



# White Township Comprehensive Plan



**A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY GUIDE  
MARCH 2008  
PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT**



**PREPARED BY THE WHITE TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Requirements For a Municipal Comprehensive Plan under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code

A Comprehensive Plan must contain several elements to be complete and valid in Pennsylvania. Prior to preparing the Comprehensive Plan, the planning agency must conduct a careful survey of trends to document changes in growth and development. Required chapters include:

- Community Development Goals and Objectives
- Plan for Land Use
- Plan for the Conservation of Natural and Historic Resources
- Plan for Housing
- Plan for Community Facilities
- Plan for Transportation.

The Plan must also include citizen input; and cannot be adopted without public meetings and hearings.

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A Comprehensive Plan is a collection of maps, text and charts, adopted by a local government to provide guidance for such policies as ordinances, public investment and capital improvements.

Once adopted, it is the official policy document of a Pennsylvania Municipality. About half of Pennsylvania's 2500+ townships, boroughs and cities have an adopted plan. The plan serves as an official guidance for public investments (Such as streets, parks, or sewer lines) and provides support for local zoning ordinances. State agencies, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection are man-

dated to coordinate with local comprehensive plans for grants or state permits.

A Comprehensive Plan must contain several elements to be complete and valid in Pennsylvania. It must have a careful survey of trends to document changes in growth and development. Required content of a Pennsylvania Comprehensive Plan is discussed in the sidebar to the left.

The last White Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1964. It was prepared in concert with Indiana Borough. White Township initiated preparing this new Comprehensive Plan on its own, but as 2007, the Borough is again

undertaking joint activities with the Township to plan for the future of both communities.

A Comprehensive Plan carries no weight of law, but it can assist decision makers. It contains no rules or regulations, but it serves as a basis for any land use provisions enacted by the Township. It is broad in scope, examining the physical, social and economic characteristics that mesh to make the Township of today, but it seeks to apply this knowledge to the future. It speaks to various issues in general terms, but it can also make specific recommendations.

## HOW THE WHITE TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WAS PREPARED

In 2003, due to increasing levels of growth and development, the Township determined the need to update the 1964 Comprehensive Plan. One of the first steps in updating the plan was the formation of a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The committee membership was drawn from Township Supervisors, Planning Commission members, and citizens.

A number of activities followed. A visioning session was held with local leaders to discuss long term assets and issues. A community attitude

survey was distributed, and the results analyzed. An engineering firm was retained to prepare maps, gather data, and help analyze trends.

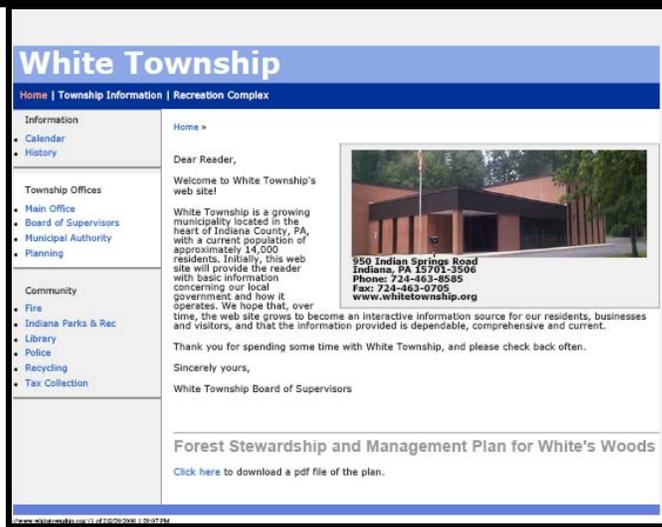
After the completion of this data gathering and public input phase, the Township retained a planning consultant to assist in actually developing the goals, objectives, actions and policies that would become a part of the actual Comprehensive Plan document. The consultant analyzed the substantial amount of data collected at-

tempted to discern the overall direction of the community. The consultant also met regularly with the Comprehensive Plan steering committee. At these meetings, the steering committee discussed a variety of policy approaches and worked together to create an outline strategy. The consultant then took this outline and prepared the narrative section and maps for each section of the Comprehensive Plan. The document was finally assembled for public review and eventual adoption.

## HOW THIS PLAN IS DIFFERENT

Traditional Comprehensive Plans tend to include most of the data collected during the plan preparation process. This can result in Comprehensive Plan documents of 200-300 pages or more. The problem with this kind of approach is that good ideas and important policies can be buried within hundreds of pages of data and charts. With the advent of Internet sites, such as [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com) and numerous other online data sources, such an approach is not as necessary as it was in 1964 when the last Comprehensive Plan was prepared.

The Township Manager set a goal for a Comprehensive Plan that revolved around key points, would fully integrate data analysis and policy formulation into a cohesive text. In order to do this, the steering



Basic information about White Township is available from the Township website ([www.whitetownship.org](http://www.whitetownship.org)).

committee examined a number of format approaches, and decided to create a format that would follow the exact intent of a Comprehensive Plan under

the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, by emphasis plan formulation. The Township has much more data available for interested persons.

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

In the words of the White Township Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, "We are creating this Comprehensive Plan for many reasons:



Members of the Steering Committee

- To promote the preservation of green areas within the context of a developing community.
- To create an overall guide for development
- To avoid the promotion of suburban sprawl

- To create a list of things that need to be done in order to remain a successful community
- To develop infrastructure and investment policies that will direct growth

- To keep separation between commercial and residential areas.
- To refill vacant underutilized business structures.
- To assist in accomplishing our major goals

- To change traffic patterns that have resulted in congestion
- To revitalize The Township's older commercial corridor

*The White Township Board of Supervisors would like to thank all those individuals and groups who provided information for the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan document.*

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Chapter Introduction

Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) states that a comprehensive plan must include a statement of the future development objectives of the municipality, with mandatory inclusion of a statement as to the “**location, character and timing**” of future developments. This section of the White Township Comprehensive Plan will establish these goals and objectives by the three standards of location, character and timing. The descriptions match those depicted on the Map One, entitled Community Development Locational Objectives. The map divides the Township into six geographic areas with distinct development objectives. The areas include:

1. Traditional Neighborhoods
2. Major Mixed-Use Development Area
3. Suburban Single-Family Protection Area
4. Business Park Target Nonresidential Area
5. Future Development Target Area
6. Rural Resource Area

## AREA 1: TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Area 1 includes the historic core areas of the of the Township. These are the areas in close geographic proximity to the Borough of Indiana, and adjacent to the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) campus. This area contains the portion of the IUP campus which is in White Township, as well as the Indiana Regional Medical Center, and the Indiana Area Senior High School. The institutional uses are surrounded by residential neighborhoods with a mix of dwelling types. There are also some properties with mixed-use (both commercial and residential) structures, and some commercial structures, of mostly neighborhood scale.

Area 1 includes some of the

oldest residential neighborhoods in White Township. In many cases, the street system is a continuation of the Indiana Borough street system.

This area should remain the preferred location for institutional land uses into the future. Ideally, the presence of these major institutions will foster the creation of strong transportation links between residential neighborhoods and the educational or medical facilities.

The character of future development should include some respect for the size and scale of neighboring structures. Residential uses must be protected as well in this densely

developed area. These should also be a balance between pedestrian and vehicular access. It is important that education and medical facilities be accessible to citizens by a variety of transportation modes. These areas have better pedestrian access than other parts of White Township. Due to the older housing stock in some areas, this is where Township resources should be targeted to control blight and deterioration. Pockets of residential blight should be dealt with aggressively. Some of these areas may be identified as revitalization priorities.



The area which immediately surrounds Indiana Borough is characterized by diverse land uses.

## AREA 2: MAJOR MIXED LAND USE DEVELOPMENT AREA

While small geographically (comprising less than 10% of the Township's land area), the mixed-use development areas represent the largest concentrations of economic activity within White Township.

These areas are important for a number of reasons. The concentration of relatively new buildings includes multiple family dwellings (many occupied by IUP students or single elderly persons, or

*While small geographically, the mixed use development areas represent the largest concentrations of economic activity within White Township.*

other non-family households), retail plazas, professional offices and light industry, and services such as hotels and restaurants. These play an important role in retaining capital within the community through retail spending and local wages paid. They also are crucial to school district taxes, as these types of devel-

opments generate significant property taxes, but require no services from the school district. The downside of this type of large scale and large intensity development is that it creates equally large impacts upon the community. These impacts include traffic, large buildings which concentrate stormwater runoff, lights, day and night activity, and noise. These important activities thus have a potential to create land use conflict with other uses, such as single-family dwellings. It is also imperative that continued investments in public and private improvements, and transportation infrastructure ensure that development does not overwhelm these areas.

Public policy must simultaneously keep this type of development within the community while minimizing its potential for conflict with less intense development. White Township's objective to accomplish such a policy is to facilitate provision of adequate infrastructure (in this case infrastructure includes road net-

works, and vehicular circulation, provision of public water and sewer and sound stormwater management). Greater intensity of like uses and infill should be generally encour-



**Retail and shopping centers are an important component of the Township's economy.**

aged within these areas. The exception is where these areas would border suburban single-family protection areas or other development objective areas with greater sensitivity to conflict. This can be accomplished by buffering, screening, transitional uses or distance. Within the heart of these areas, a wide number of high intensity, or high percentage of land utilization could be accommodated.

*Concentrations of single-family dwellings are the most vulnerable areas in the Township to land use conflict.*

## AREA 3: SUBURBAN SINGLE-FAMILY PROTECTION AREA

Suburban single-family protection areas are scattered across the entirety of White Township. The citizens whose long-term residency contributes immensely to the community inhabit these areas. They are also the most vulnerable areas to land use conflict. For example, one point of intense commercial development could create light, noise, and intensity that disrupt an entire area for residential purposes. If the homes are less than 50 years old, developers will not typically acquire them to assemble larger develop-

able parcels. The results can be very difficult for citizen homeowners.

White Township's land use policy will be to foster the protection of viable clusters of single-family dwellings from land use conflict. A variety of land uses could be permitted in or near these neighborhoods, but their character must be consistent with a primary residential setting.



**The Township is home to a variety of well-maintained single-family neighborhoods.**

## AREA 4: BUSINESS PARK TARGET NONRESIDENTIAL AREA

One area where Township policy should discourage residential development of any sort is the Jimmy Stewart Airport located near the US 119/SR 1004 interchange. The airport is an economic asset of county-wide importance. Dense residential development could create a real public safety hazard for the active airfield. Conversely, development of this area for light industry, professional offices, or similar uses would meet a goal of Township citizens to foster economic development. It would also be consistent with the

Pennsylvania Bureau of Aviation Land Use Guidelines. Finally, it is consistent with overall economic development planning completed by the County of Indiana. This resource must be protected from certain forms of specialized development that would create innate hazards to the airport. Hazards could include the height of structures, intense light or glare, or even uses that attract large concentrations of birds.



The area around the Jimmy Stewart Airport has great potential for business park

## AREA 5: FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TARGET AREA

Some areas are recognized as Future Development Target Areas on the Community Development Locational Objectives map. Most of these areas are presently used for agriculture, forestry, low intensity uses, or simply vacant land. These are areas with good road access, often served by public water and

sewer, and other conditions favorable to future development. They could be utilized for residential, commercial or mixed use development.

These development objective areas are growth areas consistent with Section 301(7)(d) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. These

are the areas of White Township where dense residential growth or intensive activity could be accommodated in the near term. From the perspective of timing, many of these areas could accommodate development immediately.

*Future development target areas are currently undeveloped lands which have access and infrastructure nearby.*

## AREA 6: RURAL RESOURCE AREA

Rural resource areas are the largest geographic designation on the Community Development Locational Objectives map. Rural resource areas are a defined term in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code in which rural resource land uses are encouraged. Such uses may include agriculture, mining, timber harvesting and forestry, which are types of activities that typically do not require excellent road access or complete infrastructure. However, this does not mean

that there are not many intensive activities occurring with rural resource uses. The same dangers for land use conflict are present. A mining operation can produce negative impacts in proximity to significant residential development. Therefore the timing of growth in these areas must be of such an extent



that it does not precede or overwhelm limited existing infrastructure. The character of future growth must be of low density or of a type that does not create conflicts with rural resource uses.

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## SUMMARY OF TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

*White Township welcomes a variety of forms and types of growth and development. The Township can accommodate a wide range of such forms and types, if careful planning continues.*

*Within the context of land use, the character of new development can be modified to ensure it could fit into a variety of settings.*

*In general, the Township will seek to ensure compatible character of development, rather than Euclidean use regulations.*

*It shall be the policy of White Township to generally protect clusters of single family dwellings from incompatible future development. It may do this through distance, buffering, or transition areas.*

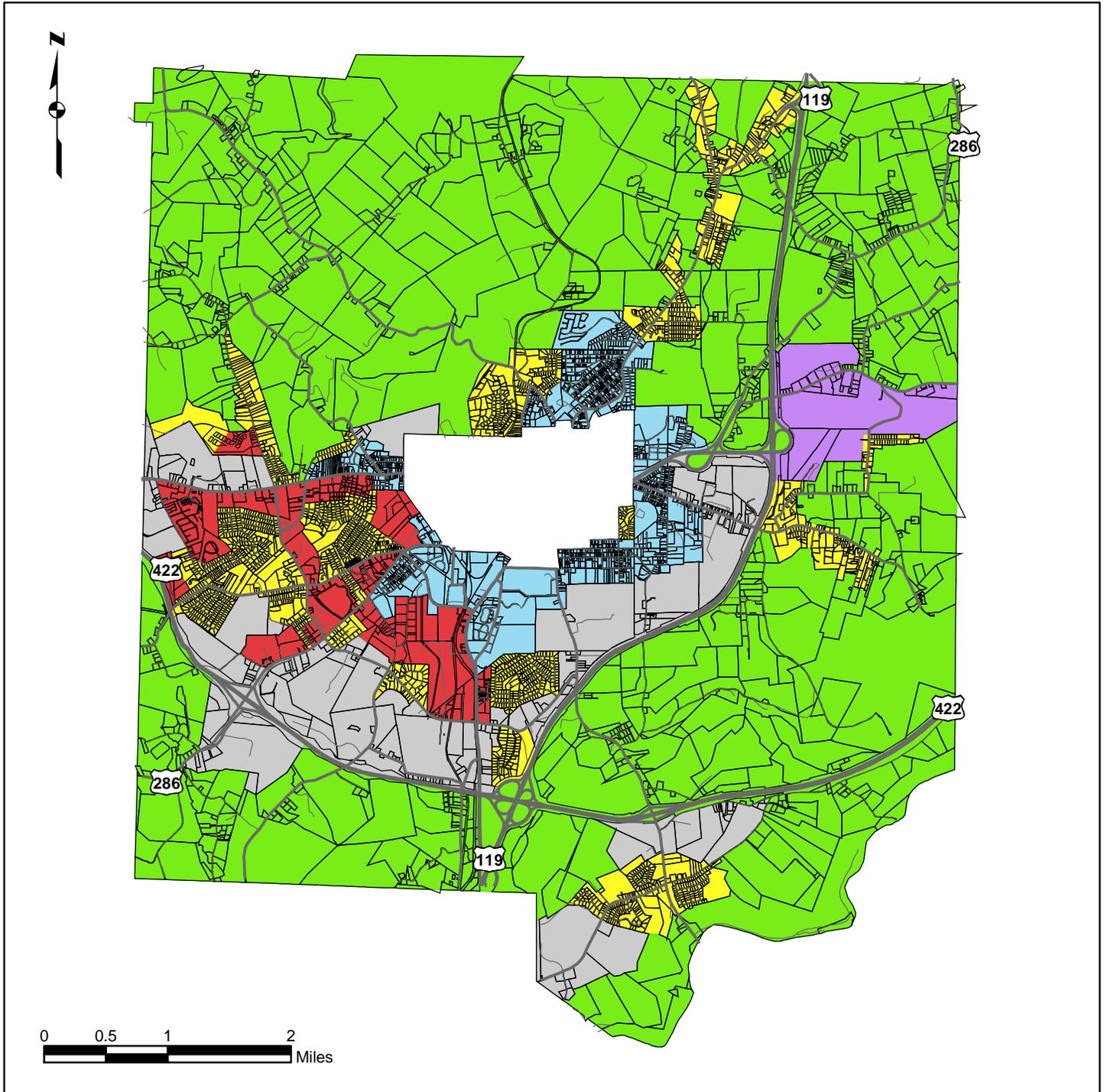
*The Township will actively support public infrastructure improvements in current and future growth areas. However, the Township does not anticipate its role as principle financier of public or private improvements.*

*The Township will not pursue the extension of public infrastructure into its rural resource areas except where necessary to correct health and safety needs of existing development or if finally generated by private development.*

*White Township welcomes a variety of forms and types of growth and development. The Township can accommodate a wide range of such forms and types, if careful planning continues.*

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# White Township Comprehensive Plan



**Map 1**  
**Community Development**  
**Locational Objectives**

- ◆ Area 1 - Traditional Neighborhoods
- ◆ Area 2 - Major Mixed Use Development Area
- ◆ Area 3 - Suburban Single Family Protection
- ◆ Area 4 - Business Park Target Non-Residential Area
- ◆ Area 5 - Future Development Target Area
- ◆ Area 6 - Rural Resource Area

# PLAN FOR LAND USE

## Summary of Issues and Policies

### ISSUES:

- White Township has evolved from a bedroom community to hosting a full service community.
- The Township anticipates continued growth and development.
- The geography of development has followed typical suburban patterns.
- The Township has responded to growth by increasing its municipal capacity.

### Key Policies :

- Respond to continued growth and development with appropriate growth management tools.
- Carefully study the tax base and capital improvements implication of future growth.
- Develop a common sense toolbox of techniques to ensure that future development fits each neighborhood and overall goals and objectives of the Township.

## WHITE TOWNSHIP — THE PATH OF GROWTH IN INDIANA COUNTY

In 1960, White Township was a bedroom community of slightly less than 7,000 people. By the 2000 Census, the Township had more than doubled in population, and gained a wide variety of non-residential development. As a growing community, the Township has responded to the changing needs of citizens by increasing capacity. The Township has established parks, public facilities, and also adopted regulations to protect public safety and ensure orderly growth.

This growth is anticipated to continue. One of the most useful applications of Census data is to make projections of future population. This helps planning for the future by allowing the community to make an intelligent guess as to its future housing, school, land use and community services needs. Like any attempt to predict the future, projections are not flawless. The table at right summarizes five different population projections for the Township. A population projection was prepared by the Southwest Regional Commission for transportation planning purposes. However, local officials believe it is overly optimistic. Because it is prepared for the whole ten-county region, it is an excellent way to analyze scenarios on a multi-municipal or multi-county basis. However, local information, such as off-campus IUP students, is not always reflected in the SPC projection



White Township residents have become accustomed to seeing signs like this one, announcing new development.

series. The SPC projection was refined by White Township for preparation of the Indiana Area Multi-Mobility Study. The result was a significant near-term reduction in forecasted population. A completely different approach was adopted by the Township in the preparation of its Act 537 Plan. Finally, residential build-

ing permit trends offer another cross check on estimating future growth. Each of these is summarized in the attached table. Regardless of the scenario, White Township will exceed 20,000 persons by the next Census count.

White Township Future Population	Projection Year			
Projection Source	2002/2003	2010	2020	2025
Southwest Pennsylvania Commission	18,904	25,526	26,448	26,330
Indiana Area Multi-Modal Mobility Study	18,904	20,376	21,986	22,676
Extrapolated Act 537	16,934	20,855	26,894	26,774
Base Trends (building permits)/Average	15,847	22,252	25,109	25,260
Base Trends (building permits) Lineal	15,847	21,393	22,248	22,136

## SUBURBAN PATTERNS IN DEVELOPMENT

Map 2 (existing land use) also details the history of land use changes in the Township. Development in the Township can be broadly categorized into three phases. The older residential developments are near the Borough of Indiana. This phase of development began in the late 1800s and continued into the 1950s. These neighborhoods have development patterns more like the Borough. Lots are smaller, with homes typically nearer to the street. There is often a grid street pattern and few or no dead end streets. The best examples of such areas are Chevy Chase and the Grandview area. Commercial development tends to be integrated wholly into these neighborhoods, and is of a small scale.

Later, a number of residential developments occurred out in

rural parts of the Township. In the earliest stage of rural residential development, lots were platted along existing roads. Examples of this can be seen in many areas of the Township, such as Indian Springs, East Pike, and Hood School Roads. About this same time (1960s-1970s), the Township began to see its first highway commercial development. This is characterized by larger buildings, large on-site parking lots, and concentrations of development on strips along major traffic routes. The older commercial development on Wayne Avenue is a good example of this.

The third phase of development, began in the 1980s, peaked in the 1990s and continues to the present. Rather than simply platting out frontage lots, more developers began building new

road systems. The new residential neighborhoods are characterized by fewer grids and more curvilinear street systems, and maximum use of dead end streets with cul-de-sacs. Commercial development continued along major traffic routes, but grew in scale.

By looking at the existing land use map, it might be estimated that perhaps 75 percent of development in the Township over the last 50 years has occurred in the area bounded by Philadelphia Street, Route 422, and Route 119. In spite of enormous growth and development over the past fifty years, the Township is far from "built out." Large areas of farmland remain, as well as large areas of wooded steep slopes in the northwestern and southeastern quadrants of the Township.

*Seventy-five percent of development in the Township over the last 50 years has occurred in the area bounded by Philadelphia Street, Route 422, and Route 119.*

### Gallery of Development in White Township: 1950-Present



1950s-1960s



1970s-1980s



1980s-Present



1980s-Present

## RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF GROWTH BY INCREASING TOWNSHIP CAPACITY

In response to growth, White Township adopted a subdivision and land development ordinance in 1963. This was replaced by a substantially new ordinance in 1980. The 1980 ordinance has been amended eleven times since its initial adoption, most recently in 2007. The ordinance has a modern concise format. Unlike many older subdivision ordinances, there is a clear process and clear standards for land developments. The ordinance contains detailed, differentiated standards for particular forms of land development. In this way, it contains zoning-like standards, without the geographic limitations of zoning. This has not been a common approach to regulating development in Pennsylvania. In the 1970s, there were court cases limiting the extent of municipal dimensional standards. However, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amendments in 1988 broadened both the definition of land development and includes a clause that states, "The subdivision and land development ordinance may contain, but need not be limited to . . . provisions which apply uniformly throughout the municipality regulating minimum setback lines and minimum lot sizes which are based upon the availability of water and sewage, in the event the municipality has not enacted a zoning ordinance."

Recent guidance to municipalities from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development publication on subdivision and land development practice in Pennsylvania includes the following: *The subdivision and land development process applies to more than just single-family residential developments. The definition of*

*"land development" was expanded to provide more control, which is important for the many communities without zoning. A community can regulate other types of land development. It is obvious that such improvements to the land include mobile home parks and mobile home subdivisions as well as multifamily residential construction such as apartments or townhouses. It is somewhat less apparent that land development standards can and do apply to small and large-scale commercial retail centers and professional office complexes. In the absence of zoning, the subdivision and land development ordinance provides the greatest measure of local control and is now specifically authorized by the MPC to regulate even a single nonresidential structure . . . Different types of development require different standards. Unfortunately, many ordinances do not include separate development standards for an office complex, shopping center or multifamily residential construction. Standards should be established for each type of land development. To be valid, standards must be reasonable, objective and whenever possible, quantifiable. Issues such as off-street parking design, ingress and egress, internal traffic circulation, lighting, curbing, water supply and storm drainage, unless covered in detail in zoning, can be appropriately*



Consistent with Pennsylvania practice, a community may regulate non-residential development through its subdivision and land development ordinance (hotel in the Township).

*addressed by any subdivision and land development ordinance.*

White Township is one of the few Pennsylvania communities that have pursued such a recommended policy. Other local jurisdictions, including Indiana County, do not regulate land development at all, in conformity to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. However, the extent to which an un-zoned community can accomplish its regulatory goals with a subdivision ordinance require careful crafting of language.

The Township has also adopted special purpose ordinances in order to protect public health and safety. For example, there is an ordinance to prevent negative secondary effects of sexually oriented businesses. This ordinance is based upon objective planning studies.

Through an active planning commission, White Township has also refined its regulatory practices and ordinances as necessary to respond to new kinds of development or changing case law.

*The Township has historically relied upon a very advanced subdivision and land development ordinance to accomplish its land use policies.*

## RESPOND TO CONTINUED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WITH APPROPRIATE TOOLS.

White Township has been unique in its approach to development policies. According to a report by the Penn State Cooperative Extension, White Township is the most populous municipality in Pennsylvania which regulates development without zoning. Historically, this has still resulted in a prosperous community with good quality of life and attractive tax base mix. However, as the types of development changes, the potential for land use conflicts can increase.

In past decades, White Township was a bedroom community, with mostly residential development. Gradually, the Township has evolved into a "full service" community, with light industrial employers, residential areas, shopping, churches, and a host of services. As land becomes more valuable, density of development will increase. This higher density and mix of different activities may bring pressure for new approaches to protect property.

The old answer to this situation was Euclidian zoning, which strictly separates activities by use. businesses are confined to one area, homes to another. However, many communities are discovering that Euclidean zoning has actually been a major contributor to suburban sprawl. Most of what is termed as "sprawl" in the USA has been built in conformity to local zoning ordinances.

White Township has an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of other communities, where use separation zoning had unintended consequences. Rather than look at whether "to zone or not to zone", the Township is starting by asking a different question. That question is, "How can White Township best protect private property owners, maximize freedom, and still ensure high-quality development?"

Part of the answer is to look

at the community preferences as expressed in the community development goals and objectives. These provide a model of the Township's ideal future. For each of these areas, the Township will examine a wide range of planning tools. These tools may include:

- Revisions to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- Elements of traditional zoning, selectively applied.
- Planned Residential Development or Traditional Neighborhood Development, which provide for unified subdivision and zoning-like approvals for major development.
- Specific Plans, which allow for zoning like controls to be applied to particular tracts.
- Special purpose ordinances, such as access management standards, and enhanced watershed level stormwater plans.

## CAREFULLY STUDY THE TAX BASE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IMPLICATIONS OF FUTURE GROWTH

In addition to its unique approach to land development regulation, White Township is unique in that it does not tax real estate. The Township relies primarily upon the earned income tax, local services tax, and realty transfer tax for municipal revenue. The Township has been successful in this strategy because of the amount of residential development with residents of above median income. However, if the nature of development changes to non-residential, or different demographics, this strategy may need to be revisited. The

Housing Plan chapter discusses the work of Dr. Tim Kelsey in analyzing the relationship between tax base and costs of municipal services (see Page 44). This can serve as a general guide in planning for tax base sustainability.

While the Township does not tax real estate, the School District does. The financial sustainability of the School District is also a community concern. As a matter of general guidance, industrial, commercial, and private farm and forest landowners pay

taxes, but require no services from schools. They, thus, benefit the district. Median- and lower- price homes tend to put more children into schools than the taxes they generate. However, elderly specific housing tends to benefit school districts.

White Township will analyze land uses for their fiscal impacts upon all local taxing bodies, and plan to ensure long term fiscal sustainability. If circumstances of development change, tax policies may need to change.



Photo of a development in North Carolina. Poor site planning costs both homeowners and the community.

## PLANNING TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN AREA 1: TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Older neighborhoods near Indiana Borough are particularly vulnerable to land use conflict, due to higher densities. Conversely, there is already a mixed-use character in many respects due to the presence of large institutional structures. It may be necessary to differentiate areas which are dominated by single-family dwellings, from those that have large institutional structures. Large institutional structures such as university buildings, major medical facilities with in-patient capacity and multiple functions, and public schools should be treated differently than small medical offices and less intensely used structures such as churches. To accomplish this, the Township could follow one of three main options:

**Option One:** Create an institutional district which would limit schools and hospitals from geographically encroaching on pre-existing residential neighborhoods. Conversely, clusters of homes should be afforded some form of protection through a residential district designation.

**Option Two:** Create a performance standard that limits large buildings in these neighborhoods. Perhaps buildings of greater than three stories and/or greater than 80,000 square feet could be limited to certain geographic specifications, such as frontage on a major road, or a minimum lot area, or proximity to another large institution.

**Option Three:** Create a form-based code or development model that applies to these areas. Under a form-based code, siting specifications could place major public buildings where they would

serve as visual gateways that remain accessible to residential areas by pedestrian access. Development standards could also contain access management regulations through a form-based approach. Multiple uses may be allowed if the scale of buildings remains similar to a dwelling house (perhaps no greater than a 3,000 square foot building footprint, or 5,000 square feet under roof). A common example of this is the re-use of large older homes for professional or medical offices, which have little negative impact, and can actually help encourage revitalization. Other factors besides the size of structure that can be important in these kind of neighborhoods are lighting, signage, limiting hours of operation, and keeping parking areas small. New development should also be integrated into the transportation network, as it exists in these areas. All new development in this area should include sidewalks.

**Revitalization:** Residential revitalization priorities are discussed in the Housing Plan chapter. A non-housing revitalization priority is the need to clean up and redevelop the underutilized properties on Wayne Avenue. Due to its strategic location, this area could create new investment opportunities. The Township has collaborated with both private and public partners to create more com-



Higher density in these neighborhoods raises concerns about land use conflict.

patible land uses in this area of Wayne Avenue. The partnership includes IUP, Indiana County, Indiana Borough, and private property owners. It shall be the policy of White Township to emphasize the continued clean up of this area and the development of further partnerships to create a new gateway area with eco-



Wayne Avenue is a Township revitalization priority.

conomic development potential.

**Institutional Policies:** The Township encourages IUP to maintain policy wherein students in proximity to the campus are not permitted to obtain on-campus parking permits. This policy prevents traffic congestion. Conversely, the Township would wish to see streets within the campus remain open to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

*These neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to land use conflict, due to higher densities.*

## PLANNING TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN AREA 2: MAJOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

This area is characterized by a mix of auto-oriented development. Whether the use is a shopping center, an apartment dwelling complex, or a development of single-family dwellings, the impact and form of development shares many features:

The form of development is characterized by:

- Large buildings, many with flat roofs
- Majority of buildings remain single-story
- Parking lots are large and typically exceed building footprints
- The impacts of development share:
  - High amounts of auto traffic including many access points, and some traffic noise
  - Large parking lots
  - Impervious areas that require stormwater management to avoid off-site impacts
  - Large signs and high lighting impact

The Comprehensive Plan, thus seeks to address the impacts that these forms of development may have on each other and the community at large. It also encourages the transition from large expanses of concrete, masses of blank windowless walls, and lack of landscaping towards forms of development that the market is supporting.

While many of the areas described in the Community Development Goals and Objectives in this category have already been developed,

there is significant opportunity for redevelopment. Many commercial buildings have an accounting life of only 25 years, and older ones in the Township may be retrofitted or replaced. At that point, it is appropriate to ask how the development could have been designed better.

The present subdivision and land development ordinance has developed specific standards for commercial and multiple family land development in these areas. As mentioned on page eight of this chapter, these regulations have ensured basic health and safety. Some areas that have not been addressed in depth include certain impacts of this kind of development; traffic signage/lighting, and the relationship between buildings, and the landscape.

**Traffic:** If poorly planned, large scale commercial and multiple family development can negatively effect traffic patterns in a community, particularly due to auto dependency within the Township’s major development areas. Excessive curb cuts create more turning movements by cars. This creates congestion and compromises the use of major streets for through traffic. The Township will explore development of access management standards that will preserve road capacity. This is discussed in more detail in the Transportation Plan.

**Signage/Lighting:** While the Township may regulate free-



Large parking lots concentrate stormwater, and do not enhance overall design.

standing signs through its power to regulate subdivision by lease and nonresidential structures, it is more difficult to regulate signs which are accessory to businesses, or attached to structures. However, this will be a part of future regulatory options.



Newer commercial development is beginning to pay more attention to pleasing design principles.

**Buffers/Landscaping:** Landscaping can soften the effect of major commercial development. For example, it can serve as buffer between otherwise incompatible development (such as residential and commercial). It can also help to naturally manage stormwater and should be considered as an option in stormwater best management practices. Such standards will be a focus of Township regulatory planning in the future.

*If poorly planned, large-scale commercial and multiple-family development can negatively affect traffic patterns in a community.*

## PLANNING TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN AREA 3: SUBURBAN SINGLE-FAMILY PROTECTION AREAS

If any area of White Township is in need of the Euclidian form of zoning, it would be these areas. Owner-occupied, single-family dwellings are one of the single most sensitive uses in terms of losing value through land use conflict. The response to this in many communities is to create an "R-1" zoning district that limits land uses to single-family dwellings and closely related or compatible uses. The more restrictive of these ordinances makes single family, detached dwellings the only permitted form of dwelling. Uses such as schools or personal care homes are frequently allowed only under some form of special use standard which must be reviewed by the local government. However, some R-1 districts also allow common forms of low-density attached dwellings, such as duplexes or quads. More modern open ordinances also make some provision for the following uses as well:

- Home Occupations
- In-Home Day Care Services
- Personal Care and Nursing Homes

Strict land use restriction would probably be well received in White Township, *if it were confined to the identified single-family clusters only*. If zoning becomes a part of regulation in the Township's future, single-family protection areas should be granted some form of R-1 designation. The extent of the restrictions should be developed in concert with citizens and neighborhoods. Some form of buffer is also recommended to protect these areas from other forms of land development or other regulatory designations. A performance based ordinance could

require mitigation through setbacks, distances or buffering if a non-single family development encroached on one of these identified areas. Examples of such mitigation might include:

- Vegetative buffers or other screening for major developments which would border these areas
- A sliding-scale setback which would make the distance of new buildings from existing homes dependent upon the size of the new building
- Limitations on intensity of activities near these areas (light, noise, hours of operation in certain cases)

It may also be possible to accomplish many of these goals through revisions to the existing subdivision and land development ordinance, but regulations would need to be carefully crafted to stay within the limits of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. However, it must also be recognized that public policy cannot protect everyone from everything. Even with zoning, there are limits on regulatory authority. For example, churches have additional protections through Federal law. Pennsylvania law also protects certain small home-based businesses from local regulation. However, communities can protect neighbor-



Roadside single family dwellings represent an area of special concern due to the impact of traffic.

hoods from many negative impacts.

In addition to protective regulations, public policy in single-family neighborhoods should also emphasize a continuation of the infrastructure and services which has created the variety of high-quality resi-



Newer single-family dwelling in the Township

dential neighborhoods found throughout the Township. One area where corrective Township action may be necessary is stormwater runoff. There are believed to be stormwater structures that are not being maintained. The Township may seek to establish watershed-based stormwater districts to alleviate localized flooding issues.

*Single-Family residential neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to land use conflict.*

## PLANNING TOOLS FOR TO IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TARGET AREAS (4 AND 5) AND RURAL RESOURCE AREAS (AREA 6)

The identified future development areas of the Township have the greatest near-term development potential of anywhere within the community. They are primarily tracts of land that are presently being used for agriculture, or vacant, but lie near major development, major road corridors, or near existing infrastructure. The Township anticipates that these areas will absorb most future growth and development. To prevent land use conflicts and maximize good site planning, the Township will look at a wide range of planning tools. Options may include:

### **Flexible Development Zoning:**

The Township may facilitate either commercial, residential, or mixed-use development in these tracts, leaving a number of options open to the developer until tracts are actually proposed for development.

### **Conservation Development Standards:**

White Township has a beautiful natural landscape with rolling hills, tree-covered slopes, and many streams. The Township has a keen interest in preserving these natural features in context of development. It will explore ways to give developers greater flexibility to set aside green areas in major developments. This may be achieved through enhanced subdivision standards or other planning tools.

**Buffering Standards:** The Township will prioritize the creation of buffers through distance or landscaping to mitigate land use conflicts. This may be through zoning or the subdivision and land development ordinance.

**Specific Plan:** This unique new planning tool is authorized by Article 11 of the Penn-

sylvania Municipalities Planning Code. The Township will determine its feasibility for establishing zoning like regulations for non-residential development applied on a limited or specific basis through specific planning

### **Enhanced Major Subdivision Standards:**

Because the scale of development increases community impacts, major subdivisions standards may be enhanced for very large development.

### **Planned Residential Development (PRD) for New Residential Development:**

While it must be enabled through zoning, PRD provides the opportunity to mix land uses, and provide flexibility in lot sizes.

### **Traditional Neighborhood Development:**

This is another form of unified development regulation allowed in Pennsylvania. It can be applied to mix subdivisions and zoning like approvals, and be equally applicable in either older developed areas, or new development.

### **Airport Non-Residential Area:**

While the Township is flexible about opportunities for a residential and nonresidential development mix on most tracts, the area near the Jimmy Stewart Airport is noted as a non-residential development in the future. This is in keeping with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Aviation Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for Airports. The Bureau recommends that land near airports not be used for sanitary landfills (due to bird strike hazard) and multiple-family or extremely high-density residential development (due to public safety in the event of a crash). White Township will examine the best means to implement these guidelines locally, in

cooperation with the Indiana County Airport Authority. The Township will also examine the effect of tall structures, such as cell towers upon the airport landing areas.

### **Rural Resource Areas**

There are other undeveloped areas of the Township that are further from infrastructure, and lack immediate large-scale development potential. White Township does not anticipate extending public water or sewer outside its future development target areas. Therefore, future development in these areas should be more compatible with rural resource uses, such as low-density housing, small businesses, agriculture and forestry, responsible mineral extraction or conservation uses. Tools in these areas need to be different.

The Township may explore the need for greater lot size in these areas to accommodate the need for on-lot water, sewer and stormwater management. The Township may also investigate net lot minimum standards that can ensure new lots are free of topographic or hydrologic hazards.

To plan for both rural resource and development target areas, the Township will investigate enabling the Transfer of Development Rights. This would enable owners of land in rural areas to be paid by developers to not develop their land under a conservation agreement. The developer could then use these rights to achieve higher density in a growth area with infrastructure. Other rural resource area tools are discussed in the Plan for Conservation of Natural and Historic Resources chapter.



Vacant land north of Indiana Borough



Rural lands in the Township add community value.

## KEY LAND USE ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, the Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible:

- Monitor changes in land use types as they relate to tax base sustainability for both the Township and the School District.
- Develop a common sense toolbox of land use and land development regulations. This toolbox will use best practices from a variety of other communities as they best relate to individual areas of the Township. Tools may include:
  1. Enhancing the subdivision and land development ordinance
  2. Elements of traditional zoning, if appropriate in single-family neighborhoods
  3. Preserving flexible development options for vacant properties in development target areas
  4. Discouraging intensive or dense development in rural areas
  5. Encouraging conservation practices to preserve natural features in major developments
  6. Enabling the private transfer of development rights to growth target areas
  7. Exploring unified development approaches through traditional neighborhood development, planned residential development, or specific plan standards

These tools will be part of a regulatory plan that the Township will prepare after completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

*White Township's success is based upon the fact that the location needs of the real estate market and public investment in infrastructure met in one place.*

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

All municipal comprehensive plans in Pennsylvania must include a plan for land use. This Plan 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 areas of special hazards and other similar uses.

The Township has a beautiful landscape and natural areas, housing for a variety of needs



Good land use planning adds value to the community, protects private investments, and ensures sustainable tax and municipal service policies.

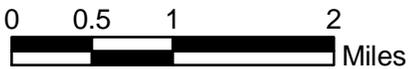
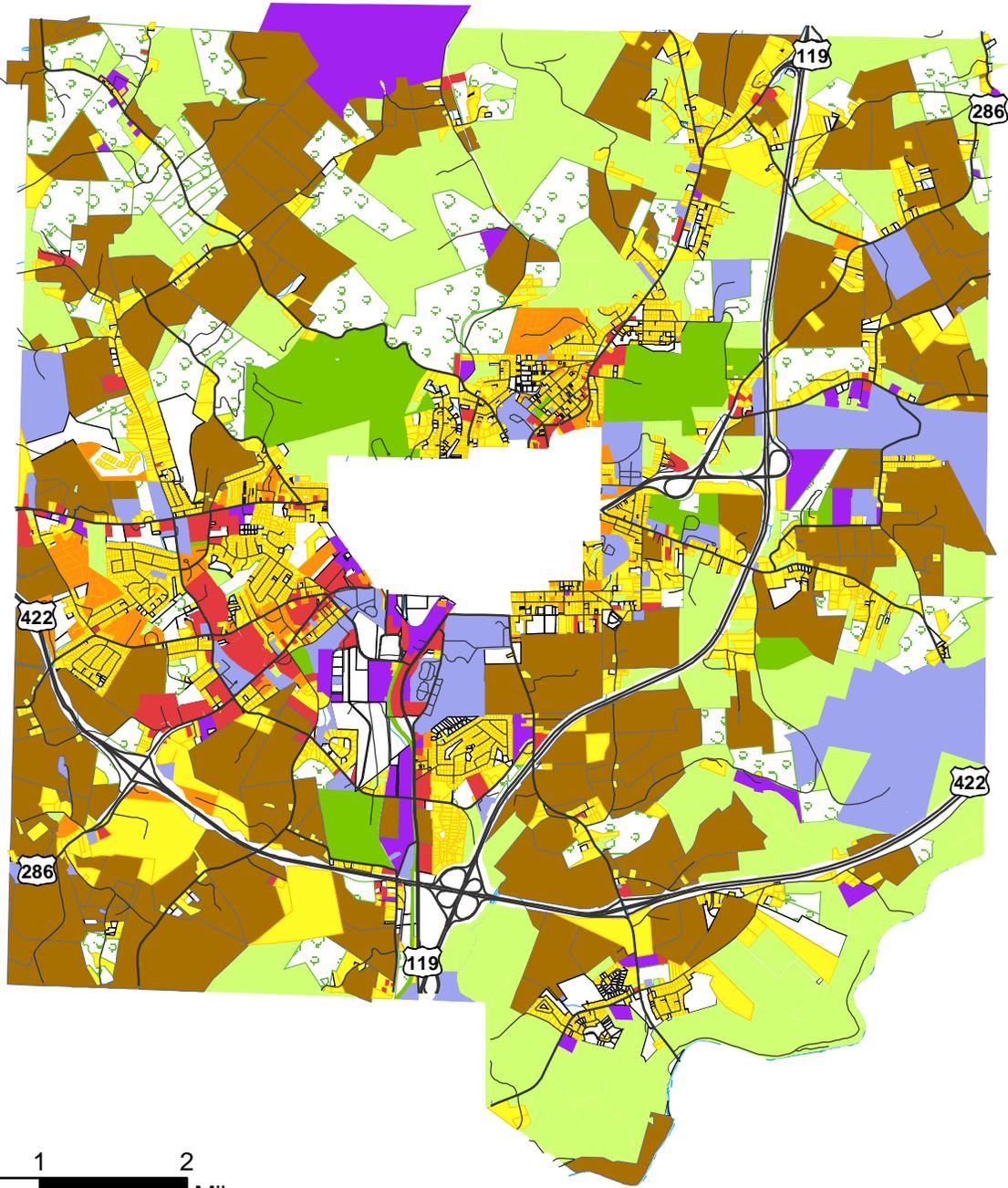
and income levels, job opportunities, shopping districts, and a variety of institutions to meet the spiritual, medical and social needs of residents. This happened because the location needs of the market and infrastructure provided by the public sector met in one

place. The result has been a desirable, prosperous municipality. The Township will continue to focus its practical land use planning on these factors.

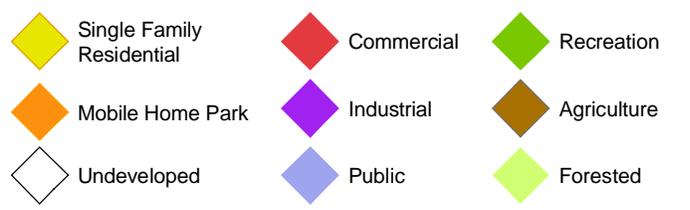
The Township will also work to explore further joint land use planning with the Borough of Indiana. Through recent amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, communities can plan together without loss of municipal sovereignty. The

Borough and Township have received State grant funding to further explore cooperation. Cooperative planning will enable the Township to fully access the toolbox of planning technique that can ensure a continuation of this community as a great place to live.

# White Township Comprehensive Plan



Map 2  
Existing Land  
Use



# PLAN FOR HOUSING

## Summary of Issues and Policies

### ISSUES:

- White Township has become the residential community of choice in Indiana County.
- There are some concentrations of older housing with potential of deterioration.
- The Township has significant levels of government assisted housing.
- Student housing will continue to be a major factor in the community.
- Changing demographics will affect housing types.

### Key Policies:

- Continue to foster high-quality single-family housing and protect existing single-family neighborhoods
- Encourage transient student housing in proximity to the IUP campus
- Revitalize older single-family neighborhoods
- Encourage special needs housing (such as housing for the elderly) in proximity to public transportation and sidewalks
- Prepare for market transitions to other forms of housing (quads, condominium units)

## WHITE TOWNSHIP—RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY OF CHOICE IN INDIANA COUNTY

Trends in the land use analysis and demographics from the U.S. decennial census indicate that White Township is a growing community. In the year 1990, White Township had 5,377 households. By Census 2000, this rose to 6,025 households. This represents an average annual increase of 1.2% for a total of 648 households. In 1990, White Township had 3,620 family households and in the year 2000, they had 3,739 family households. This represents an increase of 119 family households, or about 3.5% in ten years. The increase in households is an important trend because it represents White Township's ability to attract individuals and families into the community and acts as a barometer to gauge in-migration.

Because of this growth, the real estate market places a high value on local housing. In the Census of 2000, homeowners were asked to estimate the value of their home. The median value of a unit in White Township was \$97,100. This was nearly \$30,000 higher than the Countywide median



White Township has attracted a variety of housing for all age groups and income levels.

(\$68,300), and also above the Statewide median of \$94,800. Homes in White Township were valued much higher than any other municipal returns in Indiana County. For example, the median in Indiana Borough was only \$82,200, \$62,600 in Center Township, and \$81,400 in Armstrong Township.

Part of this high value is the fact that the Township has more new housing, and tends to have larger homes. White

Township has the highest number of post-1990 constructed housing in the County. Realtors also indicate that the numbers of 3- and 4-bedroom units in the Township have been a source of recent market interest. Both numbers of sales and average prices have increased for 3- and 4-bedroom units.

Single-Family Residential Market Activity 2003-2005					
Number of Bedrooms	2003 Listings Sold	2003 Average Sales Price	2005 Listings Sold	2005 Average Sales Price	% Change In Average Sales
All Types	412	\$94,363	410	\$107,744	+14
2 or fewer bedrooms	76	\$70,669	91	\$66,693	-6
3 bedrooms	260	\$99,035	289	\$112,357	+14
4 bedrooms	64	\$125,000	66	\$169,103	+35
5 or more bedrooms	12	\$138,927	14	\$138,329	-0.4

Source: Multi-List of the Indiana Area, gathered and summarized by GCCA for ICOPD

## THE TOWNSHIP DOES HAVE CONCENTRATIONS OF OLDER HOUSING WITH POTENTIAL FOR DETERIORATION

Six point eight percent of the Township's housing stock (444 units) was constructed before 1940. An additional 13.7 percent was built before 1959. Thus, nearly one in five homes within White Township are at least 48 years old. These older homes tend to be concentrated in neighborhoods adjacent to Indiana Borough. While age alone is not a guarantee that housing will deteriorate, older homes normally need more maintenance and area often occu-

piated by persons of more modest resources. A housing survey was conducted in the Chevy Chase neighborhood and the Grandview/Maple area. This was a windshield survey that only examined exterior conditions. The 50 units found would normally indicate perhaps another 50 to 100 in the project area which have deficiencies not visible from the street. As this survey only examined two neighborhoods, it may be fair to state that the Township

could have 150 to 200 substandard homes.



While White Township leads the County in newer homes, the Township also has older neighborhoods.

ICOPD Housing Surveys - White Township 2003-2005					
Area	Total Dwelling Units	Minor Deterioration	Major Deterioration	Dilapidated	Percent Substandard
Chevy Chase	200	10	7	25	(21)
Grandview/Maple	40	1	5	2	(20)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20.8</b>

## WHITE TOWNSHIP HAS SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF PUBLICLY ASSISTED HOUSING

The Federal and State governments have numerous programs to subsidize housing in an effort to provide affordable, safe housing. Within Indiana County, The Indiana County Housing Authority owns some publicly assisted housing, and some are private developments that received assistance from HUD, USDA, or the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. In any case, a significant number of these are located in White Township.

Publicly assisted housing may be for elderly persons, low- or moderate-income families, or handicapped persons. Some units are directly owned and managed by a public agency, such as the Housing Authority of Indiana County. The Housing Authority receives funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Develop-

ment to build and manage housing units. In other cases, private developers build publicly assisted housing under tax credit of low interest loan arrangements with the State of Federal government. An inventory conducted for the County revealed the following inventory of assisted housing within the Township:

### Privately Owned Subsidized Housing

- Whites Run Commons — 24 units, elderly
- Regency Square — 84 units, general
- Poets' Village — 104 units, family
- Clairvieux Commons — 85 units, elderly

### Housing Authority of Indiana County

- Homestead— 24 units, general

- The Courtyard Apartments — 30 units, elderly
- Indiana House — 8 handicapped units
- Schoolhouse Square — 8 units
- Glen Oaks — 30 units

Since the time of the County survey, there have been further development of assisted housing at Hickory Meadows and Orchard Hill. White Township has the highest ratio of assisted housing to all housing units within Indiana County. Ironically, this is the opposite of many communities in Pennsylvania. Normally, assisted housing tends to be built within older boroughs, where lower land prices and greater public services are available. In central Indiana County, the need for student housing pushes affordable housing into more rural areas.

*Nearly one in five White Township homes are at least 48 years old.*

## STUDENTS WILL CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR FACTOR IN LOCAL HOUSING

Discussions with IUP indicate it is impossible to definitively determine the number of students who reside in White Township. According to the Census of 2000, 1,129 Township residents are enrolled in colleges, universities, or graduate school. These 1,129 persons represent 8 percent of the year 2000 total population. By comparison, the Census count of college students in Indiana Borough was 8,825 persons, or nearly 60 percent of the population. Unfortunately, the Census question about school enrollment status is only asked on the long form sample, so an undercount was possible. Households were part of the complete Census count, and White Township has 37.9 percent non-family households, significantly higher than the Countywide or Statewide proportion. Thus, there are probably some students living in non-family off-campus households, who were not counted as students. IUP is not able to determine the number of White Township resident from their data records. It might be estimated that IUP student households

represent 10 to 15 percent of all households in the Township.

Due to the substantial growth of IUP, and changing patterns in off-campus living preferences, student housing will remain a major factor in the community. In 1960 IUP had only 3,317 students. By 2000, this had risen to 13,082. By fall 2006, enrollment had risen to 14,248. Current on-campus housing is 3,851 students. The number of on-campus housing units has remained constant for the past two decades. IUP is presently constructing new apartment-style units, but the number of residents will not change. Off-campus housing providers have noticed many significant changes in student rental preferences. In the 1970s and 1980s, students were willing to live in units of 5 or 7 persons and share accommodations. More re-



A majority of IUP students live off campus.

cently, students are expecting greater personal space, and more amenities. Individual bathrooms and single occupancy bedrooms are now the norm. Therefore, growth in students is requiring proportionally more housing units. White Township and Indiana Borough will need to accommodate these off-campus units.

*Due to the substantial growth of IUP, and changing patterns in off-campus living preferences, student housing will remain a major factor in the community.*

## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING

In 1990, 15.7 percent of White Township residents were over the age of 65. By the 2000 Census, this proportion had dropped to 12.4 percent. Within the context of western Pennsylvania, this was a highly unusual change. It seemed to be fueled by two factors: more students living in the Township, and a turnover of houses (older people selling their homes to younger families). For comparative purposes, it is important to note that as White Township's population becomes younger, the norm in western Pennsylvania was an aging popula-

tion. The region, as a whole, is still seeing the long term effects of out migration that began in the 1980s, when the steel and coal industries collapsed. The young people who left in the 1980s formed families elsewhere, and the proportion of older persons will grow. The Pennsylvania Department of Aging notes that, "Over the next 10 years, the number of elderly age 60 and older is projected to increase by about 9 percent to 2.6 million people." The results of this will likely be more need for housing types other than single-family detached units.

There will be more need for apartments, condominiums, assisted living, and continuing care communities.

The unanswered question is how much these trends will affect White Township. There will be a smaller pool of young families interested in buying or building a single-family home. There will be more older persons trying to sell their single-family detached home and find another form of housing. The result may be a stable market, with less new construction of single-family housing.

**POLICY PRIORITY: CONTINUE TO FOSTER HIGH-QUALITY SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING AND PROTECT EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS**

The Community Development Goals and Objectives note that existing clusters of single-family dwellings are vulnerable to land use conflict. The Land Use Plan discusses means to protect these neighborhoods from conflict by commercial or other non-residential land uses. The Township also recognizes that other forms of housing can also create conflicts that endanger the quality of life among permanent single family housing. The neighboring community of Indiana Borough has had a long history of these types of conflicts. Stu-

dent households bring a higher density of cars per occupant. There are lifestyle conflicts where the activities of students create noise and other negative impacts. Concentrations of student housing in the Borough have negatively affected housing affordability. Young families and low moderate income residents cannot compete in a real estate market where transient students raise the housing costs.



The home typically represents the greatest investment of a family and their

White Township will investigate actions to implement the stated policy. This may in-

clude property maintenance or rental licensing approaches. The Township will learn from other college

**POLICY PRIORITY: ENCOURAGE TRANSIENT STUDENT POPULATIONS IN PROXIMITY TO IUP CAMPUS**

One of the inevitable facts of life in college communities is conflict between transitional student populations and permanent family residents. On one level, this entails lifestyle conflicts between those who are only in the community part of the year (for only a few years) and those who intend to make White Township their permanent home. It would be the preference of the Township that major educational institutions such as IUP and Wyo-Tech provide student housing on campus whenever

possible. This minimizes lifestyle conflicts. However, it also can minimize impacts on traffic and allows the Township to concentrate infrastructure investments in smaller areas. However, the Township recognizes that on-campus housing is not always possible. In lieu of housing, transitional student populations in a walkable, integrated campus environment, should be located primarily in areas where sidewalks, and public transportation are available within proximity to the cam-

pus. Secondary locations would be along major traffic corridors, including Oakland Avenue/PA Route 286 or Wayne Avenue. Transitional student housing could be integrated into highway commercial areas within these locations. Locations to be avoided include along most Township roads (due to traffic impact), rural locations in the township (due to lack of infrastructure) and within immediate proximity to neighborhoods comprised of single-family dwellings.

*One of the inevitable facts of life in college communities is conflict between transitional student populations and permanent family residents.*

**POLICY PRIORITY: REVITALIZE OLDER SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS**

White Township has made a concerted effort to revitalize and maintain the stability of its older residential neighborhoods. For example, the Township has conducted demolition of dilapidated units. The Township's ideal is that these neighborhoods become good housing choices for young families who cannot afford to build a new home, or persons who wish to live in a

traditional, walkable neighborhood. The threats to this ideal are physical deterioration and the artificial inflation of the student market. It is hoped that the former will be prevented by new student housing. To pre-



Older homes represent a means to provide for good neighborhood housing for a variety of income.

vent deterioration, the Township has identified revitalization priority areas. White Township will look at tools to focus repair and physical reinvestment in these neighborhoods, such as grants.

## POLICY PRIORITY: ENCOURAGE HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN PROXIMITY TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND SIDEWALKS

White Township is a diverse community that includes many elderly, handicapped, and low/moderate income households. Because public funding is frequently utilized to subsidize assisted housing, the Comprehensive Plan represents an opportunity to ensure consistency between state and Federal government policies and local planning needs. Some special needs housing, such as permanent family-like group homes for disabled persons, represents no significant public impact. These small-scale forms of housing are encouraged to be integrated into neighborhoods throughout the community. However, larger-scale development with higher density require more careful planning to ensure the community can absorb impacts. It is also important to ensure that special needs populations are not isolated in areas where individual car ownership is the

only transportation choice. Ideally, the Borough of Indiana offers a more walkable setting and more regular public transportation for such groups as the elderly and those who cannot afford cars. However, the artificially inflated market created by IUP students residing off-campus has negated most possibilities for affordable housing in Indiana Borough. In lieu of locations in the Borough, neighborhoods in White Township that are near the Borough with access to sidewalks and bus service area to be preferred. However, housing for special needs populations should not



The location of housing for persons with special needs is crucial to their access to the overall community.

be placed where impacts from highway commercial development would create negative living environments. The Township has prepared a Plan for Housing map, that indicates location preferences.

## PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE MARKET TRANSITIONS TO OTHER FORMS OF HOUSING

Housing has a substantial effect upon a community's tax base sustainability. The pioneering studies of the effect of development upon tax base in Pennsylvania were performed by Dr. Tim Kelsey of Penn State. Kelsey analyzed what various kinds of housing and development brought into a community, as well as the cost of providing public services to different kinds of development.

Kelsey discovered that median price single-family dwellings often cost the municipality and school district as much in public service costs as they provide in taxes. The exception is more expensive homes. Mobile home parks tend to have a negative tax

base effect, as do apartments for families. However, he found that multiple-family dwelling complexes built for retirees tended to be very beneficial, particularly for school districts. Kelsey noted that private open land does not generate large amounts of taxes, but also needs few services. Thus, it is normally beneficial to protect farm and private forest land. The greatest tax surpluses were normally created by commercial or indus-

trial tax base. Typically, this form of development needed only 32 cents worth of serves for every dollar in taxes generated.



Retirement communities have a different tax base effect on communities than single-family dwellings.

White Township has not followed this trend, in that it has been a fiscally sustainable bedroom community. However, as housing types change, it may be necessary to revisit tax policies. Careful monitoring of the ration of single to multiple-family dwellings will be very important. If these ratios change, so will Township revenues, and the choice may be to cut services or increase reve-

*As housing types change in the future, it may be necessary to revisit the Township's tax policies.*

## KEY HOUSING ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, the Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible:

- Examine an Elm Street designation in cooperation with Indiana Borough.
- Continue the demolition of dilapidated structures.
- Seek grant funding for the rehabilitation of deteriorated structures.
- Seek grant funding for the rehabilitation of sidewalks and streets in older neighborhoods.
- Support of community based organizations in older neighborhoods to encourage neighborhood stability.
- Licensing of rental units to ensure annual inspection and minimum quality. A tenant registry for earned income tax purpose may also be explored.
- The Township may examine adoption of a Property Maintenance Code to protect housing and neighborhoods.

*The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that all municipal comprehensive plans include a plan for housing.*

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that all municipal comprehensive plans include a plan for housing. This Plan is intended, "To meet the housing needs of present residents and of 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 housing vision of the Township is that this community can provide for a variety



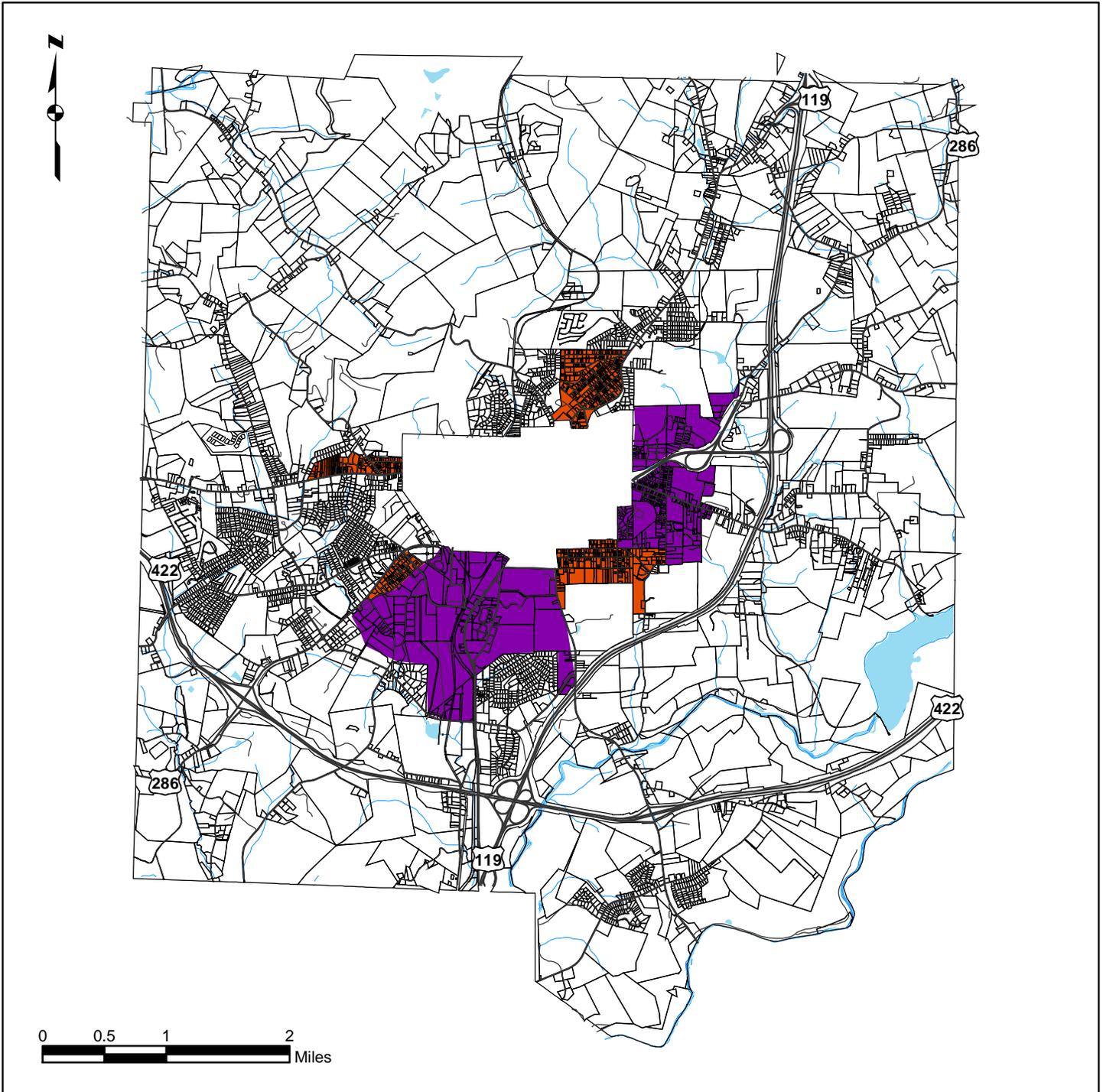
The purpose of planning for housing is to meet the needs of the present and future generations. (Photo courtesy of Ben Franklin Elementary School.)

of housing types, if there is careful planning. Planning for housing must be an outgrowth of the basic community vision. Therefore, Township policies will be different in different parts of the Township. To implement key policies, the Township will use its plan reviews, ordinances, and grant policies to:

- Encourage student housing near IUP
- Encourage housing for special needs persons near public transit, sidewalks, and infrastructure
- Protect single-family neighborhoods
- Monitor housing types for tax base implications for both the Township and School District
- Revitalize older neighborhoods

Finally, as a matter of practical policy, the Township will cooperate with the Borough on solving shared housing issues.

# White Township Comprehensive Plan



Map 3  
Housing  
Plan

-  Revitalization Priority Areas
-  Special Housing Priority Areas

# PLAN FOR CONSERVATION

## Summary of Issues and Policies

### ISSUES:

- In spite of development, there are still many natural and historic resources in White Township.
- Development may begin moving to steeper slope areas, which may increase stormwater runoff problems in developed watersheds.
- Mining and mineral extraction represents a potential for land use conflict.

### Key Policies :

- Stormwater runoff is the greatest environmental issue facing the Township. The Township will investigate a number of stormwater management initiatives.
- The Township will work to minimize conflicts between mining and other forms of development.
- The Township supports the continuation of agriculture and conservation of forest land. It will support this through policy support of existing programs or new privately funded means to pay farm and forest landowners for conservation agreements.

## WISE USE OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE MIDST OF GROWTH WILL BE A CHALLENGE IN THE FUTURE

The Plan for Land Use has noted that White Township has been the focus of much development in Indiana County. Poorly planned growth and development is often the major threat to a community's natural and historic resources.

Natural and historic resources are extremely important to White Township and its future. If future growth gives consideration to the natural and human heritage, the result will be development that continues to improve the overall community. If growth does not consider the natural setting, the result will be localized flooding, loss of water quality, and ultimately a community that loses good investment opportunities.

Natural resources are more than a pretty setting. Wooded steep slopes naturally manage stormwater runoff. Wetlands purify water. Resources such as timber, stone, and coal bring income to rural landowners and create local jobs.

Historic resources are perhaps not as crucial as natural resources. However, knowledge of the past can create a sense of respect for the community's present. Older buildings also create unique economic opportunities such as attracting visitors from outside the community.



While there has been much development, White Township still has natural and agricultural lands.

The Community Development Goals and Objectives and the Plan for Land Use were crafted to encourage a community that will continue to attract and maintain sound private investments and retain a good quality of life for residents. This can only be done with attention to the natural setting and community heritage.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes an assessment of the extent of natural and historic resources within White Township. Many state and federal agencies have developed databases and electronic mapping of such resources. Data was also available from the Southwest Pennsylvania Commis-

sion, the regional planning organization for the ten Counties of Southwestern Pennsylvania. This data was compared using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. GIS is computer technology that allows multiple kinds of database information to be compared by mapping. The series of maps attached to this Plan, presents not only what kinds of resources the Township has, but where they occur. Following data analysis, the Township developed a set of planning policies to integrate conservation objectives into the development planning process, ensure compliance with state and federal law, and prioritize other activities to conserve resources.

## A SURVEY OF TOWNSHIP WATER RESOURCES

The attached maps illustrate streams and associated floodplains, wetlands, and watersheds. Floodplains are the land areas adjacent to streams that are likely to be inundated at least once in a hundred year period. White Township has adopted a floodplain management ordinance that limits development within these areas to protect public health and safety. Development is allowed within floodplain areas, but the ordinance restricts certain hazardous activities (such as bulk chemical storage), prevent certain land uses (such as nursing homes) and may require grading or flood proofing. While there are floodplains in every quadrant of the Township, two floodplain areas occur in parts of the Township that have seen significant development. A narrow floodplain associated with McCarthy Run splits a large development area roughly parallel to Ben Franklin. The Stoney Run floodplain closely flows along Wayne

Avenue, and could limit future development there.

Wetlands are protected by state and federal law and extensive regulations. Without mitigation, human development cannot impact wetland areas, so most communities discount wetlands from lands available for development. There are few wetlands in White Township. So they do not represent a significant development limitation. The largest wetland systems are in the extreme northwestern quadrant of the Township along Fulton Run. Another wetland system is found near the confluence of Stoney Run and McCarthy Run. With the exception of some isolated ponds that are technically wetlands, most wetlands in the Township are already in floodplains. This minimizes their real impact upon future development.

Each of the streams on the map is recharged by the surrounding land. The divides of

the drainage areas are referred to as watersheds. The Township's land area is divided into fourteen watersheds.

Watersheds represent the meeting place between land and water resources. In an undeveloped watershed, rainfall is absorbed by trees and vegetation, and about 70 percent of it percolates into the ground. As more development occurs, rooftops, and pavement increase impermeable surfaces. Less water is available to recharge groundwater, and more water swiftly flows into streams, causing localized flooding. The level of development in White Township increases the chances that the Township may see a reduction in groundwater availability and localized flooding. The McCarthy Run watershed is potentially the most impacted by development. Based on this concern, The U.S. EPA conducted an analysis of Marsh and McCarthy Runs in 2004.

*The level of development in White Township increases the chances the Township may see a reduction in groundwater availability and localized flooding.*



EPA photo of stream bank erosion in McCarthy Run.

## LANDFORMS HAVE LIMITED AND GUIDED DEVELOPMENT IN WHITE TOWNSHIP

Landforms have been shaped over millennia by forces of erosion and tectonic activity. As part of the Appalachian plateau, White Township's land is broken by hills, ridgelines, and valleys.

From a planning standpoint, slopes of 0-8 percent (less than 8 foot of topographic change over 100 lineal feet) represent no limitation to development. Slopes of 8-15 percent may require more careful site planning to accommodate roads and buildings. Slopes greater than 15 percent are often very restricted, and slopes over 25 percent are practically not developable in a rural context.

Generally, the areas of steepest slope are concentrated in the northwest quadrant of the Township, and the southern portions of the Township. Very little development has occurred in this area. The combination of gently sloping land and other favorable factors have naturally drawn development into the southwestern portion of the Township. As the photograph illustrates, isolated areas of steep slope within growth areas have not been developed. The result is a backdrop of green hills behind areas of homes and businesses. However, as level land become more rare in desirable growth areas, there will be increased pressure for development of steeper slope areas. If this steep slope development is not carefully planned, it will increase the amount and especially the velocity of stormwater runoff. The potential result could be an increase in erosion and localized flooding.

The best assurance of good natural management of stormwater in slope areas is



Forested green hills provide a backdrop to development areas.

the presence of tree cover. As mentioned previously, forested areas can retain up to 70 percent of water from a rain event. At this point, most slope areas remain in tree cover, whether the land is in private or public ownership.

Prior to the 1950s, most of the gently sloping land was used for agriculture. Most development in the past 50 years has occurred on lands formerly used for agriculture. Statewide, the loss of prime farmlands to development has become a priority concern.

An examination of the presence of prime farmlands shows that most of the concentrations of prime farmland soils are within growth areas of the Township. A comparison of prime farmlands to existing land use patterns also show that most of the prime farmlands are also already being utilized for other purposes.

Some of the remaining active farms in White Township have enrolled in the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) program. ASAs are a covenant between farm and forestland owners and the Township. The land-

owner is stating that it is his desire to keep his land in farm and forest use. The Township agrees not to pass ordinances which would restrict normal farming practices in these areas, or use eminent domain to acquire these lands for infrastructure to accelerate development. As the map shows, most of the ASAs are distributed throughout the Township, rather than concentrated. One challenge of the future will be the potential for land use conflict with these farming areas, as well as protecting them as valuable open space.

Indiana County has not completed a Countywide Natural Heritage Inventory, so it is difficult to know about the extent of unique natural areas. One resource of significance is White's Woods, nearly 250 acres of forest land owned by the Township. A recent environmental assessment prepared for the Township notes that deer over browsing is damaging the resource. There are also areas where sustainable forestry and wildlife control activities may be necessary to protect forest health.

*As level land becomes more rare in desirable growth areas, there will be increased pressure for development of steeper slope areas.*

## THE TOWNSHIP HAS A RICH HISTORY AND MANY HISTORIC RESOURCES

White Township was the site of Moorhead's Fort, one of the first settler's structures in Indiana County. The fort no longer exists, but there are many 19th and early 20th century structures remaining in the Township. No historic resource in White Township has been formally listed on the National Register Of Historic Places (the Nation's chief list of significant buildings, sites, and structures). However, there are several buildings that may be potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register. In the late 1980s, the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development conducted a historic resources survey that

included White Township. Eighteen structures that were worthy of documentation were found of these, perhaps ten might be eligible for inclusion the register. However, Federal law is very clear that eligibility alone conveys all the protection as actual register listing. The protection extends only to adverse impacts by project that would use Federal funds, and there are no private restrictions. There does not seem to be any geographic concentrations of resources that would make a historic district possible.

Because of Federal law, State agencies routinely conduct historic and archeological

reviews for projects, most commonly highway projects. Extensive archeological surveys have been conducted in the vicinity of Route 422, Route 119, lower Oakland Avenue, and Ben Franklin. These are confidential, but may be consulted as necessary for Township projects.

Finally, there is one historically significant property owned by the Township, the previously mentioned White's Woods. This site was originally intended as an estate for 19th century Judge Thomas White, but was never completed.

## MINING AND MINERAL EXTRACTION REPRESENT BOTH ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND A POTENTIAL FOR LAND USE CONFLICT.

Historically, mining and mineral extraction was the largest economic activity in Indiana County. While mining is no longer the largest source of employment in the County, proportionally, it remains important. As of 2005, Indiana County led the State in the number of coal mining, stone mining, and oil and gas workers.

Approximately 50 percent of White Township has already been mined for coal, mostly through subsurface mines. Most of the recent growth areas were undermined. There are a few active mines today, but most are in the extreme southern or northern parts of the Township.

White Township recognizes both the necessity of mining and it benefits to the local economy. The Township also recognizes that mining can be

a source of land use conflict with other forms of development, especially residential neighborhoods.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has principal authority over the environmental regulation of mining or oil and gas drilling activities within the Commonwealth. This regulation is accomplished through various mining acts and DEP regulations crafted to implement the acts. DEP typically requires setbacks from water wells, setbacks from public roads, and setbacks from occupied dwellings. DEP also requires testing of water sources, bonding of the mining companies and standards for the reclamation of mined areas.

It is clear from the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code that White Township

may not exceed or duplicate mining regulations promulgated by DEP. However, there is still a role for the Township in preventing or minimizing land use conflicts from mining activities. Generally, the Township believes that surface mining activities should be confined to rural resource areas. Certain mining activities may also be regarded as land developments under the Township subdivision and land development ordinance. The Township will participate as applicable in mining permitting processes and enforce its own non-conflicting regulations in a manner that will mitigate conflicts between mining and other developments. Mitigation tools might include buffering, analysis of road impacts, or other planning techniques.

*Approximately 50 percent of White Township has already been mined for coal, mostly subsurface mines.*

## STORMWATER MANAGMENT IS THE GREATEST ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE FACING WHITE TOWNSHIP

One of the consequences of land development is that the amount of impervious surfaces increases, and rainwater can no longer percolate into the ground or follow natural channels to rich streams. In a typical year White Township can see more than 40 inches of rain and snowmelt. As this hits rooftops and pavement, it concentrates and will flood neighboring properties downhill or downstream unless the water is managed.

To ensure public safety, the developer must replace the natural stormwater monument system (vegetation, swales, wetlands, and intermittent streams) with a new system comprised of pipes, created swales, tanks, or various graded detention or retention structures. The Township reviews these improvements through its subdivision and land development ordinance and powers under Act 167 (the Stormwater Management Act). This has succeeded in mitigating or minimized off-lot stormwater impacts.

However, as more land develops in the Township, potential problems may emerge. As more development occurs in a single watershed, the function of the whole system can be compromised. This affects the ability of groundwater to naturally recharge. Also, even the best designed stormwater controls need periodic maintenance. As properties change hands, the stormwater control structures often become practically or legally orphaned. Finally, as development begins to move from scarce level sites, to more sloping sites, there is a danger that not only the volume of runoff will increase, but also the velocity of runoff. Increased velocity of runoff can increase erosion and

sedimentation problems. Erosion and sedimentation degrade surface water quality.

As with all natural systems, there is great connectivity between land and water systems, as well as surface water, and groundwater recharge. The Township will give consideration to several policies to minimize these interrelated problems.



As more land development in the Township occurs in hill ground, there is potential for increases in the velocity of stormwater runoff, and associated problems such as erosion and stream sedimentation.

The Township will explore appropriate lot sizes for sites which contain steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, or other environmentally limiting conditions. This might be done by developing zoning standards, or by creating site development standards that can be incorporated uniformly through the subdivision and land development ordinance. In either case, the object would be to ensure that lot sizes are large enough in steep slope areas to prevent excessive impervious coverage, and ensure groundwater recharge.

The Township currently enforces stormwater management provisions within the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. A major aspect of future plan approval under this ordinance will be ensuring adequate maintenance for new stormwater management structures in perpetuity. This may be accomplished through various agreements, covenants, sure-

ties, or creation of a maintenance entity, such as a homeowners' association.

The Township may also examine the creation of stormwater monument districts that are consistent with watersheds. This would facilitate the common sense management of stormwater runoff for areas larger than site-by-site development. At present, the initial priority for such a watershed approach would be the McCarthy Run Watershed. The Township will seek funding for an initial watershed plan.

*Even the best designed stormwater controls need periodic maintenance.*

## ENCOURAGING CONSERVATION OF FARM AND FOREST LAND

The Township still has large areas which are undeveloped or used for low intensity uses such as agriculture. These “green areas” contribute significantly to local quality of life, and natural stormwater management, while still providing income through farming and forestry to the landowners. The Township supports farm and forest land owners who wish to keep their lands for these rural resource uses. This policy support includes farm and forest lands both within growth areas, and rural resource areas.



Productive farmland on the edge of development

White Township has already encouraged the continuation of agriculture as an important local endeavor through its Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program. Participants in the ASA program are also eligible for Pennsylvania’s Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program. The program is funded through both State and Federal funds, and pays a farmland owner to not develop his property. A conservation agreement is attached to the deed. The property owner may sell or convey the property, but it may only be used for agriculture or forestry purposes. The owner is paid the difference between the value of the land for agriculture, and its value for development. For example, if farmland is worth \$2,000 per acre, and raw land is appraised \$8,000 per acre for its development potential, the payment would be \$6,000 per acre. As White Township is the most rapidly developing community in Indiana County, Township officials believe their farmland owners should receive some priority consideration for agricultural preservation.

Locally, participation in the program may be hampered by the fact that some farmland owners do not own their coal rights. The Township may study this issue through its Agricultural Security Area Board.

As an alternative to the State program, White Township will investigate the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. TDR is a free market, willing buyer/willing seller conservation agreement for farm and forest land. Under a TDR program, a private developer may purchase of conservation agreement from any farm or forest land owner at a mutually agreeable price. The rural property owner agrees not to develop, and the developer gains the right to build at a higher density in an appropriate area.

The role of the Township in TDR is to enable the transactions, serve as a trustee for the conservation agreement, and set standards for the density bonus. There is a particular opportunity in White Township for using TDR to facilitate

higher density in areas near IUP and the Borough, conserving land in rural resource areas. The Township will investigate its feasibility to help implement this Plan.

Finally, the Township will strive to ensure good land stewardship of its own property. As most Township owned recreation land is within the rural urban interface, management can be a challenge. For example, public forest resources can be damaged by overpopulation and over browsing of deer. To ensure permanent sound forest cover, other management activities may be periodically necessary, such as the sustainable harvesting of timber. White Township has adopted a forest stewardship plan for its largest tract of forestland consistent with Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources private landowner standards (Forest Stewardship program). This plan is adopted as an integral part of this Township-wide Plan for Conservation. Stewardship plans will be prepared for other Township lands, as applicable and necessary.

*White Township supports farm and forest landowners who wish to keep their property for rural resource uses.*

## KEY CONSERVATION ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, the Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible.

- Monitor the DEP mineral permitting process and comment as appropriate, and seek to minimize conflict between mineral extraction and growth area uses.
- Prioritize stormwater management as a natural resource priority. Stormwater activities may include three measures:
  1. Limiting density and intensity of development in environmentally sensitive areas
  2. Ensuring long-term maintenance of stormwater control facilities
  3. Consideration of watershed level stormwater plans, especially for developed watersheds such as McCarthy Run
- The Township wishes to be considered as the highest priority area for voluntary purchases of Agricultural Conservation Easements, as funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and administered locally by the Indiana County Conservation District.
- The Township will investigate a Transfer of Development Rights program.
- The Township will prepare and implement stewardship plans for its own forest properties, based upon professional scientific management.

*Natural resources contribute to local quality of life and make the Township the kind of community that can attract private investment.*

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

In 2001, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code was amended to require that all comprehensive plans include a Plan for the Conservation of Natural and Historic Resources, to the extent not preempted by Federal or State law. This clause was unique in State requirements for a comprehensive plan, in that minimal content must be included in this Plan. The Plan must address wetlands and aquifer recharge, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural lands, floodplains, unique natural areas, and historic sites. Furthermore, the MPC limits the ability of local plan-



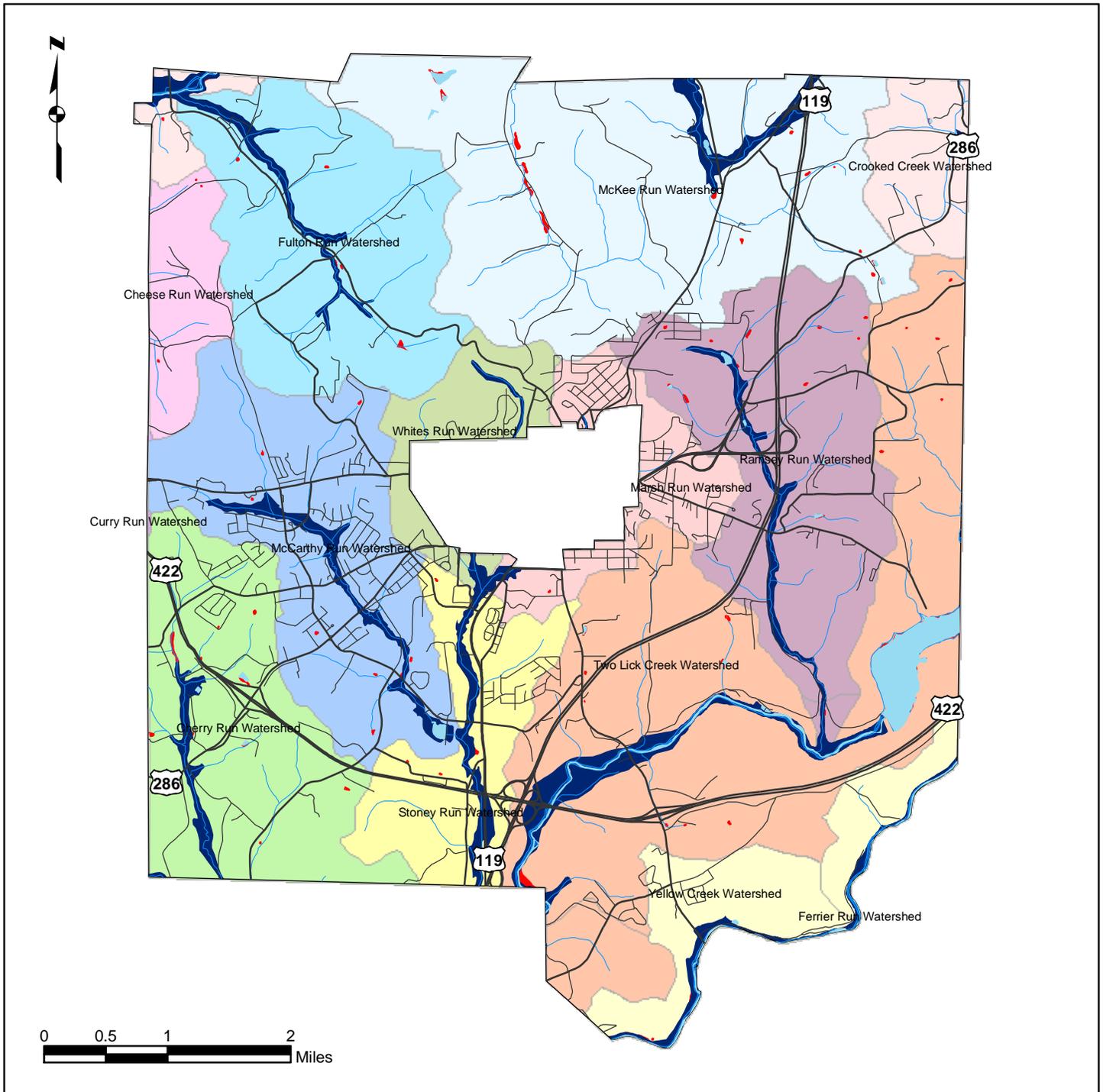
Attractive green areas are an integral part of the Township, even in growth areas.

ning to exceed requirements of major Pennsylvania environment laws. Local planning must be consistent with the Clean Streams Act, all mining conservation and reclamation acts, the Nutrient Management Act, and agricultural security law. Finally, the MPC

requires that White Township acknowledge that certain lawful activities may affect water quality and quantity. Specifically, White Township recognizes that extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities. Commercial agriculture production also can impact water supply sources.

However, beyond these statutory requirements lies the fact that natural resources contribute to local quality of life and make the Township the kind of community that can attract private investment.

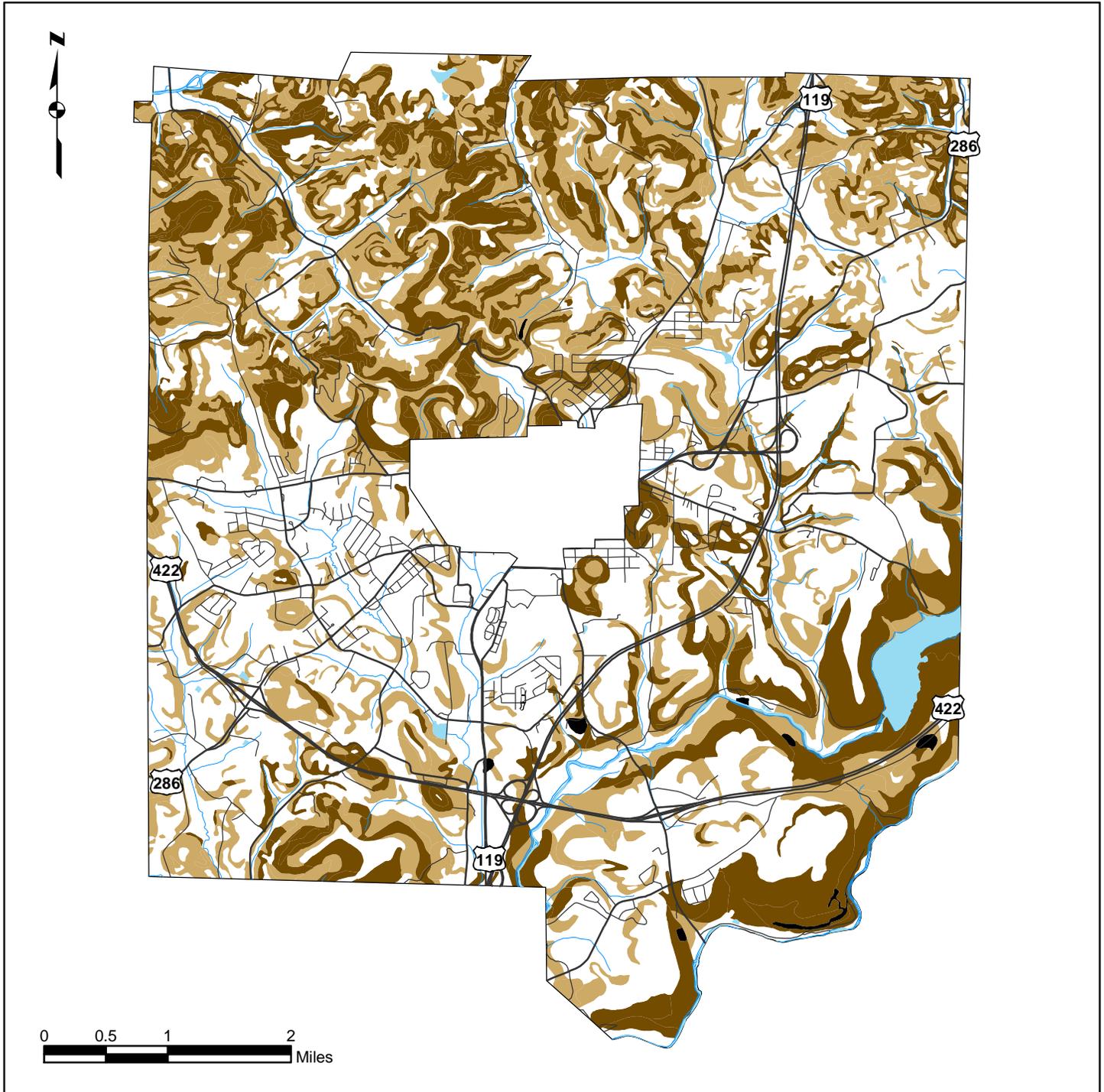
# White Township Comprehensive Plan



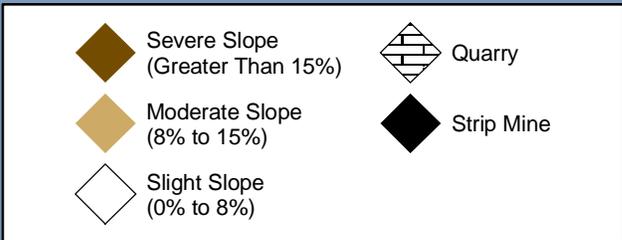
Map 4  
Water  
Resources

	Wetlands		Bodies of Water
			Floodplains

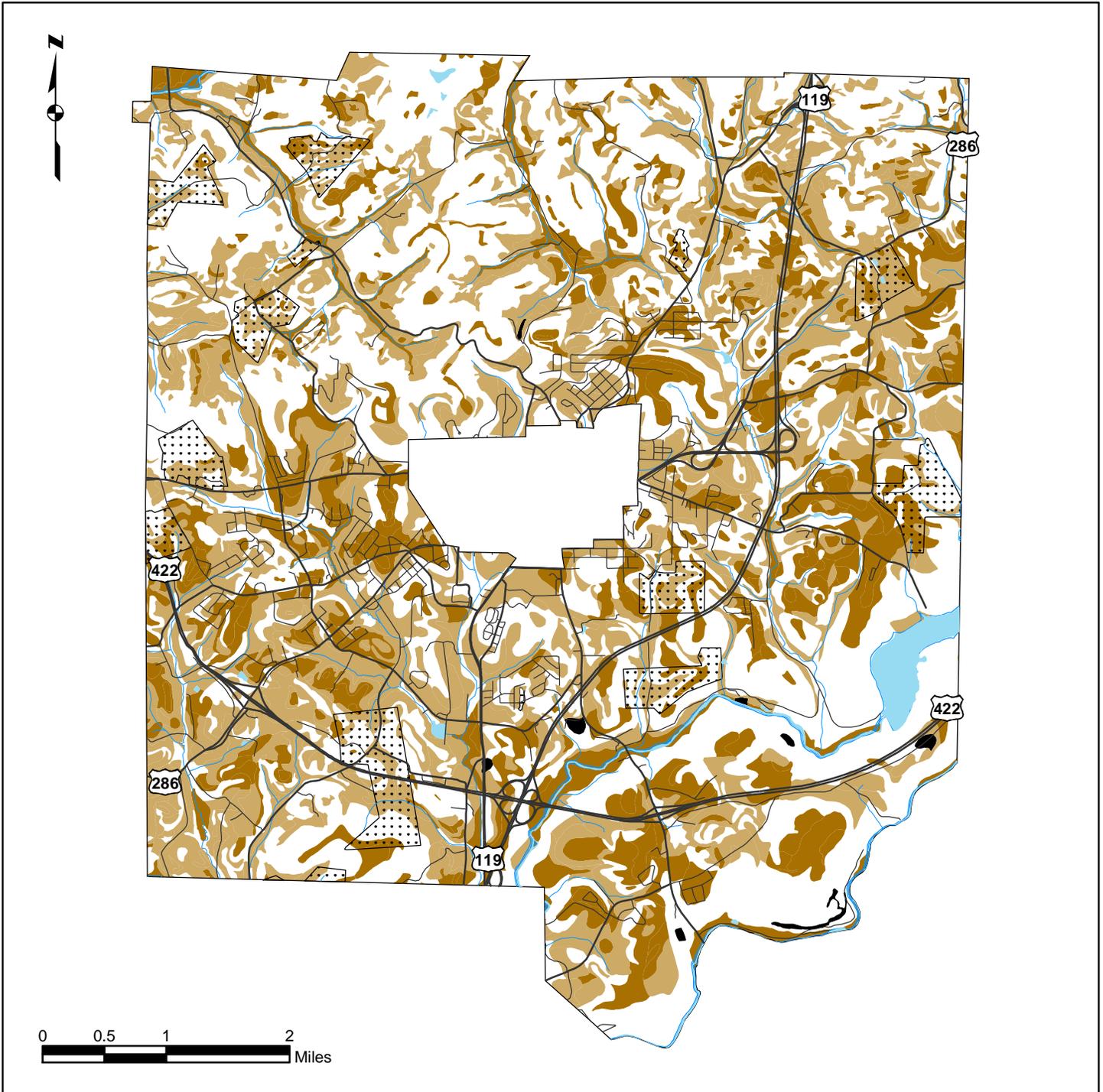
# White Township Comprehensive Plan



Map 5  
Slope  
Considerations

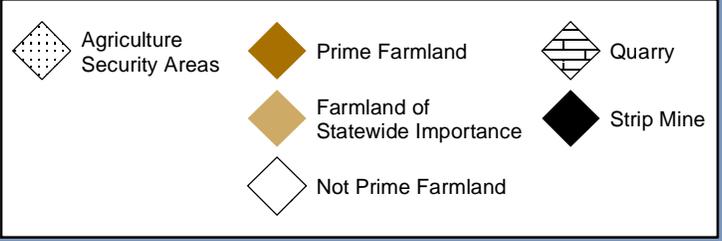


# White Township Comprehensive Plan



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Map 6  
Agricultural  
Resources



# PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION

## Summary of Issues and Policies

### ISSUES:

- Transportation improvements have added value to private land and attracted development.
- The development attracted by transportation improvements has created areas of congestion.
- The Township has responded to congestion issues by continual transportation planning.
- The future will bring more intense areas of congestion unless focused transportation improvements are made.

### Key Policies :

- Focus on systematic functional improvements to the roadway system in critical areas.
- Ensure development pays for itself in terms of impact upon the roadway system.
- Examine advanced planning techniques to ensure long term coordination of transportation improvements.

## UNDERSTANDING THE LAND USE / TRANSPORTATION LINK

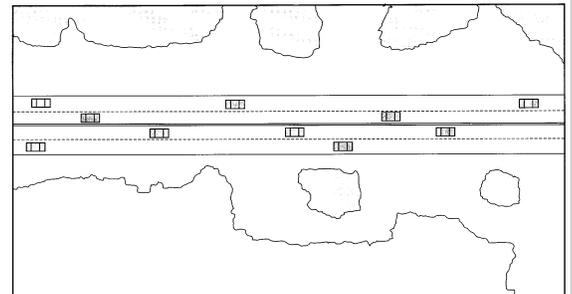
A major factor in the development of White Township in recent decades has been the substantial state and local public investment in roads and highways. Thirty years ago, crossing through the Township involved a series of two-lane roads with numerous curb cuts and traffic signals. Systematic improvements have now created limited access highways through the

Township in every direction. This represented a multi-million dollar public investment. This public investment resulted in a focus of private investment as well. New businesses have been attracted to the areas of interchanges or major junctions between the limited access roads and the existing two lane roads. This is the root cause of traffic congestion. As the figures

illustrate, the creation of access points slows down traffic by creating side friction. As land develops, road intersections and driveways also proliferate. The lesson of this is that both land use planning and transportation planning must be done in concert, especially in a rapidly developing community such as White Township.

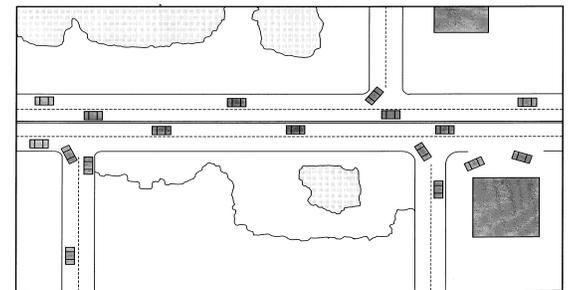
**Figure 1**

Scenic/rural  
 No side friction  
 Few crashes  
 900 to 1,200 vehicles per hour in each direction  
 No delays, efficient, not stressful  
 Average speed 45 miles per hour



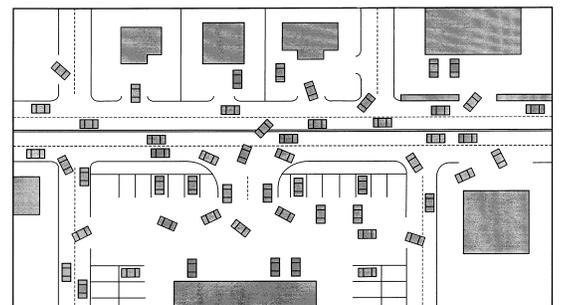
**Figure 2**

More commercial development  
 More side friction  
 A poorer traffic flow  
 Denser vehicle spacing  
 1,100 to 1,600 vehicles per hour in each direction  
 Average speed 30 miles per hour



**Figure 3**

Too much side friction  
 Excessive congestion  
 More crashes  
 Through traffic slowed  
 Too many driveways and intersections  
 Inadequate spacing between driveways and intersections  
 Too many conflict points and left turns  
 Highly stressful  
 1,300 to 2,000 vehicles per hour in each direction



## TRANSPORTATION DATA SHOW HOW TRAFFIC PATTERNS ARE DRIVEN BY DEVELOPMENT

Transportation planners normally categorize roadways based upon their function. Functional classes utilized by PennDOT and federal transportation agencies include the following:

**Arterials:** These are the roadways that carry traffic from one region or community to another region or community. Principle arterials are typically limited access roads with multiple lanes. Major arterials serve a similar intercommunity function but are not full limited access or expressway designs. Minor arterials are functionally similar but

almost always two-lane design.

**Collectors:** Collectors are the Intermediary roads in a transportation system. They essentially link the local road network to the arterials. In most small towns and suburban areas, collector roads are two lane with more open access. However, more importantly, collectors often have auxiliary lanes (intersectional turning lanes, center turning lanes, limited passing lanes).

**Local Roads:** These are the roads that primarily exist to provide individual properties

with access to the roadway network. They may link to collectors or directly to arterials.

Ideally, road usage should mirror functional classifications. Generally, local roads should carry less traffic than a collector or an arterial road. However, traffic patterns in White Township diverge from this pattern. Principal arterials do not carry most of the community's traffic. Several minor arterials and collectors are carrying much higher traffic. The result is localized areas of congestion, especially on minor arterials. This trend can be seen in the table below.

*A unique characteristic of traffic patterns in White Township is that principal arterials do not carry most of the community's traffic.*

Functional Class and Traffic Volumes of Major White Township Roadways			
White Township Roadways Road Name/Route Number	Segment Location	Functional Class	Average Vehicles Per Day
US Route 422	West of Philadelphia Street Exit	Principle Arterial; National Highway System	11,000
US Route 119	South of Route 422	Principle Arterial; National Highway System	9,400
US Route 119	North of Route 422	Principle Arterial; National Highway System	10,900
US Route 119	North of Jimmy Stewart Airport	Principle Arterial; National Highway System	5,100
Oakland Avenue/PA 286	North of Route 422 Interchange	Minor Arterial/Arterial	19,300
Wayne Avenue	South of Borough Line	Arterial	12,400
Philadelphia Street (Old 422)	At Borough line West	Minor Arterial	10,400
Ben Franklin	South of Philadelphia Street West	Arterial	7,900
Indian Springs Road	Between Oakland Ave. and Wayne Ave.	Arterial	8,900
Warren Road	At Oakland Ave Intersection	Collector	10,100
Warren Road	South of Ben Franklin Intersection	Collector	1,300
Route 954	North of Indiana Borough	Minor Collector	770
College Lodge Road	North of Philadelphia Street	Minor Collector	370

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

## GROWTH AND DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ROAD SYSTEM

While the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation owns and maintains about 68 miles of roads within the Township, the Township owns and is responsible for about 79 miles of road. Some of

these Township roads, such as Martin Road, have been owned by the Township since its incorporation. Many others, such as Mansfield Avenue, Nicole Lane, and Shady Drive, were privately con-

structed by developers and turned over to the Township for ownership and maintenance.

The design of these roads is subject to the Township subdivision and land development ordinance. In order to maximize land utilization, many residential developers have created intricate street systems, many of which have numerous dead end streets. While there are legitimate uses of dead-end streets with cul-de-sacs, their excessive use can concentrate traffic and also increase municipal maintenance costs.



This aerial photograph shows a subdivision in the Township. Excessive dead-end roads tend to concentrate traffic on a few access points.

## NON-ROADWAY TRANSPORTATION IN THE TOWNSHIP

While the roadway system is most utilized, the Township also has other modes of transportation. These include rail, air, and pedestrian systems.

The Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad transports coal to the Homer City generating plant. This line cuts through the heart of White Township, and contains several at-grade crossings in Indiana Borough. The line also hauls some scrap metals for area businesses. It can be expected that rail traffic will increase in the Township as fuel prices rise in the future. Particular attention will need to be given to at-grade rail/road intersections. White Township has three at-grade rail crossings (Rose Street, Martin Road and Braughler Lane). There are elevated crossings at Indian Springs Road and Route 119 South. PennDOT has an

overall rail safety project for the line in the current 12-Year Transportation Improvement Program, and safety improvements are also slated for the intersection of the rail line with Philadelphia Street in Indiana Borough.

White Township is also the home of Indiana County's only public airport. This facility is currently planning a runway expansion which will lengthen the runway from 4,000 feet to 5,000 feet.

The Township only has limited sidewalks. There are a few areas with sidewalks in the vicinity of the Indiana High School and the Grandview area. There is limited public transit available from IndiGo, the County Transportation Authority. Regular bus routes serve IUP, major commercial developments on Oakland Avenue, Ben Franklin and Philadelphia Street,

apartment complexes, and recreation sites.

In many suburban and rural communities, trail systems have developed to offer both recreation and an alternative means of transportation. White Township is home to a large portion of the Hoodlebug Trail. The Hoodlebug Trail is open year round for non-motorized activities, including biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. Currently, the trail extends from Indiana Borough to the confluence of Blacklick Creek and Two Lick Creek (near Blacklick, Pennsylvania). This extension was completed in 2005 as part of PennDOT's Route 119 widening project. The trail has historic importance as a former rail line, and portions of the trail parallel the prehistoric Catawba Path. A bikeway has also been established along part of Rose Street.

*While there are legitimate uses of dead-end streets with cul-de-sacs, their excessive use can concentrate traffic and also increase municipal maintenance costs.*

## TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN: USING PLANNING TO AVOID FUTURE CONGESTION

Minimizing and avoiding traffic congestion will involve a concerted effort by both the Township and developers to ensure that systematic improvements to the road system are coordinated with new development. The keystone of this policy is that growth and development should pay for itself. Toward that end, the Township has identified roads which are becoming stressed by high traffic. In

2003, White Township and Indiana Borough jointly participated in the Indiana Area Multi-Modal Mobility Study. This study included field counts of traffic flow and turning movements. Turning movements were graded on a standard letter based system based upon wait time of vehicles. This study is adopted by reference as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan. The summary results of it were

that the Township has identified a number of roads that are becoming stressed by excessive traffic and intersections that are either now failing or projected to fail with anticipated future growth. Growth was projected using building permits, and traffic was applied based upon a standard trip generation formula (see sidebar). The analytical results are summarized in the next tables.

List of Stressed Roads in White Township	
State Roads	Township Roads
Philadelphia Street West	Ben Franklin Road to Fleming Road
Warren Road	Shelley Drive
Oakland Avenue	Plaza Road
Ben Franklin and Indian Springs Road	Rustic Lodge Road
Wayne Avenue	Rose Street
South Sixth Street	Lucerne Road
286 East to Bypass	Ferguson Road
East Pike to Bypass	South 13 <sup>th</sup> Street
North Fourth Street to Hamill Road	Barclay Road

List of Stressed Intersections in White Township	
Intersection	Remarks
<b>Rose Street/Oakland Avenue</b>	Presently substandard service for left turning movements, service projected to worsen.
<b>Oakland Avenue/ Rustic Lodge Road</b>	Presently adequate level of service, left turn movements may begin to fail in the future.
<b>Oakland Avenue/Indian Springs Road/ Ben Franklin</b>	Left turn movements are already substandard. Level of service expected to worsen.
<b>Oakland Avenue/Trader Horn Drive</b>	Overall level of service presently adequate, increases in traffic are projected to decrease level of service.
<b>Oakland Avenue/Wal-Mart Drive</b>	Recent improvements have maintained adequate level of service. Additional growth may compromise this intersection in the future.
<b>Wayne Avenue/Indian Springs Road</b>	Current level of service adequate. Level of service may decrease significantly in the future.

### How Much Traffic Does Development Generate?

*The Institute of Transportation Engineers constantly studies traffic flow from existing developments to best determine the impact of future development. While the Institute maintains literally thousands of counts on specific developments, the following are offered as some very general ranges:*

**Single-Family Dwellings**  
6-12 trips per home, per day

**Apartment Dwellings**  
3 to 8 trips per dwelling unit, per day

**Retail Stores**  
35-330 trips per 1,000 square feet of store area

**Full-Service Restaurants**  
9-28 trips per employee

**Industrial Parks**  
52-140 trips per gross acre of land

## TRANSPORTATION POLICY TOOLS: ENSURING GROWTH PAYS FOR ITSELF WITHOUT INCREASING CONGESTION.

One of the key results of the transportation analysis is that continued growth will cause selective failures of the roadway system over the next 10-20 years. To prevent this, White Township will need to ensure that each new development is well planned, coordinated in the highway system, and makes necessary improvements where it accesses the existing roadway network.

Toward that end, the Planning Commission has already enacted policies to assist in implementation of the subdivision and land development ordinance. As feasible, the Township may make amendments to the subdivision and land development ordinance or other ordinances to better achieve these goals. The goal of these ordinances and policies will be to achieve the following.

**1. Traffic studies should be conducted prior to approval of major developments:** The traffic impacts of most kinds of development can be pro-

jected with some certainty. Developments which may have a major impact on the roadway system should provide the Township with an analysis of this impact. This is especially true in the vicinity of stressed intersections or roadway segments.

**2. Private development should bear the cost of physical improvements necessary to maintain or improve levels of service for abutting areas of the pre-existing roadway:**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code authorizes Township to link the approval of land developments to the completion of on-site improvements, including both streets within a bordering the development. These on-site improvements are not regarded as impact fees in Pennsylvania planning practice, as the improvement is regarded as on-site. However, the Township can either permit the developer to complete needed improvements to a public standard, or collect fees and coordinate systematic improvements. Needed

improvements might include road widening, turning lanes, or traffic control devices.

**3. All access points should be coordinated to the maximum extent possible. Where possible, access points should be shared or minimized:** Access points are the place where private driveways or public streets intersect the existing roadway system. As the illustration on page one of this Plan chapter illustrates, proliferation of access points is one of the most basic causes of traffic congestion. Basic access management coordination should be a part of every new development in the vicinity of stressed roads. Techniques can include ensuring corner lots access from the street with less traffic, placing new streets or driveways directly across from ones on the opposite side of the street, ensuring good corner clearance for entrance areas, and providing turning lanes. To facilitate good planning, these plans should consider ultimate build-out.



Wayne Avenue was once the commercial heart of the Township. It actually has better access management and greater capacity than Oakland Avenue. The Township would encourage a shifting of traffic to Wayne Avenue, as possible.

## TRANSPORTATION PROJECT PLANNING: MAKING SMART INVESTMENTS IN THE ROADWAY SYSTEM

White Township will participate fully in the regional and state transportation funding processes to maximize improvements to stressed roadways. At present the greatest local priority is Intersection improvements to Rose Street, and the eventual extension of Rose Street to Philadelphia Street. The Completion of "Rose Street II" would serve as a new collector road to connect Philadelphia Street and Oakland Avenue. Such a collector road would relieve traffic congestion on both Ben Franklin and lower Oakland Avenue. It would also reduce

the effect of many of the dead end streets in the neighborhood which have exacerbated congestion. Over time, other additional collector roads would help encourage this.

A major change to development patterns may come through the new Kolvalchick Convention and Athletic Complex. This IUP initiative will involve a 4,000-plus seat public arena, smaller auditorium, and multi-use space. This will have major impact upon traffic volumes along Wayne Avenue, and may spur new commercial develop-

ment as well. Post-construction traffic analysis will be very important. The Township ultimately believes that a long-term solution to roadway congestion lies in shifting 5,000 vehicles per day from Oakland Avenue to Wayne Avenue. Much of Wayne Avenue is of five-lane design with good access management. Over time, Wayne Avenue should become the signed entrance to IUP. The Township will work closely to support needed traffic improvements to ensure Wayne Avenue can support new development and hopefully relieve congestion elsewhere.

## LONG-TERM TRANSPORTATION PLANNING MAY REQUIRE ADVANCED PLANNING APPROACHES

Many congestion management planning techniques evolved in Southeastern Pennsylvania, where runaway growth threatened the very prosperity that new development had brought. These communities began to more fully utilize powers granted under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. As growth and development continue in White Township, use of these advanced planning tools may also be required. The two planning tools that may prove viable locally are Transportation Capital Improvement Programming and Official Mapping.

Transportation Capital Improvements Programming is authorized by Article V-A of the Planning Code. Under this article, a community may use its comprehensive plan, and growth trends as a basis to prepare a land use assumptions report. This report details anticipated growth and development on a township-wide basis (using the comprehensive plan, buildings permits and zoning map), including traffic projections. It is used for a detailed study of every roadway and intersection in the Township. The study analyzes current deficiencies, projected deficiencies, and the preliminary design of improvements necessary to maintain the desired level of service. At the point that the community commits to this process, they may begin collecting an impact fee toward paying for construction of these improvements. Upon completion of the capital improvements program, the impact fee may be adjusted to fund improvements anywhere within the impact district.

Communities have found that the costs to establish this program are often \$100,000

plus in transportation engineering and detailed planning costs. However, the resultant trip-based impact fees normally more than recoup the costs of establishing the program. One 50-lot residential subdivision can result in \$50,000 to \$75,000 in off-site impact fees. A retail super center can result in \$600,000 to \$900,000 in fees. This money can be used for Township roads or intersections, but can also be offered as match for State projects.

Transportation Capital Improvement Programming and the resultant impact fees are not a panacea. There are limits of the use of funds. For example, the impact fee districts must be carefully delineated. If funds were not spent, they must be returned. It is also clear from state enabling law that the program may not force new development to pay for pass through traffic or past mistakes. However, many major developers support impact fees, because they directly benefit from the resultant transportation improvements. Many developers also prefer the uniform application of assessments, rather than the possibility of wholly paying for improvements (as often required by PennDOT).

White Township should begin planning now to determine the feasibility of this planning tool. There may also be potential to establish joint impact fees with neighboring Indiana Borough.

The second planning tool that may serve White Township well is the official map. Official maps are authorized by Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. The official map is much more

than a map of existing roads and features. It is an ordinance that allows the community to identify *both existing and proposed*:

- Public streets
- Watercourses
- Public grounds, parks, playgrounds, and public open space
- Pedestrian ways and easements
- Stormwater management and Drainage easements

Once the map is created and an ordinance adopted, the Township may exercise either a right of first refusal or work to ensure that development conforms to the map. No development can occur within these areas without a resolution of these issues. For public grounds or parks, the Township would need to purchase the identified property. However, in the case of new public streets, or other facilities, the Township could plan to ensure a subdivision or land development conform to the official map.

The best use of official mapping in White Township would be the expansion and creation of a network of new collector roads. Such new roads could both relieve traffic congestion and add value to private land for development. Official mapping would represent a continuation of many of the policies that have made White Township a successful community, and can be adopted without zoning. Current priority for official map studies include a new collector road between Oakland Avenue and Warren Road. Rose Street II could also be part of such an ordinance.



Intersection of Philadelphia Street and Ben Franklin. This intersection has dedicated turn lanes but lacks protected permissive left turn signals.

## TOWNSHIP PLANNING WILL SUPPORT NON-HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

While a major priority of White Township’s transportation plan revolves around highway and street policies, alternative forms of transportation are a key means for eliminating congestion. The Township will support efforts to improve air, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian systems within the community.

**Air:** White Township supports efforts to improve the Indiana County-Jimmy Stewart Airport. Runway expansion would increase the use of this facility and bring potential economic benefits. The Township supports these improvements and will seek to protect the facility from adverse impacts. As the Township moves to implement its Land Use Plan, it will seek to avoid physical encroachments upon flight paths. It will also consider Pennsylvania Bureau of Aviation Airport Land Use Compatibility Guidelines in its land use policy implementation. In particular, the Township will seek to prevent sanitary landfills within proximity to the airport in order to avoid bird strike hazards.

**Rail:** White Township generally supports use of rail lines as an energy efficient form of transportation. However, expansions of rail service should be reviewed for land use compatibility. The Township may comment on crossing permit application and review them based upon standards within both this document and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

**Bicycle/Pedestrian:** Where feasible, roadway transportation improvements should contain appropriate improvements to bikeway and pedestrian systems. Guidance for this should be provided by determining the compatibility of pedestrian systems with the context of surrounding current and planned land uses. For example, areas near the identified Institutional Core, Traditional Small Town Neighborhoods, and Revitalization Target Areas are appropriate for either sidewalks or pedestrian trail systems. The Township supports the maintenance of the IUP “walking zone” where students may not receive commuter park-

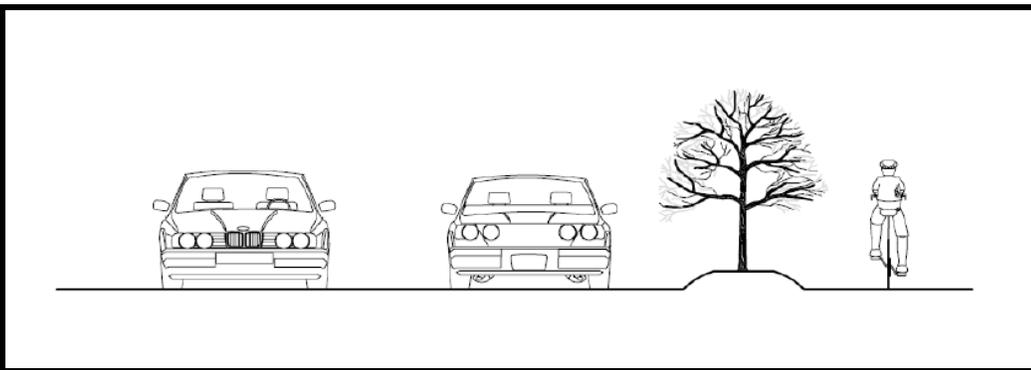
ing passes if they live within close proximity to campus. The Township would support improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure especially within such areas.

In more rural areas, sidewalks may not be appropriate, but trail and footpath systems can be. The Township will encourage this as a part of conservation development efforts. The Township also supports suburban and rural roadside bikeways as part of evolving context sensitive design solutions. Consideration will be made to create further roadside bike lanes based upon the Rose Street model. For high speed, higher traffic areas, separated bikeways may be a way to accommodate both car and bicycles.

Finally, it is important that planning for bicycle and pedestrian systems be planned to actually connect real users with real destinations. Over time, some congestion may be relieved through such transportation choices.



The Hoodlebug trail is important to recreation, conservation and alternative transportation for Township residents.



As this concept plan from the Clinton Township (Butler County) Comprehensive Plan illustrates, bicycle lanes and car lanes can safely co-exist, even on high traffic, high speed streets. White Township supports context-sensitive design for pedestrian and bicycle access.

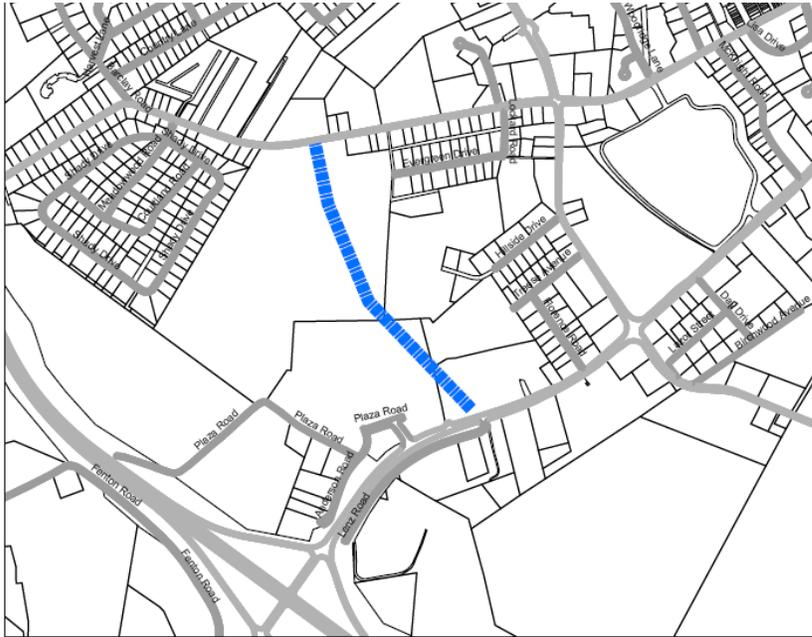


Small improvements, such as this shelter, make the trail more valuable to a variety of users.

## CONCEPT PLANS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following concept plans are not intended as final delineations, but have been prepared as concepts to guide further study of the need for additional collector roads through an official map ordinance.

### Concept Plan of New Collector Between Warren Road and Oakland Avenue



### Concept Plan of Continued Rose Street to Philadelphia Street



Other Concept Plan study areas may include:

- A secondary access road along Oakland Avenue between Eat-N Park and the Lenz Road/Wal-Mart Plaza
- A new connector Road between Lenz Road and either Indian Springs Road or Rustic Lodge Road
- A new road connecting the South Sixth Street Indiana Springs Road intersection and East Pike Road

## KEY TRANSPORTATION ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, the Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible:

- Use the Comprehensive Plan as a policy basis for requiring on-site transportation improvements by new subdivisions and land developments.
- Upgrade local ordinances to facilitate better design of transportation improvements, and coordinated access management.
- Ensure fair means to pay for needed on-site transportation improvements, through the subdivision ordinance and policies.
- Participate in the regional and State transportation funding process.
- Explore more detailed transportation planning through completion of a transportation capital improvement program.
- Explore adoption of official map ordinances to reserve crucial rights-of-way for new collector roads.

*Traffic congestion can threaten the quality of life of the community, but it can also affect the Township's economic success.*

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

Municipal comprehensive plans in Pennsylvania must 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.



PennDOT District 10 Offices in White Township.

In addition to meeting its obligations under the MPC, the Township is interested in ensuring that transportation planning be well coordinated between local government, private developers and state agencies (especially the Pa. Department of Transporta-

tion). The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee placed concerns about traffic congestion among their highest goals for this project. The Township will use this section of the Plan to both undertake

actions and as a measuring stick to ensure consistent public policy.

# PLAN FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## Summary of Issues and Policies

### ISSUES:

- This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is unique, in that the basic data gathering and analysis was conducted by Dr. Robert Begg's Planning Methods class at IUP.
- The Township has expanded community facilities and services to meet the needs of a growing community.
- Many community facilities needs are met through intergovernmental partnerships.
- Overall, Township facilities are in excellent condition. Some deficiencies have been corrected or are being corrected through capital improvements.

### Key Policies :

- Work with School District on a regular basis to compare population trends and their effect upon tax base and school facilities.
- Ensure water and sewer improvements help implement land use policies.
- Ensure that growth pay s for its own community facilities needs, rather than having citizens subsidize growth.

## EXPANDING PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH

Only fifty years ago, White Township was a rural community with only a few community facilities and services. The Township primarily managed the local road network. Water and sewer was largely provided through private wells and septic tanks. Recreation was informal.

As the community has grown, the Township has responded by offering more community facilities and services. Some of these (such as water and sewer) have been necessary to meet the needs of public health and safety. Others, such as recreation, have increased the quality of life for residents and helped to attract private investment.

Planning for community facilities and services involves finding out what level of services are needed. Then, the task is to maximize the local level of services to citizens for the least cost. Communities that can offer the widest range of facilities and services have increased chances to attract private investment. However, these investments must still be made with prudence, or the public money spent will exceed tax returns.

Overall, White Township has been very successful in maintaining a balance between maximizing public facilities and services at a reasonable cost to the community.



Young residents in the Township enjoying use of community facilities

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is unique, in that the basic data gathering and analysis was conducted by Dr. Robert Begg's Planning Methods class at IUP. Initially, the students met with the Township manager and planning consultant, and discussed the data collection needs of the Township. The students then undertook the interviews fieldwork, research, and basic analysis for this chapter, and presented their findings to the Township manager.

Overall, several trends are clear from this analysis. First, most community facilities and services are in excellent condition. Second, it is very im-

portant to note that many key facilities are intertwined between more than one unit of local government. In particular, there is a long history of cooperation between Indiana Borough and White Township.

A key policy for the Township's future is the need to continue offering high-quality services to Township residents at an affordable cost. The second important policy is to ensure that the need for future community facilities and growth remains constant. White Township is committed to the concept that growth should pay for itself and not be subsidized by current property owners or residents.

## THE TOWNSHIP IS DISTINGUISHED BY THE EXTENT AND DIVERSITY OF ITS EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

It is possible for a Township resident to gain an education from kindergarten to a PHD without ever leaving the community. The extent of these educational facilities is, in part, an explanation for the attraction of growth and development to the Township.

For municipal planning, the most important facility is the public school system, which represents the third taxing body and arm of local government. The Indiana Area School District prides itself in over 170 years of quality education. The district includes approximately 32,000 people including Indiana and Shelocta Boroughs as well as White and Armstrong Townships. With one senior high school, one junior high school, and four elementary schools, the district serves more than three thousand students. The district, with over 200 teachers, is above the National average of total teachers. More than \$12,000 are spent on each student, and this allows the district to serve the student body appropriately. With numerous awards, the Indiana Area School District is committed to providing quality education to the people of this area.

For the 2006-2007 school year, the student body is made up of 821 students from grades 10 through 12. These students attend one of four elementary schools (grades k-6), a junior high school (grades 7-9), and one senior high school (grades 10-12).

Two key municipal issues are whether the district's facilities will meet changing demographic trends and if growth and tax base structure will allow for a favorable tax base/service costs ratio. The



One unique characteristic of the district is that schools seem geographically well distributed, and older buildings, such as the 1925 junior high school building, remain in service. This serves both townships and boroughs within the district.

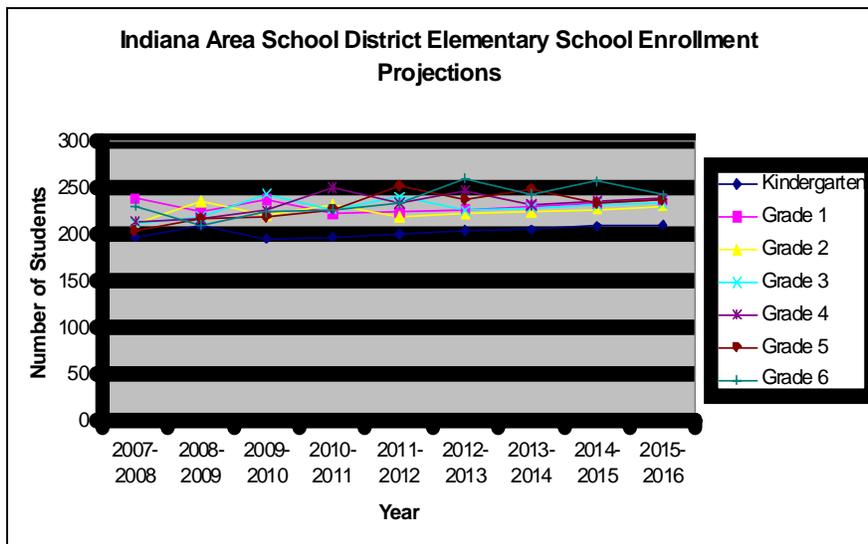
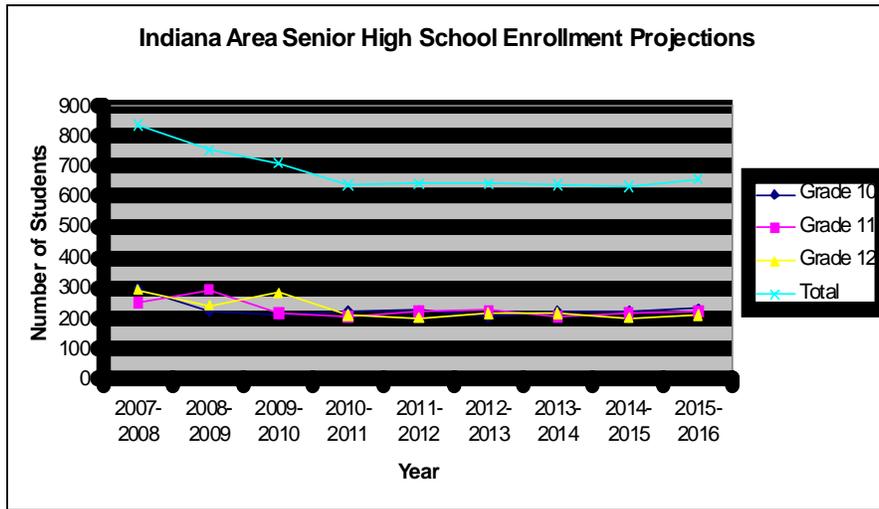
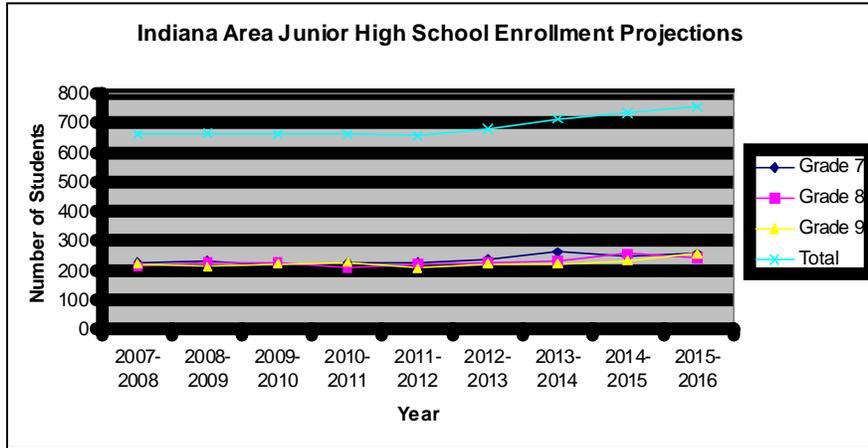
latter issue is discussed in the Plan for Interrelationships and the Housing Plan. This section will focus upon the issue of how demographic and growth trends might affect district enrollments. The Indiana Area School District has lost about 200 students. According to Pennsylvania Department of Education enrollment projections, the high school is projected to lose population in the near term, then stabilize. The junior high school is projected to gain enrollment over the short term. The elementary schools are projected to see basically stable enrollment. These projections are summarized in the three tables below.

It is important to note that these projections do not account for potential changes in residential development or the in-migration of new families from outside the district. This has an important ramification for state cost reimbursement towards the renovation or construction of new school facilities. The Township should work with other municipalities and the school district to ensure the veracity

of projections. If the State model seems inadequate, it is essential to develop a local model and offer it as an alternative in the event of a school expansion project. Likewise, it is important to not overbuild facilities without municipal input.

In addition to the public school district, the Township is home to a private parochial school, the Indiana County Technology Center, a portion of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and a branch of the Community College of Westmoreland County. Of these, the greatest impact upon local community development is from IUP. As discussed on the next page, IUP has grown phenomenally. Many Township residents are employed by the university or have jobs with private businesses, with some economic tie to IUP. The housing impact of students has been discussed in the Housing Plan chapter. However, it is important to plan for the reality that the transient student population uses virtually every other community facility as well, from recreation to water and sewer.

*It is possible for a Township resident to gain an education from kindergarten to a PHD without ever leaving the community.*



Source of Data: Pennsylvania Department of Education

**IUP Enrollment Trends**

The Indiana Normal School (now Indiana University of Pennsylvania) opened its doors on May 17, 1875 with 225 students. Since that time, enrollment has grown astoundingly, with a 2005-2006 enrollment of 14,081 students on campuses in three counties. Over this time, the student population has grown to become a major factor in County demographics.

For most of this century, students at IUP represented a small fraction of the local and County population.

Proportional differences may be even more striking due to the fact the censuses prior to 1980 did not treat students uniformly. Prior to 1940, the matter was left to enumerators. In the 1940 Census, students (except student nurses) were to be enumerated at their family residence elsewhere. From the 1950 Census to the present, students have been ascribed to the jurisdiction where they are resident while in school.

When enumeration differences are considered, the growth of IUP as a proportion of the County is even more striking, with students alone representing almost 15 percent of the County population, a majority of the Borough population, and perhaps 15 to 20 percent of the Township's population.

	IUP* No.	Percent
1911	1,202	NA
1920	1,016	-15.4
1930	1,558	+53.3
1940	1,554	-0.2
1950	1,724	+10.9
1960	3,317	+92.4
1970	9,397	+183.2
1980	11,420	+17.7
1990	13,080	+14.5
2000	13,082	0.0

## WATER AND SEWER SERVICES ARE PROVIDED THROUGH MULTI MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS

**Sanitary Sewer:** As shown on the attached map, sanitary sewage services are available or nearby about 60 percent of White Township's land area. Services are primarily provided by two entities. The largest service area is the White Township Municipal Authority. A small area in the northern portion of the Township is served by the Indiana County Municipal Services Authority. The Township has a cooperative agreement for sewage treatment with the Borough.

Both Indiana Borough and White Township have worked in recent years to expand capacity and replace sewer lines to reduce infiltration or leakage. As a result, the Township and Borough have met standards of a State-mandated corrective action plan, which formerly restricted development growth. The corrective actions have been so effective that the Township is currently in the process of redirecting flow to two small Township operated waste treatment plants and bringing the discharge to a greatly improved Indiana Borough wastewater treatment facility. The partnership is further augmented by a collaboration with the Indiana County Municipal Service Authority to provide public sanitary sewer to developments in the McKee Run drainage basin, which extends into the northern portion of White Township.

In addition to the Municipal Authority and the Indiana Borough agreement, White Township currently has other types of agreements governing sanitary sewer services such as subdivision agreements to operate small, independent wastewater treatment plants for residential subdivisions; or agreements with individual developers for reimbursing sewer line extension ex-

penses as taps and connections are installed.

In 2003, The Township updated its Official Sewage Facilities Plan (Act 537 Plan), which is incorporated by reference into this Plan. The Township has an advanced capital improvements program to address needed improvements in order to implement the Act 537 Plan.

**Water Supply:** Potable water in White Township is provided by three utility companies: Pennsylvania American Water, Central Indiana Water Authority, and Indiana County Municipal Services. The companies supply 4,060 connections providing approximately 3,054,819 gallons of water daily. Of these, no more than 3,790 are residential units. This means that of the 6,553 housing units in White Township in 2000 (Census 2000 SF-3), no fewer than 2,763 units rely on wells. It is estimated that the average daily usage of utility company services will increase to 3,610,600 gallons per day by the year 2020, and the providers are expanding operations to accommodate the growth.

**Policies:** White Township will support water and sewer upgrades in order to implement the Township's community development goals and objectives and its Land Use Plan. As a matter of policy, the Township's highest priority would be the extension of full water and sewer services into the area in the vicinity of the Indiana County Jimmy Stewart



Two Lick Creek is a major source of raw water for both Indiana Borough and White Township (Photo Courtesy of Coldwater Heritage Partnership)

Airport for encouragement of business parks and related uses. The Township will work to seek funding for service extensions in this area to support further local economic development. The Township will support water and sewer extensions in its future development target areas as consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. It would be expected that private developers would bear the initial costs of such extensions, unless there is an overriding public interest. The Township may require connection of new development to public systems based upon the size of the development and distance from the public line. Extensions in rural resource areas must be carefully planned to be compatible with rural resources.

The Township is also concerned about the adequate water supply and safe sewage disposal of systems outside the public system. New community systems should be planned to include maintenance. Safe yield studies may be required for major development proposed to use water wells. Finally, the Township will monitor and plan with the Borough relative to provision of private water to ensure future supplies.

### White Township Sewage System Capital Improvements

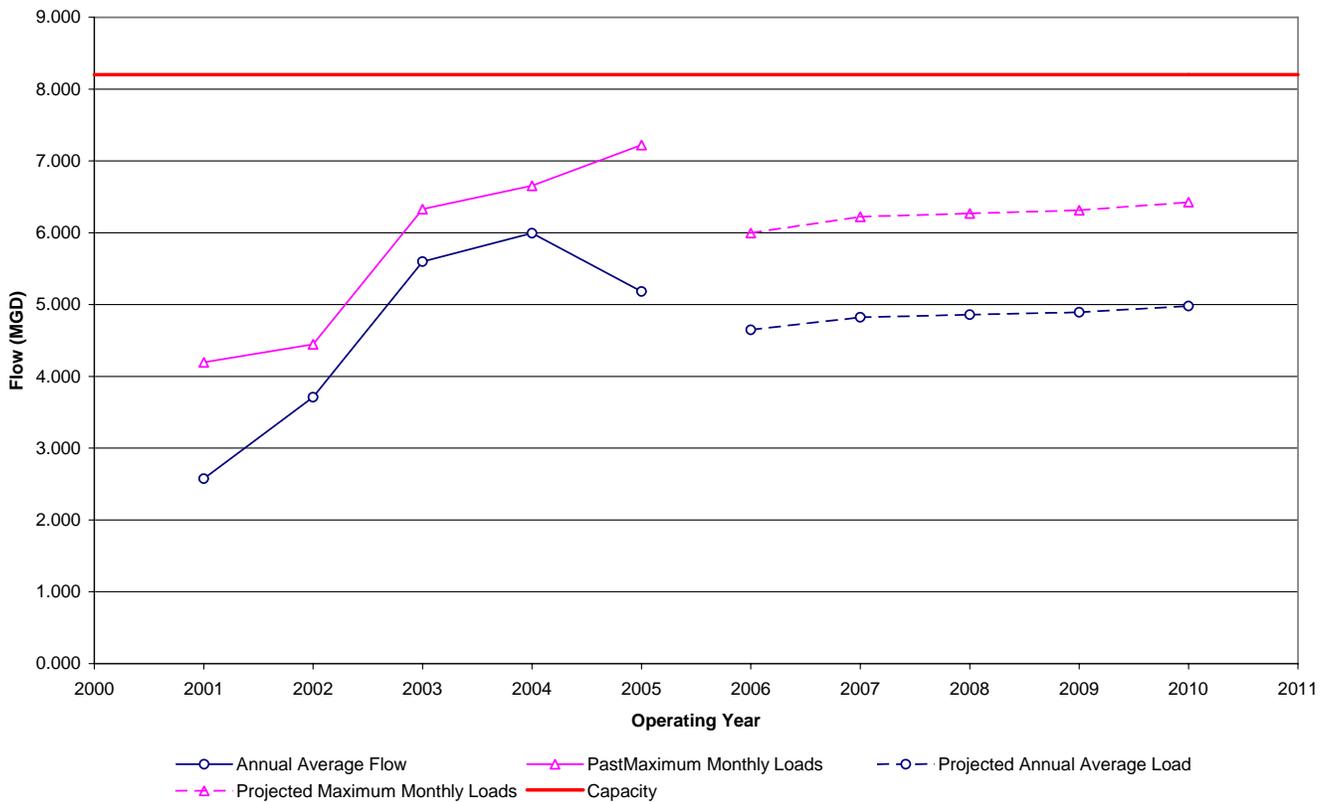
The Township is continually monitoring for inflow problems and maintaining sewer facilities, such as pump stations, treatment plants; rights-of-way and manholes. The list below includes major completed and planned improvements.

- 1991 - Replace problem sewer line in Monticello Development
- 1994 - East Pike Sewer Extension
- 1996 - West Pike Sewer Extension
- 1998 - Cherry Run Sewer Extension; Extended sewer line along Grandview Avenue and replace sewer collection line in Brookwood Estates.
- 2001 - Erma Street Pump Station Replacement
- 2005 - interceptor replace project
- 2008 - Rehab pleasant View Pump Station; convert Morganti Sewage Treatment Plant into the Lucerne Road Pump Station; replace pumps at S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street pump station
- 2009 - replace sewer line in Pleasant View development; convert Kittyhawk Sewage Treatment Plant to Kittyhawk Pump Station

Water Distribution Overview of White Township						
Provider	Connections	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Institutional	Average Gallons Per Day
PA-American Water	2,961	2,574	363	4	20	NA
Indiana County Municipal Service Authority	800	NA	NA	NA	1	250,000
Central Indiana Water Authority	298	290	7	1	0	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,060</b>				<b>21</b>	<b>3,054,819</b>

Note: The Indiana County Municipal Services Authority did not differentiate between residential, commercial, or industrial users in their Annual Water Supply Report.

### Indiana Borough Waste Treatment Facility, Hydraulic Loading Trends and Projections, 2000-2010



## RECREATION SERVICES ARE PROVIDED THROUGH AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION

There are several different types of parks and recreation facilities that serve White Township and its residents. Some are owned by the Township, and others are County- or borough-maintained, or are privately maintained. To better provide these services, the Indiana Recreation and Parks Commission was created in the late 1960s by a cooperative agreement between White Township, Indiana Borough, and the Indiana Area School District. In addition to the Commission, the Township maintains a recreation department to ensure proper maintenance of facilities. There are five recreation facilities owned and managed by White Township.

**Fourth Ward Park** is a small facility on the northern border of Indiana Borough and White Township. It is leased by the Borough from the Township. It has very few amenities and those existing are in need of repair or replacement. The lease will soon be ending, and the Township is in the process of planning for the future of this park.

**Getty Heights Park** is a park in the western part of the Township. It sits on 12 acres of land at the intersection of Rustic Lodge and Route 286. It has a large playground area, baseball field, volleyball court, and a large picnic pavilion and barbecue area. The park has recently undergone a \$144,000 renovation including new playground equipment, picnic equipment, parking, and improved drainage. Unique to Getty Heights Park is its excellent handicapped accessibility.

**White Township Recreation Complex:** In 1995, the Township purchased a 50-acre

parcel of land along East Pike Road for development as a recreation complex. Through the raising of local funds and with the assistance of State funds, construction started in December of 1998. The facilities completed and being utilized are four baseball fields, two soccer fields, a playground, a 2/3-mile walking trail, concession stand, restroom facilities, parking, two basketball courts, and two large picnic pavilions.

In 2006, the Township bought the adjacent private commercial ice skating center. This now houses an indoor tennis area with four tennis courts, and an indoor ice rink. Skate and ice rentals are available, and there are specific public skating hours. The facility is widely used by local groups.

**Kennedy King Park** is located in the Chevy Chase area of Indiana. It is currently outdated and is scheduled for a \$145,000 upgrade. Renovations began in 2007. Included in these renovations are a tot play area, new basketball courts, four tennis courts, and a parking area. To finish the project will take a second phase, which is not yet funded.

**White's Woods Nature Center** is a wooded area located just off North 12th Street in Indiana Borough and extending to Fulton Run Road (PA 954) via North 6th or North 9th Streets. The approximately 250 acres are owned by White Township and maintained by the Indiana Area Recreation and Parks Commission. This site offers many enjoyable activities, including about 6 miles of trails that intersect with one another and connect to the IUP Co-op Recreation Park. It has 5 miles of well-maintained hik-

ing, biking, and ski trails, and expansive natural areas.

In addition to the aforementioned Township parks, there are many recreation facilities in the Township owned by other entities. The base inventory of these is included on the summary on the next page. While not Township-owned, they do provide a variety of recreational opportunities, and the Township does not need to replicate these services.

**Policies and Actions:** The availability of many recreation facilities has contributed significantly to White Township's recent growth. A major future policy concern is how changing demographics and house types will affect both the type of recreation needed and the costs.

Historically, a single-family residence on a large lot in the Township met basic recreation needs within the lot, and allowed the Township to focus on community needs. As density increases through condominium units or apartments, recreation needs become more pronounced. Recreation costs per capita may increase for the Township without a corresponding increase in revenue. As a means to prevent such a negative situation, the Municipalities Planning Code permits the reservation of land for recreation, or the payment of fees in lieu of land in the form of a recreation impact fee. The Township should conduct further analysis about level of services and investigate the need for such an ordinance. Particular focus should be given to the disparately high recreation impact of higher-density housing types.

*A major future policy concern is how changing demographics and house types will affect both the type of recreation needed and the costs.*

## OVERVIEW OF RECREATION FACILITIES IN THE TOWNSHIP

### Summary Inventory of Facilities

	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Football Field	Baseball Fields	Soccer Fields	Golf Course	Track	Playground	Pool	Fitness Center	Ice Skating	Hiking	Biking Trails	Exercise Trails	Frisbee Golf	Senior Area	Handicapped Facilities	Concession Area	Parking	Bike Racks	Picnic Area	Grills	Dining/Banquet Hall	Day Care	Summer Day Camp
Fourth Ward Park																			X						
Getty Heights Park				X				X							X		X		X		X	X			
Hoodlebug Trail												X	X						X						
Indian Springs Golf and Country Club						X												X	X				X		
Indiana Area School District	X		X				X	X											X	X					
Indiana YMCA	X						?	X	X										X				X	X	
IUP Athletic Facilities	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X			X						X						
IUP College Lodge												X	X	X					X		X	X	X		
IUP Co-op Park				X															X		X	X			
Kennedy-King Park	X	X		X				X											X						
Mack Park and County Fair Grounds			X					X	X									X	X		X	X			
White Township Recreation Center		X		X	X		X				X			X		X		X	X		X	X			
White's Woods												X	X	X					X						



Fourth Ward Park



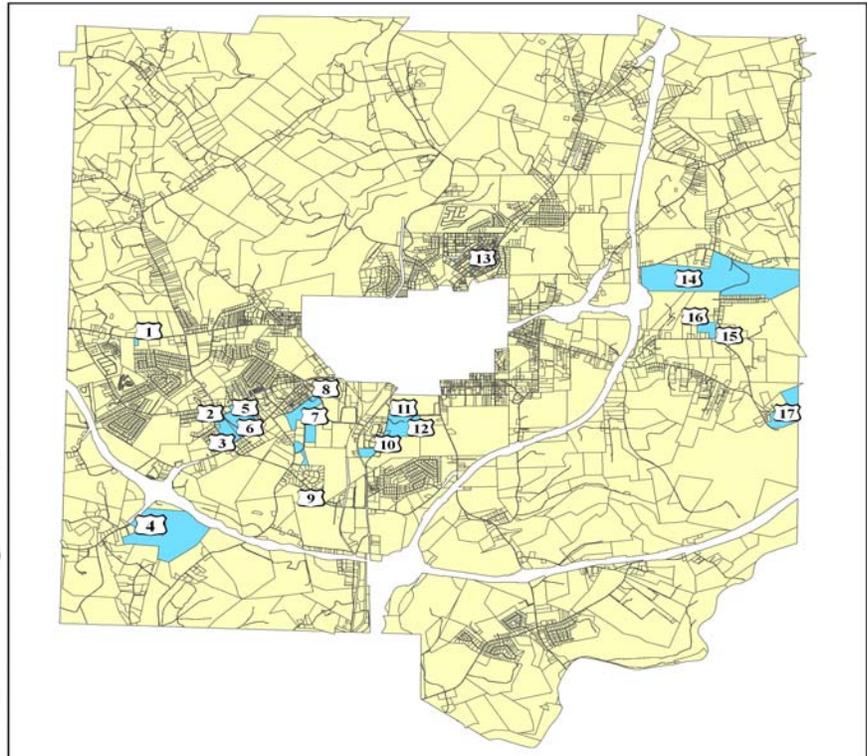
White Township Recreation Complex

## THE TOWNSHIP IS HOME TO A LARGE NUMBER OF OTHER GENERAL GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AND OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The map below was prepared by the IUP Planning Methods class. It illustrates the broad extent of specialized community facilities within the Township.

### Community and Government Facilities in White Township

1. Indiana County Assistance Office
2. Indiana Volunteer Fire Association
3. PennDOT Engineering District 10-0 and Indiana County Maintenance District 10-4
4. Pennsylvania State Police Barracks
5. Pennsylvania Driver's License Center
6. Indiana County Tourist Bureau
7. Indiana County Emergency Management
8. Indiana County Transit Authority - IndiGO
9. White Township Municipal Building
10. Social Security Office
11. Citizen's Ambulance Service, Inc.
12. Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC)
13. Chevy Chase Community Center
14. Indiana County - Jimmy Stewart Airport
15. Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
16. U.S. Army National Guard
17. PA Game Commission State Game Lands



Other community facilities include telephone, electric, and natural gas services provided by private companies regulated by the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC). At one time, planners analyzed these utilities to ensure adequate levels. However, there are now nearly uniform complete levels of utility services in many areas. Interconnection of electric and telephone services and increasingly complex regulatory structures make such analysis moot. However, many communities are becoming concerned about high-speed Internet access, and the presence of fiber optic cables. Internet services are not regu-

lated by the Pennsylvania PUC.

There is presently high-speed Internet access available in a relatively small portion of White Township. The Township has placed a policy priority on extension of wireless "hot spot" access and/or fiber optic Internet service within all of its identified growth or revitalization areas, as depicted on the Community Development Goals and Objectives map. This service is essential to ensure continued economic growth and residential quality of life.



The White Township Municipal Building is located on Indian Springs Road. In 2007, the Township purchased an adjacent lot and structure (formerly a dwelling).

## TOWNSHIP FISCAL STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Central to this municipal Comprehensive Plan is the government operation and facilities of White Township. The Township maintains its offices, municipal garage, and stockpile on Indian Springs Road. The location of the municipal complex is well situated within the current growth area and future growth target areas.

The Township has an enviable financial performance record. As mentioned in the Plan for Land Use Chapter, municipal revenues come from the Earned Income Tax, Realty Transfer Tax, and Municipal Services Tax. The Township has a sewer reserve of about 1.2 million dollars, and has a general reserve of 2.6 million dollars. The largest area of expenditures is for basic public facilities (roads, streets, sewer), followed by general government costs.

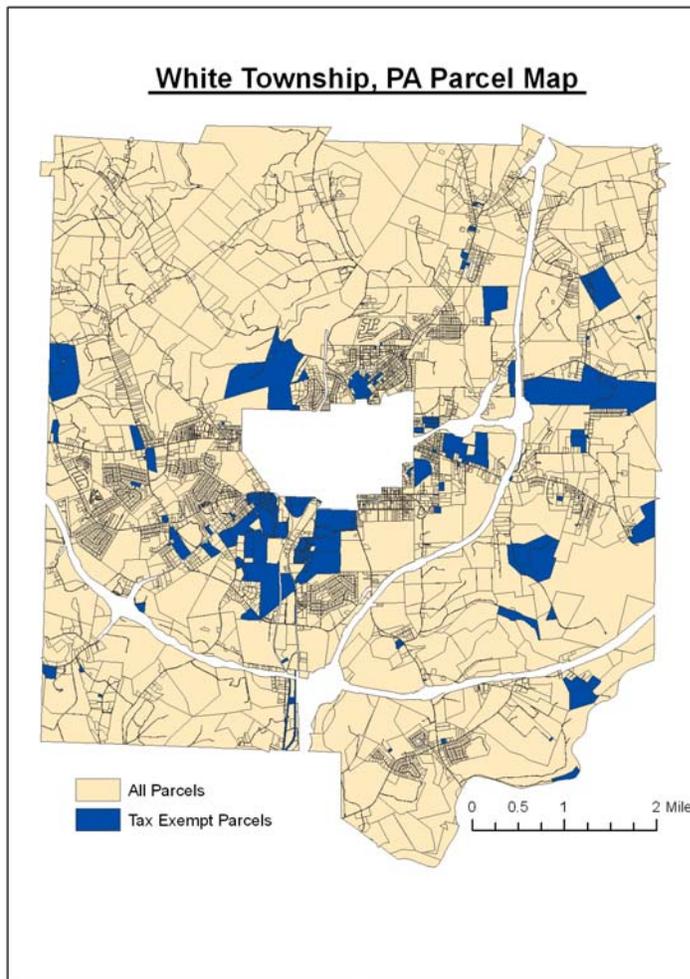
The great financial challenge to the Township's future is how changes in types of development will affect this approach to revenue. Careful land use planning may allow a continuation of the presently successful fiscal planning. The Township's revenues are based largely upon single family dwellings occupied by households with earned income, or the transfer of real estate that is a natural consequence of development. If the amount of development or the type of development changes, this may necessitate changes to revenue policies. However, this must be analyzed periodically to determine the effect of change.

One means to accomplish such monitoring is through Geographic Infor-

mation Systems (GIS) technology. With the creation of parcel based GIS maps, as shown below, The Township can monitor changes to development potential fiscal impacts of each change. A simple example of this type of mapping is shown below, in a map created by IUP students of tax exempt parcels.

The other side of sound fiscal policy is the careful management of expenditures. Recently the Township has become concerned about rising energy costs and the effect of these costs upon necessary government functions. From the costs for electricity for

traffic lights to road maintenance fuel use, rising energy costs will jeopardize the financial policies of the municipality. The Township intends to prepare a formal energy conservation plan with an emphasis upon energy conservation in local government activities. This plan will examine such techniques as Light Emitting Diode LED lighting for street and traffic lights, fuel consumption of Township vehicles, and energy audits for Township buildings.



Parcel based computer mapping allow continual monitoring of changes to development in the Township.

*The Township has an enviable financial performance record.*

## KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, the Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible:

- Cooperate with the School District to prepare model enrollment projections which are based upon building permit and local demographic trends to ensure adequate sizing of school facilities.
- Prioritize extension of full public water and sewer facilities in the vicinity of the Indiana County Jimmy Stewart Airport in order to encourage job-creating nonresidential development opportunities.
- Support infrastructure development within target growth areas, but ensure that the financing of these extensions are self-sustaining.
- Continue aggressive capital improvements budgeting for public sewer.
- Examine adoption of an "Official Recreation Plan" as a prerequisite for the enactment of a recreation impact fee. Special attention should be given to disparate impact of various housing types upon recreation resources.
- Prioritize continued development of high-speed Internet access and fiber optic infrastructure.
- Use computer based parcel maps to monitor changes to development and the potential fiscal impact of development.
- Prepare a Township energy conservation plan to minimize energy expenditures for necessary local government functions

*There must be a relationship between public service costs and anticipated revenues in order to maintain the fiscal responsibility that citizens expect.*

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

Like the other chapters in the White Township Comprehensive Plan, a plan for community facilities and public utilities is required by Pennsylvania Planning Law. This chapter of the Code has no mandatory content, but authorizes the municipality to plan for public and private education, recreation, municipal buildings, water supply and distribution, sewerage and waste treatment, and similar facilities as it sees fit.

The need to plan for community facilities was key to two of the goals established for this



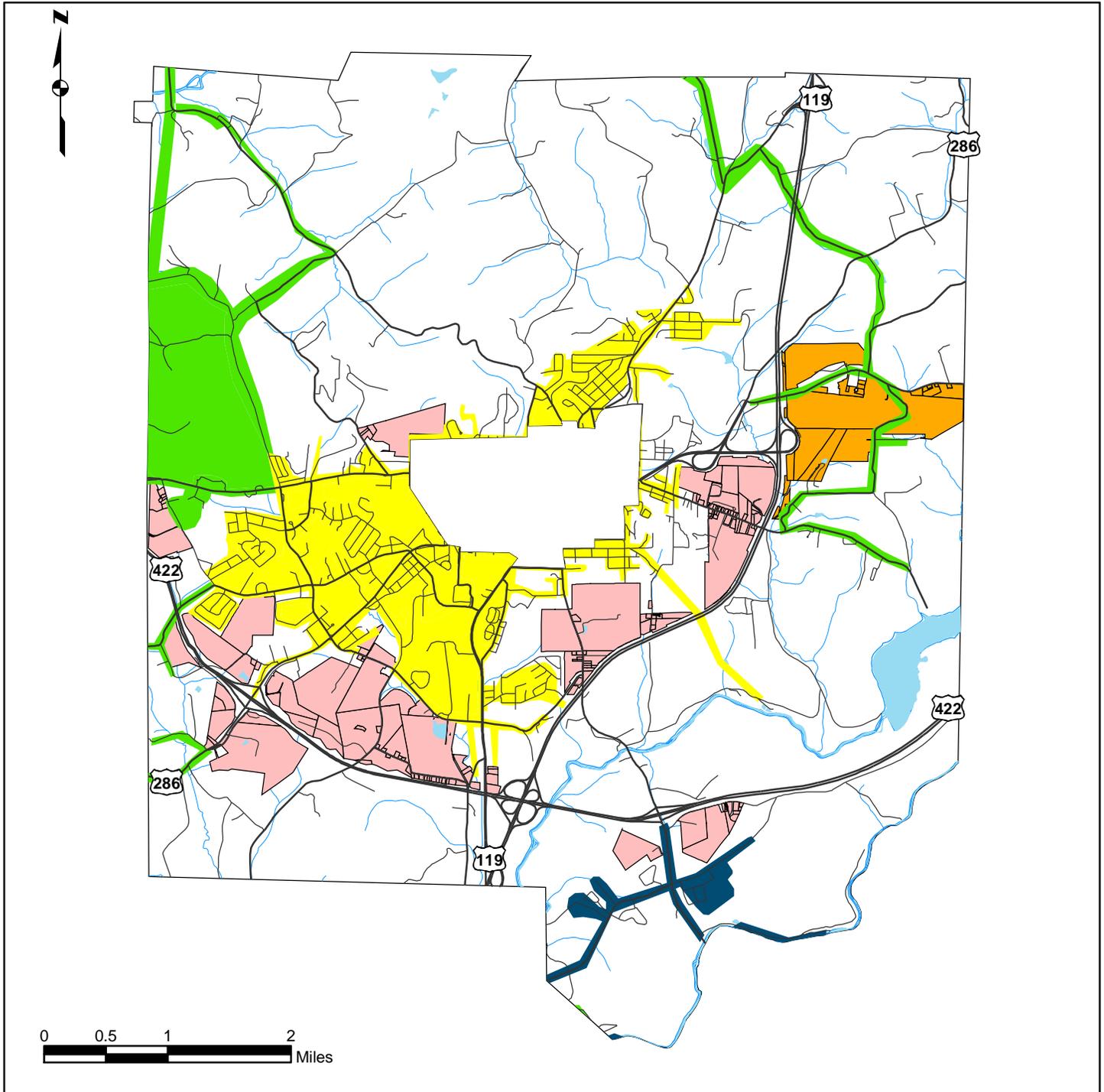
**Offering a good range of well-maintained community facilities at an attractive cost attracts beneficial development.**

Plan by the steering committee. First was "To create a list of things that need to be done in order to remain a successful community." More directly was the expectation that the Plan would "Develop infra-

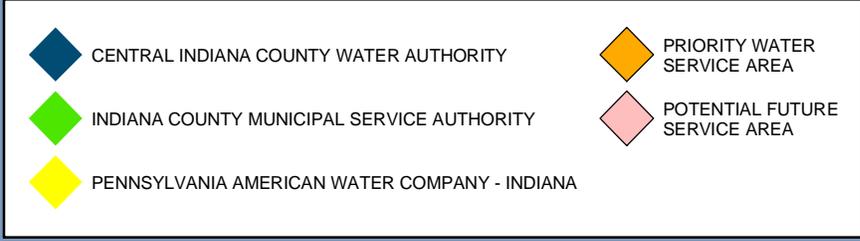
structure and investment policies that will direct growth."

As the planning process progressed, the process began to focus on the issue of providing community facilities in the context of land use planning and public revenues. The Township believes its enviable range and quality of community facilities can attract beneficial private investment, but there must be a relationship between public service costs and anticipated revenues in order to maintain the fiscal responsibility that citizens expect.

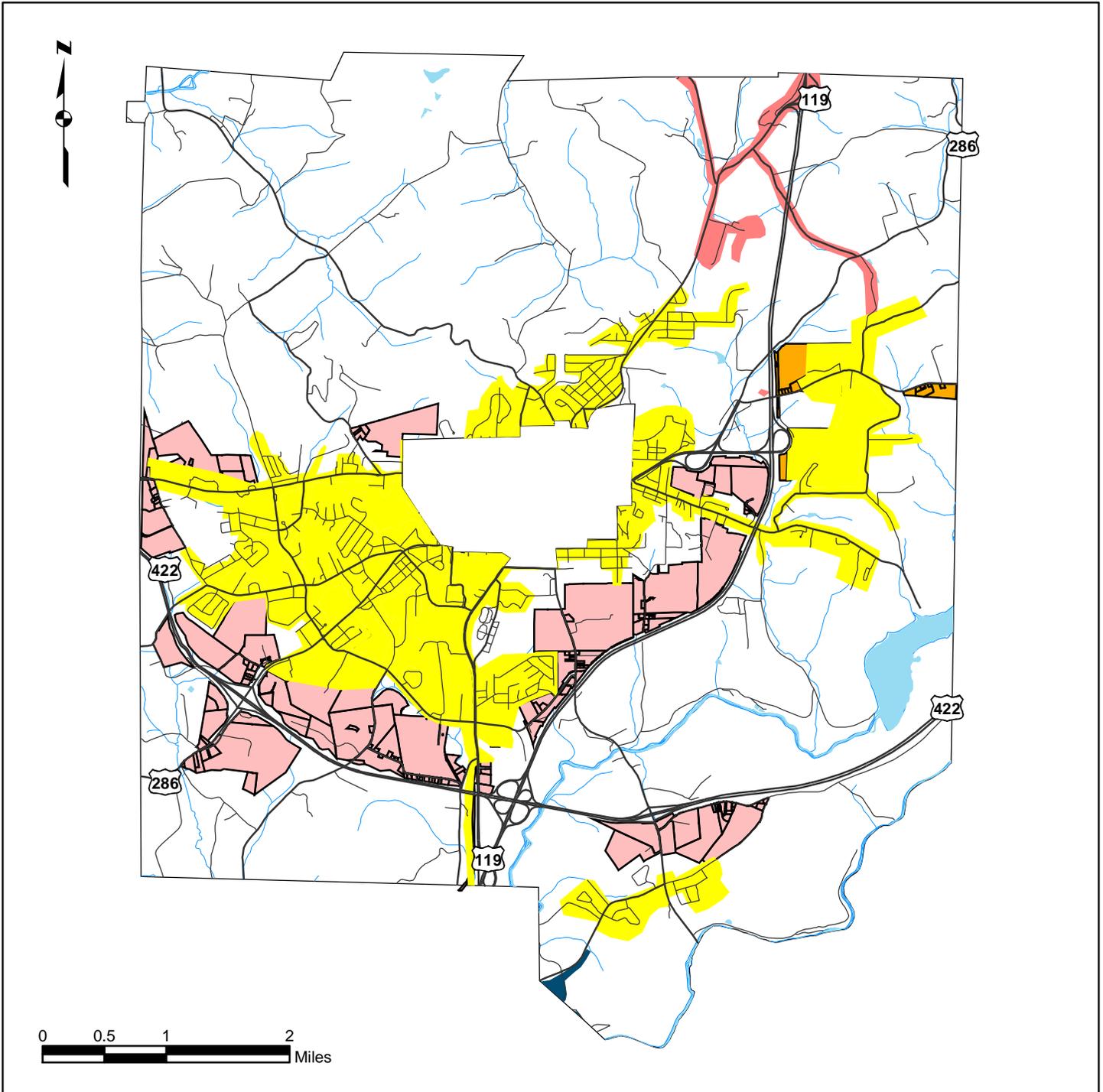
# White Township Comprehensive Plan



Map 7  
Future Water  
Service



# White Township Comprehensive Plan



Map 8  
Future Sewer  
Service

-  CENTRAL INDIANA COUNTY
-  PRIORITY SEWER SERVICE AREA
-  POTENTIAL FUTURE SERVICE AREA
-  INDIANA COUNTY MUNICIPAL SERVICE AUTHORITY
-  WHITE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

# PLAN FOR INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

## Summary of Issues and Policies

### ISSUES:

During the preparation of this plan, the Commonwealth offered financial assistance for joint comprehensive planning by both White Township and Indiana Borough.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code offers significant incentives for intergovernmental cooperative planning without loss of local autonomy.

### Key Policies :

- Both Indiana Borough and White Township should become fully informed about multi-municipal planning incentives.
- The basis for such planning should focus on areas of shared agreement, rather than areas of divergent opinion.
- Shared issues include the impact of IUP, how different tax policies create different fiscal impacts in each community, and shared services.
- White Township has achieved land use planning compatibility with all neighboring municipalities.

## INDIANA BOROUGH AND WHITE TOWNSHIP EXPLORE JOINT PLANNING

No community exists in isolation from any other. Connections include economics, when residents routinely cross municipal boundaries to work or shop. Most municipalities share infrastructure to at least some extent.

In some cases, municipalities have a long history of shared services and an intertwined economy. This is the case of the relationship between White Township and Indiana Borough. The Township and Borough share water and sewer service systems, library services, recreation programming, fire protection, and other facilities and services. They also are both impacted by the presence of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, with its benefits, and planning challenges (such as student housing and traffic congestion).

During the preparation of the White Township Comprehensive Plan, the Borough of Indiana made the decision to update its comprehensive plan as well. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development supported these efforts by offering a Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance grant to the two communities. This grant was offered to both complete the planning process and implement the plan through updated ordinances. Because of the time disparity between the two planning processes, DCED approved an



This enhanced aerial image shows the Grandview neighborhood along the White Township-Indiana Borough line. This illustrates graphically how streets, homes, and even lots are often shared between the two municipalities.

intergovernmental action plan as a means to rectify any differences between policy planning within the two communities. This Plan for Interrelationships represents a first step in the intergovernmental action plan process by identifying issues and opportunities for intergovernmental actions, based upon common sense cooperation.

The existing comprehensive plan that currently serves both communities is also a regional plan, completed for both the Township of White and the Borough of Indiana in 1963. However, as with many plans more than 40 years old. The plan and its recommen-

dations have largely been forgotten. The LUPTAP grant represented a unique opportunity to not only update the principal land use policy document for each municipality, but also to explore avenues for further cooperation in fulfilling individual goals.

While the relationship between White Township and Indiana Borough is key to this planning process, other relationships are important as well. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will also explore relationships with the County, School District, and other neighboring municipalities.

## THE COMMONWEALTH'S PLANNING LAWS OFFER SIGNIFICANT INCENTIVES FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

In July 2001, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code was amended to create a definition, standards and powers relative to a multi-municipal plan. Acts 67 and 68 revolutionized community planning in Pennsylvania. The changed law offers a way to cooperate on major community planning issues while still allowing each local government to retain its autonomy.

Communities that choose to prepare a multi-municipal comprehensive plan are given further authority to plan for the entire community. If the plan is adopted, the municipalities are further empowered to prepare an intergovernmental implementation agreement. A summary of the additional powers includes the following:

The municipalities may designate growth areas for 20-year development at one-plus unit per acre where public services are provided or planned. The community may also designate future growth areas for longer term growth and orderly extension of services. Participants may designate rural resource areas for low-density, rural development where publicly-financed services are not intended.

They may plan for the accommodation of all categories of land uses within the entire area of the plan, without all uses being provided for in each municipality, and enjoy a measure of protection from exclusionary zoning challenges within the entire area of the plan (without all uses being provided for in each municipality).

They may plan for *developments of regional significance and impact* by creating intergovernmental review standards and processes. Municipalities will be given more favorable state decisions regarding funding requests and certain facilities permitted by the State.

Municipalities may share tax revenues and fees. Municipalities may adopt a voluntary transfer of development rights program enabling transfer of densities or other rights between municipalities in exchange for conservation agreements elsewhere.

Municipalities may adopt specific plans to guide development, in greater detail, of specific non-residential properties. These specific plans may override zoning or subdivision regulations on a site-specific basis.

*Acts 67 and 68 revolutionized community planning in Pennsylvania. The changed law offers a way to cooperate on major community planning issues while still allowing each local government to retain its autonomy.*

### Key Advantages of Multi-Municipal Planning:

*More favorable review of grant and State loan requests.*

*Protection from exclusionary zoning challenges, in that each municipality need not plan for all uses within its own boundary.*

*Power to share infrastructure investments and subsequent tax base across municipal lines.*

*Power to prepare specific plans that can avoid spot zoning challenges and result in better designed development.*

*These powers are all enabled by an intergovernmental cooperative implementation agreement. The agreement is similar to many that municipalities routinely enter into for sharing road equipment or utilities, except that it covers planning and zoning.*

## PLANNING CAN LEAD TO COMMON SENSE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Prior to Acts 67 and 68 of 2001, municipalities that wished to jointly implement comprehensive plans were somewhat constrained by the law. Joint planning commissions and joint zoning were possible, but it was a very cumbersome process, that resulted in the loss of individual municipal autonomy. Now, for communities that have adopted a multi-municipal comprehensive plan, implementation can be through a simple intergovernmental agreement as sharing road equipment. However, communities often have disagreements over such issues as fair cost share and perceived competition for development. These disagreements are real and should not be ignored. Conversely, they should not be the subject of cooperative planning. Cooperative planning works best when it is built upon a base of shared areas of agreement. It is also essential that all participants believe they are meeting and planning together as equals. Each community must recognize the autonomy of the other in directing its own affairs.

There are many differences between Indiana Borough and White Township. One community has traditionally guided development through zoning and the other through a very advanced subdivision and land development ordinance. The Borough supplies local police and the Township relies upon the Pennsylvania State Police. Taxation policies are very different. White Township has a more complete array of recreational facilities, many of which are freely used by Borough residents.

In spite of these differences, there are many similarities between the two communities and many shared issues.

Foremost among these is the presence of IUP and its impact upon nearly every aspect



One of the greatest shared aspects of both Indiana Borough and White Township is the tremendous impact of the IUP student population.

of community life. Due simply to the size of the student population, they have an effect upon the housing market, community facilities and services, traffic, and the economy. Minimizing the impacts of student housing upon permanent residents is an equal concern. Encouraging students to reside near campus and walk, rather than driving is in both municipalities best interest. Design and development decisions by IUP will impact each community as well.

Other shared concerns revolve around the many inter-linked community facilities and infrastructure. The Two communities share water providers, sewage treatment, fire protection, recreation management, and many streets. Previous cooperative planning, included many transportation planning projects, such as the Indiana Area Multi-Modal Mobility Study (which was a major reference for this Comprehensive Plan).

These shared concerns, within a recognition of mutual autonomy, are the most real-

istic basis for intergovernmental cooperation. Recognizing this, each community can maximize the use of innovative planning techniques allowed by Pennsylvania law to their own best benefit. For example, multi-municipal implementation agreements allow zoned communities to treat the entire area being planned for as a single entity for the purposes for exclusionary zoning protection. If one of two communities can agree to host various housing types or other land uses, the other community need not make provision for that type of development. In simple terms, only one community might need to host future student housing developments, or big box retail.

An understanding of tax base implications of planning can help support such initiatives. The following hypothetical scenarios details how the different tax policies of each community create very different fiscal results for identical developments.

*A common sense  
basis for  
intergovernmental  
cooperation begins  
with a recognition  
of each  
community's right  
to manage its own  
affairs.*

## IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE TOWNSHIP BORDER

### Applying Tax Base Scenarios to Future Planning

An emphasis of this Plan has been the fiscal impacts of development upon township service costs. The following represent the general effect of three hypothetical future housing developments upon the public service/public revenues of both Indiana Borough and White Township. Such scenarios can only be theoretical, as it can be impossible to determine exactly who might actually live in a house, how many children they might have, and how much money they might make. The scenarios were developed using formulas

developed by Professor Tim Kelsey of Penn State in his book, *Costs and Revenues of Residential Development*.

The material on this page explains how residential development can affect the community. Building upon material included under the Housing Plan, the project planner used this information to construct three fictitious future developments. Each development was 25 homes, but the costs and resident types are different. The incomes of residents and home prices were modeled from real-world examples, and real estate rates were applied.

An analysis was then run on each fictional development to see how it would impact public services costs and tax revenues in White Township, Indiana Borough, and the Indiana Area School District.

The results of this analysis are detailed on the next page.

### Tax and Service Summary of Each Municipality

The Indiana Area School District taxes real estate at a rate of 88.18 mills. Each new student costs the district \$9,420 to provide school services.

White Township: No real estate tax. Major public services include many parks facilities and programming, support of volunteer fire protection, road maintenance, public sewer in some areas and general government.

Indiana Borough: Real estate tax at 21.63 mills. Major public services include professional police, limited recreation, support of volunteer fire protection, universal public sewer, and general government.

### Understanding Tax Revenues and Public Service Costs

Most new developments generate revenue for the host municipality through taxes. Homes in residential developments typically pay real estate tax, which is based upon a proportion of the theoretical value of the home. The school district and host township or borough independently set the rates of any real estate tax. The municipality and school district also equally share a one percent tax on residents' earned income.

Residential developments also typically require public services, but the ratio of these is linked to the people living there and the services offered by the municipality. The range of municipal services that can affect public service costs include :

**Roads:** Seasonal maintenance (snow plowing) and long-term maintenance ( repair and repaving)

**Public Safety:** Police (if provided by the municipality) and fire (may be professional or volunteer)

**Recreation:** Park facilities and programming

**General Government:** Everyday municipal functions, such as record keeping, mapping, review of developments, and code enforcement

**Education:** The cost of providing public school buildings and ongoing education costs, such as salaries and transportation of students

General impacts of residents upon taxing bodies vary tremendously based upon family composition and income. Childless households are typically a boon to the school district. They continue to pay both earned income and property taxes, while needing no direct services by the district. Conversely, developments with large numbers of children, lower valued real estate, and lower earned incomes can cost school districts more to provide education than the taxes generated. For the municipal taxing body, high income households in expensive homes, tends to be a windfall, regardless of occupants. Low value taxables can be a drain. Less favorable ratios can also be seen where there is low real estate tax rates, combined with low *earned* income. An example of this are households whose income does not come from wages, such as retirees.

## FISCAL EFFECT OF THREE HYPOTHETICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Scenario/ Neighborhood Type	“Empty Nest Acres” 25 Condos for 55+ Persons	“Hilltop Estates” 25 Single-Family Dwellings for Upper- Income Households	“Starter-Family Lane” 25 Lower- Priced Single-Family Dwellings for Young Families
Projected Cost of Homes	\$254,000	\$325,000	\$189,000
Median Household Income of New Resi-	\$44,700	\$88,000	\$35,000
Number of New Residents	50	55	75
Number of New School Students	6	21	25

### Fiscal Impact of Each Development Upon the School District

	New Revenues	New Costs	Net Fiscal Impact
“Empty Nest Acres”	\$140,195	\$56,522	+\$83,673
“Hilltop Estates”	\$289,899	\$197,828	+\$92,071
“Starter Family Lane”	\$227,550	\$235,509	-\$7,959

### Fiscal Impact of Each Development Upon Indiana Borough

	New Revenues	New Costs	Net Fiscal Impact
“Empty Nest Acres”	\$54,963	\$24,356	+\$30,607
“Hilltop Estates”	\$70,477	\$26,792	+\$43,685
“Starter Family Lane”	\$56,237	\$36,535	+\$11,741

### Fiscal Impact of Each Development Upon White Township

	New Revenues	New Costs	Net Fiscal Impact
“Empty Nest Acres”	\$14,660	\$16,300	-\$1,640
“Hilltop Estates”	\$21,011	\$18,085	+\$2,926
“Starter Family Lane”	\$18,027	\$24,506	-\$6,479

**Conclusions:** Almost any new residential development would appear to benefit the Borough. White Township must rely upon upper levels of income, to gain a service benefit due to their unique tax structure. This may be of a benefit for intergovernmental planning wherein the Borough could host developments that would not be fiscally prudent for the Township. Ironically, the inflated local real estate market for student rentals discourages affordable family housing within the Borough.

## KEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, the Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible:

- More fully explore pragmatic advantages of shared planning techniques in concert with Indiana Borough, including the potential for an intergovernmental implementation agreement.
- Explore shared land use planning based upon mutually advantageous tax/service costs basis.
- Ignore points of conflict within formal planning documents. Intergovernmental agreements should focus on genuine areas of agreement.
- This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan should become the basis for more in-depth intergovernmental action planning

*Intergovernmental planning will be most successful where it builds upon consensus between two local governments. Areas of conflict should be handled by other means.*

## WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

The MPC requires both a statement of the interrelationship among the various plan components and a statement that the municipal Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the existing development, planning, and proposed development in neighboring municipalities.

The entirety of the White Township Comprehensive Plan seeks to ensure consistency of the document by basing each plan chapter on the original community development goals and objectives. As these community development goals and objectives adhere rigidly to the MPC standards of location, character and timing, consistency is ensured.

Compatibility with neighboring municipalities has been a part of the Township's planning process as well. Community

development goals for areas which border Indiana Borough are mostly designated as small town neighborhoods or part of the institutional core area. A small area north of the Borough is designated for rural resource uses, consistent with current land use. There is one small planned commercial area that borders Philadelphia Street near the Borough, but this is also generally consistent with current land use.

Among neighboring townships, only Center Township has a comprehensive plan. Center Township is a participant in the Southern Indiana County Cooperative Communities Comprehensive Plan. The northern border of Center Township constitutes the southern border of White Township. Center Township's plan recommends most of this border area as open

space designation or agriculture. The exception is the Route 56/119 Corridor, which is designated for residential or special use purposes. Along the White Township side, the majority of the border is designated as rural resource uses, wholly consistent with Center Township's Plan. The only border area within a growth target is along the major Route 119 corridor. The special use category is intended to be for innovative residential opportunities or a mix of residential and recreational uses, such as a golf course community or resort residential. Such development would enhance development within White Township.

The Township will continue to meet intergovernmental consistency standards as required by the Municipalities Planning Code.

# A SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIONS AND POLICIES

## KEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, The Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible.

- More fully explore pragmatic advantages of shared planning techniques in concert with Indiana Borough, including the potential for an intergovernmental implementation agreement.
- Explore shared land use planning based upon mutually advantageous tax/service costs basis.
- Ignore points of conflict within formal planning documents. Intergovernmental agreements should focus on genuine areas of agreement.
- This Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan should become the basis for more in-depth intergovernmental action planning

## KEY LAND USE ACTIONS

To Implement the Comprehensive Plan, The Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible.

- Monitor changes in land use types as they relate to tax base sustainability for both the Township and the School District.
- Develop a common sense toolbox of land use and land development regulations. This toolbox will use best practices from a variety of other communities as they best relate to individual areas of the Township. Tools may include:
  1. Enhancing the subdivision and land development ordinance
  2. Elements of traditional zoning- if appropriate in single family neighborhoods
  3. Preserving flexible development options for vacant properties in development target areas
  4. Discouraging intensive or dense development in rural areas
  5. Encouraging conservation practices to preserve natural features in major developments.
  6. Enabling the private transfer of development rights to growth target areas
  7. Exploring unified development approaches through traditional neighborhood development, planned residential development, or specific plan standards.

These tools will be part of a regulatory plan that the Township will prepare after completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

## KEY HOUSING ACTIONS

To Implement the Comprehensive Plan, The Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible.

- Examine an Elm Street Designation in cooperation with Indiana Borough
- Continue the demolition of dilapidated structures
- Seek grant funding for the rehabilitation of deteriorated structures
- Seek grant funding for the rehabilitation of sidewalks and streets in older neighborhoods
- Support of community based organizations in older neighborhoods to encourage neighborhood stability
- Licensing of rental units to ensure annual inspection and minimum quality. A tenant registry for earned income tax purpose may also be explored.
- The Township may examine adoption of a Property Maintenance Code to protect housing and neighborhoods

## KEY CONSERVATION ACTIONS

To implement the Comprehensive Plan, The Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible.

- Monitor the DEP mineral permitting process and comment as appropriate, and seek to minimize conflict between mineral extraction and growth area uses.
- Prioritize stormwater management as a natural resource priority. Stormwater activities may include three measures:
  1. Limiting density and intensity of development in environmentally sensitive areas
  2. Ensuring long term maintenance of stormwater control facilities
  3. Consideration of watershed level stormwater plans, especially for developed watersheds such as McCarthy Run
- The Township wishes to be considered as the highest priority area for voluntary purchases of Agricultural Conservation Easements as funded by the Pa. Department of Agriculture and administered locally by the Indiana County Conservation District.
- The Township will investigate a Transfer of Development Rights program.
- The Township will prepare and implement stewardship plans for its own forest properties, based upon professional scientific

## KEY TRANSPORTATION ACTIONS

To Implement the Comprehensive Plan, The Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible.

- Use the Comprehensive Plan as a policy basis for requiring on-site transportation improvements by new subdivisions and land developments.
- Upgrade local ordinances to facilitate better design of transportation improvements, and coordinated access management.
- Ensure fair means to pay for needed on-site transportation improvements, through the Subdivision Ordinance and policies .
- Participate in the regional and state transportation funding process.
- Explore more detailed transportation planning through completion of a transportation capital improvement program.
- Explore adoption of Official Map Ordinances to reserve crucial rights of way for new collector roads.

## KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACTIONS

To Implement the Comprehensive Plan, The Township may consider some of the following actions as they are determined feasible.

- Cooperate with the School District to prepare model enrollment projections which are based upon building permit and local demographic trends to ensure adequate sizing of school facilities.
- Prioritize Extension of full public water and sewer facilities in the vicinity of the Indiana County Jimmy Stewart Airport in order to encourage job-creating nonresidential development opportunities.
- Support infrastructure development within target growth areas,, but ensure that the financing of these extensions are self sustaining.
- Continue aggressive capital improvements budgeting for public sewer.
- Examine adoption of an "Official Recreation Plan" as a prerequisite for the enactment of a recreation impact fee. Special attention should be given to disparate impact of various housing types upon recreation resources.
- Prioritize continued development of High-Speed Internet access and fiber optic infrastructure.
- Use computer based parcel maps to monitor changes to development and the potential fiscal impact of development.
- Prepare a Township energy conservation plan to minimize energy expenditures for necessary local government functions