "wobble room".

Commissioner Osborne stated that the Planning Commission is to polish the Plan and the Board of Commissioners' role is to sell and defend it.

Mr. MacNair stated that the question to TCA should be whether the questions raised can be addressed while keeping within the goals that were set by the Steering Committee. He stated that TCA should make the requested changes that keep the Plan in line with the stated goals and list those that cannot.

Commissioner Osborne stated that we need to be clear to TCA that it is our plan and we need to start driving its direction.

Mr. Russek stated that the Planning Commission needs to give TCA some direction.

Commissioner Osborne stated that he felt that the most biting comment was that Mr. Jaindl gave comment at an early meeting, felt that the comment had been accepted then, and found later that it had not.

Mr. Dunbar made a motion to have TCA digest the public comments and advise the Planning Commission as to what can be incorporated into the plan easily, what can be made more flexible and what cannot be incorporated into the plan. Mr. MacNair seconded.

Mr. Harbison inquired as to possible meeting dates in March.



Solicitor Kratz inquired as to whether the Planning Commission would like to act upon his report at the regular March meeting.

Chairman Tope stated his preference for a special meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup> or have TCA available for the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The motion passed 6-0, with Mr. D'Imperio not present.

**ADOPTED THIS DATE: March 19, 2009**

**ATTEST:**

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**Secretary**

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**Chairman**

**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH WHITEHALL  
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**SPECIAL SESSION**

**MINUTES**

**MARCH 16, 2009**

The Special Session of the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the Township Municipal Building located at 4444 Walbert Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Members in attendance:

Alan Tope, Chairman  
Steven Seyer, Vice-Chairman  
William H. MacNair - Secretary  
Robert H. Bielecki  
David Dunbar  
Donald Werley

Staff members in attendance:

Gerald J. Harbison, Assistant Director  
J. Ralph Russek, Assistant Township Engineer  
Blake Marles, Township Solicitor  
Gregg Adams, Assistant Planner

Thomas Comitta Associates staff in attendance:

Thomas Comitta  
Jennifer Leister

Members of the Public in attendance:

Randy and Jodi Barson	1631 Wethersfield Drive
Mary Ann Baunach	2725 Carole Lane
Kathy Bruno	4015 Lois Lane
Dennis Dugan	2776 Carole Lane
Tom Feist	2820 Carole Lane
Molly Graver	
Brian Hite	1273 Eck Road
Thomas Johns	3690 Ritter Road
Noreen Kahn	2716 Lapp Road
Elizabeth Koontz	Jeras Corporation
Ed Manzella	2848 Allison Lane
Sheryl McCartney	3730 Pheasant Hill Drive
Jodi Miller	2848 Allison Lane
David Posocco	3680 Dartmouth Road

Frank Posocco	1448 North 22 <sup>nd</sup> Street
Joseph and Bonnie Rutz	3951 Walbert Avenue
Andy Seidel	2721 Lapp Road
Alexander Tamerler	1628 Barkwood Drive, Orefield

### **AGENDA ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Tope called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m. He announced that all meetings are electronically monitored.

### **AGENDA ITEM #2 – OPENING REMARKS**

Chairman Tope described the history of the Comprehensive Plan project and Thomas Comitta Associates role in it.

### **AGENDA ITEM #3 – CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

- A. Joseph A. Zator Memo & Letter Dated February 11, 2009**
- B. Scott Sherk Letter Dated February 12, 2009**
- C. James Broughal Letter Dated February 17, 2009**
- D. Jeras Corporation Letter Dated February 19, 2009**

### **AGENDA ITEM #4– COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REPORTS**

- A. Thomas Comitta Report: Response to Public Comments from February 11, 2009 Meeting**
- B. Township Engineer Report: Transportation Chapter Revisions**
- C. Community Development Department Report: Township Open Space Trends and Property Information Background**
- D. Planning Commission Discussion**

Thomas Comitta described the guidance received from the Planning Commission after the February 11, 2009 Public Meeting at the Springhouse Middle School. That guidance was to attempt to: address those public comments that would not compromise the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, as embodied in Chapter 3, and note the comments that might either conflict with the stated goals and/or require further discussion and direction from the Township.

Jennifer Leister stated that the first issue addressed was the concern with the Open Space requirements related to Table 4.4. She stated that the “Open Space %/Types” column was seen as too confusing and that the percentages listed too prescriptive. She stated that Table 4.4 could be revised to eliminate the “Open Space %/Types” column and replace it with a “Typical Lot Areas” column.

Mr. Comitta added that Note #2 could be added as well.

Ms. Leister stated that the issue regarding the eventual ownership of the open space could be addressed by the inclusion of a paragraph describing the ownership options available. She stated that the issue regarding the Future Character Areas and Land Use Plan and phasing could be addressed by describing the plan as a long-range plan, including an endorsement of incremental growth, replacing the Phasing Plan with a paragraph describing triggers for growth. She stated that the inclusion of the Phasing Map may be more confusing. She stated that the option to address the issues include amending the Phasing Map or replacing it with a description. She stated that Mr. Jaindl had requested that several parcels under his ownership be changed from their proposed T-2 character area as follows: the parcels in the northeast corner of the Township could be changed to T-4, so long as the parcels are contiguous to other T-4 areas, and the parcels northeast of the Turnpike could be changed to T-3, so long as they are contiguous to other T-3 areas. She opined that the parcels in the northwest corner of the Township are tougher to justify a change in character area.

Ms. Leister stated that the following issues were easily addressed:

1. For clarification, the name of the “Future Character Areas” map could be changed to “Future Character Areas and Land Use Plan”.
2. All references to adaptive reuse of structures include the word “encourage” and do not use the word “mandatory”.
3. The uses allowed in the T-4 character area could be clarified to include some commercial and light industrial.
4. All references to natural resource preservation include the word “encourage” and do not use the word “mandatory”.
5. The character area for the Kuss Brothers property could be changed to a D character area.
6. The connection shown in the northeast corner of the Road Classification Map could be clarified as a potential location on the map and accompanying text.

Mr. Russek suggested that the proposed routes on the transportation Plan could be clarified as conceptual on the map and in the accompanying text. He stated that the proposed connections between Cedar Crest Boulevard and Mauch Chunk Road are to accommodate the growth in the area.

Mr. Harbison advised that the trends with the open space requirements have been: the denser the development, the higher the percentage of open space dedicated.

Mr. MacNair inquired as to examples of Zoning Ordinances that have been adopted after the adoption of similar Comprehensive Plans.

Mr. Comitta referred to Bethlehem Township’s Zoning Ordinance as a good example.

Chairman Tope inquired as to the open space requirements in Bethlehem Township.

Mr. Comitta stated that the percentage of open space requirements are between ten and twenty percent among three zones.

Mr. Seyer suggested retaining the word “ideal” when describing future road connections.

Mr. Russek stated that the word has been retained. He noted that existing roads were added on the plan to show the utilization of the existing roads as alternatives.

Solicitor Marles stated that he had no issues with the Plan. He stated that the issue regarding open space requirements becoming confiscatory is more relevant at the Zoning Ordinance phase and must take into account the trade-offs mandated.

Mr. Seyer stated that there had been suggestions to encourage consistency in zoning with the zoning of adjoining municipalities, but stated that there may also be good reasons to be different from adjoining municipalities.

Solicitor Marles suggested reporting to the Planning Commission the contents of the Joint North Whitehall/South Whitehall Open Space Plan.

Mr. Adams advised that a draft had been distributed the week before.

Ms. Leister expressed her interest in obtaining a copy of the draft Plan to review and possibly incorporate into the draft Comprehensive Plan.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #5 – COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

Mr. Alexander Tamerler inquired as to the Planning Commission’s review of the zoning of his tract east of the Blue Barn Meadows development.

Chairman Tope stated that his issue was a zoning issue which will be reviewed with the amendment of the Zoning Map.

Mr. Martin Gilcrest requested clarification of the new column in Table 4-4.

Ms. Leister stated that the column had been changed to reflect typical lot size within each character zone.

Mr. Mark Bradbury stated that routing any potential sewer line through the Jordan Valley would be through a T-2 zone, and that logically implied that the area be made available for higher density development. He also inquired as to whether any uses were being omitted from the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Comitta stated that any “Fair Share” questions are to be answered as part of the Zoning Ordinance amendment. He stated that no “Fair Share” analysis had been done.

Mr. Bradbury stated that Section 6044 of the MPC specifies that the municipality must provide for all residential types.

Solicitor Marles recommended that a higher density should not be suggested if there is no basis to suggest it. He recommended that areas without public sewer in the Jordan Valley should not be characterized as available for higher density if sewer were installed.

Mr. Bradbury noted the inconsistency of having areas served by public water that are predominantly comprised of 1-3 acre lots.

Mr. Tamerler requested further clarification as to the future zoning of his lot east of Blue Barn Meadows.

Mr. Comitta stated that rezoning issues are to be addressed after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

Mr. Tamerler stated that his recollection is that his parcel would be the first to be reviewed during the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Comitta stated that there will always be questions relating to zoning after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan does not specifically recommend the zoning of every parcel. He stated that the Township will have to review and address every application with guidance from the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Kathy Bruno inquired as to the change on character area in the northeast corner of the Township.

Ms. Leister stated that the area in the northeast corner was proposed to be changed to match the adjoining T-4 area.

Attorney Joseph Zator suggested that the statement on page 5-16, paragraph five, requiring that adaptive reuse be “proven” prior to the demolition of a structure should be removed. He suggested also removing the mention of a required review before the issuance of a demolition permit. With regard to open space, he indicated that the presence of public utilities should be considered when clustering is considered an option. He noted that clustering should be incentivized with density bonuses. He noted the change in Table 4-4 and suggested reviewing page 4-18 with regard to the open space references. He suggested providing incentives to preserve the natural resources, not regulation. He requested that the Township not exceed PA DEP standards in stream buffers. He stated that agricultural preservation should also be voluntary rather than

mandatory. He disagreed with Ms. Leister's assessment of development potential at the Schantz Orchards, expressing his belief that they could be developed in a way similar to Green Hills. He stated that, with regard to the Posocco's Blue Barn Meadows development, the plan should grandfather already-approved developments and the Planning Commission should consider including a statement that any approved project should not be negated by the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Comitta stated that the Pennsylvania MPC gives a five-year life to approved plans and that provision would likely trump any statement in the Comprehensive Plan.

Solicitor Marles stated that the Blue Barn Meadows is a unique situation in which a sewer extension required developer contribution to execute. He opined that the Comprehensive Plan may not be the document to address the issue and noted that the developer may take steps to avoid the expiration of the plan approval.

Mr. Comitta inquired as to whether the comments of the public be memorialized in an appendix to the Plan or be kept at the Township.

Solicitor Marles stated that the minutes of the public meetings are the record of the comments and therefore may not need to be memorialized in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Seyer stated that he is in favor of the concept of a repository for the public comments.

Solicitor Marles suggested that the changes to the draft could continue indefinitely and that the Planning Commission may want to consider the Plan fundamentally complete and close the proceedings.

Chairman Tope agreed.

Attorney Michael Vargo suggested that the reference to 50% open space requirement be removed from page 4-18.

Mr. Comitta stated that it would be removed.

Chairman Tope stated that, in his opinion, most of the comments have been addressed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #6 – PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECTION**

Mr. Dunbar made a motion to instruct Thomas Comitta Associates to proceed with the recommended changes proposed in Section A in his memorandum and the additional changes relating to those issues proposed at this meeting. Mr. Seyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously 5-0, with Mr. Bielecki absent.

Mr. MacNair made a motion to remove the Phasing Map 1 and change the terminology on pages 4-31 and 4-32. Mr. Seyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Tope inquired as to the decision regarding Mr. Jaindl's request to recharacterize his parcels.

Mr. Harbison stated that the options would be to re-characterize all the parcels in the northeast corner of the Township as T-4 or retain them as T-3; to re-characterize the Jaindl parcels northeast of the Turnpike as T-3 or retain them as T-2; and to re-characterize the Jaindl parcels in the northwest corner of the Township to a denser area or retain them as T-2.

Mr. Dunbar made a motion to accept the changes as shown on Map 4.2. Mr. MacNair seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Tope inquired as to a decision regarding the addition of central water and sewer services in cluster development where permitted.

Mr. Russek stated that he would recommend supporting cluster development only when public water and sewer are available or are to be made available as part of the development.

Mr. Comitta stated that the text would be adjusted to reflect Mr. Russek's statement.

Mr. MacNair made a motion to accept the change as proposed by Mr. Russek. Mr. Werley seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Comitta expressed his thanks for the individuals reviewing the Plan to catch the inconsistencies.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #7 – PRESENTATION BY FREDERICK WALKER**

Mr. Frederick Walker from the Coalition for Alternative Transportation reviewed the history of the Coalition. He stated that Chapter 7 of the draft Comprehensive Plan supports alternative transportation but falls short on supporting bicycling. He stated that the draft Plan supports pedestrian issues better but does not discuss issues related to the existing sidewalk. He stated that the draft Plan needs more support for cycling and submitted the City of Bethlehem's Comprehensive Plan comments on the subject. He reviewed strategies to encourage cycling, including signage, shared land markings, parking, education, and tracking of accident data. He recommended against the constructing of bike lanes. He reviewed the strategies to encourage pedestrian traffic, including accommodations for the handicapped, requiring sidewalks in all new developments, addressing pedestrian access within existing neighborhoods and the collection of pedestrian accident data. He recommended suggestions to add to Chapter 7, including the recommendation to construct bus shelters.



Mr. MacNair stated his concern with the speed of automobile traffic on Cedar Crest Boulevard vis-à-vis bicycle traffic.

Mr. Walker stated that wider, well-maintained shoulders are essential to safe bicycle traffic.

Mr. Comitta stated his agreement with many of Mr. Walker's suggestions.

Mr. Russek stated that he would take the comments under advisement and would be in touch with staff.

**AGENDA ITEM #8 – ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Tope requested a motion to adjourn at 9:38 p.m. Mr. Seyer made the motion, Chairman Tope seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**ADOPTED THIS DATE: April 21, 2009**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Secretary**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairman**

**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH WHITEHALL  
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**REGULAR SESSION**

**MINUTES**

**MARCH 19, 2009**

The Regular Session of the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the Township Municipal Building located at 4444 Walbert Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Members in attendance:

Alan Tope, Chairman  
Steven Seyer, Vice-Chairman  
William H. MacNair - Secretary  
David Dunbar  
Donald Werley

Staff members in attendance:

Gerald J. Harbison, Assistant Director  
J. Ralph Russek, Assistant Township Engineer  
James Kratz, Assistant Township Solicitor  
Lawrence Fox, Acting Township Solicitor  
Gregg Adams, Assistant Planner

**AGENDA ITEM #5 – OLD BUSINESS**

**A. SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
UPDATE**

Mr. Harbison stated that the draft Joint Open Space, Parks and Recreation Plan had been distributed to TCA. He stated that the Township had received a letter from Mr. Tamerler's attorney and that he will be collecting the minutes of the Planning Commission meetings in which the rezoning of Mr. Tamerler's parcel was discussed to review.

Chairman Tope requested that the Comprehensive Plan be placed on the next meeting's agenda as a discussion item.

**ADOPTED THIS DATE: April 21, 2009**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Secretary**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairman**

**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH WHITEHALL**  
**LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**REGULAR SESSION**

**MINUTES**

**APRIL 21, 2009**

The Regular Session of the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission was held on the above date in the Township Municipal Building located at 4444 Walbert Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

Members in attendance:

Alan Tope, Chairman  
Steven Seyer, Vice-Chairman  
William H. MacNair - Secretary  
Robert H. Bielecki  
Daniel D'Imperio  
David Dunbar  
Donald Werley

Staff members in attendance:

Gerald J. Harbison, Assistant Director  
J. Ralph Russek, Assistant Township Engineer  
James Kratz, Assistant Township Solicitor  
Gregg Adams, Assistant Planner

**AGENDA ITEM #3 - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DISCUSSION**

The following individuals were present:

Kathy Bruno	4015 Lois Lane
Richard Domrzalski	4139 Rochelle Drive
Martin Gilcrest	Representing Jeras Corp.
Brian Hite	1273 Eck Road
Thomas Johns	3690 Ritter Road
Noreen Kahn	2716 Lapp Road
Don and Sandy Meenen	4010 Lois Lane
Christina "Tori" Morgan	3446 Eton Road
Joseph Rutz	3951 Walbert Avenue

At the request of Chairman Tope, Mr. Harbison read the Community Development Department's memo.

Mr. Thomas Comitta of Thomas Comitta Associates stated that the correspondence relating to the comprehensive plan should be attached to the minutes to maintain a record of the process. He stated that the November 13<sup>th</sup> draft had been reviewed at the February meeting and that the comments have been incorporated into the current draft per the instructions of the Planning Commission. He reviewed the remaining part of the approval process, noting that any further changes need not be sent

to the LVPC for review and that the Board of Commissioners adopts the Plan by resolution. He reviewed the changes to the Plan since the February meeting: Map 9-1 had been inadvertently omitted and will be replaced, two utilities maps that had been moved to the front of Chapter 8 will replace the two outdated maps at the end of Chapter 8, the pixilated images on page 4-17 will be replaced, and notes will be placed on pages 7-10 and 7-13 noting the gap between item numbers that span those pages.

Mr. Russek noted that some information from the March 16<sup>th</sup> alternative transportation presentation was incorporated.

Mr. Comitta noted that the current draft addresses every topic that Article 3 of the MPC requires.

Kathy Bruno of 4015 Lois Lane requested a clarification of the open space requirements.

Mr. Comitta stated that, in Table 4-4, the “percentage of open space required” column had been deleted and that note #2 had been added to the table. He stated that the requirements will be discussed in detail within the Zoning Ordinance. He stated that the scale of open space required can be adjusted by density, utilities, etc.

Attorney Joseph Zator noted that the definition of overlay zone in A-2 should have “additional requirements” added to provide for additional use opportunities and dimensional flexibility. Attorney Zator inquired as to whether the Planning Commission had recommended allowing private water and sewer systems to allow clustering as stated in Table 4-4.

Reading from the minutes of the March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, Mr. Adams stated that “ Mr. Russek stated that he would recommend supporting cluster development only when public water and sewer are available or are to be made available as part of the development.”

Mr. Zator stated that the clustering option is listed in the T-4 Zone and should be listed in the T-3 and T-2 Zones as well.

Mr. Russek stated that the Township Engineer is recommending that private systems be discouraged. He stated that he does not object to adding the wording to the T-3 and T-2 Zones.

Mr. Comitta suggested striking “community systems” from the T-4 Zone. He also suggested adding a note that suggests final determination on the clustering issue be made at the time of a development’s application based upon the conditions at the time.

Mr. Russek agreed.

Martin Gilcrest agreed, noting that such wording would not preclude systems if they would be desirable. He noted that PA DEP could permit the private systems until public systems are available. He stated that such systems would allow users to be available when a public system is installed.

Mr. Comitta proposed an additional note on page 4-13 to address the issue.

Attorney Zator requested that any development projects receiving approval prior to the adoption of the Plan be grandfathered from the effects of the plan. He also requested that the Schantz Orchards be included in the T-3 Zone.

Mr. Comitta stated that the current plan does not preclude an amendment to future Zoning Maps based upon changing conditions. He noted that the projected densities provide for sufficient housing needs for the Township for the projected life of the Plan.

Mr. Bielecki inquired as to whether cluster development would be acceptable if it crosses Township boundaries.

Mr. Comitta stated that it would. He stated that he would like to issue the updated draft in the next few days and sent it to the Township.

Mr. Seyer made a motion to approve the draft Comprehensive Plan of April 3 as presented and including the changes that the Planning Commission adopted this evening. Mr. Dunbar seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**ADOPTED THIS DATE: May 21, 2009**

**ATTEST:**

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**Secretary**

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**Chairman**



## **APPENDIX C**

### South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners Meetings from June 4, 2009; June 17, 2009 and July 1, 2009 are included in this Appendix C.

**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
LEHIGH COUNTY PA**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**MINUTES**

**June 4, 2009**

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THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WAS HELD ON THE ABOVE DATE AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 4444 WALBERT AVE., LEHIGH COUNTY, PA. 18104

**COMMISSIONERS ATTENDING:**

Brad Osborne, President  
R. A. Rodriguez Jr., Vice President  
Howard Ellsworth  
Christine (Tori) Morgan

**STAFF ATTENDING:**

Gerald Gasda, Township Manager  
Jeffrey Higgins, Director of Community Development  
James Weber, Director of Public Works  
Gerald Harbison, Assistant Director of Community Development  
Gregg Adams, Assistant Planner  
J. Scott Pidcock, Township Engineer  
J. Ralph Russek, Assistant Township Engineer  
James Kratz, Assistant Township Solicitor

**AGENDA ITEM # 1 - CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Osborne

**AGENDA ITEM # 2 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Osborne invited all to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to The Flag.

**AGENDA ITEM # 3 - NOTIFICATION:**

President Osborne advised that all public sessions of the South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners are electronically recorded. The electronic record is kept until the minutes of the meeting are approved, and destroyed if a request is not made to retain the electronic version at that time.

**AGENDA ITEM # 4 - MINUTES:**

The minutes of the May 20, 2009 meeting were previously submitted to the Board. Commissioner Ellsworth had submitted comments to staff with recommended changes and the changes were incorporated into the draft minutes.

President Osborne called for other changes to the minutes. There were none.

Commissioner Morgan made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2009 meeting with the changes submitted by Commissioner Ellsworth. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez and approved by all Commissioners present.



**AGENDA ITEM # 5 - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVISIONS: Public Hearing****a. Opening Comments:**

President Osborne introduced the topic and commented on the process and the efforts of all involved in bringing the Comprehensive Plan to the public hearing stage where it was this evening. He thanked the members of the Steering Committee, the Staff, the Consultant Thomas Comitta and staff, the Township Solicitor, Mr. Marles and Township Engineer, Scott Pidcock.

President Osborne then asked Gerald Harbison, the Assistant Director of Community Development to provide a background of the process that brought the Township to this public hearing. Mr. Harbison advised that the process actually began in 2006 with a joint meeting of the Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission who together established a plan to create a Steering Committee and ultimately a plan to hire a consultant. The consultant was Thomas Comitta Associated.

Over a the next year and a half the Steering Committee met with Mr. Comitta and his Staff on a monthly basis and crafted a plan document which balanced the physical and economic development potential and the long term path for guidance of that development.

In October of 2008 a draft plan was completed and forwarded to the Board of Commissioner and Planning Commission. The Planning Commission conducted a series of public meeting which provided the opportunity for public comments from all interested parties encompassing a cross section of population including individual citizens and corporate interests.

In April of 2009 the plan was reported out of the Planning Commission and following modifications suggested by the public review process was again returned to the County Planning Commission for a final review. The time line for County Planning Commission comments stipulates that the Board of Commissioners can not adopt the Plan until a date following June 30 of 2009.

Following the conclusion of Mr. Harrison's comments President Osborne turned the meeting over to Thomas Comitta for his presentation of the plan documents.

**b. Comprehensive Plan Summary Presentation – Thomas Comitta**

Mr. Comitta thanked the Board for choosing him as the quarterback of the plan preparation process and he acknowledged the assistance of the Steering Committee, J. Scott Pidcock, the Township Engineer and the Pidcock Co. and the Township staff. Mr. Comitta began by explaining what a comprehensive plan is and in that regard referred to Article 3 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code which set forth the major components of what a comprehensive plan must contain including such documents as a sewage facilities plan.

He explained the major components of a comprehensive plan with short and long term goals including a long range implementation strategy.

Mapping displayed and explained included existing character areas which show patterns of existing neighborhood development and potential growth areas for future development. Future character areas were also displayed which included areas recommended for development or redevelopment, road network improvements and public transportation options. Mr. Comitta discussed traditional neighborhood developments and explained the transect concept as it relates to the proposed plan and its progressive development intensity.

At the conclusion of his presentation/explanation of the plan Mr. Comitta relinquished the floor to President Osborne who moved to the next phase of the agenda. President Osborne

suggested that he would move slightly out of order of the agenda and opened the floor to Public comment on the plan.

**c. Board of Commissioners Questions and Comments**

**d. Public Comments.**

Attorney Joseph Zator moved to address the Board noting that he represented David Jaindl and the Jaindl Development Co. He complimented Mr. Comitta and the entire team involved with the plan preparation process for the professional manner in which the plan was developed and also the fact that he and Mr. Jaindl were treated with courtesy during the preparation of the plan including the review and preparation process.

Attorney Zator asked that the Board continue to work to make proper decisions on the direction of future growth area and cited two areas of concern which they have focused on initially. The first area is the lands of the former Schantz Orchards on Applewood Drive which is now owned by the Jaindl organization. The Orchard lands comprise approximately 225 acres in SWT and the future use plan has this area designated as T-2 which is designated to support development of 1-3 acre home sites. Attorney Zator suggested that this area was more properly developed as T-3 which would permit development of homes on lots of 15,000 sq. ft. to 1 acre in area.

Attorney Zator provided photographs of the neighboring Green Hills area, a Jaindl Development, and suggested that development of this character was easily supported on the lands of the former Schantz Orchards and respectfully suggested to the Board that a change in designation of transect zones was in order.

Finally Attorney Zator suggested that the land of Jaindl on Hoffmansville road, which currently contain a turkey farm operation would in the not too distant future be redeveloped for some type of use and in that regard he suggested that the non flood plain lands could and should be reclassified to a T-3 designation.

At this point in the agenda there was an exchange of ideas between Attorney Zator and several Board members. Commissioner Rodriguez questioned the proposed use of the orchard lands and sought the opinion of Attorney Zator on the concept of a possibility of cluster development on the property. Attorney Zator responded that it was a possibility but suggested that the amount of land, under the current proposed regulations, as he understood they would require exorbitant amounts of opens space dedication which would likely make cluster development unfeasible. Commissioner Rodriguez also suggested that any neighborhood development should include plans to make the neighborhood walkable.

Manley Offutt, a citizen in the audience, expressed a concern with pollution discovered in the lands of another orchard in North Whitehall Township and questioned if similar type of pollution were possible in the area and if so would it make development difficult. Attorney Zator responded that problem pesticides are no longer utilized.

President Osborne suggested that the Zator proposal had merit and recommended that the Board give his suggestion consideration prior to finalizing the final plan for adoption.

Commissioner Ellsworth suggested that the area of T-2 in the North West quadrant of the Township was significant in size and suggested that there may be future reasons to effect a change in the designation but the question was when this should occur as development is progressing

Mr. Comitta advised that there was a great deal of careful calculation on the proportion of land designated to each transect. He suggested that there is a seam between all zones and that typical zoning could be some mutation of the cluster plan or traditional neighborhood development as determined by this or future Board of Commissioner members.

Commissioner Ellsworth offered the opinion that there was a great deal of study involved in the formation of the plan and the future character area plan and he was not anxious to change the work product without addition diligent deliberation.

Commissioner Morgan was concerned with the ripple effect the proposed changes would cause and suggested that the growth and modification of the act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan would to a large measure dictate that the progression of that development.

President Osborne suggested that the Board give careful consideration to the requested changes and duly deliberate the requests seeking guidance from the consultant, Mr. Comitta and Steering Committee if appropriate.

Commissioner Rodriguez cautioned against change at this point in the process.

Mr. Comitta following the presumed conclusion of Commissioner Comments emphasized the major goal of the plan and that was to develop a “Balanced Path Forward” and that his office and the Pidcock Company consult and provide a recommendation to the Board on the requested changes.

Mr. Comitta suggested the Township could follow one of several options which he outlined as follows

- Keep the plan as currently proposed and review every 10 years
- Modify the text as requested
- Study the growth opportunity areas and determine if some of them are more appropriately developed and suggested the inclusion of a designation for special growth area consideration.

The Solicitor suggested that the Board consider taking the plan under advisement and explore some form of middle ground compromise if the Board is inclined to do so. He suggested the issues are really a question of total density and not lot size that has been brought into contention this evening.

The following citizen comments were also received.

Ms. Noreen Kahn of 2716 Lapp Road expressed a concern that additional development would only generate additional traffic and her concern was for safety in the region.

Mr. Sam Sacco of Blue Barn Road stated that any change to the plan as proposed would make it more desirable for a developer to flip a project and cited the Pulte development which formally was a Jandl project.

Ms. Kathy Bruno, a resident of the northern tier on Lois Lane expressed concern with any proposed change in her immediate neighborhood which would allow increased density on existing vacant parcels of ground and also was concerned with increased traffic volumes and speeds in her area. Ms. Bruno specifically called out an objection to the proposed rezoning of a parcel of land owned by the Novak family.

Finally a discussion, initiated by Commissioner Rodriguez, concerning the large segment of T-4 land generally located in the North East quadrant of the Township occurred. The concerns with the current absence of utilities and potential phasing of construction was discussed with the discussion noted and continued until a later date.

**e. Establish Date for Continued Hearing and Plan Adoption**

Under the guidance of President Osborne the Board initiated a discussion on the proper time and methodology for continued discussion on the Proposed Comprehensive Plan agreed that the public hearing process was not yet complete and that the plan documents deserved continued and complete review.

Following the above conversation the Board, following the direction of the Solicitor announced that the public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan and possible action on the adoption resolution would be continued until the July 1, 2009 meeting of the Board. The meeting , which is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Township Municipal Building.

**AGENDA ITEM # 6 - RESOLUTION:**

- a. Resolution Adopting the Plan Entitled “South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan: A Balanced Path Forward,” Revised Final Draft Dated April 3, 2009/April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009, as the 2009 Comprehensive Plan for South Whitehall Township (For Review Only)**

This agenda item was taken under advisement for discussion and possible action at the July 1, 2009 continued hearing.

**AGEND ITEM # 7 -COURTESY OF THE FLOOR:**

President Osborne called for Public comment on non-agenda items. There was no response.

**AGENDA ITEM # 8 - EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**AGENDA ITEM # 9 - ADJOURNMENT:**

On motion of Commissioner Morgan, seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth and approved by all Commissioners present the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

**ADOPTED: October 7, 2009**

**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
LEHIGH COUNTY PA.**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**June 17, 2009**

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THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WAS HELD ON THE ABOVE DATE AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 4444 WALBERT AVE., ALLENTOWN, LEHIGH COUNTY, PA. 18104

**COMMISSIONERS ATTENDING:**

Brad Osborne, President  
Dale W. Daubert  
Christina (Tori) Morgan

**STAFF ATTENDING:**

Gerald Gasda, Township Manager  
Jeffrey Higgins, Director Community Development  
Linda Perry, Director Finance  
James Weber, Director Public Works  
Thomas Toth, Chief of Police  
Blake Marles, Township Solicitor  
J. Scott Pidcock, Township Engineer

**AGENDA ITEM # 12 - DIRECTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**a. Comprehensive Plan**

President Osborne introduced the topic noting that the Comprehensive Plan was scheduled for a continued public hearing on July 1. There was discussion on the development of certain areas of the Township and the likelihood of that development in the absence of completed municipal infrastructure improvements.

It was agreed that there were still some questions which required answers and for the meeting on July 1 the Board thought it best that the discussion continue, additionally it was suggested that it would not be necessary for the Consultant, Tom Comitta to attend that meeting.

This matter was continues for further discussion on July 1.

**Duly Adopted: July 15, 2009**

**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**JULY 1, 2009**

The Public Meeting of the South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners was held on the above date at 7:30 p.m. in the township municipal building located at 4444 Walbert Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

**COMMISSIONERS ATTENDING:**

Brad Osborne, President  
R.A. Rodriguez, Jr., Vice President  
Dale Daubert  
Howard Ellsworth  
Christina (Tori) Morgan

**STAFF ATTENDING:**

James Weber, Acting Manager/Director of Public Works  
Jeff Higgins, Director of Community Development  
Thomas Toth, Chief of Police  
Gerald Harbison, Assistant Director of Community Development  
Gregg Adams, Assistant Planner  
Linda Perry, Director of Finance  
Blake Marles, Township Solicitor  
Scott Pidcock, Township Engineer

**AGENDA ITEM #7 – PUBLIC HEARING – Comprehensive Plan**

President Osborne returned to the regular order of the agenda and recalled aloud that the Board of Commissioners had begun a Public Hearing about the Comprehensive Plan on June 4<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed at the end of that night's discussion to continue the hearing until this evening. Mr. Osborne then asked the Township Engineer to discuss the changes that the township's planning consultant had recommended as a result of concerns expressed at the previous meeting.

Mr. Pidcock began by explaining how the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map amendments are different from one another—pointing out that the former is broader and less detailed in scope, while the latter is much more specific. He reviewed the most recent changes made to the plan. Those changes included clarifications and elaborations upon:

- the prerogative of property owners to attempt the adaptive re-use of historic buildings,

- the positive view of the township in so far as exploring alternatives to the demolition of historic buildings is concerned,
- the idea that character zone designations do not imply blanket homogeneity of density or use,
- the subtle transition zoning can affect within and between T2 and T3 character zones, and
- the compatibility that must exist between the capacity of existing infrastructure and land use before any more intensive re-zoning takes place.

Mr. Osborne then invited people in the audience to present comments and questions. No one in the audience had anything to add, so Mr. Osborne then turned to his fellow Commissioners for comment. Mr. Rodriguez expressed some concern about the manner in which open space would be maintained in cases where cluster development may occur, but he did not wish to have the adoption of the plan stalled in order to get a complete answer.

The Public Hearing was then brought to a close and President Osborne called for a motion on the plan. Commissioner Ellsworth moved the plan be adopted. Commissioner Rodriguez suggested a correction that would insert the word “the” before “Parkland School District” in the third “Whereas” clause found on page 2 of the draft resolution. Solicitor Marles suggested that the first two phrases in that clause be transposed with one another and all accepted that change. Commissioner Daubert then seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. All Commissioners voted in favor of the resolution, and the Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

**Duly Adopted: July 15, 2009**





**APPENDIX D**

Resolution 2009-42

The 6 page Resolution that follows was adopted on July 1, 2009 by a majority of the South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners.

**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP**  
**LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2009-42**  
**(Duly Adopted July 1, 2009)**

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PLAN ENTITLED “SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: A BALANCED PATH FORWARD,” REVISED FINAL DRAFT DATED APRIL 3, 2009/APRIL 21, 2009/JUNE 24, 2009, AS THE 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, as amended (the “MPC”), 53 P.S. Section 10101, et seq., the Board of Commissioners of South Whitehall Township (“Board”) has the legal authority to adopt and amend a comprehensive plan for South Whitehall Township (“Township”); and

**WHEREAS**, on April 12, 1971, the Board adopted a plan entitled “A Comprehensive Plan For South Whitehall Township, Lehigh County,” dated September 1969, prepared by the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission with the assistance of Herbert H. Smith Associates, planning consultants, and the G. Edwin Pidcock Company, consulting engineers, as the 1969 Comprehensive Plan for South Whitehall Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board recognizes the Township has a diverse landscape that ranges from small villages nestled among the rolling hills and historic covered bridges of the Jordan Creek to the roller coasters, shopping centers, and early suburban neighborhoods that sprung out of the City of Allentown to the south;

**WHEREAS**, the Board also recognizes that change is visible and that, while agriculture continues to dominate the lands north of Huckleberry Ridge, it is slowly migrating out of the Township, replaced by suburban style development, and that to the south of the Ridge, the Township is largely built out and ripe for redevelopment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board expects the Township to continue to be shaped by the growth of the Lehigh Valley and desires to take a proactive stance to plan for the efficient and attractive use of land and infrastructure, while protecting its greatest assets; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to accomplish the foregoing, the Board desires to update its comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, in the summer of 2007, the Board formed and appointed members to the South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (“Steering Committee”) to initiate and facilitate the creation of an updated comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, in the fall of 2007, the Board engaged Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc., to help facilitate the creation of an updated comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Steering Committee held several public meetings to invite public comment and to prepare a draft comprehensive plan for the Township entitled “South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan: A Balanced Path Forward” with the assistance of Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc., The Pidcock Company and Township staff (the “Draft Plan”) and, thereafter, the Steering Committee forwarded the Draft Plan to the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission (“Planning Commission”) for its consideration; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission forwarded the Draft Plan to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, municipalities contiguous to the Township and Parkland Area School District in or around January 2009, for review and to provide comments; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held several public meetings to review the Draft Plan, invite public comment and review comments (if any) from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, municipalities contiguous to the Township, Parkland Area School District and public at large, and at its April 21, 2009, public meeting voted to forward a revised Draft

Plan, dated April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009, (the “Proposed Plan”) to the members of the Board for possible adoption as set forth in the Planning Commission Minutes of Meeting dated April 21, 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board received the Proposed Plan at its meeting on May 6, 2009, and forwarded the Proposed Plan to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, municipalities contiguous to the Township and Parkland Area School District on May 11, 2009, for review and to provide comments by June 30, 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission reviewed the Proposed Plan at its meeting on May 28, 2009, and found the Proposed Plan to be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan The Lehigh Valley .... 2030 as represented in its letter dated May 29, 2009, prepared by David P. Berryman, Senior Planner of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the Parkland Area School District and the municipalities contiguous to the Township did not provide any comments regarding the Proposed Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board held a special meeting on June 4, 2009, at the Township Municipal Building to conduct a public hearing, pursuant to the MPC, to invite public comment and consider any comments received on the Proposed Plan from the public and consider any comments received on the Proposed Plan from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, municipalities contiguous to the Township and the Parkland Area School District as well as considering the public meeting comments and recommendations of the Planning Commission prior to the Board’s taking action on the Proposed Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, at said meeting, the Board received public comment and comments received on the Proposed Plan from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, requested certain

explanatory revisions to the Proposed Plan and continued the public hearing to July 1, 2009, at 7:00 P.M. at the Township Municipal Building; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Board’s foregoing request, the Proposed Plan has been revised so Chapter 4 contains explanatory information regarding the future character areas discussed therein and Page 5-16 has been revised to remind readers that the ultimate decision regarding adaptive reuse is in the hands of the applicable property owner and is an alternative to demolition (the “Proposed Plan, Further Revised Final Draft: April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009/June 24, 2009”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Board held a meeting on July 1, 2009, at the Township Municipal Building to continue the public hearing, pursuant to the MPC, to invite public comment and consider any comments received on the Proposed Plan, Further Revised Final Draft: April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009/June 24, 2009, from the public; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board finds that the revisions to Chapter 4 and Page 5-16 of the Proposed Plan, Further Revised Final Draft: April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009/June 24, 2009, are simply explanatory rather than substantive and, therefore, do not constitute substantial revisions as that term is used pursuant to the MPC; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board finds the Proposed Plan, Further Revised Final Draft: April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009/June 24, 2009, is a vision of the future for the Township and places special importance on the preservation of natural features, farmland, open space and historic resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board finds the Proposed Plan, Further Revised Final Draft: April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009/June 24, 2009, emphasizes the appropriateness of urban uses locating near adequate transportation, sewer and water supply infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board finds the Proposed Plan, Further Revised Final Draft: April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009/June 24, 2009, seeks to refine the current pattern of new development with a more deliberate, graceful and thoughtful development approach tied to community values, long-term infrastructure objectives and preservation of natural features, farmland, open space and historic resources.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ADOPTED AND RESOLVED** that the Board of Commissioners of South Whitehall Township hereby adopts, as the 2009 South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan, the plan entitled “South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan: A Balanced Path Forward,” Further Revised Final Draft: April 3, 2009/April 21, 2009/June 24, 2009, prepared by the South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and South Whitehall Township Planning Commission with the assistance of Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc., The Pidcock Company and Township staff, which plan is attached hereto as Exhibit “A” and incorporated herein by reference (the “Plan”).

Following adoption of the Plan by this Resolution, this action shall be recorded on the Plan.

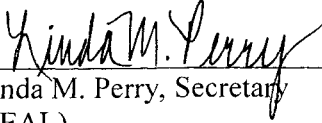
By adoption of this Resolution, the Plan adopted hereby shall be deemed to have superseded the 1969 Comprehensive Plan for South Whitehall Township, prepared by the South Whitehall Township Planning Commission with the assistance of Herbert H. Smith Associates, planning consultants, and the G. Edwin Pidcock Company, consulting engineers, and adopted by the Board on April 12, 1971.

**DULY ADOPTED** this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2009, by the Board of Commissioners of

South Whitehall Township, in lawful session duly assembled.

Attest:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP



\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda M. Perry, Secretary  
(SEAL)



\_\_\_\_\_  
Brad Osborne, President

