

## Chapter Eleven

# LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN

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The purpose of this plan element is to reflect West Pikeland Township's vision by delineating the desired future land use development patterns. The future land use and housing plan is the point at which all elements of the comprehensive plan are integrated. It includes descriptions of potential uses within each land use category and recommends density ranges, providing the rationale for each designation. The chapter is intended to establish the foundation for future land use decisions and implementation of the plan through ordinance updates and planning programs.

This chapter reviews the land use goals and objectives and summarizes past policies in light of changes that have occurred since the previous comprehensive planning effort. It discusses the key points of the other plan elements and reiterates how these affect the future land use plan. In addition, this chapter reviews related planning efforts and programs of adjacent municipalities and their implications.

The land use and housing goals and objectives are stated as follows:

### ***RESIDENTIAL GOAL:***

***Ensure that residential development respects the rural character of the Township and is developed in a manner that protects environmental resources and maintains open space as an integral part of West Pikeland Township.***

### **Objectives**

- Establish a growth boundary for West Pikeland Township that guides new residential development to areas best able to accommodate such growth.
- Establish standards for clustered residential development that respects site characteristics with emphasis on preserving open space.
- Adopt regulations to protect natural and historic resources existing on sites proposed for new development.
- Ensure that varied housing forms are available to accommodate all types of residential needs in those portions of the Township designated for growth.
- Provide for flexibility in land use ordinances and regulations to encourage innovative site design and alternatives to conventional subdivisions.
- Consider design standards for higher density housing that seek to preserve natural site features.
- Develop standards that require developers to design in a manner that protects natural or scenic qualities.

***NON-RESIDENTIAL GOAL:***

***Provide for non-residential development in keeping with the rural character of West Pikeland Township to allow for a reasonable level of growth.***

**Objectives**

- Accommodate limited commercial and industrial land uses in keeping with the Township’s rural character and at a scale appropriate to its current population and future growth projections.
- Encourage the concentration of non-residential uses in clusters to prevent strip development along the major roadways.
- Determine those locations capable of supporting non-residential uses without compromising the rural character of the Township.
- Ensure that new non-residential development complies with design standards that minimize negative environmental impacts and reflects the rural and historic characteristics of the Township.
- Encourage adaptive reuse and renovation of historic sites in village settings for limited forms of non-residential use under design standards, which enhance their setting as a traditional rural center.

***AGRICULTURAL GOAL:***

***Support the agricultural industry in the Township by protecting land and soil resources.***

**Objectives**

- Protect prime agricultural soils through zoning or other regulatory measures that limits development of these land resources.
- Seek to preserve the agricultural industry while respecting the needs of the landowners to supplement their income.
- Encourage both public and private methods of limiting development of agricultural land through the use of conservation easements.
- Recognize and support equestrian activities as a valid and important ongoing agricultural use that helps preserve the rural character of the Township.
- Continue to support farming while recognizing that the industry is in transition and part-time agricultural activities are becoming more prevalent.

<b>DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN</b>
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The comprehensive planning process culminates in the formation of the land use and housing plan, and accompanying map. All issues discussed throughout this planning process including the type and location of existing land uses, the physical characteristics of the land, the development constraints posed, the population

increases projected, and the road network's ability to accommodate more traffic, are used to generate this element.

This element is comprised of future land use categories, a series of implementation recommendations, and the future land use map. Consistent with the other plan chapters, the recommendations define the purpose of the action and how it should ultimately be implemented. The recommendations contained in the various plan chapters are highly interrelated and many of the recommendations contained in this chapter depend on implementation measures contained in other chapters. For example, recommendations associated with cluster development in this chapter depend on implementation of the net out recommendations contained in the Environmental Resources Plan chapter in order for the concept to be effective.

The future land use map indicates where the various uses should be located and illustrates the relationship among them. The map is intended to visually present preferred future land use patterns and to serve as the basis for future zoning modifications.

## REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The future land use plan has considered the policies of the existing Comprehensive Plan (1989), the Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan (1992), and the document used to guide sewage facilities planning which in West Pikeland's case, is the Chester County Master Sewer Development Plan (1970). These documents are in some cases outdated, however, their policies continue to reflect the attitudes of the Township on many issues. The Township's land use philosophy has long been conservation oriented and protecting its sensitive environmental features and unique historic features are goals contained in all its planning documents. The best ways to achieve these goals in terms of the planning approaches and techniques available, however, have changed.

### **Comprehensive Plan (1989, as amended)**

The most recent Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1985 and amended in 1989. This document was viewed as an update, as opposed to a rewrite, of the previous (1973) plan as many of the overriding policies were carried through. The 1989 Plan recognizes that West Pikeland is quite unique in terms of possessing an abundance of natural resources, but that growth and development pressures are increasing and have lead to a greater demand for housing in the Township. In analyzing changes, the plan makes regular reference to the 1973 Comprehensive Plan, comparing past and present circumstances. This approach effectively established a basis for the recommendations presented.

The overriding philosophy of the 1989 plan is to "grow sensitively" meaning "*to grow in a way that preserves productive agricultural land, protects important natural features and resources, and retains the open, rural character of the township to the maximum extent possible*". Along with this, though, is the recognition that West Pikeland needs to continue to provide opportunities for a range of housing types and lot sizes to meet certain legal requirements and the needs of its existing and future population. The primary land use goal in the 1989 document is as follows:

***To retain the open, rural, agricultural nature of the Township by developing primarily as a low-density residential community.***

This goal is accompanied by objectives related to residential land use, agricultural preservation, commercial and institutional uses, and recreational land use. Together, the goals and objectives have served as the guiding principals on which land use decisions over the past decade have been based. They are still considered valid at this point in time. Many recommendations contained in the plan were

implemented but need to be revisited in order to determine if they are indeed addressing what they were intended to address. Although the goals have not significantly changed, the most effective ways to implement the objectives, have changed and are incorporated in this update.

**Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan (1992)**

The Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan (OSRERP), was developed to serve as the basis for decisions relating to the preservation of open space, the protection of natural and historic resources and the provision of recreational opportunities for the residents of West Pikeland. It contains an inventory of environmental resources and recreational lands and facilities, as well as analysis of their adequacy in meeting Township needs. Because of the extent of environmental resources in West Pikeland Township, there is a particularly important relationship between this document and the 1989 Comprehensive Plan. The two documents interrelate and the implementation of recommendations in either document impacts the implementation of the other.

The goals and objectives of the OSRERP relied heavily on public input received through a questionnaire prepared for the project. A public workshop was also held to seek input on the plan. The questionnaire requested general demographic information, posed thirteen policy questions relating to preservation of the Township’s character, and sought input on recreational activities. Over three-quarters of the respondents to the questionnaire either agreed or strongly agreed that the protection of open space and preservation of natural resources are critical issues in the Township and that the zoning ordinance should include provisions requiring open space.

The plan contains a wide range of recommendations addressing the protection of environmental resources including preserving prime agricultural soils, stream corridors, wetlands and woodlands because of its high priority among residents. These complement the recommendations contained in previous planning documents as well as this Comprehensive Plan Update and together, these documents promote the Township’s policies regarding resources preservation.

**Sewage Facilities Plan (1970)**

Sewage facilities planning is mandated by Act 537 of 1965, the Sewage Facilities Act. Most municipalities in Chester County have opted to develop individual sewage facilities plans to address the local needs and delineate municipal priorities in terms of treatment options. West Pikeland, however, relies on the Chester County Master Sewer Plan (1970) to fulfill its sewage facilities planning obligations. The County’s Master Sewer Plan did not envision West Pikeland to be populated to the extent that would require public sewers. Most of the growth in the region was anticipated to be concentrated in the Downingtown and Uwchlan areas. The plan indicates that in areas where population densities are low and soil conditions are suitable, on-site systems are a satisfactory means of sewage disposal. On-lot systems were identified as the primary option for schools, commercial, office uses, camps, and other non-residential uses as well.

The overall population of the County has increased substantially over the past two decades and new development pressure has affected West Pikeland requiring other sewage disposal alternatives. One Planned Residential Development in the southern part of the Township is served by a community system and any future development in the designated growth area would probably require another such system or extension of public sewers. A municipal sewage facilities plan is needed in order to further support the Township’s land use philosophy and give West Pikeland greater control over treatment options. Such a plan should support the use of community systems that recharge groundwater through the use of spray or drip irrigation systems.

### **Planning Programs of Adjacent Municipalities**

The land use policies of adjacent municipalities impact West Pikeland. Coordinating land uses along borders is particularly important in order to reduce potential conflicts. A low-density residential development bordering, for instance, an industrial complex, could result in conflict requiring Township intervention. The potential for such a conflict can be reduced if the Township is cognizant of the plans and policies of adjacent municipalities and cooperates on regional basis to avoid future problems.

West Pikeland Township shares borders with five municipalities: East Pikeland, Charlestown Township, West Vincent Township, Uwchlan Township and Upper Uwchlan Township. In general, these municipalities share many of the same physical and environmental characteristics but are more developed than West Pikeland. East Pikeland, West Vincent and Charlestown Township still have large areas of open space and active farms and share the goal to preserve the remaining open space and support continuation of the agricultural industry. Much of the remaining open space and agricultural land in these municipalities borders West Pikeland Township. The non-agricultural uses permitted in these areas are mainly low-density residential land uses. Cluster development and lot averaging is an alternative provided in these municipalities, however, the gross densities remain low. Sprawl development is a continuing threat to the open space throughout this entire region.

Of the municipalities in the region, Uwchlan Township has the largest population and the highest densities. It borders West Pikeland's southern boundary and is adjacent to its growth area. The residential uses in this portion of West Pikeland are largely compatible with those in Uwchlan. Continuing to promote this region of West Pikeland as the growth area will not conflict with Uwchlan's land use policies. Although there are concerns with the industrial zoning districts bordering residential zoning, there are several features that serve as natural buffers thereby reducing the potential for conflict.

The boundary shared between Upper Uwchlan and West Pikeland is short, however, it is important as the point that the Pickering Creek enters West Pikeland Township. The land on either side of the borders in both Townships is zoned for residential purposes. The Pickering Creek floodplain will serve to reduce densities at this point and both Townships should promote large buffers.

<b>EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERN</b>
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To plan for the future, it is necessary to evaluate existing land uses and understand how and why the development patterns occurred. In many cases, land use patterns evolve from historic settlements and the associated transportation routes. Natural features such as agricultural lands, creeks, and stream corridors usually determined where these first settlements occurred. In West Pikeland, the fertile, well drained soils were suited to farming and early development patterns supported this industry. Mills to process grain were built on the creeks. The first roads developed from the trail system carved out by the native Americans and villages then grew at key points near the roads and streams. Although there is little left of these first villages and rural clusters, some remnants still exist. Future development patterns should respect the historic villages.

### **Residential Uses**

Most residential uses in West Pikeland are low to medium density. Single family homes on large lots and estate parcels dominate the remainder of the Township and are intermingled with operating farms; conservation areas and public open space. New residential development over the past decade has consisted of subdivisions with a limited number of units but positioned on large lots on single cul-de-sacs. Many of the homes are found on residential estates of ten acres or more and on small farms. Large-lot development of two acres or more is beginning to affect the rural character and agricultural base of the

Township and the open spaces are beginning to be depleted. With minor exceptions, residential development is not clustered in the northern region of the Township. Because of the many environmental constraints, sensitive natural resources, unique historic resources and operating farms in this part of the Township, additional residential development should be designed to avoid sprawl through the use of clustering and other alternative planning techniques that encourage preservation of prime open space parcels.

The medium density development is found in the Planned Residential Developments and subdivisions south of Route 401. These include the Twin Hills PRD, consisting of a mix of attached and detached homes on varying lot sizes. Twin Hills contains 250 homes and the development is served by public water and a community sewer system. Fairfields and Bridlewood consist of single family detached homes on lots averaging one acre. These are served by public water and individual on-lot septic systems. Other developments include Pickering Estates, Fox Ridge and Skyline Drive. Several undeveloped parcels are located in the vicinity of these three major developments, some of which are farmed. This area is currently the focus for new residential development since public water is available and public or community sewers are an option. It is easily accessed by major roadways and should remain the focus for new development.

### **Commercial Uses**

Commercial uses are very minor and mainly serve the local residents. Most retail and commercial needs are met outside of the Township in nearby municipalities. Many of the commercial uses exist in or near a historic village. The main intersection in the Township, Route 401, and Route 113, contains the most significant concentration of uses with a service station/convenience store on one corner, a bakery on another, and a restaurant and office on the third. Although the ability of this intersection to handle the current volume of traffic and the high number of turning movements is poor, it is slated for improvement. Since this intersection falls within the growth boundary, it is a logical location for future commercial uses.

The only large commercial use in the Township is a car dealership located north of the Route 401/Route 113 interchange. Other retail uses are found in Chester Springs at the intersection of Yellow Springs Road and Route 113. Chester Springs is the community focal point as the post office and municipal building are located near this intersection. The Yellow Springs Inn, an historic inn and restaurant, is located further west at the intersection of Yellow Springs and Art School Roads, along with a small number of other commercial/office uses. Most are located in historic buildings within the Yellow Spring Historic District and the Township is interested in maintaining the character of this area by allowing uses only of an appropriate type, scale and size.

Hallman's General Store is the only commercial use in the northern part of the Township. It is located at the intersection of Route 113 and Pikeland Road and has served as a "general" store for several decades. Several apartments are also located in this area. The intersection, as with the two previously identified, is historically significant.

### **Community Facilities**

The municipal building and the post office are located in Chester Springs, just south of the intersection of Yellow Springs Road and Route 113. The Chester Springs Library is west of this intersection in the Yellow Springs Historic District. Only one school (Montgomery School) is in the Township and it is also located on Route 113. Although there are very few community facilities, they are somewhat clustered in the Chester Springs vicinity and this area should continue to serve as the community focal point both in term of community and commercial facilities.

### **Recreational Uses**

Pine Creek Park provides for both passive and active recreational uses. The Township also owns the former Ostrander property and several natural areas for passive recreation and open space purposes. The Horseshoe Trail also traverses the Township. An important private recreational facility, the Indian Springs Camp, is located in the northeastern part of the Township. Together, these uses supplement the open space conservation areas contributing to the growing network of open space in the community. This network should continue to be developed to protect fragile resources and maintain necessary open space.

### **Agricultural Uses**

There are many active farms in West Pikeland although their numbers are decreasing. There has been a transition in agricultural use occurring in the Township over the past two decades, with smaller farms including horse farms, replacing some of the more traditional agricultural operations. Horse farms are a viable use and the environmental conditions and topography of the Township are well suited to this particular agricultural activity. Conversion of farms to residential uses is occurring regularly and farms that were in operation as recently as five years ago are now fallow, signaling that a use change may be near. Unless the conversions of farms to subdivisions are addressed immediately, more farms will be lost. The Township should continue to support the agricultural industry including the equestrian community and work with landowners in considering alternatives to land development.

### **Open Space**

An extensive amount of open space has been permanently preserved in West Pikeland through the use of various preservation techniques. Both the public and the private sectors have been actively involved in preserving open space and have worked cooperatively toward this common goal. Large tracts of open space have been eased to non-profit organizations and development subsequently restricted. Private property owners have voluntarily placed restrictions on future development of estate parcels. Key parcels have been purchased by the Township for passive, public recreation and open space purposes in accordance with the policies contained in the OSRER Plan. This combined effort has led to a nearly integrated network of open space that greatly helps to preserve the Township's environmental qualities and rural character. Protecting open space is a major goal of the Township and it should continue to preserve such land using all available means.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The environmental characteristics of the Township determine, to a great extent, the location of future land uses. The location proposed for a specific use must be capable of supporting that use on a long term basis. The underlying geology must provide the foundation needed to support the structures and accompanying road systems. If public utilities are not available, groundwater yields must be shown to be capable of providing long term potable water without depleting adjacent wells. The soils themselves must be well drained and considered suitable for on-lot sewage disposal. Land uses proposed should not interfere with the natural functioning of environmental features. No major construction, for example, should be planned for wetlands or flood plains; nor should it be proposed for steep slopes since it could increase erosion and storm water runoff. Ridgelines and viewsheds should be protected to the extent possible. The future land use plan must consider the environmental characteristics and ensure that the uses proposed can be supported without causing long term environmental damage.

### **Land Resources**

Land resources include geology, topography and soils. The Township's land characteristics are discussed in Chapter 4. In summary; the geology of West Pikeland consists mainly of granitic gneisses, which are responsible for the low valleys and steep stream banks. They adequately support construction, however,

because they contain fewer fractures and fissures, they often do not yield high amounts of groundwater. The topography is rolling with low to moderate hills with moderately steep and fairly narrow stream valleys. There are many areas of steep slopes especially in the north and northwestern regions of the Township. Steep slopes are also associated with the Pickering and the Pine Creek corridors. Slopes ranging between 15% and 25% are not considered appropriate for construction due to the potential for erosion, nor are they conducive to the construction or functioning of on-lot septic systems. The soils in West Pikeland are well suited to many types of agricultural uses and Class II and Class III prime agricultural soils are found throughout the Township, particularly in the north and northcentral region.

### **Water Resources**

West Pikeland Township is within the Delaware River basin and the Schuylkill sub-basin. The Township is traversed by the Pickering Creek and the Pine Creek, both critical water resources and known for their scenic qualities. Both creeks have been designated as Exceptional Value waters by the Commonwealth. The flood plains, wetlands, ponds, and springs throughout the Township are linked to these surface waters and are part of an integrated system. Groundwater is also part of this system and changes to the land and to surface waters affect the quantity and quality of the groundwater. Although it can be replenished and from that perspective is not a “finite” resource, the amount of groundwater available is subject to fluctuation, a significant problem for land uses relying on it as a potable water supply. Underlying geology also affects groundwater yields. Groundwater yields are considered low in the south and southeast regions of the Township and moderate in the north region.

### **Biotic Resources**

A wide variety of biological resources are present in West Pikeland. Woodlands cover much of the Township and are particularly extensive in the north and northeastern regions, providing habitat to many species of wildlife. Land that was once farmed and is now fallow provides pastures, meadows and grasslands, supporting a variety of flora and fauna. The Exceptional Value streams support species of fish that depend on clean, clear flowing waters free of sediment and other contaminants. Maintaining this habitat and thus the diversity of biotic resources is an important consideration in this comprehensive planning process. The types and densities of uses proposed must respect these biological resources and environmental qualities on which they depend.

## **FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS**

Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, mandates that comprehensive plans address the housing needs of both present and future residents. It further states that this planning 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 future land use plan addresses this requirement by describing the anticipated composition, density and location of residential land uses in the Township as projected to the year 2020.

### **Projected Population**

The projected population and the number of residential units needed to accommodate this population are discussed in Chapter 3, Demographic Characteristics. In summary, the decennial census reported the 1990 population as 2,323. The 1997 population was estimated to be 2,750 representing an 18% increase over the 1990 figure. By the year 2020, the Township’s population is estimated to increase to 3,510 persons or another 1,187 individuals over the 1990 figure. The average number of persons per household for the year 2000 is projected to be 2.84; declining slightly to 2.80 by the year 2020.

**Projected Housing Units**

The number of homes needed to accommodate the projected population growth is obtained by dividing the projected increase by the projected number of persons per household. If the population of West Pikeland is anticipated to increase between 1990 and 2020 by 1,187 individuals, and if the number of persons per household is anticipated to be approximately three, then approximately 418 residential units are needed to accommodate this growth. The building permit data indicates that 354 units were constructed between 1990 and 1997. To meet fair share obligations, land to accommodate these new units must be made available and described in the future land use plan.

Most of the residential development in the Township is single family detached and it is anticipated that new development will occur in nearly the same proportions. The alternatives to single family detached residential development are discussed within the context of each proposed land use category with the various options described. Allowing for flexibility in site development and providing for design alternatives can lead to varied housing forms in developments that respect the existing character of the Township. The Planned Residential Development (PRD) option has been used by West Pikeland in focusing new residential development and providing alternatives to single family detached units. A PRD provides for flexibility and continues to serve as a development option offered by the Township.

**FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES (2020)**

The future land use plan for West Pikeland is based on the “growth boundary” concept, a growth management technique used to reduce sprawl. This technique is not intended to halt development, merely to direct it to those areas where it can best be supported in terms of infrastructure. The boundary is a geographic delineation that marks the separation between a more developed or suburban area and a more environmentally sensitive or rural area. The growth boundary technique allows municipalities to plan for new development in the growth area while simultaneously discouraging it outside. Not all development is intended to occur within the boundary, however, the more intense uses, particularly those requiring public services and a high level of infrastructure, should occur in the growth area. Encouraging and supporting development within the growth boundary reduces development pressure in outlying areas.

The land use categories include a description of the land uses and densities envisioned for each region of the Township. The estimated acreage contained in each of these land use category and the estimated percentage of the total land area are presented in Table 11-1, and the categories are visually presented on Map 11-1, the Future Land Use Map. It is important to note that the map is intended to serve as an overall guide in directing future development. It is not a zoning map and should not be misconstrued as a regulatory tool. The purpose of the Future Land Use Plan map is to assist land use decisions by guiding future zoning ordinance revisions.

**TABLE 11-1  
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES  
Proposed Future Land Uses for West Pikeland Township**

LAND USE CATEGORY	ACRES	% OF LAND IN TOWNSHIP
Neighborhood Development Area	1,656	26.0
Resource Protection Area	4,560	71.5
Villages	159	2.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Each land use category is presented in three parts: the *purpose* of the proposed category, its proposed location within the Township, and the implementation *recommendations*. Together, the three parts provide the rationale for land use designations that address municipal goals in light of the physical, environmental and developmental conditions. Map 11-1 illustrates the location of each land use category.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AREA**

**1,656 Acres / 26 Percent of Township**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Neighborhood Development Area is to provide for new residential development in attractive subdivisions designed to conserve land and respect the natural, historic and scenic qualities of the parcel. Conventional, sprawling subdivisions that needlessly consume land, create artificial views and require high amounts of impervious surface are highly discouraged. The Neighborhood Development Area is intended to serve as the Township's growth area and to accommodate the projected population in a location that facilitates access by public/community water and sewer, is adjacent to major roadways leading to outlying commercial and employment centers, and is in proximity to other residential areas. Interconnections between neighborhoods, both vehicular and pedestrian, should be incorporated where appropriate in order to facilitate access management, ease congestion on the roadways, and generally slow traffic on local roads.

New residential development should be designed to blend with the environment and to the extent possible, units should be clustered within the development to preserve open space, protect fragile lands, reduce impervious surfaces and minimize impact on scenic vistas. Flexibility in unit design is encouraged to accommodate a variety of future residents from those with families requiring larger, detached homes with yards, to those that prefer attractive, well designed townhomes or similar alternative with lower maintenance requirements.

Permitting the creation of residential communities capable of supporting gross densities ranging from one to two units per acre is the overall intent of the Residential Development Area. Clustering in accordance with specified development standards is highly encouraged in order to accommodate net densities of two to four homes per acre in alternate forms. If a transferable development rights program is initiated, this region could serve as the receiving area.

### **Location**

The Neighborhood Development Area is intended to serve as the Township's growth area and is roughly bounded by Route 401 to the south and veering north to encompass Skyline Drive and the intersection of Route 401 and Route 113. The growth boundary (which defines the boundary between this Development Area and the Resource Protection Area) continues in a northwest direction incorporating Meadow Creek Road and proceeding northwest, crossing Messner Road to a point north of Adelpia Lane. The growth area defined contains parcels that should accommodate the projected population for the Township to the year 2020 and possibly beyond. Public water is available and public sewer may be available if full capacity has not been reached. Community systems are an alternative to individual on-lot systems. Off-lot drainage fields are utilized more as well.

The Township's PRD's are located in this growth area and several tracts serve as potential "infill" areas. Roads proposed in new development should interconnect with the road systems established. Route 113 and Route 401 provide major access through the Neighborhood Development Area and distribute traffic to other major roadways (particularly Route 100) within the region. Access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike is within a reasonable distance.

The Anselma Mill Historic District is a key Township controlled resource within the Neighborhood Development Area that will be retained as important open space as this area. The stream feeding the Mill site should also be the focus of protective measures. The recreational land and open spaces within the PRDs created by the clustering also protects scenic views and helps to maintain a rural character. These requirements should be carried through to new development.

⇒ **Recommendations for the Neighborhood Development Area**

- ***Continue to provide for Planned Residential Development (PRD) as a land use option in the Neighborhood Development Area.***

This option provides for a range of housing types and building forms, along with open space and parkland, within a planned community. An integrated circulation system links all parts of the development. The home styles can range from townhouse to detached residences on a range of lot sizes. Since this option offers flexibility in site design, it should continue to be offered as a development alternative for parcels within the Neighborhood Development Area. The development standards included in the zoning ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that PRD proposals reflect the community's character and complement the existing development.

- ***Encourage cluster development to conserve land and protect open space.***

Cluster development should be encouraged in the Neighborhood Development Area. New homes should be sited following the thorough analysis of natural, historic and scenic characteristics of the parcel proposed for development. The Township currently allows for clustering through its Conservation Residents Alternative Overlay (CRAO) ordinance for tracts of 100 acres or more. Consideration should be given to improving the existing CRAO ordinance along with implementing other cluster provisions that encourage preservation of open space.

One of the more innovative approaches to cluster development is the conservation subdivision design. This performance based design technique is referred to as the "Growing Greener" approach, and was developed by the Natural Lands Trust, a regional land trust working to conserve land in the Delaware Valley. The process is in the publication, [Conservation Design for Subdivisions](#), by Randall G. Arendt.

Conservation subdivision design is a multi-step process that involves first identifying key resources through a detailed site analysis plan, prioritizing the resources to be conserved, then creating a subdivision plan that sites homes in a manner that only minimally impacts those resources. This design approach is particularly applicable in a community such as West Pikeland that has extensive natural and historic resources. Both the zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance updates should incorporate this option.

- ***Continue to emphasize the use of road setbacks and trees to serve as a buffer between residential development and transportation corridors.***

The use of spatial and topographical buffers, and natural tree lines, to separate residential development from transportation corridors accomplishes several design goals. For the residential development, the buffers separates homes from the roadway reducing traffic noise as creating a safety zone between yard areas and roadways. It also filters dust, debris and storm water runoff. For those traveling within the corridor it enhances a sense of open space and contributes to the rural quality of the Township. Requiring a setback, particularly for residential development

abutting minor arterial roads like Route 113 and Route 401, should be incorporated into the Township's zoning ordinance and specified in its subdivision and land development ordinance. The use of native species within buffers should be required.

- ***Emphasize the need for an informal sketch plan review prior to formal preparation of development applications.***

Sketch plan review provides an opportunity for developers and municipal officials to work cooperatively on subdivision design. Seeking the input of a professional land planner with expertise in site design at the sketch plan review phase would assist municipal officials in identifying design flaws early. Use of this option could reduce development costs and lengthy review times as well.

- ***Encourage creative design that links subdivisions within the proposed Neighborhood Development Area.***

The Township's zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance should be revised to require residential development that respects the natural site features as opposed to facilitating sprawling conventional development. New subdivisions should integrate with other development in the Area to create continuity and provide an interior circulation system that reduces traffic on major roads. The pedestrian circulation pattern should be considered where appropriate. A trail system or pathway, preferably along rear lot lines, is another alternative that can link neighborhoods without the use of sidewalks.

## **RESOURCE PROTECTION AREA**

**4,560 Acres / 71.5 Percent of Township**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this land use category is three fold. It is intended to protect open space, to reduce development pressure in those portions of the Township that are sensitive from an environmental perspective and to support the agricultural industry by directing residential development to the identified growth area. The Township is meeting its obligation to accommodate growth by providing for a range of housing types in the Neighborhood Development Area, the area of the Township determined to be most appropriate for such development. By limiting development in the Resource Protection Area, and preserving open space through a variety of means including establishment of a Municipal Land Trust, it is also addressing health, safety and welfare of those residents who currently reside in this Area and are dependent on these resources.

In addition, the steep slopes, stream valleys, floodplains, wetlands and woodlands all pose significant development constraints and inappropriate construction could have negative and far reaching environmental impacts on both present and future Township residents. A large percentage of the Resource Protection Area is used for agricultural purposes and one of the Township's goals is to implement land use policies that directly and indirectly support the continuation of this use. Strictly limiting the development in the Resource Protection Area will protect agricultural lands, reduce demand on the potable water supply and reduce contamination and runoff into the Pickering and Pine Creeks, reduce soil erosion and reduce storm water runoff.

Recognizing that alternatives to agricultural use must be provided, however, this land use category permits some development options, but only on a very limited basis and at a density that will have negligible impact. These should be considered in addition to a transferable development rights program described in this section.

**Option 1:** Tracts within the Resource Protection Area may be subdivided into twenty acre parcels provided at least two acres remain free and clear of environmental constraints and provided that further subdivision is restricted in perpetuity. This option is intended to facilitate continued agricultural use while also recognizing that the nature of agriculture in the community is changing and that smaller farms, particularly horse farms, are becoming more prevalent. The topography and the soils are appropriate for livestock, and since horse farms require less acreage, providing for minimum tract sizes of twenty acres is an option that encourages continued agricultural use but is responsive to market demand as well.

**Option 2:** Tracts within the Resource Protection Area may be subdivided in accordance with a mandatory cluster development plan that allows for a variety of residential design options at a gross density of approximately 0.5 units per acre. A maximum lot size of 1.5 acres is recommended to reduce sprawl patterns and minimize development pressure on adjacent parcels. This is a performance based approach in that gross density could range significantly depending on the design selected; however, gross density should not exceed 0.5 units per acre (one unit per two acres). The lot areas must be free and clear of sensitive resources, specifically floodplain, wetlands, and steep slopes. Approximately seventy percent of the tract must remain in open space and 100% of the constrained land may be included in the open space. Lots must be contiguous. Tract yield depends on the site design in accordance with development standards. If the tract contains agricultural soils, the design should facilitate the continued use of that parcel for the same purpose and homesites should be located accordingly.

### **Location**

The Resource Protection Area encompasses the north, northcentral and northeast region of the Township outside of the growth boundary delineated by the Neighborhood Development Area. Most of the Resource Protection Area is comprised of sensitive natural resources such as steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands and prime agricultural soils. A large percentage of this area is constrained in terms of groundwater yields. The underlying geology indicates the likelihood of low to moderate yields necessitating full, thorough evaluation of groundwater capabilities prior to even minimal residential construction. Since it is difficult to make general assumptions on capabilities, it is necessary for such analysis to occur on a site by site basis.

Within the Resource Protection Area, four villages are proposed: Chester Springs, Yellow Springs, Rapps Corner, and Pikeland. These villages are intended to accommodate mixed uses that respect existing patterns and conform to the existing scale. Land uses proposed for the villages is described in the next section, Village Development Areas.

### **⇒ Recommendations for the Resource Protection Area**

- ***Require mandatory cluster development for single family residential uses on parcels located in the Resource Protection Area.***

New residential development should be focused within the Township's growth boundary, however, some development option must be provided for in the outlying areas. Since this Area is not appropriate for extensive residential development, very low gross densities should be maintained. To prevent sprawl development and the road congestion, storm runoff and strain on groundwater supplies posed by such development, cluster development should be mandated and significant open space should be required. Allowing for a maximum gross density of approximately 0.5 units per acre and stipulating that approximately 70% of a tract proposed for development remain in open space thereby allowing for lots only on the remaining 30% of the parcel (minus approximately 15% for infrastructure and roadways) provides for a reasonable development alternative yet one that is sustainable considering the considerable natural resources.

- ***Strengthen the development standards for cluster to provide greater guidance in site design.***

Cluster development should be mandatory in the Resource Protection Area. Detailed development standards should be included in the zoning ordinance. This is particularly important if a range of lot sizes is permitted because the resulting number of home sites could vary and thus affect the financial feasibility. As in the Neighborhood Development Area, the sketch plan review becomes a critical part of the process as it gives the Township and the developer the opportunity to work together for the best possible outcome.

- ***Support the agricultural industry by offering a development alternative that supports broader agricultural uses.***

West Pikeland's historical roots are in agriculture and many farms continue to operate in the Township despite residential development pressure. In order to support the industry and maintain the agricultural base, an alternative that allows for agricultural pursuits but at a somewhat smaller scale, should be considered. Agriculture is not limited to crop production, but includes raising livestock and equestrian uses as well. Allowing for small scale farms suited to raising certain types of livestock, provided that the land is secured from further subdivision, is a development alternative that should be considered. Since the Township's agricultural base is threatened, providing for a transition to a different type of agricultural activity could help prevent permanent loss of important resources.

- ***Require subdivision design that facilitates protection of prime agricultural soils.***

Because farmland tends to be the least costly to develop, it is usually sought out for residential development. Prime farmland should be protected by clustering new residential development outside cultivated areas so that the agricultural operations can continue. The Township, as a condition of development, should require that homesites be clustered in the least intrusive locations on the site so that the open agricultural land can remain useful. A record or lot of such farmland should be maintained and made available to those seeking to rent farm fields. Since residential uses and agricultural uses can conflict, it is important that potential buyers be educated on the drawbacks of living adjacent to agricultural operations.

- ***Encourage participation in the Agricultural Security Areas Program.***

The Agricultural Security Area program began in 1981 as a means of protecting agricultural lands throughout Pennsylvania from excessive governmental regulations, nuisance ordinances and other measures that could hinder the industry. The ASA program also offers protection from condemnation proceedings and certain state initiated activities. Participation is strictly voluntary and does not require a commitment to keep farmland out of development. The minimum area required to establish an ASA is 250 acres (or 500 acres to participate in the easement program), and can consist of multiple, non-contiguous farms.

- ***Promote, in conjunction with the Chester County Agricultural Development Council, educational programs that assist the agricultural community in maintaining their farming operations despite increasing development pressure.***

In addition to administering the agricultural conservation easement program, one of the major responsibilities of the Chester County Agricultural Development Council is to provide education and technical assistance to the agricultural community either directly or through referrals. Chester

County is the second largest agricultural county in Pennsylvania and preserving the industry and protecting critical soil resources are key County objectives. Technical and financial resources are available to address this objective and the Township can play an important role in helping to disseminate the information available.

- ***Encourage landowner participation in Act 319 and Act 515 as a way of preserving important agricultural land.***

Act 319, known as the “Clean and Green” Act, provides tax relief to farmers by allowing agricultural land to be assessed based on factors such as soil characteristics, farm productivity, and overall capacity for generating income. The program is voluntary and the minimum parcel size is ten acres or a minimum of \$2,000 gross agricultural income annually. The assessment remains on the property in perpetuity or until a change in use occurs. The agreement must be renewed every 7 years.

Act 515 also offers tax relief by providing for a different method of assessment, however, this program is based on the location, size, and use of the land as related to market demand. It is not used as extensively as Act 319. The minimum qualifying parcel size is 10 acres. The provisions are enacted by a covenant that must remain in effect for a minimum of 10 years.

- ***Continue to work with large landowners in the conservation of key parcels, particularly those containing sensitive environmental resources.***

To monitor changes in land use, Township officials maintain informal contact with large landowners. This contact is very positive in that it allows municipal officials to discuss alternatives with the landowners and possibly influence (to a degree) future land use patterns. This contact should be formalized through a program that establishes regular contact with key landowners and provides information on development alternatives including the use of cluster options, conservation easements, and the sale of development rights. The program should be tailored to West Pikeland’s goals and resources.

- ***Consider forming a Municipal Land Trust sponsored and administered by West Pikeland Township.***

The purpose of a land trust is to protect large properties either by purchasing undeveloped properties outright or by purchasing conservation easements on undeveloped properties. Conservation easements are defined as legal agreements made voluntarily by a property owner to restrict the type and amount of development that may take place on his or her property. The contract permanently limits the type and intensity of future land use while allowing landowners to retain ownership and control of their properties. When a land trust purchases an easement, they in essence, enter into a contract with the landowner to obtain a specific property right. Most land trusts are non-profit organizations and several municipalities in Chester County (Kennett, Pennsbury, East Marlborough and West Vincent Townships) have formed land trusts to facilitate preservation of open space.

- ***Consider establishing a Transferable Development Rights program.***

A transferable development rights (TDR) program as authorized through the Municipalities Planning Code is administered through the municipal zoning ordinance. It establishes “sending” and “receiving” areas within Township boundaries and allows development potential to be sold

and transferred from one location to another. Through the purchase of development rights, a developer is then permitted to increase slightly, the density of a parcel in the receiving area over and above the base zoning. There is an administrative burden associated with such a program; however, this could be contracted to an outside entity. A TDR program can be very effective in directing new development to appropriate areas and preserving agricultural lands. In West Pikeland, the sending area is envisioned to be Resource Protection Area while the receiving area is envisioned to be the Neighborhood Development Area.

## VILLAGES

**159 Acres / 2.5 Percent of Township**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Village land use category is to preserve the historic development pattern of the Township and to provide an opportunity for non-residential and higher density residential uses outside identified growth areas. The villages are intended to serve primarily local residents and provide for minor, small scale commercial and office uses.

Six villages are established in West Pikeland: Opperman’s Corner, Anselma Mill, Chester Springs, Yellow Springs, Rapp’s Corner and Pikeland. Although they vary in size and scale, all are small in comparison with other villages and Rural Centers in Chester County. Each has unique qualities that are largely based on its historic purpose or associations. All, with the exception of Rapp’s Corner, once served as a community, transportation or commercial center for the Township. Rapp’s Corner is considered a hamlet, as historically it was smaller and more residential in nature. The villages have changed significantly over time and in the case of Opperman’s Corner in particular; their historic associations are barely recognizable. They continue to be community focal points and much of the Township’s unique history and rural character is linked to these sites. Even though these villages do not currently function as “centers”, some remnants of the historic land use patterns still exist, along with many of the original buildings. The historic pattern should be encouraged and new uses that complement the intent of each village will promote the pattern.

The Village land use category is intended to accomplish multiple goals. It offers a way for locally oriented land uses can be focused in the rural landscape, it promotes historic preservation because it fosters rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, and it provides a means for the Township to meet its obligation to provide for various land uses. The uses proposed for each village should be tailored to the site. A separate zoning district, possibly in the form of an overlay district, will be required for each. The regulations should take into consideration the site characteristics and allow new development on an infill basis that respects the existing scale and pattern.

### **Location**

Three of the six villages proposed are located along Route 113 at key intersections. Opperman’s Corner is located at Route 113 and Route 401, Chester Springs is at the intersection of Route 113 and Yellow Springs Road, and Pikeland Village is located on the west side of the intersection of Route 113 and Pikeland Road. The other three villages are Yellow Springs, located west of Chester Springs at the intersection of Art School and Yellow Springs Roads, Rapp’s Corner is a residential hamlet located at the intersection of Yellow Springs and Street Roads, and Anselma Mill at Route 401 near Byers Road. The villages and proposed land uses are further described as follows:

Opperman’s Corner: The intersection of Route 113 and Route 401 is recommended to serve as a minor commercial center for Township residents. Since it proposed to be located within the Neighborhood Development Area, it can appropriately serve as a focus for small scale commercial and institutional uses. Most commercial, office and institutional uses are met at the regional level within the Route 100 corridor.

Improvement of the intersection could help the traffic flow at this location and the intersection should be designed to accommodate the current level of minor development. The impact of development on traffic at this intersection will be a key issue and access will need to be carefully considered if any further expansion of commercial activities are contemplated.

Anselma Mill: This area was once the site of an operating mill and historically was an important local commercial and community center. Much of the actual mill site is still intact and a non-profit organization has recently been formed to restore the mill and develop the property as a historical park. The area has also been designed as an historic district under the auspices of PA Act 167. Minor commercial uses could also be considered for this vicinity thereby providing some retail services to site visitors as well as to the neighborhoods located both north and south of Route 401.

Chester Springs: This village is near the geographic center of the Township and presently serves as the community center since the Township building, post office and library are all in this vicinity. There are small retail uses on the west side of Route 113 and several older residential structures on the east side present some redevelopment potential. Encouraging the preservation of these buildings could help showcase the history of Chester Springs as a Victorian era transportation center, a perspective that could be encouraged at this location. The relationship between Chester Springs and Yellow Springs should be taken into account when considering both development standards and design guidelines. Any new development at this intersection must be closely tied to intersection improvements to manage traffic flow. Pedestrian circulation and parking will be key issues.

Pikeland Village: A locally important general store operates at this intersection serving mainly the surrounding community. Several attached residential structures are found at this location and infill of a similar nature could be permitted in this vicinity. Minor commercial development could be permitted, but restricted to the west side of the intersection since much of the east side is township owned and is intended to remain undeveloped. Permitting new development only on the west side of Route 113 would help move traffic through the Township and reduce the potential for conflict.

Yellow Springs: This village has deep, historical roots and is widely recognized as the Township's cultural center. Both the Historic Yellow Springs Foundation and the Township are committed to working together to preserve the area. Future development, in accordance with the provisions of the certified historic district, must respect the existing architecture and overall character of the village. The Historical Architectural Review Board should play a major role in reviewing development proposals that include modifications to existing buildings. Commenting on proposals early in the process can help ensure that infill proposed for this area maintains the village's historic character.

Rapp's Corner: Rapp's Corner is a crossroads hamlet with individual homes clustered at the intersection of Yellow Springs and Street Roads. Although commercial uses once were found in the area, none have been present for several decades and no new commercial uses should be permitted. Attached homes could be considered as infill at this location in order to preserve the residential character and charm of this crossroads. Any small-scale residential uses should be permitted only along the frontage in order to maintain the historic "hamlet" qualities of the area.

⇒ **Recommendations for Villages**

- ***Develop individual zoning districts that are tailored to each village in the Township.***

In order to preserve the historic land use pattern of the Township as well as the unique character of the villages, separate zoning districts for each village are required. The zoning districts, which

could be developed as overlay districts, should be written only after review of remaining analysis of individual site characteristics and the remaining physical features to ensure that new (infill) development is appropriately integrated. The area and bulk regulations of the district should reflect the existing lot configurations and new uses should respect the scale of existing development.

- ***Encourage the formation of a village design guide to ensure that new development complements the existing pattern and structures in each village.***

Design guides should be used to encourage new development and infill that reflects the character of each village. Although in most of these cases, few buildings remain, however, historical documents could provide some guidance. The type and form of the buildings located near each village could also provide insight into historic architectural styles and the relationship among the structures in the villages. This is most relevant in the village of Yellow Springs, a certified historic district and as such, provides the Township the authority to mandate compliance with certain architectural characteristics. Design guidelines could be developed first for this area and the concept “tested” in terms of applicability to other villages.

- ***Consider developing a “village concept plan” to help guide development in each village.***

A concept plan that identifies the location and site design of future uses within a village district can help convey the Township’s land use vision to property owners and developers. A concept plan can also help in conveying the scale of development and the interrelationship among various uses within a specific area. Depending on the scope of the concept plan, design elements such as vehicular and pedestrian/ access, circulation, parking, and signage could be addressed. If municipal officials wish to formalize a specific pattern, the concept plan could be translated into an official map which reserves open space, road rights-of-way, and future development areas within the proposed boundaries.

- ***Reduce the visibility of parking areas by locating such facilities in side or rear yards and using landscape buffers or screens.***

Identifying appropriate locations for parking in village settings can be challenging. Because most villages tend to be higher density and pedestrian oriented, they are not conducive to the standard suburban parking lot designs. Requiring that parking associated with commercial or community uses in villages to be located in side or rear yards, encouraging shared parking where possible, and requiring landscape screens and buffers, can all be required in the techniques that can be required through the zoning ordinance.

- ***Maintain a pedestrian orientation in the villages.***

Villages, by their very nature, tend to be pedestrian oriented. Although many have lost that orientation, new and infill uses should be designed in accordance with a village-wide pedestrian circulation system identifying access points, sidewalks and bike paths. As new uses develop, they should be integrated into the land use pattern, and the circulation system should link the various uses. These provide the opportunity for pedestrians to park once and walk to other locations within the village. Linkages via existing greenways should be explored.

- ***Encourage the effective use of landscaping materials to enhance the village design and define the village edge.***

The use of landscaping can enhance the village design and help create a sense of place. The type of landscaping required should be set forth in zoning district regulations along with specific information as to the location, size, and maintenance of the plant material required. Native materials should be encouraged by providing a list of desired species. Landscaping should also be tailored to the specific characteristics of the village.



