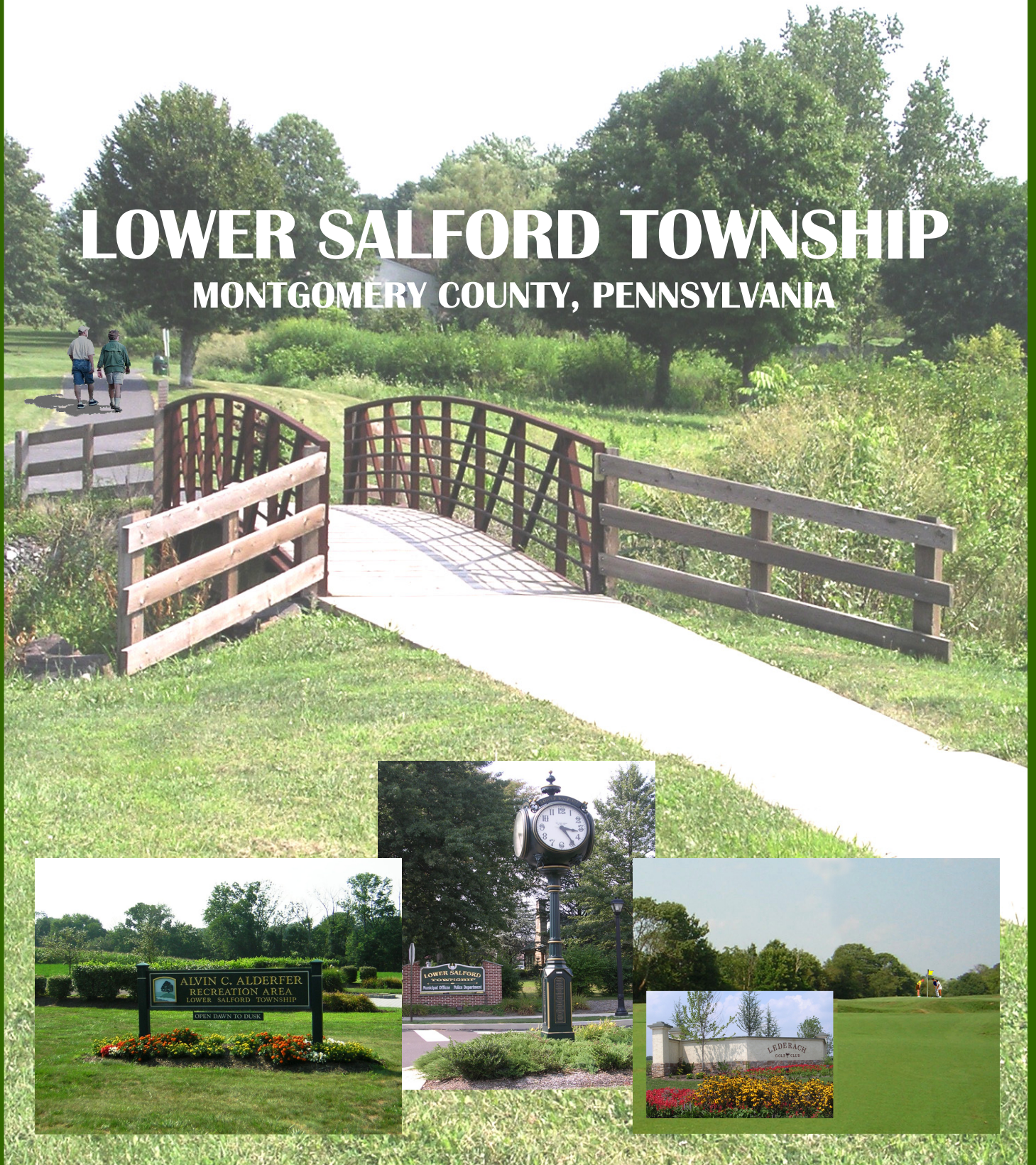


OPEN SPACE PLAN 2006

LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



A Strong Legacy of Open Space Planning

LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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MANAGER

J. Delton Plank

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Mary L. West

Cover photos by MCPC and Lower Salford Township Staff:

- Community Path Bridge over West Branch Skippack Creek
- Alderfer Park and Lederach Golf Course
- Entrance Drive to Township Building

LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP

OPEN SPACE PLAN 2006

This report was partially funded by
The Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program

Montgomery County Planning Commission

LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION NO. 2006 – 33

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP
2006 OPEN SPACE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Lower Salford Township Board of Supervisors have held a public hearing on April 18, 2006, duly advertised, to discuss the adoption of the Lower Salford Township 2006 Open Space Plan; and

WHEREAS, said Open Space Plan has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Montgomery County Open Space Board Green Fields/Green Towns Program Recommendations, which Board has approved the Open Space Plan for adoption at its October 24, 2006 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Lower Salford Township has determined that it is in the best interests of the Township and its residents to adopt said Open Space Plan.

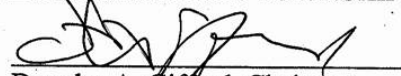
NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, HEREBY RESOLVES that the Lower Salford Township Open Space Plan, dated 2006, is hereby adopted in its entirety, in the form attached hereto, as the official Open Space Plan of Lower Salford Township.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE Township Secretary shall cause a certified copy of this Resolution to be attached to and made a part of said Open Space Plan.

DULY PREPARED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of Lower Salford Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania in public meeting held this 1st day of November 2006.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP

By:


Douglas A. Gifford, Chairman

Attest:


J. Delton Plank, Secretary

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INTRODUCTION

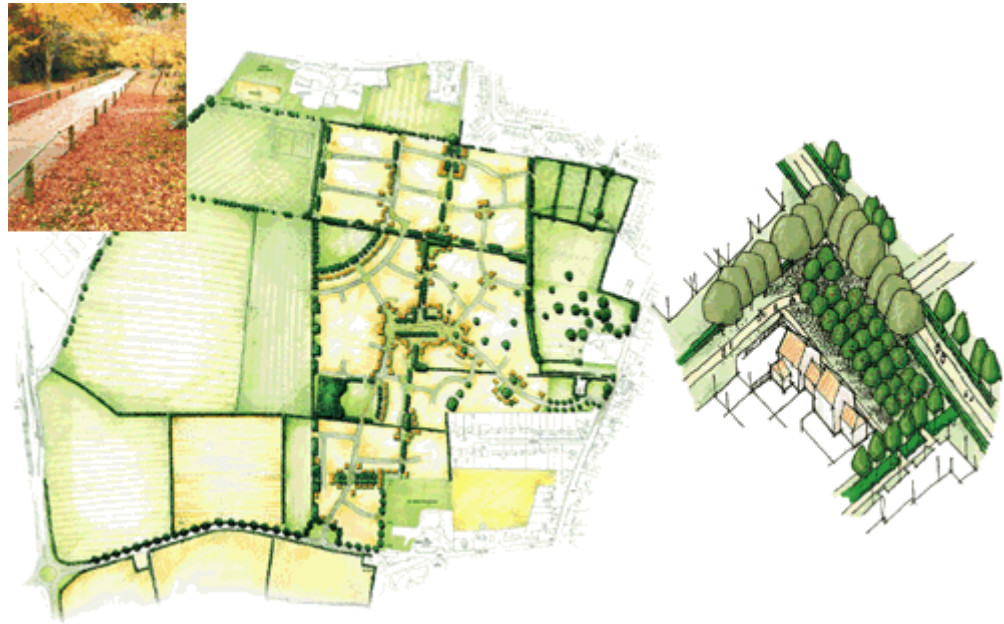
LOWER SALFORD'S 2006 OPEN SPACE PLAN

DEVELOPING AN OPEN SPACE PLAN

"In the past, many communities assumed that open space was land that had simply not been developed yet, because no one had filed a subdivision plan for it. This view was reinforced by the legal and philosophical framework of our land use system which assumed that land was a commodity to be consumed. Communities that planned for open space primarily thought about preserving land for parks. And these parks were often viewed as a community amenity, an extra, even a frill.

Likewise, until recent years, most open space preservation efforts were site-specific in their orientation: develop a park here, protect a natural area there. Today, however, a growing number of communities are recognizing not just that green space is a basic community necessity, but that it should be planned and developed as an integrated system."^{*} This plan represents Lower Salford's effort to create such a system.

^{*} McMahon, Edward T. Green Infrastructure. Planning Commissioners Journal. Number 37, Winter 2000, p.4.



PURPOSES OF THIS PLAN

This plan was developed for two major purposes. First, it was developed to serve as a guide to the Township in acquiring new open space, forging connections through existing open space via an enhanced trail network, and developing programs and policies to preserve and maintain active and passive open space in the Township.

Second, this plan was created to fulfill a requirement in order to be eligible to apply for funding through Montgomery County's Green Fields/Green Towns program. In 2003, a referendum to fund open space and green infrastructure projects was passed in Montgomery County. This funding was distributed to municipalities, private non-profit conservation organizations and the county to preserve more open space and enhance the livability of existing communities throughout the County.

Under the new program, Lower Salford is eligible to receive a total of \$1,114,371 for open space planning and implementation projects between April 2004 and April 2008. This grant requires matching funds from the

township equal to twenty percent of project costs. The County grants come with several conditions. The most important condition is that any land purchased with grant money must be permanently preserved as open space or for active recreation. Another condition is that Lower Salford must complete and adopt an updated Open Space Plan. This plan must be approved by the County's Open Space Board before applications for grant money will be accepted.

THE OLD PLAN VS. THE NEW PLAN

In 1993, the first open space referendum in Montgomery County was passed. At that time, Lower Salford drafted its 1994 Open Space Plan, which played a key role in the acquisition of new open space. As a result of the plan, several projects were implemented, such as acquisition of Alderfer, Reed, and Bucher parks, construction of several miles of bicycle trails, adoption of amendments to cluster zoning ordinances, and permanent preservation of two farms.

THE OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

In May 2004, the Lower Salford Open Space Committee was formed according to the requirements of the Green Fields/Green Towns Program. Members include representatives from the Lower Salford Planning Agency and the Board of Supervisors, as well as several neighborhood representatives with interest in and knowledge of open space issues. A liaison from the Montgomery County Planning Commission also served on the committee.

The Open Space Committee held meetings on a monthly basis from May 2004 through August 2005 to develop this plan. The committee presented a draft version of this plan to the Board of Supervisors during a regularly scheduled meeting. The Open Space Plan was presented to the community during a public hearing on April 18, 2006. Comments were solicited from the public and incorporated into the final document.

The 2006 Open Space Plan was reviewed and approved by the County Open Space Board prior to adoption by the Township. This assures that the plan's recommendations are eligible for funding through the Green Fields/Green Towns program (this does not, however, guarantee that any specific project will receive funding). In addition to County Open Space grants, grants from other agencies may be sought to implement some of the recommendations in this plan. Upon completion of this plan, Lower Salford Township will embark on implementing the recommendations listed in Chapter 10 by writing specific project proposals and applying to various organizations and agencies for grants.

The Open Space Committee made every effort to consider all aspects of open space planning relevant to the Township. However, in the event that a project, program or policy was overlooked, the plan may be

amended by following the procedure outlined in section 302 (a) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lower Salford Open Space Committee has included a number of recommendations for open space projects, programs and policies. The recommendations are described in Chapter 10. They are also listed along with priority levels, the parties responsible for implementation, and potential funding sources in the implementation matrix in Chapter 11.

WORKING WITH OUR NEIGHBORS

Lower Salford Township is a member of the Indian Valley Region and as such is accustomed to multi-municipal planning. This type of planning allows the Township to address regional issues while retaining local control.

Lower Salford Township has coordinated with its neighbors, including Upper Salford, Franconia, Towamencin, and Skippack, during development of this open space plan. It will continue to coordinate with them to implement the recommendations of this plan and to work on planning efforts in the future.

CHAPTER 1

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Community Profile Chapter of the Lower Salford Township Open Space Plan is designed to provide residents, planners and officials the necessary background information to make well-informed decisions regarding the future preservation of natural and cultural resources within their community. It consists of three parts: 1) the Community Context section, which examines the community's historical background and regional setting, 2) the Existing Land Use Analysis, which identifies the use of each property in the Township, and 3) the Community Demographic Analysis, a study of the demographic trends in Lower Salford. It is important to understand the development patterns and the history of the people who live in the Township in order to effectively plan for its future.

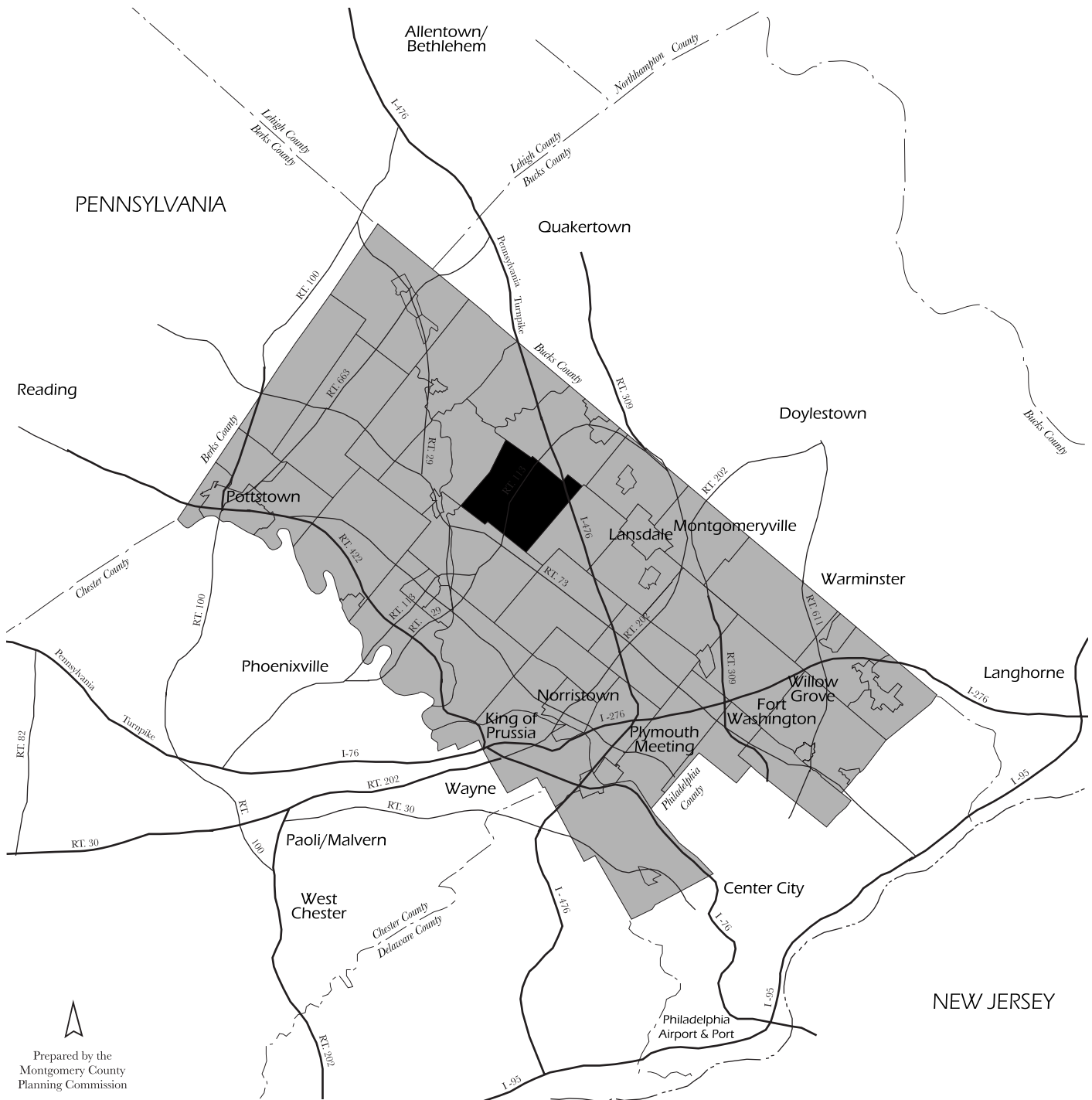
COMMUNITY CONTEXT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest recorded plot of land in what is today Lower Salford Township consisted of nearly 3,000 acres that was granted to David Powell on September 10, 1717. The Powells and their counterparts divided their land into smaller parcels that they sold for speculative purposes. The area later became known as Salford after an English city from which many of the land speculators had come.

In 1741, Lower Salford became an independent township, when the original Salford Township split into Upper Salford, Lower Salford, Marlborough, and part of Franconia Township. In 1892, Upper Salford further split into the present day Salford and Upper Salford Townships.

Figure 1
Regional Setting



Many of the original settlers were of Germanic descent and members of the “plain sects”. The church was the main avenue of communication for these residents. They built several churches that they reached by travel along various roads and trails in the area. To reach other areas, a road was opened from Gwynedd Township to Harleysville that was eventually called Sumneytown Pike. It became a major artery for the marketing of surplus goods and crude industrial products.

Travel along Sumneytown Pike increased and settlements developed at various crossroads. The taverns and inns and churches were the focal points of community life and many became the nucleus for hamlets and villages. Development of other roads accommodated increased populations that fostered the growth of commerce and business. Lederach and Harleysville grew to be the larger settlements in the Township.

The growth of small manufacturing business grew with the addition of numerous mills in the 1700’s followed by the manufacture of clothing in the later 1800’s. However, industrial growth was limited by the lack of suitable facilities for bulk hauling and the smaller population of the area. Therefore, land use remained largely agricultural with small commercial developments at crossroads that served a dispersed population.

In the 1900’s, the automobile enabled people to live away from centers of activity and commerce, yet still reach them conveniently. Major commercial settlements remain at the intersections of roads established in the community’s early years.

Lower Salford slowly grew from 1950 to 1970, but the pace of suburban growth increased between 1970 and 2000. The original agricultural area has become a diverse suburban community with shopping centers, housing developments, offices and industrial facilities.

REGIONAL SETTING

Development with suburban character continues to spread across Lower Salford Township as the edge of the Philadelphia urbanized area moves out further into the historically rural, north-central part of Montgomery County. New development in the Township since 1980 moved the northern portion of the Township into Philadelphia’s urbanized growth area. Lower Salford continues to be under intense pressure for development and also lies within the growth area spreading out from Lansdale and the North Penn area.

The closest significant employment center for Lower Salford is Lansdale, which can be reached by traveling east on Route 63, one of the most heavily traveled roads in the Township. Township residents can commute further down Route 63 to the Fort Washington area or travel southwest on Route 113 toward Route 422, King of Prussia and other employment centers. The map in Figure 1 shows Lower Salford’s position in the region.

ROADWAYS

Probably the most significant road connection for Lower Salford, however, is the Lansdale interchange of the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike (Interstate Route 476). Located on Route 63 just east of the Township border in Towamencin Township, this interchange allows residents to travel south to Interstate Routes 76, 95, and 276 to reach employment centers around Philadelphia and in northern Delaware. Traveling north includes employment destinations in the Lehigh Valley. The regional and long distance access provided by Interstate Route 476 will continue to act as a catalyst for growth in Lower Salford as a convenience for commuters and industrial traffic as well.

PARKS

Lower Salford is near a number of regional

park facilities that include Montgomery County's Green Lane Park and Bucks County's Peace Valley Park. Lower Salford's open space along the West Branch of the Skippack Creek leads to the northern end of Evansburg State Park, located mainly to the south in Skippack Township.

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

Since existing land use data was collected for the 1994 Open Space Plan, over 1,000 acres of land changed from agriculture or undeveloped to another category of land use. More than half this acreage was consumed for residential development. However, 675 of these acres became public or private open space. Overall, the Township's basic land use pattern remained the same, with Harleysville functioning as the center of the Township and other areas remaining more rural, open, or at least low density. The size of the Harleysville core area and the acreage developed as large conventional residential lots continued to increase.

The inventory of existing land uses listed in Figure 3 shows the changes in land use that have occurred since 1993. These changes are discussed in the following sections and the numbers are useful in understanding changes in land use patterns. The map helps identify potential locations for open space as well.

RESIDENTIAL

Between 1971 and 1993, approximately 66 acres per year were developed for residential uses. From 1993 to 2005, that number increased slightly to an average of just over 67 acres per year. Most of the land used for residential purposes is for single-family detached homes, but twin, duplex, and townhouses are found in Harleysville. Other homes were added on lots of two acres or more in areas between Harleysville and Skippack Township. Currently, about 44

percent of the Township's land area is developed for residential uses. Figure 2 shows the patterns of existing land use in 2005.

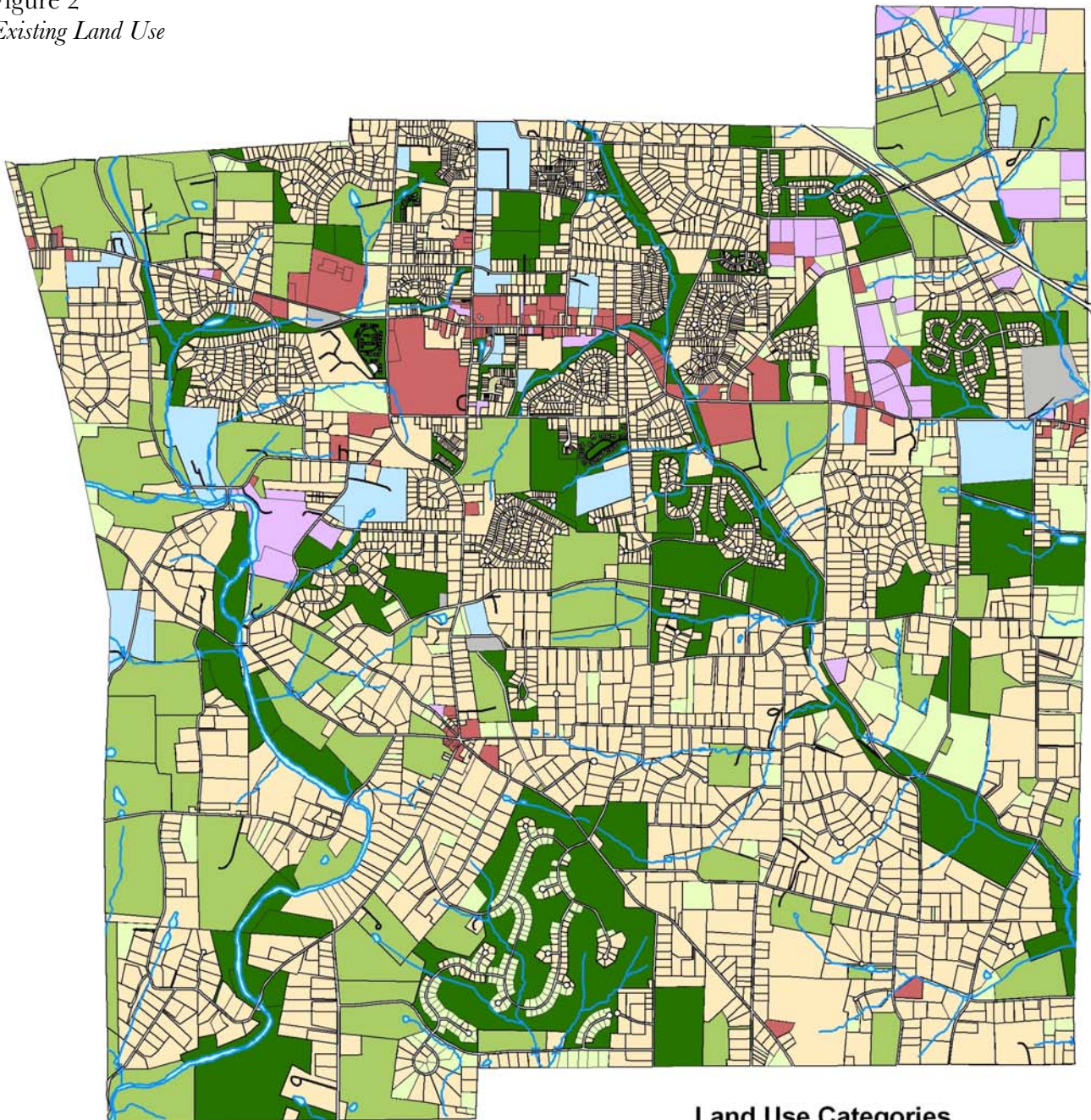
NON-RESIDENTIAL

The amount of the Township devoted to Commercial, Office, and Mixed Uses increased by nearly 85 percent since the 1994 Open Space Plan was produced, and now occupies 273 acres, or 2.8 percent of the Township's land area. Uses include the Meadowbrook Plaza shopping center, the Salford Square convenience center, Harley Commons mixed-use center, and the [Walmart/Clemens] shopping center. Some older commercial buildings have been rehabilitated and expanded and other commercial, office, and mixed use facilities are interspersed in the Township's four villages, Harleysville, Lederach, Mainland, and Vernfield.

Each of these villages has followed a different path over the past twenty or more years. The center of Harleysville was changed under a village commercial zoning district. That district encouraged and accelerated the process of converting old single-family homes into offices, stores, and apartments, but has preserved the historic village character. Lederach has continued its rejuvenation into a small tourist oriented village, with restaurants and specialty shops. Mainland, which is bisected by fast moving traffic on Route 63, has converted older buildings as shops and businesses, while Vernfield has not changed much at all over the past twenty years.

New industrial development consumed only 33 acres in the past twelve years while land categorized as institutional increased by 402 acres, most of it due to land use reclassification. Together with commercial uses, these three categories occupy a total of about 11.2 percent of the Township's land area, including the older and recently added uses in their categories. In all three categories, redevelopment is occurring.

Figure 2
Existing Land Use



MCPC

Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p)610.278.3722 (f)610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom
 This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

1,500 750 0 1,500 Feet
 base map created August 2005



Land Use Categories









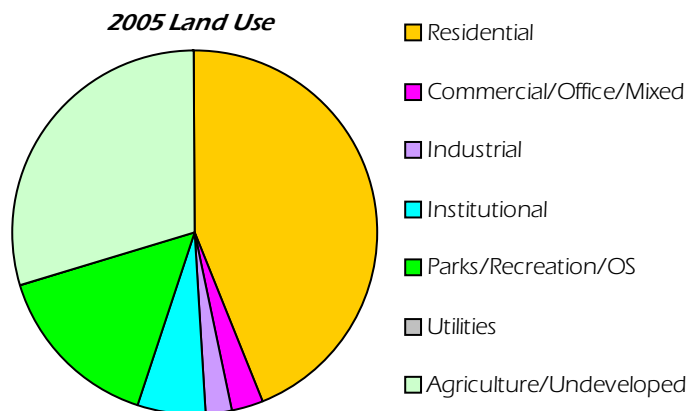
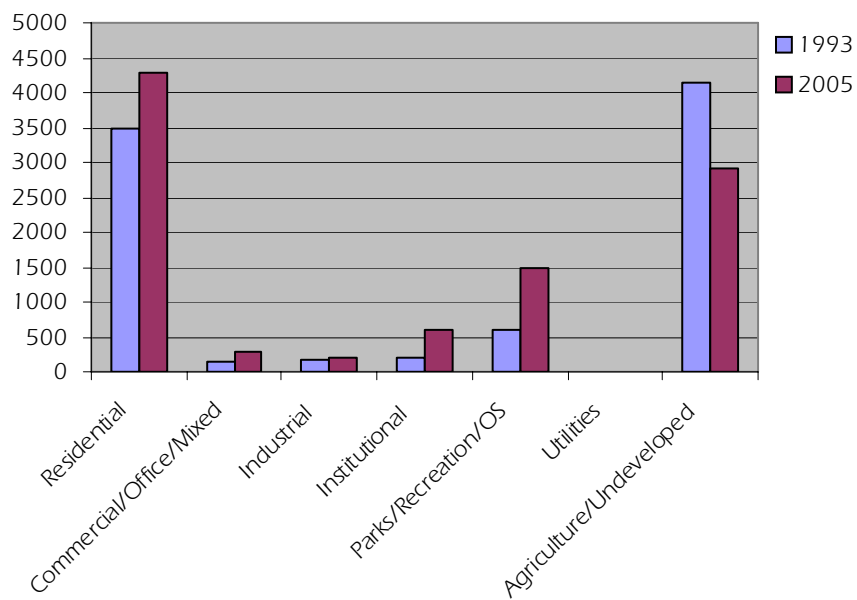
	Residential
	Commercial/Office/Mixed
	Industrial
	Institutional
	Utilities
	Undeveloped
	Parks/Recreation/Open Space
	Agriculture

Figure 3
Land Use Comparison: 1993 and 2005

Land Use	1993		2005		Acres Change	% Change
	Acres	% Total	Acres	% Total	1993-2004	1993-2004
Residential	3481	38.2%	4286	43.8%	805	23.1%
Commercial/Office/Mixed	148	1.6%	273	2.8%	125	84.6%
Industrial	177	1.9%	210	2.1%	33	18.5%
Institutional	210	2.3%	612	6.3%	402	191.6%
Parks/Recreation/OS	611	6.7%	1485	15.2%	874	143.1%
Utilities	7	0.1%	7	0.1%	0	2.4%
Agriculture/Undeveloped	4129	45.3%	2902	29.7%	-1227	-29.7%
Public Roads	357	3.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Acreage*	9120	100.0%	9776	100.0%	1415	7.2%



PARKS/RECREATION/OPEN SPACE

The amount of recreational land/open space in the Township has increased substantially during the past three decades. In 2005, 1,585 acres were public or private parks and open space, accounting for over 15% of the Township's land area. This is primarily because of Lower Salford's open space acquisitions, including those resulting from zoning that requires open space. The Township preserved substantial parkland corridors along the West Branch of the Skippack Creek and the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek.

Among the lands added to this category in the past ten years are Bucher Park, Alderfer Park, Reed Park, land along the West Branch Skippack Creek and East Branch Perkiomen Creek, and Lederach Golf Club. Also included are the open space areas preserved in the Pioneer Circle, The Heathers, Buckingham Circle, Beechwood, Belcourt, Rosecliff Manor, Salford Pond, Summerwind, and Wilshyre Village subdivisions, to name a few.

AGRICULTURE/UNDEVELOPED LAND

Only 2,902 acres remain in the agriculture/undeveloped category. In 1971, nearly 70% of the Township was undeveloped. By 1993 this had dropped to less than 50%, and is currently down to less than 30%. In the past twelve years, over 1,200 acres were converted from this category to residential and non-residential uses and more than 400 acres were permanently preserved as open space and parkland. If those rates continue, the Township's remaining developable land should be consumed by 2025. The Township may then technically be "built-out", but, perhaps another 900 acres of land will also have been added to the Parks/Recreation/Open Space category.

UTILITIES/OTHER

There are currently only 7 acres credited to utilities. The Wastewater Treatment Plants

and pumping stations that occupy this land are necessary for medium and higher density residential uses and some non-residential uses. Increasingly, the extension of public sewer lines has been used to permit low-density cluster development that has preserved significant areas of open space.

CONCLUSIONS

Lower Salford has experienced various types of development over the past twelve years. Over 1,200 acres of agricultural and undeveloped land have been developed with residences and parkland.

Commercial/Office/Mixed Use development added 125 acres, and Industrial land use added 33 acres. Institutional use land area added 402 acres. Currently, residential land use accounts for 44 percent of Lower Salford's land area and 45 percent is Parks/Recreation/Open Space and Agriculture/Undeveloped.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Community Demographic Analysis includes information relating to population, housing, and economics. With few exceptions, the source of the information is the decennial U.S. Census and other reports of the Census Bureau.

This section will briefly discuss shifts in population, housing, education, age and other demographic categories. These specific characteristics and trends may offer some insight into the amounts and types of open space that should be available to Township residents.

POPULATION

Population increase is an important measure of how a community is changing over time. Between 1980 and 1990, Lower Salford's

population increased by 4,579 persons, from 6,156 to 10,735. Between 1990 and 2000, the population grew by 2,158 persons to a total of 12,893. Although the rate of population increase dropped from 74.4 percent in the 1980's to only 20.1 percent in the 1990's, the Township's population more than doubled between 1980 and 2000, by gaining 6,737 persons.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

During the next 30 years, Lower Salford's population is projected to continue increasing, but the rate of increase should continue to slow down. If projections hold true, the population will approach 19,000 persons in 2025, as shown in Figure 5.

In general, projections are based on several factors, including past levels of development recently proposed development, proximity to employment centers, available land, and

public facilities (particularly sewers).

The 20.1 percent population increase of the 1990's translates to an increase of 150 persons per square mile in Lower Salford, from 744 to 894 persons per square mile. This increase in density of population affects the need for recreational facilities in the Township. Based on projections, the Township's population per square mile would increase to 1,085 persons by 2010 (+191/square mile). This is comparable to the 2000 densities of Lower Gwynedd and Whitemarsh Townships. The 2020 population density would increase to 1,248 by 2020 (+ 164/ square mile), which approaches the 2000 densities of Horsham, Lower Pottsgrove, and Lower Providence Townships.

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Figure 6 identifies the numbers and types of households found in the Township. A total of

Figure 4
Population Classification

Population Type	1990		2000		% Change 1980 to 1990
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	
Household Population	10,626	99.0%	12,812	99.4%	20.6%
Group Quarters Population	109	1.0%	81	0.6%	-25.7%
Total Population	10,735	100%	12,893	100%	20.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1980, 1990.

Figure 5
Population Projection

Year	Population
1990	10735
2000	12893
2005*	14270
2010*	15640
2015*	16950
2020*	18000
2025*	18760

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 2000; DVRPC projections.

* Projected population

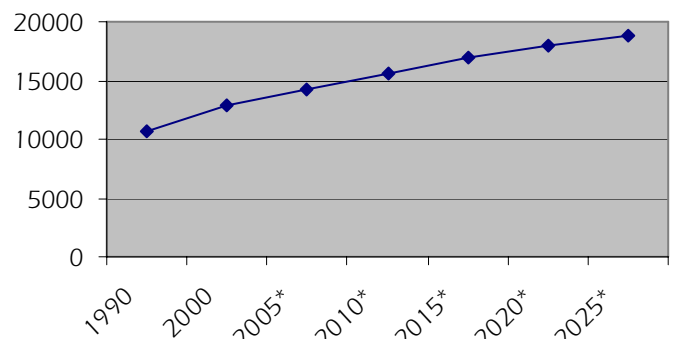


Figure 6
Household Types

Household Types	1990	% Total	2000	% Total	% Change 1990 to 2000
	Number		Number		
Married Couples with Children	1438	38.7%	1727	39.0%	20.1%
Married Couples with No Children	1125	30.3%	1377	31.1%	22.4%
Single Parent	224	6.0%	271	6.1%	21.0%
Other Family	127	3.4%	168	3.8%	32.3%
1 Person Non-Family Households	659	17.7%	712	16.1%	8.0%
2+ Person Non-Family Household	144	3.9%	177	4.0%	22.9%
Total No. of Households	3,717	100%	4,432	100%	19.2%
Average People per Household	2.86		2.89		1.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

Figure 7
Education Level

Educational Level	1990		2000		% Change 1990-2000
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	
Less than 9th grade	456	6.7%	247	3.0%	-45.8%
9th through 12th grade, no diploma	745	11.0%	520	6.4%	-30.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	2260	33.4%	2170	26.6%	-4.0%
Some college, no degree	1021	15.1%	1283	15.7%	25.7%
Associate degree	505	7.5%	602	7.4%	19.2%
Bachelor's degree	1247	18.5%	2209	27.1%	77.1%
Graduate or Professional degree	523	7.7%	1116	13.7%	113.4%
Total Pop. 25 years and older	6757	100%	8147	100%	20.6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

1,998 household are listed that include children, and 2,434 households with no children. The average number of persons per household has remained stable at approximately 2.9 per household. This relatively high number of persons per household is primarily the result of adding 336 households with children and 252 married couples with no children during the past ten years.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Township's increased population in 2000 had also completed more formal education than the 1990 population. Of the 8,147 persons over 25 years old listed in the 2000

Census, 27.1% and 13.7% earned bachelors degrees and graduate/professional degrees, respectively. Figure 7 shows the details.

AGE

Between 1980 and 1990, the numbers of persons increased in every age group as the total population increased substantially, from 6,156 to 10,735 persons. From 1990 to 2000, the total population increased by only 2,158 persons and the effects on various age groups differed significantly in terms of actual numbers of persons and percentages of the total population, as seen in Figure 8. The population under five years old remained stable. However, the number of 45 to 55 year

Figure 8
Age Profile

Age	1990	% Total	2000	% Total	%Change
	Number		Number		1990-2000
0-4	1,074	10.0%	1076	8.3%	0.2%
5-17	2,157	20.1%	2925	22.7%	35.6%
18-24	854	8.0%	734	5.7%	-14.1%
25-34	2,062	19.2%	1799	14.0%	-12.8%
35-44	1,792	16.7%	2623	20.3%	46.4%
45-54	1,126	10.5%	1797	13.9%	59.6%
55-64	735	6.8%	986	7.6%	34.1%
65-74	417	3.9%	605	4.7%	45.1%
75+	518	4.8%	348	2.7%	-32.8%
Total	10,735	100%	12893	100%	20.1%
Median Age	31.6		34.6		

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000

Age/Sex Pyramid

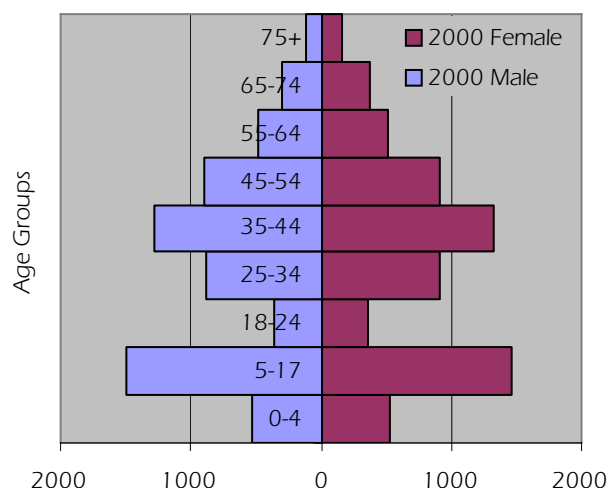


Figure 9
Income Levels (1999\$)

Income	1989	1999	% Change
Per Capita	\$23,253	\$ 28,408	22.2%
Median Household	\$60,643	\$ 70,977	17.0%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000

olds increased substantially (by nearly 60%). The number of seniors aged 65-74 increased by about 45%, while the number of 35-44 year olds increased by about 46%. The age group that experienced the sharpest decline was those 75 and over (nearly 33%).

INCOME

Over the 10 year period of 1989 to 1999, the average per capita income of residents of Lower Salford increased by over 22% to \$28,408 in 1999 dollars, while the median household income increased 17% to \$70,777,

which is nearly \$10,000 over the county median household income of \$60,829.

SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

Special needs can be defined in many ways. One way is to look at age. Both the young and the elderly may have special needs, including lack of independent mobility and the need for special care. In Lower Salford in 2000, there were 4,001 children under the age of 18, and 953 people 65 and older, which account together for 38.4% of the Township's population.

As shown in Figure 10, the special needs category also includes those with various disabilities. The 1990 and 2000 censuses characterized this category differently, and therefore a direct comparison cannot be made. However, in 2000, there were 1,298 people in Lower Salford over 16 years old with a mobility limitations indicating that over 10% of the population needs assistance to move around the community.

Finally, special needs groups may include the poor. The census bases poverty level on food costs, food purchases as a percentage of total income, number of persons in a household, and number of children in a household. While the number of people living below the poverty level in the township increased slightly from 1990 to 2000, from 406 to 441, the percentage of the population in this category decreased by .2%.

Figure 10
Special Needs Groups

Special Needs Group	1990		2000		% Change 1990-2000
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	
Persons 16-64 with Disabilities			1,298	10.1%	N/A
Persons 16-64 with Mobility and Self Care Limitations	199	1.9%			N/A
Over 65 Years of Age	935	8.7%	953	7.4%	1.9%
Under 18 Years of Age	3,231	30.1%	4,001	31.0%	23.8%
Income Below Poverty Level	406	3.8%	441	3.4%	8.6%
Total Population	10,735		12,893		20.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

HOUSING TYPES

Lower Salford has a diverse housing stock that includes duplexes, townhouses, apartment complexes, and single-family homes on a variety of lot sizes. This range provides Township residents with many housing choices based on income, family size, and lifestyle. The Township's 1990 and 2000 distributions of housing types are shown in Figure 11. Lower Salford's distribution generally reflects the distribution of housing types across the county as a whole.

EMPLOYMENT

Figure 12, Labor Force by Occupation, identifies the occupations engaged in by the labor force in Lower Salford Township. Figure 13 lists the major employers in the Township who provide the largest percentage of jobs in the community. Several of these employers have been in the Township for 50 years or more and are likely to stay in the community. Turnover in major employers has not been a problem in Lower Salford Township. Figure 14 shows the generalized DVRPC forecast for new jobs in the Township.

STATUS OF RELEVANT PLANS

INDIAN VALLEY REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The most important plan to affect Lower Salford Township during the foreseeable future is the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive

Figure 11
Housing Types

Housing Types	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Single Family Detached	2,187	57.1%	2886	63.7%	32.0%
Single Family Attached	590	15.4%	757	16.7%	28.3%
Multi Family (2-4 Units)	414	10.8%	394	8.7%	-4.8%
Multi Family (5 or More Units)	585	15.3%	487	10.7%	-16.8%
Mobile Home/Trailer/Other	56	1.5%	7	0.2%	-87.5%
Total Housing Units	3,832	100%	4531	100%	18.2%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

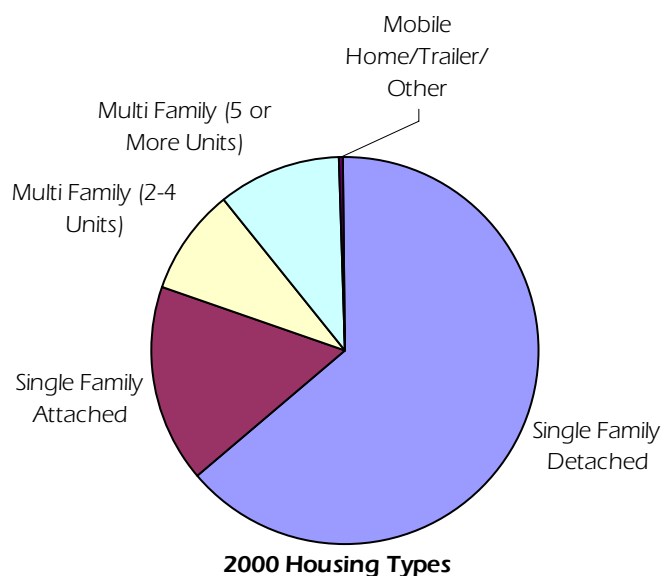


Figure 12
Labor Force by Occupation

Occupation	2000	
	Number	% Total
Management	1153	16.8%
Professional	1704	24.8%
Sales	777	11.3%
Clerical/Office	1184	17.2%
Construction	562	8.2%
Production/Transportation	809	11.8%
Farming	17	0.2%
Services	672	9.8%
Total	6878	100%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

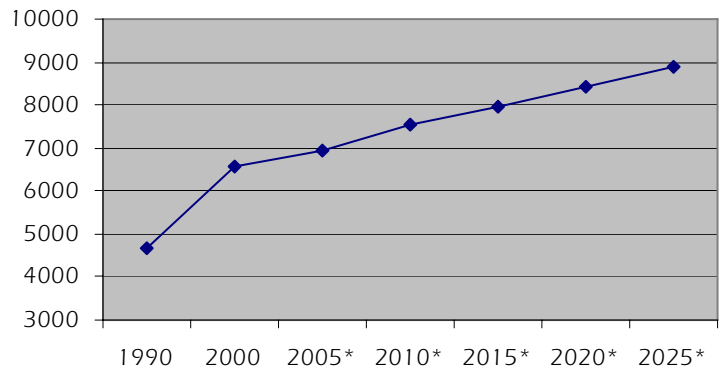
Figure 13
Major Employers

	Employer	Employees
1	Harleysville Group, Inc	1,257
2	WalMart Associates, Inc.	445
3	Harleysville Management Services, LLC	387
4	Hennings Supermarket	283
5	T H Properties, Inc.	218
6	Pittman	201
7	Clemens Markets, Inc.	189
8	Safeguard Business System	184
9	Alcom Printing Group, Inc.	171
10	Golden M Investments LP	167

Figure 14
Employment Forecast

Year	Total Employment
1990	4662
2000	6590
2005*	6939
2010*	7522
2015*	7963
2020*	8417
2025*	8898

*Source: DVRPC Forecasts



Plan. Adopted in July 2005, the Regional Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for future growth, development, transportation, and open space purposes. The Lower Salford Township Open Space Plan intends to implement major recommendations of the Regional Plan regarding parks, open space, preservation of farmland, and preservation of natural features.

LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY PATH PLAN

Since its dedication in 1991, Lower Salford's community path has become a very popular recreation and transportation resource for a wide range of people in the community. With the goal of encouraging expansion of the system, the Community Path Plan was created in 1998 with the assistance of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. It details the additions, extension, and improvements that should be made to the townships existing path network, roads and sidewalks to make the community path system function as well as possible. The Path Plan provided the basis for this Open Space plan's chapter on linkages.

ZONING AND SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCES

Zoning ordinances and the SLDO play a large role in developing open space and helping the township to maintain its rural character by providing regulations for landscaping and streetscaping, setbacks and density, and for establishing requirements for open space and impervious coverage.

1994 OPEN SPACE PLAN

Much effort went into creating the township's previous open space plan, which was adopted in 1995. The main purposes of that plan were to identify parkland needs and future parkland acquisition sites and to identify methods of preserving open space and protecting the environment other than land acquisition. This plan was consulted heavily in the process of creating the 2006 Lower Salford Township Open Space Plan.

CHAPTER 2

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives provide a framework for proposing recommendations and making future decisions. This chapter identifies the Township's Open Space goals and objectives relative to protection of natural resources, preservation of open space, acquisition and use of parkland, and development of land. Overall, these updated goals and objectives remain essentially the same as in the adopted 1994 Open Space Plan. This demonstrates consistency in the Township's planning from its early open space acquisitions through the planning period for this open space plan.

AUDIT OF 1994 OPEN SPACE PLAN

Lower Salford Township adopted its 1994 Open Space Plan on March 1, 1995. At that time a series of goals and objectives was developed to address issues regarding the preservation of open space and the protection of environmental resources. As a part of the update process required by the Montgomery County Open Space Program, Lower Salford has evaluated its previous goals and objectives to address whether the goals are still valid and to evaluate why some of the last plan's recommendations were not implemented.

Below are listed the previous recommendations that have been acted upon with accompanying explanations of their status and proposed future action where applicable.

ACQUISITION RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Obtain 10-20 acres of land for active recreation parks.**

Alvin C. Alderfer Park (27 acres) was donated by Harleysville Insurance; Charles L. Reed Park (12 acres) was developed from Summerwind Open Space; and Robert Clemens Bucher Park (4 acres) was purchased outright.

- **Preserve passive recreation and environmentally sensitive areas.**

Lower Salford has preserved over 625 acres along the East Branch Perkiomen Creek, West Branch Skippack Creek, Indian Creek, Skippack Creek and their tributaries. These greenway lands include the following properties acquired with funding from Montgomery County's first open space program:

- * East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek:
Clemens (11.4 acres)
Jones and Brown (82.4 acres)
- * West Branch of the Skippack Creek:
Lauchman (4.8 acres)

- **Create pedestrian and bicycle trails.**

Published the "Community Path Plan" in 1998. Approximately 8 miles of bicycle trails are currently open to the public, with several more miles proposed.

NON-ACQUISITION RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create agricultural lots, increase the size of rural lots, reduce the visual impact of rural homes, and adopt performance zoning.**

Completion of these tasks was postponed in anticipation of adoption of the new regional plan, which will now serve as a guide for these activities.

- **Cluster new residential developments.**

Many new developments have utilized cluster standards to preserve public and private open space. These include Beechwood, Oakridge, Salford Lea, Robin's Glen, Montgomery Meadows, Hammersmyth Farms, Summerwind I and II, Brownstone Mill, Harleysville Homestead, Hidden Creek, The Preserve at Skippack Creek, and the Lederach Golf Club.

- **Use incentive zoning to encourage preservation of open space and park land.**

The cluster zoning requirements were amended to encourage open space preservation and extended to apply to more land areas.

- **Adopt natural resource protection ordinances for floodplains, wetlands, groundwater, steep slopes, and woodland protection.**

Floodplain regulations were updated, and no action was taken on other natural resource ordinances. However, the Township facilitated a stream bank restoration project along the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek and riparian corridor restoration along the Bullfrog Run. These projects were done in Township parks in cooperation with the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy and the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

- **Adopt historic preservation ordinances.**

The township is cooperating with the local Historical Society to determine appropriate standards.

- **Establish suburban growth boundaries.**

The 1975 Harleysville Land Use study served as a guide for suburban growth boundaries. The recently adopted Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan now delineates growth and rural resource conservation areas.

- **Create a transfer of development rights (TDR) ordinance.**

This concept was not deemed feasible, but could be considered in the future.

- **Place limits on sewer and water service areas.**

Sewer and water service has been limited to growth areas and restricted to use in cluster developments in rural resource areas.

- **Encourage expanded agricultural security areas (ASAs) and the sale of development rights.**

Two farms comprising 103.68 acres have been preserved and Lower Salford received recognition from the county's Agricultural Preservation Board for its financial contribution toward one of those farms. Twenty farms comprising over 722 acres are currently enrolled in the ASA program.

- **Encourage donations of properties for open space.**

Alderfer Park was donated by the Harleysville Insurance company.

- **Require developers to provide open space or pay a fee in lieu of open space.**

Cluster development requiring preservation of open space is permitted in R1A, R1, and R3 residential zoning districts.



Scenic and rural views are an asset to Lower Salford Township.

Open space is encouraged in R4 and R5 by providing a density bonus for preservation of open space. In recent years, the Township has acquired the 224-acre Lederach Golf Club land plus an additional 267 acres of open space from sixteen cluster developments.

2006 OPEN SPACE PLAN GOALS

Although significant progress has been made toward achieving the 1994 goals, changing conditions within the Township and region require the goals to be updated and refined. Therefore, this chapter proposes the following three primary goals:

- Protect and Maintain Remaining Rural Character
- Protect Sensitive Natural Features
- Maintain and Enhance Recreation Opportunities

These three primary goals are complemented by interrelated secondary goals that share a number of common elements.

PROTECT AND MAINTAIN REMAINING RURAL CHARACTER

Remaining areas of rural character have been diminishing during the past ten years. Therefore, it has become a high priority goal to identify key areas of the Township where significant rural qualities and characteristics can still be conserved, including the following:

Preserve Farmland, Scenic Views and Roads, Historic Sites and Landscapes

Rural character cannot be maintained if these elements are not effectively preserved and protected from the spread of suburban development. Therefore, protection of these rural features should be pursued aggressively through acquisition of land and/or easements, enactment of ordinance standards that

require protection, and cooperation among landowners, developers, and the Township to maximize retention of rural character.

Preserve the Identity and Character of Existing Villages

The historic character of the Township's villages makes a vital contribution to the rural agricultural and historical character of the Township and region. Measures that encourage retention of the identity and character of these villages are critical to the overall goals of this open space plan.

Protect Rural Character Using Regional Planning Concepts

The Township has historically permitted a wide variety of housing types from low to high density, and non-residential development with a wide variety of goods, services, and employment opportunities. As a member community in the Indian Valley Region, Lower Salford has planned for growth areas and rural resource conservation areas. In concert with the Future Land Use Plan element of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan, the Township's Open Space Plan intends to protect vital elements of rural character and use land appropriately for active and passive recreation within those areas.

PROTECT SENSITIVE NATURAL FEATURES

Natural features are critical elements of the Township's rural character and they extend throughout developed areas as well. These natural features should be aggressively protected for aesthetic benefits and environmental qualities using regulatory and stewardship methods that achieve the following:

Protect Steep Slopes

To avoid increased runoff and sedimentation from disturbed slopes, improve water quality and stormwater management, and retain habitats for plants and wildlife.

Protect Stream Corridors, Floodplains, and Wetlands

To carry floodwaters, reduce erosion, protect water quality, facilitate groundwater recharge, provide plant and animal habitats, and provide recreation opportunities.

Protect Woodlands

To reduce the impact of rainfall and control erosion, filter the air, protect privacy, provide windbreaks, cool the summer air, muffle noise, absorb odors, provide plant and animal habitat, and improve the appearance of the area.

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Most areas of the Township have convenient access to Township parkland, and much of this existing parkland could be developed for active recreational purposes. Since the need to acquire more land has diminished, the Open Space Plan recommends optimized use of existing parklands for active and passive purposes, and encourages establishment of a variety of recreation programs to serve the Township's residents.

Optimize Use of Existing Parklands

Community level parks are places to play a variety of organized sports such as soccer, baseball, softball, and basketball, and neighborhood level parks are conveniently accessible, especially as play areas for younger children. Greenway corridor parks along waterways protect natural features and facilitate trail connections and passive recreation activities.

Continue to Expand the Trail Network

The Township's existing trail network provides opportunities for recreation and alternative transportation. Wherever appropriate, new development should provide segments for the trail network and the network should

interconnect with trails in adjoining communities, as outlined in the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan, and the County's Comprehensive Plan. Whenever feasible, the Township will fill in gaps in the existing network.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are fundamental to the plan and will be pursued in the efforts to implement the Township's Open Space Planning Goals:

Objectives to Protect and Maintain Rural, Agricultural, and Village Character

- Identify areas of farmland, scenic views and scenic roads, historic sites and landscapes as valuable assets of rural character that should be conserved to the greatest extent feasible, and recommend measures to protect them.
- Identify measures that encourage retention of the historical identity and character of the Township's villages and contribute to the rural agricultural heritage of the Township and region, including educational programs in the Township's historical farmland parks.
- Encourage farmers to join the Township's agricultural security area and preserve their farms under Agricultural Preservation Easements by selling their development rights to the state and county.
- Encourage decisions that support implementation of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan, with a strong emphasis on protecting vital elements of the rural resource conservation areas.
- Use low density zoning, cluster development, and incentive zoning in rural resource areas to encourage preservation of critical resources including farmland, historic buildings, and natural features.

- Continue to direct growth to areas where higher density zoning and public sewers are concentrated.
- Extend public sewers as an incentive to cluster homes in rural resource areas.
- Move homes away from roads, behind ridgelines or within woodlands to preserve scenic, rural views.
- Soften visual impacts of rural area development with tree planting and landscaped buffers.

Objectives to Protect Sensitive Natural Features

- Identify appropriate regulatory measures to protect sensitive natural features, and encourage land owners to be conservation-minded stewards.
- Enact or improve natural resource protection ordinances for riparian corridors, steep slopes, wetlands, woodlands and other sensitive features.
- Establish a setback from stream corridors to protect riparian woodlands along streams and continue to enforce the Township's floodplain ordinance which prohibits construction in the floodplain.
- Encourage and facilitate protection and restoration of stream banks and riparian corridors along the Township's streams.
- Require subdivision and land development plans to identify wetlands and riparian corridors along with strategies to properly manage these areas.
- Acquire land and/or easements to fill in gaps in the Township's existing greenways along the Indian Creek, East Branch of Perkiomen Creek, and West Branch of Skippack Creek, and extend Township ownership or easement protection along the Skippack Creek between Franconia and Towamencin Townships.

Objectives to Maintain and Enhance Recreation Opportunities

- Maintain and improve existing park facilities for active and passive recreation and identify appropriate recreation programs to optimize use of the facilities.
- Identify appropriate routes for continued expansion of the Township's bike trail network, fill in gaps in areas with established trails, and cooperate with adjoining communities and the County to provide interconnected links with networks outside Lower Salford. The Township's Community Path Plan of 1998 should be updated to help implement this objective.
- Expand trail connections throughout the Township's greenway corridor parks as land or easements are acquired to complete these greenways, and facilitate trail connections between greenway corridors, including parts of the bike trail network and trails of adjoining communities and the county.
- Preserve and maintain historic buildings and farms at Heckler Plains, Jacob Reiff, and Bergey parks for educational and passive recreation purposes within the Township's greenway parklands.

CHAPTER 3

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

A key component of the open space plan is a review of existing open space. Some of the open space utilized by residents is permanently protected, while other areas are not permanently preserved, and are in essence temporary open space. Permanent open space refers to land preserved for active or passive recreation use and/or for environmental conservation purposes. In addition to municipally-owned areas, it can include land preserved by private conservation groups and private open space preserved as part of residential or non-residential development. Permanently preserved open space puts limitations on development and provides permanent resource protection—this land will continue to exist much the way it does today for future generations.

Temporary open space also makes an important contribution to the overall recreation base of a community by providing open space, sheltering significant natural features, and/or providing recreation facilities that do not require municipal involvement in maintenance. However, temporary open space can easily be lost through development or degradation. Creating this plan involves making choices about temporary open space and determining which of these areas the township wants to permanently preserve.

PERMANENT OPEN SPACE

Permanent open space includes a variety of Township park lands, a small part of Evansburg State Park, and open space preserved privately as parts of development proposals. It also includes lands preserved under Agricultural Preservation Easements and private conservation agreements. These lands are the best protected lands because ownership and/or legal restrictions preclude development of these properties. Currently, 1,585 acres of land in Lower Salford are permanently protected.

TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE

Lower Salford Township now has more than 1,100 acres of recreation land and open space. These lands vary in size, location, and use, consisting of everything from small pocket parks to ball fields and recreation centers, and undisturbed meadows to trail corridors (see Figure 15).

The Township first began purchasing open space in 1964. Acquisition of the fire pond on Alumni Avenue was followed by acquisition of the Jacob Reiff Farmstead in 1966. In the 1970's, the Township began acquiring contiguous stream valley meadows and wood-

lands under the federal, state, and county sponsored "Open Space/Green Belt" program.

Also in the 1970's, Lower Salford enacted zoning requirements that required preservation of open space in residential developments. More recently, the Township has extended zoning requirements for open space to include more categories and larger areas of the Township under these standards.

The newest major addition to Lower Salford's open space holdings is the Lederach Golf Club and adjoining open space parcels. Acquisition of the golf course and other parcels suitable for active recreation is also a product of the development process.

Since adoption of the 1994 Open Space Plan, Lower Salford has used funding from Montgomery County's Open Space Preservation Program to acquire additional park and open space lands. These include 11.4-acre and 82.4-acre acquisitions along the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek (Clemens, Jones, and Brown), and 4.8 acres along the West Branch of the Skippack Creek that connects to Evansburg State Park (Lauchman).

ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES

The largest concentrations of active recreation facilities are found in the Alvin C. Alderfer Park on Oak Drive, Charles L. Reed Memorial Park on Clemens Road, and the Harleysville Community Center combined with the adjoining Township Park.

Other major active recreation facilities are found in Jacob Reiff Park on Quarry Road and the Heckler Plains Farmstead on Landis Road. These parks are also major elements of the greenway along the West Branch of the Skippack Creek, and vital components of the historical agricultural heritage of the Township. Further upstream, the Samuel Harley and Ted Dannerth Memorial Parks preserve greenway areas and have heavily used sec-



The 2-acre Dan Roth Park also has a pavilion, a pond and a playground. Photo by Mary West

tions of the Township's bike trail system. Other parks include the active recreation facilities at Robert Clemens Bucher Park on School Lane.

PASSIVE RECREATION AREAS

Groff's Mill, Wawa, and Bergey Parks occupy extensive land areas along the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek and provide passive recreation and protection of natural features. The greenway conservation area extends along the Indian Creek tributary to the East Branch, and includes the Briarwyck Park with its playground, picnic area, and fishing pond.



The largest concentrations of active recreation facilities are found at the Harleysville Community Center and Alderfer Park. Lower photo by Mary West

Additional passive facilities can be found at Dan Roth Park between Maple and Alumni Avenues (fishing pond, pavilion, gazebo, playground), and Kulp Road Pond Park at Kulp and Gruber Roads (picnic area and trout pond).

MISCELLANEOUS OPEN SPACE

Numerous other parcels of varying sizes have been dedicated or offered for dedication to the Township as part of the development process. These and other miscellaneous lands are also identified in Figure 15, although some areas may not yet have been formally incorporated into the Township's park system.

CONNECTIONS TO EVANSBURG STATE PARK

At the northeastern end of Evansburg State Park, approximately 25 acres of state park lands extend into Lower Salford from Towamencin Township along the Skippack Creek and its West Branch. Lower Salford's existing greenway parklands join the state park lands at this location.

This upper end of Evansburg State Park provides opportunities for interconnections among greenways and trail systems including those of Lower Salford, Towamencin, Skippack, and Worcester Townships, as well as those planned by the state park and Montgomery County.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Farmland that is valuable for agricultural productivity and rural character can be permanently protected under an Agricultural Preservation Easement through the county and state program. In Lower Salford, two farms have permanently preserved more than 103 acres of farmland and several others are eligible to apply for preservation. Two other farms have their applications in a holding or inactive status.

Figure 15
Permanent Open Space: Public

Lower Salford Township Open Space			
Map #	Name	Acres	Block/Unit
1	Homestead	24.0	1B/105, 106
2	Westrum Open Space	12.1	1/27, 95
3	Gruber Road Athletic Fields	7.8	13/23, 30, 32
4	Yoder Road Open Space	2.1	12/23; 24/83
5	Summerwind 2	7.6	25C/32
6	Briarwyck Park/Indian Creek	39.6	2/33, 58 2F/7, 21; 2C/52, 53; 6C/33, 34
7	Pioneer Circle Open Space	3.0	10B/13
8	Maple Avenue Open Space	1.6	10/25, 46, 47
9	Robert Clemens Bucher Park	4.0	14/9
10	Samuel Harley Park & Kulp Road Pond Park, West Branch Skippack Creek	58.9	12B/76; 24/55, 81, 84, 86, 88, 89, 91, 92; 24A/25; 24C/2
11	Manor Road Open Space	2.2	24J/57
12	Buckingham Circle Open Space	8.4	25B/40
13	Charles L. Reed Memorial Park	12.3	25A/60
14	Beechwood	20.2	16A/85
15	Robison	1.6	16/131
16	Robins Glen	6.6	16C/22
17	The Heathers	2.7	6B/41, 42
18	Dan Roth Memorial Park	1.8	9/46
19	Alvin C. Alderfer Park	27.4	7/85, 89; 7C/3
20	Frederick T. Dannenrth Memorial Park	18.8	8/51; 8B/137, 142
21	Cheswyck/Oak Ridge	13.9	7B/68; 7D/29
22	Hidden Creek/Butterweck	37.4	17B/92, 95, 96, 97; 17/94
23	West Branch Skippack Creek Open Space	23.5	17/17, 26, 43, 46; 17A/41; 17B/94
24	Heckler Plains Park	43.8	17/8, 9
25	Morris Road Open Space	16.7	18A/39
26	Hammersmyth	14.7	17C/23
27	West Branch Skippack Creek Open Space	25.8	21/23, 32; 39, 75, 80
28	Seneko Marczuk	28.0	21B/87,88
29	Jacob Reiff Park	73.6	21B/15, 48
30	West Branch Skippack Creek Open Space	4.8	21B/84
31	Salford Lea	21.4	6E/55
32	Brownstone Mill	5.1	20B/109
33	Landis Road Pocket Park	0.1	7/50
34	Groff's Mill Park	31.0	2D/3
35	East Branch Perkiomen Creek Open Space	42.1	03/72, 74, 81, 119
36	Wawa Park	29.3	3/16
37	Bergey Park/East Branch Open Space	51.8	4/14, 22, 77, 109; 4A/1
38	East Branch Perkiomen Creek Open Space	105.0	4/9, 13, 75
39	Lederach Golf Club	224.0	5/127
40	Schlosser Road Open Space	30.4	20/2
41	Lucon Road Open Space	37.0	22/42
Total Lower Salford Public Open Space =		1121.6 Acres	
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Open Space			
Map #	Name	Acres	Block/Unit
42	Evansburg State Park	25.3	21B/18, 19, 25; 22/114
Total Lower Salford and Commonwealth Permanent Public Open Space =		1146.9 Acres	

Figure 15 continued...
Permanent Open Space: Public

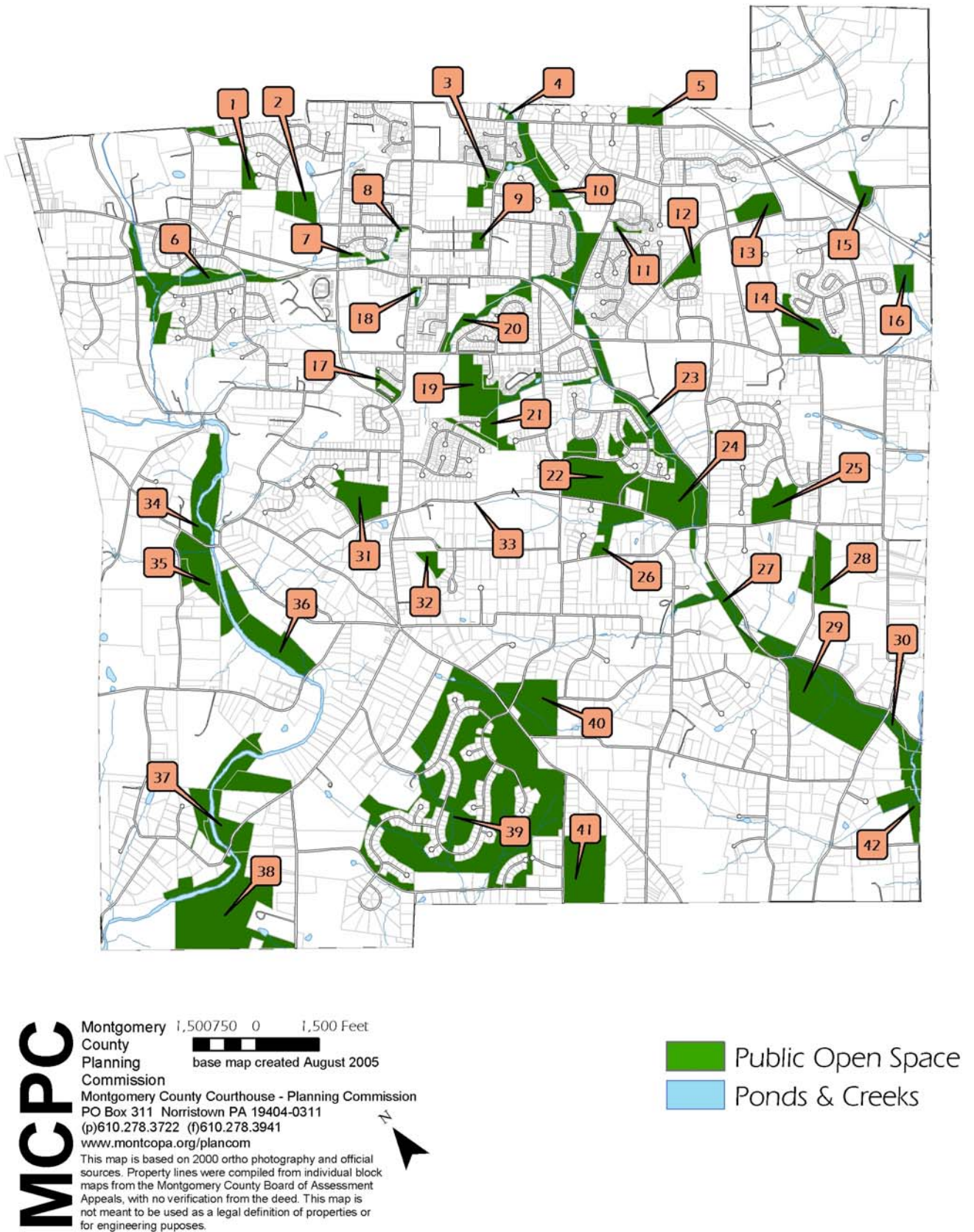


Figure 16
Permanent Open Space: Private

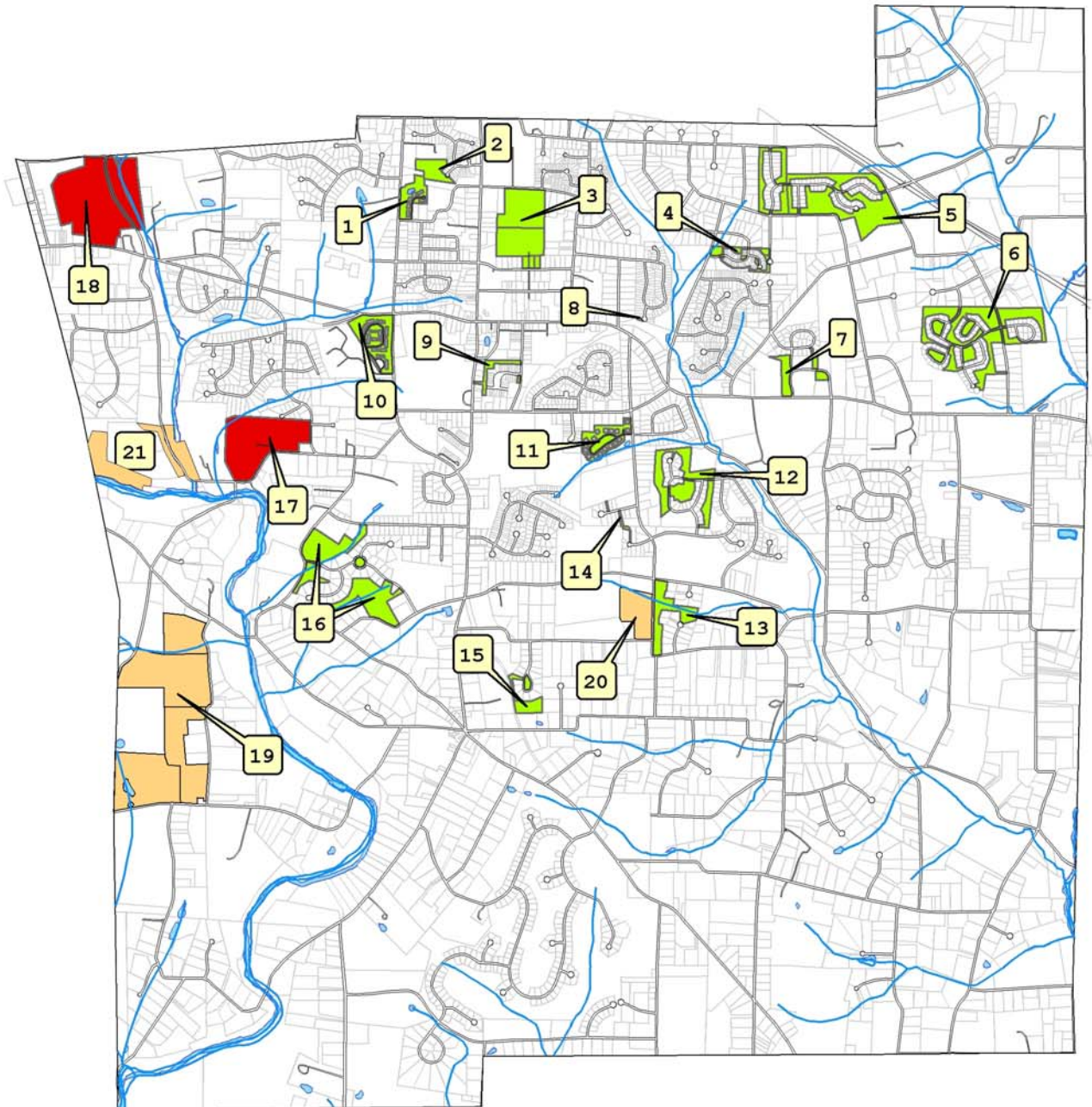
Map #	Name	Acres	Location
1	Carriage Crossing	1.9	Harleysville Pike
2	Faith Bible Fellowship Church	3.8	Walker Circle
3	Harleysville Community Center	40.1	Park Ave
4	Belcourt Manor	4.1	Belcourt Way, Manor Rd
5	Summerwind	30.7	Summerwind La, Sunset Dr
6	Beechwood	21.3	Astor Dr, Brenton Cir, Coddington Way
7	The Hendricks Group	5.4	Buckingham Circle
8	Sal Lapio Inc	0.1	Emily La
9	Wilshyre Village	3.7	Broad St, Wilshyre Way
10	Rosecliff Manor	2.6	Hamilton Dr
11	Salford Pond	8.6	Pondview Dr
12	Montgomery Meadows	22.0	Creekview Dr
13	Hammersmyth Farms	9.6	Hammersmyth Ct, Bennington Ct
14	Oak Ridge	0.5	Oak Ridge La
15	Brownstone Mill	3.9	Truman Ct
16	Estates at Salford Lea	31.5	Shakespeare Dr
17	Darryl & Stacey Knechel Farm	48.0	Indian Creek Road
18	Irwin Ziegler Farm	55.7	Indian Creek Road
19	Lewis Property, MCLT*	105.6	Haldeman Road
20	Godshall Property, MCLT*	12.9	Moyer Road
21	Wm. Moore, Brandywine Cons.	26.5	Indian Creek Road
Total =		438.3	

*Conservation easement held by Montgomery County Lands Trust



The Homestead Dairy Farm on Indian Creek Road is permanently protected.

Figure 16 continued...



MCPC

Montgomery County
Planning Commission
Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p)610.278.3722 (f)610.278.3941
www.montcopa.org/plancom

This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering puposes.

1,600 800 0 1,600 Feet
base map created August 2005



- Private Open Space
- Preserved Farm
- Conservation Easement
- Ponds & Creeks

CONSERVANCIES AND LAND TRUSTS

Alternative methods of permanently protecting and preserving open space, farmlands, natural features and other elements of rural character are available through non-profit organizations whose goals include a wide range of conservation activities. Conservancies and Land Trusts can work with land owners to develop conservation plans and apply conservation easements that protect the open space qualities of privately owned land and provide tax benefits to the landowners. The Montgomery County Lands Trust, Natural Lands Trust, Brandywine Conservancy, and Heritage Conservancy are among these organizations.

In Lower Salford, 26.5, 105.6, and 12.9 acres, respectively, of the Moore, Lewis, and Godshall properties are permanently protected under conservation easements through the Brandywine Conservancy and Montgomery County Lands Trust (Figure 16).

TEMPORARY OPEN SPACE

Lower Salford has 775 acres of temporary open space that includes farmland, institutional land, and a privately owned golf course. These open and spacious lands are important because they help protect rural character and natural features, and provide some recreation facilities. But the value of temporary open space may quickly disappear because these lands may be developed at any time. This open space plan encourages conversion of temporary open space to the permanently protected category.

Some of Lower Salford's land areas are temporarily protected as open space under the Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act, Act 319, and the Pennsylvania Open Space Covenant Act, Act 515, as shown in Figure 17. These laws enable landowners to maintain their properties as open, spacious character, but provide no guarantee of long-term protection of open space.

ACT 319

Act 319 is intended to foster preservation of land devoted to agricultural use, agricultural reserve, or forest reserve. This preferential tax assessment gives landowners an incentive to keep their parcel intact (minimum 10-acre parcel size). Landowners who subdivide their property in excess of the extent permitted under the Act 319 regulations must pay roll-back taxes for the previous seven years plus interest. With the high demand for land, this penalty is not a significant deterrent, and Act 319 often provides only fleeting protection of open space. Currently, about 82 properties comprising 2,840 acres of land participate in this program. Many of these properties also are part of an Agricultural Security Area, or ASA.

ACT 515

Act 515 was created to stabilize open areas through the use of real estate tax assessment techniques. It allows certain counties to covenant with landowners for preservation of land in farm, forest, water supply or open space uses. Some eligible lands can be as small as ten acres and must be consistent with the county or municipal open space plan. Unless properly terminated, covenants require the landowner to pay roll-back taxes for the previous five years plus interest. Act 515 has frequently been used for golf course properties, but it provides little to no long-term land protection. Two properties comprising 111 acres are currently enrolled in this program.

INSTITUTIONAL AND OTHER PRIVATE RECREATIONAL AREAS

Lower Salford also has a substantial amount of active recreational open space developed by schools and churches. Public schools provide much open space in the form of playing fields, basketball courts, and open fields. Other facilities include the Harleysville Insur-

ance Company's large parcel with a fitness trail and ball field, and the Mainland golf course.

These open spaces differ from publicly owned areas because they may not remain open forever. As changes occur in the school district, the local schools could be closed, sold, and used for other purposes, including offices or apartments. Other privately owned recreation land can be sold and/or developed at any time. Then the private recreational facilities are likely to be lost.

These temporary sources of open space with private recreational facilities are important because they offer residents a greater range of opportunities to meet their recreational needs. They also add an aesthetic quality by opening up views and providing visual relief in some developed areas. More than 200 acres of land in Lower Salford fall into this category.

The Township can continue to acquire ownership or conservation easements to permanently protect some of this open land, but it cannot reasonably be expected to protect all of it. Permanent protection is also available through government sponsored programs and private conservation agreements as explained previously in this chapter.

TOTAL OPEN SPACE

When added together, the permanent public and private open space plus the various categories of temporary open space comprise more than 2,300 acres. These lands are shown in the Composite Open Space Map in Figure 17A.

CONCLUSION

Lower Salford has extensive areas of protected land, with 1,585 acres of permanent public and private open space and 775 acres of temporary open space. This land provides Township residents with many opportunities to enjoy all the benefits of open space, including recreation, tranquility, beauty, and a sense of community. However, much of the temporary open space could be lost to development if the land owners choose to give it up and use the land for other purposes.

Figure 17
Temporary Open Space

Open Space Type	Name	Acres	Facilities
School	Oak Ridge Elementary School Souderton Area School District	20.7	School Building, Playing Fields
	Indian Valley Middle School Souderton Area School District	31.4	School Building, Ball Fields, Running Track, Tennis Courts
	Lower Salford Elementary School Souderton Area School District	10.9	School Building, Basketball Courts, Playground
	New Life Youth and Family Services Private School	41.9	School Buildings, Playing Fields, Swimming Pool
Church	Branch Fellowship	24.1	Playing fields (for church)
	Salford Mennonite Church	16.8	
Other Institutions	Harleysville LTD	16.7	Ballfield, fitness trail (corporate)
	Franconia Mennonite Board	39.9	Group home
Private Club	Mainland Golf Club	87.4	Golf course
Agricultural Security Area	Indian Creek Community Farm	40.7	Farm
	Larkin, Walter & Nancy	24.0	Farm
	Hanna, William	47.0	Farm
	Geyer, Thomas	18.2	Farm
	Rice, Leslie & Phoebe	13.8	Farm
	Moyer, Norman & Eva	68.0	Farm
	Moyer, Steven & Kathy	13.0	Farm
	Marcho, Wayne & Martha	30.0	Farm
	Landis, David & Sharon	13.0	Farm
	Retzlaff, Palmer & Patty	65.0	Farm
	Allebach, Martha	57.0	Farm
	Stutzman, Donald G. & Gladys D.	17.0	Farm
	Moyer, Doris B.	21.7	Farm
	Highhouse, William & Helen	15.8	Farm
	Swartz, Willis & Dorothy	23.0	Farm
	Keen, Patricia	18.1	Farm
Total		775.0	

Sources: County Board of Assessments; MCPC field checks, 1994, 2004

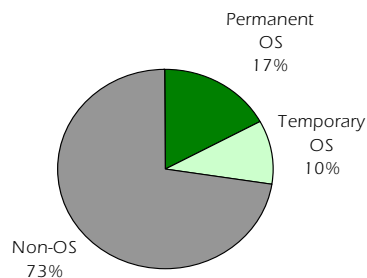
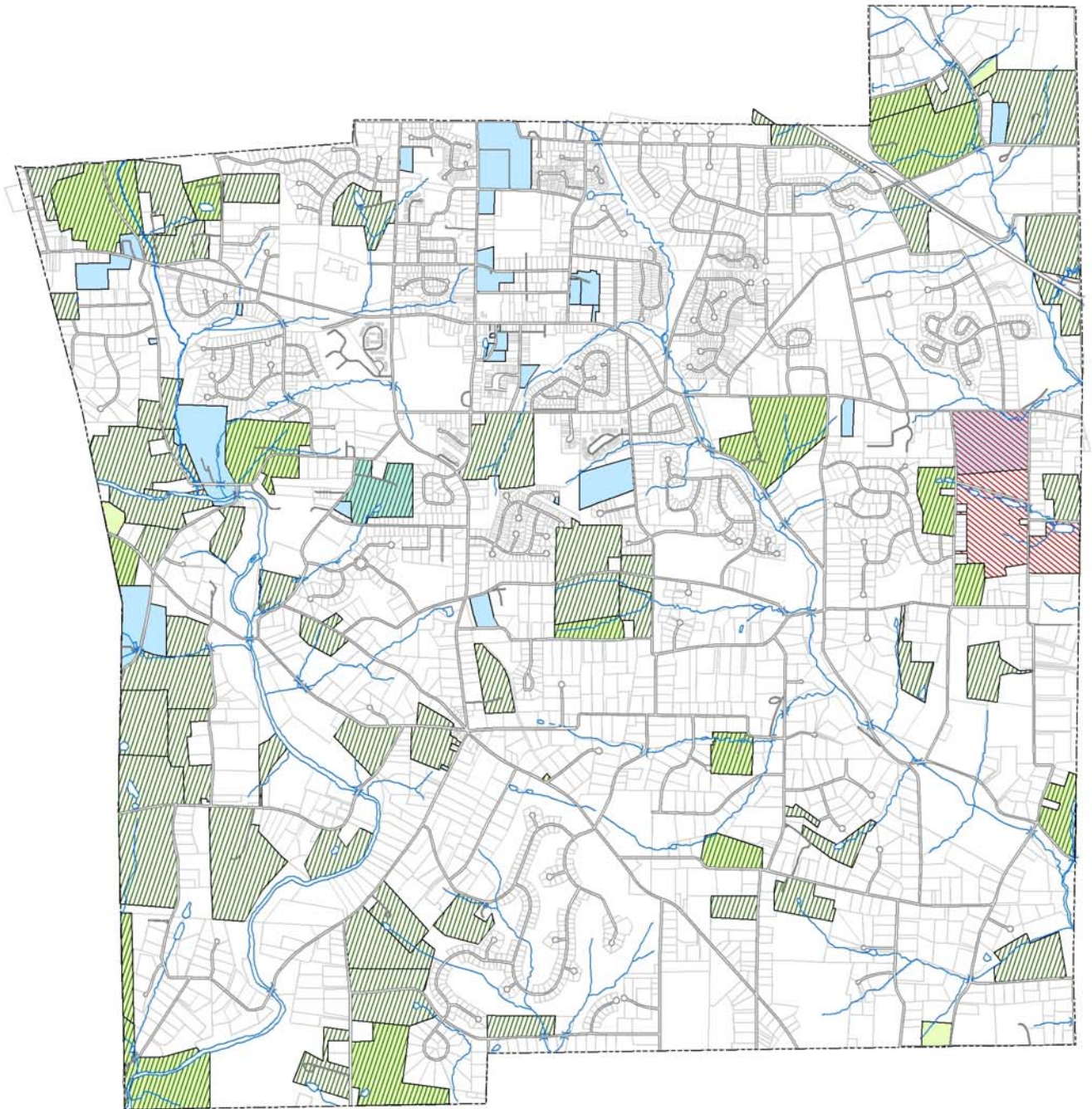


Figure 17 continued...

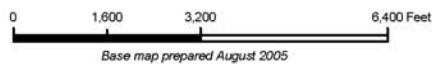


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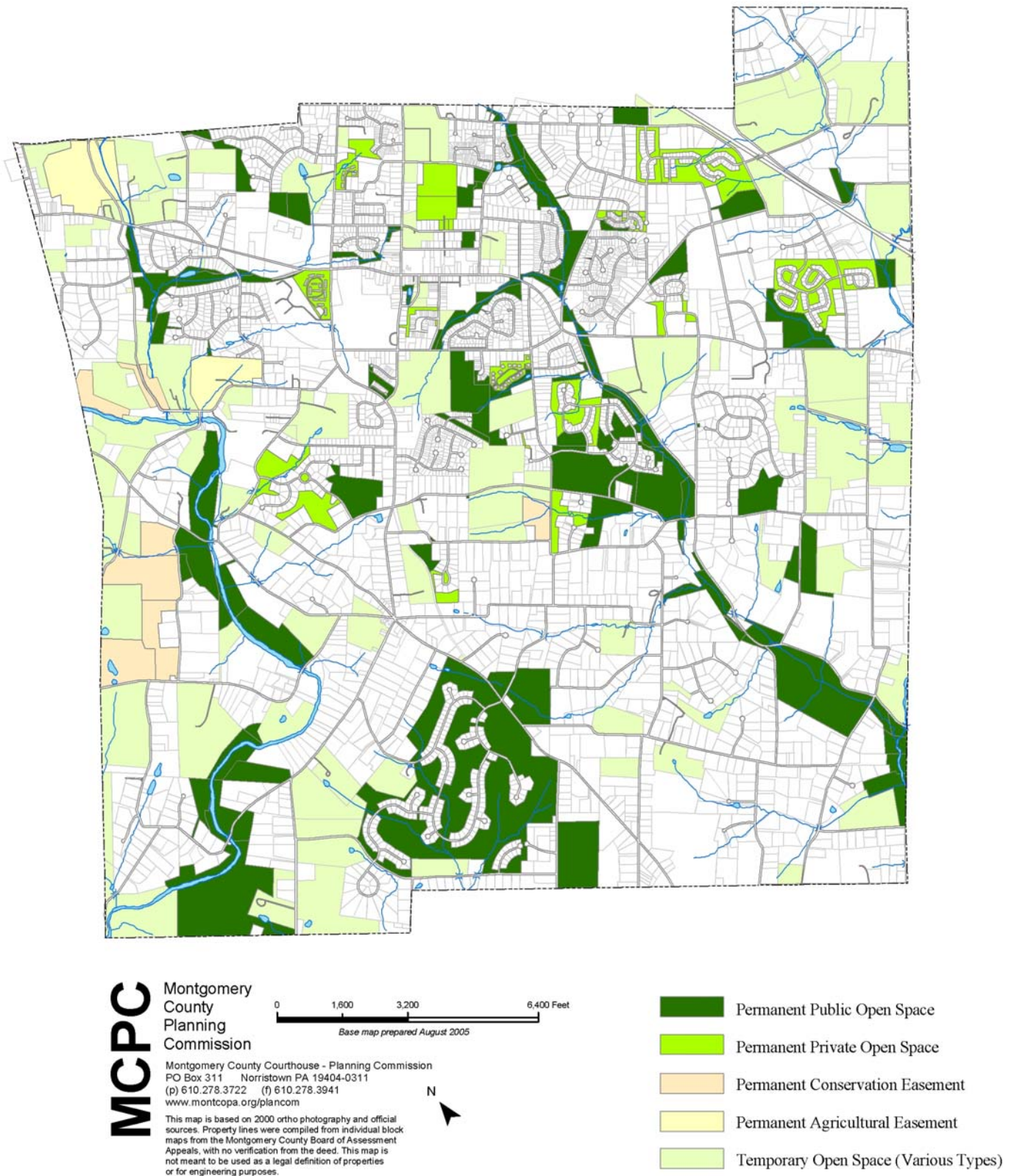
-  Act 515 lands
-  Act 319 lands
-  Institutional
-  Agricultural Security Area

Figure 17A Composite Open Space Map



CHAPTER 4

INVENTORY OF POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE RESOURCES

In Lower Salford the combination of potentially vulnerable resources, such as geology, productive soils, streams, woodlands, and historic resources, creates a unique landscape that gives the township a distinct identity and contributes significantly to the overall quality of life. The township's natural resources serve to provide clean air and water, fresh produce, and habitat for wildlife. Also, these natural features help identify the opportunities and constraints for development. In order for the community to be able to prioritize these resources according to their vulnerability and local importance, they must determine which are most important for the health and welfare of the community.

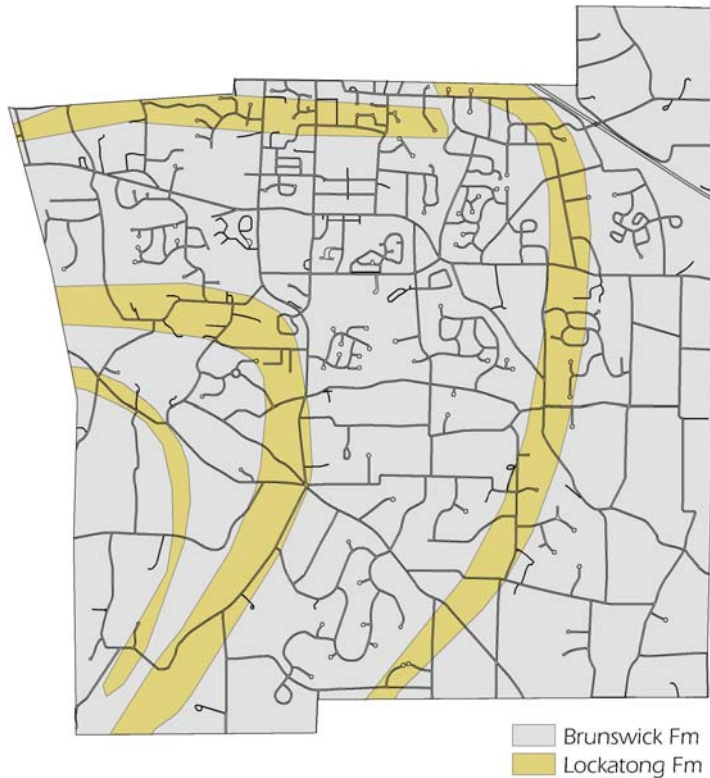
GEOLOGY

The foundation of the natural resources in the township is provided by the unique characteristics of the bedrock. In combination with the local climate, geological characteristics of the rock, both physical and chemical, influence hydrologic and terrestrial features such as local soils, wetlands, surface and ground water, vegetation, and topography.

Subsequently, their characteristics may impact woodlands and wildlife. In order to understand the township's natural resources one must understand its geology.

Montgomery County is located in the Triassic Lowland and Piedmont Upland section of the Piedmont Physiographic Province. The Triassic Lowlands are primarily red shales and

Figure 18
Geology



sandstones, with intrusions of diabase. Four formations - Stockton Sandstone/ Conglomerate /Shale, Lockatong Argillite/ Shale, Brunswick Shale/Sandstone, and Diabase - comprise the Triassic Lowlands. The formations underlying Lower Salford are described below and shown in Figure 18.

BRUNSWICK FORMATION

This sedimentary formation underlies the majority of the township and is characterized by reddish brown shale, mudstone, and siltstone. The Brunswick formation sustains moderate groundwater yields in most locations (up to 100 gpm). However, groundwater yields do vary, although secondary openings, such as joints and fractures, can provide adequate flows. In a few places, Lower Salford's underlying geology is apparent on the surface, especially along the East Branch of Perkiomen Creek, which is bordered by a number of cliffs and escarpments.

LOCKATONG FORMATION

The Lockatong formation occurs in a number of narrow bands within the township and consists of dark gray to black dense, hard shale (argillite) intermixed with beds of impure limestone and other types of shale. These rocks are hard and resist weathering. Generally, the Lockatong formation exhibits low ground water yields.

GROUNDWATER YIELDS

Limited porosity and relatively low ground water yields affect the minimum lot size that should be permitted in areas without public water. Residential areas that depend on groundwater from individual wells are drawing on a limited supply of groundwater, which comes from the portion of rainfall that percolates through the soil into underlying bedrock to the water table. Baseflow is the amount of water that flows out of the ground to replenish surface water, and in a natural state, can be viewed as excess groundwater available for consumption.

In the Township's drainage areas, most of the rainfall in an average year runs off the land during and after a storm (27.8%) or is lost to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration (60.3%). Only about 12% of the rainwater is available as excess groundwater (baseflow) to local streams. The baseflow contribution per acre is approximately 344 gallons per day for an average year. However, during a drought year with a one year in ten probability of recurrence, it drops to approximately 83 gallons per acre per day. For long term planning or as a basis of zoning density, using 83 gallons of water per net acre as an estimate of water supply is reasonable.

With one home per two acres, there will be about 166 gallons of baseflow water available for each home. However, the average suburban household can use up to 300 gal-

lons per day of water. Approximately 90 percent of that water is sent out of the house as sewage (270 gallons). Up to 50% of the wastewater that is discharged into a sand mound system is lost through evapotranspiration. The other half of the treated effluent, or 135 gallons, provides effective recharge to the groundwater. Added to the 166 gallons per day from rainfall during a drought year, it matches the 300 gallons per day that most families will withdraw.

If homes withdraw more water than is being recharged, then the water table will go down, which may dry up some wells and cause people to have to drill new, deeper wells. In addition, it will hurt the ecology of the area by eliminating water that plants and animals need.

Figure 19
Topography



TOPOGRAPHY

STEEP SLOPES

Slope, or frequency of change in elevation, is an important environmental condition. When expressed as a percentage, slope is defined as the amount of change in vertical elevation over a specified horizontal distance. For example, a three foot rise in elevation over a one hundred foot horizontal distance is expressed as a three percent slope. These changes in elevation throughout a community contribute a great deal to its appearance and natural diversity.

This is especially true of the steep slope areas of a community, which also cause limitations to development. The slope and soils present on steep slopes are in balance with vegetation, underlying geology and precipitation levels. Maintaining this equilibrium reduces the danger to public health and safety posed by unstable hillsides. Steep slopes often have a combination of vegetation, climate, soil and underlying geology that differs from the surrounding area. Frequently this means that the environmental sensitivity of the steep slope are different as well. Susceptibility to erosion and mass movement may be greater than the surrounding area, especially if vegetation is removed. Increased runoff and sedimentation from disturbed slopes require increased public expenditure for flood control and stormwater management. Also, different species of plants and the associated wildlife that depends on these plants may be present only on the slopes, creating unique recreation opportunities.

Generally, Lower Salford consists of rolling hills with some steep slope areas clustered around the township's creeks, especially around the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek and Indian Creek. Areas with slopes greater than 15% are shown in Figure 19. Almost no development has occurred in Lower Salford on these steep slope areas,

although some residential development, which predominantly consists of large lots, has occurred around the edges of these steep slopes.

SOILS

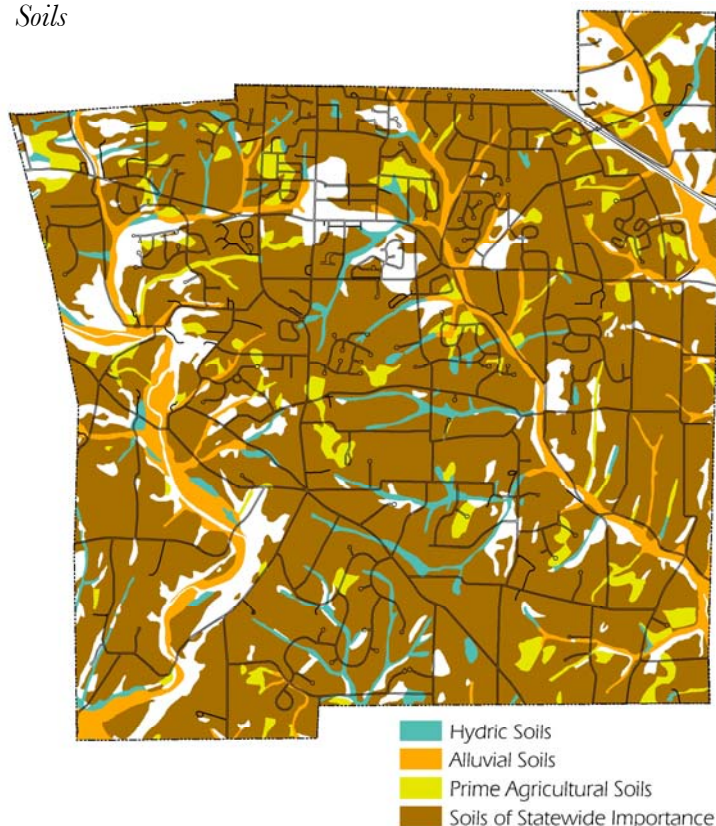
Soils are a natural assortment of organic materials and mineral fragments that cover the earth and support plant life. The composition of soils changes slowly over time, due to weathering of rock and activity of soil organisms. As a consequence, soils vary with respect to depth to bedrock, depth to groundwater, color, mineral characteristics, fertility, texture, and erodibility. One of the most influential natural features, soils are a result of the hydrology and the weathering capacity of the underlying geology in a given area. They are also influenced by the orientation of the land and the types of vegetation that grow in them. Conversely, the type of soil influences the vegetative

cover of the land, which effects the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater, wildlife diversity, rates of erosion, and the aesthetic quality of the landscape.

Though soils are diverse, soil scientists have classified the soils found in Montgomery County into several groups called soil series. Soils listed within the same series will display similar subsurface characteristics. The surface characteristics of soils within a particular series can vary in slope, degree of erosion, size of stones, and other easily recognizable features. Detailed information on soils is available in the Montgomery County Soil Survey, completed by the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1967. The agricultural importance and water table depth characteristics, are discussed in detail below.

In addition to the soil mapping units, soils can also be divided into prime and important agricultural soils, hydric components, and alluvial soils. The groups of soil pertinent to the Township are described below.

Figure 20
Soils



PRIME AND IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL SOILS

The agricultural capability of soil is measured based on fertility, depth to bedrock and groundwater, texture, erodibility, and slope. Soils are classified as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and other land, based on these characteristics. Prime farmland includes deep, well drained, and moderately sloped soils that can support high yields of crops with little management. Farmland of statewide importance includes soils that support cultivation but require careful crop management. The remaining soils are best used for pasture and woodlands.

In Lower Salford, prime agricultural soils are primarily located along the township's streams. In addition, small pockets of prime

agricultural soils are identified in the Harleysville area, which is primarily developed, as well as Vernfield and Lederach. A few other spots are scattered in the southeastern corner of the township. Soils of statewide importance cover the vast majority of Lower Salford. Other soils, which are not suitable for growing crops, are primarily located in the township's steep slope areas.

ALLUVIAL SOILS

Alluvial soils are frequently, but not always, located within a floodplain. They have been deposited by flowing water and are not stable as a result of their texture and composition. The presence of alluvial soils is only one indicator of a floodplain. Changes in the tributary drainage area or slope of the adjacent stream may create a floodplain that is either larger or smaller than the area of alluvial soils. Also, alluvial soils do not indicate the probability of recurrence of a flood (for example, a 100 year flood). An important aspect of alluvial soils is that they often form aquifer recharge areas. The Township's alluvial soils are located around the three main creeks (East Branch Perkiomen, Skippack, and West Branch Skippack).

HYDRIC SOILS

In general, soils that are saturated with water at or near the ground surface, particularly during certain times of the year, are considered to have a high water table. As would be expected, such areas often exist near water bodies and watercourses and may be part of wetlands. Because of wetness, these soils present a major constraint for development wherever on-site subsurface sewage treatment is utilized, as in many rural areas, since treatment depends largely on adequate water percolation through the soil. Hydric soils can be found along the many tributaries to the three major creeks.

SURFACE WATERS AND HYDROLOGY

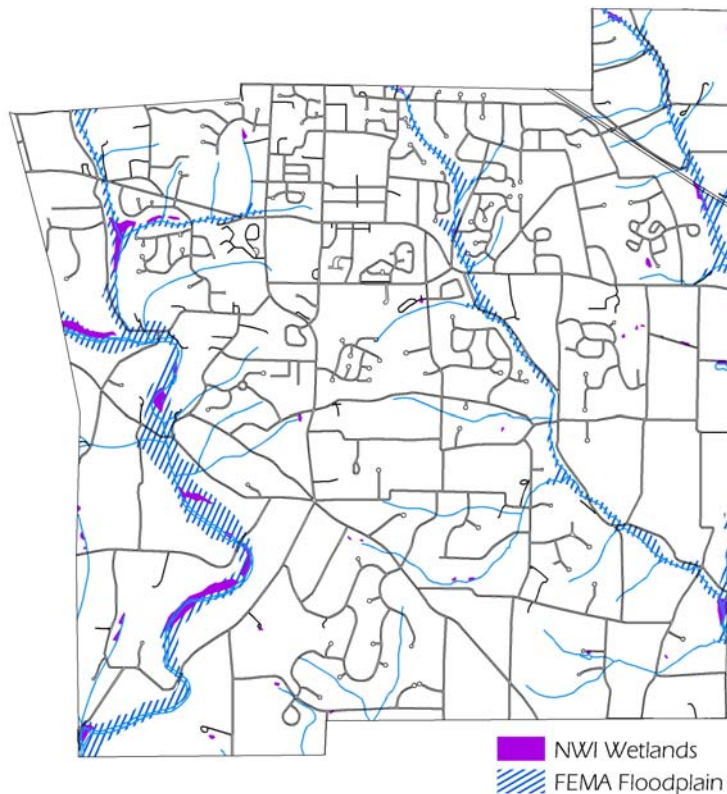
Water is a valuable resource, consumed by people and industry, enjoyed at recreation facilities, employed in the assimilation of treated sewage, and integral to the landscape. The average rainfall in the county varies from 43 inches near City line Avenue to 47 inches in the vicinity of the Green Lane Reservoir.

It should be noted that in any given year, annual precipitation can vary from the average by as much as ten inches. Generally speaking, 25 percent of precipitation becomes direct runoff, 50 percent evaporates or is transpired by plants, and 25 percent replenishes groundwater. The surface water that falls on or is carried through Lower Salford affects the topography, soils, vegetation, and groundwater and comes from two natural sources: direct runoff and groundwater. A third, manmade source, may also contribute to stream flow: effluent from sewage treatment plants, which tends to dampen the variation between high and low flow periods.

FLOODPLAIN AND STREAM CORRIDORS

The township is crossed by three creeks and their various tributaries: East Branch Perkiomen Creek, Skippack Creek, and West Branch Skippack Creek. Each of these has a 100-year floodplain along its entire length, as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The 100-year floodplain is a feature that will affect the health, safety, and welfare of township residents. Much of the time, it is dry. During storms, however, the floodplain stores and conveys floodwater. Development within the floodplain reduces the carrying capacity and increases the height and destructive ability of floodwater.

Figure 21
Hydrology



In addition to carrying floodwaters, the floodplain and stream corridor serve other important functions. The condition of the stream corridor itself is important in minimizing erosion and water pollution, protecting water quality (temperature and velocity), and providing animal habitat and recreation opportunities.

Well vegetated corridors will reduce pollutant loads to streams, shade the stream, and provide habitat for wildlife. If vegetation is preserved along the banks of feeder streams as well as the main stem, pollutant loads are greatly reduced. Wetlands that filter and impede stormwater and provide a habitat for aquatic life are frequently found along stream corridors. Unconsolidated gravel and stone deposits along corridors allow for groundwater recharge. People also benefit from protected stream corridors, as they provide opportunities for trails and other forms of recreation.

Chapter 10, Recommendations, includes an explanation regarding stream bank and riparian corridor restoration projects conducted in the Township.

WETLANDS

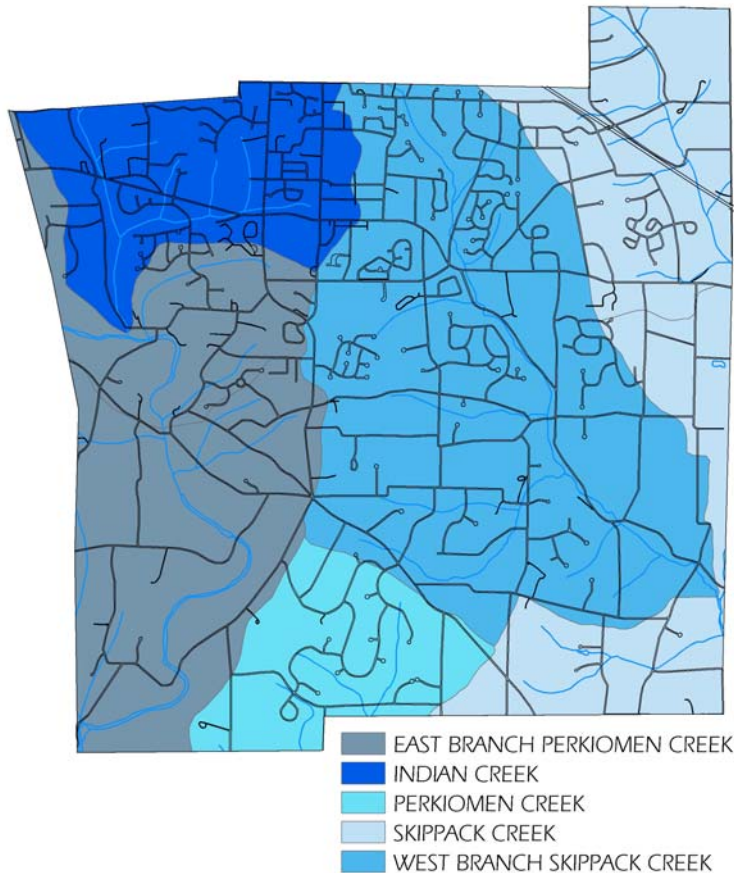
Wetlands have value and are worthy of protection due to a number of characteristics. However, it is easier to discuss the benefits of wetlands than it is to delineate the wetland itself. Some wetlands are easily recognizable by most people because the presence or influence of water is obvious. However, many wetlands are subject only to seasonal flooding. For much of the year, surface water may not be present. Still other wetlands develop in areas where the soil is saturated for long periods, but never flooded.

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers have defined wetlands as, "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a



Lower Salford is working to protect its stream corridors.

Figure 22
Watersheds



frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.”

Depending on where they are located, wetlands may serve one or more beneficial functions. Almost all wetlands provide habitat for birds, amphibians and fish. These in turn support other wildlife. Wetlands also mitigate flooding by holding back floodwater and slowing stream velocity. Wetlands improve water quality too. As water flows through a wetland, it slows and drops much of its sediment load. In addition, nutrients that can cause algae blooms and other pollution problems are taken up by wetland vegetation. Wetlands located in depressions often encourage infiltration of stormwater, contributing to groundwater recharge.

The township has a few wetland areas based on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). The NWI offers a broad based, generalized overview of wetlands, therefore other wetlands may also exist in the municipality. Hydric soils may also indicate the presence of wetlands. The Army Corps of Engineers or a qualified consultant could be enlisted for a final determination of where wetlands are in fact present. Figure 21 shows where NWI wetlands are located in Lower Salford. Most areas are along the East Branch Perkiomen Creek, while a few can be found near the other major creeks.

WATERSHEDS

The major drainage basins in the Township are the Perkiomen and Skippack Creek basins. These two basins are further divided into minor drainage basins based on tributaries of these creeks. In Lower Salford, the Perkiomen Creek basin includes the East Branch of Perkiomen Creek and the Indian Creek. The Skippack Creek basin includes one significant tributary, the West Branch of Skippack Creek. The drainage basins and watershed areas formed by these creeks are also shown in Figure 22. The Skippack and Perkiomen Creek drainage basins abut each other along a major ridge line that generally follows Route 113, through Lederach and Harleysville.

Because watershed basins are usually larger than one community, an interrelationship exists whereby municipalities that are upstream contribute surface water flow to Lower Salford, while those downstream receive Lower Salford's flow. With this in mind, the township should aim to maintain the natural conditions of its drainage system, such as through preservation of open space along watercourses.

PROTECTED WATERCOURSES

Pennsylvania, as required by the Federal Clean Water Act, has established water

quality standards that apply to all streams and other waterbodies in the Commonwealth. The water quality standards, codified in Title 25 PA Code Chapter 93, establish water quality criteria that need to be maintained to protect designated water uses.

Discharges to waters of the Commonwealth are evaluated to assure that water quality standards are complied with. Where needed, effluent or other discharge limitations are established to assure that water quality criteria are achieved and designated uses protected. Non-point source discharges are required to incorporate Best Management Practices.

The protected water use designation for a given waterway is an indicator of its value for the protection and propagation of aquatic life. Since each protected use has chemical and biological characteristics, and other stream conditions that need to be

maintained, the designations are also indicators of stream quality. Therefore, the designations can be used to prioritize the unprotected stream and stream valley resources in a municipality. Both the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek and the Skip-pack Creek, along with their tributaries, are designated trout stocking streams.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater behaves much like surface water, flowing like a stream, only much slower. Groundwater is tapped as a source of drinking water and for industrial purposes where surface water is unavailable.

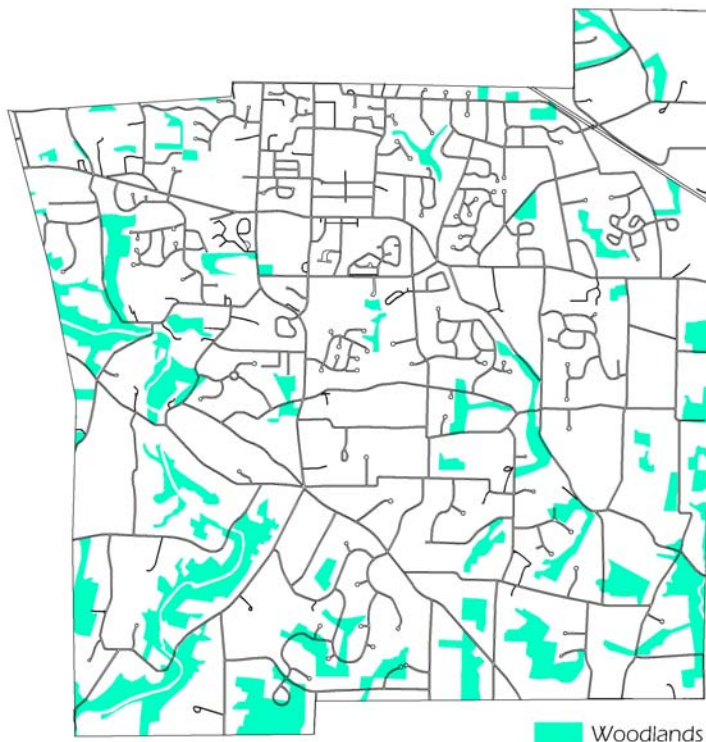
Groundwater replenishment occurs slowly, as precipitation and in some cases stream water seeps through the soil, down to the aquifer. Open, undisturbed land is essential to groundwater recharge, since vegetation serves to retain precipitation where it falls, allowing it to soak into the soil rather than run off the surface. Impervious surface from development prevents infiltration of precipitation.

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

Lower Salford has a wide variety of wildlife habitats, including the four habitats normally found in this portion of the Piedmont region. These include deep woodlands, riparian woodland corridors, upland fields (which generally consists of farms or are on the edge of farmfields and fallow fields), and wetlands (discussed above).

Woodlands, comprised of a dense forest of hardwoods, once covered over 99 percent of the county. Oaks were the dominant species, but chestnut, tulip poplar, hickory, ash, red maple, and dogwoods were also present. Several hundred years of clearing and cultivation, and in more recent times the rapid development of houses and

Figure 23
Woodlands



commercial facilities, have reduced woodlands to a shadow of their former extent. The principle types of woodlands remaining in the county are:

- Red Oak - About 60% of all remaining woodlands. Northern Red Oak is predominant, but Black, Scarlet and Chestnut Oak are also abundant.
- Ash/Maple/Elm - About 19% of all woodlands. Local mixtures will vary, and include minor species, such as the Slippery Elm, Yellow Birch, Black Gum, Sycamore, and Poplar.
- Eastern Red Cedar - 18% of the county's wooded acres are covered with this species and associated species: Gray Birch, Red Maple, Sweet Birch, and Aspen.
- Sugar Maple/Beech/Yellow Birch - The remaining three percent of woodlands is comprised of this association. Associated species include Red Maple, Hemlock, Northern Red oak, White Ash, and Tulip Poplar.

Woodlands and hedgerows serve many purposes, both functional and aesthetic. These areas provide habitat for many animal

and plant species, control erosion, clean the air, protect privacy, provide windbreaks, cool the air in the summer, reduce the impact of rainfall, muffle noise, absorb odors, and improve the appearance of an area. Because of all of these benefits, woodlands and hedgerows improve the quality of life of a community and usually increase property values.

The distribution of woodlands in Montgomery County can be described in three different patterns (see figure 23). Small, widely scattered stands can be found east of the central county ridge, often strung along alluvial soils. Long, linear stands along streams and on alluvial soils are typical in the central part of the county. Large forested blocks of land, often hundreds to thousands of acres in size, are found on ridges in the central and northern areas of the county. Lower Salford has some significant clusters of woodlands, especially near Skippack village and the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek. These woodlands, along with deep woodlands (those at least 300 feet from open land) and riparian woodlands (which follow streams) are indicated in Figure 23.

SCENIC ROADS AND VISTAS

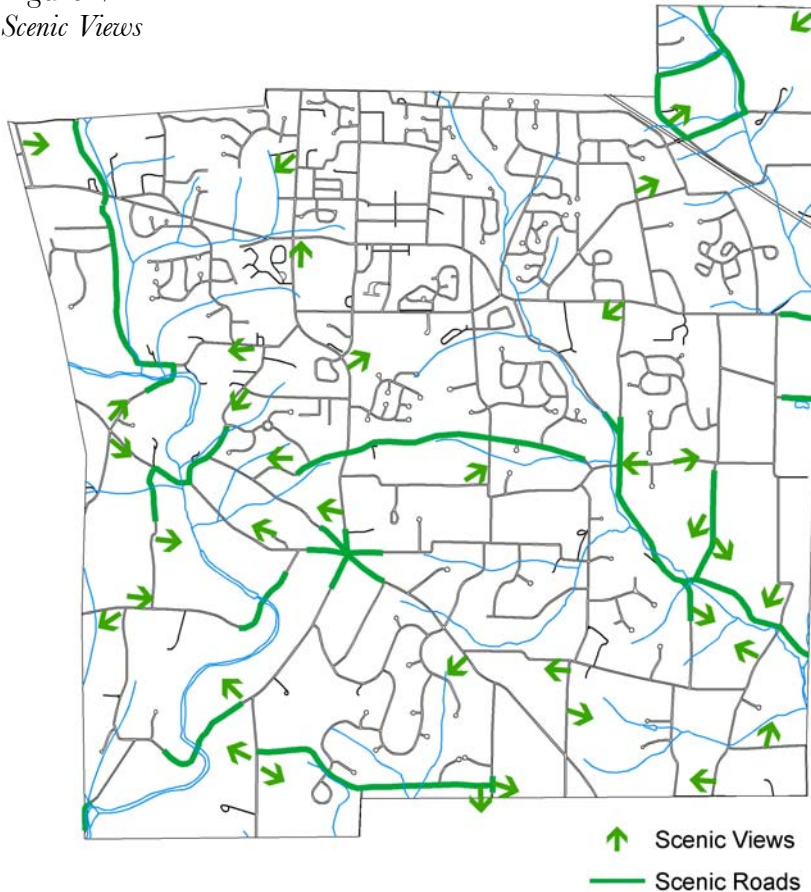
Scenic resources are elements of the natural and/or built environment that stand out among all the attributes of a community. They tend to be the most pleasant and interesting places, such as historic sites, natural features like lakes or creeks, and recreation areas.

Although the process of identifying a scenic resource is largely dependent on the observer's own opinions and preferences, information collected from a community group, such as a planning commission, can provide a relatively broad inventory. Wherever possible, these areas should be preserved and linked to the community's open space and recreation system.



Lower Salford has many scenic rural views.

Figure 24
Scenic Views



Lower Salford has many scenic rural roads, shown in Figure 24, and some are especially scenic. These roads fall into three general categories: Stream Valley Roads, Farming Roads, and Village Roads.

Stream valley roads follow or cross a few of Lower Salford's streams and often parallel Township parkland. Views from these roads tend to accentuate to the stream and abutting banks and woodlands. Very few privately developed lots are strung out along these roads. This type of road includes Indian Creek Road, along Indian Creek, and Quarry/Stover/Bridge Roads, along the West Branch of Skippack Creek as the most prominent examples. Other scenic stream valley roads include Bergey's Mill Road, a small portion of Haldeman Road, Indian Creek Road, Freeman School Road, Camp Wawa Road, Roberts Road, and Rittenhouse Road at their crossings of the East Branch of Perkiomen Creek.

The scenic farming roads are bordered by farms with very few, if any new subdivided lots within sight of these farms. If any are located within sight, they tend to be unobtrusive, tucked away on the edge of fields or wooded areas. In addition, these roads are off the beaten track. In fact, many of them split groupings of farm buildings, with the same farm located on both sides of the road. Portions of Hoffman, Tyson, Landis, Cassell, and Upper Mainland Roads all fall into this category.

Sumneytown Pike in Mainland and all six roads running through Lederach are scenic village roads (see the section on the Route 113 Heritage Corridor). Existing development along these roads has historic character and newer development fits in with the character of the villages.

The most dramatic scenic views in Lower Salford overlook the East Branch of Perkiomen Creek from Lederach, at the top of the ridge line between the Skippack and Perkiomen basins. There are other long distance views at the intersection of Lucon and Tyson roads, at a high point on Morris Road, at the intersection of Sumneytown Pike and Quarry Roads, and from Bergey's Mill Road. The Township's rolling landscape also allows a number of medium and short range views. These are shown in Figure 24.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Lower Salford has approximately 400 buildings over 50 years old, ranging from historic industrial and mill buildings to old log residences. The sole property in the township that is on the National Register of Historic places that is the Dielman Kolb house. Built in the early eighteenth century as the home of a Dutch Mennonite preacher, it has a Dutch gambrel roof.



Heckler Plains barn and kitchen garden.

Two important farmsteads that have been preserved by the Township are the Heckler Plains and Jacob Reiff properties. These have become parkland with cultural and historical character. Heckler Plains contains a German style barn built around 1750 and one of the last remaining outdoor Pennsylvania German bake ovens. Jacob Reiff Farmstead includes a home built around 1780, as well as dams, mills, and a barn.

Additional buildings with historic or cultural significance include the John Clemens house at Groff's Mill and Salfordville Roads, the Christian Haldeman home on Bergey's Mill Road, and the Schwenkfelder Church on Skippack Creek Road. Lederach village contains a large number of historic buildings and retains much of the character of a 19th century village on a stage coach line.

Along with preservation success, the Township has lost some historic buildings. For example, in the early 1980s, the Harleysville National Bank razed a number of older residences along Main Street for its expansion. The loss encouraged the Township to adopt Village Commercial zoning that provides incentives to preserve older buildings with desirable village character. Figure 25 shows locations of existing historic buildings in Lower Salford.

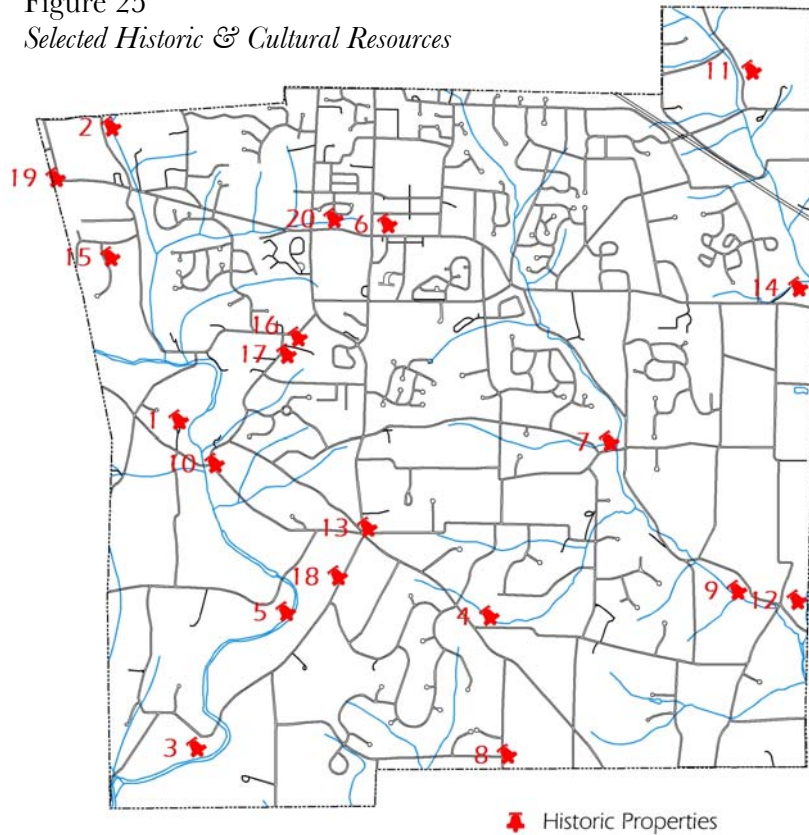
ROUTE 113 HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Lower Salford is also along the route of the Route 113 Heritage Corridor, which covers 30 intersections in 21 municipalities in Montgomery and Bucks Counties from the Schuylkill River to the Delaware River. As a daily commuting route, Route 113 stretches 28



Barn at Jacob Reiff historical park with farmhouse to the right.

Figure 25
Selected Historic & Cultural Resources



Map Number	Historic Resource	Date
1	Abraham Alderfer Homestead	1807
2	Abraham H. Cassel Farmstead	19th Century
3	Christian Halteman House	1770
4	Dielman Kolb House	1735
5	Hans Ulrich Bergey Homestead	1732
6	Harleysville	Late 19th Century
7	Heckler Barn and Bake Oven	1761
8	Jacob Kolb Log House	1725
9	Jacob Reiff Farmstead	1780
10	John Clemens Homestead	1730
11	Kriebel Homestead/ Schwenkfelder Meetinghouse	1740-1860
12	Lauchman Property	
13	Lederach Village	19th Century
14	Mainland Village	1840
15	Price Family Homestead and Graveyard	1830
16	Salford Meetinghouse School	1882
17	Salford Mennonite Church School House	1850
18	School House at 771 Lederach Cross Rd.	1908
19	Vernfield General Store	1898
20	Isaac Delp House	1768

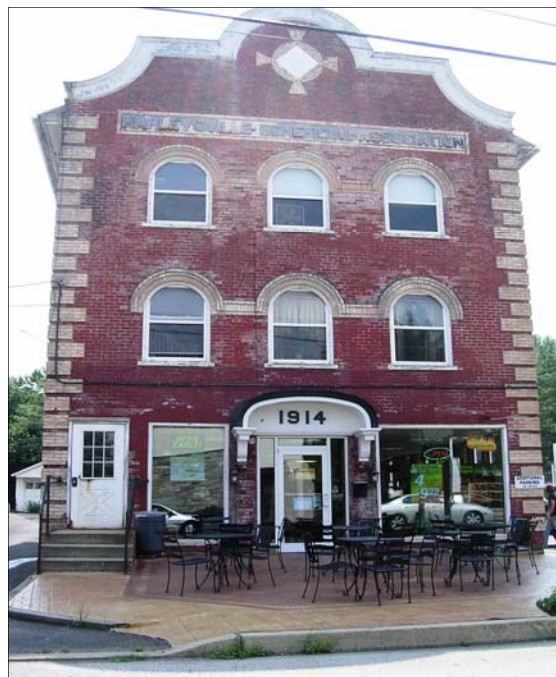


The Route 113 Heritage Corridor passes through Lederach Village and Harleysville.

miles from the Schuylkill River in Upper Providence, Montgomery County to the edge of Tinicum, Bucks County, along the Delaware River.

As a trail of history, Route 113 showcases preserved farmland, unique barns, and churches dating back to the 1700s. This former Lenape Indian path became planting grounds for farmers from the Rhineland, Germany area when William Penn encouraged Anabaptist farmers to come and build a life that included religious freedom. Many of today's Route 113 communities have been built on farms that once supplied food to the Philadelphia region. Canals are located at each end of the Route 113 Corridor, formerly used to deliver coal from the local mountains to Philadelphia.

The Route 113 Heritage Corridor Partners work together to promote "Planned Preservation, Thoughtful Growth." A \$250,000 study is underway by regional transportation planners to make the Route 113 Corridor a safe transportation route while preserving its unique geographical features and historical elements.



Re-use of a historical building in Harleysville.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF UNPROTECTED RESOURCES

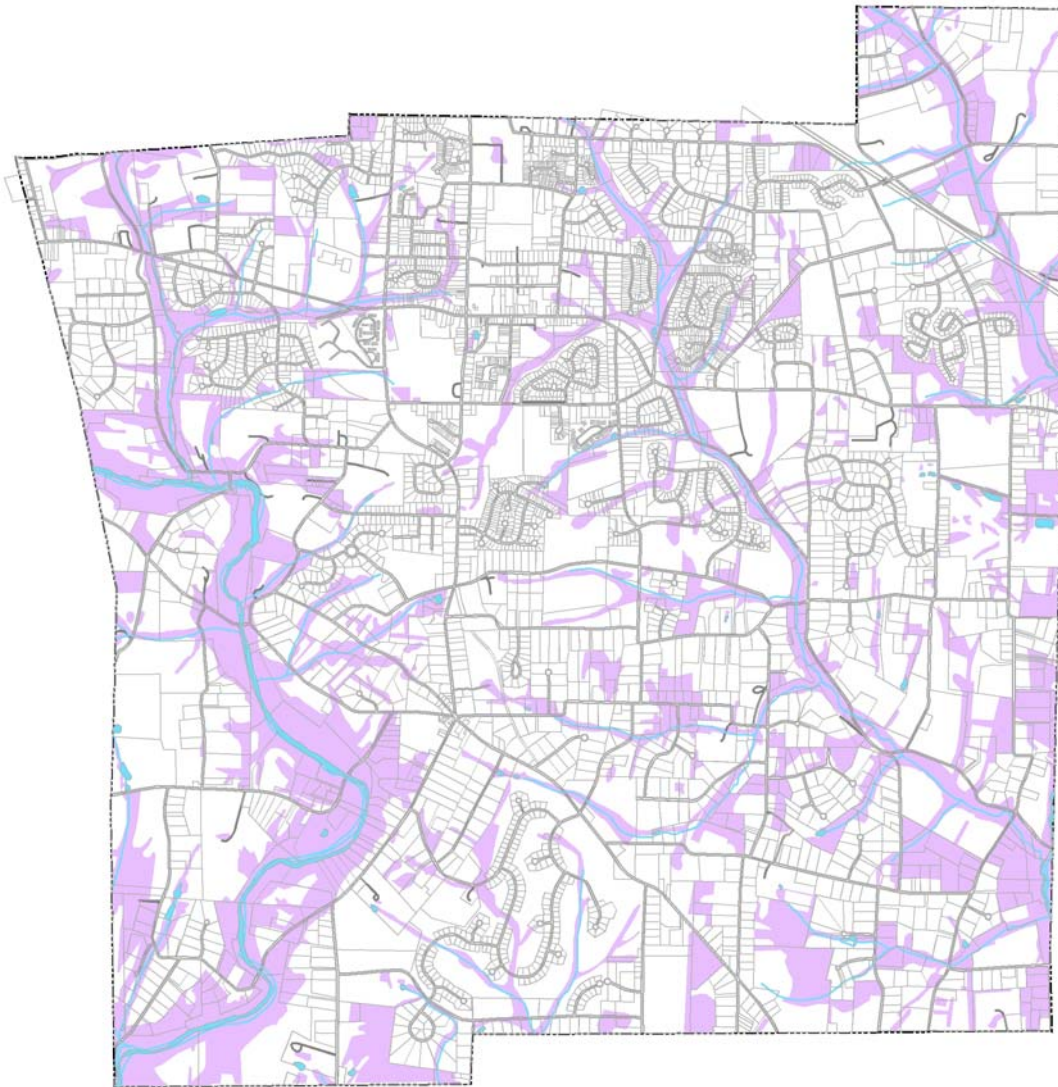
As discussed in the goals chapter, the Township wants to preserve its rural character to continue enjoying the benefits that come from preserving farmland and protecting natural features. The Township believes that the variety of elements that make up a rural Township should be preserved to the greatest extent feasible, including farmland, scenic views, scenic roads, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, and historic villages, sites, and landscapes. However, it is unlikely that every important feature can be preserved because of continuing development pressure and limited funds available for resource protection. Therefore, unprotected resources must be prioritized. This chapter examines vulnerable resources identified in Chapter 4 to determine priority levels for areas of the Township where preservation and protection efforts should be focused. While these preservation priorities are firm guidelines, the Township will also continue to watch for valuable opportunities outside the areas highlighted in Figure 27.

UNPROTECTED RESOURCES

Lower Salford has many resources that constrain, and yet are threatened by, development. The most sensitive areas are wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, and steep

slope areas. The map in Figure 26 is a composite that shows the portions of Lower Salford that are constrained by one or more of these environmental factors. The stream corridors in Lower Salford, which often contain woodlands and wetlands and are bordered

Figure 26
Composite of Vulnerable Resources



by steep slopes, have the primary concentrations of environmentally sensitive land in the Township. Concentrations of other remaining woodlands and farmland extend from some parts of these stream corridors.

PRIORITIZATION OF PRESERVATION AREAS

Ideally, the Township would prefer to preserve all its rural characteristics. Realistically, the Township must set priorities. Lower Salford's priorities consider a number of factors,

including the Township's goals, locations and availability of land, concentrations of unprotected resources within the area, and the level of importance of specific vulnerable resources.

PROPOSED GROWTH, VILLAGE CONSERVATION, AND RURAL RESOURCE AREAS

The Future Land Use map in the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan is shown in Figure 31 of Chapter 7, Evaluation of Growth Areas. It classifies Lower Salford into four general categories:



View from Lederach Village toward East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek

(c) Copyright 2005, Pictometry International

- Designated and Future growth areas around Harleysville, extending toward Mainland, to accommodate the vast majority of more intense growth .
- Village Conservation areas for the historic villages of Vernfield, Lederach, and Mainland.
- Rural Resource area for the majority of the Township's land area.

Within the combined growth areas shown in Figure 27, Preservation Area Priorities, many areas of vulnerable resources are already permanently protected as public and private open space.

Outside the growth area, extensive areas of vulnerable rural resources are also permanently protected, but many areas remain unprotected. Therefore, the Township has identified three levels of generalized priorities as a guide for implementing protection of the remaining rural resources.

HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS

Historically, the Township has given high priority to protecting the stream corridors of the Indian Creek, East Branch of the Perkiomen

Creek, and West Branch of the Skippack Creek, while also providing active recreation facilities in other areas of the Township. Now that large parts of these stream corridors have been preserved, the Township has identified completion of protection of these corridors as its highest-priority for preservation. These corridors are also important to allow completion of inter-municipal trail linkages as explained in Chapter 6, Potential Open Space Linkages.

INDIAN CREEK AND THE EAST BRANCH OF THE PERKIOMEN CREEK

In addition to resources immediately adjacent to the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek and the Indian Creek, highest-priority areas include a swath of land leading from the Perkiomen Creek to Lederach village. This land has been included because of the stunning views from Lederach village. The village stops at the edge of farmland, which falls off towards the East Branch of Perkiomen Creek. This view is considered the best scenic view in Lower Salford. Preservation of land on the edge of the village would preserve the view as well as Lederach village within its historic setting.

The creek corridors contain extensive environmental constraints, including floodplain, steep slopes, deep woodlands, and riparian woodlands. These stream corridors are probably the most environmentally constrained areas in Lower Salford. This category provides opportunities for protection along the Indian Creek, areas between Briarwyck and Groff's Mill Parks, areas between Wawa and Bergey Parks, and an area in the westernmost corner of the Township.

WEST BRANCH OF THE SKIPPACK CREEK

Another area in the Highest Priority category includes to land immediately adjacent to the West Branch of the Skippack Creek and extending toward farmland that is near the creek. This area was given highest priority because of extensive environmental constraints associated with the creek, especially floodplains and riparian woodlands.

In addition, Quarry Road is one of the most scenic roads in the Township, providing many scenic views. Two of the farms in this corridor, Jacob Reiff and Heckler Plains, have already been preserved. Preserving other farmland in this area could protect a concentration of spacious, rural land. This area also acts as a natural extension of Evansburg State Park, which is located along the southern portion of the West Branch of Skippack Creek. Much of the land in this area has either been developed or preserved, but pockets of vulnerable areas remain unprotected.

HIGH PRIORITY AREAS

Figure 27 also shows areas with a high priority for preservation, located in the eastern corner of the Township along the Skippack Creek, and in the western corner away from the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek.

These areas contain an abundance of vulnerable resources and significant areas of undeveloped land. Preservation of these areas

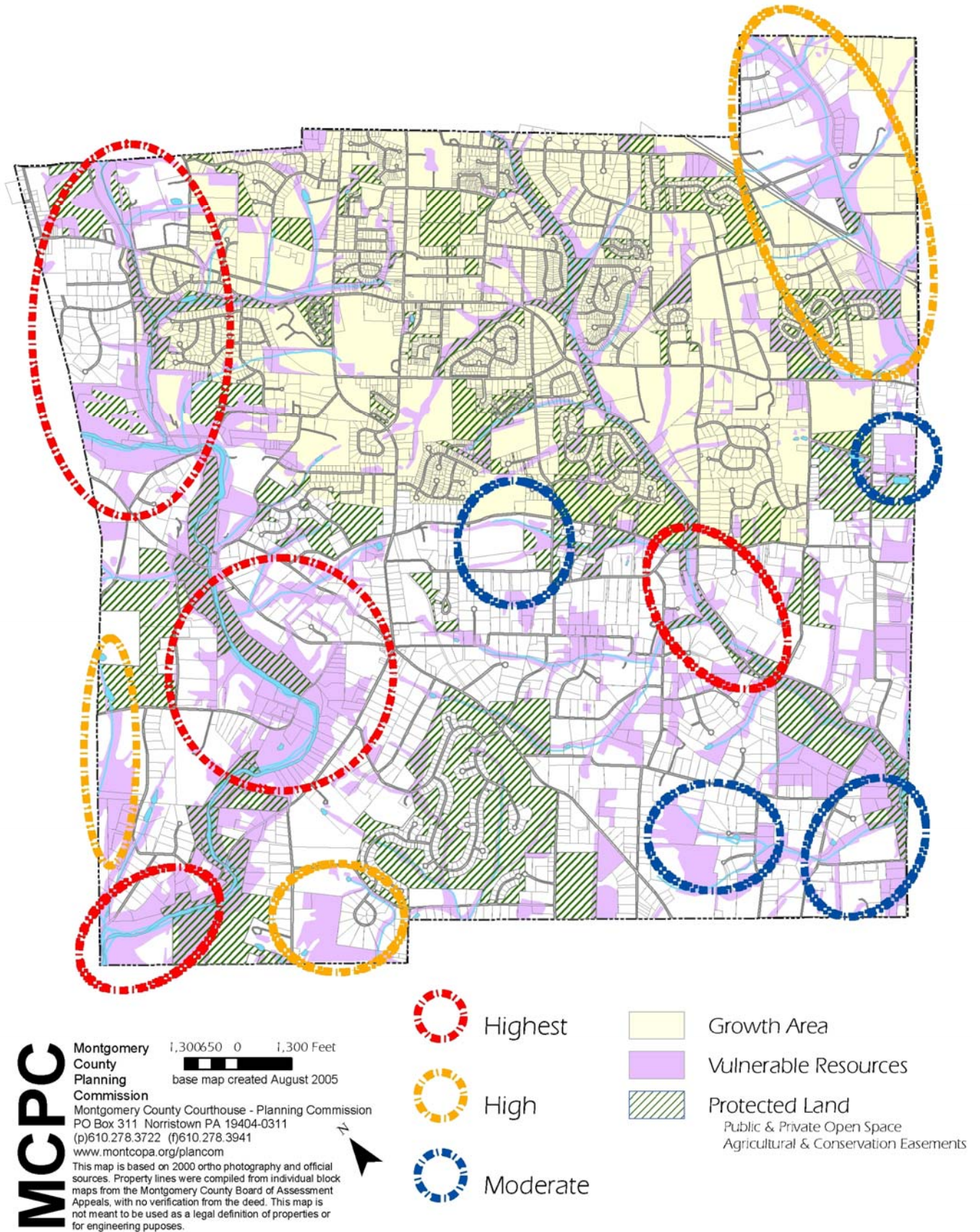
would go a long way toward protecting the rural character of the Township.

MODERATE PRIORITY AREAS

Outside the limits of the growth area, many rural resources are present that can be classified at least as moderate priority for preservation. In particular, four areas are highlighted for preservation, including sensitive land north of Mainland Golf Course, land west of Evansburg State Park, and undeveloped areas adjoining the growth area boundary along Landis Road.

Listing areas as moderate priority does not indicate that the land should be developed. Just the opposite in fact, since these areas also contain rural resources in the form of farmland, scenic roads and views, historic sites and landscapes, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and woodlands that should be preserved if possible.

Figure 27
Preservation Area Priorities



CHAPTER 6

POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

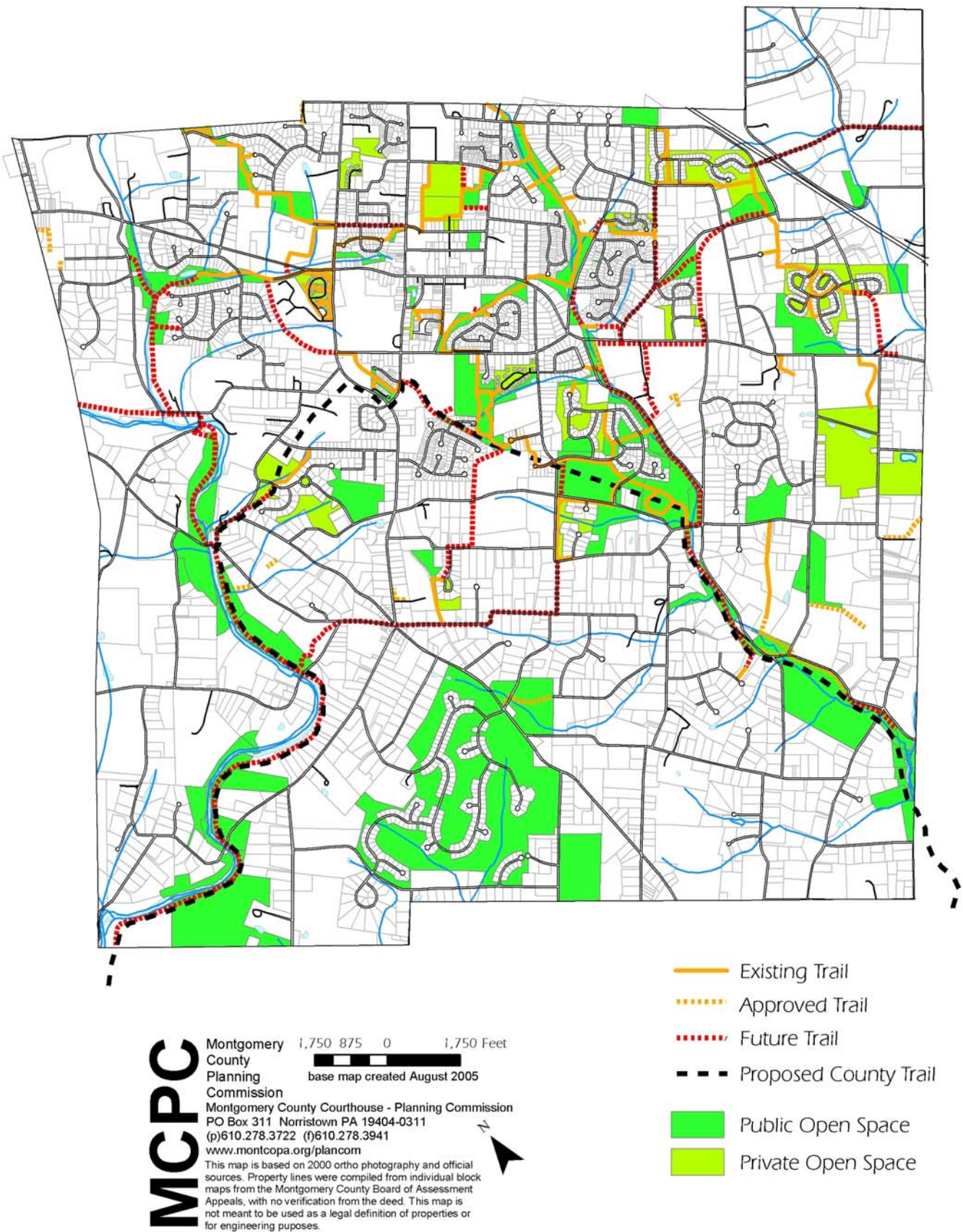
An important aspect of open space is the accessibility of that space to community residents and to the region as a whole. This section of the plan identifies potential open space linkages that can tie together open space sites within the Township and connect to open space in adjacent communities. Such connections help form a more comprehensive open space system for residents and contribute to the creation of a more effective and enjoyable regional network. They can increase the accessibility of parks by allowing off-street pedestrian and bicycle access and can offer recreational opportunities in and of themselves as passive, natural recreational space. Examples of potential linkages include utility corridors, stream valleys, abandoned rail lines, sidewalks, and similar linear features. In addition to local linkages, identification of potential linkages on a regional level will help to contribute to Montgomery County's vision of a Countywide Trail System. Existing and potential trail connections for Lower Salford Township are described in this chapter and shown in Figure 28.

EXISTING TRAILS

Lower Salford is in an enviable position because it already has an extensive trail system in place. This is due to the fact that the township decided early on that such a recreational and transportation asset was a top priority. In

the early 1970's Lower Salford adopted the Federal, State and County sponsored "Open Space/Green Belt" program. Through this program and the development process, utilizing various grants and local money, the

Figure 28
Existing and Proposed Trails



township acquired a greenbelt network of stream valleys, meadows, and woodlands around the Harleysville area. Using this greenbelt network and easements over non-public property, the township was able to establish routes for the community path system. The initial portion of the path, comprising 4.5 miles, was constructed between 1988 and 1991 using state, county, and township financing.

The system is under continual review with a goal to enable every resident to bike or walk to the center of town or to a nearby park with minimal use of roadways.

Since its dedication in 1991, Lower Salford's community path network has become a very popular recreation and transportation re-

source for a wide range of people in the community. It is a multi-use trail system used by pedestrians, bicyclists, skaters and joggers. Paths are located both on- and off-road, and are supplemented by a sidewalk system, primarily in the Harleysville area. There are currently more than eight miles of off-road paths in the township. A detailed plan to extend this system was developed in 1998, and the system was further refined as part of the planning process for the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan. The open space chapter of the regional plan also identifies existing and proposed local and regional trails. There are several categories of trails shown in Figure 28, as follows:

- Existing Trails. These are Township trails that are currently open for public use.
- Approved Trails. These are segments of the Township network that were approved during the development plan process but may not yet be constructed or linked to the rest of the network.
- Future Trails. These are potential routes for future interconnections in the network, based on recommendations in the Township's Community Path Plan of 1998.
- Proposed Evansburg Trail. This trail is proposed as a multi-use trail in the Open Space Plan component of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan.

This trail will extend through Evansburg State Park from Lower Providence through Skip-pack, Towamencin, and Lower Salford and connect to the existing Perkiomen Trail. Most of the suggested route for this segment of the Montgomery County Trail Network coincides with the Lower Salford's objectives for trails along major creek corridors. The trail alignment shown in Figure 28 is only a schematic illustration. The final alignment will be defined by Lower Salford Township. When this trail is built, it must meet the require-



The community path meanders through Ted Dannerth Memorial Park.

ments of the “Guidelines for Trail Development Within Montgomery County, Pennsylvania” published in August 2005. This document provides desirable and minimum trail design standards to municipalities applying for county open space funds to develop trail connections. It also encourages use of these guidelines even when trail construction does not make use of county funds. The County’s Guidelines describe a multi-use trail as “A trail that permits more than one user group (jogger, bicyclist, hiker, etc.) at a time, creating a two-way shared use area. The trail is constructed of a hard paved surface or a hard compacted cinder to facilitate wheeled and pedestrian trail traffic.” Preferred standards for the Evansburg Trail recommend an 8 to 10-foot trail width.

In most places, Lower Salford’s existing community path trails are constructed of eight foot wide macadam. The trails run through and connect with a variety of parks and recreational facilities. Fishing ponds, playground equipment, exercise stations, gazebos, parking areas, picnic tables, park benches, and a variety of landscaped areas are located along the trails.

REGIONAL LINKAGES

Montgomery County and Lower Salford’s neighboring municipalities have existing trails or have plans for creating trail systems or on-road bicycle facilities. In the future, Lower Salford’s bike trail network should interconnect with neighboring trails and should incorporate elements of the county trail system, particularly the Evansburg Trail. The Evansburg Trail could be used in part for connections into Skippack Village leading from either the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek or from the Skippack Creek in Evansburg State Park.

SIDEWALKS AND THE COMMUNITY PATH

The community path network is intended to serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and skaters. Pedestrians will also use the township’s sidewalks in conjunction with the community path in the Harleysville area, especially to reach certain destination points, such as the township’s schools and shopping centers. All of the Harleysville area is proposed to be served by sidewalks, and any new development in this area should provide sidewalks. In areas where sidewalks may be particularly important, but unlikely to be provided by new development, the township may want to take the initiative in building new sidewalks. Areas of importance for sidewalks are identified on page 57 of the 1998 Community Path Plan. The Plan identifies portions of Sumneytown Pike, Park Avenue, Kulp Road, Yoder Road, Maple Avenue, Sturgis Road, and Moyer Road as benefiting from sidewalks.

PROPOSED LINKAGES

Proposed linkages are illustrated in Figure 28, and are described in further detail in the 1998 Community Path plan. That plan discusses the two major hurdles to path planning: design and funding. It contains a chapter on implementation that continues to be the basis for the township’s trail planning activities.

In addition, the official Lower Salford Township Open Space Map, created in January 1997 and updated in April 2006, shows existing and proposed bike trails along with all township-owned open space.

The township plans to update the Community Path plan in the near future. Possible extensions of the network would link to Lederach Golf Course and adjacent municipally-owned lands. From there, additional connections into Skippack Village could be made in cooperation with Skippack Township.

CHAPTER 7

EVALUATION OF GROWTH AREAS

In addition to establishing open space preservation areas, it is important to identify areas that can accommodate any projected community growth. Lower Salford Township has traditionally been a rural township, but is now significantly affected by suburbanization. In an effort to plan for the future in a regional context, Lower Salford has adopted the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan. That plan delineates future growth areas as well as areas to be preserved for rural preservation. As part of the planning process, a build-out analysis was performed to get an idea of the type and amount of development the region can expect to experience in the next ten to twenty years. A summary of that analysis is included in this chapter.

POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

By the year 2025, Lower Salford is projected to have a residential population of 18,130 persons, about 5,237 more than the Township had in 2000 (Figure 29). In addition, it is expected to have about 6,750 persons employed, up from about 5,000 in 2000 (Figure 30). While population and employment are

expected to increase by 2025, the average household size is expected to decrease from 2.89 to about 2.61 people per household, resulting in more housing units needed. These units will need to be accommodated mainly in the growth and rural resource areas indicated in Figure 31.

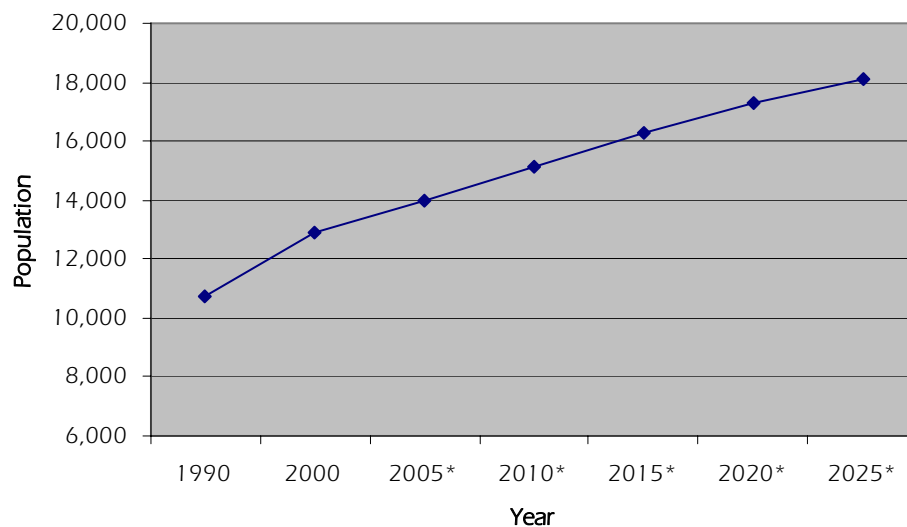
Figure 29
Population Projection

Year	Population
1990	10,735
2000	12,893
2005*	14,010
2010*	15,120
2015*	16,280
2020*	17,320
2025*	18,130

* Projected population

Years	% Change
1990-2000	20.10%
2000-2010	17.27%
2010-2020	14.55%
2000-2025	40.62%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau;
Census of Population and
Housing, 2000; DVRPC
projections.



GROWTH AREAS

The Future Land Use Plan of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan designates appropriate areas for new growth and directs revitalization, new development and infrastructure projects into those areas. Outside of the growth areas, the primary land use objective is preservation of the region's rural landscape and its natural and cultural resources.

The Future Land Use Map in the Regional Plan identifies a Designated Growth area in Lower Salford Township around the Harleysville area (see figure 31). This area has been a center of economic and social activity in the Township and region. It contains existing infrastructure and has substantial existing

development. Therefore, this area is classified as a principal location for new residential and non-residential growth.

The Regional Plan also identifies Future Growth areas in the Township just east of the Harleysville area. These have also been traditional sites of development, but on a smaller scale than Harleysville proper. The Future Growth areas serve as an extension of the Designated Growth area, however these areas are expected to develop at a slower rate and at a somewhat lower density than the designated growth area.

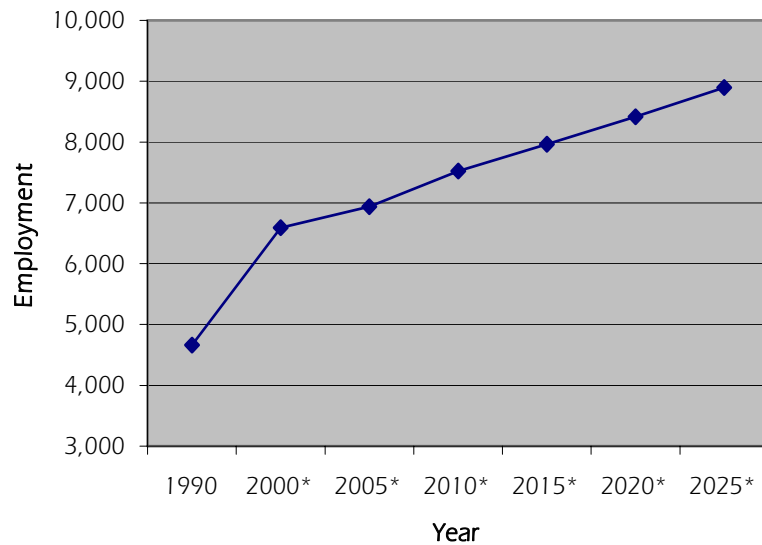
Figure 30

Employment Forecast

Year	Total Employment
1990	4,662
2000*	6,590
2005*	6,939
2010*	7,522
2015*	7,963
2020*	8,417
2025*	8,898

Years	% Change
1990-2000	41.36%
2000-2010	14.14%
2010-2020	11.90%
2000-2025	35.02%

*Source: DVRPC Forecasts.



BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS

The Future Land Use Plan adopted as part of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan outlines the Township's desired growth patterns, and Lower Salford's current zoning technically meets the minimum standards described in that plan. However, a good amount of growth is still possible under the existing zoning ordinance, and a build-out analysis has been performed to illustrate how much growth is possible in the future.

The method used to determine residential build-out is the same method used by the County to conduct a fair share housing analysis. This method examines undeveloped land

(those with land use designations of country residence, undeveloped, private open space, and agriculture), but does not consider underdeveloped land (land that has development on it, but could be further subdivided or developed more intensely). It assumes that natural features including floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes will not be built upon, and that approximately 20% of a site's area will be used for roads, driveways, and utilities. The method used here represents potential households with red dots that have been randomly placed within the developable areas based on the maximum density allowed

Figure 31
Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map

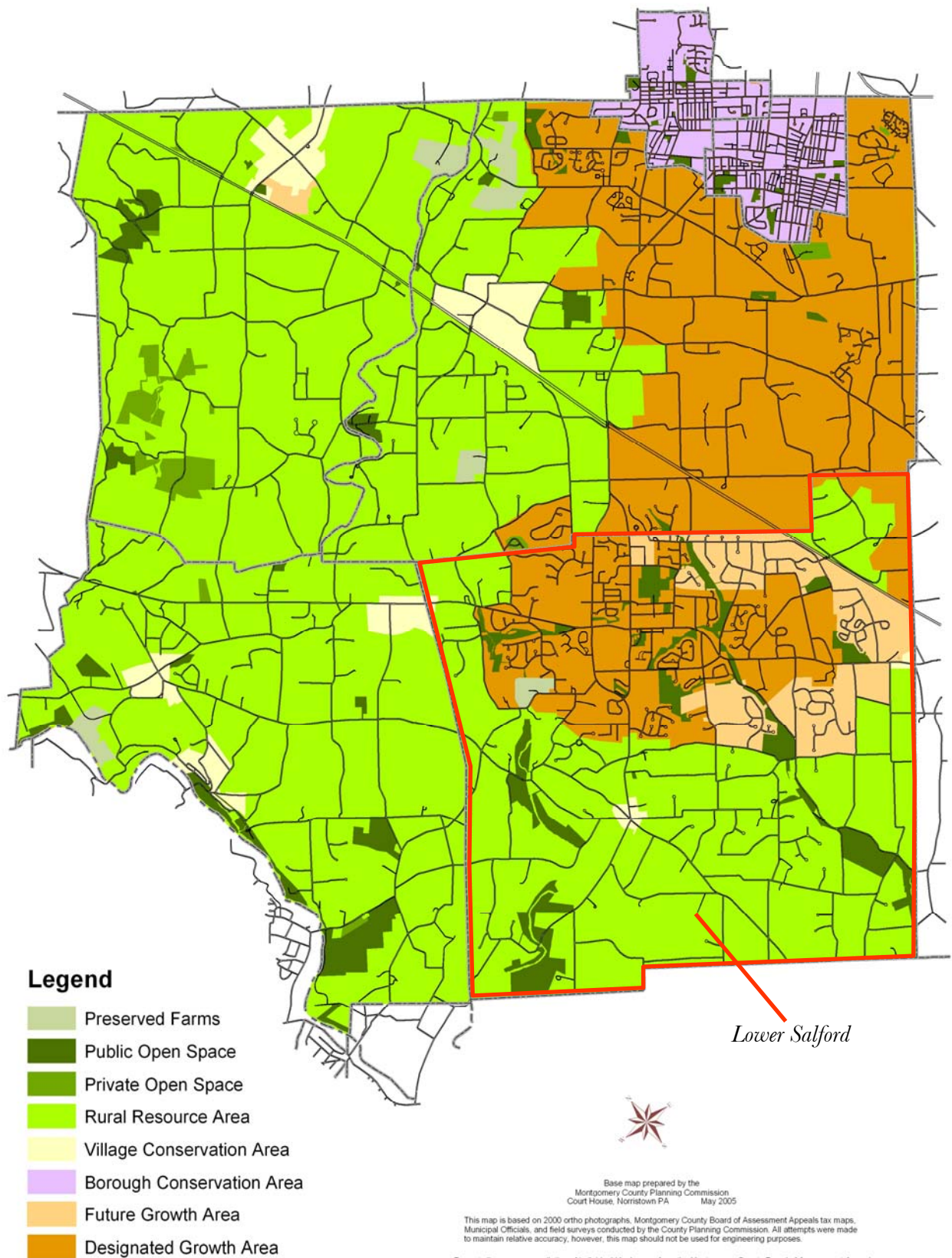
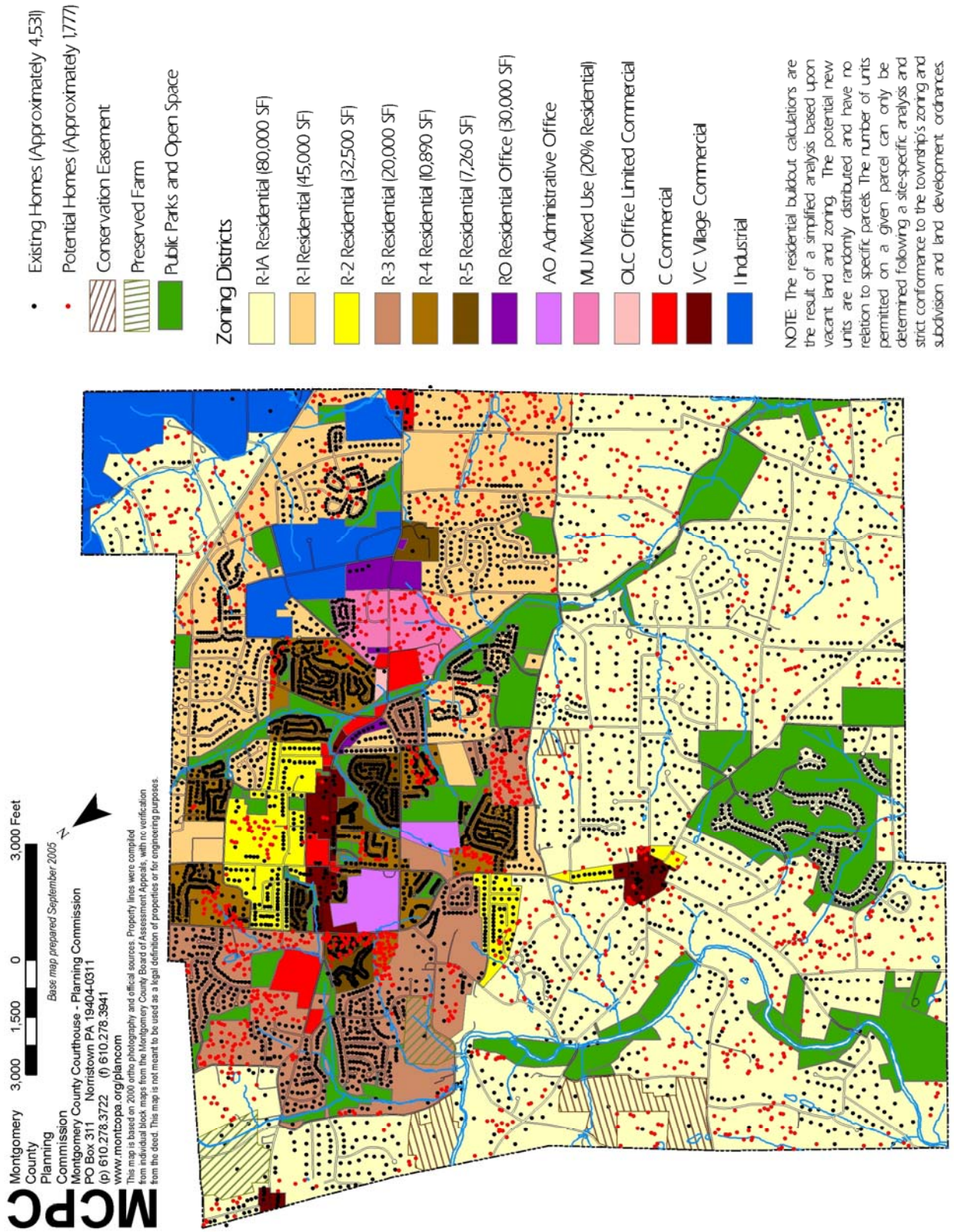


Figure 32
Residential Build Out Analysis



in each zoning district. These dots do not represent the actual location of future homes. Existing homes are represented by black dots placed in the center of each residentially developed property.

Figure 32 illustrates one potential allocation scenario of full residential build-out township-wide under current zoning standards. In this map, 1,670 potential new housing units are distributed throughout the Township.

The 2025 projected population would require addition of approximately 2,515 new housing units. If only 1,670 new units can be accommodated at build-out under current zoning, then the projected population could not be accommodated. But it appears very likely that build-out will be reached within the next twenty years. To accommodate the 2025 projected population, the Township would need to consider zoning changes that would allow more housing units to be built.

CONCLUSION

Lower Salford Township has committed to a policy of growth management. In the face of suburban growth, knowing which parts of the Township will grow and which will not can help the Township plan for its future open space needs, as well as its needs for infrastructure and various other programs. However, Lower Salford is still subject to a large amount of residential development, and should look for more specific ways to channel that growth and to provide ample recreation and open space areas for future residents.

CHAPTER 8

EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS

This section of the plan examines the amount of existing public open space and types of recreation facilities in relation to current and projected future needs. Recreation-oriented organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommend that municipalities strive to meet their open space needs independently of other providers, such as schools and private developments. Therefore open space provided by quasi-public establishments is considered only peripherally. An analysis of public open space considers how open space land is distributed in addition to showing if a deficit exists or will occur in the future. Both the amount (acreage) and type (natural, passive or active) of open space is considered.

EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

Figure 15 in Chapter 3 identifies 41 named areas of public parkland owned by Lower Salford Township, with more than 1,100 total acres. This parkland contains active and passive recreational facilities as well as natural preserves. Some of these parks can be categorized as Neighborhood Parks or Community Parks.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood Parks generally range in size from 5 to 20 acres, although some of them, such as mini-parks and playgrounds, can be as small as an acre or less. Larger neighborhood parks should serve between 2,000 and 12,000 people who live within a half mile radius. All neighborhood parks, no matter what their size, should be accessible by walking or riding a bike. People served by these

parks should not be forced to drive to get to their destination.

Lower Salford has a number of facilities that serve as neighborhood parks, including Bucher Park, Gruber Road Athletic Fields, Briarwyck Park, and Dannerth, Roth, and Reed Memorial Parks. Several of these parks provide both active and passive recreation areas, while the remainder provide only for passive recreation activities.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are usually larger than neighborhood parks and generally have no fewer than 20 acres. These parks should be centrally located to serve the active and passive recreation needs of more than one neighborhood and may serve the entire community. These parks should serve those living within a one- to two-mile radius. Although most township residents will probably travel

to community parks by car, these parks should also be accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists. It is especially important that the community parks be accessible by foot and bike for residents living with a half mile of the park, so that the community parks can serve as neighborhood parks for those living nearby. This is the case for Alderfer and Reed Parks, served conveniently by the bike trail system.

Facilities that serve as Community Parks include Alderfer Park, the Harleysville Community Center, Heckler Plains, and Reed Park, and provide active and passive recreation areas. .

It is important to recognize that these two park classifications are not mutually exclusive, but may tend to overlap where locations and/or types of facilities may allow both functions to be served. In the long run, fitting parks into categories may be less important than providing sufficient amounts of appropriate recreational facilities conveniently located with respect to concentrations of population.



Clockwise from top left: Robert Clemens Bucher Park, Heckler Plains Farmstead, Dan Roth Park, and the Gruber Road Athletic Fields. Photos by Mary West

OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

In order to determine whether or not Lower Salford has an adequate amount of land developed to serve as Community and Neighborhood Parks, it is helpful to use national standards for parks as a guide. The NRPA published its Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines in 1983. These standards were widely accepted and used for many years. In 1996, the NRPA developed new guidelines that consider the level of service and recognize that the residents of each community should be given the right to determine the size and use of land set aside for parks and recreation facilities. The new process requires use of a complex formula, and therefore many municipalities use a combination of the 1983 and 1996 standards when determining open space need.

Both sets of standards mainly apply to recreational uses, rather than passive or natural open space, for which there is no standard minimum or maximum. The 1983 standard utilizes the population ratio method, or the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The NRPA estimates that a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of municipally owned and developed open space per 1,000 people is a useful guide. Generally speaking, the more densely populated an area is, the higher the ratio should be. Therefore, a less densely developed municipality would apply a lower ratio than a more densely developed municipality. For this plan, the low and high ratios are used to create a range to evaluate existing conditions and to establish acreage goals for the future. Midpoint values of the recommended range are currently satisfied and the high values are achievable as new facilities are built within existing Township open space lands.

Figure 33
Minimum Recreational Open Space Needs

Projected Population*	2000		2010		2025	
	12,893		15,120		18,130	
Range	From	To	From	To	From	To
	Recommended Acreage**					
Community	64.47	103.14	75.60	120.96	90.65	145.04
Neighborhood	16.12	32.23	18.90	37.80	22.66	45.33
Total	80.59	135.37	94.50	158.76	113.31	190.37
	Existing Acreage					
Community	108.38		108.38		108.38	
Neighborhood	37.81		37.81		37.81	
Total	146.19		146.19		146.19	
	Difference					
Community	43.92	5.24	32.78	-12.58	17.73	-36.66
Neighborhood	21.69	5.58	18.91	0.01	15.15	-7.51
Total	65.61	10.82	51.69	-12.57	32.88	-44.17

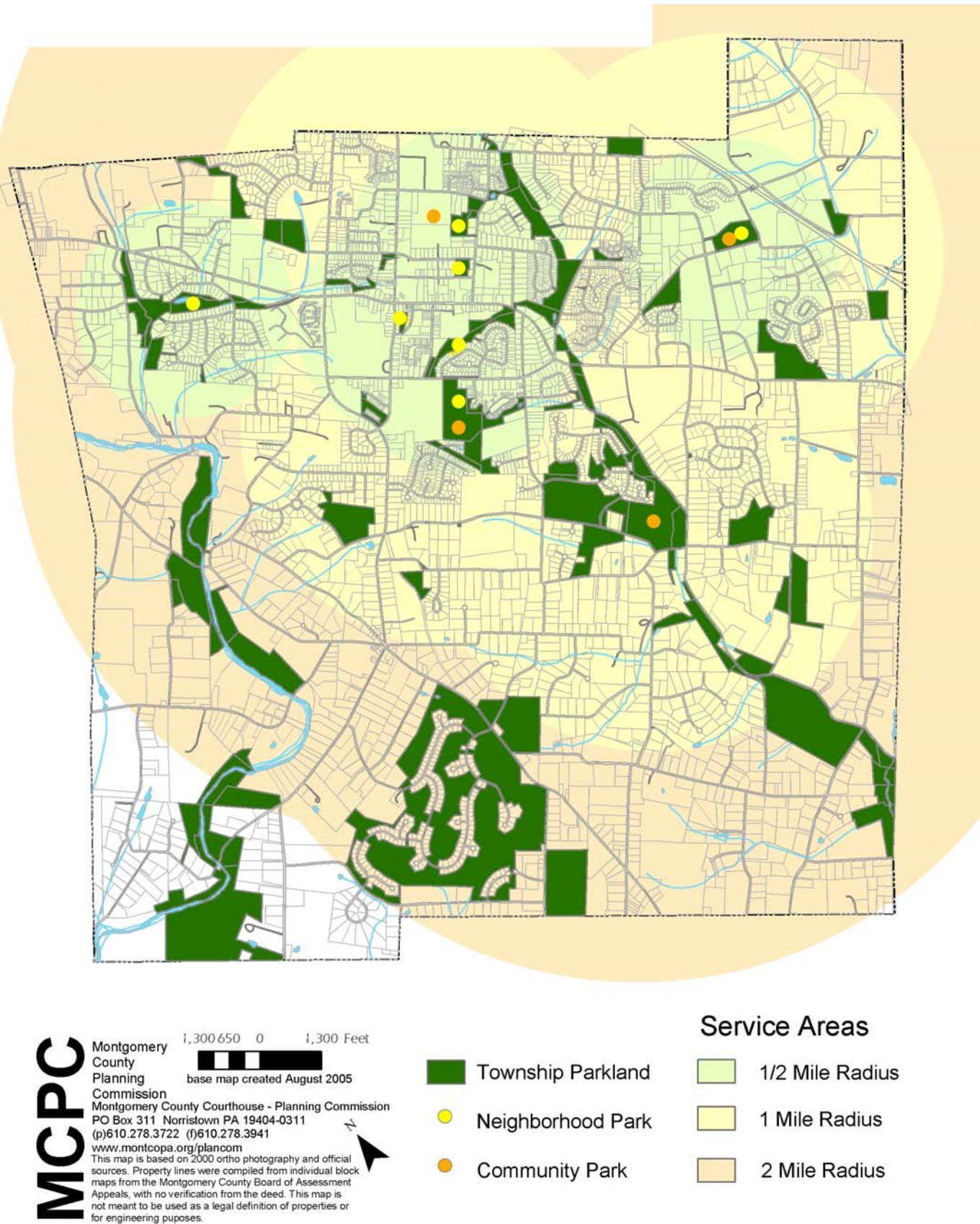
Figures in bold indicate a surplus

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; MCPC; NRPA

* Projected Population

** Recommended Acreage - Range per 1000 persons as follows: Community Level = 5.0 - 8.0 acres; Neighborhood Level = 1.25 - 2.5 acres; Total = 6.25 - 10.5 acres

Figure 34
Public Open Space Service Areas



The NRPA recommends that the developed open space consist of a core system of parkland, distributed among mini parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks. Each of these components are of a certain size, provide for certain active and/or passive uses, and have defined "service areas".

The division of acreage into community and neighborhood parks can help determine if a particular need exists now or may develop in the future. In this analysis, Bucher Park, Gruber Road Athletic Fields, Roth and Dannerth Memorial Parks, and Briarwyck Park are considered neighborhood parks, while the Community Park category includes Alderfer Park, Harleysville Community Center, Reed Memorial Park, and Heckler Plains. Figure 33 shows the results of applying the 1983 NRPA standards using existing park acreage.

As shown, existing acreages for developed neighborhood and community parks fall well within the recommended ranges through the year 2025. Other undeveloped Township open space areas are available to accommodate additional facilities for future population numbers. Facilities planned or under construction in newer parkland areas are not listed in the existing acreages in Figure 33.

SERVICE AREAS

Figure 34 illustrates service areas for public neighborhood and community parks. Neighborhood parks serve residents within one-quarter to one-half mile, while community parks serve residents within 1 or 2 miles. Lower Salford's community parks serve the entire Township, as well as residents of neighboring townships. Neighborhood parks, however, mainly serve the Harleysville area. Other township-owned open space in the Township's growth area could be developed as neighborhood parks to satisfy the future needs for additional recreational facilities as they arise.

PASSIVE OPEN SPACE

As mentioned earlier, unlike active open space needs, there is no standard to determine how much acreage to devote to passive open space and protection of natural features. Lower Salford chose to acquire passive park land along its creeks and already has extensive passive recreation areas. All the Township park land that is not used for active recreation purposes (over 600 acres) can be used for passive recreation purposes, the township's path system, and protection of natural features.

Lower Salford's passive recreation land includes substantial areas along the West Branch of Skippack Creek, the East Branch of Perkiomen Creek, and the Indian Creek. It includes fishing ponds at Briarwyck Park, Dan Roth Memorial Park, and Kulp Road Pond, as well as a fishing dam at Wawa Park. It includes historic buildings at Bergey Park, Heckler Plains park, and Jacob Reiff Park. Picnic tables are available at many different parks, and picnic pavilions can be found at, Alderfer Park, Reed Park, the Harleysville Community Center, Heckler Plains and Dan Roth Memorial Park. Walking trails, woodlands, streams, historic farmland and gardens, fields, and steep slope areas are also included in this category.

OPEN SPACE NEEDS

In addition to determining how much land is needed, it is also important to determine what kinds of open space facilities are needed. As demographics, land use, and development pressure change within a community, so do the needs of the population. For instance, a younger population may utilize active open space in the form of playing fields. Active recreation facilities should be located where significant residential density exists or is proposed. Where older populations exist, less intense

Figure 35
Recreational Facility Needs

Standard Per 1,000 Population		2000 Population	Projected Population	Existing Public Facilities	2025 Deficit
		12,893	18,130		
Basketball Courts	0.2	3	4	4	0
Tennis Courts	0.5	6	9	0	9
Volleyball Courts	0.2	3	4	0	4
Baseball/Softball Fields	0.4	5	7	13	0
Field Hockey Fields*	0.05	1	1	0	1
Football Fields*	0.05	1	1	0	1
Soccer Fields	0.1	1	2	8	0
Running Track (1/4 mile)	0.05	1	1	0	1
Swimming Pools	0.05	1	1	2	0
Playgrounds	0.6	8	11	5	6
Picknicking Areas	0.24	3	4	11	0
Multipurpose Fields	0.3	4	5	2	3
Shuffleboard Courts	0.8	10	15	1	14
Multipurpose Courts	0.1	1	2	1	1
Nature Areas	0.24	3	4	7	0
Golf Courses	0.04	1	1	1	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, MCPC; NRPA

*These uses are accommodated on the soccer fields.

open space uses such as walking trails may better serve the community. This setting also allows for natural resource protection opportunities.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Figure 35 summarizes the results of applying recommended recreational facility standards to Lower Salford and compares the results to the supply of existing Township facilities. It should be noted that some results shown as fractions are rounded up to a whole number; for example, .3 football fields means 1 football field should be provided.

In addition to facilities at public parks, the Souderton Area School District provides facilities that are utilized by residents as well. Indian Valley Middle School sports include soccer, field hockey, girls basketball, boys basketball, wrestling, track, softball, lacrosse, tennis

and baseball, and Lower Salford and Oak Ridge Elementary Schools have fields and playground equipment.

A Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan for the Township that will address recreational needs in more detail should follow adoption of this Open Space Plan.

CONCLUSION

Lower Salford Township clearly has more than enough community and neighborhood park land for recreational facilities to serve current and future populations. However, there is a need to continue developing additional facilities of various types within existing park lands. The types and amounts of additional facilities should be addressed when the Township prepares its Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan.

CHAPTER 9

EVALUATION OF COUNTY AND ABUTTING MUNICIPAL PLANS

The preceding chapters investigate the resources, needs, and opportunities that exist within Lower Salford Township. With this information, recommendations can be made to effectively serve Lower Salford’s residents. However, the Township’s land use decisions affect the larger region just as decisions made in neighboring municipalities affect Lower Salford. Therefore, this open space plan should not be created in the vacuum of the municipal borders, but rather should consider surrounding planning efforts.

This chapter identifies recommendations in the County’s comprehensive plan and the comprehensive, open space, and regional plans of abutting municipalities. The intent is to prevent conflicts between plans and to encourage collaboration of efforts. By understanding how Lower Salford’s plan fits into the larger open space and trail linkage picture, partners can optimize both the quantity and quality of future open space preservation and management.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LAND USE AND OPEN SPACE PLANS

In 2005, Montgomery County adopted its new Comprehensive Plan, “Shaping Our Future”. This plan will help guide the growth of housing, transportation, economic develop-

ment, and natural & cultural resource management, through 2025 and beyond. Each of these factors could potentially bear great significance on open space needs and opportunities in Lower Salford.

Within this plan is the Vision of the County in 2025. The county used information gained at workshops and from a survey to guide its vi-

sion and goals. Four issues were identified as the highest priority for action:

- Controlling sprawl
- Controlling traffic congestion
- Preserving open space/natural areas
- Revitalizing older boroughs and townships

Lower Salford's Open Space Plan addresses many of these issues by setting a future course for wise land use, increasing linkages and accessibility, clustering and diversifying growth, and preserving open space.

The adopted Vision Plan lists 48 goals that describe and expand upon the vision of the County in 2025. Several of these goals parallel those in this Open Space Plan, adding strength to the recommendations set forth here:

VISION PLAN

- Support Smart Growth and Preservation Efforts both Regionally and Locally
- Implement Plans Effectively and Cooperatively

LAND USE

- Direct Development to Designated Growth Areas
- Encourage Sound Land Use Planning and Design
- Preserve and Create Community Identity and a Sense of Place

OPEN SPACE, NATURAL FEATURES, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Preserve Large Interconnected Areas of Significant Open Space
- Protect and Manage Wetlands, Streams, Steep Slopes, Woodlands, and Natural Habitats
- Create a Greenway System along Rivers,

Creeks, and Other Sensitive Natural and Historic Features

- Develop a Countywide Network of Interconnected Trails
- Provide Park Facilities to Meet the Public's Recreation Needs
- Protect Scenic Roads, Vistas, and Viewsheds
- Protect Historic Resources and Cultural Landscapes

WATER RESOURCES

- Effectively Manage Flooding
- Create Attractive Stormwater Facilities that Control Flooding, Recharge Groundwater, and Improve Water Quality

At a site-specific level, the County Comprehensive plan identifies several open space areas worthy of protection in Lower Salford. They include the East Branch and Skippack Creek Greenways; one property listed on the National Historic Register and twelve properties eligible for the Register; aesthetically unique scenic roads (Salfordville Road, Bergey's Mill Road, and Stover/Quarry/Bridge Roads); proposed open space along Skippack and East Branch Perkiomen creeks; and a county trail (Evansburg Trail). As outlined in this plan, Lower Salford also considers these areas significant resources and will act to preserve, protect, and enhance them using acquisition and non-acquisition methods.

PLANS OF ABUTTING MUNICIPALITIES

Lower Salford shares its borders with four Townships: Upper Salford, Franconia, Towamencin, and Skippack. Current planning, open space policies, and other pertinent information of each municipality are summarized below. Adjacent, yet incompatible land uses may result in conflicts while potential

linkages could lead to cooperative partnerships between municipal neighbors.

Based on the Montgomery County Open Space Program in 1993, each municipality developed an Open Space Plan. Over the years since these plans were adopted, many projects have been implemented, including the acquisition and preservation of land and implementation of trails. In addition, since 1993, the needs of these neighboring communities may have changed. It is therefore vital that Lower Salford keeps abreast of the continually evolving planning efforts of its neighbors and the county.

UPPER SALFORD

Situated to the Northwest of Lower Salford, Upper Salford Township is quite different from Lower Salford, with fewer town centers and less development. According to the open space chapter of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan, Upper Salford plans to create one new trail that would extend into Lower Salford along the East Branch Perkiomen Creek and one trail that would touch Lower Salford's border at Freeman's School Road. Upper Salford does not propose any purchases of open space land in the vicinity of Lower Salford. However, its greenway policies include preservation of significant areas of open space adjoining Lower Salford that would result from subdivision and land development proposals. Much of these protected lands would extend from protected farmlands and creek corridors in Lower Salford to form a wider band of protected rural character along the municipal boundary.

FRANCONIA

Franconia is also a rural township with fewer developed areas than Lower Salford. However, its Designated Growth Area is larger than Lower Salford's, extending from Souder-ton and Telford to Harleysville. Franconia adopted its most recent open space plan in

2005. Goals of this plan include preservation of farmland, maintenance of rural character, creation of a greenbelt around the growth area, and saving more open space for recreation.

According to the township's open space plan as well as the open space chapter of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan, Franconia plans to create one new trail that would extend into Lower Salford along the Indian Creek and two trails that will touch Lower Salford's border— one at Skippack Creek and the other along Yoder Road. Currently, a trail connects the two townships along a tributary of the West Branch Skippack Creek. Souderton Harleysville Pike provides a scenic route between the townships as well. Franconia aims to preserve land in the area between Orchard Lane and the East Branch Perkiomen Creek, directly north of Lower Salford.

TOWAMENCIN

This Township is also currently updating its Township Park, Recreation & Open Space Preservation Plan. Goals include pursuing new open space opportunities, expanding and maintaining existing parks, protecting historic and cultural resources, coordinating efforts with the regional open space network, protecting natural resources, and maximizing the use of scarce financial resources available for open space and recreation purposes. Towamencin is proposing on-road bike routes along Wambold Road, Fretz Road, Sumneytown Pike, and Bridge Road, as well as an off-road bike path just south of Rittenhouse Road. The county's proposed Evansburg Trail should pass through a corner of Towamencin within state park lands along the Skippack Creek.

SKIPPACK

Skippack Township lies within the Central Perkiomen Valley, southwest of Lower Sal-

ford. Skippack adopted a comprehensive plan in 2001, that shows areas around Skippack Village designated for new residential, general commercial, and village center development along the entire Lower Salford border.

Most of Evansburg State Park lies within Skippack and the county's proposed Evansburg Trail will extend into Lower Salford's greenway along the West Branch of the Skippack Creek via a connection through Towamencin Township. The county proposes another link along the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek via either Skippack or Perkiomen Township to connect to the Perkiomen Trail.

Skippack's open space plan proposes a trail link from Evansburg State Park to the Perkiomen Creek via the PECO power line, with a connection through the Township's Palmer Park into Skippack Village. No specific linkages are proposed to extend from Skippack Village, but trail or pathway connections could be linked to the village along Lower Salford's southwest border. Skippack's plan identifies an opportunity for a link to Lower Salford in the area of Cross Road, where Skippack approved a development that provides preserved open space.

MULTIMUNICIPAL COOPERATION

THE INDIAN VALLEY REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Lower Salford is one of six municipalities that has adopted the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan. These municipalities include Salford, Upper Salford, and Franconia Townships and Telford and Souderton Boroughs. Preservation of open space is an essential component of the regional plan. It establishes growth and preservation areas that provide a framework for local municipalities to create more detailed park and open space plans. Some general open space-related goals from this plan include:

- Update and implement municipal open space plans;
- Create an Indian Valley Regional Trail Network;
- Establish inter-municipal cooperation for park facilities and programming; and
- Preserve rural character.

These goals are also reflected in Lower Salford's open space plan, and the Township looks forward to working with its regional partners on implementing these goals.

THE SOUDERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Souderton Area School District includes an area of 49 square miles in Upper Montgomery County and is the largest school district, in square miles, in the county. Its boundary is identical to that of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan. Schools located in Lower Salford include Indian Valley Middle School and Lower Salford and Oak Ridge Elementary Schools, all in Harleysville.

The school district is currently following its 2002-2009 Strategic Plan. The school district suffers from crowded and aging facilities, particularly on the secondary level. The Board of School Directors has begun construction of a new high school in Franconia Township to accommodate the swelling enrollments approaching the upper grades. Lower Salford plans to work with the school district to ensure that any new facilities do not conflict with, but rather fulfill, the stated goals of the open space or regional comprehensive plans.

CHAPTER 10

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Goals and objectives in Chapter 2 are the framework for the recommendations proposed in this chapter, which include both acquisition and non-acquisition measures. These updated recommendations are intended to continue building on the Township's open space accomplishments that began in the 1960's. Also, Lower Salford's long history of open space acquisition, development of recreation facilities, and preservation of its rural agricultural heritage will be continued through implementation of these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Township's system of parks, trails, and greenways continues to mature, changing conditions within the Township and region require the recommendations to reflect completion of acquisition of areas for active recreation, strengthening of the resolve to protect rural character and natural features, and broadening of recreation opportunities. Therefore, this chapter proposes recommendations that meet the following goals:

- Protect and Maintain Remaining Rural Character
- Protect Sensitive Natural Features
- Maintain and Enhance Recreation Opportunities

Both primary and secondary recommendations that aim to meet these goals constitute Lower Salford's approach to open space matters.

PROTECT AND MAINTAIN REMAINING RURAL CHARACTER

Diminishing rural character has led to a high priority goal to conserve key areas with remaining rural qualities, particularly farmland,

scenic views and roads, and historical sites and landscapes, and protect these from the adverse effects of suburban development. Protection of these rural qualities should be pursued aggressively through acquisition of land and/or easements, enactment of ordinance standards that require protection, and cooperation among landowners, developers, and the Township to maximize retention of rural character. The Route 113 Heritage Corridor

Study includes recommendations for maintaining and improving rural roads. Context-sensitive design utilizing a rural landscape pallet of shoulders, hedgerows, and split-rail fences is among the recommendations.

FARMLAND

The Township will continue to encourage use of conservation and agricultural preservation easements for farms along the stream corridors of the Indian Creek and East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek. Extensive areas of farmland remain along these corridors that should be conserved as additions to the several hundred acres of farmland already protected there. The Township will work to expand the agricultural security area, a first step in permanent preservation, to include as many active farms as possible.

SCENIC VIEWS AND ROADS

Some of the best scenic views will be preserved by conserving the farmland along the Indian and East Branch Creeks. In other areas and along identified road corridors, the Township will encourage builders to locate new homes where their visual impact will be lessened, and will urge use of scenic easements to protect specifically identified views. Use of cluster development will be strongly encouraged where it can contribute to protection or enhancement of scenic views and qualities. In addition, changes to the zoning ordinance requiring increased setbacks in the lowest density districts will be investigated.

HISTORIC SITES AND LANDSCAPES

The Township will continue to work with the Historical Society and owners of historic buildings and properties to develop practical strategies and guidelines to optimize preservation of the numerous historic features in the Township.



Farmland protection is very important to the township. The Knechel Farm is permanently protected.



Protecting existing villages, such as Harleysville, could be accomplished through improved zoning standards and bypass roads.

Photo by Mary West



Village of Lederach

EXISTING VILLAGES

The Township has been reserving right-of-ways for bypass roads to protect the villages of Lederach, Harleysville, and Mainland by providing alternative routes for through traffic. The Lederach bypass road would skirt around the intersection of Morris Road, Old Skippack Road, Lederach Cross Road, Salfordville Road, and Harleysville Pike. The Harleysville bypass would connect Oak Drive to Sumneytown Pike to relieve traffic on Main Street. The Mainland bypass will be included as part of the Route 309 connector project between Sumneytown Pike and Route 309.

In addition, the existing Village Commercial zoning standards will be evaluated in an effort to identify potential refinements that can make the district more effective in conserving historic village character.

REGIONAL PLANNING CONCEPTS

The Township will implement the recommendations of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan that protect vital elements of rural character and use land appropriately for active and passive recreation, especially as they apply to the Rural Resource Conservation Areas and village character. These include continuing to direct growth to areas where higher density zoning and public sewers are concentrated, especially within and near Harleysville and along Wambold Road. Also, extend public sewers only as an incentive to cluster homes in rural resource areas,

so homes can be located away from roads, behind ridgelines or into woodlands to preserve scenic, rural views.

PROTECT SENSITIVE NATURAL FEATURES

The Township will aggressively pursue protection of natural features in rural and developed areas for aesthetic benefits and environmental qualities using regulatory and stewardship methods, as well as acquisition, where appropriate. In particular, the Township is interested in protecting steep slopes, stream corridors, floodplains, wetlands and woodlands as indicated in Chapter 5.

REGULATORY MEASURES

- Enact or improve natural resource protection ordinances for riparian corridors, steep slopes, wetlands, woodlands and other sensitive natural features.
- Identify other appropriate regulatory measures to protect sensitive natural features, and encourage land owners to be conservation-minded stewards.
- Establish a setback from stream corridors to protect riparian woodlands along streams and continue to enforce the Township's floodplain ordinance which prohibits construction in the floodplain.
- Require subdivision and land development plans to identify wetlands and riparian corridors along with strategies to properly manage these areas.



Typically eroded stream bank



Restoration process



Restored stream bank



Restored stream bank protects against erosion from flooding

RESTORATION OF STREAM BANKS AND RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

In addition to enacting regulations and encouraging conservation measures, the Township will continue to facilitate restoration of eroded stream banks and re-vegetation of riparian corridors. Lower Salford facilitated stream bank restoration along the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek in Groffs Mill Park using bioengineering techniques. Riparian corridor vegetation was restored along the Bullfrog Run in Dannerth Park.

Planning and financing of these restoration projects included assistance from the Perkiomen Valley Watershed Conservancy, Perkiomen Creek Watershed Improvement Corporation, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Montgomery County Planning Commission, and Lower Salford Township.

The Township will evaluate potential opportunities for similar projects in other areas of Township parks for their environmental benefits as well as their educational value as examples for private land owners.



The restored riparian vegetation in Dannerth Park filters stormwater on its way to the Bullfrog Run

ACQUISITION

The Township will acquire land and/or easements to fill in gaps in the Township's existing greenways along the Indian Creek, East Branch of Perkiomen Creek, and West Branch of Skippack Creek, and extend Township ownership or easement protection along the Skippack Creek between Franconia and Towamencin Townships. Figure 27 on page 55 identifies these areas, which have been prioritized relative to their concentrations of environmental constraints, scenic views, significance to the greenway network, and availability of sensitive areas.

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The need to acquire more land for active recreation has diminished. Therefore, the Open Space Plan recommends optimized use of existing parklands for active and passive purposes, and encourages establishment of a variety of recreation programs to serve the Township's residents.

OPTIMIZE USE OF EXISTING PARKLANDS

- Conduct a thorough inventory of existing facilities.
- Maintain, expand, and improve existing park facilities for active and passive recreation and identify appropriate recreation programs to optimize use of the facilities.
- Identify appropriate routes for continued expansion of the Township's bike trail network, fill in gaps in areas with established trails, and cooperate with adjoining communities and the County to provide interconnected links with networks outside Lower Salford.
- Preserve and maintain historic buildings and farms at Heckler Plains, Jacob Reiff, and Bergey parks for educational and passive recreation purposes within the Township's greenway parklands.

CONTINUE TO EXPAND THE TRAIL NETWORK

- Implement recommendations identified in the 1998 Community Path Plan (see Figure 28 on page 58).
- Update the Community Path Plan to identify specific trail extensions, such as creation of a trail linking to the Lederach Golf Course and surrounding public open space areas.
- Expand trail connections throughout and between the Township's greenway corridor parks, as well as the bike trail network and trails of adjoining communities and the county, as land or easements are acquired to complete these greenways.
- Continue to require developers to install segments of planned bike trails and require developers to provide easements for trails in areas that may eventually allow a trail connection.
- Continue to provide opportunities to interconnect with trails in adjoining communities and with the County's trail system.



GREEN FIELDS/GREEN TOWNS PROGRAM OPTIONS

Through the Green Fields/Green Towns Program, alternative means of preservation are now eligible for funding through the various grant options described in the following chapter. In addition to Farmland Protection, County Trail Connections, and Heritage Resource Conservation, the Township is also eligible to apply for funding for Floodplain Restoration where inappropriately developed properties could be restored to a more appropriate floodplain condition.

CHAPTER 11

IMPLEMENTATION

BACKGROUND

Implementation is perhaps the most important part of any plan. Having identified and examined the open space issues important to the township, priorities and timing for implementation are established here to guide Lower Salford toward achieving its goals. In essence, this chapter is Lower Salford's "action plan." In the near term, implementation principally involves securing funds from the township's funding allocation under the County Open Space Program for high priority projects. This would occur over the next three to five years (2007-2011). It also means taking other, non-acquisition actions for open space preservation and recreation facility planning and development. Long term priorities will build upon these earlier efforts, and will be implemented to the greatest degree possible within the next five to ten years (2011-2016).

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Figure 45 lists the recommended actions described in Chapter 10 along with goals and objectives to be achieved, parties responsible for implementation, potential funding sources, and priority levels. This is followed by

information on potential preservation methods available to the Township and funding sources that could be used to implement the open space plan recommendations.

RESPONSIBILITY

For each proposed action, primary responsibility for implementation is proposed among the following municipal groups and consultants:

- Township Board of Supervisors (BOS)
- Township Planning Commission (TPC)
- Township Park Board (PB)
- Township Open Space Committee (OSC)
- Township Engineer (TE)
- Township Solicitor (TS)
- Lower Salford Historical Society & Heckler Plains Folklife Society (Hist Soc)
- Souderton Area School Board (Sch Bd)
- Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC)

PRIORITY CATEGORIES

Short Term actions should be implemented within the next three years (2007-2009). On-going actions should continue as needed to achieve the desired results. Long Term actions should be implemented to the greatest degree possible within the next five to ten years (2011-2016) and may need to continue beyond ten years.

ACQUISITION METHODS

There are a number of ways a municipality can obtain land for open space. An overview of these alternatives is provided here to serve as a guide for the Township's future open space acquisition efforts. In the long term, all of these could conceivably be used by the Township, although at any given time one or more may be more appropriate than others for acquiring a specific site. More generally, however, they indicate that the Township can be flexible in its approach to implementing the plan's goals.

FEE SIMPLE ACQUISITION

This option is the most direct way to acquire open space because it simply involves negotiating with a private landowner to arrive at a mutually acceptable purchase price and then completing the deal. The municipality then has free and clear title to the property, or fee simple ownership. Because it is usually a straightforward transaction, municipalities often prefer this approach, particularly for establishing a community park.

INSTALLMENT BUYING

With this method, the municipality agrees to purchase a set number of acres annually until the full parcel is acquired. In return, the full site is removed from the tax rolls when the agreement is signed. The owner may choose to remain on his land until it is completely sold and paid for. The advantage of this method is that benefits accrue to both the municipality and the landowner. For a municipality with limited funds, installment buying spreads the cost over a period of time. The landowner in the meantime is relieved of real property responsibilities with the agreement is signed.

LONG TERM LEASE WITH OPTION TO BUY

This involves the negotiation of a lease price with a property owner and includes conditions for use and possible purchase of the property. The primary advantage is that it permits flexibility; if the property is not needed in the future for open space, it returns to the owner.

PURCHASE AND LEASE-BACK

Purchase and lease-back results in buying land and leasing it back to the owner in accordance with agreed-upon policies for the use and protection of the land. Its primary advantage is that it permits purchase of property before prices rise or before the property

Figure 36
Implementation Matrix

Protect and Maintain Remaining Rural Character				
Goal/Objective Category	Recommended Action	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Priority
Rural Character Farmland	Encourage landowners to use agricultural preservation easements on remaining farm lands, especially along the Indian Creek and East Branch of Perkiomen Creek corridors.	TPC BOS MCPC	COUNTY OPEN SPACE & FARM PRESERVATION PROGRAMS	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features	Encourage landowners to use conservation easements, especially along the corridors of the Indian Creek and East Branch of Perkiomen Creek.	TPC BOS MCPC	COUNTY OPEN SPACE LAND TRUSTS CONSERVANCIES	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Farmland	Encourage builders to locate new homes where their visual impact will be lessened and use scenic easements to protect specifically identified views.	TPC BOS MCPC	PRIVATE	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Farmland	Encourage use of cluster development concept where it can contribute to protection or enhancement of scenic views and qualities.	TPC BOS MCPC	PRIVATE	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Farmland	Extend public sewers in rural resource areas only as an incentive to cluster homes.	TPC BOS	PRIVATE	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Farmland	Soften visual impacts of development in rural areas by tree planting, landscaped buffers, and reforestation.	TPC BOS PB	BOS PRIVATE LAND TRUSTS CONSERVANCIES	LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Recreation	Acquire land and/or easements to fill in gaps in existing greenways along the Indian Creek, East Branch of Perkiomen Creek, and West Branch of Skippack Creek.	TPC BOS	MCOS DCNR DEP PRIVATE	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Recreation	Acquire land and/or easements to extend greenway protection along the Skippack Creek between Franconia and Towamencin Townships.	TPC BOS	MCOS DCNR DEP PRIVATE	LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Farms & Villages	Encourage decisions that support implementation of the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan, with a strong emphasis on protecting vital elements of the rural resource conservation areas.	TPC BOS MCPC	BOS	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features Farmland	Continue to direct growth to areas where higher density zoning and public sewers are concentrated.	TPC BOS	BOS	ONGOING LONG TERM
Rural Character Natural Features	Increase front yard setbacks in the lowest density districts, especially along scenic roads.	TPC BOS MCPC	BOS	SHORT TERM
Rural Character Identity of Existing Villages	Develop practical strategies and guidelines to optimize preservation of historic features.	TPC BOS Hist Soc	BOS PHMC	ONGOING LONG TERM
Identity and Character of Existing Villages	Consider zoning refinements to improve conservation of historic village character.	TPC BOS MCPC Hist Soc	BOS PHMC	SHORT TERM ONGOING
Identity and Character of Existing Villages	Implement by pass routes to reduce vehicular traffic through historic villages.	BOS	BOS PADOT	ONGOING LONG TERM

Figure 36
Implementation Matrix Continued...

Protect Sensitive Natural Features				
Goal/Objective Category	Recommended Action	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Priority
Natural Features Rural Character	Enact or improve natural resource protection standards for riparian corridors, steep slopes, wetlands, woodlands, other sensitive natural features, and floodplains.	TPC BOS MCPC	BOS	SHORT TERM ONGOING
Natural Features Rural Character	Advocate and facilitate stewardship methods to protect natural features in rural and developed areas where regulatory measures are not appropriate, and encourage land owners to be conservation-minded stewards.	TPC BOS PVWC	BOS DCNR DEP LAND TRUSTS CONSERVANCIES	ONGOING LONG TERM
Natural Features Rural Character	Require subdivision and land development plans to identify wetlands and riparian corridors and propose strategies to properly manage these areas.	TPC BOS MCPC	BOS	SHORT TERM ONGOING LONG TERM
Maintain and Enhance Recreation Opportunities				
Goal/Objective Category	Recommended Action	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Priority
Recreation Rural Character	Preserve and maintain historic buildings and farms at Heckler Plains, Jacob Reiff, and Bergey parks for educational and passive recreation purposes within the Township's greenway parklands.	BOS PB Hist Soc	BOS DCNR PHMC	ONGOING LONG TERM
Recreation Rural Character	Develop educational programs for the Township's historical farmland parks and promote the historical identity and character of the Township's rural agricultural heritage.	PB Hist Soc Sch Bd	BOS PHMC Sch Bd	ONGOING LONG TERM
Recreation Opportunities	Maintain and improve existing park facilities for active and passive recreation and identify appropriate recreation programs to optimize use of the facilities.	BOS PB	BOS DCNR MCOS	ONGOING LONG TERM
Recreation Opportunities	Develop additional facilities for active and passive recreation within existing parklands in appropriate locations to satisfy increasing demands.	BOS PB	BOS DCNR	ONGOING LONG TERM
Recreation Opportunities	Identify appropriate routes for continued expansion of the Township's bike trail network and fill in gaps in areas with established trails.	TPC BOS PB	BOS	ONGOING LONG TERM
Recreation Opportunities	Cooperate with adjoining communities and the County to provide interconnected trail linkages with networks outside Lower Salford.	TPC BOS	BOS	ONGOING LONG TERM
Recreation Opportunities	Expand trail connections throughout the Township's greenway corridor parks as land or easements are acquired to complete these greenways, and facilitate trail connections between greenway corridors.	TPC BOS	BOS DCNR MCOS	ONGOING LONG TERM

is lost to development. It also permits flexibility because once the land is purchased it can be used for another public purpose, sold, or exchanged for another parcel.

PURCHASE AND RESALE

This method is similar to purchase and lease-back, except that the land is purchased with the sole intent of reselling it under conditions or restrictive covenants. If the land is acquired at a low cost, the resulting profits help repay initial purchase costs and can be used to acquire additional land. Another advantage is that after resale, the municipality is relieved of ownership and maintenance responsibilities and the land is taxable.

LEASING

This is a popular, relatively inexpensive way to acquire open space, especially if the land is unlikely to be developed (for example, reservoirs and utility land). The term of the lease usually ranges from 20 to 50 years; at a minimum, a period should be established that is long enough to finance anticipated capital improvements. The owner of the leased land prescribes conditions and terms under which the land can be used and the lessee is required to carry liability insurance covering personal injury and property damage.

EASEMENTS

Easements are a successful way to save public funds, yet receive open space benefits. An easement is a limited right over land owned by another person. Legally, a person has the right to use his property subject to zoning laws, subdivision regulation, etc; however, he may sell his right to use the land in specific ways. The costs of easements vary with the type acquired.

Easements can be affirmative or negative. Affirmative easements grant limited rights to the public to use the land for public pur-

poses, such as hiking, fishing, or riding. Such easements can be used selectively to obtain public use of private lands for trails and access to water-based recreational facilities. In contrast, negative easements do not allow public access, but restrict the owner in his use of the property. For example, a scenic easement requires the owner to preserve the "openness" or natural beauty of a site; this type of easement can be effective in maintaining the municipality's visually attractive roads.

Use of easements is generally more limited and complicated than land acquisition, but they can limit or prevent destruction and premature development of scenic areas. They should be selectively used and tailored to fit the requirements of each particular situation.

EMINENT DOMAIN

Eminent domain is the condemnation of land for a public use by due process of law. It must involve the determination of a fair market value for the property and a clear definition of the public purposes for which it is being condemned. Before exercising the right of eminent domain, a municipality should study the necessity of obtaining the particular site and the feasibility of acquiring it by other acquisition methods. Only if all other methods fail and the property is essential to an open space system should eminent domain be considered.

LAND TRUSTS AND CONSERVANCIES

Land trusts and conservancies are private, non-profit tax exempt trusts, usually organized by a citizen supported, non-profit agency. Their funds can be used to provide open space and to preserve natural resources such as stream valleys. Administration and management of the land are the responsibility of the service agency. Private non-profits have an advantage in that they can often move faster to acquire property than can a government agency. Frequently a public-

private partnership is formed whereby the private agency acquires land and then resells it to a government agency at a later date.

As noted previously, there are a number of existing conservation groups that will work with private landowners to conserve their land. However, such situations may or may not include provisions for public access. Because of this, a municipality should work closely with these organizations and landowners where public access is a goal. In this way, conservancies can function as an alternative method of acquiring open space.

LAND EXCHANGES

This method involves the trading of land between one owner and another to obtain mutual advantages. An arrangement can be made between landowners to exchange land that serves their interests.

VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS

Voluntary agreements can be established between government agencies and owners of agricultural lands, industrial holdings, and utility lands for various purposes. They are strictly voluntary, with permission to use the land for public enjoyment in clearly specified ways. For example, a utility company might permit trail use of a power line right-of-way.

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

If the municipality is only interested in protecting land or designated features of a property without gaining the right for public access, then this method of acquisition of partial interests rather than full fee title in land is available. In essence, a municipality could preserve significant natural, scenic, historic, or cultural resources by purchasing a landowner's right to develop the property or otherwise alter the character of the features that are deemed worthy of protection.

RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL AND PURCHASE OPTION

These methods involve establishing an agreement which specifies that the land may be acquired by the municipality at a future date. A right of first refusal provides the municipality with the option to match an offered purchase price within a specified time period should a landowner receive a legitimate offer to sell. A purchase option is simply a right that the municipality holds to purchase the land by a specified date at a specified price. Both rights of first refusal and purchase option can be either donated or sold to the municipality.

LIFE OR TERM ESTATES

This technique involves the acquisition of land with certain restrictions attached to the deed. A municipality may be better able to negotiate the purchase of property if certain interests in the land are reserved for the benefit of the landowner. For example, a municipality could purchase land with all rights of ownership conveyed except the right to occupy a house or a portion of the full property for a specified term (usually 25 years) or until the death of the landowner.

DONATIONS AND BARGAIN SALES

These methods of acquisition involve obtaining land at less than its full market value. Receiving donations of the full value of land is the least expensive way for a municipality to obtain land and can, in some instances, be a wise approach for a landowner to take to directly benefit from tax incentives and the shelter effects of charitable deductions. If a full donation of land is not possible or if the landowner has an immediate need for cash through sale, then a partial donation and bargain sale might be a prudent alternative. By selling land at a price that is less than its full value, a landowner can still receive tax benefits based on the difference between the

fair market value of the land and its actual sale price. The primary benefit to these techniques is that a municipality acquires land at a lower cost while the seller obtains tax deductions.

FUNDING SOURCES

In addition to the funds allocated through the County Open Space Program, Lower Salford is eligible for funds from a variety of sources including various grants and donations (of cash, materials, and/or labor).

GREEN FIELD/GREEN TOWN OPEN SPACE GRANTS

In 2003, a referendum to fund open space and green infrastructure projects was passed in Montgomery County. This funding was allocated to municipalities, private non-profit conservation organizations and the county to preserve more open space and enhance the livability of existing communities throughout the County.

Lower Salford is eligible to receive a total of \$1,114,371 for open space planning and implementation. This grant requires matching funds equal to twenty percent of project costs from the township. The County grants come with several conditions. The most important condition is that any land purchased with grant money must be permanently preserved as open space or for active recreation. Another condition is that Lower Salford must complete and adopt the Open Space Plan. This plan must be approved by the County's Open Space Board before grant money can be disbursed.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DCNR)

DCNR manages a variety of grant and technical assistance programs concerned with a variety of issues. DCNR annually awards

about \$30 million in planning, acquisition, and development grants for parks, recreation, rivers conservation, trails, greenways, and protection of open space and critical natural areas. Most DCNR grants require a 50/50 match. DCNR also provides pre-application workshops to assist applicants in the preparation of their application forms.

A priority goal of these programs is to develop and sustain partnerships with communities, non-profits, and other organizations for recreation and conservation projects and purposes. With this in mind, the Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) was established. It is a combination of several funding sources and grant programs, including the Commonwealth's Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (KEY 93, described below), the Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Act (Growing Greener, also described below), Act 68 Snowmobile and ATV Trails Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Recreational Trails component of the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-First Century (TEA-21).

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP)

The Growing Greener program has funded efforts to clean up Pennsylvania's rivers and streams, reclaimed abandoned mines and toxic waste sites, invested in new alternative energy sources, preserved farmland and open space, and developed watershed restoration programs. Thus far, Growing Greener has generated nearly \$1.50 in matching funds for the environment for every \$1.00 in state money. As the Growing Greener program evolves, it will focus on brownfield redevelopment, farmland and open space preservation, water quality improvements, enhanced state and community parks, and an upgraded fish and wildlife infrastructure. Growing Greener II will ac-

comply with these goals while making critical investments in community revitalization and the promotion of the use of clean energy.

KEYSTONE RECREATION, PARK AND CONSERVATION FUND

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Act was signed into law in 1993. It directs a portion of the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax to the Keystone Fund, establishing a dedicated and permanent funding source for recreation, parks, conservation, and other programming. Grants from this program require a minimum 50% match from the recipient municipality or nonprofit organization. As of 2002, \$144 million had been granted to more than 2,100 projects. The demand on the Keystone Fund already outstrips resources by a 4 to 1 margin.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DCED)

The mission DCED is "To foster opportunities for businesses and communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy, thereby enabling Pennsylvanians to achieve a superior quality of life." Therefore there are several assistance and grant programs available to Pennsylvania municipalities. Often, local economic and community revitalization efforts are supported by the implementation of green infrastructure and open space plans. Below is a list of programs offered by DCED through which revitalization funds may flow to implement the recommendations described in this open space plan.

- **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)** - Provides grant assistance and technical assistance to aid communities in their community and economic development efforts.
- **Community Revitalization Program (CR)** - Provides grant funds to support local

initiatives that promote the stability of communities.

- **Main Street Program** - Provides assistance for revitalization planning and projects.
- **Elm Street Program** - Grant funds for planning, technical assistance and physical improvements to residential and mixed use areas in proximity to central business districts.
- **Industrial Sites Reuse Program** - Grants and low-interest loan financing to perform environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION (PHMC)

Many communities value their historic resources and work to preserve them for future generations. These resources can then be integrated into the open space network and cultural amenities of that community to enhance local image and aesthetics. The PHMC offers several programs that aid municipalities in these efforts.

- **Certified Local Government Grant Program** - Provides funding for cultural resource surveys, national register nominations, technical and planning assistance, educational and interpretive programs, staffing and training, and pooling CLG grants and third party administration
- **Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program** - Provides funding for preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation
- **Pennsylvania History and Museum Grant Program** - Ten types of grants are designated to support a wide variety of museum, history, archives and historic preservation projects, as well as nonprofit organizations and local governments.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (PENNDOT)

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

This category includes projects for bicyclists and pedestrians that permit safe passage for children to walk or bike to school. This includes activities that enhance the transportation system through the construction of new facilities or the improvement of existing facilities to make them more usable for pedestrians and bicyclists. Some examples of eligible activities include: sidewalk improvements, pedestrian/bicycle crossing improvements, bike lanes, traffic diversion improvements, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In addition, this program may fund traffic calming measures to slow the speed of cars such as the following: curb extensions, bulb-outs, traffic circles, raised median islands, speed humps, textured or raised crosswalks. Funds cannot be used for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are solely for recreational use.

HOME TOWN STREETS

This category includes a variety of streetscape improvements that are vital to reestablishing our downtown and commercial centers. These will include activities undertaken within a defined "downtown" area that collectively enhance that environment and promote positive interactions with people in the area. Projects may include sidewalk improvements, planters, benches, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, transit bus shelters, traffic calming, bicycle amenities, kiosks, community "gateway" plantings, signage and other visual elements.

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (DVRPC)

DVRPC's Transportation and Community Development Initiative program is intended to assist in reversing the trends of disinvestment and decline in many of the region's core cities and first generation suburbs by:

- Supporting local planning projects that will lead to more residential, employment or retail opportunities;
- Improving the overall character and quality of life within these communities to retain and attract business and residents, which will help to reduce the pressure for further sprawl and expansion into the growing suburbs;
- Enhancing and utilizing the existing transportation infrastructure capacity in these areas to reduce the demands on the region's transportation network; and
- Reducing congestion and improving the transportation system's efficiency.

CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)

This program seeks transportation-related projects that can help the region reduce emissions from highway sources and meet National Clean Air Act standards. The program covers the DVRPC region of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania; and, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (TE)

Transportation Enhancements is a set-aside of Federal highway and transit funds, mandated by Congress in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) for the funding of "non-traditional" projects designed to enhance the transportation experience, to mitigate the impacts of transportation facilities on communities and the environment, and to enhance community character through transportation-related improvements.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The program offers technical assistance only to

nonprofit organizations, community groups, and local or state government agencies. Rivers and Trails technical staff offers the following types of assistance for recreation and conservation projects:

- Building partnerships to achieve goals set by the community
- Assessing resources
- Developing concept plans
- Engaging public participation
- Identifying potential sources of funding
- Creating public outreach
- Organizational development
- Providing conservation and recreation information

PECO ENERGY GREEN REGION OPEN SPACE GRANT PROGRAM

PECO Energy, a subsidiary of Exelon, is currently involved in several environmental partnerships including “TreeVitalize,” with DCNR, clean water preservation with The Nature Conservancy, and environmental education initiatives with the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education and Green Valleys Association. Green Region grants are available to municipalities in amounts up to \$10,000. The grants can be used with other funding sources to cover a wide variety of planning and direct expenses associated with development and implementing open space programs, including consulting fees, surveys, environmental assessments, habitat improvement, and capital improvements for passive recreation.

DONATIONS

Lower Salford should encourage donations from individuals and groups to help pay for parkland acquisition, development, and tree planting. The donations may be cash, materials, or labor. The Township could organize

special days during which local citizens and groups could gather to participate in implementing open space projects.

CONCLUSION

Lower Salford Township looks forward to adopting the 2006 Open Space Plan and implementing its recommendations. The Township believes that parks and open space contribute greatly to the quality of life of its residents, and that a “Green Township” is what Lower Salford strives to be.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program

<http://www.montcopa.org/plancom/greenfields2.htm>

Lower Salford Township

<http://www.lowersalfordtownship.org>

Montgomery County Planning Commission

<http://www.montcopa.org/plancom>

